DESIGN PORTFOLIO GUIDE

UTS Careers

A guide for all UTS students

UTS

Contents

"An interviewee should be genuine and honest but confident in their work. If they don't believe in their own work we will be able to tell. Being yourself, energetic and enthusiastic to learn is most important".

HENRY COOK
Designer at Interbrand, UTS Alum

What is a Portfolio?

A portfolio showcases your skills, ideas and works as a designer. It is a true reflection of who you are and your vision of the world.

Your portfolio provides evidence and examples of your accomplishments, skills and abilities as a designer. It is how you demonstrate to others the quality of your previous experience, your professional growth and your ability to be successful in your field. It provides insights into who you are as a designer, your authentic ideas, your design processes, work ethic and personality. A portfolio should show an employer what you care about, so you can do more of what you are energised and motivated by.

Ultimately, the purpose of your portfolio, is to get an interview or attract new clients. It speaks for you before you get a chance to speak for yourself.

Types of Portfolios

Digital and physical portfolios are often both necessary in showcasing your design work throughout the recruitment process. For example, you may send through a PDF 'taster' portfolio in response to a job ad and bring a physical portfolio to the interview.

Every designer has their own unique specialisation they are wanting to showcase. Their type of specialisation may determine whether a digital or physical portfolio is more appropriate. For example, if you designed a web page it would be better viewed live on the page itself. If you designed a piece of clothing, you would want the employer to be able to see it physically to get a real sense of the texture of the fabric and how the colours look.

For some designers, creating both is ideal, but be sure to develop consistent branding across the two. When digital and physical portfolios are utilised to each of their strengths, the combination of the two portfolios can help you stand out to employers.

In the job search and application process, you may be creating your digital PDF portfolio tailored to the job/company, updating your website or online portfolio hosting website, and ensuring your social media presence is up to date (e.g. your design related Instagram account). Additionally, you could be updating your physical portfolio. The content you select for each portfolio or platform will vary depending on the format, the intended audience and what design skills, experience or process you would like to showcase.

Digital and Physical Portfolios

Digital Portfolios

Digital portfolios are essential in the design industry. A designer is expected to send through a tailored PDF digital copy of their portfolio in response to a job advertisement at a minimum. Additionally, sending through a link to an online digital portfolio (own website or portfolio hosting website e.g. Behance) is advantageous.

Benefits of digital portfolios are:

- Easily shared, accessed and distributed
- Interactive experience with instantaneous feedback   and reviews
- Free or a reduced cost compared to physical portfolios
- Increased ability to easily customise, update and reconfigure
- Promotion of your work 24/7 and increased visibility to employers
- No limitations on portability

Digital PDF Portfolio

PDF portfolios are always tailored to the job or company you are applying for, and are your most crucial job application document. They are versatile in that they can be viewed digitally, uploaded onto a portfolio-hosted website (e.g. Behance) and they can be printed. The essentials of what to include in your PDF portfolios are outlined in this guide.

Digital self-hosted website or portfolio-hosting website

There are many options online where you can host your portfolio and showcase your work. You don't need to be fluent in HTML or JavaScript in order to have a great digital portfolio.

Essential content to include:

A short bio about yourself in an About section

Examples of your work

Provide professional contact details in a Contact Me section

Navigation

Navigation is something that needs to be carefully considered for your digital portfolio. Ensure that whoever enters the site will access every page that you want them to.

- Points of entry – what will your viewer click on first? Second?
- Organise a clear navigation route through your work examples
- Ensure all links remain updated
- Keep mobile versions in mind, your site should work across different screen sizes
- Reduce the amount of clicking a visitor has to do. Websites should not be tiresome to navigate through
- Compress images - to shorten their loading time (e.g. don't expect 5MB to upload quickly)

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Maximise your SEO by including certain keywords so more people can find your portfolio online. Search engines can't read photos, so it is the metadata (text captioning your images) you include that will be searched. Minimal keyword rich text to describe project pages and images creates that metadata you need to be searchable.

Additional tips:

- Consider including videos and gifs to make people stay longer on your web page
- Include links to your social media profiles and any blogs you may have
- Test out your online portfolio with people in your network and ask for feedback
- Share passion projects and versatility in other design areas
- Look into password protecting any content not open to the general public
- Check your portfolio content works across all website browsers, Apple and PC computers, and phone, tablet and computer layouts

"As a student, it can be tempting to include as much as possible. Just include your best work. Poor projects will reduce the impact of your amazing work".

JOSEPHINE BHIM
User Experience Designer at Cochlear, UTS Alum

"Tell a story that showcases the way you think, and the way you work with other people to get things done. That's the part of you that people want to hire".

TABITHA MING-SEE (CHAN) CHOR
Senior Consultant at The Customer Experience Company, UTS Alum

"A portfolio needs to look professional and well put together. Page layout is SO important – you can tell a lot about someone if their portfolio has been planned and is simple. Consistency throughout layout is also key".

TOM BUNTING
Senior Projects Leader at Smart Design Studio

Physical Portfolios

Physical or print portfolios are your chance to become more memorable and stand out to employers. The sky is the limit in terms of how to form a physical portfolio; from a portfolio book with a beautiful cover, to a set of cards or a paper infographic. Be careful not to make your physical portfolio too fiddly, and keep the focus on your outstanding design work.

