Unit 31: Fashion Retailing

Unit code: R/502/5505

QCF Level 3: BTEC National

Credit value: 10

Guided learning hours: 60

● Aim and purpose

Fashion retailing is an increasingly complex business, with competition between retailers for their share of the consumer market becoming more intense. This unit will provide an understanding for those learners wishing to become involved in fashion retail, but who have little experience or knowledge of this area.

● Unit introduction

The unit will help learners to understand the role of fashion within the retail sector. There are a large variety of retail companies and outlets within the fashion, sector ranging from internationally famous department stores, multinational fashion chains, small independent boutiques and now large supermarket chains. Fashion merchandise is available in all price ranges, catering for all consumers from the budget conscious shopper to those customers who can afford the most expensive designer clothes. This is an exciting and vibrant part of the retail sector and provides ample scope for interesting study. Although the unit concentrates on the retailing of fashion items, it will also allow learners to develop an understanding of the history and role of fashion in society and the fashion industry itself works. Learners will learn to recognise fashion trends and the way these trends impact not only on the products available in shops but also on the services retailers offer. Learners will understand the importance of retail image and ensuring that a retailer's image is consistent with its product range and intended market. The learning outcomes and unit content are designed to enable learners to understand how consumer needs are satisfied through fashion retailing, primarily at shop and store level. Learners will learn how market segmentation is of particular importance in successful fashion retailing. The unit will also enable learners to explore factors that influence trends and consumer tastes.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

1   Understand how different retail outlets define their target market for fashion merchandise

2   Know the impact of fashion trends on retail services and products

3   Understand how fashion retailers develop an image and product range that meets the needs of their target market

4   Know how fashion retailers cater for mass and niche markets.

Unit content

1 Understand how different retail outlets define their target market for fashion merchandise

Retail outlets: multiples; department stores; supermarkets; discount stores; outlet shops; independent traders; haut couture boutiques; market stalls; concessions; franchises; mail order; internet shopping; television sales; fashion cooperatives

Target market segmentation: age; gender; personal characteristics eg height, size; socio-economic factors; cultural differences eg ethnicity; cultural influences eg fashion themes associated with pop music trends, cinema, sport; geographical; lifestyle; purchasing habits; purchasing motivation; product life cycle; fashion trend life cycle; market response eg innovators, laggards

Fashion merchandise: clothing, footwear, accessories

Retail policies: eg pricing, opening hours, visual merchandising displays, service level, use of internet and other media

2 Know the impact of fashion trends on retail services and products

Historical fashion trends: styles; trends; social and moral influences; economic influences

Current influences: popular culture; celebrity culture; role models; music; media, eg fashion and style magazines, other popular magazines, television, cinema; technology, eg fabric technology, 'techno' styles, technology as a fashion accessory; leisure activities; social aspirations; value systems eg ecological concerns

Fashion trends: style eg length, cut, fabric, colour, trim, accessories; changing body part emphasis; designer collections; street fashions; mass reproduction; examples of current fashion trends

Retail services: growth of fashion retail markets; frequency of stock and range changes; mass demand; frequency of new designs that filter into market eg designer collection to supermarket product; retail outlet ambience; service level; alternative ranges for market sub-segments eg concessions, designer departments within department stores, identifiable sub-segment ranges within multiples; designer ranges within supermarkets

Products: breadth and depth of range; sizes; options

3 Understand how fashion retailers develop an image and product range that meets the needs of their target market

Retail image: corporate image; types of outlet; advertising; graphics; visual displays; merchandising; store layout; ambience; service level; packaging

Staff and customer service: dress codes; level of service provision; personal selling; fitting rooms; returns policy; direct sales

Product range: manufacturers, designers, labels; price range; quality; breadth and depth of stock range; rate of stock changeover

Market needs: compatibility of retail image and customer self-image; price range; frequency of style change, durability of style; retail service requirements

4 Know how fashion retailers cater for mass and niche markets

Types of outlet: independent boutiques; chain fashion stores; department stores; supermarkets; concessions; franchises; direct sales; catalogue; internet

