

## Art and design

The United Kingdom (UK) has some of the finest art and design colleges (and best-known alumni) in the world. Institutions have global reputations and students come from all over the world to study at them.

### 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?

You can study a huge range of art and design subjects at school, college or university in the UK. These range from the very practical to the more theoretical; from those that are strongly vocationally oriented to those that are more academic in content. Study at lower levels (GCSE/SCE for example) tends to be general in nature, with courses becoming more specialised as you progress.

Most courses will offer a mix of theory and practical skills.

Applications for all further education courses should be made direct to the university or college in which you are interested (each institution will supply its own application form).

The table below shows examples of what you could study at further education level.

Further education	Subjects offered	Institution
NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications)  SVQs (Scottish Vocational Qualifications)  BTEC National Diplomas and Certificates  VCEs (Vocational Certificates of Education also known as 'Vocational A-levels') AVCE (The Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education )	A wide range of art and design courses. See individual prospectuses for full details.  See also where to go and what to study at: <a href="http://www.hero.ac.uk">www.hero.ac.uk</a>	School, college of further education
A/AS-level or Scottish Higher	History of art; art and crafts (choosing from embroidery, fabric painting, lettering and calligraphy, pottery, printmaking, sculpture); art – painting; art – photography; design and technology.	School, college of further education
Foundation course	A foundation course usually lasts for one year but can also be studied part-time. It provides a broad introduction to a range of processes and will help students to identify which specialist area best suits their skills, temperament and aspirations should they wish to embark on further study. A foundation course is regarded as good preparation for higher education in many art and design programmes.	Further education college, higher education college, specialist art college, university

Higher education offers a diverse range of courses such as Bachelor degrees, Higher National Diplomas or Foundation Degrees, among others. Many courses take place in universities, but plenty are also taught at higher education colleges and specialist art institutions.

**Foundation degrees (FdAs)** and **Higher National Diplomas (HNDs)** take two years of study from beginning to end on a full-time basis. They are also popular as a part-time option for students who are working.

**Full-time Bachelor degrees (BAs)** generally involve a minimum of three year's study, although some courses take four years or longer.

**Part-time degree courses** are normally taken over a longer period, which varies according to the individual institution. As a general rule you should allow at least five years from beginning to end for a part-time degree.

The table below shows examples of what you could study at Higher Education level

Undergraduate	Subjects offered	Institution
<p><b>Higher National Diploma (HND); Foundation degree(FdA); First degree also known as a Bachelor degree (BA)</b></p>	<p>You can study a very wide range of subjects singly and often in combination. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fine art</li> <li>• Ceramics and glass</li> <li>• Digital media</li> <li>• Three-dimensional (3D) design</li> <li>• Two-dimensional (2D) design</li> <li>• Pottery</li> <li>• Public art projects</li> <li>• Applied arts</li> <li>• History of art and history of design</li> <li>• General design</li> <li>• Graphics and communication design</li> <li>• Illustration</li> <li>• Industrial design</li> <li>• Jewellery design</li> <li>• Print media (book arts and crafts)</li> <li>• Product design</li> <li>• Retail design</li> <li>• Sculpture</li> <li>• Silversmithing and metalwork</li> <li>• Typographic design</li> <li>• Visual design and display.</li> </ul> <p>See also where to go and what to study at:  <a href="http://www.hero.ac.uk">www.hero.ac.uk</a>.</p>	<p>Further education college, higher education college, specialist art college, university</p>
<p><b>Postgraduate</b></p>	<p>A wide variety of subjects in both pure and applied arts, as well as research programmes such as the history of art and design can be studied at postgraduate level.</p>	<p>Higher education college, specialist art college, university</p>
<p><b>Distance learning</b></p>	<p>Many subjects can be studied in this way. The following links may be useful:            The Open University <a href="http://www.open.ac.uk">www.open.ac.uk</a>            The Open University in Scotland  <a href="http://www3.open.ac.uk/near-you/scotland">www3.open.ac.uk/near-you/scotland</a>            National Extension College <a href="http://www.nec.ac.uk">www.nec.ac.uk</a>            Open College of the Arts <a href="http://www.oca-uk.com">www.oca-uk.com</a>            Association of British Correspondence Colleges  <a href="http://www.homestudy.org.uk">www.homestudy.org.uk</a>.</p>	



<b>Short courses</b>	These are available in a wide range of subjects and vary in length of study.	Further education college, higher education college, specialist art college, university
<b>Work placement opportunities</b>	These would depend on the course and the level of study you choose. Foundation degrees include work placements. Sandwich degree courses in design subjects usually include an extra year for work placements as part of the programme of study.  Most programmes at further and higher education level include aspects of preparation for professional practice or employment.	

