

FILE SUPPLY GUIDE



Everything you **NEED** to know
before sending files to us



WE WANT YOUR FILES TO PRINT PERFECTLY



ignore the rules and it could be fatal

We want the same thing that you want. We want your graphic files to print without fuss and look like you meant them to. We'll be honest with you – of the small number of jobs that don't print as expected, the overwhelming majority are from files supplied to us. Even if you're a seasoned professional and are used to supplying files for print, please read this guide anyway – our process is likely to be different to what you're used to.

Please read this guide in full before you start designing – **it's the best way to ensure that you don't suffer any unnecessary delays, costs and heartache.** If you follow this guide, your file should print like a breeze.

Happy Designing!



if you're using Microsoft Office e.g. Word or Publisher, create a PDF or a high res JPEG

Unflattened Image Files



The safest file formats for images are flattened files saved as TIFFs. Avoid PSDs, layered TIFF and layered Photoshop EPS files as these can cause problems.



SETTING YOUR PAGE SIZE



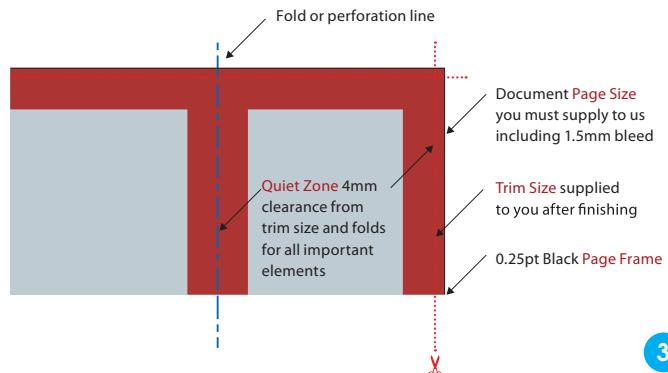
it's best not to put any important objects, such as text or logos, closer than 4mm from the trim edge, or from any fold or crease



if you're unsure **contact us for advice**
0800 122 3003

It's very important that you **set your page size correctly**. If you don't, parts of your design may be chopped off, look off-centre, or have areas of undesired white space. Here's what to do:

1. Locate the product size you're interested on the next page.
2. Make a note of the **Page Size**. This is the size you should set your page on your document.
3. Now look at the **Trim Size**. You'll see that this is 3mm smaller on both dimensions. This difference is known as the 'bleed' – 1.5mm on all four sides – that's approximately where our automated guillotines will make their cuts. The bleed allows for any small variations in this cutting.
4. To remind yourself where the cuts will be made, you could add some guidelines 1.5mm in from each edge on your document.
5. See the example on the previous page. For a business card, you'd set your page size as **88x58mm**. We'll trim down to approximately **85x55mm**. No objects must extend beyond the page size – use the 'paste inside', 'clip', or 'crop' tool.
6. Finally, it's good practice to leave a '**Quiet Zone**' of **4mm** (10mm for Booklets and Posters) from the trim edge (that's 5.5mm or 11.5mm from the page edge). Avoid placing any important objects such as text or logos within this quiet zone. This will make your job look more professional and ensure objects don't look like they're about to fall off the edge.



COMMON SIZES

A1 page: 597x844mm
trim: 594x841mm

A2 page: 423x597mm
trim: 420x594mm

A3 page: 300x423mm
trim: 297x420mm

A4 page: 213x300mm
trim: 210x297mm

A5 page: 151x213mm
trim: 148x210mm

A6 page: 108x151mm
trim: 105x148mm

A7 page: 77x108mm
trim: 74x105mm

1/3rd A4
page: 213x102mm
trim: 210x99mm

Business/Credit Card

page: 88x58mm
trim: 85x55mm

Bookmark

page: 58x176mm
trim: 55x173mm

— 'page' – supply your file at this size (see page 4)

..... 'trim' – this is the finished size of the product

CHECKING YOUR QUIET ZONE AND BLEED

Allowing for the correct bleed and quiet zone are really, really important and they are some of the most common file supply errors that we see. Here are a few examples of how to get it right (and wrong):



COMMON PITFALLS



avoid using
borders where
possible

ITEM

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Borders



Avoid using borders where possible (especially on small items such as business cards), since even a half millimetre movement when guillotined could make your border look uneven and unprofessional.