Benefits of physical portfolios:

- Ability to create lasting impressions on employers through great craftsmanship

- Presentation of added depth where people can see, touch, smell, and taste your designs

- A sense of scale. The design or product can be better visualised when physically presented

- Visually ideal for interview scenarios where employers can flip through a physical copy. Reduces technology challenges that may arise by solely having your digital portfolio (e.g. three people huddled around an iPad, or Wi-Fi disconnecting

- Displays an extra level of care, dedication and investment in your work

How to Write a Professional Bio

The purpose of a professional bio is to tell a story about your past, present, future and notable achievements, in a succinct and punchy manner while not sacrificing quality.

Succinctly describe who you are, and be yourself

- This includes your mission, what you are interested in, and words to describe your character or skill sets

- Emphasise your unique selling points. Who you are, what you do and why you do it

- Mention any notable experience and achievements (work experience, education, awards or other recognitions in the design community)

- Show you are a real person with personality and are energised by what you do

Tailor to your audience

- When you are writing, keep your audience in mind. Who are they? What do they care about? What clients are you trying to attract? What language would they relate too (e.g. plain informal language?)

- Can you solve their problems with innovative design solutions? How?

Choose a point of view

- Writing in first person gives your bio a more informal and friendly tone. Sometimes a personal touch could be more interesting and compelling to read (For example, "I am an innovative, collaborative designer")

- Writing in third person gives a more formal and professional tone and is generally used when someone else is introducing you (For example, "Emily is an innovative, collaborative designer")

- End with a call to action

- Prompt your audience with what action to take next. This could be to look over your work on your website, or to contact you

Design Portfolio Tips

Preparing Your Portfolio

Your academic work is not only an assessable item at university but can also be evidence of your design abilities. Perfect for your graduate portfolios!

If you take the time to continuously work on your portfolio throughout your degree, you will have a more curated and organised set of portfolio works by the time you graduate.

UTS Design Alumni have some tips about what they would have done differently if they had their time again at university.

Photography and your portfolio

Photos included in your portfolio should be of high quality and be focused on clear images of your projects These photos will provide a good visual understanding of your project. Unlike you or your tutors, employers are not familiar with the work and need images that give them the best understanding of the work.

Make sure to:

- Take advantage of the photo media labs in Building 6, Level 2 - book DAB photography studios as well as SLR cameras, lights and light boxes online

- Include simple, well edited photos - one clear image of the work is better than 15 close ups at odd angles

- Be selective about including mock-ups of projects - try not to use the same mock-up that you can see everybody using, but scour the internet for better quality and visually appealing works that will do your project justice

- If you are not confident with a camera, you can find tutorials on Lynda.com as well as asking friends for help - it may take a few tries before you are happy with the photos

- Take photos of your process and final through the duration of your course

Check List:

1. High resolution image

2. Clear image of work

3. Edited in Photoshop or Lightroom

4. Avoid over cropping images of your work

Documentation and organisation

Document, scan and photograph your process while working and creating. This will prove a good refresher for you when you create your portfolio. Remember an employer may call upon any part of your portfolio to discuss in an interview!

- Create easy access to your work through organised physical and digital folders

- Consider writing reflections on your projects to utilise when writing your portfolio content or preparing for an interview

Passion Projects

Passion projects otherwise known as personal or side projects are the best way for design graduates to inject personality into their portfolios. They are creative projects outside your academic or professional work that give you joy, fuel your creativity and experimentation and give you confidence in your skills and creative voice. Additionally, they demonstrate your commitment and motivation for your design specialisation outside your full-time university degree or design job.

Consider entering into design competitions to increase the number of side projects or passion projects you could showcase in your portfolio. Passion projects can be a great way to distinguish yourself from other applicants as employers can recognise where graduates have studied based on the content of their portfolios.

Alumni Advice

"The main step would just be to start with a clear way of managing all of the work. Clearly setting up a folder structure on the computer and following it for each year. Maybe at the end of each year curating the work you would like to present in your portfolio. Also set up an InDesign or similar document that you can drop stuff into as the years progress".

HUGH MARCHANT
Landscape Architecture Graduate

"I found myself forgetting about projects once they were handed in and marked by my academics. If I had my time again, once the projects were completed I would have documented these finals and produced a series of high quality/portfolio quality photos with an accompanying concept review".

KATERINA PIJACA
Visual Communication Graduate

"I would have kept a more detailed bank of documentary photos of process work and mock ups of finals throughout the year. All the visuals and imagery would have allowed me to showcase my work in a more in-depth way".

STEFFIE YEE
Animation Graduate

"Take more photos than you think you need, also take better photos than initially seems necessary. Often, you will be taking photos to document the processes for each assessment. While a quick iPhone snap on a cluttered desk seems sufficient at the time, it will make for a headache later on. It's easy to forget that the photos you take now might sit in front of a prospective employer as a part of your portfolio after you've graduated".

ALEX WATSON
Integrated Product Design Graduate

"Having something in your portfolio that you worked on outside of your assignments, a project that you developed yourself and you're proud of can be a really nice addition that not only demonstrates your skills, but also your passion and initiative. It shows that you're willing to go the extra mile".

