

## Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

### Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Art and Design, City Campus
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	BA (Hons) Decorative Arts FT FT, SW
4.	Normal Duration:	3 years FT, 4 years SW
5.	UCAS Code:	W170

### 6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

Established in 1994 The Decorative Arts Course remains at the forefront of one of the most exciting sectors in art and design and continues to direct and challenge the contemporary applied arts market. The curriculum reflects contemporary thought and practice within an internationalised art and design school and is accredited by CSD Chartered Society of Designers.

On this course you have a unique and exciting opportunity to study applied art, design and studio crafts within a stimulating interdisciplinary studio and workshop environment, where you can embrace both new technologies and more traditional methods of making.

From a theoretical perspective, you will learn about the history of the Decorative and Applied arts at national and international levels and engage with aspects of business and professional practice.

You will develop relevant professional attributes gained through professional experiences embedded into the design, learning and assessment of your course. Through the inclusion of live projects, industry visits and professional experience, together with opportunities for overseas student exchanges (to develop your international awareness), this course encourages you to broaden your horizons and prepare for a career working with design and making within the commercial sector.

#### Year One

You will undertake studio and workshop projects and learn about a wide range of materials, develop craft skills and have a chance to explore your own creative expression through a variety of media. You will be taught essential practical IT skills using 2D and 3D software alongside drawing and colour workshops to help you develop and present your ideas.

In contextual studies you can look forward to individual and collaborative projects engaging with the decorative arts in the broadest sense, and learn how to research, analyse and organise your work.

### Year Two

You will work on specific design briefs throughout the year, while undertaking material workshops where you will further develop your technical and making skills. This is supported by 2D and 3D IT sessions alongside drawing and image process workshops enabling you to produce a professional portfolio. You can participate in overseas student exchanges during the first term and go on to undertake short work experience placements at the end of the academic year.

The business-focused module will help you develop your commercial awareness of marketing, product development, planning and communication. Through individual and group projects, you will examine how studio-based businesses work.

You will be encouraged to seek and complete work experience with the opportunity to gain an additional Diploma or Certificate in Professional Practice, dependent on the duration of placement.

### Year Three

At this stage of your studies, the workshops and studio spaces are made available to for you to conduct your own practice. You can now choose a specialist material area and begin to focus on refining your own creative skills and knowledge.

Supported by disciplinary and inter-disciplinary tutorials, you will negotiate your own design brief. You will begin by researching materials through the application of your own ideas as you move towards creating a final collection. This will form part of an exciting exhibition of your objects and artefacts at the final degree show.

To support your final collection of work, you either;

Produce a Live Trading and practical business plan;

If you are planning to launch your product in a commercial or retail environment, the live trading module option can help you to produce a business plan to support your practical work.

Or you can produce a dissertation;

If you are considering a career in education, teaching or journalism, you can opt to research and write a dissertation that relates to your work, or within the broader applied art subject area.

**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:

- Establish a professional engagement with the field of decorative arts practice from a cultural and historical perspective; encompassing social, economic, environmentally and sustainable issues. (B)
- Evaluate local, national and global markets to inform and influence your own decorative art practice. (B)
- Utilise analytical and communication skills to support the development and dissemination of your own practice. (B)
- Embrace material techniques and processes, then apply appropriately to the development of your ideas, into a resolved outcome. (B)
- Create a comprehensive collection of work that will demonstrate high levels of skill and expertise in idea development, creative expression, technical application, strategic thinking and execution. (B)
- Apply critical knowledge and understanding of business and professional practice to your own area of decorative arts. (B)

**Skills, qualities and attributes**

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

- Utilise research skills for written and practical outcomes. (B)
- Apply a broad range of communication skills, when working individually or as part of a group. (B)
- Evidence relevant skills to plan, organize and select appropriately for practical and written outcomes. (B)
- Evaluate and apply appropriate materials, techniques and processes for the development of ideas into tangible outcomes. (B)

- Define and implement a strategy that leads to employability and the achievement of personal goals. (B)
- Formulate and articulate concepts about designed products using effective and appropriate technologies. (B)

#### 8. **Teaching and learning methods**

The Course teaching, learning and assessment strategy is informed by the principles, policies, practices and regulations detailed in the University's *Quality Handbook*, also supported by the School's *Assessment and Feedback Principles and Guidelines*.

The course is designed so that you will receive continuous feedback on your progress. Continual assessment is one of the most important learning and teaching strategies within the course, enabling you to develop as an independent learner. You will be encouraged to reflect on your work and undertake self and peer assessment, developing a clear understanding of the assessment criteria. The purpose of assessment is to enable you to demonstrate that you have met the learning outcomes of the course and reached a specified standard to attain the award. Teaching methods range from directed learning to independent learning, supported by briefings, lectures, seminars and tutorials.

Studio practice is introduced through workshops in 2 and 3-dimensional development, technical surgeries and individual and group presentations. You will be taught through a wide variety of ways, from direct workshop demonstrations to live projects with industry partners.

Lectures and seminars are used to present information and give you a chance, through group work, to consider and evaluate relevant information.

Practical and contextual briefings will create tasks for you to achieve and complete, so you can learn through your own working processes.

Visits to exhibitions and events will help inform you of the broader market and range of product and give you a chance to consider the aesthetic aspect of art and design practice in a professional sense.

Work experience will provide you with an opportunity to learn how businesses operate within the commercial sector.

Guidance and support through seminars and tutorials will provide you with the confidence to develop your work and drive your enthusiasm.

Study visits and live business practice also take place on the Course, and all our teaching practice is supported through an e-learning environment.

## 9. **Assessment methods**

The course conforms to the Common Assessment Regulations for undergraduate courses (Section 16A of the University's Quality Handbook).

Assessment is conducted according to the School's 'Assessment and Feedback: Principles and Guidelines' and ensures that the assessment process and standards are made clear to you. The course annually updates its own 'Assessment and Feedback Plan' which includes the details of how you will be assessed and the hand in dates etc. and this is available on NOW and will be introduced to you during induction. The final degree award is based solely on the work produced during the final year of the course.

Assessment is 100% Coursework, this involves the presentation of 2D and 3D artefacts, two-dimensional work in the form of research, idea development, presentation; including essays, and a final dissertation or Live Trading Business Plan. Assessment methods include individual and group presentations and the submission of textual work and visual products.

Towards the end of the course, you will also undertake a synoptic assessment. This requires you to reflect on the range of activities and experiences across the entirety of your course in relation to your future employability aspirations.

### Failing a module

If for any reason you fail a module, you will be provided with referral and retrieval options as determined by the Board of Examiners or the Progression Board. These decisions are informed by the University's Common Assessment Regulations and the course team's academic judgment.

Progression to the next level requires the successful completion of 120 credit points (with the potential for carrying a maximum of 20 credits only through to level 5 that would need to be recovered during that academic session). If a student does not meet the course learning outcomes then, in line with the school's holistic assessment policy, the body of work will be reassessed against the interim (fall-back) award learning outcomes for an ordinary degree (equivalent to a minimum of 60 credits being achieved in the final year of the degree). Only the modules undertaken in final year directly count toward the degree classification awarded at the end of the course.

#### 10. **Course structure and curriculum**

The course is studied on a full-time (3 years) basis, with the option of a sandwich placement between years two and three.

The course embeds employability initiatives throughout its modules. Early in the course you will be engaged in learning core employability skills and career planning activity for example working on industry projects, engaging with professional organisations, responding to professional briefs and competitions.

The course includes several opportunities for you to undertake work-related contexts, professional-led projects, activities with employer involvement and engage in other external opportunities. You will also be expected to produce work that is of a professional standard.

Towards the end of the course, you will be asked to reflect on your experiences, activities and skills in relation to your future professional/employability aspirations.

##### **Year One:**

Form, Structure and Surface Decoration (100 credit points)

Decorative Arts in Context (20 credit points)

To successfully complete level one, you will learn how to find appropriate sources of information, develop an understanding of designing and making within the applied arts, as well as learn about the principles that underpin the decorative arts in a global and historical sense.

You will be able to understand the potential of ideas, techniques and the properties of various media/materials, so you can develop concepts and create craft and design work. You will obtain practical experiences that help you archive results through experimentation and analysis.

**Year Two:**

Innovation: Creative Design (100 credit points)

Business and Professional Practice (20 credit points)

To successfully complete year two, you will have advanced and refined your practical skills in a range of chosen materials, developing a personal sense of research and practice through exploration of various briefs. You will learn through lectures and seminars about business and professional practice. You should be able to refine your research methods, improve time management and planning, and confidently discuss and present your work.

**Year Three:**

Creative Practice and Theory: Negotiated Project (120 credit points)

To successfully complete year three, you will produce a portfolio of work that illustrates creative practice and individual design approaches, using studio and workshop skills relevant to the broad range of professional opportunities, within contemporary applied arts practice.

You can choose between a dissertation or practical business plan to support your final collection. You will also develop a full range of transferable skills that will improve your employability for a future career and enrich your lifelong learning. The module consists of two elements; 70% for the practical work and 30% for the dissertation or business plan.

**11. Admission to the course**

**Entry requirements.**

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

<https://www.ntu.ac.uk/study-and-courses/courses/find-your-course/art-design/ug>

## 12. **Support for learning**

The School is committed in assisting you to achieve the best results possible during your studies and will provide you with a wide range of academic and pastoral help and advice. In addition to the course leader and course administrator, a member of staff will also be assigned to you at the start of your course who you can communicate with on more personal matters.

