

Nottingham Trent University

Course Specification

Basic Course Information

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| 1. Awarding Institution: | Nottingham Trent University |
| 2. School/Campus: | Art and Design, City campus |
| 3. Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: | BA (Hons) Fashion Knitwear Design and Knitted Textiles. |
| 4. Normal Duration: | 3 years (full time)
4 years (sandwich) |
| 5. UCAS Code: | W222, 4W28 |

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

BA (Hons) Fashion Knitwear Design and Knitted Textiles is the only undergraduate course within the UK that combines both fashion design and textile design approaches to developing creative ideas for 2D and 3D through knit. It offers tremendous opportunities for creative students to explore the dynamic world of knit. Graduates from this course offer a unique and valuable contribution to the worldwide fashion and textile industry. The impressive rollcall of alumni, which has grown over the last thirty years, serve current students well as they regularly return to source new talent in the form of placements or graduate positions. The course maintains its international reputation for excellence and continues to develop graduates who are creative designers fluent with current global industry practices and knowhow.

This is a broad-based course that aims to support your interest, enjoyment and talent in combining your fashion and textile skills to develop your unique creative voice and direction as a designer. This course will appeal to you if you have a desire to create innovative fabrics with diverse visual, physical and tactile properties for fashion and alternative interior or exterior 3D product applications such as architecture and their innovative construction and styling.

You are encouraged to be experimental and challenge conventions and explore a range of materials and processes through creative design development. You

will be introduced to the specialist areas of knitwear and knitted textile design, such as women's, men's and children's wear, accessories and interior or exterior products and their styling. We also encourage you to consider integrating woven fabrics and garment/products to enhance and compliment your design statement.

Our practical studio and workshop based projects integrate design, technology and theory, and you are able to take full control of the make process from yarn choice through to your finished garments or products and to discover the creative potential of knitwear and knitted textile materials, processes and technology in relation to fashion and product. This integration of design and technology to realise ideas and the complex decision making and problem solving equips you with a valuable set of transferable skills for the employment market.

The 'big ideas' of history and theory in 20th and 21st century design, visual and material culture is explored and integrated with your practice at all levels through the Design, Culture and Context (DCC) modules. These modules will encourage you, through a series of tasks, which test your research, presentation and written skills, to be socially, culturally and environmentally aware when making decisions in theory and practice. This critical reflection of your own work and the work/ideas of others will enable you to cultivate your own design philosophy and help you to recognise your future potential as a creative practitioner within a local and/or global context. These modules will develop your transferable and employability skills through research, analysis, idea development and the communication of ideas.

Those students who have selected the full-time study route are encouraged to search out professional work experience placements of up to two weeks during your degree studies. In discussion with the course leader and relevant module leader you can negotiate a suitable time to attend the work experience if it is considered relevant and an enhancement to your studies. You will be required to submit a report on your return to the course. This will be assessed as part of your summative assessment at the end of the year in which you have done it.

The optional one-year work placement between Year 2 (Level 5) and Final Year (Level 6) provides you with invaluable and meaningful industrial experience. Opportunities open to you are local, national and international which reflects the global reach of the fashion knitwear and knitted textile industry. There are a range of choices to be made in terms of place, timescale and type of role.

Locations include the UK, Europe, North America and the Far East. The Placement Certificate in Professional Practice qualification requires you to complete a minimum of 10 - 35 weeks. The Placement Diploma in Professional Practice requires a minimum of 36 weeks. The Placement International Diploma in Professional Practice requires a minimum of 36 weeks in one or more international companies located abroad.

You can stay with one company for this duration or gain several contrasting and complimentary experiences with two or more companies. There are placements in knitwear manufacturing, knitwear design studios, knitted swatch studios, trend prediction and retail head offices at a range of different retail brands, products and market levels with whom we have developed strong relationships. You are fully supported throughout the placement application process at Year Two (Level 5) by a dedicated employability adviser and academic team member.

During your time on the course there will be opportunities to take part in external competitions, industry linked live projects and national/international visits. The course also participates in overseas exchange programmes with the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and the ERASMUS student exchange programme.

A core aim of the course is to enable you to develop the ability to be innovative, challenging aesthetic and technical constraints through the development of your personal design ideas in 2D and 3D. The development of your portfolio of design work will allow you to acquire the professional, technical, creative and intellectual skills to engage confidently, professionally and successfully within your chosen area of employment.

We encourage and nurture your creative thinking and vision to enable you to initiate and negotiate projects and develop further confidence in presenting ideas through a range of methods appropriate to your intended audience. You will also develop the ability to analyse and critically appraise your work and present your thoughts adapting to audience and media.

