

Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium

Visual Merchandising

- Foundation Degree



Foundation Degree

What is a Foundation Degree?

Foundation Degrees are university level degree courses that offer an exciting work-based alternative to the traditional university route. They are:

- A stand-alone recognised qualification.
- Equivalent to studying the first two years of an honours degree programme.
- Highly valued by employers.

How does this work?

Foundation Degrees in Hertfordshire are accessible through your local college, as part of the Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium*. On graduation you will be awarded a University of Hertfordshire validated degree, and depending on your chosen course you even get letters after your name... FdA, FdSc.

Benefits to studying a Foundation Degree

- **real-life projects** which enable you to gain valuable work experience whilst allowing you to apply your skills and knowledge.
- **support** that's available throughout your course from tutors and advisors in College and mentors in your place of work.
- **affordable** because you can choose from one of four colleges to study at you will never be far from home, saving you money on living costs.
- **funding** through student tuition fee loans will cover the cost of your programme – so there's nothing to pay up front.

Who can study a Foundation Degree?

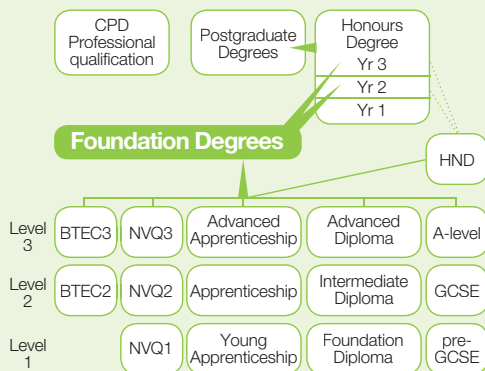
Foundation Degrees are suitable for all kinds of candidates including:

- Those with Level 3 qualifications (eg A Levels, Advanced Apprenticeships, BTECs, Access to Higher Education or City & Guilds).
- Those looking for a change in career.
- Those already employed but wanting to gain a Higher Education qualification either to progress their career or other aspirations.

What can I do with my Foundation Degree?

That really is up to you! Your degree will ensure that you are well equipped to start your career path and research shows that those with a Higher Education qualification earn 25% more than those without! However, if you have a taste for learning you can 'top-up' your Foundation Degree to a BA or BSc honours degree.

How do Foundation Degrees fit with other qualifications?



Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium*

The Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium is a partnership between the University of Hertfordshire, Hertford Regional College, North Hertfordshire College, Oaklands College and West Herts College.

The consortium provides innovative, high quality courses that support vocational higher education. Students get the best of both worlds – the benefits and support of studying at college, and access to University facilities including the libraries (LRCs), athletic and student unions all social activities, careers support and much, much more.



The table shows the structure of the Foundation Degree in Visual Merchandising – illustrated as a full-time course.

Year One	Semester A	Work Based Learning: Developing Professional and Employability Skills (30 credits)	Historical and Contemporary Context (15 credits)	Creative Problem Solving (30 credits)
	Semester B		Creative Languages (15 credits)	Creative Vocational Practice: Visual Merchandising (30 credits)
Year Two	Semester A	Work Based Learning: Professional Practice (30 credits)	Contextual Studies (15 credits)	Portfolio Development: Visual Merchandising (30 credits)
	Semester B		Cultural and Ethical Debate (15 credits)	Final Major Project: Visual Merchandising (30 credits)



This programme provides you with the opportunity to gain a range of skills and knowledge which prepare you for a career in the Visual Merchandising industry. The focus is on developing creative and commercial skills alongside placement experience in the retail industry.

Year 1 modules – Semester A

Work Based Learning: Developing Professional and Employability Skills

This module will help you to focus on planning your career and developing employability and professional skills. You will take a closer look at the creative and culture sector to identify a route that best suits and reflects your strengths and preferences whilst preparing you for progression by looking at job-hunting techniques, networking and self-promotion. You will articulate your skills and knowledge to create an action plan for progression using appropriate writing skills.

Historical and Contemporary Context

This module will develop your creative, cultural and critical understanding of Visual Merchandising and the creative work it can produce. You will be introduced to several historical and contemporary periods or movements and examine and identify the ways in which the time, place and conditions of their production influenced and shaped creativity and practice. This will enable you to develop your research abilities, critical faculties and academic skills so that you can investigate, analyse and present your case effectively.

Creative Problem Solving

This module has been designed to prepare you for further study and the workplace. You will gain an understanding of the key production processes and professional practices relevant to Visual Merchandising and the cultural and creative industries, in addition to learning methods of conceptualising creativity and authorship.

Entry requirements

48 points, including one GCE A2, a BTEC National Diploma/Certificate or equivalent. Plus GCSE Maths and English Language at grade 4 or above. You may be asked to attend an interview with a portfolio of work.

Mature students with GCSE grade C or above English language and grade D or above in Maths or equivalent, but lacking traditional level 3 qualifications will be considered on the basis of relevant experience and an appropriate portfolio of work.