At the start of the course, you will be invited to participate in 'welcome week' where you will undertake a range of activities that introduce many of the key facilities available to you within the University and where you will take part in the essential introduction to the course. You will meet staff and fellow students and will be able to find out more about how you will be taught and assessed. At the same time, the Student's Union organise their social events in the same week to encourage your involvement in the wider NTU community.

In addition to the support that the lecturers on your course will offer, you also have access to a wide range of specialist staff to support a variety of issues that might arise, e.g. financial, health, wellbeing, disability etc. Language and academic support are also provided by for international students who require additional study support.

To ensure that you have a clear understanding of the way in which you are progressing within the modules, you will receive feedback on the progress that you are making on a regular basis. Some of the feedback that you will receive is formal and will occur both during (formative) when you will receive written feedback and an indicative grade and at the end of the module (summative), confirmed by either a Progression Board (end of year 1 and 2) or the Board of Examiners (end of final year). In addition to this, group and individual tutorials are an important informal opportunity to receive feedback from fellow students and your tutors.

Academic guidance is given in the supervision sessions and is tailored to individual student needs. For international students, the Language Centre provides tailored sessions that all students whose English isn't their first language are encouraged to attend.



NOW (NTU's Online Workspace)

Studying at NTU encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and you will be able to access all course and module information via NTU's Online Workspace, referred to as 'NOW'. Useful information to support your learning and experience on the course, is uploaded for ease of access when working on or off site.

### **13. Graduate destinations/employability**

Early in the course, you will learn about, and develop your core employability skills and begin your career planning activity through live projects, visits and contact with external professionals to encourage you to engage with the creative industries.

There are opportunities within the course for you to translate theory into practice by engaging with a range of professional contexts. These may include developing your CV, looking for placements, and working with the University's employability team on career development. The synoptic assessment of this, at the end of the degree, will enable you to reflect on your skills, experiences and activities, throughout the course, in relation to your future employability and your engagement with professional briefs at various points within the course.

You will have the key skills for a range of employment opportunities, from designer-makers and producers of goods within the applied arts sector as self-employed entrepreneurs, to commercial roles within art and design, from buying, merchandising and design within the applied arts and related industries from retail to manufacture. You could also consider a career in education, teaching or journalism, or working in art direction for editorial, or progress through to postgraduate studies.

Through the University the course also offers placement opportunities to enable you to experience working in professional contexts within the retail and manufacture of goods and services for the home interior and gift sector.

### **14. Course standards and quality**

Quality management of the course is in accordance with the University's Quality Handbook and is overseen by the School's Academic Standards and Quality Committee. Responsibility for ensuring that the course remains

current and that the students are supported in their experience whilst studying lies with the course committee, which meets three times a year. There are opportunities for students to become course representatives. The role is primarily to engage fellow students in debate about the course and bring these collated views to the course committee meeting for discussion.

It is important to the course and the School that you have opportunities to offer feedback on modules, the course or any aspect of University life. There are several ways that you will be asked for your views either informally or formally. The module feedback that you will be asked to complete is in the form of a questionnaire and is referred to as 'EvaSys'. In addition to this, you have other formal channels where you can give feedback and these are at Student/staff liaison meetings, Course Committee Meetings and via school-level meetings.

The work submitted for assessment at the end of the degree is internally moderated and an External Examiner is appointed whose job it is to confirm the grades being awarded. They therefore review samples of assessed work and confirm at the Board of Examiners that the internal assessment and moderation practices are fair and in line with the School and NTU policies. The External Examiner is also required to make judgements about the course and report on the standards achieved in relation to other comparable courses in the UK. The external examiner also writes a report at the end of each academic year and this will be available to you via NOW, together with a response to this written by the course team and the Course Committee.

At the end of each year, the Course team write an evaluative Interim Course Report that is received at Course Committee and discussed by the School's Academic Standards and Quality Committee for actions recommended. Your contribution to this process is important.

15. **Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

16. **Additional Information**

Collaborative partner(s): N/A

Course referenced to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Benchmark Statements:

All course outcomes have been aligned with the Art and Design 2017 benchmark statements.

Course recognised by:  
Date this course specification approved:

10.05.17 SASQC approved PCR/CR Significant Modification changes and general updates.

SW mode of study introduced and approved by SASQC 3 July 2019

Any additional information:

This course is accredited by the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD)

*Special features:*

- The Live Trading module is one of the first educational modules to help students launch their collection of work in a retail market.
- From hand-made to computer-generated processes, this course meets the contemporary market catering for all sectors of the applied arts.
- Drawing and colour remain core to the curriculum, as an essential part of creative practice.
- This course offers a unique opportunity to explore and build upon a portfolio of material knowledge.