Gradients



Vignettes, or gradient fills are best avoided – these are difficult to print and they have a tendency to show ‘banding’ and look unprofessional. There is advice on gradients in the Help section on the Adobe website which you may find useful.

Watermarks



Be careful with watermarks, if they're too heavy it can make text or writing difficult to read. We recommend using a tint between 5%-7% for the best results. We cannot guarantee to print below 5%.

Large Areas of the Same Colour

See the advice on page 9 for more information.

Overprint



Be careful with overprint settings (especially in Quark). If you set objects to overprint, they will not ‘knock-out’ the background, and will look very different to what you see on screen or proof. Black text generally defaults to overprint, (as does the 100% black swatch in some applications). This is usually OK.



always
convert to
CMYK

Duotone/RGB images



These may print in black and white, or with washed out colours – always convert to CMYK.

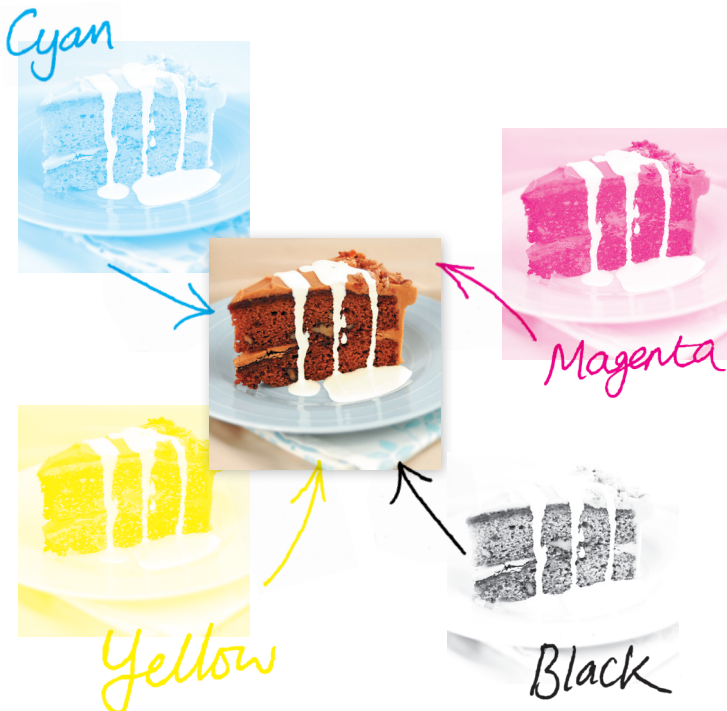
ABOUT COLOUR

what you see
on your screen
may be different
to your printed
product

CONVERTING TO CMYK

Your computer, scanner, digital camera and monitor create images using combinations of just three colours: Red, Green and Blue (RGB). Printing presses use four different colours to print these images – Cyan (light blue), Magenta (pinkish red), Yellow and Black (or CMYK – also known as Process Colour). At some stage of production, RGB images and colours must be converted to CMYK.

Conversions on images from RGB to CMYK are best done using software such as Photoshop and you should do this before sending your file to us. If you don't perform the conversion yourself, our process will apply an industry standard profile RGB to CMYK conversion meaning that colours may not print as expected.





keep all
elements
under 225%
total ink limit

BE CAREFUL WITH COLOUR

To create a good solid black, use rich black (see page 10). Don't use four-colour black. Keep all elements under 225% total ink limit. It's best to avoid solid colours of only one ink (i.e. pure cyan, magenta, yellow or black) as these can be susceptible to slight "banding". Using rich black avoids banding.

You'll get best reproduction from colours that are made up from one or two inks (i.e. magenta and cyan etc). When using lighter shades, **avoid tints that contain less than 5%** of either Cyan, Magenta, Yellow or Black, as they usually print much lighter than they appear on screen and you may be disappointed with the outcome. For best results, use tints containing 5% to 30% where possible.



