Unit 134: Fashion Buying

Unit code: Y/502/5523

QCF Level 3: BTEC National

Credit value: 10

Guided learning hours: 60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding of fashion buying. They will do this by learning about the activities of a specialist fashion buyer.

● Unit introduction

Buyers are required throughout the fashion, footwear, textile and apparel industries to purchase or find products for sale through retail outlets. Some specialist industrial buyers will focus on the raw materials or equipment required for the manufacturing process. Fashion buyers generally source fashion items to sell to meet seasonal requirements based on their predictions about the latest trends.

A fashion buyer will work with design teams to advise and coordinate ideas about new trends and new ranges.

The aim of this unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop their understanding of fashion buying. They will do this by learning about the activities of a specialist fashion buyer.

Fashion buyers have to be responsive to current consumer trends and understand ethical and sustainable issues. Many buyers have to be able to source fair trade goods, source ethically and organically produced fashions and be aware of carbon footprints as well as keeping abreast of the latest trends and the consumer profiles that they are buying for. Buyers have to understand the difference between fast fashion and buying for ongoing fashion lines. Buyers also interact closely with merchandising and design departments so that the latest styles and colours can be used to promote concepts, ideas and brand image. Buyers attend trade fairs and fashion shows to observe trends to inform their ideas for the future.

Learners will develop their knowledge of fashion buying. They will develop and demonstrate a clear understanding of the role of a fashion buyer and how the fashion buyer works with other areas to the select fashion products within a brand.

They will develop a clear understanding of the planning and buying cycle from the initial planning through to the delivery and customer selection. Learners will be taught how long the cycle takes from buyers who work with designers and trend forecasters and then source fabrics and trimmings for pre-production to the buyers who identify how catwalk fashions have been interpreted into ready made garments. Learners will also learn how different levels of the fashion market interpret and dilute catwalk trends so that the essence of the latest ideas is available to all consumers.

Learners will be encouraged to look at a variety of target customers, and will learn how to interpret trends and predictions within the fashion market, to compare offers made by competitors. They will also learn about range planning.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

1   Know about the roles and responsibilities of a fashion buyer

2   Be able to interpret trends and predictions within the fashion market

3   Understand range planning.

Unit content

1 Know about the roles and responsibilities of a fashion buyer

Role: interpret trend predictions; buy fashion items eg menswear, womens wear, children's wear, teen wear, young adult, footwear, accessories; liaise with suppliers; attend trade shows eg Premier Vision; attend fashion shows eg London Fashion Week; liaise with eg managers, merchandisers, design teams, budget holders, stock controllers

Responsibilities: ethical awareness eg fair trade, organic products, carbon footprint; source fresh items

Fashion industry: eg producers of raw materials, fabric manufacturers, apparel manufacturers, fashion wholesalers, retailers, designers, fashion press

2 Be able to interpret trends and predictions within the fashion market

Trends and predictions: eg colours, textures, patterns, fabric weights, seasonal; style eg fashion house collections, celebrity influences, street style, cultural influences; forthcoming themes or influences that shape the future fashion market (garments, hair, makeup)

3 Understand range planning

Range planning: complete concept eg outfits; accessories eg hats, belts, scarves, bags, jewellery; footwear

Consumer groups: eg profiles, age, lifestyle, buying habits, gender, ethnicity, occupation

Target marketing: eg babies, children, teenagers, young adults, young professionals, mature, elderly; market segment eg leisure wear, holiday wear, day wear, evening wear, occasion wear, wedding, party, customer

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe the roles and responsibilities of the fashion buyer [IE]	**M1** demonstrate effective and coherent understanding of the role of the fashion buyer which has been independently researched and draws upon realistic environments and scenarios	**D1** produce a sophisticated and fluent portfolio of evidence for a range of target markets which includes evidence of trends and range planning for a well-known store.
P2 identify how the fashion buyer links with other areas of the fashion business [IE, CT]	**M2** produce independently a coherent body of work which provides clear evidence of the target market and range planning for a future season.	
P3 interpret trends and predictions within the fashion market [IE, CT, RL]		
P4 demonstrate an understanding of target marketing through the use of customer profiles and provide evidence of range planning. [CT, SM]		

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Tutors delivering this unit must ensure that learners have a clear understanding of the basic principles of fashion buying and the role of the fashion buyer in relationship to other departments within the retail environment. This could be done by a visit from or to a fashion buyer or a talk from a university fashion buying course leader. Where possible, learners should be encouraged to interview local boutique owners to find out how, when and where they source their stock. They should also be encouraged to visit large retail suppliers to understand how buying roles vary according to the size of the outlet. Learners should be made aware of how to find different types of fashion manufacturers and suppliers, locally, nationally and internationally.

Learners should be encouraged to understand and research a range of consumer groups and target markets. They should consider current issues in fashion buying such as ethical trading, organically produced materials, carbon foot prints and sustainability. It is, therefore, essential that learners have the opportunity to access a wide range of materials and research tools in order to gather appropriate information.

