

Queensland Training Awards 2018

3207-VOC Vocational Student of the Year (Region: South East)

Odin Lowsley

Overview

With a love of design and creativity, Odin aspired to fast-track his education and gain the required qualifications to move into a career in graphic design faster than a traditional education path would allow. He looked to vocational education and training (VET) at TAFE Queensland for the answers, and has not looked back.

After completing a Certificate III in Multimedia in Year 10, Odin went on to complete a fulltime Diploma in Graphic Design at TAFE Queensland, rather than continue to Year 11. Odin graduated at the top of the 2017 class, with a swag of work experience under his belt and a number of awards. He used his VET qualification and hands-on experience as a stepping-stone to gain entry to a double-degree at Griffith University (Business and Design) at just 16.

While studying at TAFE Queensland, Odin took every opportunity for work-integrated learning that was presented, completing numerous designs for real-life clients both internal and external to TAFE. Through this process, Odin won the City of Gold Coast - 'What the Gold Coast means to me?' artwork competition, with a well thought-out, beautiful computer-generated artwork. Such was the quality of Odin's work that the council have since worked with him to translate the artwork into a 6m mural which has been installed at the Broadwater, Southport, and featured in the Bulletin, Blank Magazine and Channel 7 and 9 news.

Odin left school at a very young age to follow his dreams with determination, a level of enthusiasm and professionalism that is beyond his years. This approach will serve him well at university and in achieving his dream to work for LEGO as a designer.

"Being able to study what I love with supportive, experienced people around me was a dream come true." Odin

Criterion 1: Career and study achievements

Odin was a high achiever academically at school, Tallebudgera State Schools Dux and Palm Beach-Currumbin State High School (PBC) Academic Award winner, however, a traditional pathway was not satisfying Odin's career aspirations.

In Year-10 at PBC in 2016, Odin completed a Certificate III in Multimedia at TAFE Queensland, attending classes at the TAFE Coomera Creative Hub every Friday. Here Odin found an outlet for his great love of design and creativity through the hands-on learning experience offered in VET. He enjoyed the experience so much that Odin decided he would like to undertake a fulltime Diploma of Graphic Design, rather than continuing onto Year 11.

To gain entry to the TAFE Queensland Diploma at only 15, Odin completed a number of interviews with staff to ensure he had the level of maturity required to study with a large group of predominately 20+ year-olds. Odin was accepted into the course and completed his fulltime Diploma in Graphic Design with TAFE Queensland in 2017 at the top of his class.

At the TAFE Queensland Gold Coast Diploma Awards 2017, he was awarded:

- Creative Industries Student of the Year
- Overall Student of the Year

During the Diploma, Odin submitted an entry to the prestigious 'What the Gold Coast means to me?' Student Art Competition. He put an enormous amount of research, hardwork and time into preparing his artwork, applying his learning about colour and visual storytelling and his natural creative flair in his representation of Gold Coast buildings and landmarks. Odin took out the award against his fellow classmates and students from other institutions.

The awards he has received and his exceptional results, demonstrate Odin's commitment to his studies. On the basis of his achievements, at just 16, Odin was offered a place at Griffith University in a double-degree in Business and Design (majoring in Marketing and Graphic Design), which he has now started.

"Even though few people know of the pathway to university via TAFE that I took, students with a focused career passion could find this pathway more rewarding than pursuing the traditional high school approach. It has allowed me to enter university a year faster than my high school peers, while also providing me with industry-recognised Graphic Design qualifications. I will complete my degree course earlier because of my recognised prior learning credits, and even save money on my university fees." Odin

Criterion 2: Communication, team and leadership skills

Odin started his Diploma at just 15, among a class who were mostly in their 20's. From the beginning Odin demonstrated the maturity and communication skills required to work with others well beyond his years. Not only was he capable of holding his own with older students, he thrived in the learning environment. He drew on feedback from others to improve his concepts and output and shared his ideas and suggestions for their work. Odin's contribution has been valued by his peers and his learning has flourished as a result of the support and advice of others.

In completing his Diploma, Odin championed the pursuit of excellence through hard work and focused on supporting his team members in the classroom to do the same. His determination, commitment and driving force to be the best Graphic Designer he can be was inspirational to his class mates. The rest of the class found it hard to keep up, but realised they too could excel like Odin through applying themselves and learning from those around them.

