

Fashion and Retail Studies

The programs in the Department of Consumer Sciences provide students with unique opportunities for careers in industries that provide goods and services, ranging from financial planners to merchandisers in retail or wholesale settings to hotel and restaurant managers. The department's programs encompass product and service knowledge; the study of people who produce and distribute products and services, as well as the study of the people who use them; and the processes involved from conception to consumption. Programs in the department focus on enhancing consumer, individual, and family well-being.

The fashion and retail studies major, offered in the Department of Consumer Sciences, examines the fashion industry including apparel mediums and focuses on production as well as why and how people use apparel.

Students take a core of major courses and select from two tracks for a major concentration area in either Product Development or Merchandising. The major is designed to integrate knowledge of people and apparel with allocation and distribution processes and product acquisition. Emphasis is placed on *product knowledge*—performance characteristics, selection criteria, and design principles and trends; *process skills*—consumer behavior and business practices; and *communication*—visualization and interpretation. The curriculum combines product-focused courses with courses in retailing, marketing, management, and accounting. Other courses focus on the development and quality evaluation of textile and apparel products and on commercial production of apparel worldwide. Qualities and performance of fibers, fabrics, and constructed apparel products are also studied.

Pursuing Fashion and Retail Studies at Ohio State

Students should complete a college preparatory program in high school. Courses in psychology, sociology, math, and chemistry will help prepare students for this program. Good written and verbal skills are very important. An interest in business, fashion, and providing quality apparel and interior furnishings to consumers is desired.

Upon admission to the university, students enroll as pre-majors in fashion and retail studies. Acceptance into the fashion and retail studies major requires the completion of 15 credit hours of course work at Ohio State, a CPHR of 2.00, and the completion of Math 130 or any higher level mathematics course.

Fashion and Retail Studies Requirements

A minimum of 181 credit hours is required to complete a bachelor's degree with a fashion and retail studies major. The major consists of ten core required courses:

- Fashion, the Body, and Popular Culture

- Commercial and Consumer Aesthetics
- Business of Fashion
- Beginning Textile Science
- Appearance, Dress, and Cultural Diversity
- Fashion Forecasting
- Ready-to-wear Analysis
- Retail Environments
- Statistics
- Third-level writing course

An internship or field work (generally taken as a junior or senior) is also a required part of the industry-based curriculum.

Students gain a focus toward a chosen career path by completing additional course work from one of the following focus areas: (1) Product Development; and (2) Merchandising. Approximately 6 unique courses are chosen from the student's focus area. Typical courses for students pursuing the Merchandising option include International Retailing, Global Patterns and Issues in Textiles and Apparel Trade, and Merchandise Buying and Management. For the Product Development option, typical courses include Fashion Illustration, Computer-Aided Product Development, and Twentieth Century Fashion.

Internship Experience

Completion of at least one internship is required in the fashion and retail studies major. The introductory internship is typically a part-time work experience (9-15 hours per week) in an approved firm. The senior level internship is a full-time, 10-week experience. The senior level internship provides an opportunity for students to develop professional contacts in the business world.

Co-Curricular Opportunities

In addition to the required internship, fashion and retail studies offers many other opportunities for students to extend their learning outside the classroom. The Black Retail Action Group, Fashion Student Organization, and Fashion Production Association are student organizations that enhance learning opportunities and the quality of the undergraduate experience for students in the program. The Black Retail Action Group at Ohio State is a chapter of a non-profit organization based in New York with the purpose of helping minorities succeed within the retail industry. The Fashion Student Organization promotes knowledge of the fashion industry through many activities including an annual fashion show and trip to New York City. The Fashion Production Association provides students with the opportunity to publicly display their abilities in garment design, as well as advertising, fundraising, and special event production, culminating in a fashion design show or public exhibit at the end of the school year.

