

Brand Guidelines 2021

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Role of the document

These guidelines govern the unique look and feel of our branding.

In this guide, you'll find the key copy and design principles for implementing our brand elements across external campaigns and comms.



This is **Future Learning**



Brand overview

FutureLearn is a global social learning platform that delivers life-changing learning through top online courses from the world's leading universities and brands.

Here at FutureLearn, our purpose is to transform access to education. We do that by partnering with over a quarter of the world's top universities to support over 15 million learners across the globe to develop skills and achieve their personal and professional goals.

We're a leading social learning platform founded in December 2012 by The Open University and are now jointly owned by The Open University in the UK and The SEEK Group.

We use design, technology and partnerships to create enjoyable, credible and flexible short online courses and microcredentials, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. In addition to top universities, we also partner with leading organisations such as Accenture, the British Council, CIPD, Raspberry Pi and Health Education England (HEE), as well as being involved in government-backed initiatives to address skills gaps, working with companies like The Institute of Coding and the National Centre for Computing Education.



Branding & Layout

- Logo
- Clear space
- Co-branding
- Colour palette
- Gradients
- Typography
- Highlight
- Lock-up Guide
- Highlight examples
- Icons
- Accessibility

01



Logo

Our logo is designed to be legible and flexible. There are basic rules for its use, but its placement should be dictated by what best suits the application.



Clear space

We must always ensure our logo has enough space to stand out and is clearly legible. The example (right) shows the clear space we want to keep around our logo.

Minimum size

There are different sizes for logo use in print and on-screen. The minimum size is shown on the right.



Colours

There are three colour variations of our logo:

- pink steps with black type for use on white or light grey backgrounds
- all black for use on light-coloured backgrounds
- all white for use on dark-coloured backgrounds
- all white for use on dark-coloured backgrounds
- minimum size 10mm / 50px.



Standard

White, off-white or light grey backgrounds.



White

Dark-coloured backgrounds.



Black

Light-coloured backgrounds.

Co-branding

Our logo will often be paired with the logo of one of our partners. There are some simple rules for how to do this:

- the FutureLearn logo should always be on the left
- clear space rules should be followed
- the logos should be separated by a thin grey vertical rule
- the partner logo should be scaled to match either the width (x) or height (y) of the FutureLearn logo, but should not be larger than either measurement
- the logos should be centred on the vertical axis.



Colour palette

Our colour palette brings vibrancy and energy to the FutureLearn brand.

Core palette

Our core colours are pink, blue, and yellow, supported by black and white. We've included white in our core palette because the use of white space is a key visual element of our identity.

Supplementary palettes

The colours in our secondary palette are taken from our gradient. These are designed to give us more flexibility where needed, but should be used sparingly. We also have a greyscale palette.

Core palette



FL Pink
#DE00A5
RGB: 222 0 165
CMYK: 10 100 0 0
PMS: 233



White
#FFFFFF
RGB: 255 255 255
CMYK: 0 0 0 0



Gradient
#DE00A5
RGB: 222 0 65
CMYK: 0 10 100 0

Gradient
#FF8151
RGB: 255 129 81
CMYK: 0 60 90 0

Secondary palette



Ultramarine
#5000E2
RGB: 80 0 226
CMYK: 90 65 0 0
PMS:



Purple
#8700CD
RGB: 135 0 205
CMYK: 70 80 0 0
PMS:



Violet
#B100BC
RGB: 177 0 188
CMYK: 55 87 0 0
PMS:



Coral
#FF4A6E
RGB: 255 74 110
CMYK: 0 85 55 0
PMS:



Orange
#FF8151
RGB: 255 129 81
CMYK: 0 60 90 0
PMS:



Gold
#FFAA54
RGB: 255 170 84
CMYK: 0 40 70 0
PMS:



Dark Blue
#020235
RGB: 3 1 56
CMYK: 100 94 42 61
PMS:



FL Blue
#2451FC
RGB: 36 81 252
CMYK: 100 70 0 0



FL Yellow
#FECB51
RGB: 254 203 81
CMYK: 0 20 90 0
PMS:



FL Black
#3A343A
RGB: 58 52 58
CMYK: 20 0 0 90
PMS:



Medium Grey
#727376
RGB: 114 115 118
CMYK: 54 42 40 25
PMS:



Soft Grey
#CACACC
RGB: 202 202 204
CMYK: 24 18 18 0
PMS:

