THE MISALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE EXPECTATIONS OF FASHION STUDENTS, FASHION TERTIARY EDUCATORS, AND THE FASHION INDUSTRY.

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Master of Arts
Endorsed in Higher Education

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University of Otago
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ABSTRACT
What motivates students to study fashion design? What employment opportunities are there in the fashion design industry for fashion graduates? These are some of the core questions raised in this thesis. Fashion design is a highly competitive and economically lucrative industry, and in response, a growing number of vocational and academic fashion education programmes are available. This is resulting in an increasing number of fashion design graduates competing for a limited number of positions in the industry. An example of a contemporary vocational fashion training institute in New Zealand is the New Zealand Institute of Fashion and Technology (NZIFT), where the author was employed and witnessed the challenges graduates faced when seeking employment. Fashion aesthetics are constantly changing - the silhouettes, shapes, colours and textures, and the way in which we put pieces together. Therefore, the way in which fashion is envisioned, produced and manufactured is also evolving. To reflect these changes, the topics, technical skills and teaching methods should also evolve. Fashion graduates need to be flexible, skilled and have the ability to influence changes in the industry. Many students are attracted to the fashion industry because of its glamorous portrayal in the media, this, in turn creates expectations of what they are to become and their employment opportunities in the industry. This research explores the recent experiences of fashion design graduates. It identifies what motivates students to undertake study in fashion design, their expectations of what a career in fashion design could offer, and the realities of their subsequent employability. The research finds that the majority of NZIFT fashion graduates developed confidence in themselves through the skills they learnt while studying. They also developed skills and knowledge, acquired both directly and indirectly, which gave them the confidence to study elsewhere and to take up employment in an entirely different field. A minority of graduates found work in the fashion industry which they thoroughly enjoy and remain in today. Key findings from the research indicate a growing gap in the expectations of students, educators, and industry which contributes to challenges for students gaining employment after graduation. Results also revealed that students are attracted to study fashion design for a variety of reasons including personal interest, autonomy in career trajectory, incidental
endeavour, family influence, the reputation and the proximity of the school, and an expectation of fulfilling employment. While the majority of those who took part in the study said they were satisfied with the quality of their programme, they also expressed concern about gaining employment after graduation. After completing the programme, some graduates reported working in unrelated sectors, and the small number who managed to obtain jobs in the fashion industry described challenges in maintaining their jobs, partly due to difficulties meeting employer expectations. The study’s implications section suggests a way forward that would involve bridging the gap between students, educators, and industry expectations, including the transformation of curriculum and pedagogical approaches in fashion design schools. An improved future state would also require continuous assessment of the changing dynamics of the fashion industry and an update to fashion design school’s curricula. In order to better prepare fashion design graduates to thrive in the complex fashion design industry, fashion design schools will need to organise and strengthen apprenticeships and on the job training. This will prepare students for challenging careers in the volatile fashion design industry. Being able to draw from real life situations gives a real context to student’s learning experiences. This facilitates better transitions into work, ultimately supporting employment retention and an enriched career. However, the workforce must also be ready for this change and be willing to take on and nurture fashion design apprentices and provide on the job training. An increase in apprenticeships would be beneficial for both students and industry as students would be obtaining on-the-job training and the workforce would be gaining moldable, willing employees that would be obliged to remain with them for a number of years to finish their apprenticeship or on-the-job training.
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I would also like to thank the graduates of Wellington NZIFT for taking the time to complete the survey and to offer their comments, opinions, and recollections for this has been a great insight for my thesis.
DEDICATION

This thesis work is dedicated to my husband Aaron, and my two kitties Pepper and Paisley who have been a constant source of support and encouragement during all the challenges I have faced. I am truly thankful for having all of you in my life.
1. CHAPTER ONE

Introduction
What motivates students to study fashion design? What are the employment opportunities in the fashion design industry after students graduate? These are some of the core questions raised in this thesis. Fashion design is a highly competitive and economically lucrative industry with a growing number of academic programmes. An increasing number of fashion design graduates compete for a limited number of positions in the industry. An example of a contemporary vocational fashion training institute in New Zealand is the New Zealand Institute of Fashion and Technology (NZIFT), where the author was employed and has witnessed the challenges graduates faced when seeking employment.

The fashion industry in New Zealand (NZ) is always striving to meet the changing demands of consumers and competing with the relatively low cost of manufacturing overseas and importing to NZ. This has a significant impact on the NZ fashion industry, as local production is less feasible in comparison to cheap offshore manufacturing.

The free trade agreement between New Zealand and China, which came into effect in 2008, resulted in the total value of goods traded between New Zealand and China doubling to NZ$20 billion. In the year ended June 2014, New Zealand goods exported to China grew by a further 50%, with all tariffs on products originating in China scheduled for removal in 2016 (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2016).

This made the NZ and Chinese’ fashion industries more competitive with each other, with pricing and delivery becoming cheap and fast, and more businesses able to deliver fast, high fashion at competitive price points. According to Bhardwaj (2010), these are the key strategies to maintain a profitable position in an increasingly demanding market. Fashion retailers have encouraged consumers to visit their stores more frequently with continuing sales that promote a shorter life cycle and higher profit margins.
Because of this, the typical operating model of a NZ fashion businesses has changed to one where production is carried out overseas, and key roles are more in line with the oversight of offshore production rather than the traditional roles of production itself, which in turn has reduced employment opportunities for graduating students.

Despite the increasing challenge students face gaining employment after graduation, the fashion industry continues to use magazines, blogs, social media TV, advertising, movies and celebrity endorsements to present tantalizing narratives about itself (Dyer, 1986; Titton, 2015). Fashion bloggers and celebrities’ narratives in particular turn fashion items into fashion ‘looks’ by publishing pictures of themselves in fashionable outfits alongside stories about their wardrobe choices. This apparently glamorous world attracts students to study fashion design as a subject. Studying fashion also appeals to students because society often presents a positive image of the fashion industry and encourages potential students to study fashion design with the promise that, with hard work, it is possible to become a designer (Bill, 2012, Dyer, 1986; McRobbie, 1998; Titton, 2015). However, the way different stakeholders project the fashion design industry is, to a large extent, misaligned with the realities, employment dynamics, and expectations of the industry. The overarching goal of the research presented in this thesis was to explore what motivates students to study fashion design and examine the experiences of fashion design graduates in their first year of employment.

1.1 Problem statement

Institutions such as NZIFT, offer fashion design education as a vocational trade that requires a wide range of specialist skills. These skills are practiced within an industrial setting in the institution until they are thoroughly learned.

In New Zealand, fashion design and fashion technology education are offered through universities such as Auckland University of Technology (AUT) or Massey University, Polytechnics such as Western Institute of Technology (Wintec) or Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, or a school of technology such as Eastern or Southern Institutes of technology. Studying fashion design at university draws on the theoretical and academic rigour of the institution, with a focus on original research and design and experimentation (Bill, 2005, 2009; McRobbie, 1998). Conversely, studying fashion through a polytechnic
or technical institute focuses on technical skills and mastery of processes. Through an apprenticeship or on-the-job training system, students would be fully immersed in the industry and gain a swift understanding of the realities of working in the fashion industry. It would give them finely tuned and honed skills that are unique to a particular aspect of fashion design, for example patternmaking or construction. Furthermore, through an apprenticeship, fashion design students and trainees would still be able to achieve the same type of qualification that they can already gain from a technical institute or Polytechnic. This qualification would include opportunities to supplement the skills and knowledge learned with hands-on work experience (Bailey, Drew, Shreeve, 2014). Employers would also have the ability to retain students and trainees who demonstrate motivation through their learning and development, and who have clear progression plans within the company and industry. Initial findings suggest that the issue of employability and retention of NZIFT fashion graduates in the fashion industry is concerning. The goal of this research is to gain an understanding of students’ motivations to study fashion design and to identify career expectations and employment experiences a year after graduation. The study also identifies challenges Fashion design graduates face upon entering the fashion design industry.

1.2 Research questions

1. What motivates students to study fashion design?
2. What are the experiences of Fashion design graduates in gaining employment after graduation?
3. What are the employability attributes expected of graduates in the fashion design industry?

1.3 Context of the research

This study explores key factors that motivate students to study fashion design. It then describes the experiences of graduates entering the fashion industry a year after graduation. The research also focuses on the concepts of employability and professional identity, and the tension between the perceived identity of the fashion design industry and authentic identity of students entering the fashion industry. It also explores factors that
impact on graduates’ transitions from tertiary education into the workplace. For the purpose of this research, tertiary education is defined as including universities, institutes of technology, polytechnics, private training establishments, industry training organisations and Wānanga.

References to universities within the research is intentional and refers to the university system solely. Likewise, when reference is made to Polytechnics this includes the Polytechnic system solely. Some of the debate in the research compares the University and Polytechnic systems.

Alumni of NZIFT Wellington, New Zealand were the key informants. This study provides a picture of the contributions that graduate attributes make to the fashion design discipline and of the first-hand experiences of graduates in the workplace.

The study was motivated by the need to understand the challenges graduates of fashion design face in gaining employment and establishing careers within the fashion industry. Having taught a diploma in fashion design for six years and guided students to gain employment in the fashion design industry at the commencement of the programme, the author noticed significant challenges facing fashion design graduates in their first year after completion of their fashion design programme. A sample group of graduates from the NZIFT diploma programme in Wellington provided the data for the study.

1.4 The organisation of the thesis

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction, problem statement, research questions and context of the research. Chapter two presents the literature review associated with the study, while chapter three describes the research methodology and the author’s ontological orientations. Chapter four presents the findings. Chapter five is discussions and conclusions and chapter six discusses implications and the way forward.
2. CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review
The literature was reviewed to gain a better understanding of the perspectives on the evolution of the New Zealand apprenticeship and education system, contextualising the role of private training providers within the education system. Previous research on fashion design was reviewed to identify graduate attributes associated with fashion design programmes and how students acquire these qualities in fashion design programme. The literature shows a growing gap between students’ expectations of fashion design programmes and the challenges they face upon graduation.

2.1 Fashion education
The fashion industry has various trade elements, and requires graduates with both vocational skills and academic knowledge, depending on the industry pathway. On the job training is more closely aligned with specific industry requirements such as the highly skilled trades of pattern making or sewing. On the other hand, graduates of academic programmes such as degrees can remain in academia and take up jobs not necessarily related to fashion design. The fashion industry is continuously changing and emerging - the processes, technology, and conditions change fast, and those who work in the industry need to adapt and change just as quickly (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2009).

As with any subject that has a direct link to an industry, the challenge with fashion design programmes is that educators are expected to continually re-evaluate and refocus their content and directions as industry needs change. Vocational fashion studies, for example, focus on imparting technical skills such as pattern drafting, sewing, grading and construction, whereas universities focus on academic skills and research. McNeil (2010) believes that fashion should not be studied as an academic subject within historical, narrative and collective memories. Taking a social, historical feminist viewpoint McRobbie (1998) discusses fashion in the 1970s and states that women studied fashion for financial independence by engaging with sewing and drafting patterns at a time when fashion was considered as an academic subject at university. Mc Robbie (1998) goes on to say that as a cultural manifestation, the ‘Rag Trade’ (a popular name for the fashion industry in the UK) established strong links
between youth culture and art schools, and this worked in a cultural production. The consideration of fashion as a historical and cultural agency gave rise to the democratisation of fashion. This made fashion a tool of freedom of speech, it gives the wearers the freedom to wear what they want and to make a statement about what they believe in.

Contemporary fashion educators and designers can display a remarkably imperialistic attitude towards fashion as a subject and career. The concern is more about protecting the image and exclusivity of fashion design rather than its health as an industry. McRobbie (1998) considers fashion is lacking in the traditional career pathways of established professions and as fashion is highly fluid and constantly changing, the work force needs to be flexible and multi-skilled to change with it.

