

Research, Conceptualise, Analyse, Develop & Implement...

Getting a start in your industrial design career

What a design graduate needs to know



Industrial designers develop and prepare products for manufacture. They are particularly concerned with those aspects of products that relate to human usage and behaviour, and product appeal.

Where you will work: Manufacturing Companies, Design Consultancies, Designer/Maker Workshops, Research & Development Departments, Self Employed¹.

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¹ Design Institute of Australia website, <http://www.dia.org.au/content.cfm?id=106>

Tips for getting a graduate job including hints from graduates

Work Experience: This is a great way to differentiate yourself. Work experience gained while studying assists you to develop design skills and to gain the generic skills (e.g. communication skills) sought by employers. It also provides a more realistic understanding of the industry, business awareness and would enable you to develop additional samples of work for inclusion in a portfolio.

Portfolios: A portfolio provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate your design capabilities and your understanding of each stage of the design process. Your portfolio should show a selection of your best works. It should be presented in a professional manner that highlights your personal design style and have no spelling or grammatical errors. Your portfolio gives an employer the opportunity to see the thought process behind your designs and how these designs evolved. It is important to show your exploration of ideas by including some early sketching ideas or computer images.

Networking: Many design jobs are never formally advertised. Networking provides you with an opportunity to gain entry into this competitive industry. Networking opportunities can occur at professional association and industry shows and events, faculty events and through staff, guest lecturers and maintaining contact with peers.

Future trends & tips

“Computer skills will continue to be critical.”

“Graduates will need to have an understanding of the manufacturing process and the business implications of their design. Designs may have to be manufactured to a price point.”

“Employers identified the need for graduates to obtain a mix of sketching/model making and CAD. Graduates need to be good at and balance both sets of skills. This could be a point of differentiation for graduates.”

What to do and when....

Start of my degree	Middle of my degree	End of my degree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn to network. - Work on developing soft skills such as communication, team work and time management. - By end of year start exploring work experience opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gain work experience. - Continue to network at places such as professional association and industry shows and events and through University staff and guest lecturers. - Begin to build a portfolio of your work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put together an impressive portfolio. - Search for job opportunities through the contacts you have made. - Continue to gain more work experience. - Continue to network.

Skills employers want

In addition to a solid understanding of the design process and relevant computer skills, some key skills employers want graduates to have are:

Communication skills

An understanding the manufacturing process and the business needs

Ability to articulate the design process

Ability to work in a team

Flexibility and willingness to learn

Initiative & self motivated

Time management & ability to meet deadlines

What jobs are there?

Industrial designers design products that are to be produced by manufacturers. Career options include design consultant, corporate or in-house designer, self employment or production designer.

What will I be doing in my first job?

Your first job may involve shadowing other designers to learn about design work, elementary design tasks, attending client meetings, administrative tasks and research of suitable and new materials and identifying trends. The nature of the work undertaken by graduates will depend on the size of the organisation they are working for, the client and the project.

What my career path might look like: Design Assistant, Graduate/Junior Designer, Assistant Designer, Designer, Senior Designer, Project Manager/ Business Development, Creative Director.

“It also requires existing product analysis, visiting the retail outlets where we (and our competitors) sell our products, researching trends etc., and surfing the net for design inspiration, trends and styling.

My job involves research, analysis, interaction design, graphic design, software prototyping and specification and documentation. I have also been involved with patent research and writing”.