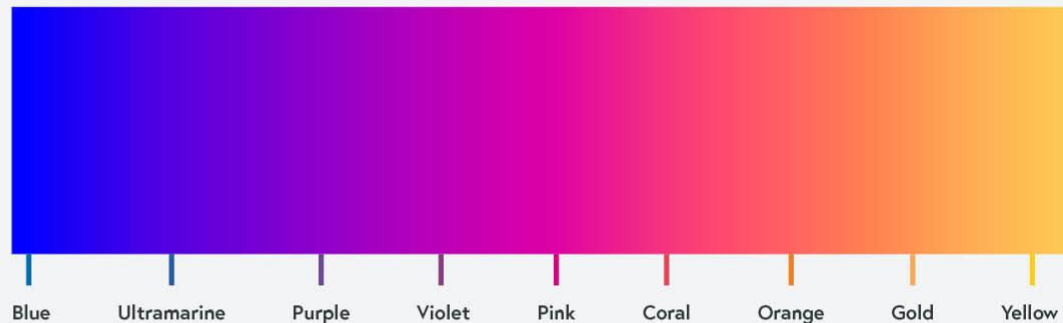


Geinsboro
#FAFAFA
RGB: 250 250 250
CMYK: 0 2 2 0
PMS:

Gradients

Rather than our brand relying on a single colour, we've created a unique core gradient to symbolise a learner's journey from discovery to enlightenment.

Full gradient spectrum



Gradient
#5000E2
RGB: 80 0 226
CMYK:

Gradient
#B100BC
RGB: 177 0 188
CMYK:



Gradient
#DE00A5
RGB: 222 0 65
CMYK: 0 10 100 0

Gradient
#FF8151
RGB: 255 129 81
CMYK: 0 60 90 0

Typography

We use Europa, a geometric sans-serif typeface with humanist influences. This gives us a modern yet friendly appearance.

Europa

Bold

Use for headlines and quotes.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Regular

Use for sub headers and body copy.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Light

Use for small-scale text and to create contrast.

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg
Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn
Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu
Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Highlight

To accompany the typography, we implement a graphic highlight device to add emphasis to our copy lines and draw attention to keywords we want the viewer to notice and remember. We also use this highlight in static placements.

This is **Future Learning**

Europa Regular

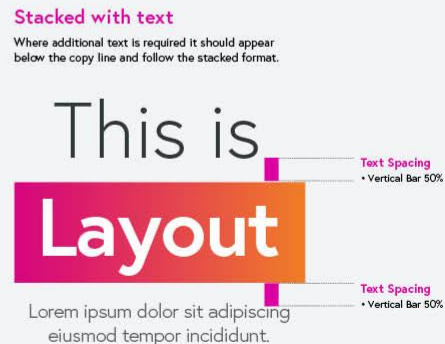
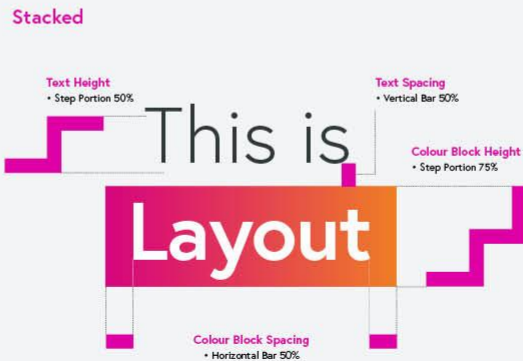
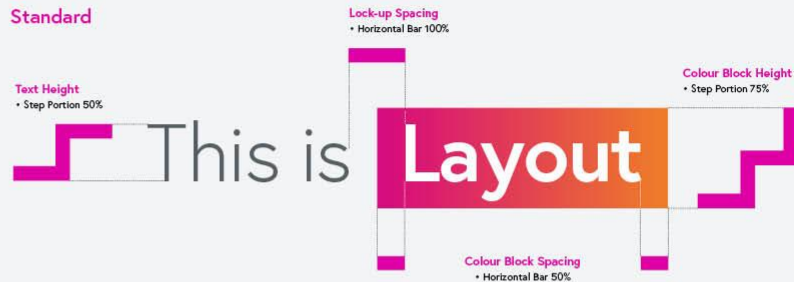
Europa Bold

This is **Future Learning**

Gradient Block

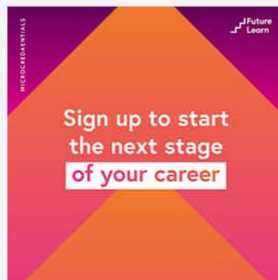
Lock-up guide

The 'step' measurement guide is used to create the copy line and highlight block.



