

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	BA (Hons) Fashion Merchandise Management The BA (Hons) Fashion Buying Management is a BA degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Diploma of Higher Education Fashion Merchandise Management Certificate of Higher Education Fashion Merchandise Management
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Harrow Campus
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	Four Year Full Time to include one year work placement
QAA subject benchmarking group(s) :	General and Business Management
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	N/A
Date of course validation/review:	March 2012
Date of programme specification approval:	May 2018
Valid for cohorts :	From September 2018
Course Leader	Kate Hopkin
UCAS code and URL:	N590, http://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate
JACS code	100054 (Fashion)

What are the minimum entry requirements for the course?

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-to-apply

Aims of the course

The Fashion Merchandise Management degree has been designed to directly meet the needs of the retail industry. It aims to deliver relevant and current course content blending academic theory, industry knowledge and direct business experience. The course has an excellent reputation within the industry and its strong links to employers support the compulsory placement year and provide excellent graduate employment opportunities.

The course aims are to provide detailed retail industry and fashion merchandising knowledge and skills alongside the development of professional. The emphasis is on developing commercial problem solving skills; supported by an academic grounding in strategic business management in order to enable students to progress quickly upon graduation to employment particularly within merchandising but also within the wider fashion and retail industry.

The business placement is considered an integral part of the course, which provides essential practical experience thus greatly increasing knowledge and understanding of the business environment. It is regarded as a critical factor in ensuring subsequent graduate career progression.

The focus of the course is global, to reflect the nature of the industry, and specifically develops your interpersonal, technical and commercial skills and knowledge, of the retail merchandising environment. Students are offered a study abroad option after the placement year allowing students to experience at first hand the international nature of the industry.

The ultimate objective of the course is to enable graduates to provide a rich resource for themselves, their colleagues and the wider business community.

What will you be expected to achieve?

The subject benchmarks for Art & Design and General Business & Management (www.qaa.ac.uk) are reflected in the course structure and content. They have been instrumental in guiding the learning outcomes and ensure that the general expectations of a course of this kind have been met. They also provide support in pursuit of internal quality assurance by the University.

One of defining principles of Art and design, as stated, is to develop the capacity to be creative and to use the creative imagination to identify and solve problems. In this course this capacity is combined with the threefold purpose of a General Business and Management programme:

- The study of organisations, their management and the changing external environment in which they operate.
- Preparation for and development of a career in business and management
- Enhancement of lifelong learning skills and personal development to contribute to society at large

The Fashion Merchandise Management course aims to create graduates who have the following graduate attributes:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and practical experience of the global fashion and retail industry; the merchandising and buying function.
- Critically evaluate the environmental and social impact of the fashion industry on a global scale and have a commitment to social and environmental improvement within an ethical framework.
- Have the confidence to progress within the industry with a commitment to on-going professional learning and development. Apply strong reflective skills to enable a reflective approach to understanding personal learning, group participation and self-development. To shape a career through flexibility, resilience and professional mobility.
- Apply an entrepreneurial and enterprising outlook in working with and leading teams; in collaboration within organisations and between businesses, the supply chain and other stakeholders.
- Demonstrate a range of professional skills required within the fashion and retail industry through the completion of an extended period of professional practice in the work placement year. For example: product development, production sourcing and technology, marketing and promotional campaigns.
- Critically evaluate current and future scenarios in relation to the fashion industry and consumer facing retail businesses. Identify the macro and micro factors that impact upon and are affected by the fashion industry to formulate strategy.
- Formulate creative solutions to fashion industry problems using strong verbal, written, creative and digital communication skills.
- Combine strong numerical and analytical skills to evaluate and formulate profitable commercial outcomes.
- Present a highly tuned global awareness and appreciation of the international industry trends and drivers. Be equipped to work with and across a high level of cultures and diversity.

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

- The overall **knowledge and understanding** you will gain from your course (KU).
- **Graduate attributes** are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA).
- **Professional and personal practice learning outcomes** are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP).
- **Key transferable skills** that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (KTS).

Level 4 Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of level 4 (first year) the successful student will be able to:

L4.1 Identify and analyse the range planning and buying cycle. (KU)

L4.2 Develop an awareness of environmental, cultural, social and ethical issues that exist in fashion retail. Explore the tensions between consumer demand, profit and the requirements of an ethical framework. (KU)

L4.3 Propose a personal development plan based on an understanding of personal learning style, team participation and leadership styles linking these to both. Target the employer market by critically assessing personal strengths and development needs. Develop a

range of tools such as CV, covering letter and interview techniques to secure an extended period of work placement. (GA)