Learners should explore the basic principles of fashion buying such as communication and negotiation, the supply chain cycle, price structuring, trends, predictions and fast fashion Learners should also gather source materials to collate a portfolio of evidence of the work and be encouraged to look at new technologies available within the fashion industry.

Learners should be encouraged to research the history of fashion buying and also develop an understanding of fashion trends and prediction forecasting for style and colour.

Learners should be encouraged to produce a portfolio of evidence which includes evidence of range planning and trends and predictions for forth coming seasons. They are encouraged to ensure this portfolio includes a range of target markets and consumer profiles. In addition learners are required to produce written reports on the roles and responsibilities of the fashion buyer.

In addition learners are encouraged to keep a diary of log of the work undertaken during their assignments which will act as a record of the work of the buyer. Regular feedback should be given to learners through day to day discussion and formal and informal assessment. Learners may also be encouraged to present their work on a regular basis to enhance their communication skills.

Learning outcome 1 should be delivered through a series of group seminars or site visits which demonstrate and discuss the work of the fashion buyer and their roles and responsibilities. Learners should be taught key terminology and demonstrate their understanding in the form of visual and written work. Evidence for learning outcome 1 can take the form of a piece of written work which outlines the role of the fashion buyer in a variety of environments. It should contain clear information on who the buyer has to communicate with and the pressures they work under. This work may also include an organisational chart and examples of how a buyer's role will vary depending on the size of their company.

For outcome 2 learners should be encouraged to gather information on trends and predictions for future seasons and have a clear understanding of customer profiles and target markets. Learners should be encouraged to look at a variety of retail outlets and their use of promotional materials for new ranges and products.

Learning outcome 3 requires learners to develop their understanding of typical target markets and consumer groups. This can be evidenced by the production of questionnaires and surveys. Learners are also required to produce evidence of range planning taking into account trends and predictions researched in the previous outcome and indicate sources that they might buy from. Evidence for range planning can be developed as both a visual and written response in the form of portfolio work as if they were presenting their ideas to a manager.

Research for this unit can be gathered from a variety of sources, trade magazines, journals, visits to manufacturers and suppliers, retail outlets, the internet, fashion shows, trade fairs, work shadowing and work experience. Learners should create mood boards to show their understanding of range planning, trends and predictions and target markets which they will present to their peer group.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in ++conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments and activities
Introduction to unit and assignments. **Assignment 1**: Principles of Fashion Buying
Lecture and discussion on the roles and responsibilities of the fashion buyer. Learner initiated study: learners research the roles and responsibilities. Discussion on the links of the fashion buyer to other areas within the fashion industry. Learners produce a mind map and/or organisational chart.
Lecture and discussion on communication. Lecture on the supply chain cycle. Learner: • research different fashion sources eg trade shows, fashion shows, and visit suppliers eg trade and manufacturers • research buyer responsibilities eg ethical trading, consumer groups, price • visit local retail stores • produce a report on the roles and responsibilities of the buyer • present on the roles and responsibilities to peer group.
Assignment 2: Client Portfolio Introduction to assignment and unit.

Topic and suggested assignments and activities
Learners research current trends and predictions.
Lecture on customer profiles.
Learners initiated study:
• create questionnaire on customer profile
• visit high street to research customer profiles
• analyse of profiles
• produce mood boards identifying customer profile
• produce mood board for individual clients
• produce mood boards demonstrating range planning for client
• present work to peer group.
Review of unit and assessment.

Assessment

To achieve P1, learners will be expected to describe the role and responsibilities of the fashion buyer and how this contributes to the fashion industry. This work may include an organisational map and the links to other areas of the fashion industry. The research can include both written and visual information. Information will be limited and tutors will have had a significant amount of input.

To achieve P2, learners will be expected to provide in depth understanding of the responsibility of the buyer when negotiating with others, sourcing of products, price structuring, researching trends and predictions, target markets, consumer groups and range planning. The work will normally be presented in a written format supported by visuals and examples from the retail environment. Information will be descriptive and limited.

For P3, learners will be expected to research fashion trends and predictions. They should have access to trend and forecasting websites and trade magazines in order to find the most current trends. Learners may also gather research from retail outlets. Learners could produce a series of visual mood boards which provide evidence of forthcoming trends for future seasons. All reference sources should be clearly recorded. Learners will be supported with tutor input.

For P4, learners will be expected to gather information on different consumer groups and target markets so that they have a clear understanding of a range of different markets. Learners will also be expected to devise questionnaires and interviews. Group work could be used to develop discussions on typical target markets and consumer groups. Learners should then produce visual evidence of range planning for a given scenario and market. Assessment could take place though the creation of mood boards for range planning which are presented to the peer group.

To achieve M1, the learner will be expected to demonstrate that they have worked independently to produce an in depth report which identifies the roles and responsibilities of the fashion buyer and their links to others within the fashion industry. The report should be professionally presented with written and visual information.

To achieve M2, the learner should independently produce a portfolio of work for a client which includes evidence of range planning for a season for a target market. All references should be recorded. The portfolio should be coherent and well presented by the learner.