By the end of the course you will have developed the capacity for independent critical thought, rational enquiry and self-directed learning. You will have gained core transferable skills suitable for more general graduate employment and an intellectual curiosity for further personal learning and growth, being fully prepared to undertake if desired, further postgraduate study.

Special Features of the Course

- The course offers breadth in its combination of fashion and textiles through the medium of knit and is diagnostic in supporting students to find their direction through the course which best suits their skills, interests and ambitions.
- This is the only undergraduate course within the UK to focus solely upon design for Fashion Knitwear, Knitted Textiles and Product.
- Optional Industrial Placement between Year Two (Level 5) and Final Year (Level 6) where students will gain either the Certificate or Diploma in Professional Practice or International Diploma in Professional Practice.
- Opportunities to participate in educational exchange schemes to the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York and other Institutions supported by the ERASMUS scheme.
- At all levels you will gain external exposure through national and international competitions, cultural collaborations, trade fairs, for example Pitti Filati in Italy and Spin Expo in China, and live industry focused projects.
- You will develop a local, national and international perspective through practical design projects and structured study visits to key research centres.
- There is an opportunity to negotiate the balance of theory and practice in the final year and develop your research project into a publishable or exhibit-able outcome with career relevance.
- Opportunities for collaboration with other courses e.g. BA (Hons) Fashion Design, BA (Hons) Textile Design and BA (Hons) Photography.
- Collaboration with industry and external recruitment agencies for graduate employment opportunities in the final year through the British Fashion Council and Graduate Fashion Week.

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:

- Utilise relevant research sources and methodologies within your work.
(B)

- Locate your own work within the global context of fashion knitwear design and knitted textiles, its associated practices and technologies. (B)
- Critically evaluate design styles and theories through cultural, historical, and economic issues. (B)
- Reflect upon design responsibility and sustainability issues in relation to your own work. (B)
- Generate concepts and solutions in response to set briefs and/or self-initiated activities to support your chosen professional career aspirations. (B)
- Define, test and critically appraise appropriate materials and technical processes in relation to design briefs. (B)

Skills, qualities and attributes

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

- Analyse information and experiences, formulating independent judgements through reflection, review and evaluation. (B)
- Construct reasoned responses to peer feedback and the critical judgement of others through self-evaluation. (B)
- Formulate creative solutions to 2D and 3D problems, selecting and applying materials and technical processes accordingly. (B)
- Employ creative and enquiring approaches to fashion trends and influences and articulate your design concepts. (B)
- Communicate ideas and information comprehensively in a range of situations through visual, oral and written forms. (B)
- Initiate and manage your own learning and workloads through independent and self-directed study. (B)

B = Learning outcomes have been informed by the Art and Design 2017 benchmark statements.

8. Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching on the course involves a range of teaching and learning experiences, which build through from first to final year with the aim of ensuring that you become an independent specialist.

Fashion knitwear design and knitted textiles requires a broad approach to teaching and learning, as reflected by the following learning activities:

- Lectures and briefings
- Technical demonstrations
- Knitting and manufacturing workshops
- Studio and I.T workshops
- Seminars
- Tutorials
- Peer and self-evaluations
- Project work, individual and group verbal and visual presentations
- Teamwork
- Live projects
- External Visits

The course encourages you to recognise the need for designers to use their initiative and to be well organised. Problem solving, team working and critical awareness are developed through a mainly project-based approach to practical and theoretical work.

Teaching and learning is conducted in an atmosphere that is informed by professional practice, creative awareness and a respect for personal viewpoints. Visiting external practitioners complement our course and provide valuable insight into current contemporary and industrial practices within our discipline. External visits include international trade fairs, companies, exhibitions and sites of cultural interest.

Learning is a reciprocal process, based on shared discussion between students and staff. Consequently, working in small and multi-disciplinary groups is an important aspect of the teaching and learning approach for tutorials and interim assessments.

The University also provides a framework of support for blended independent learning and the achievement of goals through the Nottingham Trent University's Online Workspace (NOW) and one to one tutorial sessions. These help you to take responsibility for your learning and development through a number of staff supported and self-directed activities.

9. **Assessment Methods**

Assessment is conducted according to School's 'Assessment and Feedback Principles and Guidelines.' These ensure the academic standards and their appropriateness and are made clear to you when you join, and during your time on the course.

During term one you will receive formal written and verbal feedback to provide you with an understanding of your progress. There are other formal feedback opportunities at relevant points during the modules; you will be made aware of these during module briefings and within module documentation.