Highlight examples

The examples illustrate how the highlight can be used in multiple ways.



Mobile Homepage Layout : Long Copy line





Icons

We use icons as part of our brand to support navigational elements and signify course categories.

FutureLearn icons have a distinct visual style. They are always outlines with a single stroke weight and a break in the line. Our sharing icons are exceptions to these rules and follow the guidelines of the respective brands.

Our icon suite is constantly growing and can be found and downloaded as individual SVGs in our Pattern Library.

[Download icon sets here](#)

Interaction icons



Category icons



Sharing icons



Accessibility

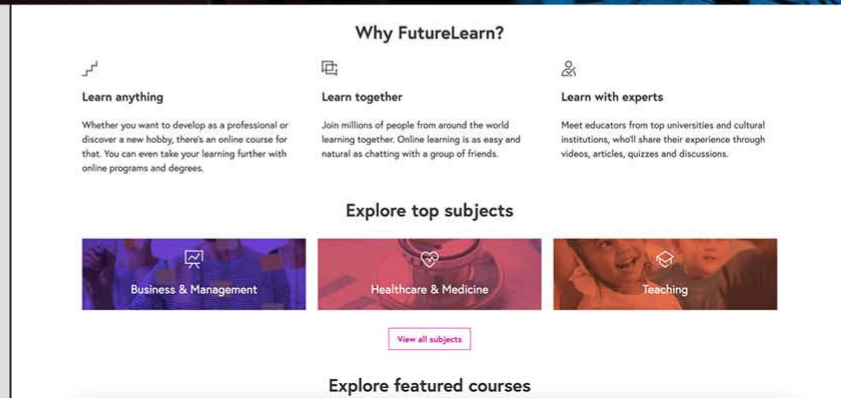
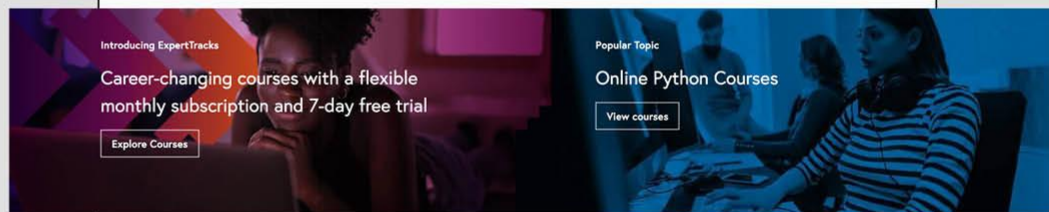
Images used in our website modules often require modifications to meet accessibility standards. This ensures all text is legible throughout the site.

There are 3 module variations used throughout the site:

Modules that use white text only use FutureLearn Blue, Ultramarine, Purple or Violet background overlays.

Modules that have a white background require copy in FutureLearn Black. Pink is used only for links.

Full bleed imagery used as backgrounds must ensure copy is legible when a module becomes responsive and copy relocates to various parts of the image.





Tone of voice

- The FutureLearn personality
- Tone of voice principles

02



The FutureLearn personality


Our brand personality helps to bring us closer to our audience and opens up a shared world of conversation and learning.

As a brand, we're progressively disruptive.

We encourage our learners to explore everything and feel confident that they can improve their lives through knowledge, and in turn, transform the world around them.

Think of us as:

- the mentor who saw your potential.
- the push you need to take the first step.



Things to remember when speaking for FutureLearn



[See our full Tone of Voice Guidelines](#)

Education is for everyone

We pitch ourselves as the authority on online learning without using formal or overly academic language. Use plain English, no jargon or slang, and simple, succinct phrasing that gets straight to the point.

Build a connection

Strive to be the human face of online learning. Channel our social learning ethos by referring to learners as 'you', using contractions like 'can't' and 'you'll', and choosing positive and human language that shows you're by their side every step of the way.

Inspire your audience

Learning leads to self-exploration, improvement, and realisation. Engage your readers in the life-changing potential of learning with bold word choices, energising rhythm and alliteration, and thought-provoking questions that inspire a two-way conversation.



Brand & Product

- Overview
- Establishing FutureLearn
- Promoting our products
- ExpertTracks
- Microcredentials

03

Overview

We use many marketing channels to target audiences at various stages in the consumer lifecycle. We alter our message and how we present our brand depending on what they know and understand about us.

