Welcome to RHODEC International

You’ve now made the decision to study Interior Design with us, after what may have been a number of years during which you’ve always felt that you’ve had more creative ideas and more artistic inclinations than those around you; more to contribute to a conversation on aesthetics; better ideas as to how to resolve a design problem; better informed comments on the use of colour in a particular interior.

No doubt you’ve at least dabbled in the subject of Interior Design already, if only in your own home, and have your own opinions as to how you’d like to improve any number of interiors you’ve visited over the years. It may well be that you have sharper visual and aesthetic awareness than many of those you know; but even if this is so, you should never become complacent in your views. The subject of Interior Design, like any other aesthetic or intellectual pursuit, demands a constant updating of one’s knowledge, and an ability to recognize the difference between knowledge in the first place, and wisdom, skill and insight thereafter - all of which often result only from the initial accumulation of knowledge - if one is to keep abreast of and, ideally, slightly ahead of current thinking.

Therefore this course is designed constantly to test and stretch your aesthetic and mental capabilities. You won’t always find your studies easy - but what worth in the long term is a course that demands little or nothing of its students?

Enjoy your learning, and learn to enjoy!

BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE, PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING COURSE ORIENTATION. IF NECESSARY, YOU SHOULD REFER BACK TO THE COURSE ORIENTATION REGULARLY THROUGHOUT YOUR STUDIES. IT CONTAINS VITAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE MANNER IN WHICH YOUR COURSE IS RUN, AND INCLUDES INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW YOU’RE REQUIRED TO PRESENT AND SUBMIT WORK, CONTACT YOUR TUTOR, etc.

YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND RETENTION OF THE COURSE ORIENTATION NOTES WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON YOUR SUCCESS DURING YOUR STUDIES WITH RHODEC.
DIPLOMA COURSE ORIENTATION
IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ IMMEDIATELY

Instruction Units
The Units contain the formal instruction in the Course and should be studied carefully. While test papers are being marked the next part of the Unit should be studied or revision of past Units carried out.

THE DIPLOMA COURSE IN INTERIOR DESIGN
Once you’ve completed Test M1 included in this Welcome Pack, Units RD1, RD2 and RD3 (Materials, History and Drafting) may be studied simultaneously or in any order - we leave it for you to decide. Studying two or all three of the first three Units simultaneously can save a great deal of time as you can be working on a test from one Unit while awaiting the return of a test from another Unit.

The Drafting Unit must be successfully completed before any tests from later Units are attempted, and all Diploma Course tests must be submitted one at a time unless otherwise stated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit RD1</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons M1 - M10</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit RD2</th>
<th>A History of Interior Design</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons HD1 - HD8</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit RD3</th>
<th>Drafting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons D1 - D8</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unit RD4</th>
<th>Design</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons De1 - De5</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unit RD5</th>
<th>Colour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons C1 - C6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit RD6</th>
<th>Furniture and Fittings, Part One</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons FF1 - FF6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit RD7</th>
<th>Furniture and Fittings, Part Two</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons FF7 - FF13</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unit RD8</th>
<th>Construction of Interiors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons Con1 - Con11</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Unit RD9</th>
<th>Professional Practice</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lessons PP1 - PP3</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit RD10</th>
<th>Final Test</th>
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</table>
Assessment of Test Papers

Your test papers will be carefully examined and assessed by your tutors, who will make notes for your guidance.

**Students with UK-based tutors will be graded according to the following system:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>85-100%</strong></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma with Distinction standard which, if maintained throughout the course, may qualify you for a Rhodec Diploma with Distinction and a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) awarded by London Metropolitan University, subject to final approval by London Met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>75-84%</strong></td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Good Pass, but could be better still.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma with Merit (Upper Division) standard which, if maintained throughout the course, may qualify you for a Rhodec Diploma (Upper Merit Division) and a Diploma of Higher Education awarded by London Metropolitan University, subject to final approval by LondonMet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>65-74%</strong></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Pass, although plenty of scope for improvement.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma with Merit (Lower Division) standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>55-64%</strong></td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Bare Pass - must try harder!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ordinary Diploma standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under 55%</strong></td>
<td>Repeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(In the opinion of your tutor you haven’t reached a sufficiently high standard to enable you to go on to the next Lesson. You must repeat the test, after taking full note of the tutor’s comments, before proceeding to the next Lesson.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE** These percentage and grade ranges are guides only, and don’t in themselves guarantee a certain grade of Diploma. It’s quite possible that you’ll achieve the grade of Diploma suggested by these percentage ranges, but sometimes a Final Test can be disappointing and not meet the requirements. Even if your total course marks (including a poor Final Test mark) add up to over 75% we can’t guarantee that you’ll be awarded an Upper Merit Diploma. The same is true of any total course mark and any grade of Diploma.
**Students with US-based tutors will be graded according to the following system:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Equivalent % Range</th>
<th>Grade Point Awarded</th>
<th>General Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>96 to 100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>91 to 95</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Diploma with Distinction standard which, if maintained throughout the course, may qualify you for a Rhodoc Diploma with Distinction and a Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) awarded by London Metropolitan University, subject to final approval by LondonMet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>85 to 90</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>standard which, if maintained throughout the course, may qualify you for a Rhodec Diploma with Distinction and a Diploma of Higher Education awarded by London Metropolitan University, subject to final approval by London Met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>82 to 84</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>79 to 81</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>(Good Pass, but could be better still) Diploma with Merit (Upper Division) standard which, if maintained throughout the course, may qualify you for a Rhodoc Diploma (Upper Merit Division) and a Diploma of Higher Education awarded by London Metropolitan University, subject to final approval by London Met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>75 to 78</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>72 to 74</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>(Pass, although plenty of scope for improvement) Diploma with Merit (Lower Division) standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>69 to 71</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>65 to 68</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>62 to 64</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Satisfactory (Bare Pass – must try harder!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>59 to 61</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>Ordinary Diploma standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>55 to 58</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 55</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Fail – Must Repeat the Test Repeat (In the opinion of your tutor you haven’t reached a sufficiently high standard to enable you to go on to the next Lesson. You must repeat the test, after taking full note of the tutor’s comments, before proceeding to the next Lesson.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes you may find that your tutor doesn’t award a mark but asks you to repeat just part of a test because the overall standard doesn’t merit a repeat mark, but part of the test is below standard.

Your success in the Diploma Course and the decision to award an Ordinary Diploma or a Diploma with Merit (Lower Division), with Merit (Upper Division) or with Distinction will be measured partly by the continuous assessment of your work during the Course and partly by the satisfactory completion of the Final Test. Consideration is therefore given to the written and drawn work you complete during the course, so it’s in your interests to complete this to the highest standards of which you’re capable.

While awaiting the return of a submitted assignment you should familiarize yourself with the Lessons and test questions later on in the Unit and in the course, and carry out research for your sketchbook studies. In this way you should always be able to keep busy during that inevitably frustrating period between submitting work and receiving it back - you must not submit a test for marking until you’ve received back the previous test in that subject with at least a pass grade, for you may only be repeating your mistakes, and at the very least will have missed the benefit of your tutor’s comments and advice on your previous work.
How the Tests Should be Answered

Each question set should, ideally, be answered without reference to the course materials (unless particularly requested to do so). If you constantly refer to the course materials while answering tests you may receive artificially high marks, but the work will serve little purpose in testing your progress and you won’t gain full benefit from your studies.

A4 paper (or 8.5” x 11”) should be used for all written work and freehand drawings. For drawings prepared with a drawing board, larger sizes will sometimes be required. Paper quality should be fully considered and drawings must not be submitted on lined paper. If you get into the habit of standardizing your test papers to ‘A’ sizes or equivalents, by the end of the Course you’ll have a portfolio of work that can be neatly presented to any prospective client or employer.

If you wish to have your original drawings remain free of tutor notes and marks, please submit copies for marking purposes. It’s very important that all original work be submitted for grading. There are no exceptions to this: if you don’t send original work the test will be returned unmarked. If you do wish to send copies, clearly mark them as “Marking Copies”!

Paper Sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sheet</th>
<th>Millimetres</th>
<th>Inches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A0</td>
<td>841 x 1189</td>
<td>33.1 x 46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>594 x 841</td>
<td>23.4 x 33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>420 x 594</td>
<td>16.5 x 23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>297 x 420</td>
<td>11.7 x 16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>210 x 297</td>
<td>8.3 x 11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>148 x 210</td>
<td>5.8 x 8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6</td>
<td>105 x 148</td>
<td>4.1 x 5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7</td>
<td>74 x 105</td>
<td>2.9 x 4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and even smaller sizes A8, A9 and A10.

In some countries such as the US, the size of paper is chosen depending on the size needed rather than a preset size. Some of the more popular sizes used by the industry are as follows:

- 8.5” x 11” letter size used for most documents and possibly small drawings
- 11” x 17” small drawings and possibly documentation (although rarely)
- 12” x 18” small drawings or detail information
- 18” x 24” drawing and presentation boards often used for interior design presentations
- 24” x 36” drawings and presentation boards often used for larger presentations
- 30” x 42” used for many architectural drawing sets and may be used for interiors as well
- 36” x 48” used for large architectural drawing sets, although they don’t have to be limited to architecture

The key is to make sure the size is large enough to meet the needs of the drawing and the information that needs to be conveyed; however the paper size should not be so large that it overwhelms the drawing(s). It’s also worth noting that different firms may have standard sizes that are used for specific purposes for all documentation that’s produced by that firm.
Registration Number
Your Registration Number is provided by Rhodec, and is very important. This, together with your name and address, must appear on all work submitted for correction, and on all correspondence with us. General correspondence or course fee/tuition payments should not be enclosed with tests, but should be sent to the Administrative Headquarters.

