

## Loughborough University students design sustainable and creative office wear as part of competition

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Eleven fashion design and technology students at Loughborough University have secured their place in the finals of a design competition organised by business management software provider, [The Access Group](#), after being praised by judges for their ‘sustainable and creative designs’ for a new capsule workwear wardrobe for employees.

The Access Wear competition, which launched in March this year, asked BA (Hons) Fashion Design and Technology students to design a collection of fashionable, practical and comfortable workwear for employees. Nine judges selected the finalists to enter the next phase of the competition based on their submission of mood boards showing illustrations of their designs alongside fabric and pattern choices.

The finalists received praise from the judges for their consideration of sustainability, including using materials such as organic cotton, linen, recycled polyester, hemp and lyocell. The judges were especially impressed by a collection that was said to ‘showcase a great modern adaptation of workwear in 2024 and a new laid back but smart aesthetic’.

One designer was praised for the clear influence of ‘Japanese design and simplicity’ in their collection, while another received positive feedback for using different fabrics to march the seasons – including a waterproof option and a more elegant satin fabric for special occasions.

For the next stage of the competition, the students will create a prototype of their design and final product. These will then be showcased to the judges, with the winning student receiving a cash prize and

their design being available for purchase at the Access Wear employee store. All proceeds from the sales will go to charity.

The competition forms part of the student's first-year degree course. The chosen designers will spend the next seven months working on the second stage of their designs, followed by a final product reveal at a fashion show next year. The fashion show will take place during London Fashion Week, with guest judges from the fashion world invited to vote for their favourite collection.

Caroline Fanning, Chief Employee Success Officer, at The Access Group, said: *"We've been thrilled to see the creative designs the students have created. It was a hard decision for the judges, but the final 11 really shone through because of their flair and originality."*

"It's extremely important to us at The Access Group that our employees are comfortable in their workwear, whether that be at home or in the office. We're looking forward to seeing these designs come to life over the next few months. We wish the finalists the best of luck in the next phase."

Jenny Prendergast, programme leader for fashion design and technology at Loughborough University, added:

*"This competition has already helped our students with their learning and development on the course, allowing them to explore new avenues and gain experience working with a large corporation."*

"We are extremely proud of the designs and ideas they have created and how they have understood the brief."

Hollie Yeomans, student at Loughborough University, whose design was chosen to go into the next stage, said:

*"The Access Group competition gave me the creative freedom to take a diverse approach to designing the collection. The chance to design a t-shirt that the company would sell if I were to win excited me, so I thoroughly enjoyed the design process and drew inspiration from the company's ethos and workplace."*

Sasha Barnes-Crowhurst, also a competition finalist, added:

*"I have found this competition a great way to explore my creative style whilst working to a challenging yet exciting brief. I decided to create a functional and timeless collection, with staple pieces needed in comfortable workwear."*

The Access Group will also roll out the competition at universities in its other key global markets including Romania, Australia, US and Malaysia. For more information about The Access Group,

visit <https://www.theaccessgroup.com/en-gb/>