Fashion as a discipline has evolved and distinguished itself from other arts and culture placing itself within the university system as an academic subject (McNeil, 2010). There is much tension around this, as fashion has had to differentiate itself from the trade associations of dressmaking to secure an identity of its own in the universities’ art schools. Much of the difference between polytechnic and university courses in fashion design is due to the positioning of institutions around funding regimes. Fashion courses are teaching the manufacturing skills that employers say they require. McRobbie (1998) agrees that fashion degrees differentiate themselves by specialising in discrete aspects of managerial, professional or conceptual skills. Further, the academic study of fashion differs from a vocational study of fashion technology, in that fashion is considered an art and a form of design, whereas the study of fashion technology focuses on manufacturing and production. Degree graduates have a larger career scope, and can use their qualification in many different areas away from the fashion industry (Kozar, 2013). Polytechnic graduates can go on to work as pattern cutters, graders, retailers or wholesalers, however with the decline of local mass production and the rise of foreign manufacture such jobs are scarce (Brown, 2011; Chida, 2011). This is in contrast with university students who choose a fashion degree over a vocational, hands on education. This degree may not get them a job with clothing manufacturers, as degrees tend to be more theoretical.
“Students tend to choose a general degree-level qualification as a risk management strategy, rather than taking up more specialised education, training or apprenticeships in clothing production” (Bill, 2011, p. 14).

### 2.2 The Fashion Design Industry in New Zealand

In August 2002, Fashion Industry New Zealand (FINZ) was established. FINZ identified itself at the outset as proactive in its support of the fashion industry with a mission statement to ensure the future growth and development of the fashion and apparel industry (Fashion Industry New Zealand, 2010). There is a place in the industry for some of the fashion graduates, but not for the numbers currently being produced, according to Chrissy Conyngham, who heads Pumpkin Patch’s 30-strong design and support team (FINZ, 2005). While education policy discourse has promoted the development of broad sets of creative skills in the creative knowledge industries, employers point out that the rag trade could not exist on image alone, and that students need to be taught other things than being creative (Ministry of Education, 2002; Whittle, 2001). Others have noted that the fashion and sewn products industries are vibrant and growing, as evidenced by the number of employment opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational employment</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobs in top 5 occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing machinist</td>
<td>9,421</td>
<td>4,604</td>
<td>-4,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressmaker or Tailor</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales assistant (general)</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>-179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief executive or managing director</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>-131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Competenz is the Industry Training Organisation for textiles and apparel industries in
New Zealand. Table 1. **Competenz current statistics for employment in the NZ fashion industry** displays their statistics for the NZ fashion industry and the historical and current trends in the employment rates of the industry for the 10 years between 2004 and 2014. It can be seen from this table that there has been a significant drop in employment rates across all roles in the NZ fashion industry, with fewer people being employed every year.

According to their web site, Competenz expects apparel and textile industry employees who have been recruited straight from school or have qualifications at levels 2-4 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) to be earning $20k-$35k per annum. A list of the qualifications and programmes available through Competenz can be found in Error! Reference source not found.

Table 2. National programmes and qualifications available through Competenz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National programmes and qualifications available through Competenz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Certificate in Clothing Manufacture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cutting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Elementary sewing skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Embroidery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Certificate in Clothing Manufacture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Basic garment assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commercial sewing skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cutting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Design and pattern making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mechanic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sewing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist strands in material selection and cutting, sewing and garment assembly and garment finishing and inspection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand Certificate in Clothing Manufacture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Certificate in clothing manufacture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mechanic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Careers NZ statistics 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Pay</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Length of training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
<td>$31-$50k</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand development</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costumier</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production planning</td>
<td>$55-$120k</td>
<td>Some, useful in oil and gas industry</td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality assurance</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, Error! Reference source not found. shows that the opportunities are poor for those wanting to enter the fashion industry even though 1-3 years’ worth of training is needed to gain entry into these jobs. Fashion education programmes are popular, as students see them as a way to enter into the industry, and therefore the programmes capitalise on the interest that prospective students have in the sector. When the effects of academic and career factors of textile and apparel students were analysed it was found that the most significant factor was perceived career image (Hodges, 2010). The three top factors for students to enroll in fashion studies were:

- A keen interest in clothing and fashion
- Certain abilities or aptitudes related to clothing and art in general
- The desire for a career that is personally satisfying.
2.3 What are Graduate Attributes?

Graduate attributes can be described as a particular set of knowledge and skills beyond the knowledge that is consumed within a tertiary education setting (Ashman, 2008; Barrie, 2006, 2007, 2012). These are the skills, knowledge, and abilities of tertiary education graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge (Barrie, 2012; Holland, 2006; Muldoon, 2009; Oliver, 2013). They are a natural phenomenon, that being a set of core skills and knowledge that are observed to exist and that institutions instill in their students.

Graduate attributes have received more attention in recent years as tertiary educators discover what their specific attributes are and articulate their purposes (Barrie, 2012; Denson, 2010; Hughes, 2010; Kalfa, 2013). Much has been debated and documented in an attempt to accurately understand what graduate attributes are, and how graduates can attain these skills (Kalfa, 2013). Scholars have argued that the significant change of trajectory recently in the importance of graduate attributes was to do with the focus on employability and how and when graduates are employed or if indeed are they employable after graduating (Jackson, 2013).

Institutions have their set of graduate attributes that they feel are appealing to their particular industries of specialisation. Broadly speaking, institutions produce a standard of graduate who epitomise the qualities of their tertiary facility. Some scholars (Curtis & McKenzie 2001; Sullivan 2001) have argued that since qualifications are currently rendered obsolete quicker than at any other time in history, the acquisition of other skills such as graduate attributes have become essential for people to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

These qualities, skills, and understandings include, and go beyond, the expertise or technical knowledge that forms the core of tertiary education programmes. Regarding the nature and desirability of graduate attributes, which are driven partly by stakeholder expectations, tertiary providers will prepare graduates for the workforce. While providers appear to have accepted their new vocational role in implementing ‘soft skills’ which are a combination of social and emotional intelligence such as people, social, communication, attitude and career skills to students, there is considerable confusion over how these things – graduate skills, attributes or capabilities – should and can be defined and implemented
Critical reflection, self-belief, career identity, lifelong learning, global citizenship, and resilience are underlined in discussions of work-readiness. Developing these characteristics and abilities emphasises the range of interacting forces which undergraduates in particular must engage with during their studies. The industry expects graduates to be work ready and to have these attributes instilled in them before they begin work. The challenge faced by tertiary educators is to transfer the focus to the development of vocationally skilled work-ready graduates who transpire to be self-confident, technically competent, fortified with a variety of social perceptiveness skills and are better prepared for the demanding employment procedures (Brown 2011; Candy, 1991; Chida, 2011).

Similar to industry expectations, students place accountabilities on tertiary education institutions to prepare and nurture them into graduates who are employable and meet the needs of the industry (Feldman & Kaufman, 2004). Barrie (2006) summarises these attributes as precursory (skills and abilities fundamental to learning); complementary (generic skills that complement the learning of disciplinary knowledge); translation (abilities to translate or apply disciplinary knowledge) and enabling (abilities that infuse and enable all scholarly learning and expertise). Coetzee (2014) on the other hand refers to ‘graduateness’ as personal growth and intellectual development of graduates and not specifically a named skill or knowledge. Ashman (2008), Barrie (2012) and Candy & Crebet (1991) stated that many researchers consistently noted that high-level graduate attributes are most useful when used as an opportunity to develop generic skills embedded within the context of curricula knowledge.

It appears that different researchers view graduate attributes differently depending on and the nature of the industry. Error! Reference source not found. summarises some of the common conceptions of graduate attributes.

<p>| Table 4. Definitions of graduate attribute according to authors within their literature. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <strong>Common conceptions of graduate attributes</strong>                 |                  |
| <strong>Author</strong>                                                    | <strong>Conception</strong>   |
|                                                              |                  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Skills/Abilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bowden (2000)</td>
<td>Qualities, skills and understandings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clanchy &amp; Ballard</td>
<td>Thinking, research, communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coetzee (2014)</td>
<td>Interactive, problem solving, continuous learning, enterprising, ethical, Presenting, goal setting, analytical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crebert, Bates, Bell,</td>
<td>Problem solving, analysis, teamwork, leadership, assuming responsibility and making decisions and high ethical standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick &amp; Cragnolini</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De La Harpe (2011)</td>
<td>Critical thinking, written communication, and problem-solving, information literacy, teamwork, and information and communications technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraser &amp; Thomas (2013)</td>
<td>Critical thinking, information literacy, history disciplinary expertise, written communication, respect for individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green, Hammer &amp; Star</td>
<td>Undefined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James (2004)</td>
<td>Holistic transparent environment is purposely teaching, independent learning, Critical analysis, intellectual development, creativity, self-confidence, oral and written skills, teamwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavanagh (2008)</td>
<td>Technical expertise, oral and written communication skills, analytical and problem-solving skills and appreciative skills including decision-making and critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manauthanga (2009)</td>
<td>Leadership, commercialization, understanding of IT issues, teamwork, ethical and social understanding, critical judgment, analytical skills, Independence, creativity, effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
communication, in depth knowledge.


Oliver (2013) Knowledge, thinking, information, communication and technology, learning to learn, international outlook, cultural understanding, professional skills.


Tran (2014) Communication skills, teamwork and personal skills, initiative and being proactive.


2.4 Why are institutions of higher education concerned with graduate attributes?

Graduate attributes can be considered to be some of the critical outcomes of tertiary education. Tertiary institutions are judged by the extent to which their graduates can achieve and gain employment within a broad range of industries. Kavanagh (2008) states that the values, knowledge, and skills that are considered to be graduate attributes are immensely useful, and indeed necessary to succeed, in the diverse and changing workplace. For instance, successful workers must be able to continuously adapt to technologies and changing work environments and universities must remove the division between themselves and the demands of the world of work to enable graduates to adapt.

Others noted that graduate attributes have more to do with adaptability, personality and lifelong learning than the technical knowledge that is gained coming out of university or polytechnic (Bridgstock, 2009). Further, the literature emphasises that graduates need the ability to be able to keep learning, and have the understanding that learning is a lifelong skill (Opengart & Short, 2002). Graduate attributes that reward students with lifelong learning
ensure that once students graduate, they can consistently adapt and learn during their employment.

An alignment between graduate attributes, employability, and lifelong, self-directed learning is well researched and accepted, with employers, professional and industry groups, governments, and students all reinforcing the need for universities to produce graduates with the attributes required for work and life. Educators should be focused on graduate attributes as employability assets in higher education (Barrie, 2006; Bridgstock, 2009; Candy & Crebet, 1991; Crebert, et al. 2004; Harvey, 2003; Holland, 2006; Medlin, Graves, & McGowan, 2003; McQuaid, 2005; Tran, 2013). Tertiary providers should be developing students into well-educated persons who are both employable and capable of contributing to the workplace and society. Graduates equipped with these assets are more likely to be valued by employers. Some have argued that it is unrealistic for universities to guarantee that graduates will possess the necessary graduate attributes to meet the demands of employers (Ballard & Clanchy, 1995) and that higher education institutions should only guarantee that students have had the opportunity to develop these attributes and abilities during undergraduate study.

2.5 Graduate attributes for fashion design

Graduate attributes are crucial to the success of graduates in obtaining and keeping employment within their chosen industry. Literature by Ashman, (2008); Barrie, (2006,2007); Clanchy, (1995); Denson, (2010); Fraser, (2013); Kalfa, (2013); Thompson, (2008) identifies a number of shared graduate attributes including: critical thinking, communication both written and oral, problem solving, information and technology literacy and an ability to continuously learn on the job (lifelong learning). Graduates who are prepared to find out and spend time and effort in developing particular characteristics for their chosen industry will have a competitive edge when applying for job vacancies and increase their career prospects (Nabi, 1999).