Designers: originals; reproductions; use of designer labels eg Armani, Armani Exchange; enhancement of brand identity of general (non-fashion) retailers through inclusion of high-profile fashion merchandise

Buying habits: seasonal purchases; number of seasons; sales policies; discount policies

Mass markets and niche markets: age profiles; purchasing habits; price ranges; 'branding' versus 'designer'

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 explain the characteristics of the target markets of different fashion retailers [IE]	**M1** analyse how the characteristics of different target markets influence the retail service policies of different retailers	**D1** evaluate the way in which a fashion retailer has adapted its policies in response to an identified target market characteristic
P2 explain the policies of different fashion retailers in terms of their retail service offer [IE, CT]		
P3 describe how a fashion trend is influenced in its development [RL]	**M2** compare different fashion trends in terms of their impact upon retail services	
P4 describe the impact of different fashion trends on retail services		
P5 explain how the image of a chosen fashion retailer meets the needs of its target market [IE]	**M3** analyse how a chosen fashion retailer has developed an image that is compatible with its target market and product range.	**D2** evaluate the effect of image on the success of a chosen fashion retailer.
P6 describe the differences in the characteristics of a niche fashion retailer with those of a mass market retailer.		

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills which are embedded in the assessment of this unit. By achieving the criteria, learners will have demonstrated 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 have the opportunity to allow learners to undertake practical research into current fashion retail practice and fashion trends. This will enable both group and individual research activities. It is important that the emphasis remains on the response of the retail sector to fashion and style changes, rather than concentrating wholly on aspects of designer and fashion manufacturing. However, the impact of these aspects on retail outlets needs to be explained. Group work and case studies should be used when learners are working on target markets.

Learners should be encouraged to consider fashion retailers that cater for markets with which they do not readily identify themselves with, as well as those that they find attractive as actual or aspiring customers. This will encourage learners to take an unbiased approach to their research and analysis and will help with achievement of the higher grading criteria, as well as developing a more objective understanding of the principles of fashion retailing. It may also be helpful to compare the influence of styling and trends on the retailing of goods and services other than fashion clothing. This will help learners to understand the relationship between these aspects of retailing, and will reinforce their appreciation of the importance for all successful retailers of reacting to market requirements. There are some very good DVDs on fashion merchandising which will interest and motivate learners especially if reinforced through class discussion.

Learners should be encouraged to visit different fashion outlets and to plan their research around particular themes. For example, a learner may look at the different market segments for a particular age group, identifying which fashion retailers in a chosen area cater for which market segments. Learners may then research which fashion trends impacted on that age group in previous generations and how retailers catered for these trends, contrasting that with present-day practice. If there is a tendency for all learners to select the same outlets or market characteristics for their research, tutors may consider some initial whole group work identifying a wider range of fashion retailers, or generating an extended list of characteristics which may apply to different individual segments. This would enable the tutor to allocate particular outlets or market segments to different individual or small groups of learners. In this way a wider range of information is likely to be researched leading to more informative class discussion.

Delivery should be learner centred and participatory, involving discussion and contact with a wide range of retail organisations. This can be helped by visits or visiting speakers. Formative assignments can be used throughout the unit to direct learners to develop the evidence required to meet the grading criteria. It may be necessary to allow learners to review and extend their work on these assignments in a summative way, using the benefit of their improved knowledge to provide final evidence for the required grading criteria. There are opportunities for tutors to link work in this unit to other areas, particularly those concerned with marketing, customer service and business planning and profitability.