For those who are unfamiliar with FutureLearn or online learning (cold audiences), we have to introduce the brand and explain our key USPs.

For those who are familiar with us (a warm audience), we talk more directly about our offering. For hot audiences (those who have shown interest and intent), we'll use more specific messaging about a course and its benefits.

Introducing FutureLearn

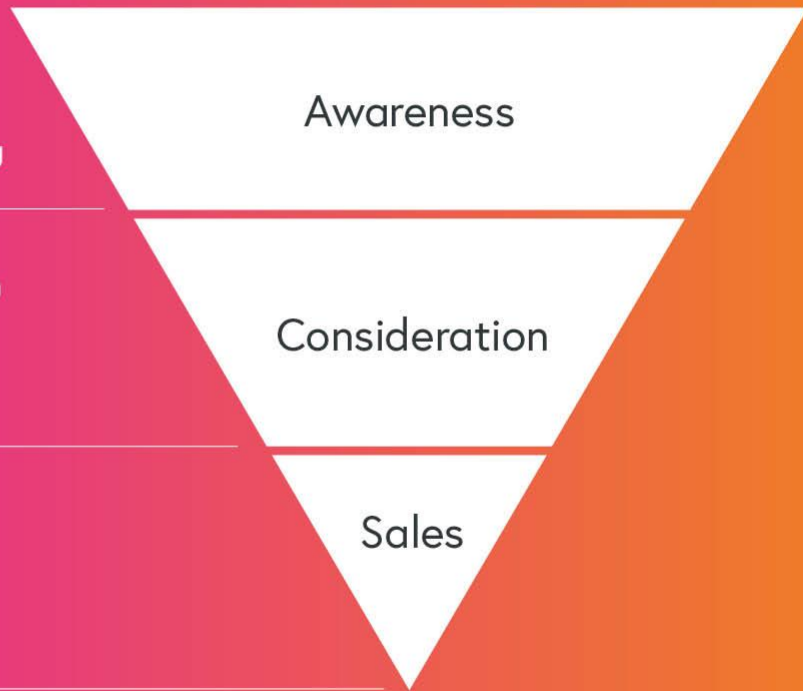
'Cold' learner mindset:
Busy, distracted, browsing

Establishing FutureLearn

'Warm' learner mindset:
Searching for information

Driving conversion

'Hot' learner mindset:
Ready to learn



Establishing FutureLearn

This is **Future Learning**

World-class education. Online.
On-demand. For everyone.

What is it?

'This is Future Learning' is our creative platform that articulates our forward-thinking ethos and unique perspective on the world.

A unified voice and identity

This creative wrapper allows us to consistently and impactfully present our USPs, using language and visual elements that are uniquely ownable to FutureLearn.

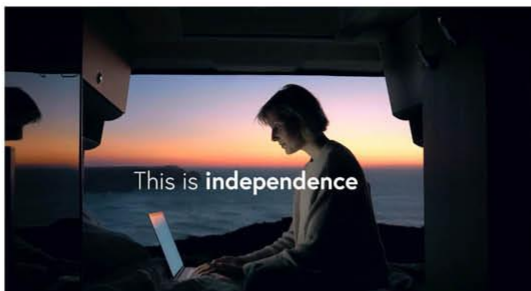
Claiming the future of online learning

It solidifies our place as a future-facing brand in the online learning space. We're boldly presenting our aspirations for what FutureLearn can be for millions of people globally.

[Find out more](#)

Establishing FutureLearn

Our brand campaigns should establish our offering and develop an emotional connection with potential learners using the 'This Is Future Learning' creative platform.



FutureLearn's first ever brand campaign emphasised the power online learning has to transform individual and collective futures.

[Watch FutureLearn's' campaign video](#)



The 'Your Future's Good' campaign introduced the FutureLearn brand to 16 to 21 year olds receiving their exam results and deciding on their next step.

[Watch 'Your Future's Good' campaign video](#)



Our 'Future of Learning' trend report explored the future of education. It features data and learner insights with expert commentary and analysis.

[Visit our 'This Is Future Learning' landing page](#)

Promoting our products

It's important our learners can easily understand the difference between the products we offer, as well as their key benefits.

We've developed specific ways to communicate our products through the visual style and language we use. You can find out more about this in the individual toolkits for our priority products, linked on the following slides.



ExpertTracks

Overview

The ExpertTracks product identity uses a unique arrow device to represent forward momentum and career achievement.

