



# FOUNDATION COURSES

IN

## ART & DESIGN

### A STUDENT GUIDE



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*“Most Art and Design students decide to study at Foundation Level. This really is essential if you are not sure about a particular field within Art and Design.”*

*Craig Fox*

*Leeds Metropolitan University  
Graphic Arts and Design Student*

# ABOUT FOUNDATION IN ART & DESIGN

## WHAT IS A FOUNDATION?

Foundation courses vary in specific content but their primary purpose is to prepare students for progression into Higher Education courses in Art & Design.

The courses are usually **one year full-time**.

The full name is – **Level 3 Diploma in Foundation Studies (Art and Design)**

## WHY DO A FOUNDATION?

- To introduce students to a wide range of materials and processes. It acts as a transition from A Level to degree level.
- To develop students' historical, theoretical and contextual knowledge and understanding.
- To develop students' independent learning skills necessary for degree level study.
- It allows you to build a portfolio toward a specialist pathway (e.g. graphic design) for degree applications.
- It encourages a different way of thinking.
- There are over 180 different art and design disciplines from which to choose. A foundation course will help gain an understanding of the options.

### PROS:

- Helps you decide what area of art you are interested in.
- Only a one year course but has a long term impact.
- Provides an opportunity to explore, expand and specialise.
- Helps to build a portfolio.
- Builds confidence.
- Usually guarantees an interview for a degree course at the same institution.
- Develops creative thinking which is important in creative industries.

### CONS:

- Financial constraints.
- Delays starting a degree.
- Is not a mandatory course.



## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The entry requirement for a Foundation course is a **portfolio of work**, an **interview** (in most cases) and **academic qualifications**.

### THE MINIMUM ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A FOUNDATION COURSE ARE:

3-5 GCSE passes (grade A-C) plus one A Level at grade C or above / AGCE / BTEC / National Diploma.

\*Requirements vary so – **check college websites.**

## COURSE STRUCTURE

### WHAT YOU WILL STUDY:

\*Foundation courses vary in content so – **research the course before applying.**

### BASIC STRUCTURE:

- All courses will include Contextual studies – History of Art and written assignments, studio practice, lectures, seminars, visits and personal study time.
- An average day is 9.30 am – 4.30 pm with some additional evenings.

**Term 1: Exploratory phase** – experimentation Art, Design and Media (includes painting, sculpture, fashion textiles, 3D design, animation, film and photography).

**Term 2: Pathway stage** – Choosing a specialism.

**Term 3: Confirmatory stage** - A major project exhibition.

## FEES & FUNDING

### FEES:

#### Under 19

Free if you are under 19 on the 31 August of the year you join the course.

#### Over 19

For over 19s - £5,290 plus registration fee.

### FUNDING:

There is a 16-19 bursary available for those who qualify – For more details see

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

# WHERE TO START

## CHOOSING A COURSE

**RESEARCH COURSES** Look for courses that cover as many Art and Design disciplines as possible. Colleges offer different specialisms (e.g. London College of Communication specialises in animation and graphics).

Here are some popular collage that students choose. See a full list on the websites below:

[www.university.which.co.uk](http://www.university.which.co.uk)

Is good for course search, statistics and recommendations.

It is easier to navigate than UCAS.

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

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

## University of the Arts

The main choices in London are the colleges within the University of the Arts

\*Only one application can be made within the **University of the Arts**.

Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon offer one combined foundation based at **Camberwell**.

**St Martins** offer a foundation course.

**Camberwell College of Arts**  
[www.arts.ac.uk/camberwell](http://www.arts.ac.uk/camberwell)

**Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design**  
[www.arts.ac.uk/csm](http://www.arts.ac.uk/csm)

**Chelsea College of Art and Design**  
[www.arts.ac.uk/chelsea](http://www.arts.ac.uk/chelsea)

**London College of Fashion**  
[www.arts.ac.uk/fashion](http://www.arts.ac.uk/fashion)

**London College of Communication**  
[www.arts.ac.uk/lcc](http://www.arts.ac.uk/lcc)

**Wimbledon College of Art**  
[www.arts.ac.uk/wimbledon](http://www.arts.ac.uk/wimbledon)

## OTHER COLLEGES IN LONDON

**City and Guilds of London Art School**  
[www.cityguildsartschool.ac.uk](http://www.cityguildsartschool.ac.uk)

**University for the Creative Arts Epsom** [www.ucreative.com](http://www.ucreative.com)

**Kingston College** [www.kingston-college.ac.uk](http://www.kingston-college.ac.uk)

**Barnet College** [www.barnet.ac.uk](http://www.barnet.ac.uk)

**West Herts College** [www.westherts.ac.uk](http://www.westherts.ac.uk)

**Harrow College** [www.harrow.ac.uk](http://www.harrow.ac.uk)

**Middlesex University** (12 week intensive course)  
[www.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.mdx.ac.uk)

**Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication**  
[www.rave.ac.uk](http://www.rave.ac.uk)

**WMC The Camden College** [www.wmcollege.ac.uk](http://www.wmcollege.ac.uk)

**Royal Drawing School** [www.royaldrawingschool.org](http://www.royaldrawingschool.org)

## COLLEGES OUTSIDE LONDON

**Bournemouth** [www.aub.ac.uk](http://www.aub.ac.uk)

**Leeds College of Arts** [www.leeds-art.ac.uk](http://www.leeds-art.ac.uk)

**Oxford Brookes** [www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)

**Oaklands College** [www.oaklands.ac.uk](http://www.oaklands.ac.uk)

## VISITING COLLEGES

Visiting colleges is an essential part of the decision making process. It is advisable to visit Foundation Shows (summer term) and Open Days (autumn term)



### QUESTIONS AND WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Check the facilities – studios, IT provision, workshops, library.
- What specialisms are offered?
- Are the tutors practitioners?
- What is the location?
- What is the progression from foundation to degree?
- What is the standard of the show?
- What trips and visits are built into the course?
- What are the class sizes?
- What do the current students think of the course?
- Is there provision for special needs?
- How is the course assessed?
- How much theoretical work is required?
- What is the cost of the course?

\*Do not ask questions that are available on the website. Find out this information before you visit.

### CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING A COURSE

- Research college websites: Look at prospectuses. Pay attention to course structure.
- Study course content. What is the specialism area?
- Book visits to colleges.
- Shortlist institutions.
- List your choices in order of preference.
- Check location. How far will you have to travel? Will you have to find accommodation?
- Check facilities – studios, IT provision, workshops, library, etc.
- Visit the college / university foundation shows (May / June) and open days (Sept - Dec).
- Rank college - put in order of preference.
- Discuss your options / decision. Talk to your teachers and careers advisors about which college course may best suit you.

# HOW TO APPLY

You will **apply via the School's UCAS process**. The deadline is **Friday 3 November 2017**.

If your application is unsuccessful your form is passed to clearing and you'll be informed of vacancies in April.

Art and design foundation courses have different closing dates January - March. However -

**YOU MUST APPLY VIA THE SCHOOL'S UCAS PROCESS.**

You will have a reference interview with the Head of Sixth Form who will collect your completed online or paper application form. A reference will be written for you and the school will send off your application.

## TIMELINE FOR APPLICATION

### Year 12

#### Spring Term 2017

- Start researching courses
- Visit open days if available

#### Summer Term 2017

- Futures week
- Visit foundation shows

### Year 13

#### Autumn Term 2017/18

- Write your personal statement
- Visit UCAS Art and Design Fair October / November
- Visit open days
- Make a final decision on choices
- Complete application forms
- Arrange a reference Interview. Deadline: **Friday 3 Nov. 2017**

#### Spring Term 2018

- Prepare portfolio
- Prepare for interview
- Interviews take place January to March

#### Summer Term 2018

- Acceptance of offers April / May
- Clearing for University of the Arts – second round interviews
- Visit foundation and degree shows



# WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

All applications require a personal statement. It is the only part of the application form where you can talk about yourself, promote yourself and make yourself stand out from everyone else.

Some colleges do not interview. Apart from your portfolio the personal statement is an opportunity to impress the tutors.

The statement should be well written, to the point and easy to read. The space allocated for the statement varies so be prepared to make alterations. Most forms allow 200-300 words – UCAS applications give you 4,000 characters.

## 3 THINGS TO INCLUDE:

### 1. Reasons why you are applying

- Why you have chosen the course
- What you hope to gain from the course
- Future career aspirations
- Particular interests

### 2. Information about you

- Specific skills, abilities and interests
- Mention artists and designers you like
- Exhibitions that interested you
- work experience
- A brief description of some of your recent work
- Other interests, activities, responsibilities, travel etc

### 3. How to end

Something specific i.e. what you hope you will gain from the course

*“I look at a foundation course as the first step towards a career in the creative field”.*

*“I hope to share with other people, in the right environment, the artistic and enthusiastic feeling I have for this subject”.*

## EXAMPLAR PERSONAL STATEMENT

It is the re-creation and questioning of the world through art that I find fascinating - the ability to convey my own perceptions to the audience whilst allowing room for their own interpretation.

