

GRAPHIC DESIGN
BA (HONS)

GRAPHIC DESIGN
AND ILLUSTRATION
BA (HONS)

PORTFOLIO GUIDANCE



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YOUR PORTFOLIO AND THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Your portfolio is extremely significant in outlining your potential and suitability for the course. This should be a thorough reflection of the breadth of your capabilities, and should be treated as an insight into your skills as an illustrator and designer.

These courses are practice based subjects, with an emphasis on the creative application of practical skills, we need to review your portfolio to assess that you have the ability to perform well on your chosen course.

Your portfolio allows us to look at your potential to be a visual communicator, and we are looking for students who are keen to learn and have ambitions for their own future. We do not expect you to be exceptional in all the areas outlined in this guide, but we do expect you to demonstrate which studios, agencies and practitioners inspire you in graphic design, typography, image-making and visual language generally.

Please make sure you are familiar with these guidelines before you submit your portfolio.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once you have made an application for your chosen course, you will then be required to submit an online portfolio of high-quality, scanned work; either in a PDF format or as a website link, and send it to techadmissions@dmu.ac.uk with your full name and the course title. The contents of your online portfolio should be the strongest examples of your work, and should contain a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 20 pieces.

Your online portfolio will then be reviewed by our experienced course academics, and we may contact you for further work if necessary. Then a decision will be made whether you will be offered a place to study on your chosen course.

If you are unsuccessful at this stage in your application, you may be considered on a similar course of interest, and we will be in touch to discuss your options at De Montfort University (DMU).

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WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

- Someone who has a passion for graphic design (and illustration) – we want to see that you have the passion for the subject, someone who is engaged, knowledgeable and intriguing
- A range of drawing skills to support this – you must show evidence of a range of core imaging skills; from the refined, to the experimental, and include examples of life drawing and objective drawing
- Idea generation and lateral thinking – someone who will push personal boundaries and create the unexpected
- Evidence of a design process – we want to see more than final pieces, please show us your whole process from the very beginning – from brainstorm, to creation
- An experimental approach to handling materials – design is much more than a pencil and a computer, so show us your innovative use of materials
- An example of written work – you will need to carry out some written work to support your design activities on the course, so we want to see an example of this submitted within your portfolio
- The questioning of conventions – we are looking for individuals with the potential to develop their own unique approaches to design problems, without relying on the traditional conventions!



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WHAT SHOULD YOUR PORTFOLIO CONTAIN?

SKETCHBOOKS

We are looking for evidence of questioning, intention to communicate effectively, and to see how you develop an idea. We would also like to see how you use your sketchbook process to research, explore and question visual language.

We are keen to see your full projects from concept generation, testing and prototyping, to the final outcome, to demonstrate how you research and respond to a given brief. Make sure you have a project in your portfolio that demonstrates creativity, a deep involvement in your work and a conclusion or final idea.

Include evidence that you enjoy making and using materials – experimental approaches to materials, and photos of 3D mock-ups and prototypes can tell us a lot about your capabilities.

Particularly within Graphic Design BA (Hons), we would like to see examples of how you have used software to experiment with, achieve, or refine final project outcomes. We do not expect this to be world-class or award-winning; we just want to see your skills in any of the following:

- Photoshop
- Illustrator
- InDesign
- Vector illustration
- Typography
- Layout
- Image-making
- Image manipulation
- Image-editing
- Digital photography
- Stop-frame animation
- Vector animation
- Website design printing etc.

If you are applying for Graphic Design and Illustration BA (Hons), whilst we still wish for you to have knowledge of these packages, we will be more closely reviewing your illustrative qualities. For this course, we would like to see more creative drawing and image making within your portfolio, to showcase your illustrative voice and have a clear indication as to the type of artist you are.