ABOUT COLOUR continued



avoid tints that contain less than 5%

GETTING THE BEST FROM CMYK

Try to **avoid large areas of the same colour** – that's where colour issues (banding, ghosting etc.) becomes most noticeable. Try to break up large areas of colour with alternate elements or add a background image. Vignettes, or gradient fills are best avoided – they have a tendency to show 'banding' and look unprofessional. The Adobe website offers some advice on gradients if you wish to use them.



try to avoid large areas of the same colour

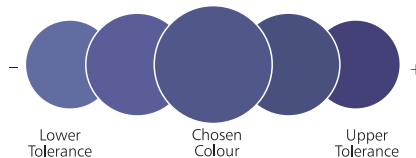
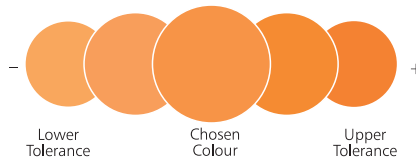
COLOUR TOLERANCES

You can produce fantastic results with full colour process – and without breaking the bank. It pays to bear in mind that **colour variation is inherent in any print process** and you shouldn't expect a perfect match to your chosen colour.

The examples below will give you an idea of how your chosen colour may actually look when printed. We'd be delighted to explain this in more detail – just ask.




colour variation is inherent in any print process



GETTING THE MOST FROM BLACK

it may surprise you to learn that there's **more to black** than meets the eye...

Black is black! Isn't it? It may surprise you to learn that there's more to black than meets the eye...

To get the best from our process, black can be produced in two ways. The first method is **single colour black**, made from 100% black ink. This is ideal for small areas less than 2cm² such as text or logos. 

On areas of over 2cm² in size, single colour black can appear washed out and uneven. This is because the rollers on printing presses roll the ink off over a large area. The alternative is **rich black**, which consists of 100% black and 40% cyan. A rich black should be used on larger areas to ensure an even, dark coverage, as the second ink colour disguises any inconsistencies. However, rich black should never be used on small text as any tiny deviance in registration will lead to a blurred effect.

Be aware that the higher the percentage ink coverage, the longer the drying time required. This is particularly true of uncoated stocks such as letterheads.

'Single Colour' Black

100% black

'Rich' Black

100% black

40% cyan

GETTING THE MOST FROM BLACK continued



10pt	✓
9pt	✓
8pt	✓
7pt	✗
6pt	✗
5pt	✗



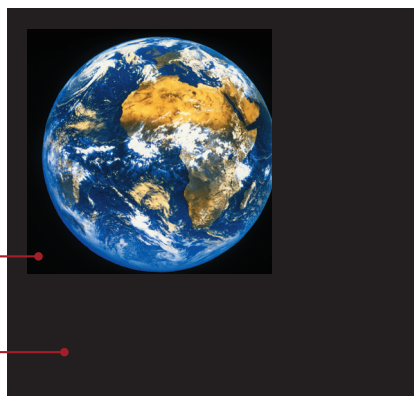
black text
should never
have more
than 140% ink
coverage

Black will inevitably appear duller on uncoated stock because of the absorbency of the paper. This absorbency also means that any fine detail reversed out of black may disappear. We do not recommend less than 6pt text, for example, on uncoated stock.

You may think that it would be okay to have 'three or four colour' black text as long as the total ink coverage is less than 300%. You'd be wrong! **Black text should never have more than 140% ink coverage.** "Four colour black" text is virtually impossible to print, will look blurred and may cause sheets to stick together.

Also be aware that black within a photograph as a background may have a different CMYK make-up to other parts of your design. This will be noticeable when printed, even if not on screen. Placing a photograph with a black background over a black area in Quark, for example, may reveal a difference between the two shades of black when printed. To overcome this, take a sample of the black that the background is required to match in an application such as Photoshop (use the colour picker tool). Then simply mix the matched colour in, say, Quark – paying careful attention to the overall ink coverage.

Remember – if the product you have chosen is black only on the reverse, it must not contain any cyan, magenta or yellow information (see page 13 for information on checking your separations).