- Apply left-to-right or upwards.
- Use pink > coral > orange gradient.
- Use the oversized variation for paid media UGC content.



[See our ExpertTracks Partner Toolkit](#)

ExpertTracks: Imagery and colour

Hero images should be career-focussed and vibrant, capturing a candid and natural unposed moment. These should skew towards the 25-35 young professional demographic. Straight-to-camera imagery is used exclusively for paid media acquisition content.

- Hero images should heavily contrast with the arrow device gradient.
- Ensure images provide enough dead space to accommodate copy.
- Use the brighter gradient highlights to enhance vibrancy.
- Use the darker gradient highlights to provide copy legibility.



[See our ExpertTracks Partner Toolkit](#)

ExpertTracks: Language and copy

Headlines should be inspirational and define a clear journey from the current status quo to a desired positive outcome, eg "Dreaming big to dream career".

Example headlines for cold audiences:

Benefit-led headlines introducing audiences to key USPs of ExpertTracks:

Career-changing courses

Certify your skills with leading experts

Learn whenever, wherever

In-demand skills, on demand

Example headlines for warm audiences:

Alliterated or rhyming examples of career progression using 'from - to' mechanic:

**From starting out
to start-up CEO**

**From always online
to fighting cyber crime**

**From people person
to psychology pro**

**From social scroller
to campaign controller**

Example headlines for hot audiences:

Course specific copy highlighting course USPs and benefits:

**Supercharge your
career with Allbright**

**Explore Data Visualisation
with Tableau**

**Sharpen you UX Design
skills with Canva**

**Explore Business Innovation
with Coventry University**

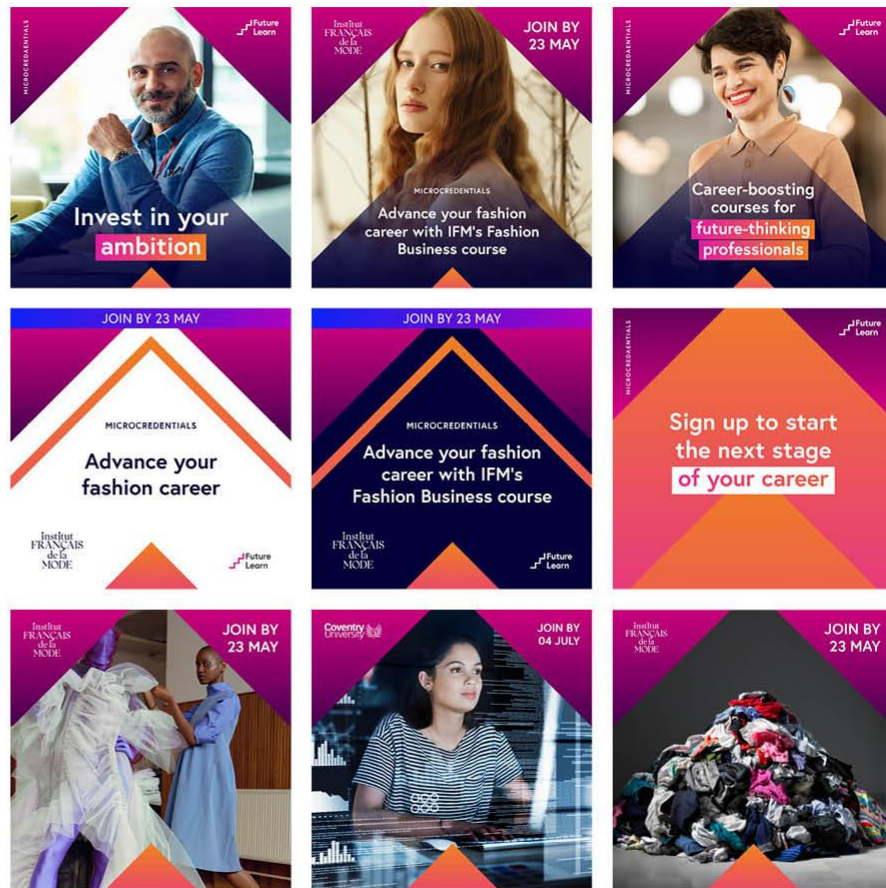
[See our ExpertTracks Partner Toolkit](#)

Microcredentials

Overview

The microcredentials product identity uses a unique arrow framing device to represent career achievement, upward mobility, and success.

- There are several device variations depending on the content type.
- Always apply the arrow pointing upwards.