ALWAYS WRITE YOUR REGISTRATION NUMBER ON EVERY COMMUNICATION.

Tutors’ Addresses
You should send your tests direct to the Unit tutor using the address provided, and fill in your name, Registration Number and test number on each sheet you submit.
You must always have your tests weighed to ensure that the correct postage is affixed. Tutors will not accept work for which they’re required to pay a postal surcharge. For the return of your test you should supply an envelope of appropriate size, fill in your name, address and Registration Number, and enclose it in the envelope in which you send your test.

You should not submit tests by any method that requires a receipt, or a trip to the post office by the tutor to collect your work, for instance because the test package exceeds a certain weight.

You should send work only to the tutor specified for that Unit.

UK Students should affix stamps in the appropriate amount to this return envelope. If a return envelope is under-stamped your tutor will not add the difference, and you’ll be required to pay a surcharge when you receive your returned work. Pre-franked return envelopes are unacceptable, as Post Offices don’t accept them. Stamps must be used.

Students studying from outside the UK and submitting work to UK-based tutors are not required to affix stamps but should affix an airmail sticker to the return envelope. All such tests are returned by airmail at Rhodec’s expense.

US Students should affix stamps in the appropriate amount to this return envelope. If a return envelope is under-stamped your tutor will not add the difference, and you’ll be required to pay a surcharge when you receive your returned work. Pre-franked return envelopes are unacceptable, as Post Offices don’t accept them. Stamps must be used.

Students studying from outside the US and submitting work to US-based tutors are not required to affix a stamp but should affix an airmail sticker to the return envelope. All such tests are returned by airmail at Rhodec’s expense.
Contacting Your Tutor by Telephone/Email/Fax

Subsequent to the submission of the first test in a subject, tutors are available by telephone, email and fax. If you have a query regarding a test, please phone, email or fax your tutor whilst bearing in mind that you should keep your questions concise and to the point. Clearly tutors are not available around the clock, so if you phone you may well hear an answering machine message. If so, please clearly state your query, your name and Registration Number, and your phone number including dialling code. Your tutor will then get back to you as soon as possible. Please note, however, that most tutors have other consultancy and teaching commitments and, while they try to return calls as promptly as possible, there may be delays, especially at weekends. It’s helpful to give an indication of the best time for a tutor to call back; but please don’t set exact times and expect them to be met without fail.

You can email or fax queries to tutors and expect an emailed or faxed answer. History tests may be emailed with accompanying illustrations embedded into a document created by a word processing program such as Microsoft Word. It’s strongly advised that you email such work in a “cross-platform” format such as Rich Text Format (.rtf file extension, and very easy to create using the “Save As” function). Rich Text Format files can be opened on both Windows and Mac computers.

You must not email or fax an essay and then separately post any non-written work that may comprise the rest of a particular test, and you must not email or fax pictures of drawings, colour work, copies of sample boards, etc. All tests requiring the tutor to assess original work such as drawings (in other words, the vast majority of the Diploma Course tests) must be mailed as normal, together with any accompanying written work that may be required.

Email Notification of Test Results

If you provide your email address with each submitted test you can expect to receive an emailed version of the tutor’s comments and the grade awarded as soon as the test has been marked. Assuming a satisfactory grade, and possibly dependent upon the necessity to refer to notes and corrections on the original test work which will follow by mail, you can then proceed to the next test in your course without the need to wait for the test itself to arrive back. This should greatly speed up your studies.

Any administrative queries should be directed to our Administrative Headquarters, and not to tutors.

Guides to Answering the Test Questions

In each Test Paper you’ll find italicized text that’s intended to give you guidelines to help you to complete the work to the best of your ability, and to give you a good idea of the points your tutors will be looking for when they assess your work. Please note that these are guides only and are not necessarily intended as definitive indicators of “the only right way” to answer the tests.

Submitting Duplicates of Your Work for Assessment

If you wish to send duplicates of your original work (drawings, colour renderings, etc.) for grading purposes you may do so. This will allow the tutor to make marks and comments on the duplicate work without spoiling the original work, which you may wish to keep to show later. However, you must send the copies together with the originals, and not in place of them. It’s critical that you understand that all tests submitted must include original drawings and documents, on their own or in addition to the copies you’ve made, or the work will be returned to you unmarked! In any event we strongly advise that you take complete copies of each test before submitting it, if at all possible. If the only copy is lost on its way to the tutor you’ll have the disheartening task of repeating it all from scratch. Clearly word-processed essays can easily be saved anyway, and a scanner is very convenient for saving full-colour copies of drawings, etc.
Basic Materials Required to Complete Your Studies

It’s in your best interests to buy the best equipment you can afford. If you can buy good quality materials now, do so - this will save having to replace cheap items, at further expense, if you become a practising interior designer. You won’t require drawing equipment until you’re studying the Drafting Unit. This list is not exhaustive, and other items may be required during the Course. This will depend to some extent on your own choices of equipment, colouring media, etc. Please note that the course fees don’t include the provision of such materials by Rhodec; they must be purchased separately.

- Pads of A4 (or 8.5” x 11”) lined paper, and of A4 (or 8.5” x 11”) unlined paper
- Writing pens, and drawing pencils of various grades
- Envelopes to forward tests to your tutors
- A drawing board of at least A3 (or 12” x 18”) size with parallel motion or tee square (otherwise known as a parallel bar) and set square (otherwise known as a triangle) - the Drafting text gives more detailed information
- Soft erasers
- A scale rule, otherwise known as an architect’s scale
- A clutch pencil or mechanical pencil
- Technical drawing pens – see Drafting
- Cartridge Paper (Vellum) or Sketch Paper (good quality paper with a slightly rough surface) and tracing paper to various ‘A’ sizes (or equivalent – see Paper Sizes above). In addition to pads, both of these products are commonly available in various sized rolls and sheets
- Paints, marker pens (art markers) and coloured pencils

All the above materials should be readily available from stationers and art supply establishments. If you have problems locating these items consider one of the many suppliers available on the Internet.

The Assessment of Your Tests

Some assessment systems around the world begin with the assumption that a tutor “works down” from 100%, often meaning that 90% is perceived as a rather average mark. The Rhodec/London Metropolitan University marking systems tend to “work up” from 0%, meaning that 90% is an extremely good mark.

You may have noted in the DipHE Handbook that a maintained average mark of as little as 75% might be sufficient to qualify for the DipHE and potential progression to the BA. Therefore, you should by no means be downhearted if you receive such a mark even if you’re used to a marking system that views 75% as very ordinary indeed. In the Rhodec/London Met system, it is not!

Particularly in a very visual and subjective area such as interior design, marks are awarded (or deducted) partly on general “feel” and presentation, and on your tutor’s personal perceptions of your design sensibilities. In most Diploma Course Units a perfect mark is all-but impossible, so please bear these points in mind during your studies.

It is, of course, still in your interests at all times to produce the very best work of which you’re capable because, the higher your overall mark, the better your chances of attaining a high grade of Diploma - and, indeed, BA - should you progress.
Collecting Samples
You'll note that many Materials tests require the collection of samples, brochures, etc. This requirement leads some students to feel “bogged down” awaiting the arrival of these items before they have even developed a regular study routine.

In answering those questions in the Materials tests that require you to list the brochures and samples in your possession we will, therefore, allow you simply to list those you’ve requested rather than those you’ve actually received. This will save you a great deal of time, and allow you to proceed much more rapidly with your studies. N.B. This concession does entail a certain amount of trust: your tutor must accept that you’ve requested those items you list, and we ask that you respect this trust.

You’ll nevertheless note that some tests require a selection of samples to be mounted and sent to your tutor, and clearly real samples must be provided at such times. We would advise you to read through all the tests as soon as you’re able, and immediately begin requesting and collecting samples in all the various categories required, in order that you have as many as possible at your disposal when the time comes to submit a particular test.

Please remember that it is in any event in your long-term interests to collect as many samples and leaflets as possible regardless of whether you’re able to submit evidence to your tutor of their collection. The Diploma Course is taught on the assumption that you wish to practise interior design on graduation; if so, you’ll need to lay your hands on such items.

Plagiarism
The practice of copying others’ work is a serious transgression, and is both dishonest and illegal. Any student found to have plagiarized another’s work risks being removed from the course without refund. Similarly, extracting text from previously written works without quoting the source is seriously frowned upon in academic circles.

You’ll therefore be required to complete and sign a Statement of Authorship, to be found on a perforated tear-out sheet immediately following Lesson M1. We will be unable to accept the work unless this Statement, correctly completed and signed, accompanies your submitted Test M1.

General
Good presentation plays a big part in an interior designer’s job; you should always bear this in mind right from the beginning of your course. Written work should be typed, printed out from a word processor, or very neatly hand-written in ink on standard sized paper; and drawings accompanying written work should be on unlined tracing paper or cartridge (sketch) paper (depending on the medium used - more about this later in the course) to the same standard format as the written work, and properly bound or clipped together. All pages of every test should be numbered, and should be arranged in the exact order in which the assignment was given. Tests submitted with pages out of order will be returned unmarked.

Questions in the tests must be answered to the best of your ability, and evidence of further study will be looked upon favourably. If you take notes from other books and use them in the content of your answers you should include a bibliography at the end of the test paper. In the History Unit this is mandatory.

