

GET-a-JOB
HOW TO GET A JOB IN...

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Graphic designers plan, supervise, analyze and create the visual solutions to communication needs, including the use of a variety of print, electronic and film media and technologies.

Trends

Graphic designers work mainly in specialized design services, such as publishing, advertising, or public relations. Some freelance either full-time or part-time, and may hold another salaried job in design or in another occupation. In 2014, about 24% of graphic designers were self-employed.

Available positions for graphic designers is expected to grow by 7% by 2022, which is slower than average for all fields. Competition is keen since there are many talented individuals who pursue this career field.

Education & Training

Strong art skills are important. A bachelor's degree is required for most entry-level positions; a master's degree is an advantage. Many colleges offer degrees in graphic design, art, graphics, or visual arts, which can provide a strong foundation for a career in graphic design. Graduates of two- and three-year professional schools may get certificates or associate degrees in design that normally qualify them as assistants to designers. Training in computer-aided software is a must.

Tips for Breaking In

- Obtain an internship, co-op or related part-time position
- Develop a strong portfolio to showcase your artistic skills
- Freelance whenever possible, starting in college
- Learn how to use design software (e.g. Adobe InDesign)
- Become familiar with website design software as well
- Enter creative works of art in shows/competitions

Licenses & Certifications

Certificate programs in design usually are 2-3 years long and may or may not include training in computer-aided software; still, a bachelor's degree is the industry standard. Certifications in some of the software programs are available to those interested, but creative talent is still the first requirement.

Earnings

Earnings depend on employer, location, and other factors. The average salary (2014) for graphic designers was \$45,900. Freelance designers may make more or less than the average. Average salaries for specific, non-entry-level positions in graphic design are

Graphic Design Specialist	\$51,561
Web Designer	\$65,299
Graphic Design Manager	\$107,585

Types of Employers

Advertising Agencies	Public Relations Firms
Newspapers	Animation Studios
Television Studios	Self-employed (Freelance)
Magazine Publishing Houses	Movie/Film Studios
Industrial Design Firms	Architectural Firms
Corporations	Book Publishing Houses
Package Design Firms	Colleges / Universities
Printing Companies	Art Galleries
Interior Design Firms	Greeting Card Companies

Example Employers

Disney	Admark Graphic Systems
Impact Technology Group	The Bolt Group
M Décor, Inc.	Signs, Etc.
FQR Marketing, Inc.	Full-House Productions
Charlotte Bobcats	Hallmark
UNC Charlotte	Bank of America

Desirable Qualities, Interests, and Skills

- Strong communication (verbal & written) skills
- Knowledge of design and website development software
- Strong artistic and project management skills
- Ability to meet deadlines and work under pressure
- Basic business knowledge and sales skills
- Creativity, imagination and openness to new ideas
- Ability to work independently

Websites

- Society of Illustrators | www.societyofillustrators.org
 International Graphic Arts Education Association | www.igaea.org
 Graphics Communications Association | www.idealliance.org
 Graphic Artists Guild | www.gag.org
 Design Management Institute | www.demi.org
 American Institute of Graphic Arts | www.aiga.org
 Coroflot | www.coroflot.com/jobs
 Authentic Jobs | www.authenticjobs.com
 Smashing Jobs | jobs.smashingmagazine.com

Sample Job Titles

Graphic Designer	Creative Director
Web Designer	Graphics Technician
User Interface (UI) Designer	Creative Project Manager
Graphic Artist	Front-end Designer
Art Director	Content Specialist
Visual Designer	Design Engineer
Production Artist	

Job market, salary, and other information on the How to Get a Job In... series is from O*Net Online and the Bureau of Labor Statistics's Occupational Outlook Handbook.