

CREATIVE ARTS AND FASHION

# Visual Merchandising



**WorldSkills Occupational Standards**

# WorldSkills Occupational Standards (WSOS)

## Occupation description and WSOS

### The name of the occupation is

Visual Merchandising

### Description of the associated work role(s) or occupation(s)

A visual merchandiser creates window and interior displays in shops and department stores thus is essentially responsible for the “look” of the retail outlet. The chief aim of a visual merchandiser is to maximize sales by communicating with the target audience and creating a positive atmosphere. The visual merchandiser communicates directly with the target audience through their designs and creates a positive impression which in turn impacts on the sales revenue of the business. Whilst not possible to precisely measure the impact of the visual merchandiser’s displays it is accepted that they are an increasingly important element of the marketing and sales mix of a successful retail business.

The visual merchandiser works in retail outlets, which are part of a group with central support functions and in small independent shops where there is greater personal autonomy and responsibility. The activities a visual merchandiser undertakes are based on interpreting and researching a brief, creating a design, and implementation – working with the products and their props.

Work organization and self-management, communication and interpersonal skills, problem solving, innovation and creativity: the ability to develop original ‘eye-catching’ concepts with the WOW factor which positively engage the target market and attention to detail/perfection are the universal attributes of the outstanding visual merchandiser.

The visual merchandiser may work in teams or alone, depending on the size of the business. In medium to large businesses they work very closely with marketing and sales teams. Whatever the structure of the work, the trained and experienced visual merchandiser takes on a high level of personal responsibility and autonomy. From understanding the goals and targets of marketing and sales departments, interpreting the brief correctly and understanding the behaviour of target markets to creating a display with the WOW factor every stage in the visual merchandising process matters and displays have a close relationship with sales revenues.

With the globalization of visual imagery and the international mobility of people, the visual merchandiser faces rapidly expanding opportunities and challenges. For the talented visual merchandiser there are many commercial and international opportunities; however, these carry with them the need to understand and work with diverse cultures, trends, and fashions. The diversity of skills associated with visual merchandising is therefore likely to expand.

## General notes on the WSOS

The WSOS specifies the knowledge, understanding, and specific skills that underpin international best practice in technical and vocational performance. It should reflect a shared global understanding of what the associated work role(s) or occupation(s) represent for industry and business ([www.worldskills.org/WSOS](http://www.worldskills.org/WSOS)).

The skill competition is intended to reflect international best practice as described by the WSOS, and to the extent that it is able to. The Standard is therefore a guide to the required training and preparation for the skill competition.

In the skill competition the assessment of knowledge and understanding will take place through the assessment of performance. There will only be separate tests of knowledge and understanding where there is an overwhelming reason for these.

The Standard is divided into distinct sections with headings and reference numbers added.

Each section is assigned a percentage of the total marks to indicate its relative importance within the Standards. This is often referred to as the “weighting”. The sum of all the percentage marks is 100. The weightings determine the distribution of marks within the Marking Scheme.

Through the Test Project, the Marking Scheme will assess only those skills that are set out in the Standards Specification. They will reflect the Standards as comprehensively as possible within the constraints of the skill competition.

The Marking Scheme will follow the allocation of marks within the Standards to the extent practically possible. A variation of up to five percent is allowed, provided that this does not distort the weightings assigned by the Standards.

# WorldSkills Occupational Standards

| Section                                   | Relative importance (%) |
|---|-------------------------|
| <b>1 Work organization and management</b> | <b>10</b>               |

The individual needs to know and understand:

- Health and safety legislation, obligations, regulations, and documentation
- The situations when personal protective clothing including footwear must be used
- The purposes, uses, care, maintenance, and safe/secure storage of hand/electric tools and equipment
- The purposes, uses, care and safe/secure storage of materials
- IT programmes for 2D and 3D design
- Techniques of time management to support productivity
- The principles of ergonomics to support efficient workflow
- The significance of sustainability and environmentally friendly work practices
- The value of managing own continuing professional development

The individual shall be able to:

- Follow health and safety standards, rules, and regulations
- Identify and use the appropriate personal protective clothing including safe footwear as required
- Select, use, clean, maintain, and store all tools, paint brushes, and equipment safely/securely
- Select, use materials including mixing paints, effectively/efficiently, and store safely/securely
- Plan, schedule and re-prioritize work as the need arises to meet deadlines
- Work well under pressure to meet the demands of the business
- Maintain safe and ergonomic working practices
- Keep the working area clean and tidy
- Discard waste ecologically
- Keep up-to-date with fashion, trends, and developments in the industry and society

| Section   | Relative importance (%) |
|---|-------------------------|
| <b>2 Communication and interpersonal skills</b> | <b>5</b>                |

The individual needs to know and understand:

- The roles and requirements of colleagues and professionals related to visual merchandising, e.g. brand managers
- The importance of building and maintaining productive working relationships with colleagues across the organization e.g. marketing and sales
- Techniques for effective teamwork
- The educational/social responsibility role of visual merchandising
- Negotiation methods e.g. purchasing materials
- Techniques for resolving misunderstandings and conflicting demands
- The features of a successful presentation

The individual shall be able to:

- Accurately determine the needs and aspirations of target audiences: internal and external customers
- Build and maintain trust of target audiences: internal and external customers
- Consistently manage effective verbal, and written communications with colleagues
- Listen, reflect, and respond positively and constructively to feedback from colleagues and external customers
- Professionally present ideas, rationale, and designs/displays to colleagues and related departments/professionals
- Reflect on and respond appropriately to questions and ideas from colleagues

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| <b>3 Problem solving, innovation, and creativity</b> | <b>15</b> |
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The individual needs to know and understand:

- The common types of problem which can occur within visual merchandising work e.g. improvisation of props
- Diagnostic approaches to problem solving
- Boundaries for resolving problems safely e.g. referring to an electrician
- Creative thinking techniques to generate unique designs
- Latest/future trends and fashions

| Section | Relative importance (%) |
|---------|-------------------------|
|---------|-------------------------|

The individual shall be able to:

- Recognize problems swiftly and follow a self-managed process for resolving
- Pro-actively re-prioritize internal customers' problems as the situation demands
- Recognize the boundaries of own expertise/responsibility and refer to the appropriate colleagues
- Gain inspiration e.g. through reviewing books/magazines/the internet, city/shop visits, films, exhibitions, and professional literature
- Maintain an "open mind" whilst accurately determining the needs of the target audience, internal, and external customer
- Use imagination and inspiration to generate original ideas
- Develop and maintain the confidence "to be different"
- Keep up to date with IT programmes for 2D and 3D design
- Lead changes in design for an organization

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|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>4 Interpret and research brief</b> | <b>10</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|

The individual needs to know and understand:

- The concept of visual merchandising: communicating with the target audience by attracting, connecting, and engaging with customers to maximize sales
- Roles of related departments/professionals and their focus/needs e.g. marketing and sales targets
- The floor plans and sizes of areas to be used for display purposes
- Target market consumer behaviour and aspirations
- The common factors which determine themes to include seasons of the year, current fashions/trends, special events, and promotions
- Composition of images

The individual shall be able to:

- Conduct research based on lifestyle concepts, trends, and store attributes
- Identify and effectively use research tools e.g. internet
- Research briefs, themes, and products/brands to design unique displays
- Research and develop display ideas to meet client/organizational goals/target market needs and aspirations
- Evaluate current trends in display design, equipment, and materials
- Develop original concepts which clearly meet client/organizational goals/target market needs and aspirations
- Create and professionally present clean, professional mood boards to colleagues, managers, and related departments/professionals to include sketches, images, and colour fabric charts

| Section         | Relative importance (%) |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| <b>5 Design</b> | <b>20</b>               |

The individual needs to know and understand:

- Full range of applications of IT programs e.g. Photoshop and Illustrator
- Technological developments and how to exploit them
- Rendering
- Graphic design/2D design
- Design of props and spaces/3D design

The individual shall be able to:

- Make 2D and 3D designs, e.g. displays and windows with props and text
- Visualize and accurately 'translate' ideas and designs
- Demonstrate brand empathy
- Produce scale drawings by hand and by computer using Photoshop and Illustrator
- Work within the available budgets
- Professionally present visuals to colleagues, managers and related departments/professionals and gain "sign off"

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|-------------------------|-----------|
| <b>6 Implementation</b> | <b>40</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------|

The individual needs to know and understand:

- Principles of window display to include use and effectiveness of colour shapes and text, utilization, and most efficient use of space, balance, grouping, and product dynamics, focus, and specific use of lighting
- The objectives of window display: to achieve brand compatibility, effective display of products, impact, drama, commerciality, and aesthetics
- Materials and their purposes/characteristics e.g. wood, MDF, PVC, glue, and paints

The individual shall be able to:

- Select and display merchandise according to their characteristics, interpretation of the original concepts and Briefs
- Present a range of products to include fashion, accessories, tableware, and books
- Collect, present, and support the merchandise to communicate effectively with the target markets
- Handle all merchandise, mannequins, and materials with care including furniture, plinths, and support structures
- Accurately and efficiently plan task breakdowns for installation, including timings
- Select, tint, and paint pure and clean surfaces to decorate walls, fixtures, and panels
- Use different types of materials and tools to measure and cut precisely, and finish display

| Section   | Relative importance (%) |
|---|-------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cover floors and walls with materials as appropriate</li> <li>• Professionally construct self-designed props, to enhance the theme, support the merchandise and communicate effectively with the target markets</li> <li>• Collect and style products, dress, and style mannequins for maximum effect to enhance themes, support the merchandise, and communicate effectively with the target markets</li> <li>• Select and place all props, materials, and mannequins in an effective composition in windows to enhance themes, support the branding of the merchandise, and communicate effectively with the target markets</li> <li>• Maximize space and layouts of areas to best advantage</li> <li>• Make creative use of lighting, allocate spotlights, and adjust lighting as required to ensure merchandise is highlighted appropriately</li> <li>• Review displays to ensure they are aesthetically pleasing and have the WOW factor</li> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of window displays in supporting the intended merchandise and brands</li> <li>• Check the final standard of installations and ensure they are complete, safe, neat, clean, tidy professional, and finished on time</li> <li>• Analyse feedback and respond appropriately, making suggestions for improvements</li> </ul> |                         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>100</b>              |



## References for industry consultation

WorldSkills is committed to ensuring that the WorldSkills Occupational Standards fully reflect the dynamism of internationally recognized best practice in industry and business. To do this WorldSkills approaches a number of organizations across the world that can offer feedback on the draft Description of the Associated Role and WorldSkills Occupational Standards on a two-yearly cycle.

In parallel to this, WSI consults three international occupational classifications and databases:

- ISCO-08: (<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco08/>) ILO 3432
- ESCO: (<https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/home> )
- O\*NET OnLine ([www.onetonline.org/](http://www.onetonline.org/))

Your WSOS appears most closely to relate to *Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers*:  
<https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/27-1026.000>

or *Visual Merchandiser*:

<http://data.europa.eu/esco/occupation/35eb0aa6-b40d-449d-9390-719be8912277>

Adjacent occupations can also be explored through these links.

The following table indicates which organizations were approached and provided valuable feedback for the Description of the Associated Role and WorldSkills Occupational Standards in place for WorldSkills Shanghai 2022.

There were no responses to our requests for feedback during this cycle.