

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

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| 1. | Awarding Institution: | Nottingham Trent University |
| 2. | School/Campus: | Architecture, Design and the Built Environment |
| 3. | Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: | BA (Hons) Furniture and Product Design SW/FT |
| 4. | Normal Duration: | SW 4 Years / FT 3 Years |
| 5. | UCAS Code: | |

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

BA (Hons) Furniture and Product Design

BA (Hons) Furniture and Product Design aims to produce designers able to meet the changing and evolving needs of the furniture and Product Design profession in the 21st Century. The course focusses on Individual and artistic expression, experimentation, the needs of the client or end user and concentrates principally on the design of Furniture, Decorative Products, Lighting, Domestic Home-wares and Consumer Goods.

The course produces capable, articulate and creative individuals who are knowledgeable, technically and socially aware and motivated towards achieving their career goals. The diverse yet intensive nature of the course provides a balanced education for students who intend to become designers or otherwise work in the design profession. With an increasing number of collaborative links to commerce and industry, the BA (Hons) Furniture and Product Design course is able to provide a contemporary and appropriate experience which has made it one of the most popular in the country. During the course you will be introduced to many of the technical, aesthetic, economic, critical, social, political and commercial aspects of design. The course is designed to provide you with a professional and creative approach to all aspects of furniture and product design.

The course passes on skills and knowledge from experienced technical and academic staff and builds these into a series of varied projects which will help to develop your design and communication skills. Some of these projects will be set by outside companies which may lead to prizes, placements or sponsorship. Students have regularly received prizes in international design competitions. Our graduates have an exemplary level of employment in the design and manufacturing industry including, as sole traders, within design consultancies and within a host of household name manufacturing companies.

An exceptional aspect of the course is the placement year – an internship of a minimum of 36 weeks that takes place between the second and third years. This can be spent in various companies learning a wide variety of skills and experiencing life at

the cutting edge of the design industry. There is a wide variety of placement experience available, some paid, some of voluntary in smaller but often quite prestigious companies. Several students every year find placements abroad in places such as the USA, Australia, Holland, Germany and Italy.

You will find that flexibility is built into the course through its close relationship with the product design portfolio of courses, exposing you to a diverse spectrum of specialist designers. The entire academic team work closely with you during term 1, year 1 (level 4), themed 'Design Fundamentals', this allows you the option, after staff counselling and consultation, of transfer between the courses during the first term and it is possible transfer can take place throughout year one if it is deemed appropriate.

Course aims and Guiding Principles:

- Concentrating on individual/artistic expression, experimentation, the needs of the client or end user; focusing on Products (specifically furniture), making processes and materials
- Embedding core course philosophy, skills, knowledge and working practices in the first term
- Promote NTU's Success for All agenda through Enhanced Induction & Support
- Develop links between Theory & Practice through integrated and holistic teaching practices
- Use of a 'soft semester' system in year 2 to aid exchange possibilities for European & International students
- Prepare students for placement through a module of integrated projects and professional practice activity
- Enhancing global, sustainable and professional contexts for contemporary design practice
- Promotion of group working and collaboration
- NTU Personalisation agenda promoted through the use of self-generated and industry driven live projects in the final year.
- Produce creative, practical and professional designers with exemplary communication skills and real-world experience, sensitive to the user/client base and the fluctuations of the mass market
- Provide you with the necessary research and design tools to operate successfully as a designer in the 21st century
- Provide a wide range of transferable skills that will support your career development
- Prepare you for employment through regular contact with the design and manufacturing industry
- Prepare you for postgraduate study and lifelong learning

As a student on the Furniture and Product Design course, you will benefit from the

internationally recognized research activities undertaken by the Product Design subject area, which has been supported by grants from variety of funding organisations including the European Union, UK Government and UK Research Councils, the Royal Society, the Arts Council, and industry. The Product Design group is regularly involved in international collaborative projects, and works closely with industry on different research and development schemes. The team also organises a number of high quality refereed international conferences and contribute to well respected research journals across the world, and liaise with policy and membership organisations for design, including the British Design Innovation and the Design Research Society.

7. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate your ability to research from a wide variety of sources, navigate and manage relevant source materials and analyse information and experiences in order to acquire insights and formulate reasoned arguments.
- Reflect on your own practice and the critical judgements of others in order to recognise your own personal strengths and needs and demonstrate your ability to apply knowledge (both theoretical and general), understanding and informed awareness gained from prior experiences in order to support your ongoing professional development.
- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and critical understanding of current professional furniture and product design practice, understand the significance of the work of other practitioners and the impact that new and emerging technology plays within the discipline.
- Explore and operate within the contexts of furniture and product design and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social, historical, political, economic and ethical factors that influence designers work and practice.
- Recognise and adhere to the professional, ethical and environmental values expected of practicing designers and work within the regulations and standards that apply to the industries in which they operate.
- Utilise the potential of ideas and creative thinking in order to innovate new furniture and products and adopt best practice and appropriate methodologies to support their development and production.
- Develop ideas through to outcomes that confirm your ability to select the use of appropriate materials, processes, systems and technology.
- Identify intellectual property issues around your own work, and those of others, in order to safeguard the innovation and commercialisation of your own creative endeavour.

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Use creativity and innovation in a professional design context, operate with imagination, intuition, insight and inspiration while accommodating for the challenges of change and uncertainty.
- Evidence your ability to generate ideas independently and negotiate the inhibitors of creative thinking in response to design briefs.
- Demonstrate your ability to observe, investigate, enquire and gain insight through the making of connections between intention, process, outcome, context and methods of communication.
- Demonstrate your ability to deliver creative ideas and innovative solutions utilising an effective range of communication tools and manufacturing techniques across a range of visual, oral and written media.
- Evidence your ability to communicate ideas and work appropriately with relevant audiences; clients, consumers, and other stakeholders and develop strategies to select and employ communication and information technologies pertinent to the audience or environment.
- Demonstrate competence in interpersonal, social and negotiation skills required in order to successfully practice within the Furniture and Product Design sector, ranging from mass production to bespoke making.
- Demonstrate effective self-management skills in the process of developing ideas from conception to realisation and successfully managing workloads and meeting deadlines.

8. Teaching and Learning Methods

A learning and teaching framework has evolved within the Product Design courses within the School over a number of years. Via regular summative and formative feedback, review and reflection, best practices have been incorporated into the teaching and learning across all modules. This framework enables collaborative working, consultation and presentations between all students studying at undergraduate level within the subject area.

The learning and teaching strategies are designed to develop independent learning and research skills. Taught modules will be centred on lectures supported by seminars, workshops (following induction) and tutorials. A range of assessment and presentation methods are employed, and where possible or relevant are complimentary to other modules and projects.

The Product Design Community

The Product Design Subject Area places a great deal of importance on the development of a strong student design community, based around the utilization of studio based

learning, one which aids supportive, peer-to-peer learning and helps to set work in a professional context. The design community is further supported through the provision of high quality workshop resources and expert technical support available to all students. Product Design at NTU is open to a wide breadth of creative approaches, this enables you to explore and experiment with new methodologies, styles and techniques and develop your practice in a nurturing environment. The range of approaches to developing the design community includes:

- Structured Induction Events
- Collaborative Working
- Studio Working
- Established Student Support (Language & Student support services)
- Workshop Mentorship
- Staff student liaison meetings (once per term)
- Group tutorial system

Learning and teaching methods will comprise lectures to introduce and develop concepts and to explore the application of these concepts; studio working, workshops and laboratories to develop skills and appreciate concepts; seminars and tutorials to provide academic support; case study and project work to develop a deeper understanding of concepts and applications; and project presentations by students to develop confidence and identity in professional practice.

Teaching materials will be available to support the learning process utilising new technologies for blended and e-learning where applicable. Such teaching materials will typically comprise written information, recommended reading, tutorial questions, self-assessment tests and computer based learning and teaching instructions. It is a normal practice of the School to invite external professional staff to contribute to learning material and to give lectures or run workshops. The Web and the University's own NOW system will also be used for communication between students and staff.