As a result of Oscar Murillo's work, I have recently become intrigued with the representation of the urban world. His use of mixed media is something that I have been attempting myself by including contrasting media such as sand, wax, string and ink to create a multi-layered piece. Murillo's work is particularly ambiguous and this is something that I have been trying to emulate. I am constantly eager to experiment with different media and learn new techniques and find that this is what excites me to work. I feel that this is something that I would be able to continue and develop at Kingston.

My A levels have also helped me develop skills relevant to art. Through studying English and Drama, I have gained respect for the importance of interpretation and have developed my analytical skills. However, interest in art travels beyond the classroom. I have created a fashion blog which I use as an artistic outlet, using my weekly posts to voice my opinions on street fashion and current news in the fashion industry.

I feel that through the diverse course at Kingston I would be able to explore new styles and gain more practical skills through learning new methods. I feel that this course would allow me to examine the world around me in further depth and enable me to have an overall clearer understanding of which area I would want to specialise in.



## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Research courses
- Speak to advisors about which college course may best suit you
- Visit colleges
- List your choices in order of preference
- Fill out and print your application forms
- Write a personal statement (see WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT)
- Arrange a reference interview in School
- The School will write your reference and send off your application

### DO:

- **Allow enough time** – start working on your statement well in advance (your tutor and specialist teacher will check it)
- **Include specific skills and abilities**
- **Include work experience** – be specific
- **Mention recent exhibitons you've visited**
- **Write several drafts** – it will take several versions to get it right
- **Get help** – follow advice of your teachers, tutors and family
- **Use clear paragraphs** – it must be easy to read
- **Explain why you like an artist or artwork**
- **Type the statement** – keep a copy
- **Check your spelling and grammar** – get your tutors and teachers to proof read it

### DON'T:

- Don't write anything you can't talk about in the interview
- Be truthful
- Repeat information that is already on the application form
- Don't mention a college by name unless you are prepared to write a different personal statement for each application
- Write general statements, e.g. "I like Picasso's work" or "I have always wanted to study art as a child"

*"Does your personal statement show enthusiasm and commitment for the subject and some indication of why you have applied to Camberwell for this course?"*

Camberwell College of Arts

# PREPARING YOUR PORTFOLIO

**Your portfolio is the most important part of your application.** Your portfolio should show your skills and knowledge. It is a visual representation of your interests, explorations and final pieces.

It should demonstrate personal ideas and commitment with evidence of research, sustained enquiry and a focussed approach. Admissions tutors will also be looking for a sense of curiosity, imagination and inventiveness in your work.

They do not have much time to look through portfolios so your work must grab their attention.

## WHAT YOUR PORTFOLIO SHOULD CONTAIN:

- **As wide a variety of work as possible**
- **Observational drawing** – variety of media from real life not just photographs
- **Development work** – show your ideas and how they develop into finished pieces – this might include sketchbooks, journals, design papers
- **A range of work** – use of different media including colour work, paintings, 3D, photography, graphics, textiles, video and animation. (Don't worry you are not expected to have examples of each of these media.)
- **Recent work** – from the last two years
- **Personal work** – evidence of what inspires you. Include work that interests, activates and inspires – e.g. a personal sketchbook of work done in addition to your present course
- **Sketchbooks / ideas books** – at least two or three showing ideas, interests, awareness of other artists and designers work, gallery visits, development work
- **Examples of written / visual research** – an example of annotated visual records of artist research and / or extended studies / essays
- **Collaborative work** – evidence of a project where you have worked as a member of a team or other activity e.g. drama production in school

## SIZE & QUANTITY:

- Portfolio size – any size that suits the content A1 or A2 are most commonly used. However, **colleges have different requirements and some are very specific**
- Work does not have to be in plastic covers
- Remember it is quality not quantity
- Sketchbooks are essential
- Normally 20-30 pages
- Four or five projects
- You will be asked to talk through your portfolio if you have an interview so bear that in mind
- Some colleges have a 'drop off' or a portfolio preview system. The portfolio is viewed and you may be asked to attend an interview or be given an offer of a place.