To achieve D1, learners must demonstrate that they have independently worked to produce a sophisticated and fluent portfolio which clearly addresses the specified target market and includes well-developed range planning for a forthcoming season. The portfolio of work should be presented to the peer group and the presentation should be clearly focused and professional in approach.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, M1	**Assignment 1:** Principles of Fashion Buying	Fashion buyer presents report on their job role including organisational map, ethical issues, sourcing opportunities, timescales and the fashion cycle.	Presentation of a report focusing on the roles and responsibilities of the fashion buyer.
P3, P4, M2, D1	**Assignment 2:** Client Portfolio	Buyer produces a mood board for range planning for a retail store. The range could be based on learners' own designs from a fashion design unit or adapting a high end range/catwalk fashion for a small boutique.	Presentation of portfolio of evidence to include range planning for clients within a retail environment. Portfolio of evidence should include customer profiles and information on future trends and predictions.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Art and Design sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following units in the BTEC Art and Design suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Introduction to Fashion Design	Working with Fashion Briefs	Fashion Marketing
		Fashion Promotion
		Fashion Styling

Essential resources

Learners would benefit from visits to or from professional fashion buyers and retail environments. Learners need access to the appropriate research tools such as the internet, periodicals, magazines and reference books.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local as this may provide the opportunity for visiting lecturers and site visits for learners.

Centres should develop links with practising fashion buyers, to deliver assignments to learners or to provide work experience.

Links with employers are essential to the delivery of the programme for work experience and future employment.

Vocational learning support resources:

● Learning and Skills Network – www.vocationallearning.org.uk

Business and finance advice:

● local and regional Business Link – www.businesslink.gov.uk

Assignments should be vocationally relevant; centres should consider the delivery of 'live projects', for example, to support the vocational content of the unit and programme.

Skillfast-UK, the Sector Skills Council for Fashion and Textiles (www.skillfast-uk.org), provides details on careers (www.skillfast-uk.org/justthejob) and the industry and has regularly updated news and events pages.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Diamond J and Pintel G – *Retail Buying* (Prentice Hall, 2007) ISBN 978-0131592360

Gowerek H – *Fashion Buying* (Blackwell, 2007) ISBN 978-1405149921

Jackson T and Show D – *The Fashion Handbook (Media Practice)* (Routledge, 2006) ISBN 978-0415255806

Jackson T and Show D – *Mastering Fashion Buying and Merchandising Management* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2000) ISBN 978-0333801659

Mower S – *Stylist: The Interpreters of Fashion* (Rizzoli International Publications, 2007) ISBN 978-0847829248

Okonkwo U – *Luxury Fashion Branding: Trends, Tactics, Techniques* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) ISBN 978-0230521674

Soloman M and Rabolt N – *Consumer Behaviour in Fashion* (Prentice Hall, 2008) ISBN 978-0130811226

Tungate M – *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara* (Kogan Page Ltd, 2008) ISBN 978-0749453053

Journals

Drapers

Vogue

Websites

www.brandrepublic.com	Professional marketing website linked to Marketing magazine
www.drapersonline.com	Drapers online
www.just-style.com	Just-style news and information

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are …
Independent enquirers	researching trends and predictions within the fashion environment and target markets through questionnaires and visual response
Creative thinkers	generating ideas for range planning and target markets
Reflective learners	reviewing and evaluating previous target groups and sales
Self-managers	managing time and resources to produce a final outcome.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are …
Independent enquirers	planning and carrying out research into fashion trends and predictions
	creating and conducting questionnaires to collate information on consumer groups
	carrying out research to develop their own range planning and professional portfolio
Creative thinkers	developing and refining ideas for their own portfolio and mood boards
Reflective learners	annotating and analysing trends and forecasting information
	evaluating progress
	presenting and inviting feedback on their outcomes; dealing appropriately with criticism and praise
Team workers	contributing to group discussions and critiques
Self-managers	completing work to designated timeframe and seeking tutor and group support when needed.

Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are …
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching backgrounds of fashion trends and forecasting developing and presenting fashion range planning for a client
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	creating and finding fashion trend examples
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	exploring and selecting appropriate materials for analysis from fashion stores' websites and newspaper databases
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: • text and tables • images • numbers • records	creating a questionnaire and collate information that could be used to promote material or illustrate current trends to a client group
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	creating and presenting of work
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	presenting portfolio to a specified audience
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	evaluating their work and the final outcomes
Mathematics	
Understand routine and non-routine problems in a wide range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts and situations	using results of questionnaire and creating charts with percentages for target audiences
Identify the situation or problem and the mathematical methods needed to tackle it	
Select and apply a range of skills to find solutions	
Use appropriate checking procedures and evaluate their effectiveness at each stage	
Interpret and communicate solutions to practical problems in familiar and unfamiliar routine contexts and situations	
Draw conclusions and provide mathematical justifications	

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	working in groups to discuss ideas
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading about fashion history, newspaper and journal articles and case studies
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing reports, research and evaluations.