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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Design Specialist</td>
<td>$51,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Designer</td>
<td>$65,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Design Manager</td>
<td>$107,585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Types of Employers**

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

**Example Employers**

- Disney
- Impact Technology Group
- M Décor, Inc.
- FQR Marketing, Inc.
- Charlotte Bobcats
- UNC Charlotte
- Admark Graphic Systems
- The Bolt Group
- Signs, Etc.
- Full-House Productions
- Hallmark
- 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](http://www.societyofillustrators.org)
- International Graphic Arts Education Association | [www.igaea.org](http://www.igaea.org)
- Graphics Communications Association | [www.idealliance.org](http://www.idealliance.org)
- Graphic Artists Guild | [www.gag.org](http://www.gag.org)
- Design Management Institute | [www.demi.org](http://www.demi.org)
- American Institute of Graphic Arts | [www.aiga.org](http://www.aiga.org)
- Coroflot | [www.coroflot.com/jobs](http://www.coroflot.com/jobs)
- Authentic Jobs | [www.authenticjobs.com](http://www.authenticjobs.com)
- Smashing Jobs | [jobs.smashingmagazine.com](http://jobs.smashingmagazine.com)

**Sample Job Titles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graphic Designer</th>
<th>Creative Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web Designer</td>
<td>Graphics Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Interface (UI) Designer</td>
<td>Creative Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Artist</td>
<td>Front-end Designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Director</td>
<td>Content Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Designer</td>
<td>Design Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Artist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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.*