EMILY NUNELL
Visual Communication Graduate

> "Often portfolios simply present work from previous occupations which don't necessarily give you a feel of what the prospective employee's own individual style and inspiration is. It is important to show what you liked or drew inspiration from in previous positions and also develop your own work or projects that highlight your design aesthetic and perspective".

ALEXANDRA ROST
Head of Design at Veronika Maine, UTS Alum

> "A stand out portfolio will be carefully curated, not full of every work ever done, but selected work curated for the specific job they are applying for and that really represents them as a designer".

PIRRA GRIFFITHS
Owner/Designer at Allerton Swimwear, UTS Alum

> "What makes a portfolio stand out is the progression towards someone's own style and genre of choice (whatever it may be). The viewer knows a portfolio stands out when he/she has to do a double take of the work".

VICTOR MURUET
Freelance Photographer

Tips for Assembling your Design Portfolio

Your portfolio is a continuous project that will evolve over the duration of your academic and professional career. You will always need to be updating it with new projects or design work aligned to your career interests and goals.

A good portfolio is a narrated story about your key skills as a designer that should clearly communicate how a project was executed. It should include the process from the brief through to the research and development, to the final product.

Tailor Your Portfolio

Every time you apply for a job it is essential to research the company and tailor the portfolio you submit based on the role you are applying for.

When tailoring your portfolio make sure to:

- Highlight your strengths in light of the position being filled

- Research the company's work, approach to design, previous and/or current projects and select your workthat best aligns with what you have discovered

- Tailor your portfolio depending on where you are in your career and the narrative you're advancing (e.g. a recent university graduate showcases academic work and a mid-level designer will have no academic work. You may choose to showcase a certain speciasisation in order to be a good candidate for a specific role)

- Consider having a master portfolio where all your portfolio work is in one place. You can then select work from your master version to create shorter and more tailored versions when applying for different roles

- Reflect on whether your portfolio shows the employer the value you can add to their company. Do you need to add a personal project to this portfolio to make your work more relevant to the company?

You should be continually modifying and updating these various versions of your portfolio:

- The 'teaser', shorter PDF portfolios sent out for job applications

- The longer versions that you take to interviews and can speak about more in-depth

- Digital portfolio or website.

What to Include in your Portfolio

It is an individual choice on what to include and how to structure your portfolio. As a rough guide to the length of a recent graduate portfolio is 15-20 pages.

Your portfolio should include:

- Cover page (1 page) – includes name, professional contact details and a short bio

- Resume (1 page optional) – can be in a separate document

- Contents page (1 page optional)

- Examples of work (9 – 15 pages) – 3 to 5 projects, 3 pages per project

- Contact page/closing page (1 page)

Job advertisements can also specify how long your PDF portfolio should be, so make sure to keep to their limitations. Additionally, portfolios attached to emails should not exceed 10MB as they can be blocked by email servers and take too long to download.

Planning Your Narrative

Ensure that your portfolio tells an honest narrative of who you are as a designer. The work you present illustrates to an employer your interests, skill sets, creative thinking, design process and the type of design that you want to pursue.

Your portfolio is not a random mix of work samples, but an organised and well thought out narrative or story of you as a Designer.

When building your portfolio, make sure to:

- Plan the sequence of your projects carefully to demonstrate your skills and experience as a designer
- Balance continuity and variety between projects
- Present from the point of view as a designer
- Display your process – your workings, your rationale behind your creative decisions, your failures or successes, your approach or your thought process
- Insert your personality by including passion or side projects, but ensure that they match the quality of your other projects and follow a proper design process
- Be careful stating that you 'specialise' or have a niche in a particular area of design. Specialisation takes years to achieve and the majority of recent graduates from design courses go into junior design roles with very little experience

Selecting work to put in your portfolio

Every portfolio is both unique to you as an individual designer, and to the position you are applying for. It is important to remember that at graduate level, companies are hiring you based on your potential, not an extensive portfolio.

Here are two questions you could ask yourself when deciding what work to select:

- Does it represent the best of what I can do?
- Does it represent the kind of work I want to be doing?

Follow the tips below to guide you in selecting what work to put in your portfolio:

- Quality over quantity: The quality of work presented in your portfolio is more important than the number of projects included in your portfolio. It should be 'all killer, no filler'
- Ensure you only include work that you are 100% proud of and confident about
- Start and end with your strongest works as these are the ones that people are most likely to remember
- Always aim to showcase your recent work
- Select a personal or passion project to inject your personality into your portfolio
- Update, refine or re-do your academic work before inserting it into your portfolio
- Update, refine or re-do your academic work before inserting it into your portfolio.
- Consider showcasing other design pursuits or projects such as photography or illustration to give you an edge, but make sure they don't dominate the portfolio
- Be careful of unsolicited redesigns that don't follow the design process or hold up in a real world situation.

Displaying a project

Each design project or 'case study' in your portfolio provides evidence of your creative mind, your design process and your ability to creatively solve different design problems.

A case study should use a mix of appealing visuals and written information to provide your target audience with enough context that they can understand the design problem and your creation of an innovative solution.

