Postgraduate Preparation Guide for Students

A guide for applicants and offer holders
Thank you for considering applying to study at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London.

For more than a century, we have been nurturing creative talent like yours. London College of Fashion is committed to helping you achieve your goals and we look forward to seeing you make your mark on the fashion industry.
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Welcome to London College of Fashion, UAL, where we have been nurturing creative talent for over a century. We offer courses in all things fashion, from business to design and fashion curation. With over 60 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and 165 short courses, our students are collaborators, and together we have the ability to reinvent the fashion industry for the next 100 years.

This guide is designed as a resource to support students who are either in the process of applying for postgraduate study at London College of Fashion, or those who may have had an interview or offer and want to learn more about life at LCF, and gain tools to help in their future research. It contains information regarding skills which will continue to be relevant throughout your future studies, and tasks and activities which can be completed in your own time.

The guide contains resources, relevant links, and sources of information designed to help you consider your current and future aims.

For further information regarding the college and postgraduate courses we offer, please see here.
Our Schools

Fashion Business School
The Fashion Business School (FBS) is a multidisciplinary school with a global reputation for its unique fashion business courses, high quality teaching and research. The courses we offer have evolved to support, as well as challenge, this economically and globally important sector - a sector that LCF continues to shape – and more than half of our courses are now non-design, reflecting our commitment to the enterprising as well as creative talents of our students.

School of Design and Technology
The School of Design and Technology teaches a combination of heritage and radical thinking. Craftsmanship and new technology. Engineering and in-depth design research. It teaches fashion in the context of art, and innovative ideas first – then innovative practice to bring them to life. Students learn social and economic contexts also, to create sustainable practice and business models. Students collaborate with students from the School of Media and Communication and the Fashion Business School, mirroring the cross-disciplinary environment of the fashion industry.

School of Media and Communication
The School of Media and Communication delivers a range of world-leading courses in the areas of fashion media, communication and design for performance. Driven by values of collaboration, engagement, innovation and activism, students and staff shape the future of the fashion media, communication and performance industries through a shared understanding of the body as a creative site.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you reviewed the LCF website, and pages for the course/s you have identified?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>Ensure you have reviewed any attachments (programme specifications are downloadable as PDFs), as well as content on the main web page.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Postgraduate course pages give a summary, overview of units and detailed information on application requirements. Programme specifications containing course content, learning outcomes etc. are downloadable as PDFs.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Have you reviewed examples of past student work where available on the course webpage?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>You may also find other relevant sources of inspiration such as films and images on LCF’s various social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, and on UAL’s Graduate Showcase).</th>
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<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Looking at examples of student work will help inspire you, give you ideas relating to the various approaches students take to the course, and help you have a deeper understanding of the course you apply for. There is a wealth of material on LCF’s social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram) as well as that on the course pages and on UAL’s Graduate Showcase.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Are you clear on what you need to submit as part of your postgraduate application?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>Start preparing your materials early so that you can review, edit and refine your submission. Guidance within this document can help in this process.</th>
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<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Review the How to Apply section of the course webpage in detail. Ensure you pay attention to suggested content/ areas to cover, word limits and other content in the How to Apply guidance. Pay attention to the course entry and IELTS requirements.</td>
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| Do you know where to submit any enquiries you may have regarding your postgraduate application? | NO | There are different ways to apply for postgraduate study; directly through the university portal, or through one of our international representatives. UAL’s representatives can help guide you through the application process. See here (EU students) or here (international students) for further information. You can submit an enquiry via our enquiry form. If you would like to book a 121 advisory session with our Student Engagement team, you can also use the enquiry form to request this. |
Application Process Timeline

Below are some dates and timeframes to bear in mind whilst developing your application. **Courses have different application deadlines** so this timeline is variable on that basis.

**September - December: Consider Your Options**
- LCF offer a broad range of taught postgraduate courses. Consider and research the course/s which interest you, and examine the course content online carefully so that you have a strong appreciation of the course, its content, and how it aligns with your interests.

**September - March: Apply for an Open Day**
- Postgraduate Open days normally take place in October and between February and April. Keep a close eye on the [Open Day webpage](#) so as to book your place early.

**October - Deadline: Develop Your Application**
- Make sure you start preparing your application as early as possible so you have time to develop and refine the content.
- Pay close attention to the details in the ‘How to Apply’ section of the course webpage.

