

Art and Design Practice (Graphic Design) National Diploma level 3

Course Overview

This is the first year of a two year qualification and is equivalent to 1.5 A levels. Successful progress can lead to entry onto the Extended Diploma (equivalent to 3 A levels). It provides a broad-based graphic design overview which can lead into an exciting range of careers including graphic designer, illustrator, advertising, digital art and media art worker. The course is supported by regular trips to galleries and museums as well as location research trips. There is also a developing programme of industrial visits and live projects.
 If you are aged 16 to 18, you will be enrolled on a study programme. This will include retaking GCSEs or undertaking Functional Skills in English and Maths if you haven't already achieved a grade 4 or above.
 You will take part in activities that help you to develop your personal skills, such as building your character and confidence. This will help you to live well and move into your chosen career.
 If you are 16-19 years old these activities will be timetabled as will work experience and placement. You can also choose to take part in other activities.
 For other age groups, activities will be tailored to your needs.

What you will learn

The course is predominantly a graphic design course with elements of interactive media covering the following subjects: ideas and concepts; drawing; design method; contextual studies; photography; screen printing; computers in art and design; and web design. The course covers the design process, and you will also be training on a range of the latest industry software including Adobe InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator.
 The course is timetabled over 14 hours, four days per week. This is a demanding course and there is an expectation that students will dedicate additional time to their studies. The course is an art and design-based qualification so you will be expected to engage with drawing and other creative units. Assessment is continuous and achievement is closely monitored.

If you successfully complete year 1, you will progress on to year two of the Extended Diploma level 3. The subjects you will cover are application, exploration and realisation in art and design; design methods in art and design; personal and professional development; digital imaging computer manipulations; mixed media; design for advertising; and information graphics.
 100% internally assessed this course is highly practical and progression focused. Featuring large, flexible teaching modules, it allows for practical and professional skills development.

Entry Requirements

Standard entry to this course requires one reference. It is desirable that you can demonstrate 90% attendance. 4 GCSEs at grade 4 (C) including English and an Art/Design related subject is required. GCSE Maths at grade 4 (C) or above is desirable. A Level 2 Art Diploma at Merit/ Merit will also be considered. You will also require a portfolio that demonstrates your suitability for your chosen course.
 Consideration will be given to all applicants over the age of 19 who do not hold formal English and maths qualifications.

Course Fees

If you are 18 or above entering this course you may incur fees if you apply for entry onto the first or second year of the programme. Please see our guidance on 19+ fees on our website

Course Progression

This level 3 course allows successful students to progress either into the creative arts industry or higher education in graphic design, or a range of allied subject areas. The course equips you to enter the creative industries at a junior level. There will also be an element of simulated work experience through live projects, competitions, and industrial assignments during year two of the course.

What Happens Next

Apply online via the College website, or if your school uses the Positive Steps @16 (PS16) application system please apply through this and speak to your careers advisor if you are unsure. You will need details of your qualifications and employment history, a reference, and a personal statement to complete your application. Once your application has been successfully processed, you will be sent a conditional offer and be invited to a Welcome Event at the College to meet your tutors, learn more about your chosen course of study and tour the facilities. You will then need to confirm your acceptance of the course offered to you.

Course Details

Course Code	P00140
Start Date	07/09/2026
Study Hours	Full Time
Duration	1 year
Campus	St Margaret's Campus
Level	3

Apply Here