### 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?', below). These may be available at your local British Council office.
- Search for courses on [www.educationuk.org](http://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 How do I get a place to study art and design?

Different higher education courses have different entry requirements. However, your portfolio is a very important part of the application process for practice-based art and design courses. This should contain the best of the artwork you have done in school, in college or in your own time. Most art and design courses will expect your portfolio to indicate the level of study you have achieved and your enthusiasm for the subject. You may also be expected to show an example of your written work.

### How do I apply?

It is worth checking with the institution first, but for most full-time courses (HNDs, FdAs and BAs) you will need to apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). UCAS offers two different routes for applying to art and design courses and these have different timetables.

The deadline for **Route A** applications is in January and the deadline for **Route B** applications is in March (see the table below for further information). Some institutions will not accept both routes, and this is something you should find out from the course prospectus or website before you apply.

You can apply online using an online application form on the UCAS website ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)). This website also gives precise guidelines that will help you through the application process.

For part-time courses, get the university or college prospectus – most are now available online.

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.



Art and design higher education: methods of applying		
	<b>Route A (simultaneous)</b> – where all (or at least three) of your chosen institutions see your application at the same time.	<b>Route B (sequential)</b> – 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.
	Enter up to six choices, listed in the order in which they appear in the 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.
<b>Closing date:</b>	15 January (earlier application advisable) of the year before the course starts.	24 March of the year in which the course starts. It is strongly recommended that applications should reach UCAS by 7 March.
	Copies of your application form are sent simultaneously to all of your selected institutions.	Copies of your application form are sent to your selected institutions in the order you requested.
<b>Late applications</b>	Up to 30 June, applications will be sent on to the institutions to consider. Whether they do so is at their discretion.  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.)	Applications received between 24 March and 11 June will be referred to the institutions in the next available round.  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.)

### 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 or not you are accepted.**

If you would like to check how your qualifications and skills compare to the UK's national qualification frameworks you can visit UK NARIC at [www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk).

### Will I have to have a good grasp of the English language?

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

## 3 How can I register as a professional?

There is no formal registration for most creative careers in art and design. However, there are many sector-specific organisations that offer membership and/or professional qualifications. These include:

- Chartered Society of Designers (CSD) ([www.csd.org.uk](http://www.csd.org.uk))
- Textile Institute [www.texti.org](http://www.texti.org)
- Society of Designer Craftsmen ([www.societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk](http://www.societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk)).
- British Display Society (<http://www.britishdisplaysociety.co.uk/>)
- Design and Art Direction ([www.dandad.org](http://www.dandad.org))

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 specific 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

- 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.
- Make sure your portfolio is up to date and carries your most impressive work.
- 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.
- Consider your lifestyle – would you be happier living in a town/city or in a more rural part of the country?

## 5 What else do I need to know?

The regulations for entry into the UK are constantly changing and it is vital that you check the Home Office UK Border Agency (BIA) website ([www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk)) on a regular basis and check locally with your British Mission so you are aware of how UK immigration procedures will affect you.

With the introduction of the new Australian-style points based system you will need to keep even more up to date with the new immigration system changes when applying for a visa or work permit. For information on the points based system go to: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/managingborders/managingmigration/apointsbasedsystem/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/managingborders/managingmigration/apointsbasedsystem/).

For advice on working in the UK: [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk).

For advice about visas: [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk).

For practical advice on living in the UK look at *Studying and Living in the UK* at: [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org).

