



Crafts Council

# **UK SIC 2026 Revisions – DCMS Invitation to share proposals Crafts Council submission September 2025**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) announced in August 2025 a revision of the UK Standard Industrial Classification (UK SIC), in line with related international classifications. This intention is to update the classification to better reflect the UK economy. DCMS has invited Crafts Council and other creative sectors to help develop the framework for UK SIC 2026.

## **Background**

In the last review of SICs, Crafts Council worked with partners to try and frame a new definition of contemporary and heritage craft/artisan businesses. But it was not possible to reach agreement across a wider group of partners without a risk of undermining the one existing SIC code that relates to craft (SIC 32.12 Manufacture of jewellery and related articles).

A new subcode was agreed in the last review (9000 Arts creation and performing arts activities), including '90.12 visual arts creation'. While useful, none of the new sub-codes specifically reference craft so it is likely to be difficult for makers to decide which to use. Together with partners QEST, Craft NI and Applied Arts Scotland, we would therefore like to make the case again for the introduction of a further craft sub-code.

## **Proposal**

The existing wording for SIC code '*90.12 Visual Arts Creation Activities*'. is:

*This class includes the activities of creation and production of works of the visual arts. This class includes:*

- *activities of independent artists (e.g. sculptors, painters, cartoonists, calligraphers, engravers, etchers)*
- *digital forms of visual arts creation*
- *creations of art featuring light installations*

Crafts Council would like to propose an addition of a new 5 digit SIC code in UK SIC 2026 to sit under the existing 4 digit SIC 90.12. The wording we propose is:

*'90.121 Craft creation activities*

*This class includes the activities of independent craft makers in the creation and production of three dimensional craft objects (eg from ceramic, glass, textiles, metal, leather, basketwork, wood)*



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It is important to make this 5-digit Subclass addition in UK SIC 2026 in order to ensure that the concept of craft is fully recognised as a 3D sub-category of the activities of independent artists.

There is a precedent for this change as the NACE framework already accepts the concept of 'craft' under '91.21 Museum and collection activities' which refers to 'crafts and design museums (e.g. jewellery, furniture, costumes, ceramics, silverware)'. If the concept is understood in terms of collections and display, it should also be reflected in terms of creation under 90.12.

Where there might be smaller numbers of microbusinesses/sole traders using the code initially, over time (and with support from craft organisations) more businesses are likely to relate more readily to the term 'independent craft makers' than to manufacturing. Crafts Council, Craft UK (a national network) and QEST would be actively committed to sharing such information through a campaign with makers and craft businesses.

This proposal seeks to make the sector more coherent and more identifiable in statistical and economic representation, helping to address the under-representation of craft acknowledged in the DCMS Economic Estimates methodology. (See DCMS Creative Industries Economic Estimates methodology pp 6, 15 & 19.) The sum of activity would also accrue more accurately to the creative industries.

Sculptors may identify with the current 4 digit SIC which focuses on the overarching occupation or, where they see their activities defined by materials, more likely with the 5 digit definition, thus giving greater specificity of activity.