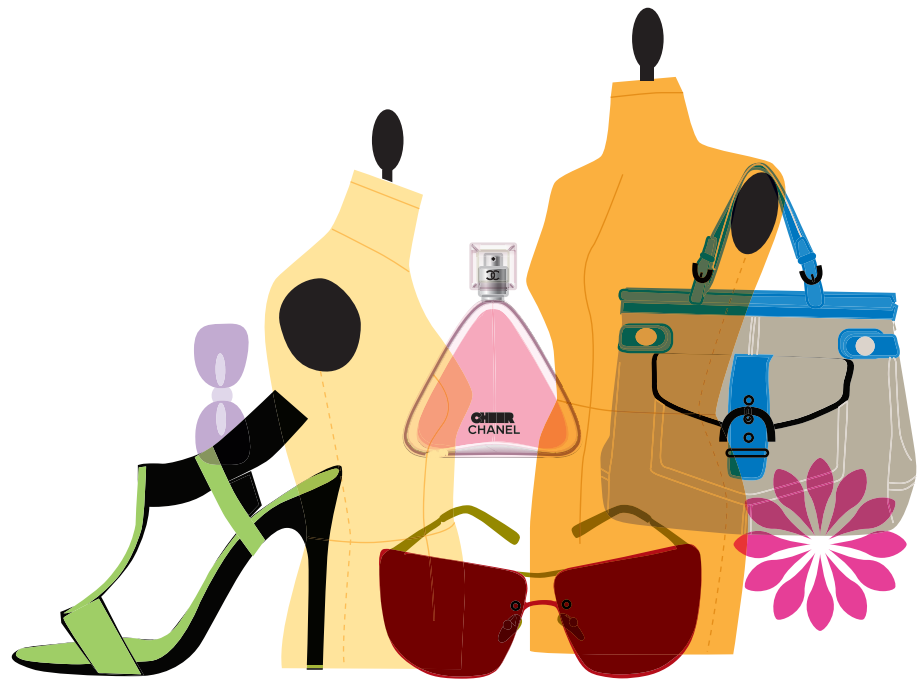


Research, Conceptualise, Analyse, Develop & Implement...

# Getting a start in your fashion & textile design career

What a design graduate needs to know



Fashion designers develop clothing, accessories, footwear and other items of personal apparel. Textile designers plan and develop patterns, knit and weave construction, prints, textures and illustrations for fabrics and other materials that require the development of patterned surfaces. They plan the way a fabric looks and performs.

*Where you will work:* Clothing Manufacturers, Designer/Maker Boutiques, Self Employed, Clothing Importers & Distributors, Department Store Fashion Buyers, Textile Manufacturing Companies, Design Consultancies, Designer/Maker Workshops, Fabric Wholesalers, Fashion Retailers<sup>1</sup>.

## Tips for getting a graduate job including hints from graduates

**Work Experience:** This is a great way to differentiate yourself. Work experience gained while studying assists you to develop design skills and to gain the generic skills (e.g. communication skills) sought by employers. It also provides a more realistic understanding of the industry, business awareness and would enable you to develop additional samples of work for inclusion in a portfolio.

**Portfolios:** A portfolio provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate your design capabilities and your understanding of each stage of the design process. Your portfolio should show a selection of your best works. It should be presented in a professional manner that highlights your personal design style and have no spelling or grammatical errors. Your portfolio gives an employer the opportunity to see the thought process behind your designs and how these designs evolved. It is important to show your exploration of ideas by including some early sketching ideas or computer images.

**Networking:** Many design jobs are never formally advertised. Networking provides you with an opportunity to gain entry into this competitive industry. Networking opportunities can occur at professional association and industry shows and events, faculty events and through staff, guest lecturers and maintaining contact with peers.

## Future trends & tips

“Strong communications skills will continue to be critical. This will include the ability to communicate with people whose first language is not English.”

“Computer knowledge and skills in programs such as Illustrator, Photoshop and Indesign are important.”

“Having business knowledge and understanding of key business areas including marketing and finance.”

“An understanding of basic design concepts will continue to remain important. This includes being good with graphics, textile and garment design.”

“Attention to detail, having realistic expectations, being committed and willing to work the hours required are all important skills for future fashion and textile graduates.”

## What to do and when....

Start of my degree	Middle of my degree	End of my degree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn to network.</li> <li>- Work on developing soft skills such as communication, team work and time management.</li> <li>- By end of year start exploring work experience opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gain work experience.</li> <li>- Continue to network at places such as professional association and industry shows and events and through University staff and guest lecturers.</li> <li>- Begin to build a portfolio of your work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Put together an impressive portfolio.</li> <li>- Search for job opportunities through the contacts you have made.</li> <li>- Continue to gain more work experience.</li> <li>- Continue to network.</li> </ul>

## Skills employers want

In addition to a solid understanding of the design process and relevant computer skills, some key skills employers want graduates to have are:

Strong communication skills

Knowledge of the whole industry

Ability to work in a team and multitask

Passion/enthusiasm for fashion & textile design

Initiative & self motivated

Time management & ability to meet deadlines

## What jobs are there?

Career options include buyer, fashion editor, fashion or textile designer, accessory designer, illustrator, visual merchandise or stylist. Other areas of employment include marketing, public relations, teaching and education, media and sales. Some students start their own business, while others work within an established company.

## What will I be doing in my first job?

Your first job may involve shadowing other designers to learn about design work, elementary design tasks, attending client meetings, administrative tasks and research of suitable and new materials and identifying trends. The nature of the work undertaken by graduates will depend on the size of the organisation they are working for, the client and the project.

**What my career path might look like:** Design Assistant, Graduate/Junior Designer, Assistant Designer, Designer, Senior Designer, Project Manager/ Business Development, Creative Director.

**“My role involves meeting stylists and magazine editors, designing textiles, sewing, cutting, sourcing supplies, selling. I basically do everything, as it is a small business and we all work together as a team.**

**A typical day includes liaising with the factory and suppliers, approving colours and trims, helping designers with the fabrics, creating artworks for prints and embroideries, research and taking part in the sample fitting process”.**