**October, February - April: Open Days**
- Open days take place in October and between February and April. Virtual open days are being offered; you can also view our facilities digitally [here](#).

**Subject to Course Deadline: Submit Your Application**
- Postgraduate courses have different deadlines so check the course page. For many courses this is either late February, mid March or mid May. The course will be closed once spaces are filled so we advise that you apply early.
Graduate Diplomas

LCF currently has two unique courses that have been developed to enable students to adapt and develop relevant skills and approaches for specialist MA study. Both courses offer intensive and immersive content and are taught in two blocks over 30 weeks.

They have a strong research focus which is individually explored in relation to key issues that require creative ideas, innovative approaches and new possibilities, often further explored in specific Masters Courses. The courses are competitive and attract graduates (Bachelors or equivalent) with the ambition to challenge themselves and move forward. LCF drives both ethical and sustainable viewpoints as well as offering rich global experiences. Both courses run at Level 6, which is equivalent to the final year of BA (Hons) degree, and are preparatory courses for students who plan to study at postgraduate level.

Graduate Diploma Fashion Management

This exciting and engaging course enables students to look at all aspects of fashion management and later focus on more specialist areas. It attracts successful graduates that have core backgrounds in business or potentially fashion.

This is a challenging and insightful conversion course that can lead into specialist Masters Study or into roles in the fashion industry.

In Block 2, the Final Major Project (FMP) gives the opportunity to choose between either a dissertation or a business report. This stage focuses on the investigation or study of an emerging issue or new proposal for fashion. Many GDFM students progress successfully into Masters courses at LCF / UAL as well as other institutes.

Graduate Diploma Fashion Design Technology

This courses centres on the importance of experimentation and introduces diverse approaches to research, leading towards a greater sense of integrity and identity in the design process.

Open briefs enable engaging possibilities and intensive research and development journeys. The course is open to a range of fashion design related disciplines including fashion design, artefact, costume, critical thinking, and sustainability. There is progression to a range of various MA courses at UAL and beyond.

It attracts successful graduates that have core backgrounds in fashion design (Bachelors or equivalent) and is a creative space to consider concepts and ideas that inform innovative fashion thinking.
Exhibitions and Meet the Student

The links below give an insight into the student experience and nature of events and exhibitions organised by LCF’s three schools. For further LCF postgraduate videos, see [here](#).

**School of Design and Technology**

**Meet the Student:** Olivia Rubens from Ottawa, Canada (MA Fashion Design Technology Womenswear) speaks about her experience as a Canadian international student, the move to London and her advice to anyone applying to UAL.

**MA19 catwalk show:** MA Womenswear graduates present their final collections.

**School of Media and Communication**

**Meet the Student:** MA Fashion Curation students Luke Moss, Maxime Laprade, Daniela Monasterios Tan and Pooky Lee, tell us what it’s like studying MA Fashion Curation at LCF.

**Fashioned Worlds:** In March 2019 LCF presented the MA19 School of Media and Communication exhibition at The Bargehouse Gallery in the Oxo Tower, London.

**Fashion Business School**

**Meet the Student:** Three current EMBA students tell us how the course is already improving their careers.

**MBA Course Leader** Julie O’Sullivan discusses the course and LCF’s offer.
Primary and Secondary Research: What is the Difference?

The difference between primary and secondary research can be broadly defined as below. It is important to have a good mixture of the two in your work; students are more likely to have too much emphasis on secondary research (through, for example, collecting visual inspiration online) and too little primary research, so do consider this as you develop your application. A very important area to consider for all research is: why have you referenced it? How did it influence you, your ideas, your work? How did you respond to it? Consider how you can help us understand this.

Primary research
This is research of first-hand material, i.e. material either directly capturing/documenting an event at the time it happened, or creative works experienced in person. This might be:

- Original research: photographs, notes, data collection, drawings, collages, samples created by you.
- Creative works, such as artworks, photographs or theatre, that are experienced/documentated in person, e.g. physically viewing a painting.
- Literature, e.g. novels, and film.
- Interviews, autobiographies.
- Letters and diaries.
- Newspaper articles written on events happening at the time of writing.