With more and more people coming into the global workforce from tertiary education, and specifically from the fashion education, there is more competition for employees, and employers have a wider degree of freedom in identifying specific graduate skills (Nabi, 1999; Nicolescu, 2009; Wickramasinghe, 2010). Leith, et al. (2011) surveyed fashion graduates and
identified some outstanding graduate attributes for fashion design which include the following:

- Communication.
- Presentation.
- Attitude, business acumen, talent.

The core graduate attributes for fashion graduates include the ability to interact with the business/industry/world, adaptability and flexibility to engage in new and unknown design practices.

### 2.6 How do graduates attain these attributes?

Every year, industry demands education providers supply them with graduates who can demonstrate higher levels of skills and who are flexible and adaptive. The industry expects graduates who are willing to learn on the job, who are team players, and technically competent and committed to excellence (Chida, 2011; McNeil, 2010). Though these expectations of graduate attributes are mirrored across industries, different levels of tertiary education offer varying levels of these graduate attributes – for example, a graduate of a certificate level polytechnic qualification will graduate with different set of graduate attributes than a Ph.D. graduate from a university.

There have been many studies examining what exactly constitutes a graduate attribute as compared with a skill or a level of knowledge. For instance, much work has been done to translate what graduate attributes are, where they are learned from and why they are needed in the workplace (Barnett, 1997; Barrie, 2006; Bowden, 2000; Bridgstock, 2009).

Graduate attributes are commonly referred to as “a particular set of knowledge and skills beyond the knowledge learned”.

A common criticism of universities is that graduates are unemployable and have a lack of preparation for the workforce (Candy, 1991; Jackling, 2009). This is considered to be as a result of a lack of broad, generic skills taught or picked up through higher education (Jackling, 2009; Jackson, 2013; Radermacher, 2013).

In the most general sense, there appears to be a gap between tertiary education and the expectations of the employment market, with industry assuming that there is a smooth transfer for graduates from higher education into a successful position in the workplace. For graduate-
level positions there is a disparity between industry needs and higher education provision and bridging this gap would take an alignment of the expectations of students, educators, and employers (Jackson, 2013; Radermacher, 2013). Teachers should be encouraged to prepare students for the workplace by instilling attributes into the students, similar to an apprenticeship education (Allen, 2013; Tran, 2014).

A person’s employability skills are developed throughout their working life, and this is why employers need to view the process of developing employability skills as a workforce issue (Allen, 2013; Martin, 2005; Tchibozo, 2013). Companies cannot expect university graduates to have all the skills and knowledge of a seasoned worker. Further, it takes time and effort for graduates to put together the knowledge and expertise from tertiary education into a working context. There will be a transitional period where the employer trains the graduate for the position, building on their knowledge and skills and moulding them into a productive employee (Holmes, 2013; Stevens, 2013; Candy, 1991; Artess, 2011). This would result in the graduate being turned into a high performing employee, but this would take time, which means there would be an initial period where performance would be suboptimal (Yorke, 2004).

The transition from higher education to employment requires a settling in period, and the transition from secondary education to an apprenticeship would also require a period of transition. Any transition can be difficult, especially when the transition is from a lower level to a higher one and employers should expect an initial drop in performance and make allowances for it (Tchibozo, 2013).

Often, however, fashion design graduates are expected to fit into the business quickly and efficiently with little consideration given to this initial period. For graduates, the transition from higher education into the workforce is the process by which they learn the knowledge particular to that workplace.

### 2.7 Student expectations

Students pursue studies in higher education to gain skills needed for a successful career. Tertiary institutions offering fashion design programmes often tell students of the challenges of gaining employment after graduating from fashion design programs because of the
competitive nature of the industry (Brown & Chida, 2011; McRobbie, 1998; Nicolescu, 2009).

However, students would not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the challenges of gaining a career in the fashion industry until they graduate and start looking for employment (McRobbie, 2009).

If graduates do gain employment, they have expectations about their job and about promotions, salary, and the type of work. They also have expectations about their skills, time, and involvement. (Nicolescu, 2009; Reed, 1998; Smith, 2004). According to Smith (2004) fashion design students have the following expectations:

- Reward and benefit expectations
- Personal expectations
- Diversity and cultural expectations
- Educational and career expectations
- Job-related expectations
- Employer expectations
- Ethical and social responsibility expectations.

An additional source of student and graduate expectations that is particular to the fashion industry is the powerful imagery created by the media. Many reality fashion designer TV shows portray the industry as being very glamorous, and these images help promote the expectation that gaining accolades immediately after graduation is possible. Furthermore, this positive display leads many graduates to view fashion design programmes as the route to attaining prestigious positions. Tertiary institutions, and the industry itself, play a role in propagating these images as they exploit stories of the perfect student or describe how studying with that particular tertiary provider will lead to your dream job. The fashion industry portrays itself as a most glamorous industry and of high prestige to encourage people to buy the latest piece of fashion (Dyer, 1986).

2.8 Industry expectations

At the same time, employers have their requirements for graduates of higher education institutions, and ideally, their skill needs should coincide with the capacities and competencies developed by individuals who graduate from higher education programmes. Often gaps are
identified between the skills of graduates and those expectations from the industry of graduates which can prevent them from succeeding within their chosen career (Radermacher, 2013). Within the fashion industry, employers report that tertiary institutions are producing too many graduates with general fashion design degrees and too few people with high level specialist skills such as pattern making and sample machining (Bill, 2011). This is backed up by an independent study of New Zealand’s fashion and apparel sector which was commissioned by Fashion Industry New Zealand (FINZ) in 2005. The survey found that 65% of the industry that were surveyed were concerned that fashion schools were not adequately aligned with industry needs. It was also found that the higher education system failed to adequately prepare graduates for the realities of the workplace. The FINZ report therefore supports the theory that there is too much of a gap between the classroom and the workroom.

2.9 Challenges of gaining and retaining employment

There are three conditions which need to be in place for all expectations to be met and those expectations are often the primary motivations for people to engage in a particular activity. According to Vroom (1964) those three conditions are:

1. **Valence** – value of obtaining the goal. Students motivation for studying is at the beginning the end goal in mind, the qualification. As they are studying it will change to knowledge or a particular skill set they can obtain.

2. **Instrumentality** – connection of reward and success. Students want to know what they have to do to pass the programme, to be successful. This should be laid out transparently for them.

3. **Expectancy** – perceived probability of success. Students require feedback and direction, so they can become successful.

Students use tertiary education as a way to prepare themselves to enter a career or a place of work with the skills necessary for that job. However, the changing face of the industry now requires graduates to not only possess the skills and knowledge needed for their particular field, but also attributes such as attitude, loyalty, excellent communication skills, teamwork and great personal skills (Barrie, 2006; Clanchy, 1995; De La Harpe, 2011; James, Lefoe &
Hadi 2004; Manauthanga, Pitt, Critchley, 2009; Muldoon, 2009; Tran, 2014; Wickramasinghe & Perera, 2010). Furthermore, according to Colin, (2005); Lindsay, (2009) and McQuaid, (2005) the way tertiary institutions are structured means that the transition from education into the workplace is something individual graduates need to negotiate themselves and it is ultimately up to them to find jobs and to stay employable in the job market (Nicolescu, 2009).

Educators might provide unsubstantiated levels of education; but there is often little to no education on gaining and retaining employment after education. This is unless the student seeks it either through the tertiary providers or their place of work. Gaining a higher education qualification does not equal a job or a start in a new career, it is merely a start in that direction. Obtaining employment or a career requires even more momentum forward and learning about the subject.

Fashion design graduates face the challenge to get jobs and to become skilled through their employer, to their employer’s standard. This can be through unpaid internships or work experience to gain an advantage over other fashion industry job seekers (Allen, 2013). McRobbie (2004) describes the ‘passionate attachment’ creative fashion workers have for their jobs and takes into account that the ideal creative worker is willing to do anything for the love of their work, including working overtime or for free. This is a type of disciplinary mechanism, where the pleasures of work autonomy, creativity and freedom of expression enable a strengthening of the labour market and creates a normalisation of working conditions.
3. CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in the study. It describes the context in which the study was undertaken and the ontological and epistemological stance of the author. The chapter also presents the research questions and the research design, methods and sampling strategy, and participants involved in the study. Limitations associated with approaches and methods employed in the research are also discussed.

3.1 Positionality of the author

The position of the author (i.e. personal and professional commitments) will inevitably impact on their interactions with individuals and influence their viewpoint. This is mitigated by honest self-reflection on how this position may have affected interactions with the participants during the data collection and analysis. Bias is always present in any piece of research and starts with the choice of topic, as the researcher will naturally select something based on their beliefs and interests and what they think is important. It is not possible for a researcher to come into any research with an empty mind, but it is important to have a mindset which is open enough to understand and deal with any potential bias when interpreting data. I have attempted to minimise the impact of my bias by reviewing a broad range of literature (some of whom I agree with and some I do not) and taking it all into careful consideration. I have deliberately sought out alternative interpretations in the literature, especially if the findings have confirmed my points of view, in an attempt to demonstrate balance.

I became interested in graduate attributes while tutoring the Diploma in fashion design at NZIFT. It became clear that graduates were not remaining within the industry once they had graduated and been found their first graduate job. This led the researcher to question whether it was the industry, skills, knowledge or attitude of the graduates that made the graduates leave the industry.

At the beginning of this study I read the literature about graduate attributes to establish what it was I was looking for and if indeed it was graduate attributes at all. I needed to create a lens to determine the viewpoint and understand the position which many educators had taken
when studying graduate attributes, and how they valued them. I selected my data collection sampling pool as all the students who had passed through my classroom during the time I taught the Diploma in Fashion Design.

The diploma year at NZIFT is the last of three programmes offered after which graduates go out into the workforce or on to further study. I thought I would approach all the graduates I had taught on the diploma as I had spent a lot of time with them, we knew each other very well and therefore they would be more likely to help. The students trusted me and understood that the research was about them and their experiences.

My initial hypothesis was that the sample subjects were dropping out of the industry because they had been poorly prepared for the reality of the workforce. I presupposed that they had been protected from the harsh realities of the industry by being handed their first job – being escorted to interviews and being helped to write their CVs – and being given an unrealistic view of the fashion industry which left them unprepared for the realities. However, as the survey samples came back, it became apparent that this was not the case.

I began this research with some areas of concern. First, I wanted to understand the implications that NZIFT’s vocational fashion design programme had in the workplace and the fashion industry. Second, I wanted to understand the trajectory of the graduates being surveyed, that is, why they signed up to the programme, where they are now, and why. Third, I wanted to identify how and what the students should be learning during their fashion design course – what the industry wants, what the graduates need, and how to support the learners and stakeholders in fashion education.

3.2 Interpretive paradigm

Interpretive positions are founded on the general belief that reality is socially constructed and fluid – that what we know is always negotiated within cultures, social settings, and relationship with other people (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). In the interpretive paradigm, the researcher’s values are fundamental in all phases of the research process, and all findings or knowledge claims are created as the investigation proceeds. Therefore, interpretations are based on one particular moment in time and can change. Accordingly, the soundness of truth cannot be substantiated in an unprejudiced reality and what is taken to be true is negotiated into what can be multiple claims to knowledge, all of which may be valid.
3.3 Ontology of this research

Through an interpretive paradigm I have taken an anti-positivist stance. According to (Dogan, 2013) anti-positivists believe that social reality and the world are relative. This approach is used to view the data collected through the experiences of the individuals. This aligns with much previous research in this field, which is concerned with people’s feelings, attitudes, and beliefs. Therefore, this is an interpretive stance, as there are some different approaches and it focuses on the perceived experiences of individuals. As an interpretivist, I recognise that people may experience the same reality differently and one hypothesis cannot explain all situations. Therefore, I am interested in developing a range of theories to explain different realities rather than proving a single ill-fitting hypothesis that involves many different individuals. This qualitative research aims to generate theories, rather than verify existing theories, and is concerned with discovery rather than proof. I attempt to collect data and identify the variables in play without interfering or trying to control those variables. Data have been collected through surveys and group conversations on a social media platform, and the researcher has used her values, knowledge, and experience to interpret the results. While this methodology is qualitative in nature, it was fine-tuned using a Likert scale question and answer survey which produced numbers that could be analysed using quantitative methods. This method of analysing qualitative data in a quantitative form provided the statements with a numeric a descriptor of their qualitative feelings and perceptions. As people’s opinions are assessed there will be a variation in how they have interpreted and understood the questions being asked.