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/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and structure of the programme
How different retail outlets define their target market for fashion merchandise. Learners will receive or participate in: • formal theory input • a group exercise on types of retail outlets • pair work on how to segment a market • a case-study exercise on market segmentation in the fashion industry in groups • a guest speaker on fashion merchandise • a visit to local fashion retailers • an individual exercise searching the internet for retail policies • a class discussion on 'What makes a successful fashion retailer?' • a group exercise on retail policies There may still be formal input during group work.
Assignment 1 – Target Markets and Policies on the Retail Offer
The impact of fashion trends on retail services and products Learners will receive or participate in: • formal theory input • a group exercise on historical fashion trends • a DVD/video on influences on fashion followed by a class discussion • a group exercise on culture and buying behaviour • a discussion on fashion trends and the meaning of 'trends' • an exercise on retail services in groups • a discussion on products and product ranges in the fashion industry There may still be formal input during group work

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Assignment 2 – Fashion Trends
Image and product range that meets the needs of the target market Learners will receive or participate in: • formal theory input • a class discussion on the meaning of retail image • a role-playing exercise on customer service • a DVD/video on the importance of customer service/class discussion • a class discussion on market needs • group exercise on searching the internet to identify fashion retailers who are meeting the needs of their customers There may still be formal input during group work.
Fashion retailers in mass and niche markets Learners will receive or participate in: • formal theory input • a class discussion on niche and mass markets • Individual research into one niche retailer and one mass market retailer • a 5-minute individual presentation on the findings from the research • an exercise on types of designer products in groups • a case study on the buying habits of consumers as a group exercise • a review of the unit There may still be formal input during group work.
Assignment 3 – Image – Niche and Mass Marketing
Supervised assignment time
Non-supervised study time and completion of assignments

Assessment

To achieve a pass grade, learners must achieve the six pass criteria listed in the grading grid. For P1, learners will be expected to identify two different fashion retailers and to explain the characteristics of the target markets for each, using the market segmentation characteristics listed in the unit content. This can be achieved in a number of ways and it is a matter of choice whether market characteristics are identified first and then retailers catering for them are researched, or whether particular fashion retailers are chosen and then their target markets are identified. However, if the latter approach is adopted learners should be guided to ensure that they do not choose retail outlets with identical or very similar markets. Learners can present evidence for this criterion in a variety of ways, which may include narrative descriptions or presentation in a tabular form.

P2 requires learners to explain the policies adopted by two different retailers in terms of their retail service offer. This can include explanations of ambience, customer service level, price range, etc. They must give two different examples and should be guided to identify retail outlets with contrasting target markets. Learners will benefit from keeping to the target markets identified for P1. It would help learners if they choose examples which will also allow them to develop more evidence for M1 and D1.

To achieve P3, learners, will need to describe the factors that influence an identified fashion trend. For P4, learners need to describe two different fashion trends and to describe, with an example for each, how these impacted on the retail services that are (or have been) offered.

P5 requires learners to explain the image of a chosen fashion retailer and how it meets the needs of its target market. For P6, learners must explain three differences between fashion retailers catering for a niche market (for example a high-end shoe boutique or a surfwear shop) and those catering for a mass market (such as Topshop or Marks & Spencer).

For M1, learners must analyse how the characteristics of their target markets influence the policies (described in P2) of two of the retailers chosen for P1. Learners should produce evidence of understanding the rationale linking the retailers' adopted policies, in terms of the retail offer made, and the target market(s). For M2, learners need to compare the two different fashion trends discussed in P4 in terms of their impact on retail services.

M3 requires learners analyse how a chosen fashion retailer (most likely the one chosen for P5, but this is not essential) has developed its image to be compatible with the characteristics of its target market and how its product range contributes to that image whilst meeting customer needs. The analysis should clearly identify the relationship between the market characteristics, the product range and the retail image, showing what links them together.

For D1, learners must show that they have evaluated the way in which one of their chosen fashion retailers for P1 (or another retailer if the learner prefers) has identified a particular characteristic of its target market and adapted its policies in response. This may be a characteristic of its existing market that has changed as a result of social or economic change, or it may be that the retailer has identified a new or extended market that requires an adaptation of its existing policy. Learners might, for example, look at how the fashion ranges of a department store have responded to a change in the age or social profile of its market, or how a multiple retailer has adopted a new image in order to attract a new market, or how a niche retailer responds to changes in the fashion tastes or buying habits of its core customers. These are only examples and are not intended to be a definitive list.

