

Interior Designer

Plan the inside of buildings so they work, not just so they look good. Codes and drawings, not cushions.

TYPICAL PAY

\$67,190

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$41k to \$114k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Design studios, architecture firms,
furniture dealers, construction sit...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Art, drafting, math and any computer design course. Start a portfolio, because most programs ask to see one.
- 2 Interior design degree** 4 years
 A four-year bachelor's degree is the usual route. Look for accreditation from the Council for Interior Design Accreditation, which accredits over 170 programs worldwide; it is what the certification route expects.
- 3 Internship and first job** During school and after
 Firms hire on portfolio. An internship during school is the normal way to get the first job, and the hours often count toward certification later.
- 4 Log supervised work experience** About 2 years after the degree
 The Council for Interior Design Qualification requires verified work experience under a supervisor before you can finish the exam, and how much depends on which education route you took.
- 5 Pass the NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualification) Examination** 1 to 2 years of exam sittings
 Three sections: fundamentals, professional practice and a practicum. The fundamentals section can be taken soon after graduating, the other two after the experience is logged.

Pros and cons

- + You can walk into a finished space and see your work
- + A real profession with codes and drawings, not just taste
- + Commercial work is steady and pays reasonably
- Starting pay is low for a four-year degree
- Clients change their minds late and expensively
- Work dries up fast in a construction downturn

Good to know

The exam has three parts and takes years

The NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualification) Examination is split into three sections covering fundamentals, professional practice and a practicum. You need verified supervised...

Accessibility law shapes every plan you draw

Federal accessibility standards set hard minimums for door widths, turning circles, counter heights and restroom layouts in public buildings. A large part of professional interior design is proving that a...

Optional boosts

Healthcare interiors. Workplace and corporate interiors. Hospitality. Lighting design.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Interior Designers (27-1025.00)
 Council for Interior Design Qualification, which runs the NCIDQ Examination
 Council for Interior Design Qualification: exam eligibility
 Council for Interior Design Accreditation

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/interior-designer>



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