

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course Record Information

Name and level of final & intermediate Awards
BA Honours Fashion Merchandise Management
Diploma of HE
Certificate of HE

Awarding Body

University of Westminster
Location of Delivery

University of Westminster Harrow Campus

Mode of Study

Full time 4 year Sandwich Course incorporating 1 year business placement

UW Course Code

U09SUFM
JACS Code

N100,N200,N500,M111,M221,M222,N300,R&T Languages,W230

UCAS Code

WN25

QAA Subject Benchmarking Group

General & Business Management
Professional Body Accreditation

N/A

Date of initial course approval/last review

June 2005/May 2012

Date of Programme Specification

August 2012

Admissions Requirements:

Candidates, in addition to the specified academic qualifications, are expected above all to be self-motivated and exhibit the following skills/ qualities:

- A clear understanding of the merchandising function
- Enthusiasm for retailing and for fashion (retail experience is highly desirable and advantageous)
- Good communication
- Confidence and personality
- Numerical ability

The minimum requirement for admission to the course is 18 units of which at least 12 units must come from six-unit qualifications (A level or equivalent)

Preference given to:

- Business Studies
- Geography or history
- Maths or economics
- Science or psychology

5 GCSE passes (or equivalent) including Maths and English at grade c minimum, strong preference for grade B or above in maths.

Other qualifications that will be accepted will include:

- NCVQ recognised awards, including relevant GNVQ at level 3
- BTEC/SCOTVEC normally at Higher National level
- Irish Leaving Certificate Higher Certificate with passes in five subjects at Higher Level
- Passes in Open University courses
- Passes in recognised Access course
- Passes in recognised Foundation course
- Advanced Modern Apprenticeship with level 3 qualifications

Students who have not had their secondary education through the medium of English must attain the equivalent of IELTS 6.0, Cambridge Advanced, or TOEFL 550.

International/Overseas qualifications may be accepted in accordance with guidance from the National Academic Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (NARIC), as indicated in the university's prospectus.

All suitable applicants will be interviewed. A numeracy test will be given as part of the interview day. A clear understanding of merchandising is essential.

Accreditation of Prior Learning

The course complies with University regulations regarding Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) which can be found in the general University handbook of Academic Regulations:

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/current-students/resources/academic-regulations>

Aims of the course

The BA Honours 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 aims are to provide detailed retail industry and fashion merchandising knowledge and skills. 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 & retail industry.

The key course aims are:

- To develop the commercial awareness and analytical skills that are central to success in fashion merchandising and related disciplines.
- To develop the problem solving, decision-making and leadership skills which are central to a fast-paced and demanding business environment

- To provide a thorough knowledge of the global fashion retail industry, the different types of organisations, management structures, business processes and measures.
- To develop good understanding of the roles played by merchandisers, buyers, and designers in particular sourcing, product development, negotiation skills and effective range building that will result in maximised profit.
- To develop problem solving skills applicable to the work place based on sound research, analysis and evaluation.
- To enable learning opportunities that are active and student centred in order encourage self-motivated lifelong learning.

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.

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

Employment and Further Study Opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e., employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements which will inform the service delivered to students.

The prime focus of the course is to develop the academic and commercial skills required for the fashion merchandising role. However, students are also equipped for careers in buying (where the role is more about selection than product development) and supply chain management, brand management, trend forecasting, retail and marketing roles.

The sandwich structure of the course incorporates both a compulsory year's work experience, together with the on site taught modules. This structure is designed to specifically equip students with the skills, knowledge and practical experience, along with the development of a professional demeanour that is the key to successful employment. The skills and knowledge gained on the course will, therefore, all be directly relevant to a retail buying and merchandising head office as well as applicable to a wider business environment and will directly reflect the University's ethos 'educating for a professional life'. 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 for permanent roles the students they took on placement.

The course has and actively maintains excellent contacts with industry. All staff are industry professionals and are very aware of the need for skilled and professional graduates within the fashion and retail sectors. To this end:

- Career development skills are firmly embedded in the course
- Students are encouraged to take part time work at Level 4 and most succeed in achieving high quality placements on their year in industry.
- The experience of the year's placement allows Level 6 modules to build substantially on basic skills and to be geared towards the more senior positions within fashion retailing that our students are capable of achieving in the years following graduation.

- Staff work continuously to keep abreast of trends & incorporate these into their teaching.
- The choice of modules offered, particularly at Level 6 allow students to personalise their degree, building on their strengths & interests.