Secondary research
Secondary sources comment on or analyse primary sources - they are referring to other material. It includes original material experienced through another source - for example, a fashion artefact viewed online or in a book. Further examples are:

- Images collected online.
- Journals or critical academic texts.
- Reports analysing data, e.g. a business report.
- Articles (from magazines, newspapers etc.) on past events.
- Creative works that are not experienced through the medium they were created in; for example, a painting viewed online, film footage of a play, a photograph in a book.
- History books.
Secondary Research: Suggested Websites

Applicants should consider which aspects of their primary research to include in their portfolio carefully. Secondary research also has an important role; below are some exciting websites you may find interesting to explore in your research. Remember to reference research so we know what is your work, and what is the work of others.

All schools
• **The British Fashion Council.** BFC’s mandate is to promote the best of British design to an international audience, through London Fashion Week (LFW) and London Fashion Week Men’s (LFWM).
• **The Business of Fashion.** Authoritative, analytical website covering fashion news, analysis and business topics (subscription required, but you can sign up for free daily emails with news, careers and fashion show information).
• **Drapers Record.** This business-to-business magazine and website covers the fashion retail sector.
• **SHOWstudio.** Award-winning website pushing the boundaries of how fashion is communicated, particularly through film.
• **Vogue Business.** Industry publication offering a global perspective, exploring cultural trends and patterns that impact the business of fashion.

Fashion Business School
• **The Economist.** A weekly newspaper with authoritative insight and opinion on international news, politics, business, finance, science and technology.

School of Media and Communication
• **Nowness.** A video channel premiering the best in global arts and culture across Art and Design, Culture, Fashion and Beauty, Music, Food and Travel.
• **Dazed Digital.** Youth and pop culture provocateurs since 1991.
• **LSN: Global.** A subscription-based insights platform that documents new consumer behaviour and key industry trends.

Other
• **Fashionista.** Source of fashion news, criticism, business, style, and beauty.
• **Kanopy.** Contains large numbers of cutting edge documentaries, films, world cinema, and more.*
• **Linkedin Learning.** Resource containing online courses in a wide range of digital programmes.*
• **Trend Tablet.** Website exploring how trends grow, evolve and flow.
• **UAL library.** Vast numbers of books available electronically, as well as access to many e-journals, which you can access as an enrolled UAL student.
• **Unsplash.** Huge collection of public domain, high res images for free download.
• **Victoria and Albert: Search the Collections.** Search objects and find physical details, historical information, and downloadable high res images/ PDFs.

* Subscription required. As an LCF student you would have free access.
Research Activity: Consider Your Inspirations

Most LCF PG courses require a Study Proposal as part of the application. In order to help work out what the fundamentals are in terms of your area of proposed study or research, it can be useful to consider the core areas that underpin your work and research. To assist in this process, a suggested mind map is included below. You may like to place information in the relevant empty squares, filling as many fields as you can and then reviewing. Consider how some areas may interlink, and where you can perhaps develop your knowledge and skills in a focussed way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CULTURE: What cultural references inform your work?</th>
<th>LITERATURE: What books, texts, articles etc. relate to your work?</th>
<th>CONTENT: Why are you interested in exploring your chosen field?</th>
<th>FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: How do you intend to develop your practice/skills/ideas?</th>
<th>CAREER GOALS: What are your long-term aims, how do these align with the course?</th>
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<tr>
<td>E.g. galleries, museums, designers, theoreticians, artists, brands, businesses, other creatives</td>
<td>E.g. academic texts, magazine content, journalism, business reports, poetry, reviews, novels</td>
<td>E.g. a source of inspiration, personal history or background, relevant issues of the day, politics etc.</td>
<td>E.g. skills you want to learn, things you want to read, see or make, places you want to visit</td>
<td>E.g. long or short term ideals, career or personal development goals</td>
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Portfolio Development*

Preparing a portfolio is an exciting opportunity to select your strongest work and present it in a personal, professional way. To help you prepare, we’ve gathered advice from across UAL.

A chance to showcase your creative potential, your portfolio is an important part of your application. As courses vary in their selection criteria, we encourage you to familiarise yourself with the application information relevant to your chosen course while preparing your portfolio.

Review the videos in the links opposite for advice on portfolio construction. Further information can be found on our Portfolio Advice page.

What Is A Portfolio?
What should you include? How should you present it? If you’re applying to join us at UAL, our portfolio advice videos will answer all your questions so that you have the best tools to show us your skills, personality and potential.

Preparing a Portfolio for Postgraduate Study
We’ve spoken to staff and students to get insights on what you should include in your portfolio when applying to one of our postgraduate courses. Whether you’re continuing your studies from a similar discipline or exploring a new subject area, we’ve got you covered.