3.4 Research design

Qualitative method data collection is derived from personal experiences and opinions of the sample group being studied (Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1988; Eisner, 1991). Theory stems from the data, and because the data is from the subject’s personal experience, the research is about people for people. Regardless of the nature of the theory, its origin is in the results of the data, and academic rigour and integrity must be upheld during its analysis and
reporting. In this study, data were collected in a manner appropriate to the topic being researched and reported accurately while the author’s self-reflection and impartiality remain paramount. This study was conducted using an exploratory research approach. Exploratory research fundamentally perceives that the problem does not exist until it is examined and identified, which in this case necessitated secondary research.

**Methods and procedures**

The primary data collection strategy was to use an online survey. This allowed a range of research questions and involved collecting data from graduates to identify the key issues relating to the research questions. Purposive sampling was used where all diploma graduates of Wellington NZIFT were selected. Although not all responded, this exploratory study provided significant insight into the situation at large for all 63 graduates of Wellington NZIFT Diploma programme (2010-2014).

The procedures of data collection involved inviting graduates who were willing to converse about their experiences to feel that they had a choice as to whether they participated, rather than feeling that they were being led into any discussions, or that the ‘owed’ me the time and benefit of their opinions and experiences. The data collection design was to send out invitations via messaging on Facebook with a friendly hello and informal request for participation.

Initially, all 63 diploma graduates of NZIFT were identified as potential participants, although I only managed to successfully contact 61 of the 63.

I contacted them all through Facebook and started a private Facebook group for them to join if they wished. An interview guide with closed-ended and open-ended questions was developed and put online in the Facebook group. This approach is in line with an asynchronous online interviewing method for collecting data (James & Busher, 2009; Silverman, 2016). The link to the survey had a response rate 73% of those initially invited responded (61 invited and 74% responded of the 61, meaning 45 responded). Data were coded into sections of questions and then ordered into group percentages which showed how many out of the sample group had answered which question from the Likert scale. This process was also performed on any accompanying comments. This formed an overview of the
consensus of graduate viewpoints and helped direct the informed questions which were asked via the Facebook page.

These issues were devised to gain some more insight into why the graduates chose to study fashion design and whether their expectations were matched by the reality of studying fashion design with NZIFT. Once the questions were answered, the data and comments were again collected, coded, and ordered and percentages were assigned.

**Figure 1. Message to graduates**

‘Hope you are well ‘smile emoticon’ Just a little message as I am still studying and are conducting a survey on all my Diploma graduates just to get some honest feedback that I can put into my Thesis. If you have some spare time, I would love it if you could fill in the survey. You can do as much or little of it as you like. I have started a diploma graduate group here: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/1519793555015413/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1519793555015413/) and the study are here: [http://hedge.otago.ac.nz/forms/form/4sa04coQmbz](http://hedge.otago.ac.nz/forms/form/4sa04coQmbz) I would love to know what you have been up to! It's totally anonymous by the way- even I won't know who has written what!’

The instant messaging mechanism on Facebook enabled me to see that all messages were read, although some chose not to respond. This was to be expected and is an extension of their freedom to choose whether or not to participate. The graduates who did respond, however, did so wholeheartedly and were extremely helpful. It is worth mentioning here that although the survey was anonymous, the instant messaging mechanism on the Facebook page required that a user must use their avatar to send messages and I could identify people through their avatar.

**Participants and data Analysis**

Out of the 61 contactable graduates, 45 graduates responded and joined the Facebook group ‘NZIFT Wellington Diploma graduates’ where they were linked into the online survey and given an explanation of the research and data collection that I was involved in. From these 45 graduates, 14 completed the online survey.
Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics (frequency, and percentage) on the survey data. Responses to open-ended questions were analysed thematically, using a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006). This approach involved reading responses to a particular question and establishing a limited number of categories based on the theme of the closed-ended questions. First, initial codes were identified and then organised into meaningful segments of text from which themes were identified around the questions. Themes were then divided into two groups: overt or manifest (open-ended) themes based on the questions asked and latent or emergent themes (closed-ended). In order to achieve accuracy and consistency, the themes were reviewed and refined. Each theme was described, discussed and followed by relevant quotations. The following data is from the online survey, some participants have responded quite animatedly using emoji’s and conversational speak.

The majority (92.9%, 13) identified as female and (7.1%, 1) as male. Participants identified with two main ethnicities, with the majority identifying as New Zealand European (100%, 14) and also New Zealand Maori (23.1%, 3). About (92.9%, 13) indicated that their first language was English and (7.1%, 1) other.

The survey can be found in the appendices 8.2.
4. CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Fashion graduates were motivated to study the NZIFT fashion design programmes for a number of reasons, including reputation of the school, convenient location, and recommendations from family, friends and other graduates of the school. However, their initial attraction to the industry stems from the glitz and glamour that is portrayed in the media which appears to be a global phenomenon, not just isolated to NZIFT. All graduates stated that they had some sort of personal interest in designing and creating garments for themselves or others, perhaps being unable to find the right sort of clothing in the shops for their stature, or believing that they could produce their own clothes with higher quality and better price points than the shops. Graduates felt confident in some area of the fashion development process before they joined the programme and felt well informed about the diploma programme before enrolling.

The majority of graduates expected to be a pattern maker or seamstress when they graduated, however it is not a realistic career expectation as clothing in New Zealand is frequently manufactured off shore from start to finish and there is a lack of these sorts of jobs in New Zealand. It would seem fair for graduates to expect to perform either of these roles as that was the focus of the majority of learning they did during their two years at NZIFT. When reality did not align with these expectations it left a lot of the graduates feeling that they should have studied something else that may have provided more potential for meaningful employment. There was a mix, where some graduates felt that their time at NZIFT was instrumental to their success in the fashion industry and some, who had not been able to find related work, felt that the other skills they learnt such as work ethic, problem solving skills and time management, gave them confidence to go onto other career choices or further study. The majority felt they were better people after they had finished their programme and that the transfer of knowledge from the strict and detailed creating of garments helped them to be more detailed in life as well. Many of them did, however, feel that they were missing computer skills and specialist machinery skills which they needed within the industry. Graduates felt that the student centered approach to teaching that was used by their tutors helped make the programme interesting and easy to learn. The majority of graduates felt a huge amount of
support had been provided by the tutoring staff, which helped them in their personal growth as well as helping them to achieve high levels of skill. There are many reasons for graduates not having successfully broken into the industry or remaining in the industry for just a short time. The misalignment between their expectations and the reality of the fashion industry left some graduates feeling disappointed. The fashion industry itself is not as glamorous as the media depicts and the challenges of finding employment opportunities for fashion design graduates is difficult globally due to the constant evolution of the fashion design industry which the education sector is not keeping pace with. Through vocational programmes such as apprenticeships, or on-the-job training, the gap between student and industry expectations would become smaller and expectations would be better managed.

4.1 Motivation to study fashion design

Globally, fashion design is one of the most attractive career choices for many younger people as it is perceived as being a glamorous and exciting career. Students who enroll in a fashion design programme often have certain expectations of what they want to become after their graduation. Such expectations are influenced by their perception of the fashion industry. One participant mentioned that they pursued a diploma in fashion design because of the exciting nature of the industry; another student saw fashion as a way of life and was eager to contribute to that endeavour.

However, students are motivated by different reasons to pursue fashion design studies. In the research presented in this thesis participants mentioned the reputation of the school as the most frequent reason for going to fashion design school (see Error! Reference source not found.).

Table 5. NZIFT graduate’s motivation to study fashion design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The reputation of the school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Personal interest

Participants in the study also talked about personal motivators for enrolling in the fashion design programme with a passion for sewing and designing being a key factor in enticing them into studying fashion design in the first place. These graduates believed that after finishing the fashion diploma programme they could make clothes that were superior to those obtained from stores, for both themselves and others. This appeared to be the primary focus for them to enrol in the FDP.

“I always loved sewing and designing, and I am good at it (smile emoticon.”)

“I'm a bit short (shocking!) And shopping for clothes is a pain: I wanted to be able to make my own.”

“I wanted to be a fashion designer; I felt it was a great way to apply my creativity.”

Participants saw a need for personal development and creativity and decided that a fashion design programme would nurture their skills. Others were motivated by the more altruistic aim of creating artifacts for themselves and similar others.

“I was studying art and kept sewing my projects; then I saw the ad for fashion tech in a magazine.”

“I wanted to make my own patterns because I didn't like anything in the shops and they never fitted correctly.”
4.3 Incidental endeavour

Some mentioned that they were attracted by the atmosphere of the school and immediately enrolled, while some reported that they were motivated to explore and improve their skills in costume design and development.

“I had intentions of studying fashion until I went and had a look at Fashion Tech with [name withheld for privacy reasons] who showed me around at the time was so lovely, and it looked like heaps of fun, so that was why I decided to go”.

“I knew Fashion tech existed because my previous course was in the same building. So basically, I wanted to get better at sewing and learn how to make patterns and then I got more into the fashion side of things as time went on (: I never actually intended to do the Diploma when I first started but I'm glad I did.”

Some participants reported they incidentally enrolled in the Diploma in Fashion Design. They developed an interest after realising they wanted to advance their artistic skills and creativity. It is more likely that this incidental encounter is more personal and professional development rather than career pursuit.

4.4 Family influence

One graduate who participated in the survey, stated that their sibling, who was a current student, influenced them into starting the same programme. The graduate knew it was going to be of interest to them before they even began, as the programme had been described to them in detail by their sibling.

“I had a sister doing it and I took fashion as a subject all throughout college, and it was mainly the only class I went to so I knew it was ma jam (smile emoticon.)”

It is not uncommon for family members to influence each other in the pursuit of similar educational pathways. The family has always been instrumental in socialising certain
individuals to follow desirable learning and career pathways. It serves as a role model in setting standards and examples for others.

4.5 Expected type of career after graduation

The essential knowledge acquired through studying at NZIFT consists of sewing and patternmaking. Students spend most of their day undertaking equal amounts of time in these tasks. Therefore, students are keen to convey this learning into employment. Although student’s expectations and the realities of the workforce do not align the students do recognise that designing is a challenging task and there are not many jobs out there for them doing this.

Figure 1. Expected type of career after graduation

4.6 Perception of the fashion design Programme

The overarching goal of the Diploma in Fashion Design at NZIFT is to prepare students primarily to become professionals in the fashion industry. Students were expected to learn the practical skills necessary to be able to assume a variety of roles within the fashion industry. The curriculum progresses from introductory level, where students are supported through each task, to independent study, where third-year fashion students are able to
complete a collection of garments, manage timeframes and produce a digital portfolio. The students were taught new skills in the following general sequence:

- A general overview of the skill (task) and where it fits in within the industry.
- A demonstration of that skill by the tutor.
- A workshop session to practice that skill with the tutors help/comments with an exemplar to work from.
- A full version of the skill pre-assessment with comments and help from the tutor.
- An assessment of that skill with questions answered by the tutor with an exemplar provided and full instructions.
- A chance to hand in this work for formative feedback.
- A final submission of the work for official feedback with an allowance for feedback and re-hand in twice after that.

