

fashion and textiles

A Level

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Exam board: OCR



What is this subject about?

Creative industries are one of the biggest employers in the UK. The UK fashion industry is the largest employer of all creative industries and the UK is renowned for having the best fashion colleges in the world (British Fashion Council 2019). Fashion and Textiles is taught as a highly creative subject whilst developing awareness and skills in professional practice.

The course is designed to introduce you to the many different aspects of fashion and textiles. It is taught creatively against a background of contextual studies, historical developments in fashion, art and design movements and key figures within the fashion and textiles world. You will master design from concept to final product, learning through designing and making, using both traditional methods as well as new technologies. Awareness of developments and current trends in the fashion and associated industries is given a high profile.

What will I study over the two years?

In the first year you develop design and technical skills, sketching and recording ideas, developing design ideas through exploring both materials and processes. You will discover how fabric and textiles can be used in both a decorative or functional way, producing your own individual designs.

Working in a sketchbook from first and second hand observation, you will develop your drawing and mark-making skills. You will learn a variety of techniques that can be used to produce a fashion textile including screen printing.

Technically you will learn to illustrate your ideas, develop skills in stand work and pattern drafting, as well as learning construction techniques, and how to make a toile. Studying contemporary and historical fashion will enhance your own design development.

In the second year you will have more freedom to explore and develop your own design work. You will submit one major project that has personal significance, building on, extending and developing skills learnt during the first year. Students produce individual outcomes, which may be a collection of garments or be focused on textile design for fashion. There will be a written element relating to this project in the form of a 'related study'.

In the second half of the year you will select one starting point from a range of themes set by the exam board to produce a portfolio of design work, with the final outcome being produced under controlled conditions. All second year work is submitted for teacher assessment and external moderation.

How is the course assessed?

Assessment is 60% coursework, in the form of a Personal Investigation which is presented as a design portfolio and practical outcome(s). There are also marks allocated to a written Related Study (20% of the coursework grade). In addition to the coursework there is an Externally Set practical which is worth 40% of the overall A Level mark. Projects are marked by the teachers and externally moderated by the examination board.

What skills will I need and develop in this course?

An art or design background is a helpful base to develop new skills. You will be encouraged to make independent visits to exhibitions, art galleries and museums and keep up-to-date with current fashion issues. You will develop your observational and analytical skills and acquire practical and technical skills to be transferred into creative work as appropriate to your intentions.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general entry criteria that the College requires, whilst it is preferable to have a GCSE in a creative subject such as Art, Design or Textiles, it is not essential.

Students with no previous qualifications in art or design, but with a genuine desire to study Fashion are advised to contact the Head of Department. You will be required to complete some creative tasks that you will present to the Head of Department at enrolment. Acceptance on the course will be at the discretion of the Head of Department.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

In both years the department offers a range of visits to galleries and exhibitions to support portfolio work. We inform students of current exhibitions and encourage independent visits. There is a celebration of students' work with an end of year exhibition and catwalk show.

Subject combination advice and what can this course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers:

Fashion can be combined with Fine Art, Photography, 3D Design, Graphic Communications or BTEC Art and Design. However you should be aware that there will be continual coursework throughout the year so you will need to manage your time accordingly. This combination will give you a strong portfolio for applications to Art Foundation or Fashion related degrees.

This course also combines well with Media, English, Mathematics and Business for those wishing to progress to fashion journalism, styling, marketing, product development or business. There are no restrictions with other choices.

Will I be repeating myself if I do Fashion and BTEC Art and Design?

These two subjects complement each other well; there may be a cross-over with the subjects and skills, but you will not repeat yourself. Many students combine two or more practical and creative subjects at A Level to strengthen their portfolio application for an Art Foundation or degree application in the creative arts.