

2026/2027 Student Ceramics Handbook

Updated: March 2026

Welcome to Place des Arts ceramics studio! To fully understand the workings of the studio, the role of the technician and the ceramics process itself, please read this handbook carefully. Students will be oriented to the studio by their teacher during the first class. **By registering for a ceramics program, the student acknowledges that they have read and agree to the studio procedures outlined within.**

THE STUDIO

Our studio is a mid-fire stoneware facility that allows students to choose either electric/oxidation or gas/reduction firing. The studio consists of 4 spaces. While working at Place des Arts, all clay, materials, tools and equipment must remain within the ceramics studio.

Room 108: The Wheel Room

This area has 12 wheels and table space for students and teachers. Each wheel is numbered/lettered, and each student will have access to a table space indicated with a corresponding number/letter. The teacher wheel and wheels 1-4 are along the north wall (the wall with the door from the atrium). Wheels 5-11 are along the wall with the windows.

Room 107: The Glaze Room

All glazes are kept here and samples of available glazes are on display. If you are new to the studio, you may utilize the tools and materials in this room after orientation from your teacher.

The Kiln Room

The Kiln Room has three electric kilns and one gas kiln, all used for firing student work. There is a yellow line on the floor of the kiln room indicating the space accessible to students and the technician's area. For safety reasons, please remain in the student area.

On your first visit to the studio each session:

Please **clearly print your first name, last initial and maker's mark** on a kiln room shelf using a permanent marker like the example below. The shelves in the kiln room with **yellow labels** are **accessible shelves** for anyone who would benefit from not climbing the step ladder or bending down. If you are comfortable using the step ladder and/or bending down, please consider choosing a higher or lower shelf in the kiln room.



Please also **clearly write your maker's mark and shelf number** using a pencil next to your name on the alphabetized student list attached to the technician's clipboard in the kiln room (indicated by the red star in the photo).

The Damp Room

The Damp Room is designed to keep your work in progress in a moist, workable condition. Purchased clay is not to be stored in the damp room. If you are unable to transport your clay to and from PdA, please contact the technician for an alternative solution.



On your first visit to the studio each session: clearly print **your first name, last initial and maker’s mark** on a blank piece of **green tape** on a damp room shelf using a permanent marker, like the example shown. **The shelves in the damp room with red tape are accessible shelves** for anyone who would benefit from not climbing the step ladder or bending down. If you are comfortable using the step ladder and/or bending down, please consider choosing a higher or lower shelf in the damp room.

OPEN STUDIO TIME

Open Studio time is available to currently registered students. Open studio access is limited, and students are required to sign-up for Open Studio in advance. The Open Studio Sign-Up Sheet is a Google Docs spreadsheet. The Sign-Up Sheet indicates when the studio is available and how many spots/wheels are available. The Ceramics Program Manager will email registered students every two weeks when the new schedule is available for online sign-up. When the Open Studio schedule is released, the weekly tabs indicate the maximum number of spots students may sign up for in advance per calendar week.

To sign up, please type your first and last name in a blank cell on the date and time that you would like to visit the ceramics studio. The number/letter in the cell corresponds to a wheel and table space in the studio. Please add your name after the letter/number, like the example shown. Please use the wheel/space you have signed up for. The teacher wheel has a camera with a flexible arm that can be bent underneath the wheel when not in use. Please do not remove the camera from the wheel. During class time, this wheel is reserved for the teacher. If you are using the studio before or after your class, please use the wheel/spot number you have signed up for on the Sign-Up Sheet during class time.

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|----------------------------------|
| Thursday, January 18 |
| 9:00 - 11:30 AM (2.5 hrs) |
| T. Kim Correia |
| 1 |
| 2 |

If there is availability showing within the current week, students may sign up for additional open studio spots **no sooner than 24 hours** before the start of the available spot. For example, if there is an available (blank) spot on the sign-up sheet for July 7 at 12:30pm, a student can sign up for that spot beginning at 12:30pm on July 6. There is no maximum on the number of additional weekly studio sign-ups.

Availability for open studio sign up is on a first come, first served basis. We appreciate your understanding and following the sign-up rules. Please know the list is monitored by staff and those not following the outlined rules may be contacted. Students may only sign up for Open Studio time for themselves. If you require assistance with signing up, please call 604-664-1636 ext. 0 or visit in-person.

If you have signed up for an Open Studio slot and are unable to attend, please remove your name from the sign-up sheet to allow another student to attend. It is appreciated if you can remove your name from the spot at least 1 hour prior to the start of the posted open studio spot. Students must not alter another student’s entry on the sign-up sheet.