The programmes offered by NZIFT are based on a competency based learning- model (CBL). Students must achieve the equivalent of an A+, or 100% pass mark, although there is no pass mark system or grade assigned. CBL is an outcome focussed assessment model which is neither “unique nor earth shattering” (Bowden, 2004). It is more often used successfully in learning technical skills rather than theoretical learning. CBLs motivation to focus on the outcome of educational programmes is an outdated and irrelevant way of teaching students which demands that all students must be working at 100% accuracy at assessment stage (Guthrie, 2009). Students work must be the same or better as the exemplar to pass as there is only competent (C) or not yet competent (NYC). NYC means that the student can attempt the assessment again at any time they feel ready, as long as they feel confident enough to pass the required standard, and the student is evaluated repeatedly on their individual competency at a particular task. Only once the student has mastered it are they assessed and then they move on to the next task. This allows the student to work and take the time to learn particular areas that they struggle with. Voorhees (2001) writes that competency-based learning models rely on an assessment that is easily measurable or comparable. The advantage for students of these models are that it makes it very clear what they need to know and do because the knowledge can be easily described and measured. Competency based models allow the student to return
to one or all of the skills that have not successfully achieved, rather than facing the prospect of repeating the entire programme.

Focusing purely on the outcome of the assessment, and not the learners approach to the assessment and the work leading up to the gaining of the knowledge, CBL tends to measure the ability for the student to hold onto enough information long enough to ‘get through’ the assessment (Guthrie, 2009). Betts and Smith (1998) agree that the popularity of competency-based systems is making education watered down and prescriptive.

As many as (93.3%, 12) participants reported that they completed their Diploma in Fashion Design. A majority (72%, 10) indicated that they were aware of the standard of work expected during their study programme. Further data obtained through social media (Facebook) revealed various themes associated with why participants enrolled in the Diploma in Fashion Design. These included the image of the industry, personal interests, individual endeavours to seek a career path in what seems attractive, and family influence.

Almost half (42.9%, 6) of those who participated said they chose to study at NZIFT because of its reputation and the convenience to where they lived/wanted to live. Most participants (71.4%, 10) in the study were satisfied with their learning experience in the diploma. The majority of the participants (85.7%, 12) indicated that they enroled in the diploma to improve their employment prospects, (78.6%, 11) over two-thirds were attracted to the programme because of their own personal interests and (71.4%, 10) said they joined the programme to advance their career path. 64.4% (9) enrolled into the diploma programme to enable them to progress to a higher-level qualification, (42.9%, 6) wanted to gain a professional qualification and (28.6%, 4) studied at diploma level as a requirement to enter a particular profession.

The majority (78.6%, 11) of graduates found the programme intellectually stimulating, and others (92.8%, 10) said that they felt completing the programme was worthwhile. Participants (64.2%, 9) found some balance between abstract and practical knowledge in the content of the subjects taught. Participants (50%) also commented on the intellectual calibre of the programme. They indicated that succeeding in the programme required much more than memorising materials presented to them (50%), instead, it required intellectual ability, and cognitive design skills, and (64%, 9) found the programme motivating.
A large percentage of graduates (92.8%, 13) felt that the programme taught them autonomy in planning their work.

More than three-quarters of participants (78.6%, 11) felt that they were provided with clear learning pathways when they were enrolled into the programme. A majority (71%, 10) of participants also said that they would recommend the NZ Institute of Fashion and Technology to other students as a great place to study, however, finding a job in the industry proved to be tougher for some, and they recommend the programme with trepidation.

4.7 Career uncertainty in the industry

The increasing number of enrolments in fashion design programmes is not met by equally increasing career opportunities for most fashion design graduates. While students seem to enjoy studying fashion design, challenges finding employment afterwards means that society’s ever-increasing demand for “designed” objects has led to unprecedented rates of production and consumption.

“The programme itself was great it made everyone work hard and put in 100% effort. I learned a lot and met a lot of friendly people. It was a great experience. If I knew how hard it was going to be getting a full-time job in the industry, I probably would have studied something else though.”

Some graduates found that the computer skills component to be the most exciting area of learning, although they found it difficult to find employment with the skills attained from this particular programme.

“The highlight of my time in diploma was learning PAD (Computer Aided Design system); I found a real enjoyment in the process of working within PAD and would have loved to be able to take this skill into the workplace or find a role working in PAD.”
4.8 Institutional limitation to creativity

One student felt that the administrative staff (“head office”) of NZIFT had interfered with their ability to express themselves creatively due to the rather narrow scope in the world of fashion which those staff held. Another found that the administrative staff were not understanding of them and their attendance while they were sick was a major factor in them passing the programme.

“I had a lot of conflict on a personal level with head office as my goal and visions for my work and how I wanted to design did not meet with their very narrow scope on what was desired in the industry.”

“Head office did not particularly understand the issues I was facing, and there was always the immense pressure of attendance being the most important factor in passing the course…..”

4.9 Vital start

One student writes enthusiastically how the diploma course, in particular, was necessary to their start in the industry and found that being challenged gave them the confidence to think a different way.

“Completing the Diploma course was essential to the start of my career in the NZ fashion industry having challenges once in a while e.g. Resend, and Red Cross made me think outside the box.”

4.10 Fostering networks

One student discovered that positioning themselves to do the hard work during the diploma programme rewarded them with magnificent technical skills that are very valuable and propelled them effectively into the industry.

“It is a good Launchpad to get into the industry. The ability to make contacts is high if you're willing to put in the work on your end and the technical skills are very valuable.”
4.11 Programme changes

One student remarks that they had a great time in the diploma programme however they would no longer recommend the programme as it has changed, tutors have left, and it is longer and more expensive now.

“It was awesome!!!! And I always highly recommend doing it!!!! However maybe not so much now that a lot of the original tutors are no longer there and the programmes are now longer and more expensive.”

4.12 Programme structure

One student writes about the class size as being too big to gain the attention from the tutor they required. They felt that there wasn’t enough structure to the computer work and it wasn’t stimulating enough for them.

“Loved the programme! A few things I were a bit iffy about. I found the work of equipment was a bit jumbled and over the place. I think this was down to class size. I think I would have liked it more if it was a smaller class (like the one teacher ones that were happening when I was in the CGT class). I would have like there to have been more covered on real aspects of designing. I felt it was more of an 'advanced sewing class' than a fashion design diploma as the only real fashion design part was the end of year mini range which I felt we were given too much info on 'how' to design (not that it was an issue for me personally though).”

Reflecting on the acquisition of skills, participants 86% (12) said that they gained problem-solving skills. Over three quarters (78.2%, 10) mentioned that diploma helped sharpen their analytical and design skills. In an attempt to examine team skills, participants (71.5%, 10) said that the programme enabled them to develop the ability to work in teams. Confidence is an important graduate attribute within the fashion industry, participants reported
that they felt more confident about tackling unfamiliar problems in the workplace as the result of the programme. Participants mostly felt that they gained better written and verbal communication skills after attending the programme (42.9%, 6).

Participants mentioned they experienced student-centered quality teaching from the tutoring staff on the programme who encouraged and supported them during their studies (84.6%, 11). Many (85.8%, 12) agreed their tutors in the programme gave them helpful feedback on how they were going. Furthermore, all (100%, 14) said they received regular feedback, and all agreed that their tutors were extremely good at explaining things, and that the tutors worked hard to make their subjects interesting and relevant (92.9%, 13). Over two-thirds said that academic advising in the diploma programme was of a high standard. A majority of graduates (93.2%, 13) said that the diploma programme had described how they would be able to apply the knowledge they acquired from the Diploma in Fashion Design to their work.

Participants who felt supported revealed many testimonials about the programme and the support they received.

4.13 Personal understanding

Several students found that the tutors understood them and helped them. They felt that having the tutors support helped them through difficult times.

“Support from my tutors was very important to my overall ability to complete the course. I had to balance my work alongside the fact that I was very unwell both physically and mentally throughout the course. My tutor’s understanding and support were the only things that enabled me to get to the end.”

“The feedback and support I received from [name removed] during my studies were instrumental in my success, and I am very grateful she was my tutor.”
4.14 Personal growth

One student found that completing their diploma programme made them a better person for the workforce. They found that the tutor’s experiences in the industry helped them better prepare for what lay ahead

“All feedback was highly regarded and accepted as making me be a better person when I eventually was to leave to go into the workforce. The tutors were fantastic, each having their experiences in the industry, some good and some not so well!”

A couple of participants reported mixed experience about the support they received. Some felt others in the class were receiving more help than them. They felt favouritism towards other students but did have an appreciation of the tutors trying to keep everybody happy. However, they also mentioned fulfilled experience. Furthermore, they stated that having one tutor per class who is in charge of teaching all of the skills and attributes relevant to the industry for a full year is a difficult predicament. It means that the students are in class with lessons eight hours a day for five days of the week with one tutor.

4.15 Inequality in teaching approach

Two graduates found that they were not favoured by the tutors teaching the diploma programme and this made it difficult for them to get through the end of the programme. They found there was a hierarchy and other students were favoured more and had an easier time because of it.

“I thought the teachers were great most of the time. Near the end, I started to get more annoyed with one of them in particular. I felt like I was no longer important as a student and that I was just a constant annoyance. I chose to ignore it thought because I was nearly finished, so it didn't bother me too much. As a whole, though there was a lot of help and support, the teachers always had time for my questions and helped me to work out how to pattern things or how to do things, which I definitely appreciated.” (Respondent 5)
“I received a reasonable amount of support during my time. There were definitely moments there where my tutors were there for me when I needed it. However there were other times where I felt there was a favouritism (sic) hierarchy and I ended up having to look after my interests because good opportunities were being given to those who were squandering them. But with time and perspective, I have come to realise that perhaps the tutors could see a waning lack of interest in those people and were trying to reignite their passion. Which is admirable.”

(Respondent 6)

4.16 Lack of support

One participant (14%, 1) felt unsupported and expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of contact time, feeling they were left on their own a lot of the time.

“I think overall the support did lack a little. Sometimes it felt like you were left up to your own a lot of the time, and due to the larger class size could be hard to get tutor feedback.”

All participants mentioned that they intended to use the Diploma in Fashion Design in some professional way. Participants also stated that enrolling into the diploma was a vehicle to better employment prospects. Others indicated that they undertook the diploma to help them gain access to a university education.

4.17 Experience in the workplace after a year of graduation

Participants reported they went to various jobs after graduation. Some pursued further studies, one participant worked as a mechanic, and another one went on to work with New Zealand Police Services.
“I also worked customer service at a video store for a time, but they had unreasonable expectations of their staff, and as such, I left. Turnover of staff since I left is still high.”

“I have also completed a Certificate in Small Business Management as I wanted to try to adapt my sewing skills into being able to provide a job for myself, seeing as the industry is not in a position in which many jobs are available. This study was despite the fact that I actively do not want to run my own business but this is the only option I am left feeling open to me with my qualifications.”

Some graduates went to work in retail business, brewery industry and only 4 of the 14 (25.8%) went to pursue design work and teaching fashion design. One graduate started working for themselves, but they did not feel skilled enough or ready to be able to follow this through successfully.

“Since graduating, I have done some alterations and design under my name, as well as teaching at some community sewing courses. I loved the teaching, and it is an area I would like to focus in. However, I don’t feel skilled enough to organize this type of work on my own. I had really positive feedback from the people I used to work for and with my students.”

It seems that Diploma in Fashion Design graduates are often employed in a different capacity and in various sectors other than the fashion industry. Even though they appear to have come out of their tertiary education with skills and knowledge for the industry, there does not appear to be much of an industry to support them. Only 28.5% of graduates surveyed are actively pursuing a career in the fashion industry. Some students felt they needed to be re-educated even further and have gone on to study completely different subjects where they hope there will be a bigger industry and more jobs after they graduate.
4.18 Employers with unreasonable expectations

One graduate found their first employer in the fashion industry, who moved them from the production department to the embroidery department, had unreasonable expectations of them. Feeling that the company did not treat them fairly, they left that job after being there twelve months. This graduate then went on to gain another position in the industry where they are much happier. In the same job market as the other graduates, this graduate successfully gained two industry jobs within twelve months.

