

Section 2

Choosing work for your portfolio

Why do I have to choose work?

- Your portfolio is the most important part of your application.
- Tutors don't have much time to look through portfolios so your work must grab their attention.
- Tutors want to see that you can judge which is your best work.

How many pieces of work should I include?

- Check with the college or university - some courses say how many pieces of work you should have.
- If they don't say how many, include enough to show the full range of what you do.
- But don't include so much work that you can't carry the portfolio!

Talking through my portfolio

You may be asked to talk about your portfolio at interview. You need to think about what you would say if you were asked:

- to choose a piece you're proud of;
- what you'd do if you had the time and freedom to develop your ideas further; and
- if there's a piece you're not so pleased with, how you could improve it.

What should be in my portfolio?

Examples of observational drawing that you've done from real life. You don't have to draw things 'photographically', and you can use whatever you want – pencil, ink, charcoal, even mud!

Development work. Show your ideas and how you develop them into finished pieces. Include sketchbooks, ideas books or journals, photos, magazine cuttings and so on, but present it well so that it doesn't look messy.

A range of work using different media. Don't just include one sort of work because you think you're good at it.

Work from the last two years. Make it obvious which work is most recent! Tutors want to see how you've developed as an artist or designer over the last few years.

Work that tells the tutor about you. Tutors want to teach students who have lots of ideas and inspire each other. Include work you've done about things that interest, motivate and inspire you.

Sketchbooks and ideas books. They don't have to be neat. They should show:

- that you understand how your ideas relate to what's going on around you now – socially, politically and culturally;
- your awareness of other artists' and designers' work, current trends and fashions, and how they affect the way you work; and
- how your ideas develop into finished pieces.

Collaborative work. If you've worked on a project as a member of a team, explain what your role in the project was.

Examples of written work. Include an essay you've done for any English course you've studied or as part of your current art and design course.