- L4.4 Develop strong team working and leadership skills to negotiate positive group outcomes. (GA)
- L4.5 Apply a knowledge of discipline and roles within fashion business to develop a strong CV to gain professional work experience (PPP)
- L4.6 Identify where and how to gather key economic and market data, interpret basic financial reports and to and debate contemporary commercial issues in the UK and global fashion and retail business. (PPP)
- L4.7 Apply technologies to produce presentations that are relevant to topic and audience. To produce well-structured reports that are written in the appropriate language for industry. (PPP)
- L4.8 Apply basic merchandising calculations with speed and accuracy to trading figures. To be able to read and analyse retail annual reports and trading statements. To be able to use basic excel functionality. (KTS)
- L4.9 Recognise and discuss the breadth of social, cultural, political, economic and historical factors that affect the fashion industry. Apply knowledge of how trends develop from macro to market level. (KTS)

Level 5 Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of level 5 (years two and three) the successful student will be able to

- L5.1 Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the range planning process. Understand the roles and responsibilities of both buyers and merchandisers in this process and how planning and trading decisions impact on sales and profit. (KU)
- L5.3 Identify and reflect on the key industry skills required and gained during the preparation for and the placement year. (GA)
- L5. 4 Demonstrate professional team working and leadership skills to develop new business concepts and resolve industry problems. Identify and develop collaborative skills to enhance team performance (GA)
- L5.5 Demonstrate a range of professional skills required within the fashion and retail industry through the completion of an extended period of professional practice in the work placement year. For example: merchandising, production, marketing and marketing (PPP)
- L5. 6 Evaluate current business internal and external strategies and practices. (PPP)
- L5.7 Develop effective communication skills. Apply creative technologies to produce mood boards and well-presented and written blogs. (PPP)
- L5.8 Understand the role of trend and history in the production of trading plans that maximise profit and minimise risk. Produce planning and trading documents that calculate KPIs and associated planning parameters correctly. Understand fully the importance of profit to the fashion retail business. To develop intermediate excel skills as required by the work place. (KTS)

L5.9 Identifying and assess key drivers and trends within the retail industry, textile and garment manufacture. Be equipped to work with and across a high level of cultures and diversity. (KTS)

Level 6 learning outcomes: Upon completion of level 6 (fourth year) the successful student will be able to

L6.1 Critically apply theoretical models to the solution of fashion industry problems in sectors such as the fashion supply chain, consumer behaviour and branding and communication (KU)

L6.2 Critically evaluate the environmental, social and economic impact and drivers of the fashion industry on a global scale. (KU)

L6.3 Have the confidence to progress within the industry with a commitment to on- going professional learning and development. Develop a reflective approach to understanding personal learning, group participation and self-development. To shape a career through flexibility resilience and professional mobility. (GA)

L6.4 Apply an entrepreneurial and enterprising outlook in working with and leading teams; in collaboration within organisations and between businesses, the supply chain and other stakeholders. (GA)

L6.5 Design and implement a major piece of research that draws on the critical thinking, knowledge and creative problem solving and skills gained through the course. (PPP)

L 6.6 Critically evaluate current and future scenarios in consumer facing retail businesses. Identify the environmental, social and economic macro and micro trends to understand the future consumer, formulate strategy and manage risk. (PPP)

L6.7 Formulate creative solutions to fashion industry problems using strong verbal, written, creative and digital communication skills. (PPP)

L6.8 Combine strong numerical and analytical skills to evaluate and formulate generate profitable and sustainable commercial outcomes (KTS)

How will you learn?

The learning and the teaching of the course is varied with interactive sessions covering the academic, practical and applied elements of the subject. There is a strong emphasis on the real world and much use is made of the resources London has to offer, retailers, suppliers, museums etc.

A year business placement provides the practical commercial experience, which is central to the ethos of the course. The industrial placement module allows further work experience and the study abroad programme offers not only appropriate academic modules but encourages students' personal development through the experience of living overseas. Students will be given substantial support in securing a placement and the course has longstanding relationships with many excellent retailers who recruit placement students and graduates every year. The placement year will be assessed in the 20 credit Business Experience module which will build on your PDP and also provide you with the opportunity to conduct an in depth study of any area of work relevant to your employer.

Students will be supported and encouraged to develop into largely autonomous, self-directed learners through experiential, reflective and research- based learning.

Teaching

Teaching takes place in the lectures, seminars, tutorials, work placements, off site visits and via the on-line learning system Blackboard. This on-line learning system is used as a central communication point for e-mails between staff and students and between the students themselves along with course or module announcements. Lecture slides and hand outs are made available electronically and discussion threads/forums, group working and links to external research sources are all hosted through this site.

The teaching is delivered by a team of core staff, all with substantial industry experience, along with additional expertise from practitioners in specific fields. We have an extensive network of industry professionals who support relevant modules throughout the four years of the course.

How will you be assessed?