Projects should include:

- A compelling title for your project
- The project brief
- If the work was completed for university, for a client or as a passion project
- Your design process
- The final outcome – any anecdotal, client, academic feedback?

Always be honest about your role in any group projects:

- What did I contribute?
- What was the problem I was trying to solve?
- How did I tackle the problem?
- What were the results?
- Were there any obstacles?

Some helpful tips are to:

- Show your design process in a clear and understandable way
- Say more with less: keep text minimal so that it does not overpower the visuals
- Make the text enjoyable to read
- Include annotations to guide someone through your design process
- Be careful not to include any work that is under an Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA)
- Always ask for permission to include work completed during internships or with an employer
- Consider asking an individual in your network who isn't a designer if they understand the projects and design challenges and solutions you presented in your portfolio

"Don't try to be overly complicated with your layout. Your work should sell itself, and not be drawn away by ostentatious graphic design".

SIMON MOORE
Senior Industrial Designer at Dashing, UTS Alum

"A portfolio is a way to make thinking tangible for others to appreciate, whether it's academic or not. Lay your thinking out in a way that reflects how proud you are of the work you've done. Use your personality to determine how you would explain your work and as a result you will more likely present yourself authentically".

SCOTT BURNS
Product Designer at ustwo, UTS Alum

"The most important thing is to have beautiful images of your work and let these do the talking. Let them breathe on the page and don't be afraid to use a single image to fill an entire screen/page".

ALINTA LIM
Industrial Designer at King Living, UTS Alum

Portfolio Design

Your ability to attractively package and present information concisely is just as important as the content in your portfolio. Ensure the images, layout and feel of your portfolio draws the viewer in. The devil is in the detail, so display your attentiveness in your portfolio design.

Details to consider are:

- How you will format your portfolio
    - If printed, A3 landscape is more appropriate
    - If on screen, a 16:9 ratio is more appropriate
- Embrace white space and let images speak for themselves - don't clutter pages with too many images or text
- Avoid black or colour backgrounds as they are hard to print
- Simple, consistent design will always be more successful than overcrowded and inconsistent pages
- Use a consistent grid across your portfolio
- Stick with legible and simple typefaces: ensure key text is prominent
- Choose a refined and limited colour palette
- Ensure that text sizes are readable across different screen sizes and printed materials
- Consider introducing each project with a cover page
- Take inspiration from designers work or portfolios you like but find your own voice
- Be consistent in design across all job application documents, including your resume and cover letter
- Think about whether a footer would be valuable to guide your viewer through your portfolio (e.g. page number, project name)

Showcasing your technical skills

Each area of design requires knowledge of different technical skills, whether it is AutoCAD, Adobe Illustrator or Maya. Ensure that you showcase the relevant technical skills for your area of design and any that are mentioned in a job advertisement. Be mindful not to include a full page of technical drawings when one will suffice. You can show more technical details and delve further into how you have mastered that skill if you get to the interview stage.

Software used to design your PDF portfolio

Utilise software and applications that have great multi-page layout abilities such as Adobe InDesign. Do you research into what design software suits your needs best. Most (if not all) graphic software programs can export a design as a high-quality, high-resolution PDF that can be emailed to anyone you want to demonstrate your work to.

Activity:
Your Design Process

Conveying the journey of your project from the initial brief to the final outcome is important in demonstrating your design thinking process. You don't need to include every single aspect of your process, but rather create a story that is engaging, clear and takes others through the journey to your final result.

For each area of design (whether you study fashion or UX), the design process varies. This activity takes you through the common stages that most projects go through and can be used as a guide for presenting your own project in your portfolio.

1. Project Brief
Explain what the goal of the project was, the clients and if there were any constraints.

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2. Research
Provide evidence of relevant research that informed your design process.

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3. Development
Demonstrate the different iterations of the project in a refined and clear way.

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4. Final
Include a 'hero' image of the final outcome and highlight any features if necessary.

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Portfolio Tips Specific to Individual Design Degrees

The portfolio tips in the first half of the guide are applicable to students of all design degrees at UTS and give you the foundation of knowledge to start building and curating your portfolio.

However, there are additional portfolio tips relevant to your individual design degree and specialisation. Check them out!

Architecture, Landscape Architecture & Interior Architecture

- ☐ Ensure the reader knows what they are looking at. Explain how the building works and give the viewer a holistic understanding of it

- ☐ Have a balance of technical drawings, sketches and photorealistic renderings to give a holistic view of your project

- ☐ Play with size, contrast and texture for any illustrations you include

- ☐ Give images breathing room, they may require a whole page to be legible

- ☐ Showcase a diverse range of skills (particularly those listed in the job ad):
      — Computer-Aided Design, drawing, Animation/Video Stills
      — CAD / Construction and technical documents
      — Original drawings or sketches (optional)

- ☐ Include photographic evidence of 3D models. Only if they are of high quality

- ☐ Have titles for your drawings

- ☐ Add in design boards or mood boards if appropriate

Find Architecture, Landscape Architecture & Interior Architecture portfolio inspiration and resources at: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

"I remember show reels that have a feeling of momentum. Engaging movement and visuals, especially when the different pieces flow smoothly into the next one. High quality personal pieces that are a bit zany and show your personality are also memorable".