“I had a job previously to my current employment where I spent six months in production and six months in embroidery. What I learned at that job was this; it's hard to want to bust your ass for a company that won't hear you out or treats you as more than a second class citizen. Who say one thing and deliver another. Some people may be willing to take it lying down for the sake of prestige and position and "that's how it is in the industry." But I won't.”

4.19 Stress and Mental Health

As there are many facets to why graduates have not remained in work, having poor health is one reason a graduate has not been able to remain in the industry but manages to do a few things industry related at home when they can.

“I have not been engaged in any work recently as my physical and mental health are still problematic, and I am still under high levels of medical care. I still do not want to run my own business, but without the ability to fund training in another area and being unable to work a full-time job in either fashion or retail I am left with little option other than increasing my workload by doing alterations from my home as much as my health allows.”
4.20 Enriched opportunities

One graduate felt very prepared for their first job after graduating and found that the work experience they obtained during their programme of study presented many opportunities to them within the industry.

“I went very prepared for my first job after I had graduated and the work experience placements often lead me to employment opportunities.”

4.21 Learning on the job after graduation

Two graduates (28%) found that they were upskilled on the job by their employers as a different set of advanced skills and knowledge was needed for the specialist machinery that they were to use.

“Skills I learned from school are necessary. I've learned a lot more advanced things on the job. The big thing starts from a small step.”

“Just in my particular job, I was working on specialized machinery, that fashion tech did not have so regarding that, I haven't prepared but that kind of thing I learned on the job anyway.”

4.22 Integration of skills in the fashion programme

Being a technical school infers that the skills students learn are exactly what is used and needed in the industry. Tutors work directly alongside industry aligning students with industry for work experience and possible job opportunities.

4.23 Useful skills in the workplace

Graduates (70%, 5) found that the skills they learned were helpful within the workplace, one student is now working as a tutor at NZIFT, so they are not sure it counts as being helpful as it has come full circle and they are using the skills they learned to teach other students the skills.
“Some of it helped some of it didn’t.”

“It did give me a hand in the workplace, but it wasn't until I started working in the fashion industry that I realized it wasn’t for me! I still love sewing though and will always keep doing it. It’s okay. Hope you doing well xx”

“I miss fashion tech too! I miss being a student: P”

“Very helpful in most of my workplaces.”

Three graduates have ended up teaching at NZIFT, two of them commented on the helpfulness of the skills they learned to be able to teach their students.

“It has been extremely helpful in my current job, but I am not sure if that counts.”

“Um yes, I use this skill almost daily.”

4.24 Work ethics

Three graduates (42%, 3) found that NZIFT instilled a great work ethic into them, making them into better, competent people. Graduates would have liked to learn even more about the industry. It was also noted that the confidence NZIFT gave them helped them to pursue further study elsewhere.

“I think the work ethic we are taught is impressive, in or out of the fashion industry I feel like we’re employable simply because FT makes us better people. I would have liked to learn more about the sector as a whole (what it's like overseas, how clothes are made in large scale production etc.) but that interest didn’t come about until I decided I wanted to do something about the working conditions for overseas manufacturers. I guess that's why I went back to uni.”
“Very true! I don't regret studying at Fashion Tech as I learned so much, which is stuff I feel like I can always use in my life!”

“Haha yep, but I also taught myself those pretty fast which I think I can credit fashion tech for teaching me how to be self-sufficient and learning through trial and error. I miss fashion tech.”

### 4.25 Indifferent

ATITO is the acronym for the Apparel and Textile Industry Training Organisation which is now restructured into COMPETENZ. The ATITO developed a sewing training programme that teaches the students to sew to quality and time, students refer to this programme, which is taught as part of the foundation Certificate of Garment Technology, as ‘the ATITO.

A graduate would only use this throughout their career if they were to become a machinist or do a lot of sewing in their job.

“Think it's probably a personal thing though, it just depends on the student as to how or if they use ATITO throughout their career. Also if you work in a job where you need to have those skills, it's very handy indeed. Happy boss means happy workplace.”

“As much as I hated it, ATITO really helped me with working in a factory. Speed and accuracy are of course critical in that kind of workplace.”

### 4.26 Knowledge transfer

Two graduates found that the knowledge and skills they learned during their time at NZIFT were transferable to other areas of their workplace and life.

“Being able to pivotal transfer is handy in most situations!”
“All of the practical things I learned at Fashion Tech were very helpful to me and helped me get into managerial positions at work. I suck at any computer thingy, so for me that was plenty, and the jobs I’ve had in the industry didn’t require PAD, etc. The only thing I wish we did more of was draping and more pattern manipulations.”

4.27 Challenges

Not all things taught at NZIFT crossed over into being helpful in the workplace and many graduates wished they had been taught the latest version of computer programs and machinist skills that are used in the industry. Some are finding it difficult to gain momentum in the workplace from needing to upskill again.

One student wished they had been told that not everybody was going to get a job with a designer once they had completed the Diploma programme.

“Like sewing with two feet wasn’t helpful because at the factory we been told it breaks the machine. I wish we been told that once you leave fashion tech, not everyone is a fortune to get a job with a designer.”

Several students strongly felt that the computer skills they were taught in the Diploma programme were out of date and were not the programmes that the industry actually uses. They felt this had an integral part in them not finding work in the industry.

“I also agree that we didn’t learn enough computer stuff, we covered just the basics which aren’t sufficient to be too adequate in the industry. Although I also realize that it’s hard to fit more stuff into the already busy schedule of Diploma. I haven’t worked much in the industry, but the skills I did learn helped me a fair bit (:”
Three graduates found that precisely their lack of knowledge of the Adobe Illustrator drawing programme which was not taught in their diploma programme has held them back into successfully finding work within the industry.

“But I feel more is needed to be taught on the computer now. Every job I go for needs you to know illustrator.”

"Every place I applied wanted advanced skills in Illustrator, Photoshop, and InDesign!"

“But recent jobs I've applied for need me to know Illustrator and Photoshop. So more computer work would have been helpful.”

One student found that the sewing skills they were taught early on in the programme were lacklustre by the end of the programme and it was not drilled into them as much as the first time they were learning it and were assessed on it.

“I feel like once we did ATITO it was forgotten about and my speed and accuracy levels dropped by the time I reached Diploma haha. It wasn't as drilled into us in Diploma, so I got a bit lax. But I also don't enjoy sewing in the industry, so I guess currently it doesn't matter for me.”
5. CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The majority of graduates felt they were ready for their first job within the fashion industry upon completion of the diploma programme and with the skills and knowledge they learned. Having these skills gave them confidence to enter into the workforce and they included work ethic proficiencies which were acquired indirectly during the programme. Graduates found that their newly gained inner confidence and their skills gave them the ability to go and study elsewhere, or to take up employment in an entirely different field.

A minority of graduates managed to find work in the fashion industry that they thoroughly enjoy and remain in today. It appears these students had a more realistic viewpoint of what the industry would and should be like from the start of their studying. Many graduates who entered the fashion industry felt they were not valued enough and many decided to leave the industry very quickly and pursue other careers and study. Some found it difficult to enter the industry in the first place and were frustrated by the lack of choice in the job market.

5.1 Image of the industry

The captivating image that the fashion industry projects through the media greatly influences the prospective student of fashion design education’s views on fashion design as a subject and their motivation to study it. Dyer (2004) and Warner (2014) both observe that celebrities play a significant part in the modern culture and are marketed for profit in such a way that their presence is a promise to the kind of product you are buying into. Fashion is of high importance in the manufacturing and distribution of celebrity; fashion is used for the celebrity to endorse. This conjures a form of identity that makes people believe that looking or dressing a certain way creates conformity to ideals of themselves and having a sense of belonging somehow becoming unique and individual. Narratives about celebrities are contained within images that are manipulated for photography, film, music, television and the internet. Fashion is a mechanism of cultural struggle and this cultural identity plays a vital part in educators gaining prospective students into fashion programmes (Bill, 2012; Feather, 1996; McNeil, 2010; McRobbie, 1998). The lure of these programmes is specifically aimed at
those who are interested in careers related to the textile sector through the media’s portrayal of the industry. The ‘hype’ about the fashion industry, and excessive levels of media publicity given to promising new fashion designers, gives students unrealistic expectations of employment because the media attention glosses over the fact that only a few could succeed as ‘top’ designers. (Blomfield, 2002; Burleigh-Evatt & NZIER, 2001; Cumming, 2002). The pretence of desirability and abundance only goes so far as to provide this façade of culture that provides business to fashion schools and work experience students to the industry.

Prospective and current students imagine their lives in the industry and project those expectations on the tertiary educators and industry. Feldman & Kaufman (2004) report that students expect tertiary providers to prepare them for their chosen profession. Tutors are expected to coach and support them, and graduates are expected to prove themselves worthy of becoming part of the creative industries. With all these expectations placed on the institution, students and tutors it is not difficult to see that gaps between these high expectations and actual performance are likely to emerge. In the findings of graduates surveyed, their realisation once graduated and out in the industry that it is, in fact, not at all glamorous and fabulous as depicted in the media, proves discouraging and disheartening to the graduates.

In research conducted across the graduates of NZIFT (2010-2014) the majority of the participants were fascinated by fashion design as a subject. They saw this as an opportunity to gain employability skills and contribute to the industry. However, there was incongruence between perceived and constructed image of the fashion industry and the professional expectations of the industry. The majority of participants described having a personal interest in all things fashion related. Whether designing, sewing clothes or using their creativity, this is what brought the students to the programme, alongside what their expectations about what employment in the industry entailed.

If students were primarily involved in the industry from an early stage, this would help them decide early on whether the industry is for them. Being able to experience the realities of the industry, even indirectly, would allow them to develop realistic expectations of the industry and what they need to be learning within a tertiary education context.

Tertiary education institutions use students’ motivation in the subject to get them ‘in
the door’ and signed up into programmes that are unlikely to lead to a career or work in their chosen industry, perhaps learning skills and techniques that are not needed or have a direct influence on gaining a job in the workforce. Individuals working in and around the industry understand what a high and often hard vocation working in the industry is like (Kozar, 2013; McNeil, 2010). Graduates of NZIFT were enticed into the programmes through advertising, presentations about the success of past graduates and stories of how the industry is booming. NZIFT surveyed 136 fashion industry specific companies in their 2012 industry survey (Ray, 2012) and reported that the industry is concerned at the lack of formal apprenticeships or on-job training to support them and any new staff as companies do not have the time and resources to teach everything. The report also finds that 53-128 brand new jobs within the NZ fashion industry were likely to be created in the subsequent 12 months. From the findings of the research survey for this study, some graduates found themselves after graduation not able to gain any satisfactory work in the industry. Some graduates went to work in retail business, brewery industry and only 4 of the 14 (25.8%) went to pursue design work and teaching fashion design. From this, some students have departed to study a more diverse subject and work in unrelated fields. The decline in fashion related jobs and industry within NZ has resulted from the free trade agreement with China that was signed in 2008. New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) stated in 2014 that between 2009 and 2014, total goods trade between New Zealand and China doubled to NZ$20 billion. There has been more traded with China since 2008 than there has been in all previous history. When the majority of clothing is being manufactured overseas to cut costs and provide cheaper garments for New Zealanders, there is simply no demand for fashion industry graduates. There are no ‘dream jobs’ of being a fashion designer or even a pattern maker left in New Zealand. All the leading manufacturers have shut down as they cannot compete with the frugality of manufacturing overseas. This is a contradiction to the images and stories of having ‘made it’ or ‘being successful’ as a result of a particular programme or attendance at a particular tertiary institute that entices potential students to transition into programmes and gain expectations of grandeur about the industry.

Participants reported they went to various jobs after graduation. Some pursued further studies, one participant worked as a mechanic, and another one went on to work with New
Zealand Police Services. It seems fashion design programme graduates are often employed in a different capacity and sectors other than the fashion industry. Even though they appear to have come out of their tertiary education with skills and knowledge for the industry, there does not seem to be much industry to be in with only 28.5% of graduates surveyed pursuing a career in the fashion industry. Some students felt they needed to be re-educated even further and have gone on to study completely different subjects where they hope there will be more industry and jobs after they graduate.

