

DELTA COLLEGE
COUNSELING/ADVISING & CAREER SERVICES
COMPUTER AIDED DRAFTER

Salary Potential: \$22,820 to \$76,640 annually
Personal Interests: Technical activities, math and precision
Work Environment: Generally indoors, alone or in teams

Description

As a Computer Aided Drafter, you will make detailed manual or computer drawings of products and machinery from sketches and specifications conceived by engineers and designers. The finished drawings are used as working plans for engineering and manufacturing purposes. Depending on experience and level of responsibility, duties may vary from preparing basic drawings to modifying the finished design using computer aided design equipment.

In order to enter this area of work, you should be able to: work within precise limits or standards of accuracy, concentrate for long periods of time, visualize 3-dimensional objects from drawings or pictures, see detail in objects or drawings, and recognize slight differences in shapes and shading. Computer skills are a requirement.

Working Conditions

Drafters may work alone or as members of a drafting team under the direction or supervision of a more experienced drafter, chief drafter or project director. Drafters may also work under the supervision of an engineer or architect.

Drafters work at drafting tables or computers in well-lighted rooms. Drafting work can be demanding and requires close attention to detail. Many hours may be spent working on drawings or at the computer. Fatigue and

eyestrain may result from the close work and concentration.

Training, Other Qualifications

Approved vocational education programs in Drafting prepare students to plan, prepare, and interpret sketches; use special equipment and materials to produce charts and drawings; to develop models; and prepare reports and data sheets for writing specifications for a job. Instruction may be specific for areas such as architectural drafting, electrical/electronic drafting, and/or mechanical drafting.

Programs in drafting provide opportunities to gain the knowledge and skill needed for employment in any of the many architectural, engineering, and manufacturing fields that require detailed drawings of structures, products, and machinery.

Programs in Computer Aided Drafting provide opportunities to supplement design and drafting skills with specialized computer graphic skills. Persons trained to use Computer Aided Drafting systems may also find employment in the engineering, architectural, and manufacturing fields.

Delta College offers a Certificate in Computer Aided Drafting and an Associate Degree in Mechanical Design Technology. Both programs provide students with skills needed to work with

computer aided drafting and design and to be prepared for a technical-level career upon graduation.

Job Outlook

Nationally, there were about 254,000 Drafters employed in 2004 and is expected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations through 2014.

Drafters will be needed to support a growing number of scientists and engineers and to deal with increasingly complex design problems. However, widespread use of computer aided design equipment will increase productivity and could affect employment growth. Individuals with Associate Degrees in Drafting and those trained in computer aided equipment will find the best opportunities.

There were about 10,500 Architectural, Electrical and Mechanical Drafters employed in Michigan in 2004. Most worked in urban areas. The majority worked for manufacturing companies or provided drafting services for a variety of businesses. Many Drafters employed in manufacturing worked for companies that manufacture cars, trucks, and related transportation equipment. Almost all of the Drafters employed in service industries worked for companies providing engineering and architectural services.

Employment of Drafters is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations in Michigan through the year 2014. Because of the increasing use of electronic drafting equipment and computers to do routine tasks, opportunities will be best for Drafters with advanced skills.

Earnings

Earnings of Drafters depend on their education and experience and the location and type of company for which they work. The highest earnings of all Drafters' wages are found in urban areas and in manufacturing companies.

Annual earnings in Michigan in May 2006 for architectural and civil drafters were \$24,920 to \$61,990. For electrical and electronic drafters, it was \$22,820 to \$70,410. For mechanical drafters, it was \$32,590 to \$76,640. And, for all other drafters it was \$26,340 to \$69,810.

Related Occupations

Automotive Design Drafters, CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing) Technician, Civil Drafters, Civil Engineering Technicians, Commercial Drafters, Electrical Drafters, Electronic Drafters, and Technical Illustrators

Computer Aided Drafter.doc SC 9/07
Sources: Occupational Outlook Handbook, MI Occupational Information System, Eureka, Delta College Catalog,

Career Center
D 132
Bay City/Saginaw: (989) 686-9072
Midland/Auburn: (989) 495-4000, Ext. 9072
Frankenmuth, Birch Run, Reese & Vassar: (989) 758-3400, Ext. 9072
<http://www.delta.edu/careercenter>

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