The course offers a variety of assessment to students which assess appropriately the learning outcomes of particular modules. Presentations and group work occur throughout the course- the skills developed by these assessment methods being particularly sought after by industry.

There is a PDP strand running through relevant core modules for the first three years until the end of the yearlong placement. Students will be encouraged to reflect both on the skills required for academic and personal success in the work place and the PDP will form a key discussion point with the student's personal tutor.

The following methods are employed on Fashion Merchandise Management:

- PDP
- Career pack
- Reports – individual and group
- Essay
- Presentations – individual and group
- Blogs
- Mood Boards
- In class tests
- Exams
- Spreadsheets
- Portfolio

Employment and further study opportunities

University of Westminster graduates will be able to demonstrate the following five Graduate Attributes:

- Critical and creative thinkers
- Literate and effective communicator
- Entrepreneurial
- Global in outlook and engaged in communities
- Social, ethically and environmentally aware

The prime focus of the Fashion Merchandise course is to develop the academic, personal and commercial skills required for the merchandising role. However, students are also equipped for careers in supply chain management, business analysis, brand management, wholesale, trend forecasting, E-commerce, retail management, marketing roles and for some buying roles. This is reflected in the varied nature of both student placements and graduate employment destinations.

The sandwich structure of the course incorporates a yearlong work placement. This structure is designed to specifically equip students with the skills, knowledge and practical experience, along with the development of a professional attitude that is the key to successful employment. The skills and knowledge gained on the course will, therefore, all be directly relevant to a retail merchandising head office as well as applicable to a wider business environment. It is now widely recognised within the industry that students coming from a course, which offers a significant business placement are highly favoured, with many retailers recruiting from the students they took on placement.

Career development skills are firmly embedded throughout the course:

- At level 4 students are supported and encouraged to take part time work or short term internships or work experience across all sectors and roles within the fashion industry. Students will take a module in semester 2 that will explicitly prepare them for securing a paid placement position, both CV writing, assessment centre strategy, telephone interviewing skills. The course works closely with many well-known names who each year seek out fashion merchandise students from the University of Westminster for a yearlong position.
- At level 5 students will be further prepared to be successful in their placement (20 credit Business Experience module) and will be supported by a tutor during the year out. Students will be encouraged through the use of a PDP to gain the maximum possible from this year. Students who elect to take the study abroad pathway (semester 2 year 3) will depending on location be able to take internships as part of their studies gaining valuable experience of the global fashion industry.
- The placement year means that returning students can build substantially on their basic skills and allows level 6 to be geared towards the more senior positions within the fashion industry that our students are capable of achieving in the years after graduation.

University of Westminster courses capitalise on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of our students.

Study Abroad/UK Pathway

Following completion of the placement year students can choose to return to the University of Westminster and take the UK Pathway or can elect to spend a semester studying abroad.

The UK Pathway is the opportunity to take complementary modules to the ones taken preplacement, these are more creative in nature and will provide students with a greater level of product knowledge, something that will help you in your merchandising career or will open up other career pathways such as buying or marketing. There is one core module Textiles and Product Development, in addition to this, students will select two modules from Fashion Promotion, Visual Merchandising or Global Retailing.

For students wishing to study abroad the course has a number of very successful and well established exchange partners and many students each year chose to spend a semester studying overseas. Currently we have exchange programmes with LIM and FIT in New York, Ryerson in Toronto, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond Virginia and Hong Kong Polytechnic. The semester abroad follows the yearlong placement (semester 2 of the 3rd year) and lasts from January to June. To qualify for the study abroad programme students must have passed 120 credits at level 4 and have an average mark of 50% across all modules taken in the first two years (all Level 4 modules and modules taken in semester 1 of Level 5).

Students will be briefed on the options open to them before the start of the placement year and again in June of the placement year following the June presentation interested students will let Louise Cootes (Fashion Merchandising Management/ Fashion Buying Management) study abroad coordinating tutor) know their first, second and third choices. The number of places available varies each year as we match student numbers with each partner university, where the demand for places exceeds the spaces available places are assigned on the basis of average mark achieved in years one and two. We do all we can to enable students to attend the university of their choice with fellow students of their choice if this is what is requested. Once a place has been confirmed the University's International Office will work with students to complete application forms (required for registration, your place is secure) and Visa paperwork.

Students carry on paying their full fees to Westminster during their exchange period, no additional education fees are payable but students on exchange are responsible for all other costs, flights, health insurance, accommodation, books and materials. As part of the briefing we will provide students with the latest costs based on recent student experiences. Whilst overseas students must take the equivalent module to Textiles and Product Development, the number of modules that must be taken in addition to this varies by institution (due to variances in credit weighting and visa requirements). Elective modules include amongst others internship options (LIM and FIT), CAD, fashion event management, supply chain management, contemporary fashion, trend spotting and fashion history. Louise will liaise with all students to ensure that modules chosen are suitable. There is excellent pastoral care available at all institutions and Louise will remain a point of contact throughout the semester.