Further study opportunities are often provided by an employer, in structured training and development schemes. These are usually directly related to the required competencies of each level of career progression. The University of Westminster provides the opportunity of further professional and academic advancement through its MA in Fashion Business Management. The entry level requirement is a minimum 3 years full-time employment in the Fashion or related industries together with a second class honours or above, first degree.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students will have achieved as the result of learning. They are threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

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

The BA Fashion Merchandise Management course ensures that attainment of the learning outcomes will result in the development of the necessary knowledge and skills to become an effective Merchandise Professional within the Retail Industry.

Students are expected to undertake a continuous learning curve throughout their four years on the Degree programme. Progression will be dependent on having achieved the required levels of skill and competency, which are implicit in each level.

Attainment will be assessed against specific module learning outcomes that are provided in greater detail in the module handbook. Listed below are the learning outcomes specific to each level. These have been divided into three areas; knowledge and understanding, specific skills for fashion merchandise management and key transferable skills.

The modules have been designed to focus on and emphasise different aspects of understanding and subject knowledge, and develop specific skills for fashion merchandise management. However all modules also concentrate on developing the key transferable skills, which are not specifically designed to meet a particular role or responsibility but enhance and enrich you and prove valuable in the context of continuing professional development in a wider career arena.

Levels

Level 4 modules provide a fundamental underpinning of knowledge and skills that will build and deepen throughout the rest of the course.

Level 5 modules build on those taken during your first year and the expectation is that the additional skills and knowledge gained will enable you to prepare for a successful business placement. Level 5 modules completed after placement are designed to provide you with additional background knowledge of the wider industry.

Level 6 modules are designed to encourage you to reflect on your business experience and to incorporate your knowledge and understanding into a more strategic perspective on the retail industry.

The learning outcomes have been divided into three areas.

Knowledge and Understanding

Upon completion of **Level Four** of the course you will be able to:

1. Recognise the issues and influences within the Fashion Industry and its key players. Describe the key relationships that constitute the buying and merchandise team in different organisations and their interplay with their customers and suppliers.
2. Be aware of the sources of information available to merchandisers in planning and managing balanced ranges.
3. Appreciate the nature of financial accounting information systems and demonstrate ability in preparing financial statements. Define the main terminology used in management accounting and demonstrate the ability to prepare basic financial statements. Define management accounting within a broad organisational control context and appreciate the role of management accounting as an information supplier.
4. Know how and where to gather data to measure consumer needs and market change, and to monitor marketing performance. Demonstrate an understanding of the key concepts of the marketing mix and the management of the mix variables for the fashion business.
5. Understand the basic concepts in learning, team work, motivation and the management of information. Identify, evaluate and select relevant methods of communication. Examine and debate the integral role of professional and transferrable skills that contribute to the success of securing a work placement.
6. Explain the nature, role and significance of law in modern society.
7. Examine and debate the integral role of professional and transferable skills that contribute to the success of securing a work placement.

Upon completion of **Level Five** you will be able to:

8. Understand the relevance of both history and trend within the decision making process.
9. Evaluate and understand the breadth and width of influences affecting the fashion industry in a manner which evaluates evidence and provides logical amalgamations of concepts.
10. Discuss the meanings of work and the way individuals relate to their work, workplace and to other employees. Describe the nature, behaviour and processes of groups at work. Analyse the impact of leadership and power in organisations. Develop your personal understanding of the requirements of the workplace particularly that of retail and your own preference for particular working experience.
11. Describe the design development process that will support and/or initiate product development. Demonstrate an understanding of the lead times involved in design and development.
12. Develop an understanding of the relevant cost of textiles in fashion product. Understand the production and distribution processes of a variety of key textiles produced globally.

Upon completion of **Level Six** you will be able to:

1. Envisage a number of future scenarios for the Retail Industry and the implications for the fashion merchandising activity. Analyse the nature behaviour and performance of the fashion industry. Identify the external factors which impact upon the behaviour and performance of organisations. Evaluate the risk factors involved in future scenarios and produce detailed critical paths for successful implementation of change.