The Human Ecology Learning Community also provides an opportunity for students to interact with others who share their professional interests by living in a residence hall community

For more information, check these web sites:

Fashion and Retail Studies:

ehe.osu.edu/cs/programs/undergraduate/frs.cfm

College of Education and Human Ecology: ehe.osu.edu

Ohio State: osu.edu

Admissions: undergrad.osu.edu

First Year Experience Program: fye.osu.edu

Curriculum Sample

This is a sample list of classes a student will take to pursue a Merchandising focus in Fashion and Retail Studies. Since university students need more than specific education in a narrow field, they also will take classes to complete the General Education Curriculum (GEC). The GEC will allow students to develop the fundamental skills essential to collegiate success across major programs. Course work options satisfying the GEC often come from a variety of academic areas of study allowing students to tailor their GEC toward their interests. Note: This sample represents one of several possible paths to a degree in Fashion and Retail Studies. Consult the departmental web site, ehe.osu.edu/cs/programs/undergraduate/frs.cfm, for details on each specific track.

Freshman Year:	
Multicultural Consumer	5
Business of Fashion	3
Elementary Chemistry	10
GEC (English composition)	5
GEC (visual & performing art)	5
General Psychology	5
Human Ecology Survey	1
Introductory Sociology	5
Math	4
Microeconomics	5
Total hours	48

Sophomore Year:	
Commercial and Consumer Aesthetics	3
Computer Science	4
GEC (history sequence)	10
GEC (literature)	5
GEC (natural science)	10
GEC (second writing course)	5
Statistics	5
Textiles I	5
Total hours	47

Junior Year:	
Accounting	5
Appearance, Dress, and Cultural Diversity	5
Consumer Perspective	2
Consumer Service & Satisfaction	3
Global Patterns/Issues in Textiles/Apparel Trade	3
History of Fashion	5
Marketing Management	4
Merchandise Buying	5
Ready-to-wear Analysis	3
Retail Environments	5
Electives	5
Total hours	45

Senior Year:	
Fashion Forecasting	3
Fashion, the Body, & Popular Culture	3
Field Experience	15
International Retailing	5
Merchandise Buying and Management Technology	1
Professional Development	2
Consumer Decision Making	5
Third-level writing	5
Electives	2
Total hours	41

among other students of the same major. Students in the living environment gain increased interaction with faculty members and upper-class students, and a stronger connection with the college. Ohio State also offers more than 100 study abroad programs in 40 countries around the world. These opportunities enable students to gain valuable work experience, learn about cultures, and take on leadership roles before entering the workforce, which may provide an advantage in the job market.

Honors & Scholars Programs

The College of Education and Human Ecology offers an honors program for students of high academic ability. The honors program allows for individualized program structuring to meet students' learning objectives and provides an opportunity for students to work with faculty to design and perform research. Through an understanding of the core course work and effective research methods, this individualized plan of study helps students experience professional growth and increased knowledge. In addition to undergraduate research opportunities and close working relationships with faculty, honors students also have access to smaller classes, priority scheduling, and unique housing opportunities.

The Ohio State Scholars Programs feature close-knit, residential communities for students who share common interests. Fashion and retail studies students participate in the Arts, Business, Communication Technology, International Affairs, and Mount Leadership Society Scholars Programs.

Honors and Scholars programs represent great opportunities to be part of a smaller community within a large university. Good candidates for these programs will receive additional information upon admission to the university. For more information about these opportunities, refer to the Honors and Scholars web site at honors-scholars.osu.edu.

Career Prospects in Fashion and Retail Studies

Graduates who specialize in Product Development find employment as apparel product development specialists and technical designers as well as positions in the area of quality control. Those who specialize in Merchandising typically find employment in firms ranging from specialty stores to mass merchandisers to catalog distributors. Positions include wholesale/retail manager, buyer, entrepreneur, and visual merchandiser.

Beginning salaries for graduates of the fashion and retail studies program range from \$30,000 to \$40,000 depending on the candidate's skills and previous work experiences.

Revised August 2009. For the most up-to-date information on the fashion and retail studies program, visit ehe.osu.edu/cs/programs/undergraduate/frs.cfm.

Contact information:

College of Education and Human Ecology
201 Campbell Hall | 1787 Neil Avenue | Columbus, Ohio 43210-1295
(614) 292-6612