## DO:

- Give yourself time to prepare
- Check individual institution requirements
- Photograph 3D items and bulky pieces of work
- Label your photographs (media, dimensions and title)
- Put recent work at the front
- Arrange so that the Admissions Tutor can easily follow how you have developed an idea from the initial research through to the finished piece
- Balance pages
- Mount work on the white or appropriate cartridge paper
- Include canvasses if too large
- Use fixative on charcoal/pastel drawings
- Check institution requirements e.g. London College of Fashion like to see fashion design, make up, photography
- Include sketchbooks
- Present films or videos in the form of storyboards and stills
- Check and re check your portfolio

## DON'T:

- Include too much annotation
- Include work not intended for assessment
- Over decorate or use large, labels or titles
- Mount on heavy card unless absolute necessary
- Put in films, video or DVDs – there will not be time to view them
- Take large or very bulky items
- Put in unfixed pastel / charcoal work
- Include so much work that you can't carry it!
- Leave everything to the last minute
- Use black paper, some colleges do not like it

## PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

- Is my work visually interesting?
- Is it clearly titled and annotated?
- Does it show concept to conclusion?
- Does it demonstrate experimentation with a range of media?
- What does the work say about me? Personal interests / style?
- Which pieces would I choose to talk about and why?
- Is my portfolio arranged so that I can talk through it fluently and with confidence?
- Do my sketchbooks show investigation and exploration?
- Is there evidence of gallery visits?
- Do my sketchbooks demonstrate personal inquiry?



# INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Interview procedures vary from college to college. Some colleges require you to drop off your portfolio on a specific date and collect it later that day. No interview takes place. You will be notified within a few weeks as to the outcome.

Others require you to deliver your portfolio and will then call you for interview the same day.

Interviews for Foundation are likely to be short – five to ten minutes, as there are hundreds of applicants. You may be interviewed in a group with each student required to talk about their work.

You need to know what you are going to say about your work. Select particular pieces - the tutors may ask you to talk about a selected piece .

## PREPARATION

- Know your work
- What will you say about your work? How has it evolved? What were the influences? What were the materials / processes used?
- Research the college and course - visit beforehand and speak to students
- Go to current exhibitions
- Read arts pages in newspapers
- Have a mock interview and go through your portfolio so you learn what you will say about your work.

## PRESENTATION

- Think about how you present yourself through your body language, voice delivery and what you say
- Make an effort with your appearance but wear something you are comfortable in
- Be polite
- Listen to questions carefully and consider your response before answering
- If you are not sure about a question, admit that you don't know and try to move onto something you do know about

## WHAT ARE COLLEGES LOOKING FOR?

- Subject knowledge
- Knowledge of the course
- Enthusiasm
- Skill and hard work
- Motivation
- Commitment

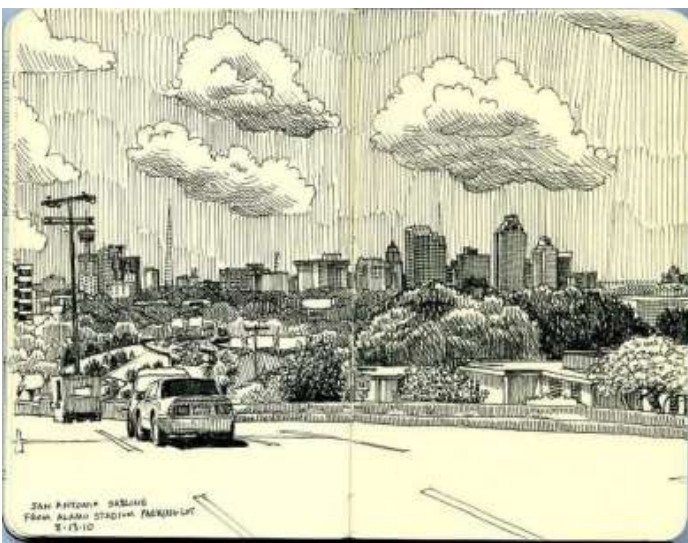


## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Where did the idea for a piece come from - artist influence, exhibition, previous work?
- What materials and techniques did you use?
- What does the piece represent - what is its meaning?
- Has the work led to further pieces or what alternatives would be explored?
- Ask relevant questions.

