

## Teaching Excellence Case Study

### *Fashion goes global: Insights into industry across cultures*

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**Course:** BA Fashion

**Student Level:** Undergraduate (Level 4, 5 and 6)



#### LINKS TO EDUCATION STRATEGY PILLARS

- Embedded employability
- Intercultural and international engagement
- Creativity and enterprise

#### AIMS

For fashion students based in the UK, it can be difficult to gain **first hand experience of the industry**, given the limited amount of manufacturing that goes on nationally. In order to gain knowledge and understanding of the production processes, and how they connect with the fashion industry, students need to look beyond the UK and Europe.

The course team wanted to give students the opportunity to gain these insights, which are invaluable for employability. Establishing **partnerships with China**, where manufacturing is undertaken on a much wider scale, was an innovative way of realising this ambition and giving students “real life” experiences.

#### ACTIONS

Various initiatives were undertaken to achieve this aim, including:

- Students and recent graduates of the CU course went to China to undertake **industry placements** at three different fashion companies, lasting up to 6 months.
- In collaboration with the **Communications University of Zhejiang (CUZ)**, an [Online International Learning \(OIL\)](#) project took place between Level 5 students from each institution, with a focus on using design to revive Chinese handicrafts.
- CU staff are actively involved in teaching at CUZ, embodying the “**flying faculty**” approach, as well as continually hosting visiting scholars from CUZ.



*Images: Simon Armstrong*



#### IMPACT

As a result of these initiatives, the course team are **better informed** about the global fashion industry, as their work in China allows them to develop up to date knowledge of markets, and attend key events and shows. The team are also using a **wider range of international images** in their teaching materials. All of this supports students’ **intercultural awareness and employability**.

Students and staff alike gain insights into working in contexts with different **languages and cultures**, which gives them direct experience of– and an appreciation for– what it’s like to operate in a unfamiliar environment.

The course team were awarded a **Coventry University Staff Excellence Award** for Supporting Global Learning for their work in this area. In future, they are keen to host an **international showcase** with students from CUZ and other global partner institutions, an idea which would not have been possible without these collaborations.

#### STUDENT FEEDBACK

“Doing a placement in China was perhaps the most **exciting**, and also most “**out of comfort zone**”, experience ever. The fashion industry in China is completely different to fashion here. I gained **invaluable** insight into the fashion and e-commerce companies in China including visiting manufacturers and **working for global clients**. I have developed a better understanding of a **different culture**, both business and social. In addition, having an international work experience has given me more **confidence**, **boosted my CV** and has opened opportunities for me.”

#### TOP TIPS

- Establishing and maintaining good relationships with **industrial and academic partners** is crucial, as is making the most of opportunities they offer (e.g. company visits).
- Be aware of differences in **communication and culture** when working globally, and consider what your students can learn from these when designing the course.
- When supporting students with **international placements**, allow plenty of time for visas to be arranged, and make travel plans carefully.
- Ensure that students based at CU **reap the benefits** of staff spending time abroad– this can bring enhancements to their intercultural awareness and employability skills.