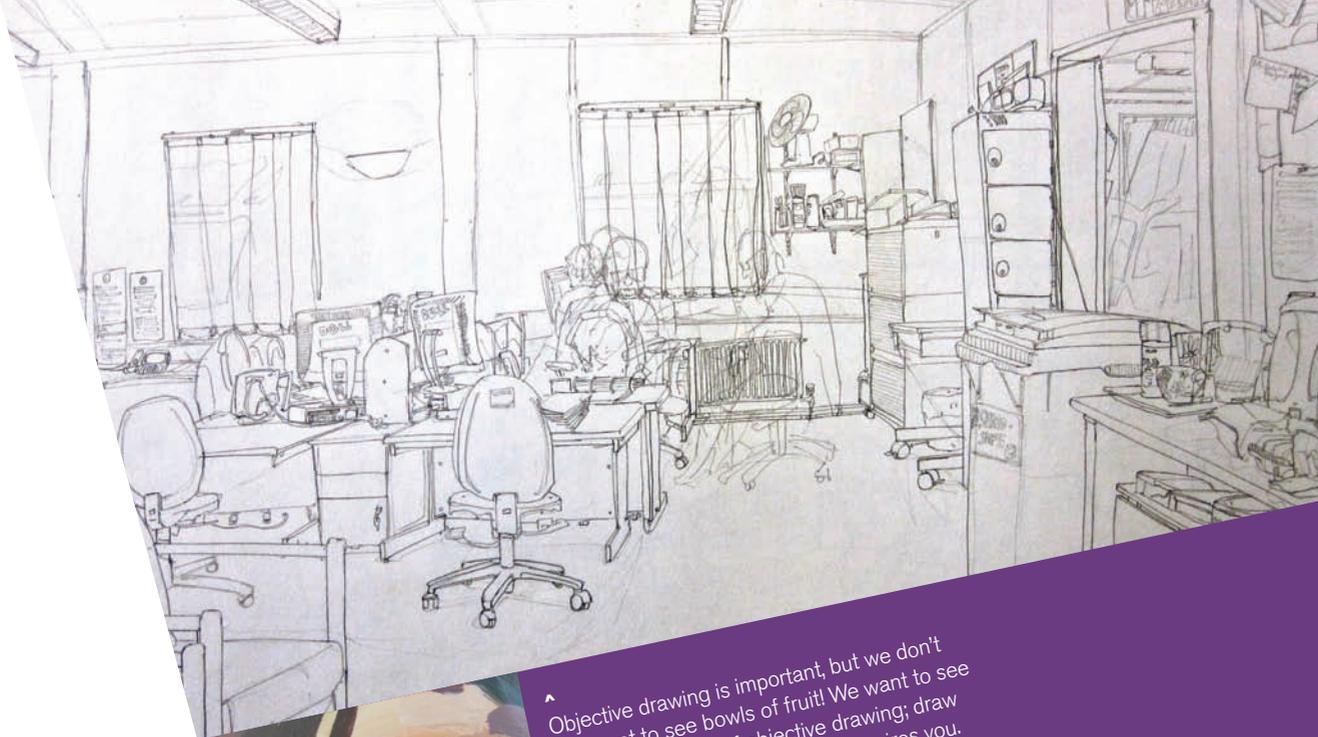
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DRAWING AND IMAGE MAKING

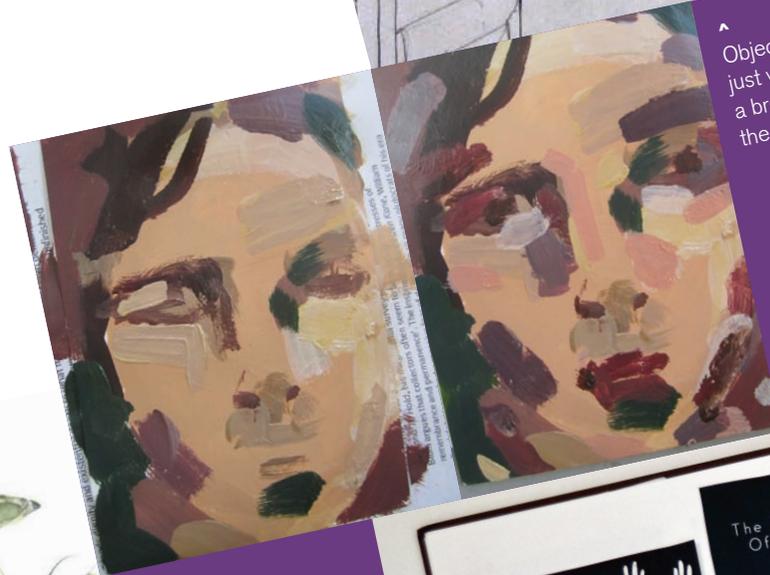
Your portfolio should contain examples of drawing and image making in the broadest sense; from life drawing to experimental design sketches, photography and collage - the more diverse, the better. We are particularly interested in drawing based on objective study, colour and tone.

Do not be afraid to include your rough 'idea generation' sketches. We know that they are not the final pieces and may not look as finished or neat as a final design, but they are an insight into how you think and creatively solve problems, and this is an important part of the creative process.

This part of the portfolio is particularly important for Graphic Design and Illustration BA (Hons) applicants, as it helps to further demonstrate more illustrative and image making talents.



Objective drawing is important, but we don't just want to see bowls of fruit! We want to see a broad definition of objective drawing; draw the world around you and what inspires you.



This is a great example of illustrative development in a sketchbook to show the journey of an idea.



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PROJECT WORK

As part of your portfolio review, we will be looking for evidence of creativity, questioning, intent and empathy with the subject and audience, and how you use a design process to work towards a conclusion.

Include evidence that you enjoy making and using materials. We are keen to see your experiments with materials outside of your sketchbook, so 3D models are of interest and these can be presented in your online portfolio.



← This is a great example of using a sketchbook to show idea development from thumbnails, to final pieces



WRITTEN WORK

You are required to submit an essay or a recent example of writing that is linked in some way to your subject interests, which could include a recent project you have been involved in. There is no word limit, but we recommend 500 to 1000 words; even an excerpt from a larger piece will be useful. This example of written work will allow us to assess how well you write and how you think. Even though these are practice-based courses, you will have to undertake written work that supports your design activities, so it is important we have the opportunity to assess your ability.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT**

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W: dmu.ac.uk/illustration



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