STUDIO ETIQUETTE

- Students must clean their wheel and work area after each use. **See pages 7 and 8 for the clean-up process.**
- Cell phone conversations are not permitted in the studio. Please excuse yourself to take your conversation outside.
- Some of the chemicals used to disinfect surfaces in the studio and throughout the building have a mild fragrance. However, please be mindful not to use other scented products prior to or during your visit to Place des Arts.
- Do **NOT** put any food or drink down the studio sink - it creates a big stink! Rinse or wash any dishes with drinks or food in the kitchen sink.
- If food items are brought to Place des Arts, leftovers and containers must be taken home. Students are required to bring their own cutlery.
- Guests, including family and children, are not permitted in the studio.
- For safety reasons, please wear closed-toed shoes in the studio.
- If you have clay on your hands, **please only touch clay**. Clean your hands before touching door handles, shelves, the sink, etc.
- Please use one of the designated wedging tables (located outside of the damp room and in the glaze room) to wedge your clay when other students are hand building or doing detailed work at the main table to avoid vibrations from wedging disrupting work at/on the main table.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

There are several shared tools available in the ceramics studio, and there are wareboards available to borrow for the session. It is recommended to put a sheet of newsprint between your work and the board to protect your work as well as the board.

Basic Tools (Recommended)

- Kemper or generic pottery tool kit*
- Notebook and pencil or ceramics app such as [Clay Lab](#)

*Generic pottery tool kits are available at the Registration Desk for \$15.00 + tax and include: a boxwood potters' rib, boxwood modeling tool, ribbon tool, sponge, needle tool, loop tool, metal scraper and a wire clay cutter.

Optional Tools

Other supplies can be purchased from [Greenbarn Potter's Supply](#), [The Clay Warehouse](#), [Opus Art Supplies](#) or [The Pottery Supply House](#).

What to Wear

Dress for mess and wear closed-toed shoes in the studio. Many potters also wear an apron to reduce mess on clothing.

Clay

To protect our equipment, **only clay purchased at Place des Arts may be used**. Please speak to your teacher or the technician for more information about our clay and your specific clay needs. The current price list for clay is posted in the studio. Due to limited space, your clay and tools cannot be stored at Place des Arts. Clay is available for purchase from the Registration Desk



in full or half-box amounts and reclaimed clay is also available. After completing your clay purchase, give your receipt to your instructor, the technician or available staff who will retrieve the clay and keep the receipt.

Sanding

To reduce everyone's risk of silica dust exposure, only wet sanding is permitted of ceramic work at the greenware, bisque or glaze fired stages on site at PdA. Sanding can be minimized by smoothing work with sponges and ribs while in the leather hard stage. If you must sand your bisqueware, ensure you plan ahead. Wet sand your wares and leave them to dry for 24 hours before glazing so that they can absorb enough glaze. For more information on silica dust management, visit:

<https://digitalfire.com/hazard/dealing+with+dust+in+ceramics>

Glazes and Decoration

The technician maintains a supply of glazes for student use mixed from chemicals and stored in well-marked containers. Some heavy metals in our glazes may cause skin sensitivities. When glazing, students should wear rubber gloves to avoid contact with skin. If glaze comes into contact with your skin, wash your skin as soon as possible. Please be especially mindful of this prior to eating or drinking.

Please consult your teacher or the technician prior to purchasing products for decorating to confirm that they are compatible with Place des Arts' materials and equipment.

PRODUCTION

Each student may make a maximum of 25 projects (which is equal to 25 bisque firings and 25 glaze firings) per session. The technician will use a tally system to track students' production. Once a student reaches 25 projects, they may not create more projects to be fired during that session. *Tech's tip: focus on quality and technique over quantity!*

Project sizes are limited by kiln and kiln shelf sizes.

- The maximum project size is: 18" wide/deep and 18" tall
 - Projects taller than 12" will be counted as three projects.
 - Projects wider/deeper than 12" will be counted as two projects.
 - Projects taller and wider than 12" will be counted as four or more projects.
- Pieces less than 3" in diameter and less than 6" high are two-for-one (or half a project).
- There is no limit on test tiles; the maximum test tile size is 2" x 2" x 2".

Your work should have your initials, maker's mark and/or name **clearly marked** on the bottom so that no confusion results over the ownership of the work.

Your Maker's Mark

When considering your maker's mark, think about how it will be unique from other potters. Using only your initials may cause some confusion. For example, **AJ** and **AT** can look similar, or **MM** could be read as **WW**. Consider also using a shelf stamp (available in the studio), adding your shelf number (such as **12**), or using a unique marking such as dots in the example shown. Make your mark inside the foot area of your project using a pencil or dull instrument, rather than a pin tool to ensure your mark remains clear after firing.