Specific Skills

Upon successful completion of **Level Four** you will be able to:

1. Target the employer market, apply for, and maximise the opportunity to gain a work placement, by critically assessing personal strengths, and effectively translating these into a tailored CV and covering letter format.
2. Describe and apply appropriate sources of law to a problem situation. Apply the area of substantive law relating to contract and tortious liability to problems relevant to the fashion industry. Apply the law relating to intellectual property as it applies to the fashion business.
3. Evaluate a range and produce comprehensive shop reports. Understand the activities involved in buying and merchandising processes when developing and managing in line with market position. Demonstrate an awareness of the risk associated in such ranges.
4. Evaluate the nature of costs and be able to identify and apply them in a variety of techniques. Apply simple budgetary techniques to construct a master cash budget.
5. Evaluate the role of the macro and micro environmental influences and competitive forces on the fashion business.

Upon successful completion of **Level Five** you will be able to:

6. Demonstrate practical skills in the formulation of key financial targets. Recommend strategic proposals based on historical data, trend, the competition and the overall company strategy.
7. Select appropriate trend data from a range of sources and develop appropriate research strategies to analyse their evolution and impact.
8. Develop, plan, implement, evaluate and communicate outcomes for a piece of primary research into a business management issue making effective use of research methods. Use a relevant software package to analyse primary data.
9. Analyse and evaluate the commercial interpretation of concepts from designer fashion through to the High street shops. Research and summarise the media's approach to a current fashion trend.

Upon successful completion of **Level Six** you will be able to:

10. Debate with reference to academic models and schools of strategy the implications of strategic change on an organisation and the impact on stakeholders with particular reference to the retail fashion industry.

Other skills learnt at Level 6 will vary based on the choice of option modules that is made.

Key Transferable skills

Key transferable skills can be broadly grouped under the following 8 headings; Communication, Numerical and Analytical, Management of Information & Research Techniques, Group Work, Critical Evaluation, Problem Solving and Decision Making, Organisation and finally Self Evaluation. These skills are developed in regards to the scope and depth of their application as students progress through the levels. In completion of each year of study, students will be able to:

Transferable Skills	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Communication			
Numerical and			

analytical			
Management of information and research			
Group work			

Transferable Skills			
Critical evaluation	Accurately define terms and context. Identify and evaluate given assumptions and findings.	Evaluate statements or situations in relation to supporting evidence and context. Logically amalgamate concepts.	Critically evaluate current opinion, statements and commercial approaches. Provide evidence of the synthesis of theory and practice for a given required outcome.
Problem solving and decision making	Apply given tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well-defined problem. Begin to appreciate the complexity of the issues. Apply creative solutions to both familiar and unfamiliar problems.	Can identify key problems. Develop appropriate, creative and original approaches, tools or methods for the resolution in a considered manner.	Confidently identify and define complex problems in a flexible manner. Apply knowledge, tools and methods to deliver creative and innovative solutions. Provide evidence of the synthesis.
Organisation	Take responsibility for own learning with appropriate support. A good level of attendance. Professionalism within the learning environment and participation in activities.	Can take responsibility for own learning with the minimum of direction. Good attendance. Contribution to the debate and learning experience.	Can take responsibility for own work and criticise it. A positive contribution to the debate and learning experience.
Self evaluation	Evaluate own strengths and weaknesses within criteria largely set by others.	Can evaluate own strengths and weaknesses. Challenge received opinion. Develop own criteria and judgement	Is confident in application of own criteria of judgement and can challenge received opinion and reflect on action. Can seek and make use of feedback for personal development.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods

Learning

The course is modular 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 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, individual 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 handouts 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.

Updating of market knowledge and strategic overview is gained by staff engaging with continuous professional development through specific research projects underpinned by work placement and industry shadowing of key retail executives.

Assessment

The following methods of assessment are employed on the Fashion Merchandising Management Degree:

- The Learning Log
- The Report – Individual
- The Essay
- The Report - Group
- The Presentation
- The Presentation –Group
- The In-class test /On line test
- The Blog
- The Exam

Developmental Logs and ongoing self-reflection and analysis of your own work form a major part of your Personal Development Plan.

Methods of assessment vary depending on the type of module and the required learning outcomes. Each method of assessment is chosen because it is regarded as the most effective way of matching and measuring the specific learning outcomes.

Course Structure

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.