IMPORTANT ALL TESTS IN THE DIPLOMA COURSE MUST BE SUBMITTED ONE AT A TIME UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED. YOU MUST NOT SUBMIT A TEST FOR MARKING UNTIL YOU’VE RECEIVED BACK THE PREVIOUS TEST IN THAT SUBJECT WITH AT LEAST A PASS GRADE, OR AT LEAST EMAIL NOTIFICATION OF A SATISFACTORY RESULT, FOR YOU MAY ONLY BE REPEATING YOUR MISTAKES, AND AT THE VERY LEAST WILL HAVE MISSED THE BENEFIT OF YOUR TUTOR’S COMMENTS AND ADVICE ON YOUR PREVIOUS WORK.
The Course curriculum is arranged in such a way as to make each Unit a logical progression from the previous one. After Materials, History and Drafting, all Units must be studied in order.

It’s advisable to buy an A1 (or equivalent) size portfolio so that all your course work can be stored in a professional manner. If you apply for a job you can take your portfolio with you and show the work you’ve completed during your Course.

We do welcome evidence of further study and advise you to see what books and reference materials are available in your neighbourhood. Your local library should have a stock of useful reference books, or will be able to order titles for you from other libraries. Today, of course, the Internet is a wonderful research resource. For students who wish to buy books for their personal reference library and who are unable to buy them locally, we hold a stock of reference books (and paints, pencils, etc.) for sale by mail order, details of which are available from Rhodec.

We can’t stress too fully the importance of reading as many design magazines as you can. You should be a regular subscriber to at least one, and flick through others to see if there are any articles, illustrations, etc. that are of particular interest. Many publications are available on direct subscription through the publisher, although you may need to visit a larger bookshop or newsagent to locate those with more educational insights rather than the ones intended for the do-it-yourselfer. In addition, some publications are available only to the trade.

In addition to magazines, it’s necessary to realize the importance of a great deal of additional reading and reference. Studying by distance learning means that you take a great deal of responsibility for your own education. In taking this responsibility it’s up to you to research and take an active part in understanding the profession and all the elements you need to learn. Since the profession of interior design is different in various parts of the world, it’s important for you to research subjects in order to make sure your education meets the needs of the profession in your particular area.

We would also strongly advise that you register with as many product specification guides as you can. These list dozens or even hundreds of addresses of suppliers of many different materials, with photographs and descriptions of the products and services offered, and contain a Reader Service Card which you can complete to request free brochures, etc. from the suppliers listed. Once you’re on the mailing list of one or two publications, you’ll probably find before long that a number of others start being delivered to your address!

Again, the Internet is another resource for invaluable information for the designer. It’s a very positive way to have a sustainable office that reduces the use of paper in as many areas as possible. You’ll find that many manufacturers will put as much information on the web as they do in their catalogues.

In addition you’ll find that a number of magazines aimed specifically at the design world include product cards to accompany suppliers’ advertisements. These should also be investigated.

Your studies should be taken seriously; success cannot be obtained without effort. It’s advisable to get into the habit of studying as soon as possible after you register, and to continue to work at a steady pace until you’ve completed your Course.

Any questions you want to ask will, of course, be answered. If you wish to write questions rather than take advantage of the telephone, fax or email facilities mentioned earlier, questions on tests should be written at the end of your completed test and space left below or overleaf for your tutor to reply. You should also leave a wide margin on test papers for tutorial comment. Any questions that don’t relate to the academic content of your course (e.g. queries about fees, change of address, etc.) should be sent to the Administrative Headquarters.
Rhodec International
Extramural Independent Studies

Diploma Course CAD Option
We offer the option to produce Computer-Aided Design renderings instead of conventional drawings in order to answer certain course questions subsequent to the Drafting Unit. This is to encourage you to become acquainted with CAD, whose role in the design world is becoming ever more important. We stress that this is only an option, and that you won't be penalized in any way if you don't use CAD during your studies. Indeed, most drawings must still be produced by conventional means, as it's important for you to keep in practice. As you progress through the course you'll see some test questions, and even some entire tests, clearly marked CAD OPTION. There you may use CAD if you wish, but for those and only those questions specified.

The CAD software you have may not be capable of rendering all the drawings listed, in which case you'll be required to produce those drawings by conventional means. Please note that colour rendering, extra details, etc., should be added by hand where appropriate. It's in your best interests to become familiar with CAD early in the course: you'll not only possess a valuable skill in today's world, but will be able to execute many drawings required to answer course questions, and all drawings required to answer the Final Test, more speedily and more professionally.

If you intend to complete Final Test drawings using CAD, we strongly advise that you invest in an A3 (or equivalent) colour printer, or if possible an even larger printer or plotter, with your future career in mind. Small printouts do scant justice to detailed plans, elevations and perspective drawings; furthermore, if you're registered on the DipHE element when you complete the Final Test, the submission of small drawings may count against you when London Metropolitan University's internal and external examiners assess your work. (A less expensive alternative in the shorter term is to take your computer-rendered files on a Zip Disk, CD ROM, etc. to a local business that has the facilities to print the pictures to high standards using very expensive state-of-the-art equipment.)

If you're happy that you've absorbed all the important points in this Course Orientation, please proceed to study Lesson M1 on the following pages.
**Introduction**

**HAVE YOU READ AND FULLY DIGESTED THE DIPLOMA COURSE ORIENTATION? IF NOT, PLEASE DO SO NOW BEFORE PROCEEDING ANY FURTHER, AND KEEP IT TO HAND THROUGHOUT YOUR STUDIES.**

To many people Interior Design conjures up visions of beautiful fabrics, luxurious carpets and a wide range of rich colours from which to choose, thereby creating attractive and artistic schemes.

This is of course true to a certain extent, but the art of the designer is by no means confined only to using merchandise in a purely superficial way.

Although this Course begins with this very important subject of Materials it will soon be apparent that a deeper knowledge and understanding of these, and all the other elements, will be encouraged in order to develop critical awareness of the nature of design itself.

Therefore you, the student, are invited to get to know as much as possible about materials, and allow your imaginative instincts to create a whole new series of visions and ideas that could, with knowledge and practice, stand proudly to face the world.

From now on you must see the environment more acutely, feel the atmosphere more keenly, read and draw more selectively, and collect thoughts and ideas, samples and brochures, carefully sorting them into sections and files suggested in this Unit.

You must study your own reactions and those of other people, registering the situations that affect their comfort and behaviour. One doesn’t necessarily have to be indoors to appreciate materials and their qualities of texture, the subtleties of pattern and the excitement of contrasts. Things seen and learned in Nature’s great outdoors can be applied to advantage within the interior.

This Unit, therefore, and the whole Course, endeavours to help you harness this sensitivity, and through communication transform your ideas into reality.

Who can impart to the foyer of a building, or a room, or an auditorium, the much-needed drama, the sense of comfort, the assurance of prestige, the function, the safety and the necessary interactions? The designer.

Inside the architectural envelope there are myriad spaces allocated to humans as personal or splendidly public worlds. This is the sphere of the interior designer. Just a feeling for colour, carpets and curtains could not meet that exacting role. Study is needed.

Therefore the following text has been carefully planned to help you towards a realization of a hope that you can use your talents in a creative, positive way, and by so doing there is a chance of changing something, somewhere for somebody.

Apply yourself carefully to each section and understand the basics thoroughly, since this will enable you to extend confidently beyond the scope of this Unit, if you so wish, and prepare the way soundly for further study.

**IMPORTANT NOTES**

Rhodec teaches students the world over, and not all text and illustrations within this course will necessarily apply to your own location. The course is therefore a “baseline guide”, and it is vital that you be familiar with the laws and guidelines of the country within which you work.

All information contained in this course is correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication. Rhodec International does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy of such information.

All conversions between Metric and Imperial/Standard throughout the course are approximate.
The Definition of an Interior Designer

The International Interior Design Association (IIDA) gives a short and a long definition of interior design on their website, www.iida.org. The following is the long definition taken from that location. Other organizations may define “interior designer” differently, so we encourage you to explore this for yourself.

Long Definition (Scope of Services)
The interior design profession provides services encompassing research, development, and implementation of plans and designs of interior environments to improve the quality of life, increase productivity, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. The interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology. Research, analysis, and integration of information into the creative process result in an appropriate interior environment. Practitioners may perform any or all of the following services:

Programming
Identify and analyze the client’s needs and goals. Evaluate existing documentation and conditions.
• Assess project resources and limitations. Identify life, safety, and code requirements.
• Develop project schedules, work plans, and budgets.
• Analyze design objectives and spatial requirements.
• Integrate findings with their experience and knowledge of interior design.

Determine the need for, make recommendations, and coordinate with consultants and other specialists when required by professional practice or regulatory approval.

Conceptual Design
Formulate for client discussion and approval preliminary plans and design concepts that are appropriate and describe the character, function, and aesthetic of a project.

Design Development
Develop and present for client review and approval final design recommendations for: space planning and furnishings arrangements; wall, window, floor, and ceiling treatments; furnishings, fixtures, and millwork, colour, finishes, and hardware; and lighting, electrical, and communications requirements.
• Develop art, accessory, and graphic/signage programs.
• Develop budgets.
• Presentation media can include drawings, sketches, perspectives, renderings, colour and material boards, photographs, and models.

Contract Documents
Prepare working drawings and specifications for non-load bearing interior construction, materials, finishes, furnishings, fixtures, and equipment for client’s approval.
• Collaborate with professional services of specialty consultants and licensed practitioners in the technical areas of mechanical, electrical, and load-bearing design as required by professional practice or regulatory approval. Identify qualified vendors. Prepare bid documentation, collect and review bids.
• Assist clients in awarding contracts.

Contract Administration
Administer contract documents as the client’s agent
• Confirm that required permits are obtained.
• Review and approve shop drawings and samples to assure they are consistent with design concepts.
• Conduct on-site visits and field inspections.
• Monitor contractors’ and suppliers progress.
• Oversee on their clients’ behalf the installation of furnishings, fixtures, and equipment.
• Prepare lists of deficiencies for the client’s use.