D2 requires learners to examine the analysis conducted for M3 critically in order to identify gaps or weaknesses in terms of the compatibility of the retail image with the identified characteristics of the target market and fashion product range.

Assessment for all the criteria might be through a variety of means. Learners can provide evidence in the form of written reports, presentations or a combination of both. When presentations are used, tutors should ensure that sufficient evidence of the content and quality of the presentation, and its application to the grading criteria, is retained.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the 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, D1	Assignment task 1 Target Markets and Policies on the Retail Offer	You are a journalist for a national fashion magazine and your editor has asked to you to undertake research into fashion retailing and produce an article on target markets, policies on retail services, which will go in next month's edition.	Magazine article Report or presentation

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P3, P4, M2	Assignment task 2 Fashion Trends	As above investigating fashion trends.	Magazine article
			Report or presentation
P5, P6, M3, D2	Assignment task 3 Image – Niche And Mass Marketing	As above investigating retail image, niche and mass marketing.	Magazine article
			Report or presentation

Learners will be expected to produce evidence that shows their knowledge and understanding of the nature of fashion retailing. It may include an article/report on fashion retailing that includes how retailers define their target markets, the impact of trends, retail image and how retailers cater for mass and niche markets.

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

This unit forms part of the BTEC Business sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the Business suite:

Level 3
The Business Environment
Understanding Retailing
Visual Merchandising in Retail

This unit links to the Level 3 NVQ in Customer Service, particularly Units 7, 18 and 26.

This unit links to the National Occupational Standards for Marketing and Sales Non-specialists, particularly Units 1, 3, 5, 7 and 8.

This unit also links to the Level 3 National Occupational Standards for Retail, particularly Cluster A, B and D.

Essential resources

Learners will benefit from access to fashion retail outlets, and from sufficient library and/or internet resources to allow them to research the current activities of retail organisations. Visits to, and/or visiting speakers from, fashion retail organisations will be helpful.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with local fashion retailers. Many retail organisations want to promote their businesses so are often willing to provide work placements, visits, information about their businesses, visiting speakers and the world of fashion context

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Diamond J and Diamond E – *The World of Fashion* (Fairchild Books, 2002) ISBN 1563671808

Franklin C – *Fashion UK* (Conran Octopus Ltd, 2002) ISBN 1840912693

Martin R et al – *The Fashion Book* (Phaidon Press, 2001) ISBN 0714841188

Journals

Drapers

Fashion Weekly

Website

www.fashion-era.com   Fashion era – clothing and historical fashion trends

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	explaining the image of a chosen fashion retailer and how it meets the needs of its target market explaining the policies of different fashion retailers in terms of their retail service offer
Creative thinkers	explaining the policies of different fashion retailers in terms of their retail service offer
Reflective learners	reflecting on how a fashion trend is influenced in its development.

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 the different types of target markets for fashion retailers
Creative thinkers	looking at how different fashion retailers respond to trends adapting their skills as circumstances change when carrying out research
Reflective learners	setting goals, with success criteria, for researching retail fashion businesses inviting feedback on their own work and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism evaluating their experiences and learning to inform future progress
Team workers	working in a groups to discuss ideas about fashion retail trends taking responsibility for their own role when working in teams managing activities to reach agreements and achieve results when working in groups
Self-managers	seeking out challenges or new responsibilities and showing flexibility when priorities change dealing with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands responding positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed when facing obstacles in their research
Effective participators	Voicing own views and opinions when working in groups.

● 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 fashion retail business organisations researching on the internet for retail policies
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	tabulating information about retail policies
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	researching fashion retail business organisations
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	exploring, extracting and assessing the relevance of information from websites about retail fashion businesses
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	bringing together a variety of materials gathered through research preparing information to present to others about the fashion retail businesses
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	communicating with other members of a group during group research exercises
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	carrying out group work investigating fashion retailers working in groups on types of retail outlets
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	reading about retail fashion businesses reading about retail fashion trends and the factors that influence trends
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing reports and notes to provide information about retail fashion businesses.