4 colour black

100% black

IMAGE CHECKLIST

Consider the final size your image will be used at. **Photographs should be 300-350dpi** at the size you are going to use them. There's no point taking a postage stamp at 300dpi and then blowing it up to a A4 size. Conversely, photographs at more than 300dpi will have little or no effect on the actual printed quality and will unnecessarily increase file size and processing time.

Use this checklist to make sure your image is correct.

- ☐ All images are converted to CMYK, and saved as TIFF or JPEG files
- ☐ Photos are scanned at 300dpi at 100%
- ☐ Line-art images are scanned at 800 to 1200dpi at 100%
- ☐ TIFF and EPS files are saved without any image compression (not JPEG, LZW or ASCII encoded)
- ☐ Any alpha channels are removed and images are flattened
- ☐ Ink coverage below total ink limit



WORKING WITH TEXT



When working with small text it's best not to use colours which contain more than one ink. All printing presses have a tiny variation in the positioning of the different colour printing plates. It's fine to use coloured text in headlines or type above, say, 10 point, but below that the blurring may be noticeable and won't look too hot. The same thing happens when you knock white text out of a coloured background made from more than one ink.

it's fine to use
coloured text
in type above
10pt



we advise
against
setting text in
Photoshop

Be careful if you are putting text over a photographic background as the text may be hard to read. To overcome this you may want to lighten or darken the image in an image editing package such as Photoshop.

You may need to adjust the image more than you expect – always think to yourself “is it more important to see the image, or read the text?” If the text is more important, it may be best not to put it over the photograph at all.

We really advise against setting text in a bitmap application like Photoshop – the text will not be nearly as clear as if it were vector text from Illustrator or Freehand, say. Also, Photoshop by default does not apply any trapping, and thus the chances of mis-registration are increased.

PAY ATTENTION TO SMALL TEXT

We'd recommend that you keep your text above these minimum sizes for each product.

Business card - 6pt
A6 to 1/3rd A4 - 7pt
A5 to A4 - 8pt
A3 to A1 - 10pt

FILE SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Page Size/Layout

<input type="checkbox"/> Product page size is correct	see page 3
<input type="checkbox"/> Page includes correct bleed	see page 5
<input type="checkbox"/> All important elements are at least 5.5mm from the page edge	see page 5
<input type="checkbox"/> No object extends beyond the page edge	see page 3
<input type="checkbox"/> No pronounced borders are used	see page 6

Images

<input type="checkbox"/> All images are converted to CMYK, and saved as TIFF or JPEG files	see page 2
<input type="checkbox"/> Photos are scanned at 300dpi at 100%	see page 12
<input type="checkbox"/> Line-art images are scanned at 800 to 1200dpi at 100%	see page 12
<input type="checkbox"/> TIFF and JPEG files are saved without any image compression	see page 12
<input type="checkbox"/> Any alpha channels are removed and images are flattened	see page 2
<input type="checkbox"/> All images are converted to CMYK	see page 7

Colours

<input type="checkbox"/> All colours are converted to CMYK, including any Pantone® or Spot colours	see page 7
<input type="checkbox"/> No tints contain less than 5% of either Cyan, Magenta, Yellow or Black	see page 9
<input type="checkbox"/> All colours (including images) have a total ink coverage of less than 225% (uncoated) or 300% (coated – small areas only)	see page 8
<input type="checkbox"/> Large areas of black made up of 'Rich Black' (100k/40c)	see page 10

Fonts

<input type="checkbox"/> No effects from the 'text effect' menu in Quark or Freehand are used	see page 13
<input type="checkbox"/> All text above 5pt (litho) / 14pt (Large Format)	see page 13
<input type="checkbox"/> Text under 12pt avoids using tertiary colours	see page 13
<input type="checkbox"/> Text set as vector	see page 13

Other

<input type="checkbox"/> No hairlines/fine lines less than 0.25pt are used	see page 6
<input type="checkbox"/> No Corel texture or postscript fills have been used	see page 6
<input type="checkbox"/> All OLE objects have been converted to bitmaps	see page 6
<input type="checkbox"/> There are no EPS files within other EPSs	see page 6
<input type="checkbox"/> Overprint items are set correctly	see page 6