Modules are designed to expand student's awareness and understanding of Product Design while developing a wider appreciation of design's role within modern society, and the impact of new thinking in business on the design industry. The courses will promote intellectual curiosity and the development of designers as multi-faceted professionals, confident in interdisciplinary practice. The course also focuses on the needs of future professional design practice and work to promote the understanding of both local and international business and support entrepreneurial approaches to developing products and services, and the development of strategic design for business success.

9. Assessment Methods

The course uses a variety of methods of assessment to ensure that you can demonstrate the range of learning outcomes and these are tested through a series of coursework submissions. Assessment will take place at the conclusion of each module or element.

Assessment throughout the courses is based on the submission of coursework. Tasks and briefs, often multiple, are set within modules and structured to enable students to address the course learning outcomes, ensuring that assessment is directed towards the achievement of those outcomes and are discipline specific. Assessment methods are selected such that they are the most effective in enabling students to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. All module learning outcomes are aligned to assessment and grading criteria that describe the level of learning being achieved against each learning outcome. Individual modules create learning opportunities which encourage, reinforce and enhance students' learning processes, developing their ability to think, evaluate, create, make judgements, communicate and act. The courses use a variety of assessment techniques so that a team of academic assessors may evaluate the quality of your output for the modules and elements; evidenced by project development work and outcomes. These assessments are derived from the following forms of evaluation:

- Presentations: Oral, Audio/Visual
- Reports and reflective journals
- Reviews of design development work and models/prototypes (realised in 2D, 3D or 4D formats)
- Exhibitions of work/project outcomes
- Portfolio Reviews
- Project Thesis or Dissertation

All modules on BA Furniture and Product Design are assessed through course work.

In order that student work is appropriately judged and marked consistently, assessments are panel marked (typically by 2-3 academic staff) for presentations, reviews of design development work and assessment of exhibitions or sample marked and checked ('moderated and verified') by other academic colleagues for the reading of reports, journals and thesis/dissertations.

The ethos of combining theory and practice is strongly reflected in the nature of assessments. All, are coursework based, requiring students to undertake practical work together with research and critical evaluation in order to demonstrate the link between theory and practise.

You will receive regular verbal and written feedback about the progress you are making at each tutorial through discussion with staff and peers and via completion of tutorial

record forms. You will also receive feedback from staff and students during presentations, workshops and seminars. At the end of each module you will receive written feedback supported by tutorial contact where you can discuss the outcomes of the assessment in more detail.

10. **Course structure and curriculum**

The course is one of three that make up the Product Design suite of courses, namely;

1. BA (Honours) Furniture and Product Design
2. BA (Honours) Product Design
3. BSc (Honours) Product Design

Although all students study 'Product Design' the courses are distinctly different in their approach to the subject, their aim and their objectives. You will study common modules at Year 1 (level 4) on the Design Fundamentals module (40 Credits), Year 2 (level 5) on the Professional Practice module (60 Credits) and during the Final Year (level 6) on both the Design in Practice (80 Credits) and Design in Context (40 Credits) modules. All other modules at each level are course specific.