During the course, regular verbal formative feedback will be given through weekly individual and/or group tutorials, written and/or verbal formative feedback against learning outcomes and an indicative mark is given to you mid-way through each term and at the end of each term, so that you are aware of your progress. Marks and summative feedback are provided at the end of Year One (Level 4) and Year Two (Level 5) modules. Written formative feedback is provided at regular intervals at Final Year (Level 6) leading up to your final course assessment.

If you fail modules you are counselled and provided with options directly relating to university progression policy. You need 120 credit points to progress to the next level and are allowed to carry referrals at the discretion of the Exam Board.

Summary of Assessment Methods

- Assessment criteria are linked to module learning outcomes.
- Assessment is 100% coursework, which may involve, in various design modules, the presentation and evaluation of research, design development, technical and practical resolution.
- Assessment methods for Design, Culture and Context (DCC) include written and visual presentations and a final individual research project.
- The final year degree award is based on the assessment of your final year work.
- Progression through the course requires 120 credits at each level.

10. Course structure and curriculum

The course is full time over three years with an optional one-year placement between the second and final year. The academic year is made up of three terms. At Year One (Level 4) and Year Two (Level 5) the design modules comprise of 100 credits, the theory modules comprise of 20 credits. In Years One (Level 4) and Two (Level 5) the design and theory modules run concurrently throughout the year. In Final Year (Level 6) design and theory are integrated together into one 120 credit point module.

Contextual research and reflective practice is fundamental in supporting your creative exploration and development at all levels of the course. The curriculum includes exploration of relevant contextual issues and debates relating to 20th and 21st century design currently motivating producers and consumers in the global context. You will be encouraged to reflect on your own role and experiences as a consumer and designer/maker so you are socially, culturally and environmentally aware when making decisions in theory and practice. Visiting lecturers are employed to teach within all modules, and this also brings a contemporary currency to the curriculum, allowing a range of perspectives to be explored.

Knowledge and skills are developed within the Year One (Level 4) practice based module through projects designed to build your practical, technical and creative skills. Year Two (Level 5) aims to further develop these skills introduce and prepare you for the optional placement opportunity and to provide an insight into the industrial context of Fashion Knitwear Design and Knitted Textiles. There are opportunities to work on directed live industry-linked projects and optional negotiated placement focused projects. In Final Year (Level 6) the module offers you the opportunity to develop a personal direction through a negotiated project, external live briefs or national competitions as well as explore a substantial individual research project which connects with the Design, Culture and Context (DCC) modules from previous years.

The negotiated aspect of this module enables you to tailor the final year of study to suit your own future career aspirations.

If you have chosen the full time study route, it is possible to arrange short work experiences by prior agreement with the Course Leader and Module Leader and you are encouraged to take up these opportunities. The Employability Team are accessible to all students and can offer support and advice on a range of employability issues. You are required to submit a report of the placement

experience. This is marked and forms part of the summative assessment of your learning for the year in which you do it.

Students who do not progress to the final honours year may, on successful completion of the year receive a Certificate of Higher Education (Year One / Level 4), Diploma of Higher Education (Year Two / Level 5).

An Ordinary Degree (Final Year / Level 6) is awarded as a fall-back award following assessment of the work for those students whose work does not meet the learning outcomes for the honours degree. This is the equivalent to a minimum of 60 credits at level 6.

Course structure

(All modules are compulsory)

Year 1 (Level 4) : (HE Certificate 120 credits)

- Fundamentals: Design and Technology 100 credits
- Design, Culture and Context 1 20 credits

At Year One (Level 4) you are encouraged to develop the challenging skills required of the modern, professional fashion knitwear designer. You will gain skills that will allow you to progress and support your own 2D work through visual research and creative exploration. Creating knitted fabrics and garments requires both practical and technical skills, though previous knit and garment experience is not essential. Year One (Level 4) offers an excellent range of practical and technical inductions to ensure you gain skills and knowledge that will enable you to explore fabric and garment design ideas. Knit fabric and garment make workshops will allow you to gain the skills required to realise your design ideas from sketchbook to fabric and product. The Design, Culture and Context module will introduce you to the 'big ideas' of history and theory in 20th and 21st century design, visual and material culture, as well as debates, which cover international perspectives. Further to this you'll be undertaking image, object and material analysis and learning to use specialist vocabulary for discussing design in context, which includes your own design work. Your research methods, idea development and presentation skills, as well as your personal reflections, writing skills and Harvard referencing, will all be tested on this module.