*If applicable. Not all courses require a portfolio; check requirements on the course webpage.
Portfolio Advice: Thoughts and Suggestions

In your portfolio we want to see:

• Your skills and potential.
• A sense of your personality.
• Work that has been decisively selected.
• Material that shows how your skill set aligns with the course being applied for.
• Research and development as well as final pieces.

Work does not have to just be finished pieces; we like to see works in progress as well as final outcomes. There should be a focussed approach to the selected work. In selecting your strongest work, you may need to edit or reject other examples. Consider how 3D work is photographed and recorded to maximise your strengths.

Work does not have to be displayed chronologically but can be if you choose to; be creative in your choices of presentation! There is no set formula for presentation style, but course pages give advice on the nature and quantity of required content.

CONSIDER:

• Giving a strong sense of the context of your application, showing work and skills that are relevant to and align with the chosen course.
• Giving a strong sense of your personality and what is unique about you.
• Appropriately titling images with supporting information (title, process, materials) where applicable.
• Including images of both your final pieces and the working process, e.g. sketches, maquettes, moodboards.
• Including evidence of research and development. This might include primary and secondary research, and experimentation with e.g. samples or materials.

AVOID:

• Including content you are unhappy with to make up the maximum allowed number of images/pages.
• Supplying low resolution images that are unclear or highly pixillated when viewed onscreen.
• Sending images via email or Wetransfer. Your work should be uploaded on the university’s digital portfolio tool, PebblePad (you will be guided to this in the How to Apply section of the course page).
• Including only secondary research; see the earlier definitions of primary and secondary research. We like to see a good mixture of both.
Depending on your chosen course of study, you may be asked to provide a personal statement and/or study proposal. These are important parts of your application that give us a clear idea of who you are, what you are interested in, and how you intend your practice to develop throughout your studies. This section gives some advice and pointers to bear in mind whilst writing this content.

The course webpage will contain specific advice, in the How to Apply section, regarding personal statement and study proposal, so make sure you read the course page thoroughly.

In this video, UAL academics give advice into some of the key issues to bear in mind whilst writing your personal statement; its role and importance, suggested approaches, and how it can tell us about your unique story.
Study Proposal Structure and Content

Our course web pages contain specific study proposal advice; below you will find suggestions of things to consider. We are not recommending you cover every point mentioned here, which may not be possible within your word allowance; these are ideas and prompts which may add depth to your application.

Introduction

• **What is the focus of your work/research?** Form a title and communicate your proposed idea clearly. Briefly outline recent developments, relevant projects or work experience, how your work or ideas have developed.

• **Describe the specific ideas that you want to explore,** and what you know about this area: how have you researched your field (e.g. through reading, exploring objects, learning key skills)? Consider the past (has anyone else researched a similar or related area?) and present (what is happening now, that is relevant to your work/research?).

• **Focus on specific areas that underpin and frame the proposal.** What are the key issues at stake? Are there any theories, social issues, skill areas, elements of your personal life, or other factors that give your ideas further background?

Programme of study

• **Outline the sequence of practical, theoretical and research activity that you intend to follow.** This is how you intend to do your work: how you will develop skills or learn new ones, investigate relevant themes or theories, and conduct research activity - are there places you want to visit, things you want to read or see, people you want to meet? What methods will you use for learning?

• Consider including research sources that you hope to engage within the future.

Evaluation

• **Evaluate your work/research to date.** What are its strengths or weaknesses? How successfully is it communicating your ideas? How do these strengths or weaknesses relate to your desire in studying the chosen course?

Research sources

• **Give details of exhibitions, museums, galleries, retail or other locations that you have visited as part of your research** towards the proposal. This evidences the work and time you have put in to think about your subject. There may also be relevant books, journals, theatre, film, and other media which you have researched and have informed your ideas.

Bibliography

• **Keep a record** of all original and documentary material consulted. List appropriate material, ideally using the Harvard Referencing System.
CONSIDER:
• checking the individual course page for further specifics about the study proposal.
• showing you have researched your area properly, and committed time to learning about it.
• being concise. Only include information that is relevant and helps us understand your ideas and enthusiasm for the subject.
• being honest in your analysis of your work. We want students who have more to learn, and want to learn more.
• trying reading the text aloud to yourself - does it make sense to you, does it say what you mean?
• show what is different about you. Our academics read thousands of applications, and applications that show individuality and depth of consideration stand out.

