Design Additional Requirements
Portfolio Information

You must complete this in addition to the Admission and Enrolment form. Your application will not be processed until you have submitted the Admission and Enrolment form and all additional requirements.

Applying for the Bachelor of Design

Applications for the BDes usually begin in September, and we usually accept applicants through until late January of the year in which you intend to begin study. It is best to apply as early as you can, before we begin to fill our intake quota, though often applicants may be delayed by the need to complete NCEA work. Don’t forget to photograph any NCEA portfolio work before you hand this in.

Once we have assessed your written statement and portfolio, we may accept you directly; or if we would like to know more about you, we may ask you to come in for a short interview. These interviews generally cover similar topics to the written statement, and we always welcome family members or other supporters to these informal talks.

In any case, you’ll be directly contacted with the outcome as soon as we have evaluated your application. In most cases, our decision will still be conditional on the outcome of your Level 3 NCEA if you do not have those results yet.

About the portfolio

We prefer your portfolio of visual work to be submitted as 15cm x 10cm (6x4 inch) photographic prints, NOT original work. If you are preparing a standard bursary portfolio, or if you are preparing a portfolio of work specifically for application to our degree programme, you must photograph the original work.

We will also accept digital portfolios on CD or USB sticks but note that these will be non-returnable. If submitting work digitally, you must also provide a document that outlines each image/piece of work in line with the portfolio specifications.

If you are taking your own photographs, make sure that you photograph in natural daylight but not direct sunlight. Do not use a flash or photograph in artificial light. Photograph 2D work front-on with the camera parallel to the image and make sure it is in focus. 3D work can be shown from a variety of different angles. Get help to ensure the cleanest, most faithful reproduction of your original design/art work.

There is a maximum of 16 photographs per application. Please present these in a folder as detailed below.

We recommend that only one piece of original work be represented within each photograph. You may include (within the 16 photographs) images of process work (workbook renderings, rough sketches, etc.). A maximum of five photographs should represent process work and the rest should be of finished work. Each of your photographs must be labelled with dimensions and media on the mount.

The portfolio should show evidence of your current ability as well as your potential to develop further a range of media and subject matter.

Portfolio requirements

Unlabelled photographs cannot be assessed.

The portfolio should show evidence of your current ability as well as your potential to develop further a range of media and subject matter and include art, graphic or design work in any media giving clear evidence of your ability to generate ideas and concepts towards a specific purpose. Drawing (process, descriptive or imaginative), composition, and technical skills will be given special consideration.

You may include examples of drawing, sculpture, graphics, mechanical drawing, illustration, three-dimensional objects, painting, digital imaging, printmaking, and any other artforms at which you may be accomplished.

Portfolio qualities which are reviewed include:

- research and concept development
- analysis and interpretation, eg workbooks
- technical competence (in any given medium)
- understanding 2D and/or 3D form
- understanding of colour/texture and line as basic design elements.

Photography portfolios:

Please provide up to 16 images which must be printed in an A4 portfolio to a high standard. Close attention to the order and presentation of the images on the A4 pages is critical to a successful application. Level 3 NCEA portfolios are acceptable as an alternative to the A4 portfolio. There should be a range of subjects covered in the portfolio, which might include documentary, landscape, sports, portraiture, etc. The work should give clear evidence of your ability to generate ideas and concepts towards a specific purpose.

The folio should show evidence of most of the following:

- have entry level camera skills
- to be able to explore subject matter with multiple images
- an appreciation of photography as a medium of communication
- perceptual skills showing the application of photographic design principles
- rapport with subjects
- neatness of presentation.

Fashion portfolios:

You will be required to present a concept or look book, relating to your own personal fashion interests and aesthetic of about 14-16 pages. This may include drawings or sketches, collaged imagery, clippings, mood boards and notes. It should include a range of found and/or drawn material that expresses what excites you about fashion, and what your goals in the fashion industry might be.

If you have made any garments, we’d love to see drawings or photographs of these as well, but mainly we need clear evidence of your engagement with fashion. This should include clothes, hair, makeup and accessories, and should be presented so we can understand what kind of fashion field you aspire to be a part of.