[See our Microcredentials Partner Toolkit](#)

Microcredentials: Imagery and colour

Hero images can be candid moments or straight-to-camera. They should be career-focussed and in an appropriate professional setting. They should skew towards the 30-45 demographic.

- Hero images should heavily contrast with the arrow device gradient.
- Ensure images will fit the framing device appropriately.
- Colours use a premium palette of navy with pink highlighting.
- Orange can be used as an alternative highlight.



[See our Microcredentials Partner Toolkit](#)

Microcredentials: Language and copy

Copy should focus on the next steps of career progression and highlight positive professional messaging, eg 'invest in your ambition', 'advance your career'. CTAs should have urgency with clear user journey guidance, eg 'Join by'.

[See our Microcredentials Partner Toolkit](#)

Tier 1 copy examples:

Short, benefit-led copy for cold audiences

**Advance your
fashion career**

**Become a leader in
fashion sustainability**

**Master project
management**

Excel at online teaching

Tier 2 copy examples:

Benefit-led copy with course description for warm audiences

**Advance your fashion career with
IFM's Fashion Business course**

**Master project management
with specialists at QA**

Tier 3 copy examples:

Feature certification and course benefits for hot audiences

**Advance your fashion career with
certification in Fashion Business**

**Master project management
and earn PRINCE2® certification**



Photography

- Brand imagery
- Choosing imagery
- Technical considerations

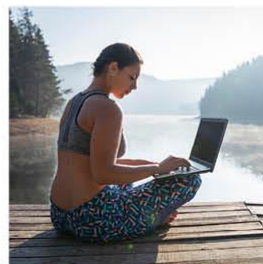
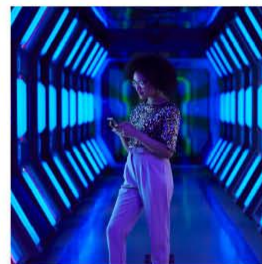
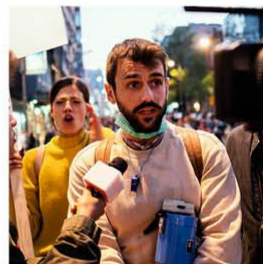
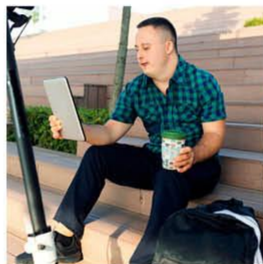
04

Brand imagery

FutureLearn's photography captures multiple subjects and learning environments.

Through our photography, we communicate the global nature of our online community, as well as the limitless opportunities that are available to learners.

The imagery should be optimistic, engaging, fun, and diverse, celebrating the individual stories of our learners worldwide.



Choosing imagery

Imagery should be relevant to both the subject and the audience. Hero shots are set in the 'real world' and tell an exciting visual story. We're looking for honest emotions and relatable situations, not obviously staged setups.

We should pay attention to gender and ethnicity with image choices. This illustrates our global community of learners and promotes marginalised groups in areas where representation may be low.



Technical considerations

We use full-bleed imagery to bring hero shots to life. However, we use a set of overlay gradients to guarantee that the image is as vibrant as possible and also to ensure that copy can be applied to assets in a legible way.





Web & social

- Marketing landing pages
- Instagram
- Instagram templates
- Instagram grid
- Email