Evaluation
Review and evaluate the implementation of projects while in progress and upon completion as representative of and on behalf of the client.
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1 metre = 100 centimetres = 1000 millimetres.
For example, 0.583 m = 58.3 cms = 583 mm.

1 yard = 0.915 metres (0.915 m)
1 foot (1') = 30.5 centimetres (30.5 cms)
1 inch (1") = 2.54 cms
1 metre = 1.093 yards = 3' 3'/2”
1 centimetre = 0.4 inches.
Lesson M1
General Approach

To begin with one must have ideas, or a building within which ideas can be developed, or a document that specifies an ultimate goal that, through the planning processes, one can progress towards and finally achieve.

Then, as soon as the vision or plan is formed, the problem is how to transform it into reality! We must analyze it to make sure that it answers the functional criteria of space enclosure acceptable to human conditions and meets all formal regulations.

The next important question is to think about the type and appearance of the materials that can be used to create the impression that's desired. The way they're put together, not only constructionally, but in juxtaposition to each other, will have to be considered very carefully.

It's therefore essential to develop a sensitivity towards materials within the design context. A wider knowledge of the varieties available, and their particular properties, can be used to advantage if understood properly, and this understanding enables designers to increase their range of ideas and their capacity for imaginative detailing. Because materials are the media through which schemes are created, and the means by which structural and decorative realities are interpreted, it will become increasingly natural to think of them within the design process as a whole.

Properties
There are, for all materials, natural and imposed properties, and these, together with the aesthetic considerations, will be studied in this Unit. In many cases they will finally modify and qualify the choice of natural material, since they're important influences on the final success or otherwise of the design.

Where the properties of wearability and/or subsequent maintenance are concerned, the costs, the amount of time and energy involved in upkeep, the difficulties of accessibility and the number of replacements that may be required, should all influence the decision as to which is the most suitable choice in each particular instance.

We intend, where applicable, to include special reference to local and regional uses of certain materials. Since climatic and geographical influences will be seen to have an obvious bearing on the choice and use of such materials, these should be noted carefully.

It's essential, where appropriate, to think in terms of sound absorption and thermal insulation. Therefore we will go into the properties of certain materials, together with their effective placement within the interior.

Also fire-spread and fire-retarding properties under certain conditions and different circumstances must be understood and assessed. Combustibility warnings and flame check values will be included where feasible.

Because of poor design or detailing, or inappropriate use of materials, detrimental conditions can occur in particular instances - condensation, for example. Therefore the likely causes and suggested materials and/or treatments will be explained, besides showing means of avoiding these problems if possible.

Aesthetics
We will also discuss the aesthetic qualities of the materials themselves, and the way light, colour and texture can inter-relate to gain the desired effect. We hope that this part of the Unit will help you to develop an appreciation and awareness of the individual qualities of materials. Their special beauty and the appropriateness of their use, in any number of positions, only serve to indicate how they're the real fabric with which to create, in reality, the 'unseen vision'.

Everyone has their own material preferences within several design categories. For example, the Scandinavian reputation for skill with natural materials, and in particular wood, and their traditional excellence and quality of craftsmanship, appeals to many; or the more sophisticated industrial design approach, prominent in much Italian work, is practised a great deal in commercial spheres. Both these interpretations are suitable for certain similar fields, while each can also be special to particular environments as required. It's up to the designer to judge the suitability and standard appropriate to each individual project, and it's
this skill that this Unit, and indeed the Course as a whole, aims to develop.

“Passion, colour and originality cannot atone for serious imperfections in clearness, unity or truth.”

Palgrave

Specification Issues
Choices for interior finishes are most often made based on the aesthetics or look of a particular material. The design professional realizes that, while aesthetics are critically important, there are several other factors that must be considered when choosing finishes for interior design. These factors determine the longevity of the installed material, the effect on the environment of the material and its processing and disposal, and the impact of the material regarding the life, health and safety of the occupants of the interior space. It’s the knowledge and understanding of these factors that make the job of the designer so important and help us as design professionals recognize our responsibility to make choices that not only project the image the client seeks, but also “do no harm” to life, health or the environment.

Material Aesthetics
The aesthetic of a material is an important characteristic to consider when making interior finish decisions. Colour, texture, pattern, grain, light reflection, draping, and other characteristics should all be reviewed as unified interiors are designed. The relationship between all materials in a space must be evaluated to assure that there is a cohesive flow throughout the space, and that the visual effect of the materials supports the goal of the designer. Finishes for walls, floors and ceilings should work together to form the basic structure and background from which the design professional begins. Furnishings and accessories should then be determined based on visual goals, functions of the space, and general feel of the environment. Manufacturers often provide samples to help designers decide on materials to use within the space. Frequently these samples are quite small and may not give a true illustration of pattern, texture or colour variations. Be sure to request larger samples to assure that you have a clear view of the material’s aesthetic qualities.

Light is a very important component of material aesthetics, and materials should whenever possible be chosen and coordinated under the same lighting that will occur within the space. Many well-coordinated projects have turned into visual disasters simply because of choices made under incorrect lighting!

Material Properties
Each material has inherent physical properties beyond its aesthetic. These properties include sound absorption, temperature (both real and perceived), visual characteristics (transparent, translucent, opaque), and reactions to environmental influences. As with aesthetics, each of these properties must be considered individually and as it relates to the properties of other materials used in the space.

Interior materials are instrumental in either reflecting or absorbing sound. Sound is typically measured in decibels (dB), and the higher the decibel number, the louder the sound. For example, a quiet conversation between two individuals may be about 40 dB, while a plane taxiing on a runway could be over 120 dB. Materials should be chosen and placed to absorb or reflect sound as needed in specific areas of each space. The overall sound absorbing characteristics of materials are usually expressed in a Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC) that’s a number between 0 and 1.0. The lower the number, the more sound is reflected off of the material. For example, a material with an NRC of 0.01 reflects more sound than a material with an NRC of 0.45. These ratings are standardized throughout the design industry and can be made available by the manufacturer for your use in specifying materials.

Temperature and insulation properties also need to be considered when choosing materials for interior installations. Some materials have either a real or a perceived temperature that can affect the overall feel of a space. For example, many people feel that interiors in which a great deal of chrome and silver metals are used feel much colder than interiors sporting wood paneling. Designers must be aware of these perceptions and use materials that reinforce the design goals of the environment. Insulation properties of materials are another important set of factors to be considered during specification since materials either support or inhibit the flow of heat. Expressed as an “R-Value”, numbers are
assigned to materials to indicate how much resistance a material provides to heat flow. The higher the R-value of a material, the greater its resistance to heat flow. For example, an insulated wall panel will have a higher R-value than a pane of glass.

Materials also have varying degrees of opacity allowing for different light transference. Transparent materials allow almost total light transference and visibility through the material. Translucent materials scatter the light rays somewhat, but still allow them to pass through. Translucent materials may also allow some visual privacy since they’re not totally transparent, but movement and shadows can still be seen through even the densest translucent materials. Opaque materials block all light and visual access, defining spaces by their location and design characteristics. They may be either light reflecting or light absorbing, which will also alter their impact within your design.

Finally, all materials react in some way to environmental influences, and we must be aware of these reactions and take full advantage of them in our designs. Some materials will react in negative ways to moisture, direct sunlight, or draughty areas. Other materials may produce positive reactions to the same elements. For example, a gypsum wallboard may mildew if exposed to extremely moist conditions for an extended time, ultimately causing it to be destroyed. Copper, exposed to the same environmental conditions, will safely “weather” to a wonderful blue-green patina and create a completely different effect from the initial material. Direct intense sunlight often causes materials to fade quickly if nothing is done to lessen the effects of the light. Some wallcoverings will separate from the wall surface in hot or overly moist environments, and some wood products will warp in the same conditions. Carefully read information about material characteristics and reactions to various environmental conditions prior to identifying the final specifications for your design.

**Codes/Life Safety**

Most countries have some standardization of building expectations, and this often includes the type and amount of particular building materials allowable in different types of spaces. Design professionals must be aware of national and local codes or standard requirements prior to designing all commercial and most residential projects. These standards give requirements pertaining to fire codes, materials testing, toxic discharges, and other safety issues. Often localities will enact local building codes that exceed national requirements, and these must be incorporated in the decision-making process. Usually a government inspector will come to examine construction projects and ensure that all local and national requirements are being met. These inspectors have been known to shut down job sites immediately if they’re not satisfied with the work being performed or the materials being installed. Don’t let your decisions be the cause of this distressing situation! Know your codes, consult with the inspectors ahead of time if necessary, and make decisions that meet the requirements of your locality.

**Sustainability**

Sustainability, or “Green Design” is an approach to design and construction that minimizes the impact of our industry on the environment. The building industry has a tremendous effect on our resources, air quality and natural resource management, and as such has an even greater responsibility to use materials and processes sensitively and judiciously. As design professionals we impact land use in siting facilities; indoor air quality of interior spaces; mining and use of underground and above-ground resources for interior materials; and air, water, and ground toxicity with material creation and disposal. Our natural resources are becoming more limited, the toxins in our air, water, and ground are increasing at an alarming rate, and our production of energy is taxing existing suppliers and resources. We must change the process by which we make decisions about the design and finishes of our interior spaces to reflect our growing need to support our planet.

The “Environmental Building News” (1995) has outlined priorities for sustainable design, several of which are identified below.

1. **Save energy.** We should strive to conserve energy in the gathering of the materials necessary for our interiors, the processing of those materials, the shipping of the materials to the site, and the ultimate
1. Disposal of the materials when they’re replaced. The designer must also be aware of the site orientation of the building to take advantage of the daily and seasonal natural heating and cooling trends. It’s important for the design professional to research materials and understand how to use natural energy sources to provide the most energy-efficient interiors.