BETHANIE MONTANO
Junior Designer at Invisible Artists, UTS Alum

"You can always tell when a lot of thought has gone into the portfolio, as the candidate has taken the time to edit the images and text they are showing to convey the type of designer they are, rather than cramming in everything they've ever done".

KRISTY BALL
Architectural Division Lead at Hot Black, UTS Alum
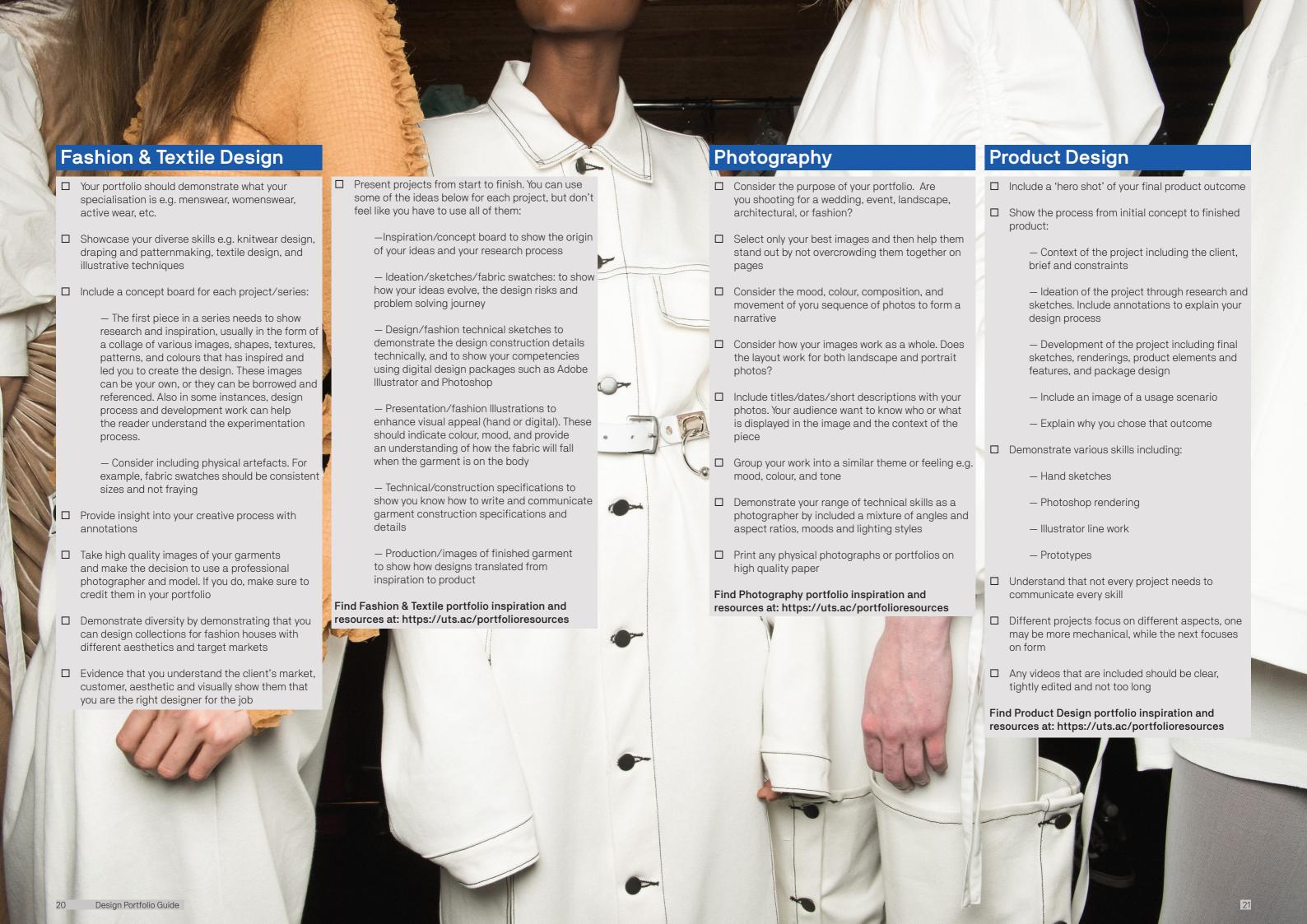
Animation

Show Reel

- ☐ Keep your graduate reel short, maximum one minute

- ☐ Demonstrate your storytelling ability and directorial skills by evoking some sort of emotion through your reel

- ☐ Ensure you are keeping your viewer engaged and entertained with different pieces that flow smoothly between one another. Consider continuity, cutting and staging as well as demonstrating variety

- ☐ Include scenes that show characterisation and acting by avoiding work that looks like a homework exercise

- ☐ Include sketches as well as finished work; to show your understanding of concepts such as gravity and construction of anatomy

- ☐ Give a sense of who you are and the type of art you like to do through your drawing, staging, lighting, and value

- ☐ Show your skillsets such as acting, posing, design, composition

- ☐ If you created a film in a team, be clear about what your role was in each shot. Overlay it on the screen at the bottom of the reel instead of in a separate breakdown document