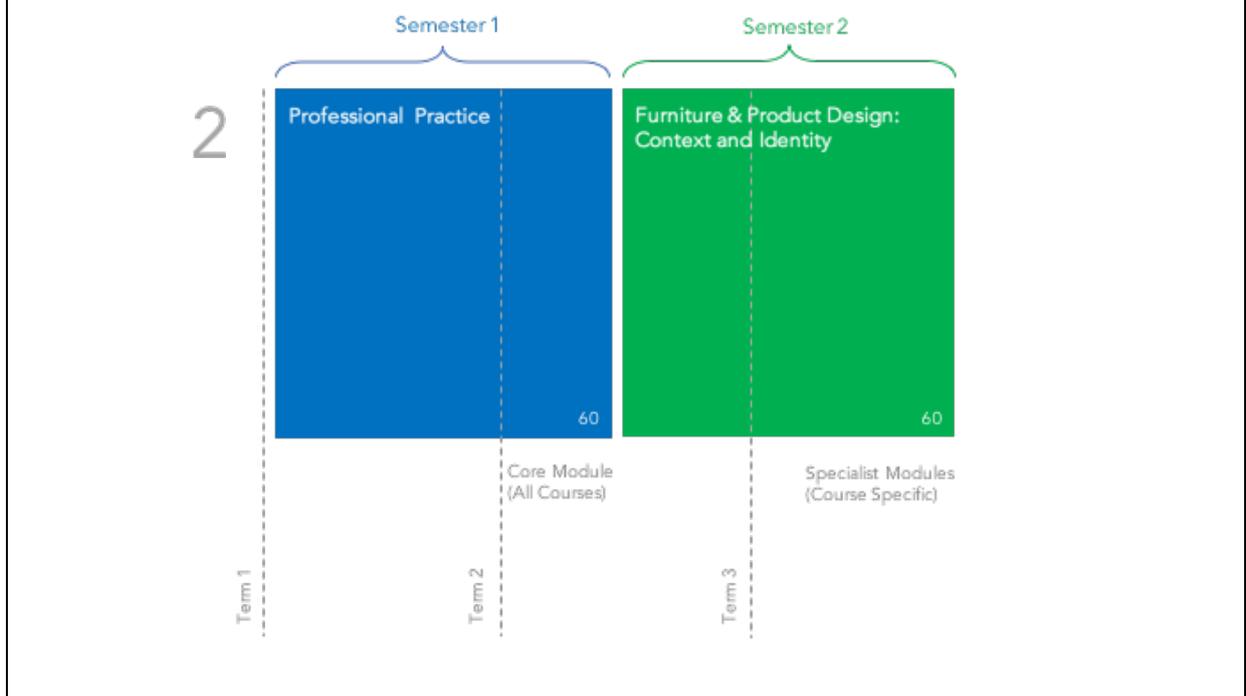
The course is studied on either a sandwich (normal route) or full-time basis. In the case of the sandwich route the first two years of theory and simulated practice are consolidated by a year of industrial experience.

We offer a wide variety of projects during years 1 and 2. These include 'live projects' i.e. those provided by industry, design competitions and short projects.

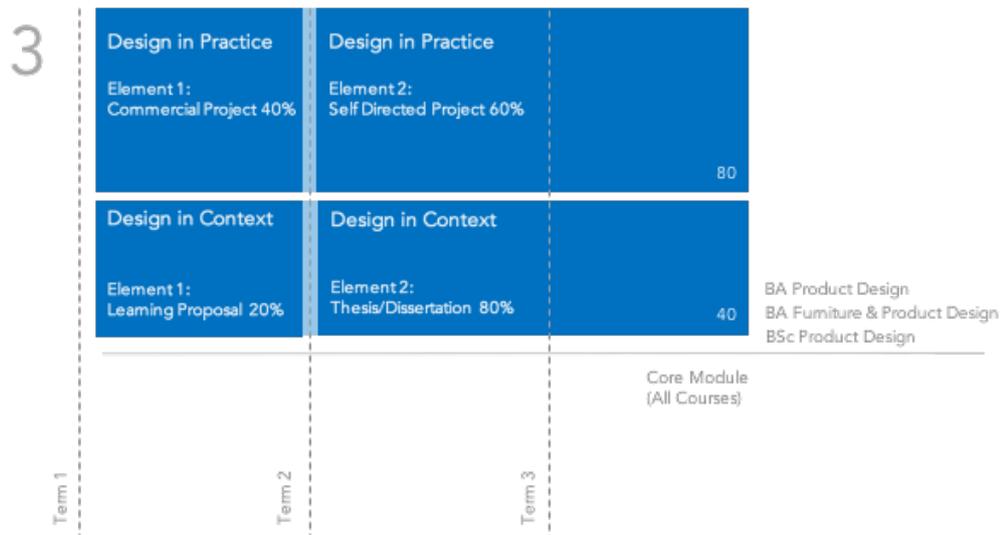
The year 1 (level 4) modules are designed to give you the knowledge, skills and experience of the principles of the design process. Product Design focuses on consumers, the market, technology and systems. You will study a wide range of design related issues covering all aspects of product design. You will develop knowledge and comprehension of the historic, contemporary and future influences on product design in order to promote imagination and creativity in the solving of problems and the development of designed outcomes. Through a range of diverse and stimulating projects you will explore many aspects of product design from the understanding of user needs through to those of materials and new technologies. You will also be introduced to and develop a range of key communication skills utilising a range of media and methods from drawing and model making through to the creation and manipulation of digital information to support your work.