2. Recycle buildings. Often clients believe that constructing a new facility is the only way to meet all of their design needs. There are many existing structures that may be very effective to house their business or dwelling with the proper renovation. Helping clients understand the need to reuse, the possibilities of upgrades to existing structures, and the potential cost savings are additional areas of responsibility we as designers must attend to.

3. Reduce material use. By designing spaces more efficiently, it’s possible to create comfortable, functional work and living areas within less floor area. This reduces the overall building materials used, and the interior materials needed to complete the spaces. Also by effectively using interior materials, it will be possible to reduce the amount of environmentally compromising materials while maximizing the effect from all finishes used.

4. Select low-impact materials. The design industry is making strides towards creating new materials that have an extremely low or negligible impact on the environment. It’s important that we investigate and specify these materials on a regular basis, and support the creation of more environmentally friendly interior materials. These would include low pollution-generating materials during the manufacturing process or during use (i.e. Volatile Organic Compounds – VOC’s), using recycled materials, and using easily renewable resources such as bamboo.

5. Maximize longevity. A major way in which the design and construction industry contributes to environmental compromise is through the disposal of discarded materials. By specifying materials that are more “timeless” in their appearance as well as long-lasting, we are able to reduce the need to renovate spaces repeatedly or replace worn materials that no longer serve the client’s needs. This, in turn, reduces the amount of waste placed in landfills and the energy required to produce new materials to be installed within the space.

6. Make the building healthy. A “healthy” building supports the occupants by effectively integrating the interior and the exterior, making use of natural light and fresh air, and minimizing the use of materials that produce toxins. Mould and mildew should be controlled by limiting the moisture content of the indoor air and, where possible, occupants should be allowed to control the temperature, lighting and airflow of their personal space. The “sick building syndrome” is becoming a more widespread problem as buildings are environmentally sealed and indoor air is recirculated without the addition of sufficient fresh air to clean and remove airborne toxins.

Designers and architects are most often the professionals making decisions about construction and finish materials in new construction projects. We are responsible for the health and safety of the building occupants and for conscientiously using the earth’s resources. This awareness should have a direct influence on every decision you make when designing any interior space.

Historical References, etc.
Because you’re likely to have to deal with both old and new buildings, an historical background to materials can be helpful in some instances, and this has been included where applicable; you can supplement this with a study of the materials local to the geographical area where the project is located, since these are often of character and are obviously most relevant to the project itself.

It’s now common, of course, for materials of all sorts to be recycled or re-used. In the sphere of interior design special items such as fireplaces, carved stonework, window frames, etc. are considered sufficiently valuable to be incorporated into new schemes as special features. It’s therefore well worthwhile investigating all possible sources of such items in your neighbourhood.
**Making Appropriate Choices**

It should be obvious to you by now that making appropriate material choices for your interior designs is more complex than simply choosing elements that you like. Your client’s needs and desires; the life, health, and safety of the occupants; the environmental responsibility; and the aesthetics and properties of the materials all have to be considered in your decisions. It may sound like a very intimidating task right now, but remember that you’re just beginning your design journey. Before you know it, making these decisions and considering the numerous characteristics of each material will become second nature! Keeping a notebook of information you gather on particular interior materials may help you in the future as you continue to explore the wide variety of choices available to you.

**Dealing With People**

Not everyone thinks of interior design as a ‘people profession’, but it’s very much a human occupation. Consider who will be enjoying the environments you design. Creating interiors doesn’t happen in a vacuum, and interior design has been referred to as a very intimate career. When you consider some of the most intimate places people spend their lives, such as the bedroom and the bathroom, you can appreciate what an important part the interior designer can play in their lives. You may design environments where people are at their most vulnerable, such as hospitals or other health care facilities. You’ll clearly be designing spaces for people with challenges you know nothing about until you’re faced with having to learn.

Your empathy and care will take you a very long way in this profession. To design successful interiors appropriately it becomes important to know your client well; therefore you’ll have to have a great deal of interaction. Quality interior design does not happen when designers take the attitude that they know it all and their clients know nothing; clients must have a great deal of input into the process. This is important to remember, as the designer will walk away from the finished project but the client has to live with the result. It is therefore your job to make sure that your clients are happy with the work you do with them. Even in the areas of contract and commercial design, working with people is what the interior designer does. Your work will be guided by the information you collect from people; your work will directly affect people; and therefore your work is a ‘people profession’.

Because of this truth, it becomes important you learn not only the psychological impact of design decisions but also to learn ‘people skills’. To some this comes naturally, while others may find it more of a challenge. We encourage you to interact with people, talk with people and find ways to present your ideas to others. Being able to express yourself and having the skills you need in order to do this will be critical when the time comes to find work. Being able to create interior environments for people requires that you work on these skills. Join discussion groups and participate. Make sure you honour the opinions of everyone - they are their own. Good designers can put themselves in their clients’ shoes and, with the appropriate skills, they can together come up with very successful interiors.
The Elements and Principles of Design

Before we can begin to explore the world of interior design, we must first understand the elements and principles of design in order that they may be applied to the designs that you'll prepare during your course and your career. Yes, now is the beginning of the design process, so understanding and applying these elements and principles will become the foundation for all your work.

Introduction
The elements and principles of design provide us with the foundations for every design decision that we make throughout our design careers. The elements provide the visual tools needed to create our designs, while the principles give us guiding constructs to use as we manipulate and arrange each of the elements. Careful consideration of the elements chosen and the principles applied throughout your designs will produce more cohesive, appropriate, pleasing and functional spaces for your clients and others who interact with your designs.

The Elements Of Design
It's generally accepted that there are eight elements most commonly used in design of any type. These are line, space, form, shape, texture, colour, light, and time. Occasionally you may see reference to additional elements, but understanding the following eight will provide you with the information you need to begin making stronger design decisions.

Lines
Horizontal
Vertical
Angled

Lines Horizontal
Lines Vertical
Lines Angled
The element of line is actually an abstract concept, but becomes very real visually as we design interiors. We may see a representation of a line as something drawn or placed in a space, or we may understand it as a visual composition that leads our eyes through a room. Lines evoke different psychological feelings, and we need to be aware of the perception of the lines we use within our designs. For example, horizontal lines convey a more relaxed feeling, can elongate a space, and may tend to be more reassuring. Vertical lines, on the other hand, may evoke a feeling of more formality, height, and grandeur. Angled lines can represent energy, while curved lines may illustrate more natural or freer spaces. Being aware of the lines both used and created in our spaces and all other aspects of our designs will help us to understand the subtle messages we are communicating.

Space is probably the most important element to discuss in design since it is actually what we are manipulating to form our designs. Space is three-dimensional, and is defined by either physical or visual boundaries. We can manipulate the space by considering what's happening within the boundaries, as well as the relationship between several spaces. For example, we may design a space that meets a client's needs by providing a large volume that's very open. We must also consider that specific space in relation to the other spaces that interact with it. How is the inside space related to the outside space? How is your room related to other rooms within the home? Are there visual relationships as well as physical relationships? Each of these questions must be carefully considered as we create spaces for ourselves and our clients.
The next two elements, *shape* and *form*, are often thought of as interchangeable, but this is not the case. They’re two distinct elements with individual characteristics that set them apart from each other, and make each important individually in our designs. Shape is a two-dimensional element that has only length and width and occurs on one plane. We often use shapes as applied elements or as representations of other three-dimensional components. Some common shapes would include a square, circle, rectangle, and star. Other shapes are more free-formed and convey specific messages within our designs. Form, on the other hand, is a three-dimensional element that has length, width and depth. Probably the most common form we as designers work with is the rectangular box, since this is the form of most of the spaces we are presented with. Creating more original forms for our enclosed rooms can help to convey different psychological messages to our clients and the users of our spaces. Forms are typically understood as either hollow (as in the room) or solid (as in a piece of sculpture), and each is important to consider as we make choices throughout our designs.

*Texture* is the next element that we must be familiar with as we move into designing spaces for our clients. Texture is both a visual and tactile element, meaning that we experience different materials as soon as we see them by visually understanding what they should feel like, then we experience texture through our tactile senses when we actually touch the materials. Sometimes the visual message of a texture is actually different from the tactile message, and it’s important that we, as designers, try to maintain a strong relationship between the two to reinforce the integrity of the materials and the design. Choices of textures should strengthen and relate to the other design decisions made, so holistic consideration of all materials becomes critical in creating interior spaces.
We're all familiar with the elements of colour and light, and each of these will be addressed in great detail in upcoming Lessons. For now, it's simply important to realize that these two elements are interdependent, and changes in one will create changes in the other. Colours viewed under different light sources will change, so all colours must be chosen under the light sources with which they will be displayed in the space. Light sources such as fluorescent and incandescent give off different colours of light within the visible spectrum and also create different atmospheres within the spatial volumes. Begin noticing the different types of light sources as you go into diverse environments, and observe colours under each different type of light. These observations will help you to make better and more informed decisions about both colour and light choices in your designs.

The final element we will discuss in this section is time. Materials, styles, colours and forms often change as time passes, and we must be aware of these changes to design spaces that will function and be aesthetically pleasing over long periods. Also being familiar with changes within a space over the course of a day, month, and year from a lighting point of view, and sun angle standpoint, will affect many of the choices you'll make. Understanding how materials “mature” helps you to see what the space will look like in several years as well as at the moment of installation, so ensure that the design decisions you have made are appropriate and that the client will be satisfied with the space for a long time to come.

The Principles Of Design
The principles of design act as guiding ideals to help us as we use the elements to create our physical spaces and in other forms of design (such as presentations, graphic designs, fabric designs, etc.). As with the elements, we generally recognize eight principles of design: balance, rhythm, emphasis, proportion, scale, unity, harmony, and variety. Clearly there’s a relationship between all of the principles as we use them in our designs, and we’ll briefly discuss each principle in the following paragraphs.