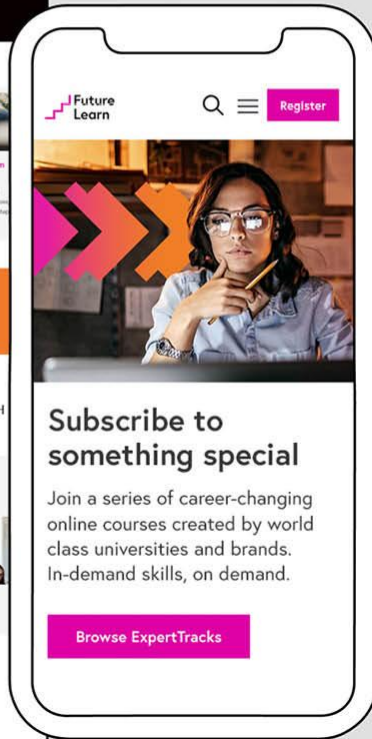
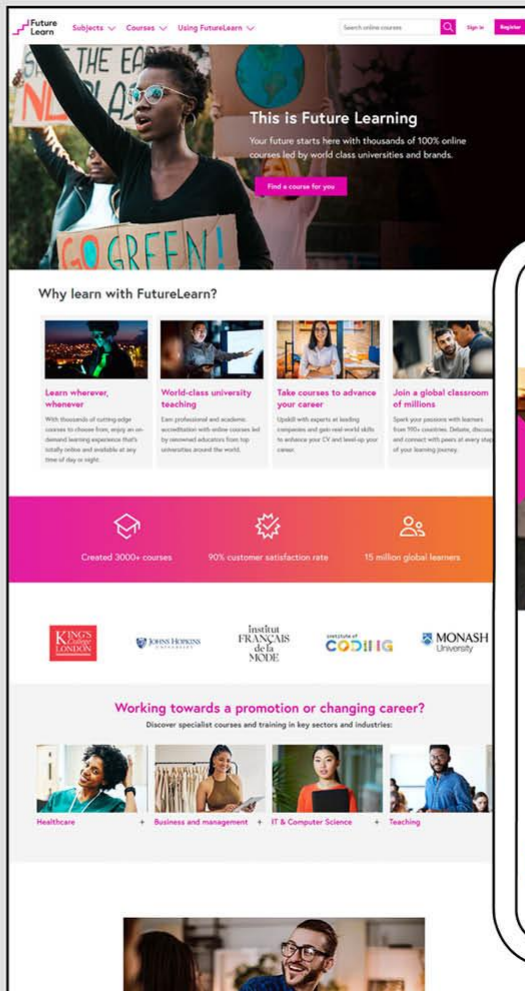
05

Marketing landing pages

These pages are campaign-specific and sit separately from the work of the UX team on the main site. They are crafted using a set of WordPress templates.

We create these to align with the approved look and feel of a brand or marketing campaign as well as the target audience.

The hero module reflects the full-bleed imagery used in the campaign. These are supported by various other modules using approved and consistent assets, such as the colour palette, our gradients, and icons.



Instagram

Instagram is a great tool for communicating the internal and external culture of FutureLearn, as well as highlighting the personal success stories of our learners.

We create a bright and engaging grid that showcases a variety of content, including quotes, learner stories, celebrity soundbites, and bespoke FutureLearn tips for success.



Instagram templates

Templates give a consistent look and feel to our core content and franchises, whilst helping streamline our content creation and approval processes.

They also allow us to produce different content strands that our followers can recognise within our feeds, like learner stories or productivity hacks.



1080 x 1080



1920 x 1080



1080 x 1920



GRADIENT



WHITE + HIGHLIGHT



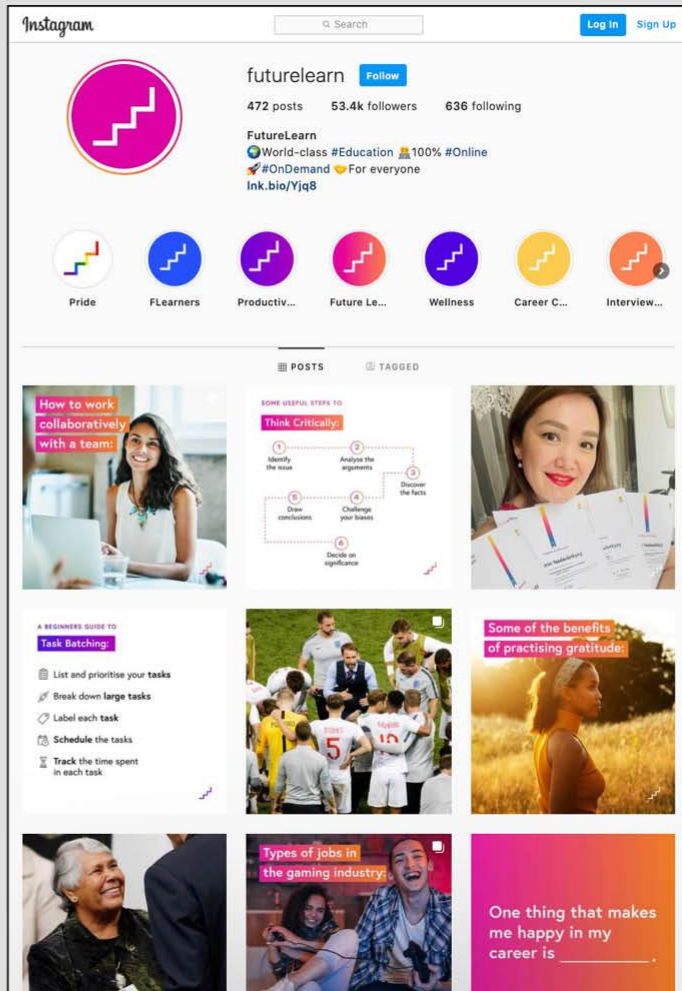
WHITE + HIGHLIGHT

[Link to Social Template deck](#)

Instagram grid

Instagram is a highly visual platform which we use to build a strong brand visual identity that our followers can recognise straight away.

