

Why study Product Design?

A designer dreams of things that never were, and says, 'why not?'

Dick Powell

Practically everything you use, see and touch in a day is designed by someone. So design is key to everything out there, be it architecture, furniture design, electrical products, toys, fashion, packaging, graphics, jewellery and so on. Designers hold a pivotal position in society as they determine the success or failure of every product and how it impacts on the consumers who use them. In today's society designers also have a great responsibility to meet the demands of the new millennium and consider ethical issues such as the environment, designing for need and providing for the developing world. If you love innovation and think 'why not!' then this is the course for you.

What will you be learning?

At A level 50% of the assessment is through a 'Design and Make' assignment. You will use an iterative design process which will be structured like the GCSE D&T NEA to design and manufacture a prototype product of your choice. In previous years popular products have included adult and children's furniture, toys and storage solutions. You will start with a problem, and work through research, design work, modelling, testing and development to create an innovative design solution. This will be manufactured as a high quality product solution and then evaluated and tested.

The remaining 50% is assessed through a written exam paper where you will be tested on your understanding of the social context and theory of designing and manufacturing, 15% of this mark is maths based. The content of the exam will be weaved into the design and make projects in year 12 and the Non-Exam Assessment (NEA).

What are the lessons like?

Lessons are very varied with something for everyone. The first term will be skills based to teach you the designing and making skills needed for successful completion of the coursework. This will include design communication incorporating CAD, analysis skills and problem solving strategies. We do some focussed theory lessons but the majority of the time you will be in the workshop doing hands on research, designing, development, testing and manufacture. We do some team designing early in Year 12 but you will spend most of your time working, with support, on your individual design and make coursework assignment.

'Product Design gives its pupils the skills needed to contribute to the world we live in. It is an

enjoyable, creative subject which allows its pupils to celebrate their individuality through their designs.’ (Year 13 pupil)

What can it lead to?

Because Product Design is such a wide topic it can lead to many different options after A Level. The obvious progression is to study a degree course in product or industrial design, engineering, architecture, interior design, graphics or one of the huge range of ‘designing’ courses now available. Alternatively you might want to pursue a career in teaching, take up an apprenticeship, or train as a design technician or craftsperson.

Want to know more?

To find out more about the course and discuss your suitability please contact K.Vose@qes.org.uk