Central House is home to the Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design (The Cass). The school allows students easy access to London’s creative and cultural quarter.

The Cass boasts a great London location on Commercial Road, just minutes from Aldgate and Aldgate East tube stations.

Introduction

‘The studio approach ensures a stimulating student experience, providing excellent preparation for professional practice’

Andrew Stone, deputy dean

What is studying at this school all about?
There are several themes which run through The Cass. These include a focus on socially engaged forms of practice at every scale; a focus on London as case study and context for many of our projects and collaborations; and a faculty-wide interest in making as well as designing.

What kind of teaching method is applied here?
The studio approach is at the heart of our delivery. Studios are smaller study groups, launched at the beginning of each academic year and focusing on a specific theme. Practice-based learning, field trips, research and critical studies are delivered in an integrated way within these groups. Students vote to join the studio that interests them – at present there are 66 studios in The Cass. Our studios bring together students, academic staff, practitioners, industry leaders and clients nurturing a sense of ownership and competitiveness which enhances a high quality of student experience and work to be produced.

Why should students choose this particular school?
We have many strengths. The studio approach ensures a stimulating student experience, providing excellent preparation for professional practice. Students are taught by and engage with a wide range of successful practitioners, many with links to the city’s creative practices, agencies and organisations. There are four unique cross-faculty areas which greatly benefit the students. Cass Works is a service providing excellent workshops, technologies – and the technicians to support them – from traditional workshops through to contemporary manufacturing technologies to digital media production. Our Cass Projects Office bridges study and real world engagement ensuring The Cass has an excellent reputation for live projects locally and globally. The recently launched Cass Cities supports a growing interest in urbanism, and Cass Culture delivers critical and contextual studies in an innovative way, using London and its galleries and collections as a library.

What is expected from the students?
Students are required to be inquisitive, innovative, critical and ambitious about the interior. They are expected to challenge their subject, their practice and the interior’s capacity to choreograph human activity.

What is the most important thing for students to learn during this course?
We encourage students to develop a reflective and critical approach to practice. We want students to engage with, and understand contemporary design but also to develop their own framework and language.

Where or in what kind of jobs do your former students mostly end up?
We have alumni all over the world working in architectural and interior design studios or in their own design practices.
The overall theme and content of the course is intended to encourage independent design thinking in the field of the interior. In this respect, the curriculum begins to focus in a more advanced and systematic way on aspects of the profession and practice. Design occupies a large proportion of the course and the process of design is rehearsed through the vehicle of project work, which is carried out within an optional thematic studio. This year’s studio ‘City, Country, Coast’ has three projects with real clients: the City Project, with The Royal Academy of Arts, London; the Country Project with the National Trust at Knole House in Kent; and the Coast Project in collaboration with the Fisherman’s Preservation Society in Hastings, Sussex.

The studio platform situates the student in a more real, complex and ambiguous context for project work, with many more parameters that cover social, political and economic contexts as well as the physical context. In addition to studio study there are thematic modules that expand and deepen knowledge of a chosen area of cultural context or professional expertise particular to the student. The programme is designed to set out the breadth of the field of interior design and help students to secure a sufficient depth of understanding to ground their own work.

### Programme

Head of programme: Susan Ginsburgh
Mentors and lecturers: Janette Harris, Suzanne Smeeth-Poaros and Andy Stone.

### Structure

This 1-year full-time, or 2-year part-time, study programme covers 2 semesters and the summer. Students should expect 12 hours of teachings a week plus the time spent on studio study.

### Head of programme

Susan Ginsburgh

### Mentors and lecturers

Janette Harris, Suzanne Smeeth-Poaros and Andy Stone.

### Notable alumnus

Xenia Gyftaki

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**A student takes a short course in woodworking at the Commercial Road Woodmill facility.**

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### School Facts

**Duration of study**

- **Full time**: Yes
- **Part time**: Yes (2 years)

**Female students**: 42%
**Male**: 38%
**Local students**: 25%
**Students from abroad**: 75%
**Yearly enrolment**: 12

**Minimum requirements for entry**

- Bachelor’s degree

**Language**

- English

**Application procedure**

- Apply online and submit the following materials:
  - A written piece of work outlining your design approach
  - A project idea
  - A portfolio that demonstrates academic and creative potential

**Admission depends on a portfolio interview in the form of a discussion around the applicant’s range of interests and portfolio of work.**

**Application details**

[cass.com/apply/overview](cass.com/apply/overview)

**Application date**

While there is no formal deadline, application by March in the year of intended study is strongly advised.

