



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Edinburgh College of Art

[www.eca.ed.ac.uk](http://www.eca.ed.ac.uk)

*How to Apply*

# ART & DESIGN 2021

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## Degree Programmes

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BA (Hons) Art <i>(1st year entry only)</i>	<b>W100</b>
BA (Hons) Intermedia Art	<b>W900</b>
BA (Hons) Painting	<b>W120</b>
BA (Hons) Photography	<b>W640</b>
BA (Hons) Sculpture	<b>W130</b>
MA (Hons) Fine Art <i>(5-year degree, 1st year entry only)</i>	<b>W150</b>
BA (Hons) Animation	<b>W615</b>
BA (Hons) Fashion	<b>W230</b>
BA (Hons) Film and Television	<b>P390</b>
BA (Hons) Graphic Design	<b>W210</b>
BA (Hons) Illustration	<b>W220</b>
BA (Hons) Interior Design	<b>W250</b>
BA (Hons) Jewellery and Silversmithing	<b>W721</b>
BA (Hons) Performance Costume	<b>W451</b>
BA (Hons) Product Design	<b>W240</b>
BA (Hons) Textiles	<b>J420</b>

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## PORTFOLIO GUIDANCE

### Introduction

As part of your application, you are required to submit a portfolio as evidence of your artistic ability and potential. You should begin to plan your portfolio as soon as you decide to apply.

Assessors are not necessarily expecting a showcase of final work, but rather an indication of work in progress showing how you approach an idea or subject and develop the work from initial thought, through experimentation and enquiry, to resolved work.

In this guide, you will find details of what we are looking for and how your work will be assessed. You will also find some general tips on how to plan and present your work and what makes a strong portfolio in different subject areas.

Please ensure you allow time for the technical aspects of portfolio submission. Take time to familiarise yourself with the submission portal once it opens in December (you'll get a link to it after you apply via UCAS), and work out what you will need to do to prepare your images for upload.

Guidance on submitting your portfolio digitally, including answers to common questions, can be found here:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-systems/support-guidance/applicants/submitting-mini-portfolio>

### Requirements

For applications to Film & Television you should upload one digital video file (or a URL link to it), up to five minutes in length and accompanied by a short passage of text. In addition you will be asked to give written answers to three questions (see page 14).

For applications to other Art and Design programmes we require:

- up to 10 images of your development/sketchbook work (minimum of 5 images)
- up to 10 images of your resolved work (minimum of 5 images)
- up to 5 images which demonstrate your influences (minimum of 2 images)

You are encouraged to include some brief supporting/explanatory text (maximum 100 characters) in the space provided alongside each image. The images demonstrating your influences may be images of work or objects which have inspired or influenced your work e.g. people working in the same medium or for the same audience, now or in the past; people interested in the same subject or theme, now or in the past; natural or man-made phenomena, objects, places or events which have inspired or provoked a response.

## Assessment

Portfolios are assessed by a team of academic staff who are particularly interested in how you research and develop ideas in a visual way and how you engage with your chosen discipline. This is broken down into four main areas of assessment, briefly summarised as follows:

- **Visual Research and Enquiry** shows the level of your engagement in intelligent, structured visual enquiry and how well you communicate this.
- **Idea Development** shows your ability to appropriately explore and develop ideas, and your level of skills in the use of materials or techniques.

- **Selection and Resolution** shows how well you judge which ideas have the most appropriate potential and your ability to bring them to a level of completion appropriate to your intended outcome.

- **Contextual Awareness** shows the extent of your knowledge of the subject you have applied for and how your work relates to it.

How the content of a portfolio provides evidence for the above categories will vary enormously depending on the person and the subject being applied to, and no two portfolios will be the same.

Saskia Cameron, BA (Hons) Illustration, 2016



## Planning and Presentation

Assessors are interested in how you have decided to put your portfolio together. This means that your portfolio should be carefully planned and well presented.

Assessors will be judging your ability to edit your work, so be selective and strategic in your choice of material. Aim to show a clear narrative or sense of the themes in your work, as well as the connections between the pieces.