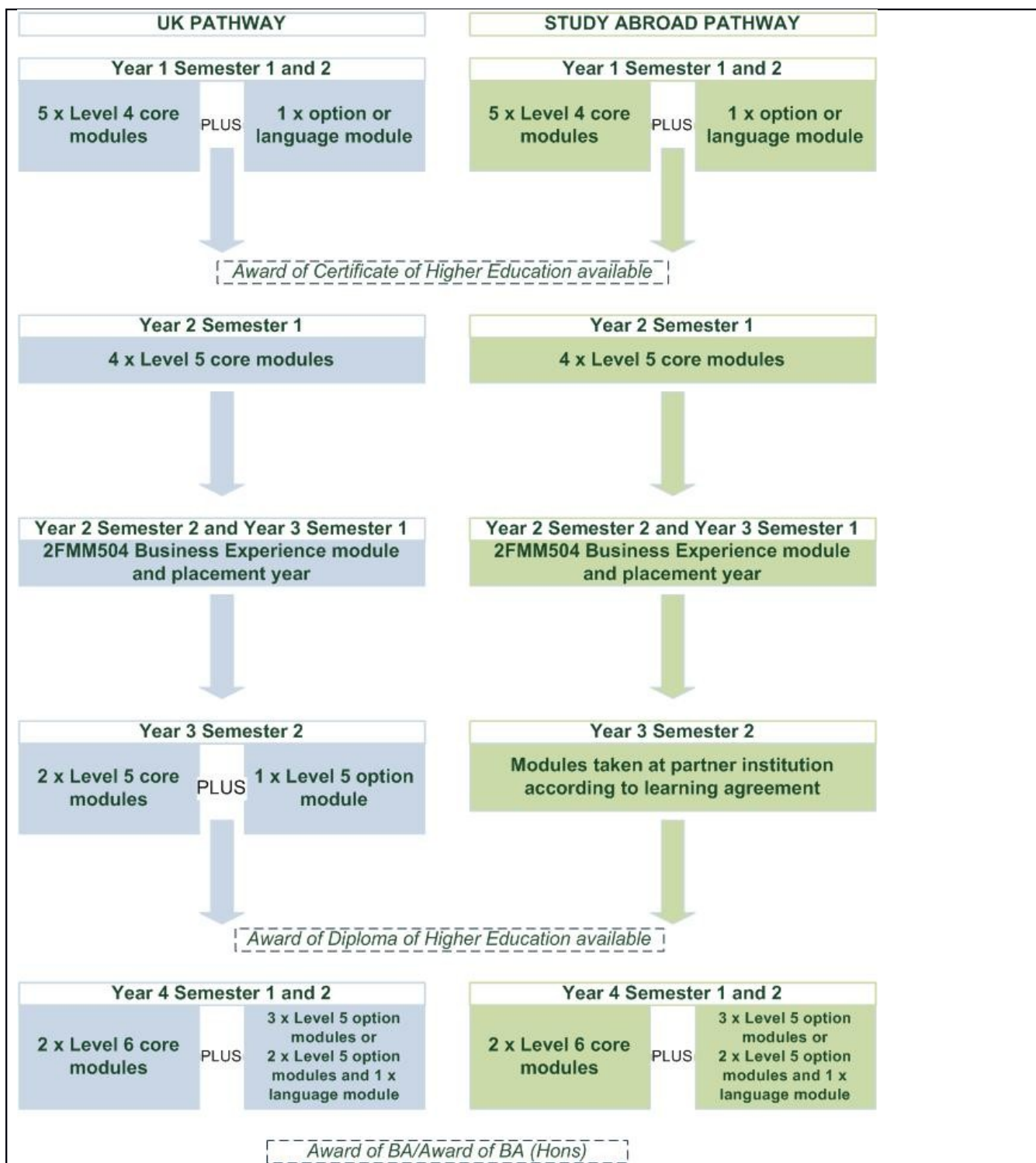
	TITLE	CREDITS
CODE		
2FMM406		
2FMM404		
2FMM402		
MFMM400		
MFMM401		
MFMM402		
2FMM503		
2FMM501		
MFMM502		
MFMM503		
2FMM504		
2FMM502		
MFMM501		
MFBM503		

2FBM503			
MFMM500			
Modules taken vary by institution according to learning agreement.			
MFMM603			
MFMM600			
2FMM611			
2FMM604			
2FMM608			
2FBM602			
2FMM601			
MFMM601			
MFBM600			
MFBM602			
<i>Award of BA/Award of BA (Hons)</i>			
NB: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year			
The Fashion Merchandise Management programme also offers the following validated modules for incoming Study			

Abroad/Exchange students:		
CODE		
2FMM401	Merchandising in the Fashion Industry – Study Abroad only	15
2FMM405	Buying Cycle and Range Planning – Study Abroad only	15
MFMM504	Industrial Placement – Study Abroad for FMM Exchange Students	15

Pathway structure diagram

Please refer to course structure above for list of modules at each level.