**Tuition fee**

- **GBP 7,650 (approx. EUR 9,512)** for EU citizens (full time, part time)
- **GBP 6,500 / approx. EUR 10,564 per 20 credit module)**

**Fees stated are for September 2014**

**Funding/scholarships**

Yes, many scholarships including The Cass Alumni School of Design Postgraduate Scholarship.

**Memberships/affiliations**

- Interior Educators

**Collaborations with**

- The Royal Academy of Arts, The National Trust, London Jewellery Week, Orange and London Transport

**Facilities for students**

Cass Works provides workshops for wood, metal, plastic, print, ceramics, textiles, photography, film making and more. Services at Metropolitan Works Digital Manufacturing Centre include CAD, Rapid Prototyping, Laser Cutting, Waterjet Cutting and CNC Routing.

**Graduation rate**

100%

**Job placement rate**

Depends on the economy
Student Work

Reynolds Room Knole House (2013)
By Anna Jane Derbyshire

The Reynolds room is situated in a 500-year-old stately home called Knole House in Sevenoaks, Kent. The custodian of the house, the National Trust, asked for an interior in response to the painting and artefacts housed there. The resulting design schemes were displayed in an exhibition at the Orangery at Knole.

Light Lounge (2013)
By Xenia Gytaki

A responsive night club in the Old Truman Brewery creative hub, Brick Lane.

The Orangery at Knole House (2014)
By the class of 2014

This self-generated student project was the result of spatial experiments exploring illusion and transformation.

The Net Hut, Hastings (2013)
By Sophie-Louise Bynam

The net hut has been designed as a fisherman’s living archive and social club to preserve the memory of the fishermen of Hastings.

Floating Casino on the River Thames (2013)
By Aslan Karosh

This reflective installation gave a detailed narrative about the painting hung in the Reynolds Room.

Knole House (2013)
By Edoardo Verbigrizia

The students designed and built this exhibition to display their project inspired by the Reynolds Room at Knole House. Photo Susan Ginsburgh

A Community Dance Centre at Building 100, Woolwich Arsenal (2013)
By Anna Terebinski

Woolwich Arsenal, a redundant armoury in South East London, has gone under a huge transformation over the last 15 years. This project develops a new use for the site, one that is more inclusive for the community as a whole.
Alumna

Yan Guo
Name
Yan Guo
Residence
London, United Kingdom
Year of birth
1981
Year of graduation
2010
Current job
Design director at ZedFactory
Clients
Local government of Zhangwu, local government of Shanchuan, Jeffery, H, Sogal China
Website
zedfactory.com

Why did you choose this school?
The Cass is well known for multiple majors like jewellery design, painting and fine art. I believe that the vision here is not just created by tutors, but also by the international students around the school, and it affects your levels of thinking on design through interactions with them. Plus, financially the tuition fee is affordable, for international students especially.

What was the most important thing you learned here?
The most essential thing I was learned that to be able to join parametric design onto sustainable high-end retail interior design. My tutor, Sue Ginsburgh, never limited my personal interest in this special area. I felt she was guiding me with her practical suggestions, rather than tell me what I should do. Surprisingly, we students had to provide our own topic and direction for the final graduation project of the MA course.

What subject do you wish you paid more attention to?
Sustainable parametric interior design!

What was your graduation project?
It was called Cardboard Fashion Boutique. In it, I used paper to create a high-end retail store design.

Any words of advice for future students?
You really need to have a serious think about what you actually want to achieve in the course, otherwise you will probably be lost up until the final project. The MA course is just 1 year long, and the course sections pass by very quickly. You need to be as active as possible with the programme, and even if you fail to find your personal direction initially, you can receive lots of suggestions, support and inspiration. You should never be afraid to share your thoughts and feelings.

Are you still in contact with your fellow students?
Yes – we are all on Facebook.