Production Deadlines

Each session, the following deadlines are indicated on the Open Studio Sign Up Sheet:

Last Wet Clay Day: This is the last day a project can be started. This day is one week before the greenware deadline.

Greenware Deadline: All projects must be ready for bisque firing and placed in the kiln room. This deadline is two weeks before the Glazeware deadline to allow for bisque firings to occur and time for glazing.

Glazeware Deadline: All projects must be glazed, ready for final firing and placed in the kiln room.

Project Pick-Up: At the end of each session, an email will be sent to students when projects can be picked up, approximately 1-2 weeks after the glazeware deadline. A pick-up deadline will be included in this email and unclaimed pieces will be donated as "clay things" to the Artisan Shop or discarded after the pick-up deadline.

Project Storage

Space is available for storing projects in various stages of development in the damp room and kiln room. Projects should be stored carefully, with respect for others' work. A small bump to a damp project can cause a large problem and unnecessary disappointment. As storage space is limited, please move your pieces to the next stage as soon as they are ready. Shelves are divided evenly amongst students, please only use the space allotted to you. Clay can not be stored in the studio, please take clay home with you.

CERAMIC STUDIO CLEAN UP

Help keep the studio a healthy and comfortable environment for everyone to work in by cleaning your individual space as well as common areas. **Be sure you have cleaned up and are ready to leave the studio by the end of the posted Open Studio hours. Clean up should begin at least 25 minutes before the end of the posted Open Studio hours.**

Please see pages 7 and 8 for the ceramics clean-up process. This clean-up process is also posted within the studio for reference.

Safety Note: *Clay and glaze materials contain silica dust, and inhalation of silica dust can lead to health and respiratory issues. Silica dust can remain in the air for a very long time and prolonged exposure may cause respiratory discomfort or disorders such as silicosis. If you have any concerns, please talk to the technician. During your cleanup, everything must be wiped down with fresh water and a wet sponge and clean up any clay while it is still wet (no dry sanding, sweeping or blowing dust into the air).*



An extra 5 minutes of general clean-up after each studio session maintains the studio in a state that everyone can enjoy.

- CLEAN SHARED AREAS:** wipe down sink, counters, window knobs, door handles and all surfaces.
- CLEAN GLAZE ROOM:**
 - Put all used newspaper into the garbage and wipe counter tops.
 - Ensure the correct lids are used with corresponding glaze buckets to avoid glaze contamination and wipe down sides and lids of buckets.
 - Ensure all glaze tongs, glaze trailers, sponges, stir sticks etc. are cleaned thoroughly and neatly returned to shelves.

QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK

At Place des Arts we value feedback from our students so we can improve our programs.

If you have studio-specific or technical questions, please ask your instructor or our ceramics technician.

If you have questions, comments and/or concerns about the program or Place des Arts in general, please contact our Ceramics Program Manager Kim Correia at kcorreia@placedesarts.ca.

Ceramic Studio Clean Up Process

1. Recycle Clay



Collect and Keep: Collect 'rainbows', scrap clay, and any trimmings to recycle yourself.



OR Donate to PdA: Break unwanted clay into small pieces and deposit into the Reclaimed Clay Bucket for PdA to recycle.

Note: bone dry clay goes into the garbage

2. Preliminary Rinse

Rinse your equipment, tools, and the wheel using the water from your throwing bucket.



3. Dispose of Throwing Water and Sludge

- Pour off **water** from throwing bucket into the sink.
- Dispose of **sludge** (wet, sloppy clay at the bottom of your bucket) in slop discard bucket. Pouring sludge through the plastic sieve will catch any hidden tools!
- Scrape sludge caught in the plastic sieve into slop discard bucket.



4. Clean Tools and Equipment



Clean Tools and Equipment

Thoroughly rinse your tools, equipment, and the splash pan in the sink.



Clean Wheel

- Wipe down wheel, including its sides, with a clean wet sponge.
- Wheels should look clean with no clay residue anywhere.
- Once the wheel is reassembled, give it another wipe down with a clean, wet sponge.



Turn OFF Wheel

Ensure the pedal is in the off position, and switch the power button on the side of the wheel to the OFF position.



Clean Table

- Wipe down the table with a clean wet sponge.
- Rinse your sponge with clean water and give the table a second wipe to ensure it is free of clay residue.



Wet Mop Floor

- Avoid sweeping to prevent stirring up harmful silica dust; pick up clay pieces and trimmings by hand before mopping.
- Thoroughly mop the area around your wheel.