## 6 Where can I find more information?

The British Council has produced the Education UK portfolio to provide international students with a wide range of information and guidance that will help them find out more about studying on a UK course and other important issues, such as applying to study, entry clearance and living in the UK. The portfolio includes:

- the Education UK website and a number of country websites containing locally relevant information – [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)
- *Your guide to: UK Undergraduate and pre-university\**; *Postgraduate and MBA\**
- *Your guide to: UK universities, colleges and schools handbook\**
- *Club UK\** magazine, also available online at [www.educationuk.org/clubuk](http://www.educationuk.org/clubuk)
- *Postgraduate UK* magazine.\*

\* The publications are available at a selected number of British Council offices for students to use.

The Education UK websites are a valuable source of information, with a database of over 450,000 courses and profiles of institutions that contain details of entry requirements and course fees; some offer a virtual tour of their campus.



**Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)**

PO Box 28  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ

Telephone +44 (0)87 0112 2211  
Fax +44 (0)12 4254 4961  
E-mail [enquiries@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ucas.ac.uk)  
[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

**British Display Society**

12 Cliff Ave, Chalkwell  
Leigh-on-Sea  
Essex SS9 1HF

Telephone +44 (0)20 8856 2030  
Fax +44 (0)870 421 5589

Email : [enquiries@britishdisplaysociety.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@britishdisplaysociety.co.uk)  
<http://www.britishdisplaysociety.co.uk/Pages/contacts.html>

**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  
E-mail [csd@csd.org.uk](mailto:csd@csd.org.uk)  
[www.csd.org.uk](http://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  
[www.craftscouncil.org.uk](http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk)

**British Design and Art Direction (D &AD)**

9 Graphite Walk  
Vauxhall Walk  
London SE11 5EE

Telephone +44 (0)20 7840 1111  
Fax +44 (0)20 7840 0840  
[www.dandad.org](http://www.dandad.org)

**Design Council**

34 Bow Street  
London WC2E 7DL

Telephone +44 (0)20 7420 5200  
Fax +44 (0)20 7420 5300  
[www.design-council.org.uk](http://www.design-council.org.uk)

**Society of Designer Craftsmen**

24 Rivington Street  
London EC2A 3DU

Telephone/fax +44 (0)20 7739 3663  
E-mail [info@societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk](mailto:info@societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk)  
[www.societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk](http://www.societyofdesignercraftsmen.org.uk)

**Textile Institute**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
St James's Building  
Oxford Street  
Manchester M1 6FQ

Telephone +44 (0)16 1237 1188  
Fax +44 (0)16 1236 1991  
E-mail [tiihq@textileinst.org.uk](mailto:tiihq@textileinst.org.uk)  
[www.texti.org](http://www.texti.org)

**National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD)**

The Gatehouse  
Corsham Court  
Corsham  
Wiltshire SN13 0BZ

Telephone +44 (0)12 4971 4825  
Fax +44 (0)12 4971 6138  
[www.nsead.org](http://www.nsead.org)

**Wales International Consortium**

[www.walesinternationalconsortium.com](http://www.walesinternationalconsortium.com)

**Higher Education and Research in the UK**

An online gateway.

[www.hero.ac.uk](http://www.hero.ac.uk)



**The Council for International Student Affairs  
(UKCISA)**

9–17 St Albans Place  
London N1 0NX

Telephone +44 (0)20 7288 4330  
Outside the UK +44 (0)20 7107 9922  
Fax +44 (0)20 7288 4360  
[www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)

**design 4 design**

Wilmington Media Ltd  
6–14 Underwood Street  
London, N1 7JQ UK  
[www.design4design.com](http://www.design4design.com)

**StudentZone**

Online site with information and advice for students in the UK.

[www.studentzone.org.uk](http://www.studentzone.org.uk)

**National Recognition Information Centre for the  
United Kingdom (UK NARIC)**

Oriel House  
Oriel Road  
Cheltenham GL50 1XP

E-mail [info@naric.org.uk](mailto:info@naric.org.uk)  
[www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)

**Creative Future**

Career portal website by the Design Council, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Arts Council for England.

[www.yourcreativefuture.org](http://www.yourcreativefuture.org)

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