

# art and design

BTEC National Subsidiary Diploma or  
National Diploma

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Exam board: Pearson Edexcel



## What is this subject about?

BTEC Art & Design is a dynamic and practical programme consisting of two courses: the Diploma in Art & Design (equivalent to two A Levels) and the Subsidiary Diploma (equivalent to one A Level). These vocational courses provide an opportunity to explore a wide range of art and design disciplines before specialising and choosing a progression pathway. The Diploma course is particularly aimed at students who are very committed to this subject and wish to progress to higher education or a potential career path in this area.

Creativity and visual awareness are at the heart of each course, with an emphasis on developing visual problem solving, drawing and making skills throughout the two years. Your individual creativity is developed through continuous experimental and practical workshops which explore materials and techniques in 2 and 3D. You will also tackle vocationally relevant art and design briefs which build understanding of professional practice and 'real world' creative challenges. You will learn how to research art and design history and contemporary practice, through written studies and reports linked to your individual creative work. This is a very demanding programme which requires a substantial time commitment outside class to complete coursework satisfactorily.

## What will I study over the two years?

The first year year is experimental and exploratory, and designed to help you to discover new creative strengths and to build your confidence in a wide range of art and design activities. You will develop your ability to solve creative problems, and both courses provide a thorough foundation in a wide range of approaches, techniques and media.

BTEC Diploma in Art & Design covers 6 units in the first year, and the Subsidiary Diploma covers 3 units. Each unit must be completed to a Pass level within a specified time to pass the course overall.

Drawing and painting are central to both courses, and you will develop your ability through weekly classes exploring many subjects, approaches and techniques. You will apply drawn work to art activities and a range of

design briefs covering 2D design (graphics, illustration), 3D working (sculpture, 3D Design), print techniques (fine art and surface design) and the use of Adobe computer programmes.

You will research and study historical and contemporary art and design, and produce written work on a regular basis to support your creative activities. Diploma Art & Design students will complete a unit specifically concerned with contextual references and produce a substantial researched and written investigation into art and design history.

Regular trips to museums and galleries will inspire you to experiment and develop creatively as you learn about vocational subject areas. Diploma students will also undertake relevant work experience at the end of Year 1 as part of their Year 2 coursework.

In the second year you will build a deeper knowledge and ability in a specific art and design discipline, while preparing for your next step towards a creative career. In both the Diploma and Subsidiary Diploma courses you will explore a creative 'pathway' of your choice, which will enable you to develop a portfolio for application to foundation and degree courses of your choice. The units covered in year 2 will enable you to develop a more professional level of skills and awareness through negotiated briefs and independent study. Diploma students will be able to explore their chosen specialism further through an extended project unit.

Diploma students will in addition complete a unit covering personal and portfolio presentation, developing skills of communication in interviews and presentations, digital and physical portfolio preparation, website and blog presentation of their work. Year 2 includes a range of exciting trips and opportunities to learn from professional practitioners.

Throughout the two years your work will be regularly assessed by a personal tutor, who will advise and guide you in developing new skills and understanding. Full advice and guidance is given to all BTEC students on progression course choices, portfolio and interview preparation.

### **How is the course assessed?**

The course is assessed throughout the two years by a number of practical and written coursework assignments. Coursework assignments may include written documents, group presentations and practical work. These coursework assignments are centre-assessed and then externally moderated by the exam board.

### **What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?**

The department has an excellent record of successfully enabling students to progress on to many highly respected degree and diploma courses across the country, ranging from architecture to jewellery, fashion to 3D design and fine art to game design, in addition to art foundation courses. The Diploma course in particular provides opportunities across most creative disciplines and equips students with the self-reliance and vocational experience necessary to progress directly to BA qualifications. Recent destinations have included degree courses at Central St Martins (Animation), Falmouth College (Graphic Design), Winchester College (Textile Design), Hertfordshire University (Game design), Kingston University (Architecture) and Brighton University (Illustration). Many students also progress to art and design foundation courses at Kingston University, UAL and UCA. The range of transferable and vocational skills developed on this programme enables those who do not wish to enter

higher education to apply successfully for apprenticeships in professions such as joinery, graphic design and stonemasonry.

Students receive extensive guidance on progression, and Diploma students are able to adapt their second-year programme towards the development of a portfolio relevant to their career aims in creative subjects.

### **What are the formal entry requirements for this course?**

In addition to the general College entry requirements, this course requires significant personal commitment to art and design, and therefore it is expected that applicants will have gained good GCSE grades in creative subjects, or can provide extensive evidence of their own work in a portfolio. You will be set regular written work, including annotation and essays, and should therefore have a good level of written competence, ideally including a grade 4 in GCSE English Language.

### **Subject combination advice:**

The Diploma provides a self-contained art and design programme enabling successful students to apply direct to degrees and art and design foundation courses. The remaining subject choice can therefore be made from any other subject area, or from other creative subjects. Consideration should be given to the quantity of coursework overall, and to how mutually supportive subject choices can be.

The Subsidiary Diploma provides a varied art and design programme. Students wishing to apply direct to degrees and art and design foundation courses should consider taking at least one more creative subject to build a coherent portfolio for application.

### **What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?**

You will be supported by the department through individual coursework tutorials, and at all stages of your application to your next course, including portfolio guidance and mock interviews. The department works closely with college Learning Support staff to target specific assistance to those needing extra support.

You will also explore professional practice through live briefs for external clients (past clients include BP, the V&A museum and Sky TV), and learn about how specialists in your chosen field work. Visiting artists and designers, and regular trips will broaden your horizons, inspiring you to new creative heights. The course website publicises current events and exhibitions to broaden awareness and experience in art and design.



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