5.2 The programme

Overall research findings suggest that students feel their experience in the NZIFT diploma programme was a positive one. Many saw the fashion design programme as an opportunity to support lifelong learning and long-term professional and personal goals. For example, the majority enrolled from the reputation of the school and for personal interests from their love of sewing and wanting to make clothing for themselves. They felt it was a great way for them to apply their creativity to a career. Graduates report that their highlights from the course were a sense of self-sufficiency, learning a great work ethic and also computer skills, some were pleased with the sewing skills they picked up too.

5.3 Expected outcomes

The essential knowledge acquired through studying at NZIFT subsists of sewing and patternmaking. Students spend most of their day undertaking equally in these tasks. Therefore, as the findings reported the majority of students expected to gain work in either sewing or patternmaking after completing their diploma. Once they had graduated and tried to gain employment within these fields, it soon became apparent that this was not going to be possible.

“Expectations are fundamental human phenomena however we believe that both tutors and students hold expectations which are specific or more significant in art and design pedagogy” (Austerlitz, Blythman, Grove-White, Jones, Jones, Morgan, Orr & Shreeve Vaughan, 2008, p.6). Amongst these, we may identify the expectation to produce original artifacts, to graduate with sufficient skills, to become an innovative artist/designer who explores new frontiers or to realise the expectation of 'making it' that is becoming a star designer 'not like anything else
that we have seen before”.

With design being such a popular topic there is an apparent over-supply of new designers. It is crucial to develop transferable design skills and provide design students with complementary skills such as business management and communication as well as careers advice.

5.4 Employment intentions

When asked about what their plans for work after the programme, when they entered the Diploma programme the majority of participants (64.9%, 9) had expectations to become either a seamstress or pattern maker. One graduate reported that if they knew how hard it was going to be obtaining full-time work in the industry, they would have studied something else.

5.5 Workforce issue

Employability skills are developed throughout a person’s life and should not be expected to be implemented or taught through tertiary education. Artess (2011), Tran, (2014) and Yorke, (2004) consider this problem an employability development and a workforce problem, not a higher education one. They argue that employers need to view the process of developing employability skills as a whole-of-workforce issue. Employers should not expect university graduates to have all the skills and knowledge of a seasoned worker straight after graduation. But it appears that crucial employability skills remain in the foreground for employers. Bourner & Millican (2011) write that despite efforts to expand the hypothesis of graduate employability to incorporate extents that enrich graduate employment forecasts such as, life skills, career management, and personal skills. Students reported that the work ethic they were taught made them more employable because they were turned into better people. They felt that the skills they learned went beyond being able just to sew and pattern make. Some commentated on how they learned to learn. Higher education has an unremitting challenge to transfer the focus to the development of skilled and vocationally educated graduates who transpire to be self-confident, technically competent and fortified with a variety of social perceptiveness skills, and who are better prepared for demanding employment procedures. These graduates tend to have success in the continuous conversion into
employment straight after graduation and a lasting prosperous profession. Pegg, Waldock, Hendy-Isaac, & Lawton, (2012) agree that employability remains of considerable tactical importance and continues to have an impact on higher education policies and curricula.

Students, tertiary providers and industry’s expected outcomes do not appear to align. This phenomenon is well researched and accepted, with employers, professional and industry groups, governments, and students all reinforcing the need for educators to produce graduates with the attributes required for work and life. Bridgstock (2009) argues that the employer’s requests that graduates should have the required attributes do not report the complete representation of what is needed by the graduate facing the possibility of the labour market.

Shephard’s (2008) report agrees that teaching and assessment in higher education focus on cognitive skills and knowledge rather than affective outcomes of values, attitudes, and behaviours. Shephard points out that institutions provide credit to students who just attain the indicated results and that the reward for doing so justifies the minimum involvement that is necessary to succeed in tertiary education. It is possible to graduate from a tertiary institute without having gained any graduate attributes and have only imparted knowledge. This would be difficult to measure and deduce as through the process of learning the student would gather graduate attributes as they are embedded within the higher education facility and the curriculum. According to Tran (2014), intense criticism is often directed at universities with the claim that graduates are unemployable and lack preparation for the workforce. This is considered to be the result of the outdated, irrelevant topics and lessons within the higher education system that don’t prepare graduates for what the industry is really like right now – ranging from work ethic to knowledge, and skills. Often subject matter experts within tertiary education have been out of the industry for some years, so their knowledge and expertise is outdated. This is evident in my research, with graduates perceiving that the computer and sewing skills they were taught were outdated and deemed ‘useless’ within the industry. Some of the skills that were acquired were overridden once they were out in the industry and a new and different set of skills were taught to them. Students were divided as to whether the knowledge gained during the programme helped them in the industry or not. Cranmer (2006) speaks of the difficulties linking universities and industry due to different perceptions on the quantity of accountability and parallel of the value of developing non-technical skills in undergraduates. Tutors are expected to coach and support students to become successful
graduate’s worthy of becoming part of the creative industries. With all these expectations placed on the institution, students, and tutors it is not difficult to see that there are significant gaps between these high expectations and actual performance. For expectations to align, they need to be collaboratively developed and this has never happened. Vroom (1964) found there are three conditions in which all need to be in place for expectations to be met, and that expectations are often the primary motivations for people to engage in a particular activity

Vroom found that this is a major factor in getting people to be motivated in the first place. Ideally, collaboration would happen between students, tertiary providers and industry to instrumentally discover what each other’s expectations are and align them. Instead each party has their own set of expectations, and ultimately their needs are not met due to misalignment of those expectations. Students enter into tertiary education with high expectations, especially around being filtered into the labour market. Employers and companies have their own set of requirements for incoming graduates regarding the abilities and skills which they feel should already be developed in individuals who have attend higher education programmes (Nicolescu & Paun, 2009). This creates a gap between tertiary providers, graduates, and companies.

This is a long-standing and widespread problem of trying to line up all parties involved to discuss their ideas, and proves to be a difficult subject to get right. Maharasoa & Hay (2001) state that to successfully gain employment after graduation, graduates must have the abilities employers need and ask for. Each party will gain something, and it is not ultimately a misalignment, but it is not as perfectly paired with each other as apprenticeships are. McRobbie (2009) states graduates are never ready for the industry and are certainly never expecting their exploitation, which seems to happen to those who are newly graduated and wanting to get a foot in the door in the industry. It is not the tertiary education systems job to make student ‘work ready’ but to impart knowledge to them and to help them gain experience in the subject matter. Students feel that gaining a qualification is a ticket to being successful and if they have paid money and spent time with the institution, there will be the reward of career success at the end.

### 5.6 Actual outcomes

Participants stated that the skills they learned at NZIFT were helpful in the workplace. The programme instilled a great work ethic into them, one graduate saying they thought the
work ethic they were taught was ‘impressive’ and that they felt they had become very employable simply because NZIFT made them into better people. This illustrates that graduates took away more than just the skills taught to them, but skills that are transferable to other areas of work and life. A study by Harvey (2000) had similar observations, stressing that the primary role of higher education is to transform students by enhancing their knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities while empowering them as lifelong critical reflective learners. Harvey goes on to state the employability of graduates should not be seen as the primary focus of higher education. Rather, employability is a subset of, and fundamentally contingent on, transformative lifelong learning. Measuring the success of the student’s outcome via job status is not necessarily the right way of measuring. The skills and knowledge and work ethics are great gains of their own – which are a success. In fact, we should be measuring these and declaring them a success rather than using the rather linear measure of education into employment. Although it is an expectation of students to gain a job in the industry as soon as they graduate, since the 1980s there has been tremendous pressure on higher education to contribute directly to national economic regeneration and growth (Ball, 1998). Higher education is seen as a drain on the government and the economy as the students that are studying are not partaking in generating economic growth within the community and the country at large. Students borrow money and rack up debt to get through the education system, in the expectation of them getting through the system and then into a job at the end. The Dearing report (1997) asserts that the primary purpose of higher education is to prepare students for the world of work, but unless the industry runs alongside tertiary educators and advises them what it is they want and need from a graduate, how are tertiary educators to know what industry require? Universities have been trying to accommodate the demands of the workplace by refining what they have to offer students and trying to be transparent about what their graduates are likely to provide society once they have graduated (Barnett, 1990). One-way universities do this is to communicate their role through a description of the qualities their graduates either have or will obtain through studying with them. These are often generic qualities that are from the culture of the provider. Vermillion, Peirce & Parker (2009) discovered that some qualifications were imparting old techniques that were not being expended anymore and wasted students and industry’s time. An alignment of student expectations, tertiary expectations, and industries expectations would benefit all.
Fashion students spend a lot of money and time learning the ways of the fashion trade and often take student loans to cover tuition fees and living costs for the two to three years of study. Coupled with time away from full-time earnings, this sets the average student up with a lot of debt at the beginning of their career. Compounded by the difficulty of becoming fully employed, many graduates are faced with massive debts and a very limited capacity to service them. Learning trades such as pattern making, machining or cutting in the classroom does not adequately prepare students for the realities of the workplace, instead, it makes sense that these skills are learned in on-the-job training or through an apprenticeship. However, there are currently no apprenticeships within the fashion industry in New Zealand. Fashion students are actively encouraged to spend time in non-paid internships from one week to one year at a time, either during their course of study or after their graduation, to earn them some real industry skills. Working as an unpaid intern or undertaking work experience is often a requirement of their course of study and can sometimes lead to employment. Students and graduates are often spending their work experience time running large fashion shows - such as New Zealand fashion week, ID, Wellington fashion week and WOW. Larger New Zealand designers have a steady stream of interns queuing to work in their workroom, all eager to get the notoriety of having a large NZ designer’s name on their CV. The apprenticeship system for the fashion industry was dissolved to make way for vocational tertiary educators to teach students the trade in classrooms.
6. CHAPTER SIX

Implication and the way forward

The fashion industry’s professional image is manipulated by the media, educators, and industry portraying illusions of grandeur. This appeals to many, especially students who already have a passion for the fashion industry through a love of clothing. There appears to be a misalignment between the expectations of students, educators, and industry. Currently within higher education, it is only through apprenticeships and on the job training that we can constructively align this gap. Although currently there are no fashion apprenticeships in New Zealand, the fashion industry generally expects new employees to have already been trained in the field. Being able to learn on the job and draw from real life situations gives a real context to the learning students experience and makes the transition into work more successful. Only through instructional scaffolding to facilitate students learning, creating learning resources and assessment tasks that directly address the intended learning outcomes. Alignment of students, educators, and industry, and a clear narrative with and through each of these, would make this issue more transparent and facilitate consistent expectations of the skills and knowledge needed by industry and what realistic job opportunities there are out there. It is essential for industry and tertiary providers to work together to develop a positive strategy to address this mismatch between the number of fashion graduates and jobs in the industry.

This study provides an in-depth view of the decision making of graduates of the fashion industry. An anti-positivist exploratory approach provided a framework; this highlights the importance of understanding the contextual factors of why these students chose to study fashion design at a technical institute and what their experiences of the fashion industry were compared with their preconceived ideas. One of the significant findings to come out of the study was the importance of having gained a strong work ethic through studying which had positive, practical implications for students and industry. Understanding graduate perceptions provides a great insight into the skills and knowledge taught, retained and then utilised within the industry. Graduate perceptions have profound implications for fashion programmes, indicating the ongoing need for curriculum and programme development in consultation with industry to keep up with the fast-changing world of fashion. Practical skills are only practical if they are utilised. This research focused on graduates of NZIFT who had been out into the
workforce for 2-4 years after graduation. Future research might examine the fashion industry and find out their wants and needs for graduates and tertiary educators. A similar approach could be used to investigate the factors relevant to the industry. Findings from this research suggest that educational programmes in fashion design need to create a realistic image of the industry and particularly emphasise the changing nature of the Fashion design industry, and closely align and maintain closer relationships between the changing needs of the industry, required graduate attributes and Fashion design education.
7. REFERENCES


Verena Tilson-Scoble | Master of Arts 68

doi:10.1080/0729436042000206636

doi:10.1080/1363908042000174192


doi:10.1080/07294360.2011.629361


Gush, J. (1996). Graduates into the retail industry: an assessment of the nature and causes of mismatches between the needs and expectations of the retail industry and its graduate


Leith, JQ and McInnes, M (2011) *Co-working, exploring the ways teacher-practitioners shape students’ learning experience in fashion and textiles higher education*.