- ☐ Include an explanation of what you did and describe what software you used to achieve the effects

- ☐ If you are showing 3D work, make the wireframe of the models visible to show that you are modelling cleanly

- ☐ Consider your music choice, it should match your show reel and not overpower your animation or distract the viewer. If in doubt, turn music off

- ☐ Do not use copyrighted music, as your reel could be taken down because of it

- ☐ Insert credits at the end with your name and contact details

- ☐ Seek help with the editing if it's not your strong point

- ☐ Don't use Flash –it's not compatible with most mobile devices and conveys that you are not up to speed with trends

- ☐ Consider Vimeo, YouTube or your own website to host your reel

- ☐ Create a specific thumbnail for your video that is eye catching

- ☐ Keep download sizes small so your reel loads quickly. Avoid compressing content so it is pixelated or the sound distorts

- ☐ Send a link to your reel and ensure any passwords needed to access your work are in the email to the employer

- ☐ Update your show reel, and always create a new URL link (e.g. to your Vimeo). If you have applied to the same organisation more than once, and you use the same link, hiring managers will assume it is the same old show reel and won't be able to see your progress

Portfolio

- ☐ Demonstrate your knowledge of non-animated areas too (e.g. storyboarding, character design)

- ☐ If you are specialising in illustration and concept art, consider stills on a website

- ☐ If you are a character artist, include expression sheets for your characters (all angles, varying expressions)

- ☐ Provide examples of your range of skills by showcasing your process and practice through sketches, life drawing, still life drawings etc.

- ☐ Consider joining skills together, for example a page of figure drawings

- ☐ Showcase other relevant forms of art such as sculpting, photography, drawing and oil painting

- ☐ Avoid Fan Art

Find Animation show reel and portfolio inspiration and resources at: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

Fashion & Textile Design

- Your portfolio should demonstrate what your specialisation is e.g. menswear, womenswear, active wear, etc.

- Showcase your diverse skills e.g. knitwear design, draping and patternmaking, textile design, and illustrative techniques

- Include a concept board for each project/series:

    — The first piece in a series needs to show research and inspiration, usually in the form of a collage of various images, shapes, textures, patterns, and colours that has inspired and led you to create the design. These images can be your own, or they can be borrowed and referenced. Also in some instances, design process and development work can help the reader understand the experimentation process.

    — Consider including physical artefacts. For example, fabric swatches should be consistent sizes and not fraying

- Provide insight into your creative process with annotations

- Take high quality images of your garments and make the decision to use a professional photographer and model. If you do, make sure to credit them in your portfolio

- Demonstrate diversity by demonstrating that you can design collections for fashion houses with different aesthetics and target markets

- Evidence that you understand the client's market, customer, aesthetic and visually show them that you are the right designer for the job

- Present projects from start to finish. You can use some of the ideas below for each project, but don't feel like you have to use all of them:

    — Inspiration/concept board to show the origin of your ideas and your research process

    — Ideation/sketches/fabric swatches: to show how your ideas evolve, the design risks and problem solving journey

    — Design/fashion technical sketches to demonstrate the design construction details technically, and to show your competencies using digital design packages such as Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop

    — Presentation/fashion Illustrations to enhance visual appeal (hand or digital). These should indicate colour, mood, and provide an understanding of how the fabric will fall when the garment is on the body

    — Technical/construction specifications to show you know how to write and communicate garment construction specifications and details

    — Production/images of finished garment to show how designs translated from inspiration to product

Find Fashion & Textile portfolio inspiration and resources at: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

Photography

- Consider the purpose of your portfolio. Are you shooting for a wedding, event, landscape, architectural, or fashion?

- Select only your best images and then help them stand out by not overcrowding them together on pages

- Consider the mood, colour, composition, and movement of yoru sequence of photos to form a narrative

- Consider how your images work as a whole. Does the layout work for both landscape and portrait photos?

- Include titles/dates/short descriptions with your photos. Your audience want to know who or what is displayed in the image and the context of the piece

- Group your work into a similar theme or feeling e.g. mood, colour, and tone

- Demonstrate your range of technical skills as a photographer by included a mixture of angles and aspect ratios, moods and lighting styles

- Print any physical photographs or portfolios on high quality paper

Find Photography portfolio inspiration and resources at: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

Product Design

- Include a 'hero shot' of your final product outcome

- Show the process from initial concept to finished product:

    — Context of the project including the client, brief and constraints

    — Ideation of the project through research and sketches. Include annotations to explain your design process

    — Development of the project including final sketches, renderings, product elements and features, and package design

    — Include an image of a usage scenario

    — Explain why you chose that outcome

- Demonstrate various skills including:

    — Hand sketches

    — Photoshop rendering

    — Illustrator line work

    — Prototypes

- Understand that not every project needs to communicate every skill

- Different projects focus on different aspects, one may be more mechanical, while the next focuses on form

- Any videos that are included should be clear, tightly edited and not too long

Find Product Design portfolio inspiration and resources at: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

User Experience & User Interface Design

☐ Demonstrate a visually-pleasing portfolio with images and small chunks of text even if you are not interested in UI or Graphic Design