If English is not your first language, you will need an IELTS score of 6.0 or 80 IBT or equivalent.

How to apply

Applications are to be made through UCAS – www.UCAS.com. Institutional Code: Herts H36.

How will I be assessed?

This programme is assessed by coursework only, in the form of practical and written assignments. Coursework may be based on both individual work and group work.

What will I learn?

This higher education qualification develops your design and practical skills to standards that will impress the retailers that you will deal with in the future. The modules focus on employability and prepare you for a career in the retail sector or the many agencies that support the visual merchandising industry.

Where will I study?

The Foundation Degree in Visual Merchandising is only offered at Hertford Regional College. For more information visit www.hrc.ac.uk and also see previous student work at www.hrcfda.com

Progression routes

Students who pass the Foundation Degree in Visual Merchandising normally enter straight into employment. Alternatively you will have the opportunity to top up to a BA honours in Interior and Architecture, Visual Merchandising, Retail Branding, Marketing and Promotion or similar relevant programme.





Year 1 modules – Semester B

Creative Languages

This module is all about creativity in action. You will investigate well-known practitioners from the field of Visual Merchandising, concentrating on their expressive languages, comparing them with each other and relating them to your own ideas. You will produce a body of your own work ready to be incorporated into project work in other modules.

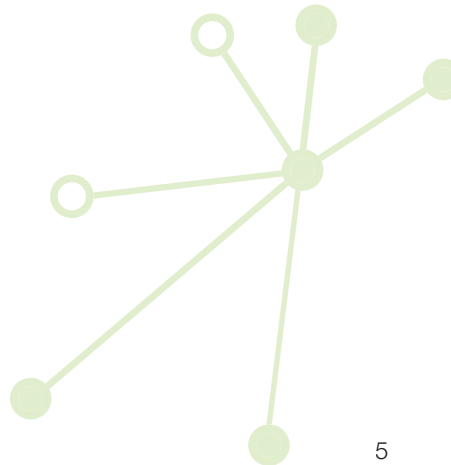
Creative Vocational Practice: Visual Merchandising

This module focuses on building professional and creative skills in realising and presenting typical vocational briefs in Visual Merchandising. You will learn how to exploit the visual and tactile qualities of merchandise and how to make it look its best at the point-of-sale. You will often use fashion promotion as a tool and draw from examples from a variety of retail environments including shop floor organization, using plans and modelling techniques.



“ My experience of the foundation degree has been a very positive one, enabling me to make contact with many professionals and negotiate and undertake a number of work placements. One placement led to an extended internship with Habitat during the summer of my first year and now I that have graduated, I am working for the company to pursue my career in the Visual Merchandising industry. I would highly recommend the benefits of Work Based Learning at this level of study. ”

*Shelley Piper Foundation Degree
Visual Merchandising 2013*



Year 2 modules – Semester A

Work Based Learning: Professional Practice

In this module you will work with an employer / client on a project that meets their needs whilst allowing you to express and develop your professional skills and understanding. The project will be negotiated and may be carried out on the employer's premises but this will be dependent on the type of project agreed.

Contextual Studies

This module provides an introduction to contemporary critical perspectives in the theory and practice of the creative arts to provide a frame of reference for Visual Merchandising Through the examination of creative practices within a variety of historical, socio-political, aesthetic and institutional contexts you will learn the basis for critical examination in practice.

Portfolio Development: Visual Merchandising

In this module you will explore, develop and apply the professional skills needed to build a portfolio of work for progression to employment or further study. You will develop your conceptual and practical skills in the context of Visual Merchandising through all aspects of retail design, fashion and lifestyle promotion.



Year 2 modules – Semester B

Cultural and Ethical Debate

This module will cover theme based explorations of the influences that shape creative messages in a range of contexts. You will develop awareness of how social and cultural constructs are formed, evolve, and are challenged and used to influence future developments considering issues such as; consumption globalization, sustainability, race, gender diversity and the role of stereotypes.

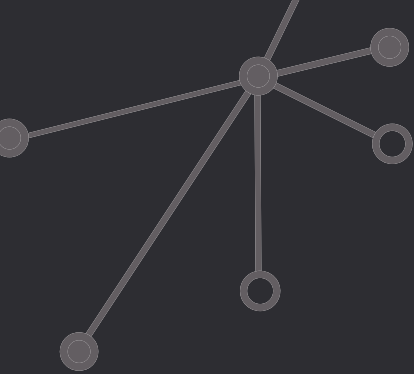
Final Major Project: Visual Merchandising

This module provides the opportunity for you to put all your experience and learning together in one final project that confirms you as a creative professional in Visual Merchandising. Through an agreed brief you will articulate a complete design process from identification of need to realisation and presentation. You will investigate and employ a variety of platforms to promote both your final piece of work and yourself as an employable professional.



A large white rectangular area with rounded corners, containing horizontal lines for writing notes. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the area.





For further information

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