

Art and design

The United Kingdom (UK) has some of the finest art and design colleges (and best-known alumni) in the world. Students come from all over the world to study at institutions with a global reputation.

Checklist: Why study Art and design in the United Kingdom?

- the UK has some of the best-known and admired institutions in the world
- UK institutions have produced some of the greatest artists and designers, both past and present
- you can study at all levels and at all types of institution, from colleges of further education to the unique Royal College of Art, the only wholly postgraduate university of art, design and communications in the world
- overseas students have been coming to the UK to study art and design for many years, and you will feel at home in a cosmopolitan environment
- you will emerge with widely recognised formal qualifications in your subject, giving you a head start in your career
- the opportunity to improve your fluency in English will improve your job prospects in English-speaking countries.

1 What can I study?

There are different levels of study in art and design. Study at lower levels – GCSE/SCE – tends to be of a more general nature, such as Art or Art and Design. The higher the academic level, the more you are likely to specialise.

The table shows examples of what you could study

Type of study	Subjects offered	Institution
Vocational courses (GNVQ, NVQ, SVQ, National Qualifications, SGA)	Art & Design See <i>Choosing a career based training course</i> in this series for information about vocational qualifications.	School; college of further education
Vocational A-level	Art & Design	School; college of further education
A/AS-level or Scottish Higher	History of Art; Art & Crafts (choosing from embroidery, fabric painting, lettering and calligraphy, pottery, printmaking, sculpture); Art – Painting; Art – Photography; Design & Technology	School, college of further education



Foundation course	The aim of a foundation course is to help students identify which specialist area of art and design best suits their skills, temperament and aspirations, and then to help them build up a strong portfolio of work in that area. A foundation course is regarded as the best preparation for higher education in most art and design subjects and may improve your chances of being accepted on a degree course.	College of further education; college of higher education; art college
Higher National Diploma (HND); Foundation Degree; First degree (BA)	Very wide range of subjects and subject combinations, including: Fine Art Ceramics & Glass Digital Media Three-dimensional (3D) Design Two-dimensional (2D) Design Pottery Public Art Projects Applied Arts History of Art & History of Design General Design Graphics and Communication Design Illustration Industrial Design Jewellery Design Print Media (Book Arts & Crafts) Product Design Retail Design Sculpture Silversmithing & Metalwork Typographic Design Visual Design & Display	College of art and design; college of higher education; university
Postgraduate	Wide variety of subjects in both pure arts and applied arts for commerce and industry (such as 3D Project Design, Animation, 2D and 3D Motion Graphics and Virtual Programming, and Design Management). Also research degrees such as History of Art and History of Drawing.	College of art and design; college of higher education; university
Distance learning	Many subjects can be studied this way.	
Short courses	These are available in a wide range of subjects.	
Work placement opportunities	This would depend on the course you choose – sandwich courses offer work placements as part of their programme of study (usually either one twelve-month placement or two six-month placements). However, sandwich courses are fairly rare in art and design.	



- Checklist: Choosing the right course**
- think carefully whether you want to do a general art and/or design course or to specialise at an early stage.
 - if possible, read one of the reference books on art and design courses (see ‘Where can I find more information?’). These may be available at your local British Council office.
 - search for courses on www.educationuk.org.
 - obtain the prospectuses for the courses you are interested in and read the course requirements carefully – do you have to do a foundation year, or send a particular type of portfolio?

2 Entrance

The Portfolio

An important part of the application process is your portfolio. This should contain the best of the artwork you have done in school or in your own time. Most art and design courses expect your portfolio to show that you have a natural aptitude for the subject and the enthusiasm to pursue it. Some institutions require you to send work in a particular way. For example, one institution asks overseas students to send a small portfolio of slides of a specific type (or a video or CD-ROM), with a written explanation, to show their work.

The importance of keeping your portfolio up to date cannot be over-emphasised. You will be expected to present it throughout your higher education, even when you have achieved a first degree.

How to apply

For most courses you apply direct to the institution, but for Higher National Diploma (HND) and first degree (BA) courses you must apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). UCAS offers two different methods of applying for art and design courses, as detailed in the table below. Some colleges will not accept both methods and this is something you should find out from the course prospectus before you apply. (See also www.ucas.com)