Our ongoing social formats include informative 'study hacks', inspirational quotes from famous figures, and engaging photography that builds an emotional connection with our audience. We flex our style for each format to ensure high engagement, eg using a white background on a 'study hacks' post to ensure learners can easily read and use the content.

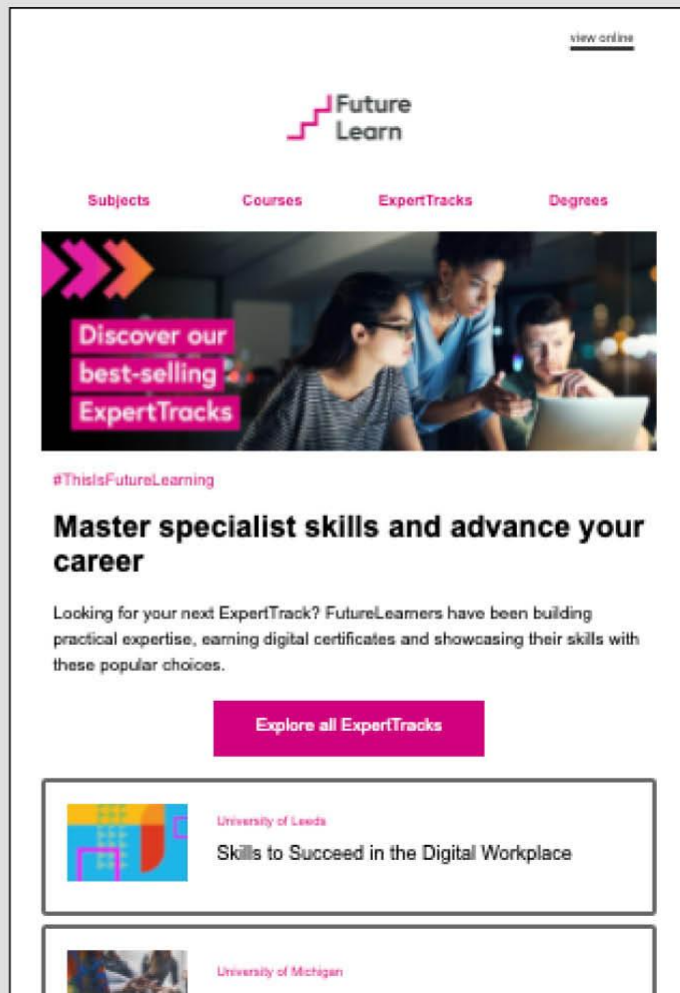


Email

We use emails to engage directly with our learners, keeping them up-to-date on FutureLearn, our new courses, and our campaigns.

Our emails are built using a set of templates that are responsively designed for both mobile and desktop. These templates use a modular system, allowing us to create bespoke emails efficiently.

We integrate photography that aligns with our brand guidelines but for course feature modules, the imagery pulls from the course landing page.





Brand assets

06

Brand assets

We have a number of additional documents and tools to help you understand our brand better.

Click the play button to access the documents >



Brand Direction Playbook

Defines the direction of the FutureLearn brand and illustrates how to communicate it to our learners, partners, and colleagues.



Company Values & Behaviours

This document defines FutureLearn's internal values, as well as strategic pillars that influence company culture and set us up for long term success.



Presentation Template

You can use this designed template for any internal or external presentations.



Icons

Our icon suite can be found and downloaded as individual SVGs in our pattern library.



Photography (for internal use only)

We have a selection of photography that can be used for presentations or other internal use.



ExpertTracks toolkit

This toolkit is for our partners and outlines how we market ExpertTracks.



Microcredentials toolkit

This toolkit is for our partners and outlines how we market microcredentials.



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Thanks!

Any Questions?

Chat to the Creative Studio on email:
creative.studio@futurelearn.com

or Slack:
[#creative-studio](#)