



The Pantone Playbook: Getting The Most out of Design School

Incoming Design Student? Here's How to Maximize Your Experience



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Good design can change the world. And all great creators — like those who brought us the iconic NYC subway map, the practical IKEA Billy bookcase, or the timeless Air Jordan 1s — started learning somewhere.

Whether you're enrolling in fashion school or a graphic design program, a design education will ignite your passion and shape you into a tenacious professional. You'll have the opportunity to push your creative limits, develop new aspects of your visual identity, and challenge your critical thinking skills.

How do you balance between relishing this journey of self-discovery and securing the foundation for your future career? We at Pantone understand the significance of a design education for graphic designers, fashion enthusiasts, and interior artists around the world. Here's our top advice on making your design school experience the most incredible it can be.



1. Design Goes Better When You're Together

Design is a people field. Try to surround yourself with them. Build relationships with other designers, seek mentorship from those you admire (or don't admire, you can still learn from them!) and seize opportunities to

collaborate. At this stage, you and your peers are still refining your styles, ideas, and techniques — take advantage of that. When you're stuck on a design problem, there's a good chance your classmate brings a different perspective that can get you unblocked.

Of course, engaging with people also means networking. Attend local design events or workshops and try your hand at online [design competitions](#). Volunteering at events like Fashion Week can give you an inside look at the industry and introduce you to major players. Finally, use social media for more than just entertainment: start engaging with professionals, peers, influencers or attend [virtual workshops and creative trainings](#). You never know when those connections might lead to something bigger.



2. Embrace Criticism

There's no design process without feedback. Remember, it's not personal; it's an opportunity to learn, improve, and refine your work. If an instructor's approach strikes you as too "old school," remember that while trends change quickly, principles rarely do. The "old school" way worked at a point in time for a reason. You don't have to incorporate every suggestion, but stay open-minded. Listening to feedback from a different perspective can take your design game to new levels.



3. Let Curiosity Lead the Way

Don't feel pressure to contain yourself to a specialization right away. School is the time to explore and experiment with various disciplines and techniques. Each new tool in your toolkit adds to your design dexterity.

Much of this exploration will lie outside the classroom. Whenever you're curious about an area of design, take on internships or pursue extracurriculars that give you hands-on experience. Make note of good and bad designs in the wild. Visit galleries. Explore the intersections: what inspiration might a fashion student take from architecture, or a graphic designer from the natural world?



4. Look to the Future to Stay Ahead Now

Design trends can change in an instant. Immerse yourself in the latest literature, like the Pantone [color trend books](#), to stay ahead of the season. Pantone color trend books explore the macro influences that will affect color six to 24 months in the future and explain how to apply them to a brand or product. Additional features include color trend palettes, culturally relevant visual inspiration, suggested color combinations, and new color processes, materials, surface finishes, and applications.

Following international scenes can also give you a viewpoint into how design is evolving in different countries and cultures, and where it might come to influence your local sphere. Regularly engaging with trend forecasting and broadening your perspective will sharpen you with forward-thinking insights.



5. Make the Most of Your Resources

You have no greater access to or wealth of free resources than when you're a design student. Make the most of them. Brush up on Pantone Guides (such as the [Graphics and Print Formula Guide](#) or the [FASHION, HOME + INTERIORS Guide](#)) before you have to use them in coursework or a professional capacity. You also have the benefit of having instructors handy who can help you navigate the guides. Finally, take advantage of discounted subscriptions. Pantone Connect, for example, is a software platform that helps designers capture color inspiration in the real world and ensure color consistency in their branding, fashion, and product design workflows. Students get [60% off Pantone Connect!](#)



Welcome to the Design Community

Design school is the time to seize every opportunity available to you to make the most of this incredible experience. Embrace collaboration, seek inspiration in unexpected places, continuously refine your craft. Speaking on behalf of the millions of designers who use Pantone every day, we hope you embrace this colorful world with open arms, and let your creativity paint a brilliant future.