A study abroad agreement is required from all participating students.

Course structure: UK Pathway

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Credit Level 4				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
4FAMN011W	Introduction to the Fashion Merchandise Industry	Core	20	20
4FAMN012W	Study Skills for Fashion Merchandise Management	Core	20	20
4FAMN002W	The Role of Buyers and Merchandisers in the Fashion Industry	Core	40	20
4FAMN003W	Fashion Marketing	Core	20	10
4FAMN005W	London Fashion	Option	20	10
Various	Westminster Elective	Elective	20	10
Award of Certificate of Higher Education available				
Credit Level 5				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
5FAMN005W	Fashion Trends	Core	20	10
5FAMN001W	Preparing for Work in Merchandising	Core	40	20

5FAMN003W	Business Experience (Yearlong placement)	Core	20	10
5FAMN004W	Textiles and Product Development	Core	20	10
5FAMN011W	Visual Merchandising	Option	20	10
5FAMN008W	Fashion Promotion	Option	20	10
5FAMN010W	Global Retailing	Option	20	10
Various	Westminster Plus Elective	Option	20	10
Award of Diploma of Higher Education or Foundation Degree available				
Credit Level 6				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
6FAMN001W	Final Major Project	Core	60	20
6FAMN002W	The Changing Business of Retail	Optional	20	10
6FAMN003W	Fashion Entrepreneurship	Option	20	10
6FAMN007W	Global Fashion Sourcing	Option	20	10
6FAMN006W	Commercial Skills	Option	20	10
6FAMN004W	Fashion Branding	Option	20	10
6FAMN005W	Sustainable Fashion	Option	20	10
6FAMN008W	Consumer Behaviour for the Fashion Industry	Option	20	10
6FAMN009W	Luxury Fashion Management	Option	20	10
Various	Westminster Plus Elective	Option	20	10
Award BA/BA Honours degree available				

Course structure: Non-UK Pathway

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Credit Level 4				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
4FAMN001W	Introduction to the Fashion Merchandise Industry	Core	40	20
4FAMN002W	The Role of Buyers and Merchandisers in the Fashion Industry	Core	40	20
4FAMN003W	Fashion Marketing	Core	20	10
4FAMN005W	London Fashion	Option	20	10
Various	Westminster Plus Elective	Elective	20	10
Award of Certificate of Higher Education available				
Credit Level 5				

Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
5FAMN005W	Fashion Trends	Core	20	10
5FAMN001W	Preparing for Work in Merchandising	Core	40	20
5FAMN003W	Business Experience (Yearlong placement)	Core	20	10
5FAMN004W	Textiles and Product Development	Option	20	10
5FAMN011W	Visual Merchandising	Option *1	20	10
5FAMN008W	Fashion Promotion	Option *1	20	10
5FAMN010W	Global Retailing	Option *1	20	10
Various	Westminster Plus Elective	Option *1	20	10
Award of Diploma of Higher Education or Foundation Degree available				
Credit Level 6				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
6FAMN001W	Final Major Project	Core	60	20
6FAMN002W	The Changing Business of Retail	Option	20	10
6FAMN003W	Fashion Entrepreneurship	Option	20	10
6FAMN007W	Global Fashion Sourcing	Option	20	10
6FAMN006W	Commercial Skills	Option	20	10
6FAMN004W	Fashion Branding	Option	20	10
6FAMN005W	Sustainable Fashion	Option	20	10
6FAMN008W	Consumer Behaviour for the Fashion Industry	Option	20	10
6FAMN009W	Luxury Fashion Management	Option	20	10
Various	Westminster Plus Elective	Option	20	10
Award BA/BA Honours degree available				

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academicregulations

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

The Fashion Merchandise Management Degree is housed in the Department of Fashion Film and Music within the Faculty of Media, Arts and Design.

The faculty has one away day per year to identify and address ways of improving the design and delivery of its courses. The department holds monthly course leaders meetings and the individual course teams run regular meetings.

Annual Monitoring enables a reflective and proactive process of course development. All staff carry out annual appraisals and peer observation, and undertake staff development through course attendance and research activity.

Course approval monitoring and review

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 1999. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course has been revalidated using the same procedures in March 2012 to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of industry and students alike.

The course is monitored each year by the School to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from External Examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring sub-committee considers the School action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. The Fashion Merchandise Management course has a course leader and level leaders who together manage all aspects of the teaching and student contact. All students enrolled on a full-time course will have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters, and can assist with pastoral matters or direct you to appropriate specialist services. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students

Learning Support

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 1999. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.
- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.
- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.
- The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which seeks the opinions of students about their course and University experience. Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

Please note: This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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