Academic Regulations

The BA (Honours) Fashion Merchandise Management and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called **Essential Westminster 2011/12** which is available at westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster. The following regulations should be read in conjunction with the *Modular Framework for Undergraduate Courses* and relevant sections of the current *Handbook of Academic Regulations*.

A *pass* in a module is achieved when the overall mark is greater than or equal to 40%; with at least 30% in the final assessment and any qualifying marks and/or sets achieved as detailed in the module handbook.

Condoned Credit at Level 3 and Level 4

A student may be awarded condoned credit at Levels 3 and 4 only, where he/she has achieved:

- a) an overall module mark of greater than or equal to 30% but less than 40%;
- b) an overall mark of 40% or greater but not reached the required qualifying mark(s) and/or qualifying set(s) as detailed in the module handbook; and
- c) attempted all referred assessment as offered by the Assessment Board.

Where a student, following a referral opportunity, is awarded condoned credit, the recorded module mark will be capped at 39%. Condoned credit will count towards any credit limits for specified awards. Where a student is awarded condoned credit in a module but subsequently achieves an overall pass within a retake module, credit may contribute only once to an award.

Progression

To progress from Level 4 to Level 5 in full time study, a student must achieve an average of 40% across 120 credits; to progress from Level 5 to Level 6 full-time study, a student must pass at least 165 credits, including 75 credits at Level 5.

Award

To qualify for the award of BA (Hons) Fashion Merchandise Management, a student must:

- a) obtained at least 360 credits including:
 - passed 75 credits at Level 4 or higher and achieved at least a condoned credit in each of the remaining modules worth 45 credits at Level 4; and
 - passed a minimum of 120 Credits at Level 5 or higher; and
 - passed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6 or higher.
- b) attempted modules with a maximum value of 330 credits at Levels 5 and 6; and
- c) satisfied the requirements contained within any course specific regulations for the relevant course Scheme.

The class of the Honours degree awarded is decided by two criteria: the average of the best 105 credits passed at Level 6 being in the range of the class to be awarded, and the average of the next best 105 credits passed at Levels 5 and 6 provided the next best 105 credits passed are no more than one classification below this.

Support for Students

On arrival, an induction programme will introduce students to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which they will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and to the School Registry. Students will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Students are allocated a personal tutor who can provide advice and guidance on academic matters.

A tutor will also be allocated for the duration of the Placement Year. The tutor will be available throughout the year by telephone/email and will visit you at your place of work over the summer and meet with your line manager. At this meeting your progress to date will be reviewed, objectives will be set for the remainder of the placement and your business proposal topic will be discussed and agreed. If a visit is required earlier in the placement year this can be arranged.

A member of the course team, Louise Cootes, will be the principal contact for students taking part in the exchange programme, both incoming and outgoing.

Learning support includes the Library which, across its four sites, holds print collections of 356,000 printed books, 29,000 print and e-journals, over 45,000 electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Access to all resources is facilitated through Library Search, a new online service.

There are over 3,500 computers spread over the four University campuses available for students use. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students can access course materials and communicate with staff and other students via message boards.

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

Reference Points for the course

Internally

The course has been designed to match the University's mission to provide education for professional life and meet the University policies on skills development and employability. The Course structure follows the requirements of the modular frameworks and the academic regulations of the University.

Externally

The course has been designed to match the needs of business as detailed by Skillsmart retail project report (2005) Feasibility study into the development of National Occupational Standards for Retail Buyers and Merchandisers.

The learning outcomes of the course, as detailed earlier, have been formulated in accordance with the specific QAA subject benchmarks for Art & Design and General Business & Management. (www.qaa.ac.uk)

Ongoing industry consultation helps to ensure that the course evolves continuously to match the needs of the retail sector.

Quality Management and Enhancement

Course Management

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

The School 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 and external subject specialists from academia and industry to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other Universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic Course Review helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

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.

Student involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student

feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

All students are invited to complete a Module Feedback 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 elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

Students meet with Review Panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from Course Committees are part of the Schools' quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course:

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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.