If you have lots of high quality work, include it. It can show that you have talent in breadth and are hardworking and committed. If you haven't, select your best: these key gems can show us that you know what you are good at, and how to show it. Resist the temptation to pad out your portfolio with mediocre work.

Each image can be accompanied by a small amount of text, and applicants are strongly encouraged to make use of this opportunity. You should avoid including titles or descriptions of the work and instead explain the ideas behind the work, the challenge undertaken or any other significant factors. It may also be useful to explain why you have included the image in its particular category (development work, resolved work or influences).

Consideration should also be given to the graphical layout of the portfolio.

Remember that assessors will be looking at your work on a screen so the digital image you present to them is what they assess. Poor quality photographs and bad scans of your work will not create a good impression. Take the time and care to make your work look as good as possible.

*Imogen Richards, Painting BA (Hons), 2019*



**Art (including Art, Fine Art, Intermedia Art, Painting, Photography and Sculpture)**

A strong portfolio submission will show evidence of independent work beyond school/college projects. Assessors are looking for work which shows original thinking as well as depth, personality and visual understanding. Look out into the world, slow down and examine your surroundings honestly and inquiringly.

Ideas are more important than technical ability and assessors want to see work with conceptual underpinning, not just a random selection of images – be selective and strategic in your choice of work. Above all, assessors are looking to see a reflection of your true interests and a real commitment to the ambition to study Art.

*Brandon Logan, Fine Art MA, 2019*



## Animation

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- Confident use of a variety of drawing media and techniques.
- Originality in content, style and execution.
- Observational drawing – evidence of ability to draw the things that you can see, not just the things that you imagine. Life drawing can be one of the best indicators of this ability.
- Evidence of sequencing or pattern in folio (e.g. drawings/prints of objects changing state, drawings/prints of repeating pattern etc.)
- Evidence of narrative or storytelling such as written evidence, storyboarding, comic strips, scripts etc.
- Self-initiated projects beyond school/ college work.

- Practical animation experiments – we want to see your attempts at animation, regardless of quality, as evidence of your experience of the level of effort required to create animation.
- An awareness of animators, as well as animated films.

In addition, applicants to 2nd year should display:

- Evidence of practical animation beyond character design, layout and storyboarding – a completed film is the best indicator.
- Familiarity with at least some of the following software: 3D modelling & animation packages e.g. Maya, 3D Studio Max; 2D painting or photo manipulation packages e.g. Photoshop, Painter; compositing software e.g. Premiere, After Effects.

*Isabella Avery, Animation BA (Hons), 2019*



## Fashion

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- Excellent drawing skills (e.g. creative fashion illustrations, life drawing, drawing clothes on people, still life) in a range of media with evidence of a personal illustration style.
- An awareness of contemporary art, design and fashion.
- Strong research skills from primary and secondary sources.
- A good understanding of the development process through to final piece.
- Consideration of professional presentation and styling of finished work.

In addition, applicants to 2nd year should be displaying:

- Evidence of experimental 3D creative pattern-cutting.
- Sewing skills and ability at garment manufacture.

## Film & TV

The portfolio is made up of written answers to three questions (below) and a short film. The film should consist of a dramatic, documentary or experimental work. The film should be no more than five minutes long and ideally be a complete work, or else a strong excerpt that shows your ability to express a story or concept through audio-visual material. If your film is not in English it should include English subtitles. All submitted portfolio clips must be readily accessible (e.g. are not password protected) and must not contain copyrighted material.

We are looking for a clear understanding of what it means to employ film/video as a mean of artistic expression and as such portfolios consisting of showreels, music videos, travel reports or storyboards are unlikely to meet our criteria.

- What kind of research and preparation did you carry out to produce this film? *(Maximum 250 words)*
- Give a short description of the two main roles that interest you in a film production. What do you consider to be the main responsibilities and activities of these departments? Why are you interested in performing these roles? *(Maximum 250 words)*
- If you were given the assignment to make a short 3-minute film with the theme 'Cultural Diversity', how would you carry out the research, plan the budget and realise the production of this short film? Present a concise and clear plan. *(Maximum 500 words)*



*Julian Vogel, Film & Television BA (Hons), 2019*



*Alex Sixuan Fan, Fashion BA (Hons), 2019*

## Graphic Design

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- Evidence of concepts and problem-solving.
- Experimentation with materials and how ideas develop into resolved pieces.
- Typographic skills.
- 2D and 3D skills.
- A broad range of projects undertaken with a variety of outputs not just one idea, technique or theme.
- Above all, while drawing and digital skills are desirable, assessors are looking to see ideas. Ideas should be evident at the centre of any work presented.

