

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

Getting a start in your interior design career

What a design graduate needs to know



Interior designers plan and detail commercial and residential building interiors for effective use with particular emphasis on space creation, space planning and factors that affect our responses to living and working environments.

Where you'll work: Interior Design Consultancies, Architects Offices, Builders, Government Building & Construction Departments¹.

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

“The general state of the economy will impact on the demand for interior design graduates. However, in order for graduates to be competitive they will require a diverse range of skills, such as design, documentation, project management and soft furnishing design ability skills.”

“Ability to combine model making and hand sketching skills with 3D skills in CAD, Photoshop and Illustrator, aligned with solid construction knowledge is important.”

“The need to understand colour.”

“Be prepared to crawl before you walk. Have the ability to develop and build relationships.”

“Be fully aware of international design trends and products.”

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

Ability to produce detailed drawings

Solid knowledge of construction

Flexibility

Ability to work in a team

Initiative & self motivated

Time management & ability to meet deadlines

What jobs are there?

The majority of graduates work in commercial interior design both locally and internationally, while others go on to work in event design, exhibition, museum and interaction design, theatre, film and television production, virtual worlds, furniture design, research, strategies, journalism and education.

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.

“Graduates may do research, setting up and packing up exhibits going to client briefings for exposure. They may also input a hand sketch into CAD, source materials, update and maintain resources.

Graduates will be doing a lot of sourcing materials and learning about the materials. They may be going on site to measure and then draw to scale on the computer, reflecting ceiling plans and elevations of the existing space. They may also assist in preparing concept presentations”.