*“Another factor that came into consideration was what to wear and how to present myself. On job interviews I usually dress very smartly and act very professionally, but this was an interview for an art course so I wanted to show my personality and be a little more free but still look like I was taking it seriously”.*

*Katrina Caplan- Applied and Design*



## DO:

- Research the course beforehand
- Arrive early
- Dress in your normal style
- Be yourself
- Make eye contact
- Listen to questions carefully
- Admit when you don't know the answer to something
- Be enthusiastic
- Express your opinions

## DON'T:

- Arrive late
- Try to be cool
- Talk too much
- Become defensive
- Be arrogant

*“I chose my final piece from my environment project because I felt it was the one I could speak about most confidently. In deciding what to say about it I asked myself the following questions:*

- 1. What was the project title?*
- 2. Which artists did I look at?*
- 3. What inspired me?*
- 4. What I did to plan my project?*
- 5. How did I design and develop my designs?*
- 6. Which galleries and visits did I use to assist my explorations ?*

*Katrina Caplan  
Applied Art and Design Student*

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Why have you chosen this college?
- Have you attended an open day?
- What do you know about our course?
- What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses in your work?
- Which is your favourite piece from your portfolio?
- Choose a piece from your portfolio and explain why you have selected it
- Who is your favourite artist or designer?
- What aspect of Foundation do you wish to pursue?
- Which galleries, exhibitions or museums have you visited recently?
- What do you think are the challenges in being an artist or designer?
- What motivates or inspires you?
- What are your favourite books / films?
- What are your future career plans?
- Have you got any questions for us?



## AN INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE

*Foundation studies in Art and Design: London College of Fashion*

*We waited in a room until all of us (about 16) got called into the interview room to place our portfolios on the table. We then all went back to the waiting room to fill out a questionnaire with questions such as:*

- 1. What was the last film you watched?*
- 2. What was the last book you read?*
- 3. What was the last exhibition you went to?*
- 4. Who are you most inspired by?*

*Once we had waited and filled out our questionnaire, after about half an hour, we were called back into the interview room and split into two groups and each had to talk about our chosen piece”.*

*Katrina Caplan*

*Applied Art and Design student Interview at London College of Fashion*

## OFFERS

**Offers are usually unconditional other than the successful completion of your current course.**

- If you receive an offer from your first choice college then you should accept it.
- If you have applied to one of the colleges within the University of the Arts London and you have not been successful then your application will be sent to clearing.
- You will hear from a second choice college, if they have vacancies, during April / May and you will be given another interview date. The outcome of this interview will be known by mid-May.
- Meanwhile you may have accepted an offer from a college outside of the University of the Arts while waiting to hear from clearing.
- If you are successful on your second interview with the University of the Arts then you will need to make a decision – talk it over with your teachers, careers advisors, parents.

## “WHAT DO I DO IF I DO NOT GET AN OFFER?”

**Do not give up! There are options.**

- **Contact other colleges directly:** it may be possible to make a late application if they have places
- **Ask for feedback from the colleges that rejected you:** to get an idea of weaknesses spotted
- **Consider taking a gap year**
- **Find employment and work on your portfolio:** go to evening classes to strengthen it. Many colleges offer portfolio courses for this purpose and re-apply next year. [www.kingston.ac.uk](http://www.kingston.ac.uk), [www.arts.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.arts.brookes.ac.uk)
- **Improve your prospects:** Enter competitions, do awards [www.arts.award.ac.uk](http://www.arts.award.ac.uk), exhibit / sell your work
- **Consider an apprenticeship:** See [Apprenticeships in Art & Design a Student Guide](#) for more information

## LIFE AFTER FOUNDATION

In the second term of your Foundation course you should have a good idea of a specialist area of study. This will allow you to build up a portfolio for the next stage – Applications to an Art & Design Degree (BA Hons) or other HE course such as: HND or Foundation Degree.

### SPECIALIST AREAS:

- **Fine Art:** Painting, Sculpture, Printmaking
- **Communication:** Graphics, Photography, Advertising, Web Design
- **Design:** Jewellery, Product design, Ceramics, Textiles, Fashion, Interior Design

You may decide that you would like to seek employment or that Art and Design is not the field you wish to continue with into higher education.

A new round of research is required into courses and institutions. You may decide to apply to the same college (if they offer your specialism) or to research alternatives.

## LINKS & RESOURCES

### Getting into Art and Design Courses

James Burnett

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

Develops skills in the creative industry

### Art and Design Uncovered

Emma Caprez

“Rave Lates” on You Tube

### Careers in Art and Design

Noel Chapman

[www.cassart.co.uk](http://www.cassart.co.uk)

Workshops

### Studying Art & Design (Q & A Degree Subject Guide)

[www.a-n.co.uk/news](http://www.a-n.co.uk/news)

Support Artists

### UCAS Guide to Getting into Art & Design

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

Help and advice for creative careers

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

Resources, network and opportunities to develop your art practice.

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

Competitions, funding and jobs

[www.artshub.co.uk/arts-jobs](http://www.artshub.co.uk/arts-jobs)

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

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