In addition, applicants to 2nd year should display:

- Evidence of more lateral thinking.
- Experimentation and risk taking.
- Graphic application, i.e. use skills with typography and a larger volume of text, leading to compositions.
- Ideally some work on a client or more commercial brief.

## Illustration

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- Evidence of a confident and expressive visual language.
- A clear narrative or evidence of themes.
- Imagination, inventiveness, vitality, flair.
- Visual perception.
- Intelligent, original communication of ideas and stories.

*Victoria Underwood, Graphic Design BA (Hons), 2019*



## Interior Design

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- An aptitude for hand sketching (in situ as opposed to from a photograph), in any medium, of a variety of interior environments showing an understanding of 3D spaces and perspective.
- Evidence of ability to engage with the unfamiliar, such as projects that show an understanding of materials and evidence of experimentation.
- Interior-based projects beyond those focused on a domestic interior.
- Projects that show evidence of an understanding/engagement with people, either in who the projects are for or what they hope to achieve in relation to atmosphere and environment created.
- The development of your work showing how initial inspiration/research has resulted in your final solution, and the journey taken in-between.
- A thoughtful approach to the content and graphical layout of the portfolio itself.
- Basic understanding of computer programmes such as SketchUp, Photoshop and AutoCAD is desirable but not essential.
- An awareness of key players in modern architecture, and engagement in the wider design world in general.

## Jewellery and Silversmithing

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- Drawing in its widest sense, including
  - but not restricted to: collage, test pieces and experiments with materials, visual source material, photography, painting and digital design.
- A selection of observational drawings of personally selected subject matter (architecture, objects, people, nature etc.)
- Three-dimensional models in a range of materials clearly presented in an accessible way.
- Resolved work that shows a combination of creativity, hand skills, care and attention and an interest in materials and their properties.
- An awareness of contemporary makers and designers in jewellery and silversmithing as well as a wider interest in art and design and inter-related disciplines.
- Evidence of individuality, curiosity, patience and professional practice.

*Ruth Page, Jewellery & Silversmithing  
BA (Hons) 2019, Stations*



## Performance Costume

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- Strong drawing ability and image-making ability.
- Engagement with textiles.
- Experience of costume design for character, often evidenced through school project or personal project.
- Manual skill in making, e.g. millinery, costume, models, puppets etc.
- Evidence of creative thinking through design development, experimentation with materials, interesting and varied research.

- Unexpected and creative conjunctions of materials and ideas or references, and their synthesis.
- Practical implementation of costume design, e.g. involvement with costuming performance, perhaps a school play or amateur theatre group.
- Engagement with contemporary design, awareness of contemporary trends, designers, film, drama, exhibitions.

Rowan Leckie-Howell, *Performance Costume BA (Hons), 2019*



Matt Copeland, *Product Design BA (Hons), 2019, CuPRI*



## Product Design

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- Evidence of explorations through media that demonstrate strong drawing and image-making skills.
- Evidence of making. Some level of prototyping, modelling through diverse media, with evidence of experimentation.
- Design process. Demonstration of iterative thinking and designing including sketchbooks. Individual creativity in response to mundane briefs. Demonstration of personal interests.
- Research sensibility. Indication that applicants look beyond their own imagination for inspiration – images of people in their work, of things in the world, photographic studies, sketches, stories, cinema and wider culture.

## Textiles

A strong portfolio is likely to display the following:

- Well-developed, relevant and original work.
- Evidence of personal enquiry and direction.
- Some consistency of thought or theme.
- Commitment to the study of textiles.
- Some personal and/or independent work.
- Strong drawing skills.

*Claudine Stiles, Textiles BA (Hons), 2019*