☐ Clearly display your design process for each project:

— The problem

— Your role and who you worked with

— What tools you used

— The discovery phases of how you went about solving the problem

— The process you used to overcome the problem. Such as lo-hi wireframes, proto types, sketches, personas, user journeys, and research

— The final outcome of both your work, and what happened after it was handed in

☐ Skills that can be highlighted:

— Researching

— Content strategy

— Information architecture

— Problem definition, constraints, product vision

— Visual composition including iconography and imagery

— Front end development including building style guides, components, templates, prototyp ing, optimizing performance and implementing production code

— Testing and conducting usability tests

☐ For digital versions on webpages:

— Incorporate videos/screen captures and gifs of how the design works as it is vital to see interactions and animated UI components

— Use links to hide 'clutter' e.g. process books, case studies, lengthy prototypes

☐ If you didn't create any UI solutions, still show the final outcome in your portfolio but make it clear that it wasn't your work

Find User Experience & User Interface case study inspiration and resources at: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

Service Design

☐ Show the design process from the initial research phase to the developed design proposition

— Include information on the context of the project including the client, brief and constraints

— Outline research strategies employed, including: sources of data, methods for gathering and processing data, strategies for ideation, methods for prototyping and testing design possibilities, and methods for gaining user feedback at every stage of the design process

— Include images, quotes or videos of: co-designing with existing service participants; mapping created from data; prototyping and feedback process

☐ Include behavioural archetypes or personas developed, and information as to how these were arrived at

☐ Include scenarios of user interaction with the re-designed service, for at least one behavioural archetype or persona

☐ Include the service blueprint

☐ Demonstrate skills in:

— Interacting with clients and users within co-design contexts
— Facilitation of codesign
— Analysing user research data
— Communicating design possibilities
— Prototyping and testing design possibilities

Find Service case study inspiration and resources at: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

Visual Communication

☐ Remember that high quality, clear images of your work are paramount

— Don't present scaled down versions of your work

— Try not to include fake mock-ups of work, they don't convey it properly or provide an accurate representation of the work

— Select the right images that will tell the story of your work

☐ Demonstrate skills across Adobe Creative Suite

☐ Convey the area of design you want to work in through the type of projects you include

☐ Include live links for any works with motion/ movement

☐ Demonstrate a good understanding and use of typography

☐ Exhibit attention to detail

☐ Vary your project types to show diversity and your ability to adapt to a commercial reality

Find Visual Communication portfolio inspiration and resources at: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

Applying for a Design Position

Your essential marketing tool when applying for a design role is your portfolio. It provides the best evidence and examples of your accomplishments, skills and abilities as a designer. However, it is just as important for your portfolio to be accompanied by your resume and cover letter.

Job application documents

Your job application documents including your portfolio, resume and cover letter, all need to have a consistent look and feel. Ensure you carefully choose your colour scheme, typography, and visual elements. Upload all your documents as PDFs unless otherwise specified in the job advertisement and double check any links to videos before sending your application.

Be aware of Application Tracking Systems (ATS) that scan text in your resume for keywords linked to the job selection criteria. If your resume was made in a design program (e.g. Illustrator) and is made up of pictures rather than text, the tracking system may not be able to read your resume properly. If you save your Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator or InDesign resume in the .jpg or .png format, it won't be scannable for the ATS. All layers including the text will get merged so the software used to preselect fitting candidates will see your resume as an image. With no text on it. As if you submitted a blank resume. Always save your resume as PDF to avoid these issues but be sure to research into the best way to export your resume to ensure it makes it through the ATS.

Always tailor your application to the position and company you are applying to. This requires extensive research into what the company's mission, goals, values, products and services, employees, online presence and other relevant information. You will need to provide evidence that your interests, skills, experience and knowledge align with and will add value to the company. This can be achieved in your resume and cover letter by summarising your work or volunteer experience, co-curricular activities and details of your studies.

Please refer to the UTS Careers Resume and Cover Letter Workbook (also found under the 'Resources' tab on UTS Career Hub) for information on how to write an impressive resume, cover letter and email. You will find valuable tips on what to include, how to structure and tailor your resume and cover letter documents around the job advertisement, and what to mention in your job application email to the employer.

Specific tips to create a design resume:

- Design your resume to be simple, readable and visually pleasing

- Try to keep your student or graduate resume to one page

- Create your design resume using InDesign or Illustrator rather than Microsoft Word as designers are looking closely at the layout of your resume

- Provide professional contact details such as your email address, mobile, online portfolio URL, LinkedIn

- You are not required to provide a photo of yourself on your resume in Australia

- Stick to simple, readable fonts and clean layout

- White space is your friend

- Edit your content to be brief and compelling and don't forget to spell check!

- Consider spelling out design acronyms. Your resume may be viewed first by someone who may be unfamiliar with design terminology

- Provide evidence of your creative artistic background and technical skills

- Use colour carefully by making sure it enhances the content and doesn't distract the viewer

- Avoid overdesigning your resume with cutesy graphics, unclear illustrations, cartoonish fonts, lots of colours and slanted type

- If you choose to have a short bio/resume page in your portfolio, you also need a full page resume with all your details

- Avoid rating your technical design skills through a chart or skill graph. Rating your proficiency is very subjective. Let your portfolio show off your proficiency in the technical skills the job advertisement requires

Industry Advice

"Typically when I go mot my first round of interviews in the UX/UI industry I bring a pdf portfolio that has a curation of 3 - 5 key projects. A graduate can expect to talk through their process and role on a particular project. I recommend to structure the presentation using the STAR method – Situation, Task, Action, Result".