Balance is the visual and physical sense of equilibrium we create in a room. It provides a sense of stability or constancy, and helps individuals feel comfortable as they observe the space. The most common type of balance used in design is symmetrical balance. Items are identical
on either side of a central point, much like a mirror image. While this type of balance is quite stable and formal, it can become somewhat boring or feel uninspired. Asymmetrical balance is the use of different objects on either side of a central point, but with objects that are sized and placed in such a way as to create a visual similarity of weight. This type of balance is perceived as less formal and often more comfortable, but takes more skill and thought to create. Balance within our designs must be a strong consideration, and conscious decisions should be made to reinforce the feeling of equilibrium throughout our spaces.

The next principle, rhythm, deals more with the visual and physical movement of a design than with more static principles. The primary goal of rhythm in a space is to move the eye around the room and keep interest flowing. Without rhythm, spaces become visually stagnant and the viewer perceives the space as dreary and monotonous. Rhythm is often achieved by techniques such as repetition of a pattern, line, or other element. In addition to repetition, designers also use gradation, or the gradual change in size, spacing or shape to visually engage the viewer. This may be seen in the use of furniture pieces such as nested tables, or the use of shelving units with progressively increasing heights. Finally, transition is sometimes used, and can be found in many forms. Transition is the creation of a relationship between varying elements that leads the eye from one element to the next.

Emphasis is the principle that creates a focal point within a design that attracts attention, indicates importance, or shows that something holds a place of distinction. In other words, we are emphasizing something to draw the viewer’s attention to a particular area or element. It’s important to analyze a space or design to determine if an element needs to be emphasized or hold a secondary place in the design. Creating appropriate points of interest can make a room come alive and give it interest and excitement, while too many focal points will cause the viewer to become confused and uncomfortable, and to perceive the room as chaotic. Emphasis is accomplished in many different ways. Changes or contrasts in colour and texture are very common methods of attracting attention and creating a focal point. Increasing the size of an item or using an overscaled element in the room will also focus attention on that particular area. Sometimes
architectural elements such as fireplaces or columns can be points of emphasis, as well as views to near gardens or distant horizons from well-placed windows. Whatever the chosen points of emphasis, it’s critical that there is a clear relationship between the elements of the focal points and other elements and principles used throughout the design.

**Scale** and **proportion** are the next two principles of design for discussion. Each of these principles addresses the relationship between objects within a design and the relationship between objects and the design as a whole. The terms are often used interchangeably, but there are subtle differences that must be understood to use each principle appropriately.

**Scale** typically refers to a relationship between elements where there is a known size of at least one of the objects. For example, a child-scaled room will typically have smaller objects and/or furniture than an adult-scaled room, but we must have an understanding of an “adult-scaled room” before we can comprehend a smaller scaled version. We also use the idea of scale when we’re producing drawings that are a reduced version of the space we’re designing. It would be impractical to draw a room at actual size, so we represent the room in a reduced scale drawing. These drawings are most often shown at a 1:50 (¼” to 1’0”) scale, or 1:100 (¼” to 1’0”) scale. For smaller spaces or more detailed drawings, we use a larger scale to allow for more comprehensive information to be conveyed.
On the other hand, proportion is more of a visual relationship that is created without necessarily knowing the size of one or more objects. It’s how the objects “visually work” in relation to each other and the space in which they’re used. Proportion has been a topic of much discussion for centuries, and since there is no one way to determine if the proportions of a design are appropriate, it’s often a matter of trial and error and experience to understand the relationship between objects. There are some guidelines, however, that are based on mathematical formulae created by the Greeks many centuries ago. While these are not foolproof methods for “getting it right” every time, they do give beginners guidance for making preliminary decisions. The Golden Mean, also known as the Golden Section, the Golden Ratio and the Golden Rule, provides opportunities to experiment with proportions identified as comfortable and successful by the accomplished Greek engineers and designers. Rhodec’s course materials are produced using this Golden Ratio of 1:1.618 (the horizontal edge is 1.618 times as long as the vertical edge).

Unity is often referred to as the “Master Design Principle” since it is focused on the overall compatibility of each and every decision made for any design. Unifying a space means that all of the elements come together in a coherent form in which “nothing can be added, taken away, or altered without changing the totality” (Pile, 1988. p. 57). Each decision has been carefully considered and every element in the design has a reason for being included.

Although the designer considers each detail of the design, the unity of the whole allows the observer of the space to perceive it as a whole, not a collection of parts. Elements can be unified by similarity of line, shape, colour, texture, and scale.

Variety is closely related to unity, and provides the diversity needed in a design to keep it from becoming mundane and boring. Accents, contrasts and focal points are all examples of methods of adding variety to a design, and breaking up the unity created will help the individuals experiencing the design to become more engaged with the space both physically and visually. For example, one approach is the use of a “white on white” scheme for a room. This is successful because of the variety of textures.
and shapes used in the space. For additional variety, the placement of a collection of brightly coloured flowers on a table in the midst of the white provides a dramatic break in the flow of the space and allows the viewer to be drawn to a particular point in the room. This splash of colour may be repeated in a throw placed over a chair in the far corner of the room, then again in a small work of art on the opposite wall. This small addition of variety and texture moves the eyes around the room, allowing for a visual excitement within the unity of the overall white scheme.

**Harmony** is the last principle we will discuss. It’s very closely related to both unity and variety, and harmony helps designers bring together unity and variety in ways that reinforce the design. When creating harmony in a space, we must consider how the unity supports the variety and how the variety reinforces the unity. While this may sound confusing, the major idea is that the elements included to add both variety and unity to the space must be carefully considered in relation to the whole of the design. There must be an underlying idea, element, or commonality that runs through all of the objects and elements used. This common thread may be a style or historical period of design, a colour combination, or a general “feel” brought to the space by each element. It’s the responsibility of each designer to carefully consider the designs we create to assure that we’re making conscious decisions about each element and principle and how they’re brought together to produce creative, functional, and “whole” designs for our clients and ourselves.

These elements and principles of design are the foundation of all of the design work you’ll do. We encourage you to learn them well and to apply them with the greatest sensitivity and professionalism.
Sample Boards

The sample board is a very useful presentational device, showing the client the actual materials you propose to use in a design. Interior design requires a great number of communication skills, and sometimes the skills are language-based. Visual communication is also, of course, another critical area in this profession. In this Lesson we will be looking at one particular way to visually communicate to clients the designs being proposed, using combinations of the elements and principles discussed above.

Sample Boards are forms of communication that help clients experience actual samples of materials that may be included in the environment being designed for them. These boards can be produced in a traditional manner or they might be very creatively presented. The key is to make sure the client understands them and is comfortable with the choices.

Reasons for Sample Boards
The interior designer has often gone through a long process to reach the point where a materials sample board can be presented. There is the entire process of designing and several preliminary presentations that are made before a formal materials board is prepared for presentation. For the design professional this is more a form of communication support with the client than a meaningful part of the design process. The formal board is most often used for clarification with clients, and in many cases is the element that the client most identifies with.

Design of the Sample Board
The actual design of the sample board is a critical consideration for the design professional, because you want to convey your design abilities through the graphic presentation. Like the interior itself, the work that you produce to communicate your ideas needs to be well designed. Without a well-designed presentation, your client may not have the confidence necessary to follow through with the project with you as the designer. In other
words, the graphic work that you present becomes very much a marketing tool.

The style of sample boards varies greatly between designers, but the principles of design should be considered when preparing any board. The boards should have great graphic impact and should be well composed. It’s also important to keep the format of the boards the same – all running in landscape (longer side along the horizontal, like most landscape paintings) or all running in portrait (shorter side along the horizontal, like most portrait paintings). Don’t mix the way that boards run in the same presentation.

The sample board base should be sturdy art board, sometimes known as mat board (dozens of different colours are available), and preferably cut to A2 (or 18” x 24”) or even A1 (or 24” x 36”) size – but for the purposes of the tests in this Unit please keep them to A4 size or 8.5” x 11” when submitting them to tutors. A large board will give you the chance to adhere reasonably sized samples: this is of particular importance when displaying a large-patterned wallpaper or fabric swatches. Similarly, wherever possible the size of the sample should be roughly in proportion to the area in which it will be used: e.g. large wallpaper and carpet samples but small samples for cushions, table linen, etc.

Typically sample boards are prepared with borders of some kind, whether they’re physically in place or implied. There are many ways to accomplish this. The border can be around the entire board, it can be around the samples, it can be drawn or put in place with graphic tape or it can be a frame created with an overlaying board. An implied border would be just that and no physical border would be placed on the board. In this case, the actual placement of the samples becomes critical to the graphic success of the presentation.

The overall layout of the board should be very carefully considered: a few badly cut out photographs and grubby samples arranged haphazardly on a small piece of board will do your ideas no justice at all. If possible, be generous with the size of the samples you use, and, before attaching them permanently to the board, play around with various arrangements to see how different patterns and colours work next to each other. All fabrics should be wrapped around a small piece of mat or foam core board and attached to the sample board. They should not be draped because they don’t travel well that way.

So how is the sample board organized? There are several thoughts on this. Some designers like to organize the board as the materials would appear in the environment. In this case, the flooring materials would appear at the bottom of the board and samples would move up in a progression so that the ceiling finish would be at the top of the board.

Another method is to arrange the samples by the area that they will cover, giving the client the overall feel of the space. This means the material that covers the most surface area will be the larger sample while the material that’s the smallest area will be the smallest sample. Of course a combination of these two styles would also create a positive statement.