Year 2 (level 5) modules build on the experience of year 1 (level 4) and consist of a series of varied product design-related projects in preparation for professional practice. Projects are often set by the design industry and focus on the changing commercial and cultural demands within the design community. You will also take part in contemporary design competitions which will stretch your creative abilities and further develop your wide range of skills. You will also form a solid grounding in design principles, culture & philosophy. By the end of year 2 (level 5) you will have produced a high quality portfolio of work. This will prove invaluable in securing a placement in industry.



The final year of the course (level 6) marks the culmination of the course, you will develop a detailed learning proposal for the year, negotiated with tutors, which will allow you to investigate, explore and develop projects of a personal and professional interest to you. The final year will mark the synthesis of all information, skills and learned wisdom from previous years and will help you develop your work and personal stance on contemporary design.



C = a core module

Year 1 (Level 4)

Design Fundamentals (40 Credit Points) - C

The Developing Furniture and Product Designer (40 Credit Points) – C

Applied Furniture and Product Design Practice (40 Credit Points) – C

Year 2 (Level 5)

Professional Practice (60 Credit Points) - C

Furniture and Product Design: Context and Identity (60 Credit Points) - C

Year 3 – Industrial Experience Work Placement

Diploma/Certificate of Professional Practice

Working in conjunction with the work placement office, you are assisted in identifying appropriate work placement opportunities (in design or design related industries) which are then secured through a process of application and competitive interview. In order to qualify for the Diploma of Professional Practice you will normally have:

- Completed 36 weeks (minimum requirement) of Professional Practice Placement with an approved organisation.
- Received a satisfactory report from the employer.

- Successfully completed the Professional Practice submission requirements.

A Certificate in Professional Practice is available for the successful completion of shorter periods of placement work experience (a minimum of 10 weeks).

NOTE: A Sandwich award will not be conferred with a Certificate in Professional Practice

Further information regarding the placement learning framework can be found by visiting the Placement Information area of the NOW Workspace.

Year 3 / 4 (Level 6)

Design in Practice 3 (80 Credit Points) - C

Design in Context (40 Credit Points) – C

11. Admission to the course

Entry requirements

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the course information web page.

12. Support for Learning

The School is committed to assisting you in achieving the best results possible during your studies, providing you with a wide range of academic support and advice.

A comprehensive learner support system is adopted by the course, which also can include input from the University and student union, tailored to meet your needs.

The School is keen that all students, irrespective of background and characteristics such as age and nationality, have equal opportunities to succeed with their studies. There is a section in NOW for students within the school to access materials to help you with your studies.

Induction courses will run at the beginning of your studies and will ensure that you are made aware of the full range of support facilities in the University as well as giving you specific information about resources, procedures and practices needed to undertake the course. These include Health and Safety, workshop practices, and library induction. Welcome and induction activities are shared across the subject area undergraduate courses, encouraging a cross disciplinary student community.

You will receive support throughout your studies from our experienced and committed teaching and technical support staff. Staff members teaching on the course are members of professional institutions and most are active researchers, many undertaking industrial consultancy.

The Course Leader is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the course, with Module Leaders in charge of the separate module learning activities and assessments. Course Managers are responsible for the overview of all teaching (UG and PG) provision within the subject area and work closely with Course Leaders to ensure parity and a high level of student experience across courses. School and University Resources, including dyslexia support, counselling services and language support, are available if required. Subject specialists from careers service, and library and learning resources are also available to support you during your studies.

