



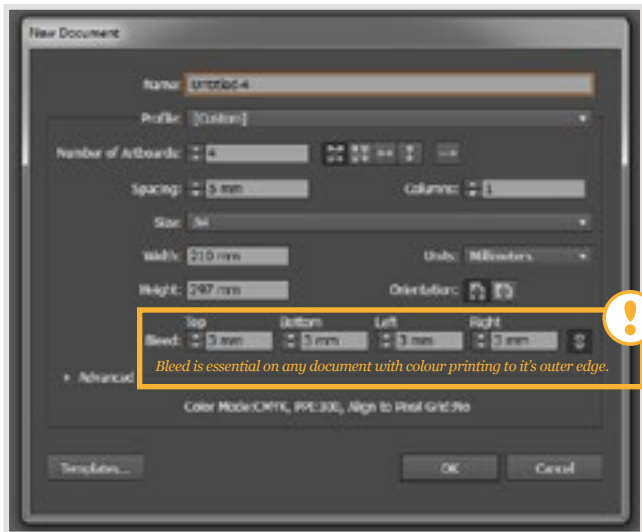
Setup and Export Tips

For Adobe Illustrator

Initial Setup

All Illustrator projects start here, so it's important to get familiar with the features offered in the initial document setup page. Page size and

bleed are of particular importance, and a colour mode of CMYK gives best results for digital printing



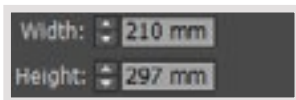
Bleed is essential on any document with colour printing to it's outer edge.

A four page Illustrator document, set up at A4 with a 3mm bleed for edge to edge colour.

Setup Information:

Some of the options presented in Illustrator are slightly different to other Adobe software, and it lacks some of the useful publishing tools of InDesign.

Page Size



Make sure that this is set to one individual page of your document, and not the size of a full spread.



Page Margins

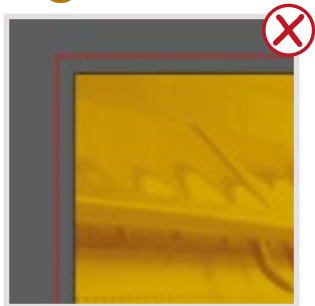
Unlike InDesign, Illustrator lacks a method of automatically adding margins to your artwork, however these are still essential for a successful print. Please see the 'Understanding Margins' page to learn about adding guides to your artboards.

Bleed Area



Bleed is an additional area of print that surrounds the periphery of a design. For any artwork that has images or background colours which reach the edge, bleed must be enabled. It is shown as a red line surrounding the outside edge of your artboard.

More On Using Bleed



Bleed has been set to a sensible 3mm, but has not been used. Unless the area contains content, it is not helpful, print ready bleed.

A single page design using suitable bleed (notice that the background extends all the way to the red line, and does not stop at the black page edge).

Enabling a page bleed, without filling the area with design elements intended to reach the edge of the artwork is one of the most common file set-up errors. Make sure you follow the examples shown above and you'll have no issues getting edge to edge prints, without disappointing white edges.



Double page spreads are not natively supported in Illustrator, but can be created by placing two sequential artboards side by side. Notice the overlap of bleeds at the centre of the page.

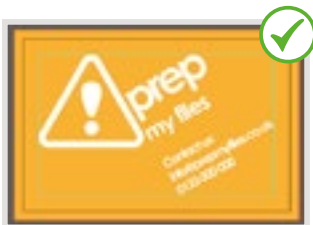
Understanding Margins

Margins are the remedy to losing important text to the guillotine during the production process. Using correct margin width will make sure no essential content is missing or damaged due to mechanical tolerance.



Draw a rectangle at least 5mm from each of your documents edges, select it and right click. You can now convert this shape to guidelines which will operate like any other illustrator guide.

Illustrator does not natively support margins. Follow the example shown above to draw your own, and use these to place your content safely on the page.



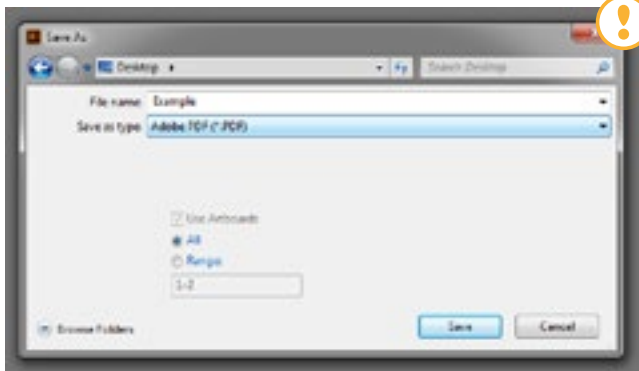
Here, margins and bleeds are correctly used on a business card layout. There is no risk to the important text, or logo within the circle.



Here, margins are ignored. This means that these cards will lose legibility as the letters will be partially cut.

Saving Files for Print

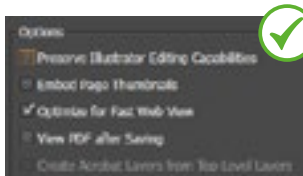
As with other design software, the Edinburgh Copyshop recommends exporting files to print ready .pdf documents, with bleed and trim marks where appropriate. In Illustrator this is handled through the 'Save As' panel.



.pdf files are the most suitable for printing through our server, select .pdf from the Save As options when you have completed your document, and are ready to send it for print.



Illustrator offers several preset export options for .pdf files, start the export process by selecting 'high quality print' from this drop down - we'll make a few modifications to control file size later.

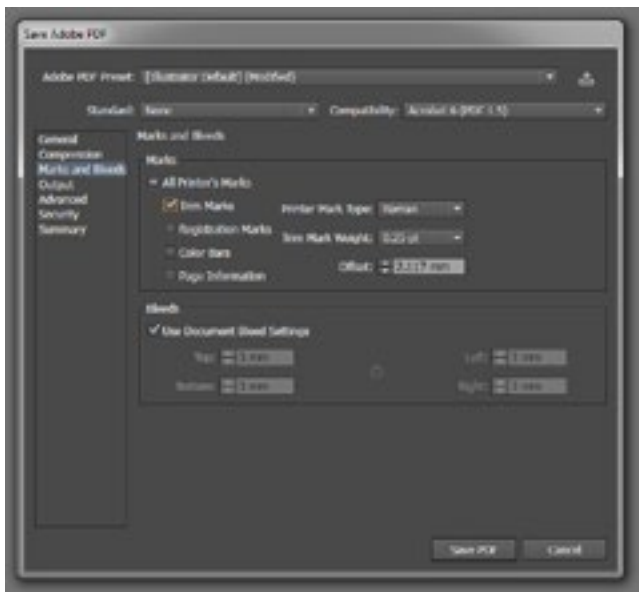


Files with illustrator editing left enabled will at times be larger than the original document! Keep your print files small, disable this option.

Illustrator has a feature which allows .pdf files to remain fully editable in similar versions of Illustrator when shared. Although convenient when previewing working documents, it should be disabled when preparing final print-ready files for issue. This will minimize file size and wait times.

Print Marks and Bleed

The last step in preparing print ready material using Illustrator is to make sure our correctly set-up document is exported to .pdf with bleed and trim marks included. This makes sure we can get an edge-to-edge print at the correct size.



If you've used your bleed correctly, you should see '3 mm' in each of the boxes.



Saving as .ai for future edits

It's bad practice to use your printing .pdf files as working illustrator saves. Always save an .ai file at the same time as your 'Save As' .pdf export. This way you will have an uncompressed document, that will remain easy to edit in the future.



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