Current Students

‘I chose this school because it has a conceptually focused master’s programme. It is more tailored towards research and conceptual development than the technical aspect of interior design which I studied for 3 years for my first degree.’
Ana Caetano Alves

‘The most important elements for me were the exposure and direct access to real clients, live projects and other designers working in the industry. This interaction is key for young professionals, who must shortly leave the safety of being students to dive into the professional world.’
Ana Maria Dimitriu

‘I really enjoyed the studio work because it teaches you new skills and begins to hone your own personal style and talents.’
Sophie-Louise Bynam

‘My favourite places to hang outs were the live music venues and the art, architecture and design galleries. London offers a wide range of all these – it is really hard to get bored in this city!’
Edoardo Verbigrazia

‘This is a very much self-driven learning experience that challenges you to push your abilities.’
Anna Jane Derbyshire

‘I came here after hearing positive feedback about the school from a friend. The most valuable part of the course for me was the tutorial class about the dissertation.’
Mostafa Ghazian

Yan Guo’s favourite student project was ZedHouse for ZedFactory - an adventure in using recycled materials which included a ceiling light created using 2236 old beer bottles.
City Life

London is a wonderful city for a student of any subject, offering an incomparable wealth of social, cultural, entertainment, educational and life experiences. A design student based in the capital has access to a huge number of world-renowned galleries, museums, collections and specialists. London is also home to the main UK, European or global offices of many design, architectural, technology and media organisations that help with live projects, work experience during study and future employment after graduation.

The Cass is in Aldgate, at the point where city’s main financial district meets the East End. It’s about a 10-minute walk to the Tower of London and the River Thames, and the West End – celebrated for its shopping and theatres – is about a 15-minute journey by underground.

The school’s Central House building is close to Aldgate East underground station and opposite the world-famous Whitechapel Gallery. This exciting part of London – which includes areas such as Spitalfields, Shoreditch and Hoxton – boasts a vibrant social scene. There are also about 3500 creative companies, from galleries and design agencies to jewellers and digital innovators, in this immediate locale so it is a great place to see work, network and interact.

City Facts

See more London City Facts on p.236

Tate Modern 3
Located in Herzog and De Meuron’s iconic former Bankside Power Station, the Tate Modern displays over 100 years of modern and contemporary art across seven floors.

tate.org.uk

The Millennium Wheel 4
Also known as the London Eye, a ride on the wheel offers spectacular views and is a great way to get your bearings.
londoneye.com

The Design Museum 5
Design in all its manifestations in contemporary culture is the subject here, both of the interesting permanent collection and excellent exhibition programme.
designmuseum.org

The British Museum 6
A vast collection of world artefacts, numbering 8 million works plus temporary blockbuster exhibitions, all sheltering underneath the spectacular glass roof of Norman Foster’s Great Court.
britishmuseum.org

Brick Lane and the Old Truman Brewery 7
This once neglected street is now a hip area filled with vintage clothes stands, organic food stalls, curry houses and the cutting-edge arts and media quarter, the Old Truman Brewery.
visitbricklane.org

London Festival of Architecture
This month-long, city-wide celebration of architectural experimentation, thinking, learning and practice is held in June.
londonfestivalofarchitecture.org

The Queen Elizabeth II Olympic Park
Straddling the park, get fit in the original 2012 Olympic venues and take in some cutting-edge architecture and art in one of London’s newest quarters.
queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk

Museum of London 8
From Boudicca to Shakespeare to Sherlock Holmes, a fascinating look back at the long and eventful history of one of the world’s great cities. museumoflondon.org.uk

How to get around

Getting around London is easy thanks to its extensive tube, bus and tram network and a cycle hire scheme. The Cass is located on Commercial Road, which is located just a few minutes from Aldgate and Aldgate East tube stations, which are served by the Circle, Metropolitan, District and Hammersmith & City lines. Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street stations are also a short walk away.

London’s airports are easily accessible from the school, with London City being the closest at just 8 km away. Many students choose to cycle, as it is the quickest, cheapest and most environmentally friendly way to travel.

Arranging housing

Average

Housing support by school
Yes, the university has an accommodation bureau.

Cost of room in the city
Between GBP 90 and GBP 140 per week (approx. EUR 112 to EUR 174)

Cost of campus housing
n/a