AVOID:
• describing the course you are applying for, or the reputation of London College of Fashion; we are interested in learning about you and your ideas. We do however want to understand how your own interests and skills align with the course you are interested in.
• making unsubstantiated points: if you claim to care about or be inspired by a particular issue, what evidence can you give of this?
• dwelling on irrelevant biographical information. There may be specific things in your life that are relevant to your area and help us understand your ideas; however students often include experiences which don’t directly relate to their ideas.
• being vague. Giving specific examples or ideas teaches us about your work.

Some courses may request a motivational statement, or essay as part of the application. Check the course page for specific advice; some further guidance for each of these is included below.

**Motivational statement**
You may be asked to provide a Motivational Statement, answering specific questions on your interest in the course, what you hope to learn, and your research:

- Course pages have **Programme Specification PDF attachments**. Review this as well as the rest of the course page, to help you understand and explain your reasons for studying the course.
- **Be specific.** Are there particular learning strategies, relevant skills acquisition, work by academics, projects or aspects of course philosophy that inspire you?
- **When describing what you hope to learn, consider both long and short term factors;** it may be skills that improve your work and thinking both whilst studying and in your future career goals.
- **Be clear and concise when describing your research area;** what it is, why it is relevant, and how it is suited to the course being applied for. Your independent work in this helps show your enthusiasm for the subject.

**Essay**
Some courses require a short essay to be submitted. This allows you to be analytical, critical, and creative in interpreting the issues at stake.

- **Critically consider the essay question.** We like to see students approach ideas in unusual and creative ways. What issues in relation to it do you agree/ disagree with?
- **Evaluate the material you look at/ research.** What do you think is successful or unsuccessful? Could anything be improved on using new skills, better technology, or new ways of thinking?
- **Show balance in your argument.** Consider alternative perspectives; there may be evidence of an opinion different to your own, consider how this may affect your evidence or line of argument.
- **Consider whether what you are examining offers a new or different perspective.** It is exciting to see students using unexpected evidence or examples, and noticing what is not obvious to others.

**Additional application requirements**
Some courses may request a short video piece /pitch. This is an opportunity to communicate key points about you, your unique story, potential and experience and to put forward your study proposal. Consider the guidance around personal statements and study proposals when preparing your pitch. There is specific guidance on the web page of relevant courses. There are also courses in the Fashion Business School that may require a numeracy test, which will be organised when you make your application.
Curriculum Vitae (CV)*

What is a CV?
A CV is a document that gives an overview of your full education and employment history, key skills, interests, and experience. It allows us to have a full overview of your past achievements and understand the wide range of skills you have, so that we can see how your abilities match the content of the selected course.

Make your CV detailed but concise, giving good evidence of all your abilities and achievements, and a broad picture of yourself and interests both in your academic, professional, and social life.

How to Write a CV
You can find an instructional video here, with suggestions on content to include, as well as a template you can download and customise. Please note: this video is about CVs in relation to job applications, and so the reference to including a cover letter would not apply unless specifically requested on the course application page.

Creative CV Guide
The more detailed Creative CV Guide gives some images of example CVs; see page 42-43 for example Academic CVs.

*If applicable. Not all courses require a CV; check requirements on the course webpage.
Thank you for considering LCF for your postgraduate studies. We are fortunate to attract exceptional individuals from around the world. We encourage you to use this guide to support your PG application and hope this gives you some further information to support this process.

Whilst many of LCF’s courses attract a large amount of applications, we are always looking for individuals with something unique to research and ambitions to use fashion as a tool for change. We invite you to apply and we look forward to your application.

if you are at the stage where you have already made your application and have received an LCF PG offer: congratulations - we look forward to working with you in the future!

Contact
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University of the Arts London
20 John Prince’s St
London W1G 0BJ

International Students:
E lcf.international@arts.ac.uk

Home/EU students:
T +44 (0)20 7514 7344
You can submit application questions via our portal.

Follow us
Facebook
Instagram
Twitter
YouTube

Pigeons and Peacocks
Fashion Space Gallery
Student Life at LCF
Postgraduate Community
Students Union
Find Us

Stay up to date with us on our social channels and visit portfolio.arts.ac.uk to see current student work and visit LCF Stories to find out more about student life at LCF and read our latest news.
“Come and show us the future and we can help show you the world.”

Grayson Perry CBE RA
Chancellor of UAL