Year 2 (Level 5): (HE Diploma 240 credits)

- Context: Design and Industry 100 credits

- Design, Culture and Context 2 20 credits

In Year Two (Level 5), the skills you developed in Year One (Level 4) will be extended and you will focus upon the industrial context of fashion knitwear design and knitted textiles. This will allow you to understand the position and responsibilities faced by the designer within the global design industry.

There are opportunities to work on live projects in collaboration with retailers and suppliers within the fashion, knitwear and textile industries and also to participate in national and international design competitions. The experience gained throughout projects within the design module will prepare you for the optional professional placement and give you an insight into current practices. The Design, Culture and Context 2 module will build on the knowledge and skills you have gained in Year One (Level 4) and explore the relationship between commerce, culture and design since the Industrial Revolution. You will be focusing on the developments in commerce and culture through the 20th and 21st centuries and the 'big ideas' and/or theories which have tried to evaluate and explain them. Further to this you will be looking at contemporary trends and emerging cultural issues, which cover international perspectives, and selecting a topic for your final year research project.

Optional Professional Placement Year

Through the support of the course's Employability Adviser, you have the opportunity to compete for available paid placements to be taken between Year Two (Level 5) and your Final Year (Level 6) of study.

The course has established relationships with a range of local, national and international companies within the fashion and textiles industry. The proven benefit of a professional placement is the employability enhancement it provides you with, which is particularly beneficial on return into your final year.

There is a Placement Call-Back Day for those students who undertake the placement route, where they return to the University to present their experiences to the whole year group, reflecting on what they have achieved and learnt and how this will prepare them for the final year. There is the opportunity to discuss ideas for the theoretical aspect of the final year module within the group. This is an excellent opportunity to network, share experiences, ideas and useful contacts.

This placement experience offers you diverse opportunities for specialist skill and knowledge development and the broadening of creative and industrial awareness and will give you the chance to experience possible career destinations. On successful completion of the placement you will receive a Diploma or a Certificate in Professional Practice in line with the NTU Academic Standards Quality Handbook, Section 10D, Placement and work-based learning. Alternatively, you may choose not to undertake the placement and go directly into the final year of the course.

Final year (Level 6): (BA (Hons) Degree 360 credits)

- Resolution: Theory and Practice 120 credits

The Design Culture and Context (DCC) final year research project is an integrated element of this module which aims to consolidate the links between theory and practice. You are asked to choose one of two options available to you:

Option A : 80% practical design work - collection and competitions 1 and 2
20% written dissertation or visual product

Option B: 65% practical design work - collection and competition 1
35% written and visual outcomes

The final year of study supports the development of specialist skills encouraging you to pursue personally negotiated goals tailored to your individual future career aspirations. The aim is to facilitate your ability to develop work that explores and demonstrates your personal creativity and an understanding of fashion knitwear design, knitted textiles and product in relation to social, cultural and political issues. We encourage you to apply questioning methods within your own design concepts and define personal aims and goals and considering the wider local and global issues facing designers of today. Your final year research project aims to build on the knowledge and skills gained in Year One (Level 4) and Year Two (Level 5) and will enable you to explore and analyse contextual issues and debates relating to 20th and 21st century design, visual and material culture in depth. You will develop viable research questions and carry out appropriate and rigorous research to explore answers to those questions and cultivate your own design philosophy. You will have a choice as to how to present this research and how it is weighted against your other practical design projects. These projects also extend your communication,

professional and presentation skills by considering a range of potential audiences.

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.

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 this, a comprehensive learner support system is in operation within the School and can be tailored to meet your specific needs.

At the start of your course you will be invited to participate in an 'induction week' where you will undertake a range of activities that will introduce many of the key facilities available within the University and will also provide you with an essential introduction to the course. You will meet the staff and your fellow students and will be able to find out more about how you will be taught and assessed on your course. At the same time, the Students' Union organises social events in 'welcome week' that will encourage you to become involved in and meet people from the wider NTU community.

Nottingham Trent University's Online Workspace is referred to as 'NOW'. All course and module information is posted on this site for you to access at any time.

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) and at the end of the module (summative) and may be written. Group tutorials are also an important opportunity to note the feedback that you are getting from your tutors and fellow students and are seen as an important part of the feedback mechanism in the School of Art and Design. This feedback will enable to you reflect and evaluate your own progress.

You will also be encouraged to conduct a skills audit which is an informal task that runs throughout the course and helps you to diagnose areas of strength and areas for improvement and from this develop a personal development plan.

