

Melissa Heyes

BTEC Art & Design Extended Diploma



Progression pathway



BTEC Extended Diploma in Art & Design at Southport College



Fine Art Degree at University of Central Lancashire



Qualified Secondary Art & Design Teacher

1 How do you think BTEC helped get you where you are now?

Since a young age I have adored art. When I was in Year 11, I was certain I wanted to become a secondary school Art teacher. To do this, I knew I had to continue studying art in college. I left high school with an A* in GCSE Art and wanted to study art full time rather than doing an A level in Art. Having looked at many different college courses, I knew the BTEC L3 Art & Design course was the best possible option for my career. Having achieved distinctions at the end of the course, I was accepted into the University of Central Lancashire to study Fine Art. After graduating with a 1st class honours degree, I achieved my PGCE in Secondary Art & Design and am now a qualified teacher!

2 Can you describe your BTEC experience?

Throughout my BTEC course, I learnt so many new skills within the arts and was continuously pushed out of my comfort zone to find new strengths and interests. When starting the course, my main strength was realistic pencil drawing and at first, I was afraid of pushing my boundaries, but eventually after lots of encouragement and reassurance from my tutors and other students I became so experimental within my own art practice. I naturally began to develop my own art style and my confidence grew more and more after each project. One of my favourite experiences on the BTEC course was discussing each other's works and giving honest and constructive feedback to one another. I was lucky to have so many encouraging individuals surrounding me and each day in the studio, our group would bounce off each other... It created such a motivating and inspiring atmosphere.

4 Would you recommend taking a BTEC?

110%. The experience, skills and knowledge I gained have helped direct me into the artist I am and the career I'm in today. I would love to go back in time and relive my BTEC Art & Design days!

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What top 5 skills did you gain from your BTEC?



Photography



Textiles



In depth artist research



Art history



How to find my own art style

3 What did you like most about taking a BTEC?

I loved learning new skills within that I had never had the opportunity to learn before. In particular, using machines, tools and materials in a place where I felt free and encouraged to experiment.

5 What is your current job?

I am currently a newly qualified secondary Art & Design teacher, still trying to secure the perfect job! I also have my own face painting business which I have been doing for 5 years at children's parties, conventions and many other events. All of the skills and knowledge I gained on my BTEC course have been incredibly beneficial in these roles.