Some designers may choose to use some other graphic element to help explain the layout of the samples. For example, the use of a rendered floor plan on the sample board might be an organizational tool that would help explain the location of the various samples. Other graphic details might also be helpful on the sample board. It’s important for you to create these sample boards to suit the overall presentation as well as the client.

The arrangement of the samples is left up to the best graphic decision that you, the designer, can make. Some designers prefer to leave negative space between each sample while others prefer to have the samples touch (as they might in the interior). It’s important for you to consider what is right for the particular project as well as what will be the easiest for your client to understand.

While you should always use actual samples of fabrics, wallpaper and carpets, obviously it’s not practical to attach light fittings, door handles, etc. to the board! In such instances you should neatly cut out photographs from suppliers’ catalogues and glue them carefully in place.
after considering their position in the overall layout. You must also take care in choosing the colour of board, which should be chosen to complement the samples.

Because many samples are very heavy, the backing for them must be quite strong. If you’re preparing samples for an interior renovation that are lightweight, possibly mat board, or other boards known as museum board, illustration board or even foam core board could be sufficient backings. If you have some materials that are quite heavy and others that are light, you may find that the best solution is to mount the heavy samples on a sturdy backing and cut "windows" in mat board (or other suitable material) and overlay it on the sturdy backing so that the heavy material shows through the "windows". If you’re layering boards, you’ll need to consider a way to create a clean edge to the board where the edges of samples may be otherwise exposed. Please note that if you choose to do this, the edging needs to be done in a neat and clean way that doesn’t detract from the samples being presented. You should also be aware that there may be products that don’t hold up well for the particular purposes of transportation. Again, this is an important consideration to make when choosing your selections.

**Attaching Samples**

Adhesives are extremely important when creating sample boards. One of the most unfortunate things that can happen when presenting to a client is to have the samples remove themselves from the backing material. Consider that these boards will most likely need to be left in a vertical position for an extended time – sometimes for weeks while they’re on display. Some of the glues you may wish to consider and experiment with are: white glue, rubber cement, double sided tapes, hot glue (used with electric glue guns) and for very heavy samples you may even consider products known as Liquid Nails, No More Nails, and so on. There are additional possibilities for lightweight items such as spray adhesives or a safer alternative such as Studio Tac or brands with similar proprietary names.

When preparing fabric samples for the board, there are several techniques used depending on the presentation. Fabric does well to be wrapped around a firm support. This means cutting fabric and neatly wrapping it around pieces of mat board, foam core board or other rigid material and securing it with glue or tape. It often helps to back this with another smaller piece of mat board before securing it to the presentation board. This creates neat samples that don’t have edges to fray.

Photographs or other pictures are easy to mount. A richer presentation is created when those pictures are first mounted to mat board or even plain bond paper and then mounted on the presentation board. Cutting these paper samples is made neater and easier with a sharp bladed paper cutter. The grid markings on the paper cutter’s surface help to ensure that the paper is cut at neat 90° angles. Sometimes a nice coloured or handmade paper adds to the presentation of a picture.

The key is to make sure that the cutting is clean, neat and sharp.

You may find that some samples will have information printed on them by the manufacturer. This information can often be removed with an electric eraser or with a solvent. If a solvent is used make sure that it will not damage the surface of the material.

Continue to explore the world of adhesives and presentation materials. Make sure that the boards are neat, easy to read and durable when designing and preparing them.

**Labelling Samples**

The arrangement of samples is no less important than being able to read the presentation board. The use of a legend or a key box will help with understanding the meaning and possibly the placement of the materials presented.

The key or legend that references the sample can be located on the front of the board (for easy reference) or on the back of the board (if it would detract from the overall graphic impact). Some designers label the samples with what they are: for example, “A” may be carpet while “B” is wood flooring and “C” is the wall surface. This can be neatly hand lettered or noted with other graphic materials as discussed in the next paragraph. The important thing to remember with this feature is the ease of use, the readability, and the accessibility for reference. Other designers will choose to reference samples with additional
specific information like the fibre content or finish specifications. How you or your firm chooses to reference is most likely governed by the project and/or company policy.

For the titling of the board, simple hand lettering can work if you have a good technique (see the Drafting Unit). Another option that works well is computer-generated lettering onto paper that’s then neatly mounted in place; or the use of adhesive film (known as sticky back) that’s printed on using your ink jet or laser printer, then neatly cut to size using a sharp bladed utility knife (a smaller style may work better for you here than the larger knife used to cut mats). These labels can then have the backing peeled away and neatly put in place on the board. This adhesive film product creates a nice clean appearance.

You may find that drawing a sketch of the sample board will be helpful as you begin to design the layout. As with all parts of design, the planning of the presentation must be done before the final presentation can be fulfilled.

Interior design is clearly a very visual subject, and the presentation of your ideas is of great importance. It may be all very well saying to a client, “I’ll get a rust-coloured fabric for the curtains, and a nice bluey-green carpet...” and so on, but this really is an instance where the old adage “A picture speaks a thousand words” holds true. Few people are as visually literate as the trained interior designer, and you should not assume that everybody has great powers of visualization. A sample board can work wonders, and, when well executed, can delight the client by bringing into sharp visual focus what before may have been no more than vaguely pictured colours, patterns and textures.

The Importance of Presentation Boards
Often the residential client is able to connect with informal presentations of materials but the commercial client is a different story. The presentation then becomes a selling tool. These clients are very used to presentations given by advertising agencies and expect similar visual presentations by the design professional. With presentations to corporate/commercial clients, the process becomes more of a production utilizing various tools including computer presentations and presentation boards.

Sample boards are included in the broad category of presentation boards. Program analysis graphics, bubble diagrams and schematic boards might be prepared and presented early in the design process. Inspiration boards, rendering boards and sample boards may be presented later on as the design nears a conclusion.

As discussed earlier, the importance of the sample board comes down to the fact that it’s an excellent way to communicate to the client(s) the intent for the environment. It’s important to understand that all of these tools are to be prepared in a neat and attractive manner. The boards need to remain clean, easy to understand and simple while still employing the principles of good design. Lettering needs to be clear and you must make sure that other graphics add to the presentation and don’t detract from the importance of the ideas being presented.

One of the greatest tools available to you as a designer is to be able to communicate your ideas and thoughts. This is a visual profession and will need to be communicated visually as well as orally. While presentations using technology (such as a computer-generated Microsoft Power Point presentation) have become important when presenting to larger groups, the presentation board concept is still very much accepted. One of the reasons that it remains important is that it allows the client to connect with the kinaesthetic values of the environment – a feeling for the senses of touch, vision, etc. through which we experience the world. Remember that when we can make a connection with the various senses of the human being, we are beginning to understand the importance of the built environment.

Learning to prepare excellent presentations well will aid you greatly in this profession. If you become an employee of a firm, you may learn that there are certain methods that particular firm utilizes, so understanding and learning a variety of presentation methods will be of great benefit in your future professional work.
Mood Boards

The mood board is a less formal device than the sample board, and is intended more for your own purposes in developing ideas for a scheme than to show to clients – although mood boards may indeed be helpful in putting over your basic ideas to the client, so don’t rule them out as presentational devices. The mood board can be built up in much the same way as the sample board but in a less structured manner, and its purpose is to give you an initial ‘feel’ for a design you’re considering, or wish to put this across to the client. While less formal than the sample board, it could be said to be a slightly more formal version of ideas you’ve come up with in your sketchbook, helping you to crystallize some half-formed idea into a more coherent whole.

It will often consist of ‘sketchy’ ideas, perhaps illustrations cut out from magazines (colour photocopy, or scan and print out, if you wish to preserve the magazine) to suggest the feel of the interior spaces you’re developing. You should include ideas for furniture, materials and textures, or of complete interiors that give the sort of mood you hope to create. They might be on a particular theme such as “moody blue” or “dynamism”, or the atmosphere you’re looking for in designing for a client, perhaps “modern rustic” for a restaurant development.

Note on cutting mat boards by hand: It’s important to use clean, sharp mat knives to give a clean cut on the mat. You may also wish to experiment with making the cut at a slight angle to give a nice finish. Safety is of paramount importance when using these knives. They’re extremely sharp and can cut deeply into human flesh with one swift motion. Always take special care when using these knives and always make sure that they’re kept out of the reach of anyone who could possibly do harm to themselves. One of the safest things to do is to use several passes with the mat knife to achieve the cut, rather than attempting to cut the entire depth in one swipe.
The interior designer’s sketchbook is an invaluable tool for working through design problems and issues, and you’ll be required to maintain at least one sketchbook related to each Unit as you progress through the course and to submit it with the last test in each Unit.

For many interior designers the question arises as to how the sketchbook happens. It’s important to know that they’re as varied as the individual designer. One of the things that you need to ask yourself is: how do you best work? Some designers find that using a combination of journals and drawings works well for them. Others find that the creation of highly detailed drawings is vital. One of the important things to understand is that the sketchbook is clearly a way of working through design issues, gathering information and looking closely at details that may be helpful to you in this journey known as interior design. All of these methods are correct. Some designers are excellent artists while others are more graphic in their approach to “sketching”. As with most creative fields, the working sketchbook or journal is often not “pretty”. The writer uses the journal to document thoughts, ideas and observations. The sketchbook is the visual artist’s journal.

Interior Design can be regarded as a ‘cultural’ activity: it doesn’t exist in a vacuum but is influenced by contemporary issues such as style, fashion, new materials, new use of existing materials, and political and social issues such as global warming and design for disability. For a designer to cope with all these and other matters and produce design solutions that are visually satisfactory it takes a great deal of experience.

