



Fashion Design and Marketing student Abbie Inwood

May 15, 2024 13:00 BST

Success for Northumbria student in national design awards

A Northumbria University student's passion for fashion has brought her success in a national design competition.

Abbie-Louise Inwood, a fourth year [Fashion Design & Marketing](#) student, was crowned winner of the [Graduate Fashion Foundation](#) (GFF) x Next Design & Trend Competition, which attracted the best emerging design talent from universities across the UK.

The GFF challenged students to design an autumn/winter 2024 capsule collection for retail giant Next. This involved researching industry trends, forecasting which garments were likely to sell well, and creating innovative designs that would captivate consumers and enable Next to meet its commercial goals.

Abbie's design was inspired by her surroundings and heritage – and particularly by her love of Quality Street chocolates!

The 23-year-old, who is originally from Gomersal in West Yorkshire, explained: “The Quality Streets provided inspiration for the bright, vibrant colours of the collection I created. My knit technician brought a box of them into university and I noticed how everybody’s mood was lifted as they searched the coloured wrappers to find their favourite chocolate!

“My aim was to create a refreshing, sophisticated look as part of a powerful yet casual style. I also wanted to make sure my collection was versatile and could be worn for different situations. I designed knit samples to add depth and texture to my portfolio as warmer clothes are needed in the autumn and winter seasons.”

Abbie was rewarded for her efforts with a £1,000 cash prize, a four-week work placement at Next and a guaranteed interview for one of GFF’s graduate placement programmes.

She said: “I was over the moon when I heard I’d won the competition. It was a great opportunity to showcase my design skills, creativity and commercial nous and it’ll look good on my CV when applying for future jobs. Perhaps I had an advantage in that I spent three years as a retail assistant at Next before studying at Northumbria University, so I got to know how the company worked. I also gained a good understanding of the typical Next customer through my interactions on the shop floor, and this gave me a good base for designing garments for them.

“I’m grateful to Next and the university for giving me this fantastic opportunity, which is hopefully the first step on the road to a career in womenswear design.”

Rosie Smith, the University, Event and Digital Communications Manager at

the Graduate Fashion Foundation, said: “This achievement is a testament to Abbie-Louise’s creativity and talent. Her unique designs stood out among the rest, showcasing her innovative approach and dedication to her craft. Winning the £1,000 cash prize, a four-week placement and a guaranteed interview for a graduate placement programme with 12 months’ pay is an incredible achievement.”

Assistant Professor Sarah Walton, Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Fashion Design and Marketing course at Northumbria University, said: “The Fashion Design and Marketing team are so pleased for Abbie-Louise. The prize offered by Next is an excellent opportunity for industry experience as well as a cash prize. Abbie-Louise is such a deserving winner; her project is a great example of the creativity and talent we continue to be so proud of in our graduates.”

[Northumbria’s School of Design](#) was ranked fourth in the UK for research power in Art and Design in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, sixth in the UK for product design in the 2024 Guardian league tables, and named Best Design School at this year’s International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York. The school offers study programmes in fashion, industrial, communication and innovation design which are delivered internationally, with partnerships including the BINUS-Northumbria School of Design in Indonesia and the Academy of Design in Sri Lanka.

Discover more online by visiting www.northumbria.ac.uk/design

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences
rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk
07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk
07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk
07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact
Student Communications Manager
james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk