

GRAPHIC DESIGN

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

PRINT DESIGN

Type Design
Magazine Design
Newspaper Design
Book Publishing
Publication Design
Brochure/Newsletter Design
Educational Design
Cover Design:
 Book
 CD
 Video
Label Design
Publicity Pieces
Advertising Layout
Photo Editing/Photoshop Art
Illustration
Identity Design
 Logo Design
Branding

Publishers including:
 Magazine
 Periodical
 Book
 Directory
 Newspaper
 Textbook
Design firms
Advertising agencies
Publishing houses
Business form companies
Publicity firms
In-house creative departments
Large retail stores
Nonprofit organizations
Government agencies
Universities
Self-employed (freelance)

Graphic designers have a hand in creating countless items, large and small, from posters to identity systems and much more. Research all the niche areas and then gain the tools and technological skills to succeed in that area. Assemble an impressive portfolio of work samples. Complete a related internship to gain relevant experience and to contribute to your portfolio. Work on campus publications in design or layout or find a part-time position with a local publication. Develop excellent communication skills and learn to work well on a team of professionals. Volunteer to create brochures, newsletters or other publications for campus organizations. Develop problem-solving skills, attention to detail and the ability to meet deadlines. Join professional associations as a student member. Become knowledgeable in production and printing processes. Develop broad software application skills in MAC and PC based programs but not at the cost of developing a solid background in design. Participate in local or campus design contests.

THREE DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

Signage
Signage Systems
Packaging
Exhibition Design
Environmental Design
Promotional Display Design

Design firms
Product design divisions of large corporations
In-house creative departments
Advertising agencies
Museums and attractions
Government agencies
Self-employed (freelance)

Find an internship in a design studio that specializes in 3D design especially for signage, exhibition, promotional display and environmental design which are very specialized. Gain skills in model building and three-dimensional design. Develop a willingness to experiment. Join a related professional association such as the Package Designers Council. Develop excellent computer skills and strong written and oral communication skills. Participate in design contests.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

ELECTRONIC MEDIA DESIGN / 4 D DESIGN

Digital
Multimedia
Film Title
Television Graphics
Video Games
Computer Graphics
Motion Graphics
Animation
Website Design
Interactive Media
Educational Design

Film studios
Motion picture production firms
Television stations
Computer systems design firms
Video game designers
Software firms
Video production houses
Internet media companies
Online publishers
Online retailers

This is a highly specialized area of design that is not widely taught in all design programs. Research programs carefully to find ones that emphasize this area. Consider attending specialized programs in order to learn about television and motion graphics, animation and video game design.

Develop excellent computer skills in a variety of platforms and design software.

Gain relevant experience through part-time jobs and internships.

Volunteer to design the website for a student or local community organization.

Work for the campus television station.

To work in television and film, consider relocating to areas of the country where the entertainment industry is more prevalent.

Stay current with media and cultural trends.

ADVERTISING

Creative Services
Art Direction
Production
Copywriting
Corporate Identity Design
Branding
Logo Design

Advertising agencies
In-house creative departments
Television
Radio
Newspapers
Magazines
Business firms

Supplement curriculum with course work in advertising or business.

Complete an internship in an advertising agency.

Work on the campus newspaper in the advertising division.

Learn to work well in team environments and to communicate your ideas effectively.

Develop the ability to meet deadlines and work under pressure.

Be prepared to move to larger cities for the most job opportunities.

Gain experience with a variety of media.

Create a strong portfolio of a work samples.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

EDUCATION

Higher Education:

Teaching
Part-time Instruction
Research
Administration
Student Life
Library Sciences

Secondary:

Teaching

Four-year colleges and universities
Two-year colleges
Public and private high schools

A Master of Fine Arts or doctoral degree is preferred and/or required for full-time professorships.
Create a portfolio for faculty review.
Consider private consulting or operating a small design studio to complement classroom activities.
Earn a master's degree in college student personnel or information sciences to prepare for positions in those areas.
Not all high schools offer graphic design courses/programs. Be prepared to relocate or advocate for program development.
To teach high school, obtain teaching certificate/license. Requirements for certification/licensure vary by state. Seek multiple certifications to increase employability.
Get involved in student organizations related to the art and design such as Visual Arts Committees.
Gain experience through campus leadership positions such as Resident Assistant, Orientation Leader, Peer Mentor and other similar roles.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Carefully research design programs to find one that fits your career goals. Programs vary in terms of the content taught so not all programs will prepare students for all areas of design.
- Approximately 3 in 10 graphic designers are self-employed. Freelance designers must develop strong abilities in networking, sales and persuasion.
- Graphic designers work in countless industries on a wide array of projects. Research the field thoroughly to learn about career options and the experiences and skills necessary to work in those areas. Some graphic designers choose to specialize their work while others complete a variety of projects.
- Be prepared to start entry-level and work your way up the career ladder. Take a first job based on the industry and type of design you desire to work with because work from your first job will comprise your professional portfolio.
- Some graphic design areas cross in multiple media such as educational design, identity design, information design and systems design.
- Graphic designers must be able to tolerate criticism and direction in their work, since much of their work involves creating a product for a customer.
- Graphic designers are typically artistically skilled, imaginative and effective problem-solvers.
- Develop a solid background in communications theory as identifying the needs of consumers is becoming increasingly important.
- Learn to listen effectively to client needs and communicate ideas effectively.
- Subscribe to and read graphic design materials such as Print, Eye, Communication Arts, Step into Graphics, Griphis, Computer Graphics and Applications, and others relevant to your interests.
- Student design magazines such as CMYK and Creative Convocation solicit student work and have regular competitions. Try to get your work published.

GENERAL INFORMATION CONTINUED

- Join major design organizations and societies, e.g. The American Institute of Graphic Arts, The Society of Publication Designers, University and College Design Association, New York Directors Club, Society of Illustrators or the Graphic Arts Technical Foundation.
- Become familiar with as many computer graphics and design software packages such as Quark, Photoshop and Illustrator. Plan to stay up-to-date on new developments in the industry.
- Continuously keep an updated portfolio containing examples of your best work. Employers often use a portfolio as a deciding factor in hiring.
- Successful graphic designers are well-read and in-touch with changing consumer preferences and can react to new trends. Learn about your product and who will use it. A liberal arts education helps designers learn a little about a lot of things. Additionally, graphic designers should develop good research skills, work well on a team and learn a foreign language if working in international design.
- Graphic design is moving towards a more user/viewer way of thinking that allows the user/viewer to contribute to the design.
- Many design schools are shifting towards a more activist attitude teaching ethical behavior, green-uses of design and using the power of design to rally people behind causes that affect us all.
- This field is highly competitive. Many new jobs will be associated with interactive media. Consider taking classes in website design and animation to increase marketability.