

Graphic Designer

Logos, packaging, websites, posters. The portfolio decides whether you get hired, not the diploma.

TYPICAL PAY

\$62,960

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$40k to \$105k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Agencies, in-house marketing teams, freelance, tech companies

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Art, media and any computer courses. Start collecting your work now, because what you make at 17 can go in the first portfolio.
- 2 Design program** 2 to 4 years
A two-year associate degree, a four-year bachelor's at a public university, or an art school. Many programs review a portfolio as part of admission.
- 3 Internships and real client work** During school
Paid internships, campus jobs, small business logos. This is the part employers actually read.
- 4 Build the portfolio** Ongoing
Eight to twelve projects that show thinking, not just pretty pictures. Explain the problem and your choices for each one.
- 5 First job** After graduation
Junior designer or production artist. The degree opens the door, the portfolio gets you through it.

Pros and cons

- + Short, affordable training compared with most careers on this site
- + Remote and freelance work is normal
- + Work you can point at in the real world
- Low starting pay and a crowded junior market
- Slower than average job growth for the next decade
- Image generation tools are squeezing the simple end of the work

Optional boosts

User experience and product design. Motion design. Front-end code. Brand strategy.

Good to know

It is a big field that is barely growing

About 265,900 graphic designers worked in the United States in 2024, with roughly 20,000 openings expected over the following decade. Most of those openings are people leaving, not new positions being c...

The interstate highway signs are a design system

The typeface, colors, arrow shapes and spacing on American highway signs are set by a federal manual so that every sign in the country behaves the same way at 70 miles an hour. That is graphic design as...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Graphic Designers (27-1024.00)
O*NET OnLine: Graphic Designers, employment and outlook
AIGA, the professional association for design
National Association of Schools of Art and Design

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/graphic-designer>



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