Odin worked closely with his teachers throughout his Diploma, asking questions without hesitation to gather information for his learning and development. He respects the depth of professional industry experience held by the teaching staff at TAFE Queensland in both design and working with clients. He sought their professional advice and input and applied his learnings to his work throughout his studies.

It was Odin's talent and commitment to excellence that led to him being awarded the Diploma Creative Industries Student and Overall Student Awards. He delivered a final 'Showcase Set-up' that was beyond his years, drawing on the exceptional depth and creativity of his portfolio, and winning an award on the night. At the Diploma awards function, Odin presented confidently and engagingly to over 100 people in the Auditorium, including the General Manager, students, parents and teachers in attendance, as part of the showcase.

"If you know what you want to do and you're willing to work hard at it and challenge yourself, you can achieve amazing things." Odin

Criterion 3: Ability to represent the national training system at a broader level

Odin's story is proof of what can be achieved through vocational education and training and the opportunity presented by VET as an alternative pathway to university, in this case fast-tracking his career. Odin learnt a lot about the training system and industry-recognised Graphic Design qualifications during the process to get approval to undertake the Diploma at 15. He is a passionate advocate for alternative pathways for high-school students.

Odin jumped at every opportunity presented to him to engage with industry through work-integrated learning activities, both internal and external. He developed logos, ads, banners and business cards for a Childcare centre, and was selected as the winning concept for several real-world briefs including Depot Nightclub, TAFE Film Festival (logo, poster, flyers) and TAFE Exploring Industry Seminar (working with his teacher, client and graphic designer). Through developing his entries, Odin learnt how to work with clients, discuss concepts, ideas, pricing, drafting and sketching, skills that he has already applied in the development of his own fledgling graphic design business.

When Odin won the Gold Coast art competition, the award was presented at the Coomera Campus by the City of Gold Coast, with the Gold Coast Bulletin standing by to do a story on him. For any 16-year-old this would be both overwhelming and nerve-racking, however Odin took it in his stride and should be commended for how professional and personable he was, especially at such a young age. As a result, Odin and his artwork were featured twice in the Bulletin, once in a full page spread.

After winning the award, Odin was contacted by council requesting to use the artwork for a mural. He worked with council to translate his award-winning design to meet the requirements for installation on a 6m wall. Working with a real client, Odin demonstrated his maturity, professionalism and technical ability to deliver, and gained an invaluable insight to the world of commercial graphic design. Odin's mural version of the artwork has recently been installed and will be seen by many people, particularly throughout the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. The mural has also featured on Channel 7 and 9 news and in Blank Magazine.

"I thought about how far the Gold Coast has come as a city so I wanted to incorporate everything that makes it iconic, and hoped that everyone who saw it would be able to relate to it in some way". Odin

Criterion 4: Other pursuits

"Life has myriad opportunities if you keep your eyes open for them, don't just accept that what everyone else is doing is the best choice for you." Odin

With his learning and experience at TAFE Queensland, Odin has already setup his own design business (www.legodin.com), completing work for a number of clients, growing his industry contacts and extending his connections through his interests.

Combining his passion for graphic design, LEGO and Marvel, Odin has completed numerous lego-related designs that are developing a significant following on his Instagram page ([@legodin](https://www.instagram.com/legodin)). For every new marvel superhero trailer or movie, Odin will design a poster as a design challenge. He uses this interest to grow his design ability and build his knowledge of new software, tools and design trends.

As professional development, Odin aims to create one design a day, incorporating new skills or design techniques. This keeps his ideas fresh and provides a focal point for renewing his knowledge and learning new things.

"An extremely innovative student, Odin excelled in all his course subjects consistently delivering an exceptionally high level of refined art, graphic and web based design work. Always prepared with an extraordinary abundance of enthusiasm, his entertaining delivery and task management skills, I would recommend he is more than capable of representing the national training system or any organisation he believes in. With a caring and respectful attitude, whether individual or team situation, Odin's communication and team leadership qualities are excellent and will be an asset to any field or pursuit he chooses to venture into next." Kat Queenan, Teacher

Ultimately, Odin aspires to design for LEGO, but in the short term, would love to work for a design studio, creating logos, advertisements and interfaces for a variety of clients. As he continues his education through his double-degree, Odin has a clear goal in his mind of pursuing his dream career at LEGO.

"I want to further my education. I want to be successful. I want to make an impact..." Odin

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