To help come to terms with this, designers will often undertake ‘visual research’ (sometimes referred to as ‘precedent studies’). This involves looking up references to good examples of other design solutions that relate to the project in hand. For example if the brief involved the design of a bar/café the designer would find numerous references in recent design, architectural and style magazines showing wonderful examples. By selecting examples that relate to the project they’re engaged in (and/or other non-related examples that might offer a source of inspiration) the designer can adapt and learn from successfully completed bar and café interiors. Ideally this will be done by actually visiting the building interiors concerned and observing first-hand.

Often it’s not possible to see real examples of suitable interiors and it’s necessary to rely on well-illustrated, recent articles in suitable magazines, of which there are many. At the same time the designer may need to be involved in practical research looking at the mechanics and ergonomics of bar back-fittings, of seating/table...
arrangements, of requirements for kitchens, toilet facilities, disabled access and so on. Visual research is also a means of keeping up to date with the ‘state of the market’, so precedent studies should form an important part of your sketchbook work.

The understanding of creativity is an important part of utilizing your sketchbook to the fullest. What is the creativity/sketchbook connection? Creativity is, among many things, an ability to connect relationships that have not been connected before. Often creative people rely on their intuition and, in the case of design, the ability to think visually. In order to work through design issues or to access design issues it’s important to learn to use and document this visual thinking for reference. As you work through a design issue, you may have thoughts that will work for other issues at another time. In learning to document these thoughts and ideas, you’ll be creating a valuable resource.

Clearly your sketchbook will be different from another designer’s sketchbook. You should not compare your work to another’s; your creativity is your own. With anything creative, the ideas you have may be quite similar to someone else’s ideas. This is not unusual; however, how you use those ideas can be very different. How you visualize their use is your idea alone. Use your sketchbook to explore ideas, elements and principles, techniques, etc. The only real mistake you can make is to not use this tool to its fullest.

Although we have already discussed design elements and principles, the only way in reality to put design into practice is through the concise use of drawings, notes, sketches and ideas, all put down on paper. In some instances, of course, CAD (Computer Aided Design) programs can be used, but ultimately the results must nearly always still be printed out on paper. There is no better way of recording information, ideas, etc. than by keeping a sketchbook ready to hand. We are not talking now of ‘sketching’ in the old sense, whereby one went out to ‘sketch’ or record information (although this will
be a part of it); rather we mean the development of an approach which allows for the use of the sketchbook at the very moment that one has an idea.

It's extremely important that you keep a sketchbook and use it regularly, keeping it by you most of the time so that you're able to jot down any thoughts or ideas as they come about, for although you may forget them almost immediately, they do provide a constant source of information on reflection. It may be years later, as many designers have found, that you come upon a sketch that immediately fits the current need. Never throw a sketchbook away, because the ideas (that's what the sketches are, after all) are timeless.

One really can't emphasize enough the importance of the sketchbook. If you have any doubts of this importance, try consulting books reproducing the sketches of, for example, Leonardo da Vinci, for these will immediately show you the wealth of information that can be documented in sketch form. Get used to the idea of carrying a sketchbook that can always be used for jotting down notes about a particular material, product or finish. At the same time you should try to encourage yourself to sketch small studies of rooms that you like: ideas for decoration, arrangement of furniture and anything else that you think relevant. You should maintain a 'working' sketchbook, full of ideas and accompanying drawings explaining these ideas. The sketchbook should be used to put down drawings of interesting objects, natural forms, shapes, colours or patterns. An everyday thing can spark off an idea that may prove useful later. The sketchbook is an ideal way not only of building up a store of knowledge, but also of recording important information and working through a development of that idea.

If you're new to the sketchbook, begin with the very forgiving graphite pencil. Like most creative endeavours, sketching takes a great deal of time to perfect - and is it really perfected? Begin with scribbling and note taking. Giving yourself this permission gets you going with the sketchbook idea. Of course, progression is what we will
be looking for as well as how well you’re using this tool. Several good books are available that can help you get started with sketching, and we encourage you to explore all that’s available to you. Once you’re more comfortable with the sketchbook, you can begin to explore other media beyond the graphite pencil.

The other issue you’ll wish to explore is the type of sketchbook you wish to use. Again, you’ll have to understand how you work, the type of paper you wish to use and the options available to you. Ask yourself questions like: do I want a book that opens flat like the spiral bound style? Should the spiral be at the top of the page or on the side? What size is best for me? Would a book-style hard bound sketchbook be better for me? How will I “fix” the sketches? Your comfort with the sketchbook will be very important as you’re using it. In reality, it needs to become a trusted friend!

This is an experience to enjoy. Use all the knowledge you’ve gained to this point and explore the new information you’ll be exploring from this point forward to fill your sketchbooks with ideas. Explore the composition of pleasing pages and express detailed thoughts. Think about the sketchbook being a reference tool for you that will be a collecting point for ideas that will bring projects to fruition.

Not to be confused with the designer’s sketchbook or used as a substitution for a sketchbook is a Design Process Journal. This tool uses words as well as images not only to think through projects but also to document the progress of projects. Think of how important it’s to keep detailed notes about meetings, thoughts, ideas, progress, resources, articles, etc. This is important to the process of design as well as the business of design. As a student of design, it will become important you become familiar with this tool as well as the sketchbook tool.

How is the Design Process Journal kept? Again, it becomes important to understand how you work, think and create.
Included in the journal might be:

✔ The day-to-day progress of the project
✔ inspirations
✔ any ideas that need to be explored
✔ where information can be found that relates to the project
✔ successes and frustrations that arise during the project
✔ notes from meetings
✔ resources that are or may be utilized
✔ goals, photographs of the progress
✔ notes about alternative ideas
✔ client personalities and how to approach working with them
✔ conclusions about the project
✔ any other entries that need documentation as they relate to your work on the project

As with the sketchbook, the designer’s journal is personal to the individual. It’s a resource for you. It can help you think through the issues and find successful ways to solve any problems that may arise. The work of the designer encompasses many areas and the journal helps to bring those areas together hopefully to complete a successful project.

As you can see, these tools can become extremely helpful to you as you move further into the field of design. As creative people in a fast-paced business, one thing that needs to happen is to slow down and allow the process of creativity work its magic. Hopefully, these tools will remind you how important that slowing down is to the process.
CHECKLIST of the Main Types of Materials

Whenever you walk into an interior, be it a house, restaurant, hotel, bank, etc., look carefully, identify the main types of materials and then ask yourself these questions:

1. What materials are used?
2. What colour, texture or pattern?
3. Why have the particular materials been chosen?
4. What effect do they create?
5. How are they withstanding wear?
6. How are they cleaned?
7. How are they fixed?
8. How expensive are they?
9. Have they been chosen correctly to suit the environment?
10. What would you have chosen?
11. Would another material work as well or better?

You should refer to this checklist throughout your study of this Unit, and, indeed, throughout your studies with us and beyond. Jot everything down in your sketchbook. We want you to start observing, and not just seeing; the interiors around you; if you always bear this checklist in mind you’ll appreciate the wide range of materials at your disposal.
Test Paper M1

A straightforward exercise to begin with:

1. Cut out two colour pictures from a magazine: one of an interior view which appeals to you, and one which you think you could improve upon.

2. Mount these pictures neatly on paper or card and write a brief critique of each, comparing what strike you as the respective good and bad points of the two interiors and how you feel you could make improvements where necessary. (Be sure to read Checklist of the Main Types of Materials above to give yourself a few hints - think about general colour and lighting as well.)

Each critique should be approximately 250 words. Concision and clarity of expression are important aspects of essay writing. Please note that overly long essays that significantly exceed the stated limit, in this Test and throughout the course, will be penalized by a deduction of marks. At the same time, though, don’t worry about struggling to find the words to reach the requirement – this paragraph alone contains 70 words!

You should give full reasons why you like or dislike the two interiors and your answers should reflect your current level of design awareness and show that you’ve fully understood the first Lesson of this Unit. Your written work should show a professional approach to design and a consideration of the wide range of possible alternatives and permutations that are open to the imaginative designer. When choosing alternative materials that you think would be as successful, or indeed be an improvement, the proposed changes should be genuine and not merely “change for the sake of change”. These alternative ideas will often give your tutor the chance to discuss ideas with you and to build up a good working relationship. All materials and ideas discussed in this test should be considered in terms of aesthetics, properties and environmental considerations. All cuttings should be neatly trimmed and mounted carefully on A4 size (or 8.5” x 11”) paper or card.

Never be afraid to criticize something you see in a “professional” setting - if you don’t like it, spend a while thinking about why it doesn’t appeal to you. If nothing else, this course is designed to develop your own critical faculties. Even professional designers have no absolute right to dictate “good taste”: fashions change by the year, and your views may be just as valid as those of the “expert”. It’s also good to understand exactly why you don’t like something and to ask if the design objectives were met in a way that meets the principles of design discussed earlier.

One day, if you persevere with your Rhodec course, you’ll be equipped to become a professional interior designer yourself. For all the basic design principles you’ll be learning with us, though, always remember that aesthetic matters are, by their very nature, subjective. There is never an absolutely right or wrong way of doing things.

PLEASE BEAR THIS IN MIND AT ALL TIMES
In this very visual subject of interior design, we can’t stress too often the importance of good presentation, in this Unit, throughout your studies and beyond. You’ll be marked down for poor presentation of work, including written work. The overall appearance of what you present to tutors during your studies, and to clients thereafter, is of paramount importance. Our aim is to get you thinking in visual terms from the very beginning of your course. If you always consider your tutor a potential client you’ll stay on the right track. Even before submitting work, put yourself in the position of a potential client. Think to yourself, “Would this appeal to me visually if it were presented to me?” If not, do it again!

This completed Test Paper should now be submitted to your tutor.

Have you begun your sketchbook for this Unit? You’ll be required to submit it with Test M10.

Enclose a self-addressed envelope (stamped if studying in the UK/US) and always write your name, address and Registration Number on all submitted work.