

# Report on IFFTI Faculty Exchange 2017

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## 1. Introduction

The aims of this Faculty Exchange were:

- to review information of courses offered by UAL: London College of Fashion which carry similar academic learning outcomes as RMIT Associate Degree in Fashion and Textile Merchandising.
- to investigate the delivery and teaching methodology of the subjects, the learning outcomes and the opportunities offered to students.
- to identify the possible gaps in the Associate Degree and plan for possible change in
- to update my knowledge in the fashion retail industry in U.K.

### 1.1 Scope of the report

This report is to reflect on the activities during the week of stay from 23 - 30 November 2017. It also reflects on the experience and the outcomes of the activities.

## 2. Activities

### 2.1 Meetings

A number of meetings were arranged and organised with the purpose of exchanging structures of the various programs offered in the Business School of London College of Fashion. These meetings included academics from the following programs: BSc (Hons) Fashion Management, Msc Strategic Fashion Management, and BA Fashion Marketing. Academics met included:

Sally Bain, Senior Lecturer, Placement Year Coordinator

Matteo Montecchi , Course Leader, Msc Strategic Fashion Management

Ana Roncha, Senior Lecturer, Consumer Insights and Business Model Innovation

Lisa Henderson, Lecturer BSc (Hons) Fashion Management

Dr Natasha Radcliffe-Thomas, Course Leader BA Fashion Marketing

#### 2.1.1 Outcomes

All the academics were extremely helpful and they gave clear presentations on their programs. They were all very passionate about their programs and the quality of education they provided to the students. Assessments were the area of interest.

One of the outstanding areas of interest was the strong focus on employability skills. Students develop employability skills and graduate attributes throughout the three years of their programs. Team skills are introduced in First Year. Students learn about various roles played in a team and they also get to understand themselves. This not only helps them get prepared to work in a team but also for the industry project in second year.

The most interesting set up in the People Management course led by Lisa Henderson is the opportunity provided to students in a real life situation. Collaborating between London College of Fashion and industry allows students to attend assessment centres. These

assessment centres are genuine centres of six UK brands. A number of job roles are offered and each student is to apply for two. They prepare their resumes and then attend the interviews at the Assessment Centres. Students not only receive feedback from industry but they also write a reflection on their experience. Students review their learning journey, the preparation they put in, the emotions, the mistakes and what they need to improve in future. This reflection aims at helping students to be responsible for their future and to become independent learners, and not to be spoon-fed.

There is no doubt that a lot of effort has been invested in organising and liaising to ensure students attend Assessment Centres. Reflections on assessments show that examination is not the best method due to the nature of the subject. More interactive assessments will replace examination. Assessments will include preparing resume, cover letter, a 2 min video pitch where students talk about themselves.

Another exciting outcome is the possibility of setting up collaboration between students from the Bachelor Degree in Fashion Marketing and RMIT students from the Associate Degree in Fashion and Textile Merchandising. Dr Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas was keen to have this set up. This will open up communication between the two groups of students looking at consumer behaviour in the UK and Australia.

## 2.2 Attending a seminar

It was organised for me to attend a Product Seminar. It was very kind of Jeannie, the Lecturer, to give me the opportunity to observe and participate. The format was very much like tutorials with student working on activities. Though the aim of the seminar was to encourage students to answer questions and be involved in discussion, yet it was obvious that only a few took an active part. The other students were rather passive, waiting for responses from their peers.

Through a discussion with Jeannie, I understand that the retail environment in UK like Australia has been struggling. This would be due to a number of factors. Firstly, the English pounds have dropped since leaving the Euro market. Secondly, consumers are not buying because they are waiting for the Black Friday, and furthermore, there is no manufacturing in UK.

## 2.3 Meeting students

Sally Bain organised a couple of meetings to meet RMIT students, Caitlin and Sarah who are doing their Exchange program at London College of Fashion. In addition, another meeting was organised to meet with UAL students, Isabelle Coulston, Emily Bisgaard and Charlotte who are interested to come as Exchange students to study in RMIT.

### 2.3.1 Outcomes

Feedback from RMIT students was fairly positive while UAL students were very keen to join RMIT for a semester. All queries were attended.

## 3. Industry Engagement

Tom Pearce who used to work in Australia Country Road as Head Designer is now the Design Manager of Next.