JOANNA GRYGIERCZYK
Senior Product Designer at Bilue, UTS Alum

"Practice, practice and practice. Practice talking about your project in a clear and thoughtful way".

ZOEY CHEN
Senior Architect at HASSELL, UTS Alum

"My advice is to engage actively in communities focused around the industry they want to break into, networking and who you know us usually more important than the skills themselves companies want to know that you can work with the other members of the team and it helps immensely if someone you met can vouch for you".

RAYMOND LEUNG
Creative Director at T&DA, UTS Alum

"The portfolio is the most important asset for a designer to get an inte-rview however during the interview the portfolio is a support to the actual individual and their communication skills and the way they present and express themselves".

MARIA BRIGANTI
Environments Design Director at Frost*collective

"The biggest thing to know about getting a job, is that you're being hired for a reason – to fill a gap in the team, to bring new energy, to help the studio do the work it aspires to do, to help shape the future of that studio. That means that you will get paid not to just turn up, but help transform the agency".

JASON LITTLE
Creative Director/Co-founder For The People

"To be honest if you're at the interview stage your work is probably good enough to be hired, When I'm interviewing a candidate I'm trying to establish if they're going to be a good fit within the company, skills can be taught but attitude is something that is much harder to instil in a candidate".

RICHARD MEADE
Associate Creative Director at Binyan Studios

Interview

A successful curation of your job application documents will leave the employer wanting to find out more about you, and result in an interview.

Please refer to the UTS Careers Interview Skills Workbook found under the 'Resources' tab on UTS Career Hub for detailed guidance on how to prepare for an interview and how to address and answer different types of interview questions.

Additionally, in creative industries you will be presenting and communicating to an interviewer or interview panel about how you approach complex design problems and solutions with the aid of your portfolio.

Presenting your design work in an interview:

- Take your audience on a journey, but keep to the point as you only have a limited time

- Know each of your projects inside out and be able to speak about the brief, challenges you faced, your creative problem solving/design thinking and your outcome

- Be able to justify your design decisions – know the why and how of what you have done

- Be able to critically reflect on your work and what you have learned about yourself or the design project. Tell the employer how you would approach things differently next time, or your learnings going forward

- Try to finish with a positive outcome that came from the project such as an anecdote or the client's feedback. It will highlight the work as more than self-expression

- Be open about your role and collaboration if presenting a team project

- Avoid presenting the same projects you've already sent them, unless you are showing more details

- Prepare a couple of additional examples of work not already sent through in your job application

- Consider presenting files that may be really interesting but not polished enough to make the final cut of your portfolio

- Always be positive about your work when presenting it

- Research the company and interview panel members prior to the interview and tailor your presentation to them

- Practice your presentation: failing to prepare is preparing to fail. You need to be able to communicate your ideas visually and verbally

- Be enthusiastic, passionate, honest, creative, memorable, punctual, positive, and most importantly, be yourself

- Minimise technical issues and prepare alternatives in advance – e.g. bring your laptop charger so that it doesn't run out of battery and save your work to your desktop rather than relying on Wi-Fi

- Prepare questions to ask at the interview

- Ask for feedback about your work

- Remember to relax! Be comfortable during the interview as employers are assessing whether they can see you working or 'fitting in' with their current team

Networking

Most employers will agree that job boards are not the preferred way to source candidates for vacant positions. In fact, research suggests that up to 80% of available jobs are never publicly advertised. This is because hiring managers like to hire people that they know, like and trust. They prefer to find candidates internally, through referrals or direct approaches. For these reasons, many hiring managers find employees without publishing job advertisements. These unadvertised positions represent the hidden job market.

The best way to access the hidden job market is through networking. So get out there as a designer!

- Attend exhibitions or industry events

- Have your own exhibitions

- Enter competitions

- Join professional associations

- Be involved in your local community

- Follow the studios you love on social media

- Join UTS Student Societies

- Source an internship

- Join online networking platforms such as LinkedIn

- Search for a mentor through industry networks or through UTS platforms such as the Professional Mentoring Program

For more tips on how to approach a designer for an 'informational interview', how to use online networking platforms to increase your professional network, and how to access the hidden and advertised job markets, please read the UTS Careers Job Search Workbook (also found under the 'Resources' tab on UTS Career Hub).

Resources

For a list of resources for different areas of design, please visit the UTS Career Hub info page here: https://uts.ac/portfolioresources

These resources include design magazines, professional associations and online job boards.

"Personality is important, personal branding isn't".

CHRISTOPHER DOYLE & CO.

UTS Careers

careers.uts.edu.au
(02)9514 1471
careers@uts.edu.au

Drop–In

10am-12pm
(No appointment necessary)

1.30pm-4.30pm
(appointments bookable via:
careerhub.uts.edu.au)