Ravensbourne
University London

How to build a strong portfolio

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of your work that showcases your skills, creativity, and experience relevant to the course you're applying for.

Why do I need to show my work?

Creativity is more than grades or exam results, we want to see how your ideas come to life.

We love seeing your passion for your subject and how you've improved your creative skills and knowledge. We are really interested in how you approach project briefs, solve problems and think outside the box!
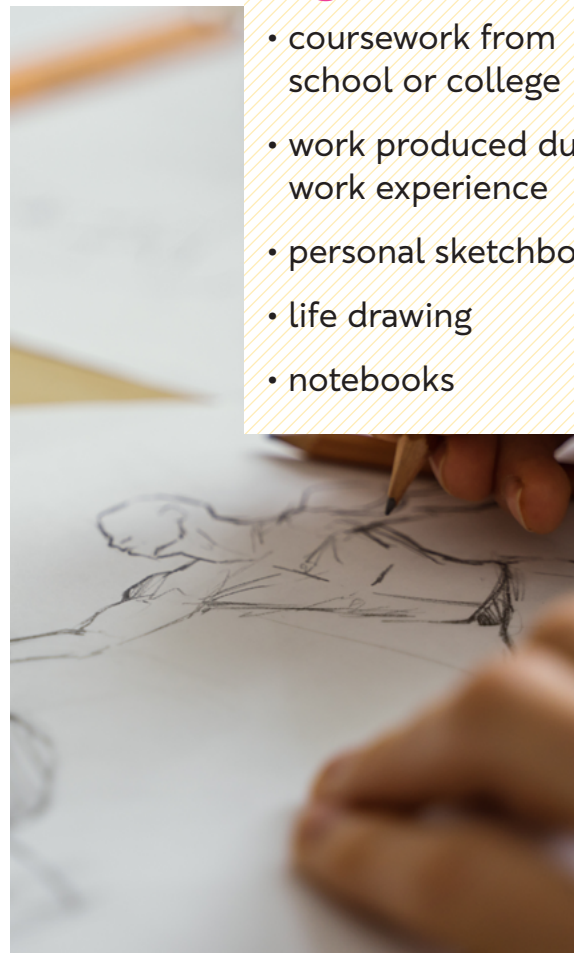
How should I present my work?

The order you show your work in your portfolio is up to you.

• Some people like to show the work in chronological order, other people prefer to start and end with their best projects and show a mix of different projects in the middle.

• The work should cover the process of design from initial research, development of concepts, and resolution of the final piece.

• Make sure your name is on the front and each piece of work, including sketchbooks.

• Keep to a format, i.e., all landscape or all portrait.

• We require the submission of a digital portfolio. This may include photos of your projects and not just work created digitally.
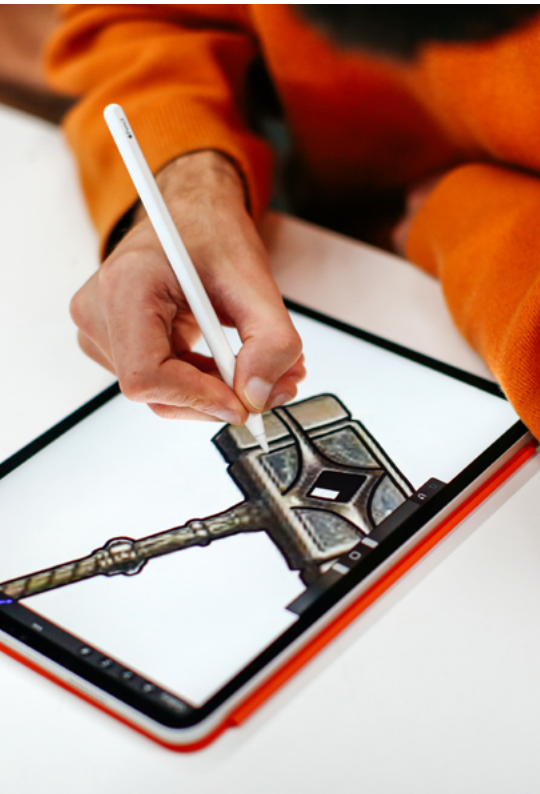
Work to include might be:

• coursework from school or college

• work produced during work experience

• personal sketchbooks

• life drawing

• notebooks

What are we looking for?

Generally, your portfolio should be a digital document containing 3–5 projects and ranging between 15–20 pages long. Please check the individual course pages, as their requirements may vary.
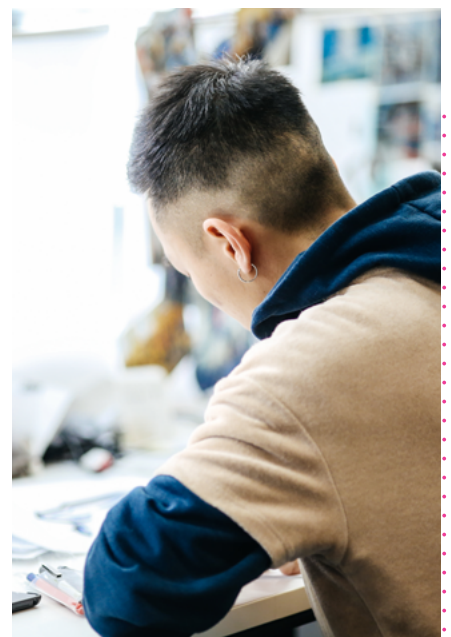
Can you draw/create?

- We want you to produce drawings in different scales using various forms of media, for example, life drawing, quick sketches, detailed drawings or technical drawings related to your subject.

- **We are a digital university;** we like to see that you have a basic understanding and interest in digital technology.

- We want people who can work in a variety of methods and media.

The importance of context.

- It's one thing to be able to draw and create, but you also need to be able to explain your work and the context behind it.

- Context will tell a story, explain its purpose, and help us to understand your creative process.

Can you develop ideas?

- We will be looking to see whether you can take a concept from initial research, and develop this into your final piece of work. **Research –** did you go to any exhibitions? Is there any artist/designer/historic art period that inspired you? **Experimentation –** what was your initial response to the brief?

- What creative choices did you make on the way?

- Did you play? we want to see you experiment with different methods, materials and mediums before you find the right path.

Key things to remember

The following courses require a portfolio

- Access to Higher Education
- Advertising and Brand Design
- Animation (2D & 3D)
- Architecture
- Character Design and Concept Art
- Digital Content Creation
- Digital Photography
- Fashion
- Fashion Promotion and Communication
- Games Art
- Graphic Design
- Illustration for Communication
- Interior Design Environment Architectures
- Motion Graphics
- Product Design
- Urban Landscape Architecture
- User-Experience and User-Interface Design

Different courses have different requirements for your portfolio

Our **BA Fashion** course requires a portfolio of work focusing on design, textiles or fashion, with the portfolio consisting of the use of materials and the act of making a garment.

Our **Design** courses want your work to display that you can draw and develop ideas and design practically and digitally.

Our **Architecture** courses do not expect you to have sketches of buildings already in your repertoire, but they are looking for your ability to draw, and the use of digital tools and design techniques would benefit your application.

✏️ Annotate

Your artwork cannot do all the talking. Please label and annotate your work so we can understand what you're doing, the story that is being told, and how it all relates to the course you are applying for.

? If you have any questions, or would like feedback on your portfolio before you send your application, contact our outreach team at outreach@rave.ac.uk

Keep an eye on our events page for upcoming **portfolio advice webinars:** ravensbourne.ac.uk/events