8. APPENDIX

8.1 Research Ethics

Informed consent was explicitly obtained from all participants in the research. The nature and purpose of the research were explained, and it was emphasised that they were under no obligation to take part and could withdraw at any stage. The anonymity of all participants was preserved - their identity was not known to the researcher, and none were named during the survey, there was no opportunity for the graduates to reveal themselves to the researcher. The data is held onto by my supervisor, and the only other copy is on my computer with no names held onto by either parties. After writing my proposal and obtaining permission to conduct this study by Otago University human ethics committee I set up the Facebook group page and invited the graduates to participate.

On the page I had written as per proposal:

‘Hi beloved graduates! Thanks for taking the time to read this ‘smile emoticon.’
I am currently studying at Otago University and researching what happens to you graduates after you have left the tertiary environment and how well you were equipped for employment.
I have a survey for you to fill in (if you could!) you can give me as much or little information as you like. It is entirely anonymous. The information you supply will be collected and collated by myself and my supervisor and will form my Thesis I am writing for my Masters of Art.
If you could spare 5-10 mins to fill the survey in it would be much appreciated! If you have any question, queries or comments feel free to message me –
‘smile emoticon.’
The study is here:’
8.2 Graduate survey

Graduate attributes survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This study is to explore and understand how you have reflected and utilized the knowledge you gained from the New Zealand Fashion Tech Diploma programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to identify any factors that impacted on your transition into the workforce, satisfaction of your job, job prospects and challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, this information will remain anonymous and will go on to form my Thesis for a Masters with Otago University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diploma Experience Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you complete your Diploma?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The statements are based on comments that students have made about their expectations of tertiary teaching and studying. In answering them, please think about your program of study as a whole rather than individual papers, subjects, topics or classes.

- It was always easy to know the standard of work expected during my study program
- The program helped me to develop problem solving skills
- The teaching staff on the program motivated me to do my best work
- I found my studies intellectually stimulating
- The program sharpened my analytical skills
- I usually had a clear idea of where I was going and what was expected of me in the program
- Staff here put a lot of time into commenting on my work
- To do well in the program all you needed was a good memory
- The program helped develop my ability to work as a team member
- As a result of doing the program, I feel more confident about tackling unfamiliar problems in the workplace
- The program improved my written communication skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Options</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2. Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neutral</td>
<td>4. Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strongly agree</td>
<td>6. Does not apply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- It was often hard to discover what was expected of me in the program
- I found the program motivating
- The tutors made a real effort to understand difficulties I could have been having with my work
- The program was overly theoretical and abstract
- Tutors normally gave helpful feedback on how I was going
- My Tutors were extremely good at explaining things
- Tutors worked hard to make their subjects interesting
- The program stimulated my interest in Fashion Design
- The program helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work
- Feedback on student work was usually provided ONLY in the form of marking
- Tutors made it clear right from the start what they expected from students
- Overall, my experience in the program was worthwhile
- The program improved my verbal communication skills
- Academic advising in my program was of a high standard
- Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of the program

Do you have any comments on the value of your program? Please write below.

Open-ended

Do you have any comments on supervision or the support you received as a student? Please write below.

Open-ended

**Skills Development Scale**

For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

- As a result of my experience I felt confident about managing a project
- My experience improved my analytical skills
- My experience helped me to develop a range of communication skills
- As a result of my experience I improved my ability to learn independently

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree
6. Does not apply
- There were adequate opportunities available for me to further develop my research skills
- There were adequate opportunities available for me to further develop my knowledge of Fashion design
- There were adequate opportunities available for me to apply my knowledge of Fashion design

**Infrastructure Scale**

For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- I had adequate access to the equipment necessary for my study</td>
<td>1. Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I had a suitable working space</td>
<td>2. Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There was appropriate financial support for study activities</td>
<td>3. Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There was adequate provision of computing resources</td>
<td>4. Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There was adequate provision of other facilities</td>
<td>5. Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I had the technical support I needed</td>
<td>6. Does not apply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intellectual Climate Scale**

For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- I was provided opportunities for social contact with other students</td>
<td>1. Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was provided opportunities to become involved in the broader student culture</td>
<td>2. Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was provided opportunities for social contact with other students</td>
<td>3. Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was provided opportunities to become involved in the broader student culture</td>
<td>4. Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was provided opportunities for social contact with other students</td>
<td>5. Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was provided opportunities for social contact with other students</td>
<td>6. Does not apply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- The environment in my class stimulated my work
- I felt integrated into my class community
- I felt integrated into the Fashion industry and community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals and Standards Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I understood the required standard for the Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I understood the standard of work expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I understood the requirements of assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I understood the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does not apply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development and Career Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was encouraged to think about the range of career opportunities in the Fashion industry that were available to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was encouraged to reflect on my professional development needs (e.g: Such as Technical knowledge, and skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I was encouraged to reflect on other career development needs (e.g: Such as time management, interview strategies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does not apply</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For each statement, please rate the extent of your agreement or disagreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that NZIFT valued and responded to feedback from students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understood my responsibilities as a Diploma student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was aware of the school’s responsibilities towards me as a student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to find information quickly and easily about any aspect of my Diploma experience at NZIFT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Provision of guidance on institutional standards and expectations for your Diploma programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The main motivation for me pursuing a Diploma in Fashion design was:      | 1. My interest in the subject
  2. To Improve my career prospects in the Fashion Industry
  3. To improve my career prospects outside the Fashion Industry
  4. Because I was encouraged by a former tutor/supervisor
  5. Because there was funding available
  6. Because I felt inspired to work with a particular Tutor
  7. Other (Please specify) |
| What type of career did you have in mind when you completed your Diploma? | 1. Fashion Designer  
2. Seamstress  
3. Tailor  
4. Retail  
5. Self Employed  
6. Pattern Maker  
7. Technician  
8. Cutter  
9. Teaching  
10. Other |

**Coursework Questions** (for postgraduate qualifications with coursework component)

**Organisation and Management Scale**

| To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding organisation and management of your programme? | 1. Strongly disagree  
2. Disagree  
3. Neutral  
4. Agree  
5. Strongly agree  
6. Does not apply |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The timetable fitted well with my other commitments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Any changes in the programme or teaching were communicated effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The programme was well organised and was running smoothly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The balance between scheduled contact time and private study was appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall, the workload on the programme was: | 1. Much higher than I expected  
2. Higher than I expected  
3. More or less as I expected  
4. Lower than I expected  
5. Much lower than I expected |
**Learning Resources Scale**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding learning resources on your programme?

- The resources and services were good enough for my needs
- The resources and services were easily accessible
- I was able to access general IT resources when I needed to
- I was able to access social learning spaces (e.g. for group working) on site when I needed to
- I was able to access specialised equipment, facilities, or rooms when I needed them
- I was satisfied with the quality of learning materials available to me (Print, online material, DVDs, etc.)

| 1. Strongly disagree |
| 2. Disagree |
| 3. Neutral |
| 4. Agree |
| 5. Strongly agree |
| 6. Does not apply |

**Career and Professional Development Scale**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding professional development on your programme?

- I was encouraged to reflect on my professional development needs
- I felt better prepared for my future employment
- After completing my Diploma, I felt my future employment prospects were better

| 1. Strongly disagree |
| 2. Disagree |
| 3. Neutral |
| 4. Agree |
| 5. Strongly agree |
| 6. Does not apply |

**Overall Satisfaction Indicators**

Please rate the following broad aspects of your Diploma programme in terms of how your experience of those aspects met with your expected

| 1. Much higher than I expected |
**Expectations**

- Quality of teaching and learning
- Assessment and feedback
- Organisation and management
- Learning resources
- Skills and personal development
- Career development
- Overall experience of my program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Higher than I expected</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. More or less as I expected</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lower than I expected</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Much lower than I expected</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**My main motivations for taking this Diploma programme were:**

(select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To enable me to progress to a higher level qualification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To progress in my current career path (i.e. a professional qualification)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To change my current career</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To improve my employment prospects</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. As a requirement to enter a particular profession</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To meet the requirements of my current job</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. For personal interest</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Other (Please specify)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do you feel that your qualification encouraged the development of each of the following attributes during your program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A willingness to learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required skills to plan my own work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to solve problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent judgement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to be creative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The skills to implement change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic rigour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A multi-disciplinary perspective</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility and adaptability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An awareness of ethical issues</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A global perspective</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural understanding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental literacy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent do you feel you have APPLIED each of the following attributes since completing your Diploma?</th>
<th>1. Extensive Application</th>
<th>2. Some Application</th>
<th>3. No Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- A willingness to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teamwork skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Oral communication skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication skills</td>
<td>4. Does Not Apply</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The skills to plan my own work</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to solve problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent judgement</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ability to be creative</td>
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<tr>
<td>The skills to implement change</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic rigour</td>
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<tr>
<td>A multi-disciplinary perspective</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Analytical skills</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexibility and adaptability</td>
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<tr>
<td>An awareness of ethical issues</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A global perspective</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural understanding</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research skills</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information literacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have any further comments on the way in which your study equipped you with skills relevant to your subsequent career and life experience?  

| Statistical Information (for all respondents) |                  |
| What is your gender?                         |                  |
|                                                | 1. Male          |
|                                                | 2. Female        |
| What was your student status in the final year of your qualification? | 1. New Zealand student  
2. Australian student  
3. International student (does not include holders of Australian or New Zealand permanent residency) |
| --- | --- |
| Please indicate the ethnic group or groups with which you identify: | 1. European/Pakeha or New Zealand European  
2. New Zealand Maori (please specify iwi)  
3. Pacific Island (please specify)  
4. Asian (please specify)  
5. Other (please specify) |
| Is your first language English? | 1. Yes  
2. No (please specify) |
| Why did you choose to study at New Zealand Institute of Fashion and Technology? (Select up to three from the following) | 1. Family connection and/or talking to older students or graduates  
2. The reputation of the school  
3. Campus culture  
4. Course available only at Wellington/Auckland  
5. Nearest Fashion school  
6. To enjoy new places, people and to increase independence |
<table>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
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| Would you recommend the NZ Institute of Fashion and Technology to other students? | 1. Yes  
2. No (please specify) |
| Are you currently employed?                                             | 1. No  
2. Yes (part-time)  
3. Yes (full-time) |
| Please give job title and employer                                      | Open-ended                                                             |
| Please indicate your current income sourced from wages and salaries or self-employed income: | 1. NZ$0 – NZ$20000  
2. NZ$20001-NZ$30000  
3. NZ$30001 – NZ$40000  
4. NZ$40001 – NZ$50000  
5. NZ$50001 – NZ$60000  
6. NZ$60001 – NZ$75000  
7. NZ$75001 – NZ$100000  
8. NZ$100001+  
9. Prefer not to disclose |
| Are you currently studying for a further tertiary qualification? | 1. No  
2. Yes (full-time)  
3. Yes (part-time) |
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<tr>
<td>Please indicate qualification and institution</td>
<td>Open-ended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have any comments about this survey or about any other aspect of your NZIFT experience?</td>
<td>Open-ended</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you would like to receive an electronic report on the results of the survey please print your email address here:</td>
<td>Open-ended</td>
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