

Portfolio guidance

BA (Hons) Graphic Arts

Your portfolio is one of the most important parts of your application. It is your opportunity to show us your work, and it is our opportunity to find out more about you. We realise that you may not have presented your work at interview before, so here is some help in preparing your portfolio.

What do you want to see in my portfolio?

Your portfolio should demonstrate a lively, inventive approach to the development of course projects and personally-directed work. It should be carefully selected as this will show us your critical ability.

Your portfolio should be accessible and comprehensible, showing the development of ideas from initial drawings, workbooks or photographs to finished pieces. Please bring two or three sketchbooks as well as scrapbooks of materials from magazines, media, collected graphic ephemera etc.

Your portfolio should reflect your understanding and awareness of graphic design, advertising and photography in their many forms and knowledge of practitioners whose work has influenced or interests you. We like to see evidence of sensitivity in response to surface, form, tone and mood, and in the materials used.

Show us the range of your work: drawing, for example, shows your ability to observe still life, structure or people with accuracy, so make sure to include some. If you have had the opportunity to study the human figure, please include life drawing in your portfolio, but remember that we are also interested in seeing more creative and experimental work.

How many pieces should I include?

Your portfolio should include a maximum of 25 pieces. We will need to see evidence of course projects and self-directed work. Your work should have been produced within the last twelve months, although earlier work can be included if it is particularly relevant to your interests and development.

How should I present my portfolio?

We do not expect you to spend a lot of money on expensive mounts, although clear, logical and professional presentation of your work is essential. If you are unable to bring three-dimensional

objects, it is a good idea to include photographs of your work. Film should be saved as a Quicktime file, and other work in PDF or JPEG format.

Will I be expected to have in-depth knowledge of relevant design software?

We would expect you to have had some hands-on experience of computing hardware and awareness of photo-manipulation software such as Photoshop and page-layout software such as InDesign etc. This is desirable but not essential.

Information for Mature students

We understand that mature students may not have work that is structured in the same way as A Level or Foundation students. We are, however, still interested in seeing self-directed work, including sketchbooks and finished pieces.

We also understand that some applicants may have to include work that is over a year old. Life experience and any courses that you may have taken over the last few years will be relevant, but make sure that you include as much recent work as possible in your portfolio.

Information for International Students

We do not expect international students who are not already studying in the UK to come to an interview. On some occasions a member of staff may be visiting your country and an interview may be arranged. As a general rule, international students are invited to send in a portfolio of work by e-mail or by post for consideration.

Please note that we will not be able to make a decision on your application before we have seen your portfolio, so international students should send it to us as soon as possible after applying.

Top Tips

- Interviews can seem daunting, especially if you have not been to one before, so make sure to arrive in good time so as to avoid any extra pressure.
 - Do your research! Learn as much about the course as possible before your interview. Read our prospectus, come to an Open Afternoon and visit our website.
 - Come prepared with a couple of questions about the School or the programme. It shows that you are interested, and is also a good opportunity for you to relax.
 - Tailor your portfolio to the programme. Investigate the Graphic Arts programme thoroughly before making your selection for your portfolio. Remember that the contents of courses with the same name at the other universities can be very different.
 - If you have any special requirements, please inform Admissions well in advance of your interview.
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