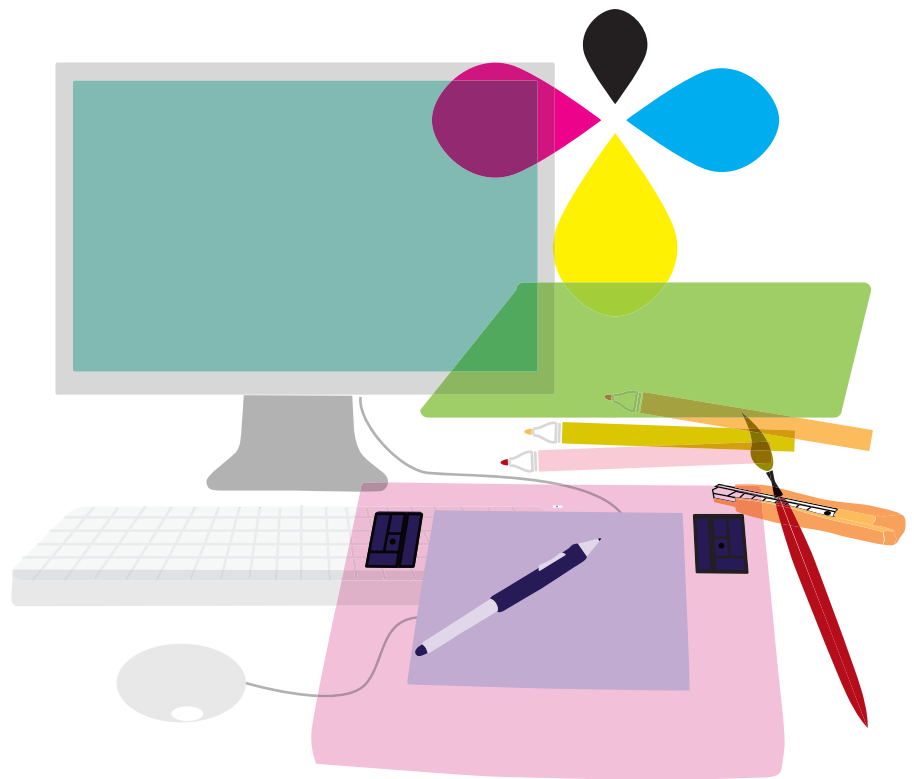


Research, Conceptualise, Analyse, Develop & Implement...

Getting a start in your visual communication career

What a design graduate needs to know



Graphic designers develop and prepare information for publication with particular emphasis on clarity of communication and the matching of information styles to audience requirements.

Where you will work: Advertising Agencies, Public Relations Firms, Design Consultancies, Government & Business Promotion Departments, Desk Top Publishing, Web Design, Printing Companies, Packaging Companies, Manufacturer's Promotion Departments, Publishers, Newspapers, Magazines, Self Employment¹.

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

“Technical skills will continue to be very important for visual communication graduates. You need to be up to date with the latest relevant software applications.”

“There may be a greater variety in the mix of departments visual communication graduates work with; for example, marketing and business strategy.”

“An understanding of basic design concepts remains important.”

“Consider less ‘glamorous’ areas of visual communication to work in for example, packaging design.”

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 work in a team

Time management & ability to meet deadlines

Initiative & self motivation

Passion & enthusiasm.

What jobs are there?

Areas of work for graduates may include design or art direct graphics, web design, advertising, animation, new media, publications, photography, illustration or broadcast media.

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.

“My job involves the design and production of websites and promotional print material for well-known brands. Day to day I work with a small team of around 5 people, which usually consists of other designers, programmers and a project manager. Most projects are supported by a larger team of 20-50 people who work on other aspects of the brand, like TV commercials and packaging. We all tend to work long hours because there’s always more work to do!”

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.