Art and design HNDs/Bas: methods of applying		
Step 1: Contact your chosen institutions before completing the UCAS form to establish the arrangements for sending a portfolio and to see whether an interview is necessary. Also find out whether they will accept both methods of application, or only one. Then follow one of the routes below.		
	Route 1 (simultaneous) – where all (or at least three) of your chosen institutions see your application at the same time.	Route B (sequential) – where you are able to prioritise the order in which your applications are considered so that your first choice institution will see your application first.
Step 2	Enter up to six choices, listed in the order in which they appear in UCAS handbook. You can reserve up to three institutions for application through Route B if you would like to do so.	Applicants indicate on a separate form (supplied with the UCAS application form) the order in which they would like to be interviewed, or to have their portfolios considered. A maximum of three choices is allowed.
Closing date:	3 15 January (earlier application advisable) of the year before the course starts.	4 24 March of the year in which the course starts.
Step 3	You can reserve up to three institutions for application through Route B if you would like to do so.	
Step 4	Copies of your application form are sent	Copies of your application form are sent to the three



	simultaneously to all six institutions.	institutions in the order you requested.
Late applications	<p>Up to 30 June, applications will be sent on to the institutions to consider. Whether they do so is a matter of their discretion.</p> <p>Applications received after June will be entered in Clearing. (Refer to <i>Applications</i> in this series for an explanation of Clearing and the 'UCAS Extra' process)</p>	<p>Applications received between 24 March and 11 June will be referred to the institutions in the next available round.</p> <p>Applications received after 11 June will be entered in Clearing. (Refer to <i>Applications</i> in this series for an explanation of Clearing and the 'UCAS Extra' process)</p>

Will my qualifications enable me to gain a place in the United Kingdom?

You will need to satisfy the entrance requirements, but the origin of your qualifying examinations will not be of great importance. Your portfolio will be a major factor in whether you are accepted.

Would I have to have a good grasp of the English language?

Probably. Some institutions expect you to have achieved at least 550 in the TOEFL test or to have an IELTS exam score of 6.0. You need to check with the institution.

3 How can I register as a professional?

There is no formal registration for most creative careers in design. Career progression is achieved on merit, and would be expressed through your portfolio of work.

However, there are some sector-specific organisations that offer membership and/or professional qualifications. These include:

- Chartered Society of Designers (CSD) (See www.csd.org.uk)
- Textile Institute (See www.texti.org)
- Society of Designer Craftsmen (See www.societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk)
- The British Display Society (www.messiterdesign.co.uk)

Many arts and design fields have craft guilds and institutes.

Would a United Kingdom qualification be recognised in other countries?

Some UK institutions have worldwide stature that would give you a head start in your working life. You may, however, work in an area of applied art or design for which particular qualifications are needed. You should check in the countries in which you want to work that your UK qualifications will be useful and acceptable.

4 Next steps

Checklist: Your next steps

- 1 Do not rush through the course selection process – there are thousands of art and design courses in the UK and you need to find the right one for you.
- 2 Make sure your portfolio is up to date and carries your most impressive work.
- 3 Bear in mind that for many degree courses you will be required to do a one-year art and design foundation course before you start.
- 4 Look carefully through the prospectuses of the institutions you intend to apply to – some will not accept both of the traditional two methods of application, and this could delay your start date.
- 5 Consider your lifestyle – would you be happier living in a town/city or in a more rural part of the country?

5 Where can I find more information?

British Council Education Information

Website www.educationuk.org

For further information, you can find details of your nearest office at www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm which includes links to all our country web pages and a worldwide address book giving contact details for all offices.

EducationUK Scotland

Website www.educationukscotland.org

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

PO Box 28
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ

Telephone +44 (0) 870 1122211
Fax +44 (0) 1242 544961
Email enquiries@ucas.ac.uk
Website www.ucas.com

Wales International Consortium

Website www.walesinternationalconsortium.com

British Display Society

146 Welling Way
Welling
Kent DA16 2RS

Telephone +44 (0) 20 8856 2030
Fax +44 (0) 20 8856 9394
Email geoff.bircher@macunlimited.co.uk
Website www.messiterdesign.co.uk/bds

Chartered Society of Designers

5 Bermondsey Exchange
179 – 181 Bermondsey Street
London SE1 3UW

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7357 8088
Fax +44 (0) 20 7407 9878
Email csd@csd.org.uk
Website www.csd.org.uk

The Crafts Council

44a Pentonville Road
London N1 9BY

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7278 7700
Fax +44 (0) 20 7837 6891
Website www.craftscouncil.org.uk

D & AD (British Design and Art Direction)

9 Graphite Walk
Vauxhall Walk
London SE11 5EE

Telephone +44 (0) 20 7840 1111
Fax +44 (0) 20 7840 0840
Website www.dandad.org

Design Council

34 Bow Street
London WC2E 7DL

Telephone +44 (0) 7420 5200
Fax +44 (0) 7420 5300
Website www.design-council.org.uk

Creative Future (career portal website by the Design Council, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council for England)

Website www.yourcreativefuture.org

Society of Designer Craftsmen

24 Rivington Street
London EC2A 3DU

Telephone/Fax +44 (0) 20 7739 3663

Email info@societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk
Website www.societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk

Textile Institute

1st Floor
St James's Building
Oxford Street
Manchester M1 6FQ

Telephone +44 (0) 161 237 1188

Fax +44 (0) 161 236 1991
Email tihq@textileinst.org.uk
Website www.texti.org

National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD)

The Gatehouse
Corsham Court
Corsham
Wiltshire SN13 0BZ
Telephone +44 (0) 1249 714825
Fax +44 (0) 12 4971 6138

Website www.nsead.org

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