## The reality

**Rachel Duff – Féis Rois Education Manager**

Well I think there's a wee bit of a misconception that when you're a freelance artist you can do whatever you like. But I think the reality is that you often find that you're working with lots of different companies and organisations, all who have got their own ethos, their own aims and objectives which you have to adhere to when you’re delivering the work for those organisations. And in terms of challenges, I think financially it can be a challenge. So not only are you having to book yourself different work opportunities, you’re also having to manage them. You have to know how to keep all your receipts, how to deal with tax, knowing what your tax allowances can be and you're basically an administrator, as well being a creative artist. So I think that can be a challenge for some people.

**Norman Bolton – High Life Highland Development Officer**

The flexibility that people can have in their work life, I think is it is a major attraction. Although as Rachael said, it is hard work to juggle all the potential routes to employment and being able to take some sort of control as to the artistic aspects of what you doing can be good. And just building up a portfolio of really broad experiences is a major attraction. You also need to have really, really good communication skills, as in the direct communication with potential employers as well, because there is nothing worse from an employer’s side, sitting waiting for a week or 10 days to get a response from somebody when you want to move project on. So it's important that any responses are made really quickly.

## Tip 1: plan ahead

**Rachel Duff – Féis Rois Education Manager**

You need to be really organised and you need to have a clear plan for whatyou would like to achieve before going in. And that plan, you need to identify how you're going to deliver the work not just what you are going to deliver. And it's almost a case of imagining how the class would actually play out before you get there. Imagining all the different things that could happen, the different scenarios and being ready with different tools and techniques which might help with any situations which come up.

## Tip 2: be adaptable

**Rachel Duff – Féis Rois Education Manager**

You need to understand the levels of ability within the room. You need to be able to read the people in the room, know when it's time to move on, when it's time to change direction to do a new activity and also know when it's time to, like, lift people's energy up and when to bring it back down again. And being able to sense when you've got a class that is with you or if they have lost you and you need to slow the pace down. And being okay about making mistakes and having fun with that as well, because that's all part of the process. If you're having fun and you’re making mistakes and you’re learning along with young people.

**Norman Bolton – High Life Highland Development Officer**

That thing about making mistakes, in order to be able to deal with that you have to have a really high personal skill level, even musically, you have to know what you're doing to be able to be as adaptable as you are saying as well. And just having that kind of engaging personality that just pulls people into your enthusiasm as well.

## Tip 3: reflect on your practice

**Rachel Duff – Féis Rois Education Manager**

Being able to reflect on the work that you have delivered and yet knowing what's gone really well and why it's gone well and what’s, maybe, not worked quite so well and how you could have changed it or how you would take it forward if you had the same group for another session.

**Norman Bolton – High Life Highland Development Officer**

You also have to know when you’ve lost a teacher if you're in a school environment. Because you have to have staff on board as well and it's not just about the pupils in front of you or young people. You need to have a teacher on board as well and be able to deliver the information to the teacher about what you want done or what they can do to enhance the session as well.

## Tip 4: never stop learning

**Rachel Duff – Féis Rois Education Manager**

I think it's really important that everybody is continuously learning and whether that’s about going along to training sessions, workshops, courses or actually just being able to self-reflect on the work that you've done and identify what have been successes and weaknesses. As well as, constantly building up your repertoire, learning new tunes, new material, learning from the pupils, learning from the other tutors and the musicians or artists that you're working with. I think it helps keep things fresh, it helps keep you focused.

## Top traits

**Norman Bolton – High Life Highland Development Officer**

I’ve kind of summed this up in three words, basically, which I think are quite important traits to have. So we’ve got reliability, imagination and flexibility.

## Opportunities

**Rachel Duff – Féis Rois Education Manager**

We offer different work placements both for a school students and also for college and university students. So people can get in touch with us and let us know what they would like to learn and then we'll put together a program of different activities for them to take part in. And that's really on an individual basis depending on what people want to get out of the placement. We have also got the opportunity for people to shadow different tutors without working as well so people can get in touch and we can organise things for them

**Contact:** rachael.duff@feisrois.org

**Norman Bolton – High Life Highland Development Officer**

Folk will just have to contact me through Highlife Highland and we would certainly consider any sort of mentoring or shadowing opportunities.

**Contact:** norman.bolton@highlifehighland.com