One to one tutorials support progress on the course, where individual needs and goals may be discussed with your assigned personal tutors. This tutor will meet with you on a regular basis during sessions that support you with both academic and pastoral matters. You might also discuss other issues including ways in which you might continue to develop your general skills and preparing ahead for your next career steps.

The school has a framework to train second and third year students to become 'mentors' enabling them to support first year students. The Fashion Knitwear Design and Knitted Textile mentors will be identified during induction and opportunities to meet with them promoted to students and integrated within key sessions. They offer support and advice from academic and practical perspectives.

Your course handbook will also contain details of the support available to you should there be an interruption in your studies, due to circumstances outside of your control, or through other factors affecting your academic performance. The School provides three options for requesting consideration and these are found in the section on the Academic Appeals Process.

Outside of the School the NTU Careers service is particularly relevant to the course as employability is a central theme for your experience and the links with key external industrialists are used formally and informally throughout the course. Within the library services there are specialists assigned to Art and Design who will work with you at all levels during your time on the course.

13. Graduate destinations / employability

One of the key focus areas of our course is the employability of our graduates and we have an exceptional record of successful employment. This is not only due to the excellent academic rigour of the course content, but may be enhanced by the industrial placement, which can be undertaken between Year 2 (level 5) and Final Year (level 6). We have found that students who return to their final year of study after placement have an extensive understanding of the value of work-based projects.

Students who choose the full-time study route are encouraged to explore opportunities to gain a professional work experience placement of up to two weeks duration as part of the academic year to further support their studies.

In addition to the placement live projects and industrially focussed competitions, networking through events organised by the British Fashion Council and Graduate Fashion Week provide opportunities for exposure. This has a proven track record in terms of securing graduate employment.

Nottingham Trent University's Careers Service is also accessible to all students and organises Careers Fairs and offers support and advice on a range of employability issues.

Many graduates now occupy a range of senior positions within major fashion, textiles and retail companies around the world and within the broader professional field of knit. Our graduates are able to find employment in diverse careers at home or abroad; ranging from designers within design led companies, design or buying positions with mainstream High Street retailers or fabric studios. A number of graduates choose to become designer/makers selling under their own names. The technical expertise gained throughout the course allows graduates to join companies taking a more technical role. There are also opportunities for graduates to apply for the postgraduate courses on completion of their degree course, or return to the University at any time during their working life.

14. Course standards and quality

Dialogue with you about your experiences of the course is valued and we engage with receiving your feedback both formally and informally. You will have an opportunity to put yourself forward to be considered as a course representative at the beginning of each of your years of study. As part of this role you will be invited to attend the course committee meetings that occur three times a year and contribute to the conversations and debate to support the continuing health of the course. Any issues brought up at the course committee meetings are reported to the school academic standards and quality committee and actions identified. Responses are reported back to you either via the next course committee meeting or Nottingham Trent University's Online Workspace (NOW).

The experience that you have whilst studying on the course is important to us and you will be requested to give feedback on individual modules and will also

be invited to attend staff-student liaison committees and/or end of year meetings. This feedback and the dialogue with placement companies provide important views in relation to the quality of the course, the abilities of our students and the relevance and currency of our teaching. This and other feedback from industrialists, visiting speakers and professional bodies informs the evaluative document that the course team write at the end of each academic year. The Interim Course Review (ICR) is received at School level and contains an action plan to ensure that the course continues to reflect and develop.

Our External Examiner who is appointed to the Course moderates all module assessment decisions that contribute to your final degree. This is to ensure that the work meets national standards and that the assessments are fair. The External Examiner submits an annual report to the University and this also feeds into the Interim Course Review (ICR) and is discussed at the Course Committee.

15. Assessment regulations

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook).

16. Additional Information

Collaborative partner(s): None

Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements: Course Outcomes are referenced to the Quality Assurance Agency's benchmark statements for subjects in Art and Design published in February 2017

Course recognised by:

Date implemented: Major change approved via Development Approval Group (DAG) on 21/06/17.

Amendment to accreditation approved at SASQC 3 July 2019

Any additional information:

The course is unique in that it is the only one of its kind in the UK at undergraduate level to focus solely upon design through Fashion Knitwear and

Knitted Textiles. It has an extensive technical resource and a proven track record of industrial links and competition successes.

The course has well developed links with the global fashion and textile industry and the opportunity for students to complete meaningful work placement. Assessment feedback is conducted through various and regular audio and written methods. To aid peer and self-reflection. This helps students to develop a personal development plan and an individual creative response to projects and tasks to match their career interests and ambitions. Students are encouraged to develop a unique creative voice and direction as a designer.