Project work on this course is well supported by extensive resources including the machining and manufacturing workshop, well-equipped laboratories specialising in a range of specialist areas, modern CAD/CAM facilities and product design studios for individual and group working, seminars and presentations. The HIVE business incubator unit, based at Nottingham Trent University, works closely with this course to help the graduates to facilitate the formation of their own company and complementary product solutions. The staff will help secure any intellectual property rights resulting from the course activities.

In addition to email, social, online media and the University's virtual learning environment (NOW), are used by individual module and course leaders to communicate effectively with students.

If you are an international student and English is not your first language, language support can be provided by the University where appropriate to enhance your learning experience and to improve your presentation skills. If necessary, English language classes are available from the University Language Centre. These classes form a course of English for Academic Purposes and are separate from the degree course. The University Student Support Services offer a range of general, specialist and professional support services for students.

13. Graduate destinations / employability

This course has been developed to meet the needs of industry in the UK and overseas. It is specifically designed to increase the employability of its graduates in a business context by identifying new service, strategy and product opportunities, and conducting projects in collaboration with industrial partners. You will become strategically aware and technically literate, and will communicate concepts and outcomes at a graduate level in an ever-changing global market place. On completion, graduates will have acquired skills and knowledge to set up their own businesses, to work in manufacturing industries, design consultancies, and research and development organisations, or to progress to Masters level study.

Design, management, production, marketing and computer-aided design are all employment opportunities. Graduates of the course are flexible enough to respond to the ever-changing multidisciplinary demands of industry, and allow entrepreneurial interests to flourish. The employment record of the course is very good. Many of our graduates are working in the furniture and product design area as practitioners and designers. Other career paths have included teaching (after postgraduate study), TV and studio design, design for museums, trade exhibitions, domestic appliances, industrial components and point of sale materials within companies such as B & B Italia, Fitch & Co., Habitat, PDD, Priestman-Goode, Tom Dixon and Nestle.

The University Employability Service is available to all students, offering individual consultation and support.

14. Course standards and quality

There are well-established systems for managing the quality of the curriculum within the School. The course is subject to, and fully complies with, the University's requirements in respect of course standards and quality; this involves:

1. The appointment of external examiners to the course. External examiners are appointed to each course and report annually on the appropriateness of the curriculum, the quality of student work and the assessment process.
2. Monitoring of the course and the production of an annual Interim Course Report. At the end of each year the Course Leader writes an evaluative report, informed by staff and student feedback. This is then discussed by the School Academic Standards and Quality Committee and actions are identified.
3. Periodic review of the course; Periodic Course Review is the mechanism by which course teams reflect on the validity, currency, and the academic quality of the provision once every three years. This is a face-to-face discussion with external stakeholders and students, centering on key data sets provided in advance of the meeting to enable appropriate consideration of the current and future quality and standards of the course. The outcome of the review is a three-year Course Development Plan.
4. A Course Committee covering all Undergraduate courses within the department of Product Design are held three times a year, student representatives, elected by their peer group, attend and contribute to discussion.
5. Staff/Student liaison committees are held three times a year where UG student representatives are invited to attend and provide feedback on their educational experience.
6. Formal module evaluation is gathered by anonymous questionnaire at the culmination of each module.

The course is referenced to the QAA Benchmark Statements: Art & Design 2017 and informed by the Chartered Society of Designers Genetic Matrix™ which underpins all of the Chartered Society of Designers initiatives including: CSD membership categories, Pathway to Chartered Designer status and the CSD Course Endorsement Programme. The CSD Genetic Matrix is a recognised framework for professional design practice offering metrics benchmarking in both design practice and study.

15. Assessment regulations

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its [Quality Handbook](#)). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

There are no course specific exceptions from the University regulations

16. Additional Information

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| Collaborative partner(s): | None |
| Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements: | Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements: Art & Design 2017 |
| Course recognised by: | Chartered Society of Designers (CSD) |
| Date implemented: | March 2018 |
| Any additional information: | None |