

DELTA COLLEGE
COUNSELING/ADVISING & CAREER SERVICES
GRAPHIC ARTIST / DESIGNER

Salary Range: \$24,120- \$73,540 annually

Personal Interests: Creativity, imagination, precision, artistic talent and computer proficiency

Work Environment: Clean, well-lighted, ventilated studios with occasional travel

Description

Graphic artists and designers design and prepare camera-ready copy for any type of printed material, including business cards and stationery, brochures, advertising, packaging, book covers, newspapers, billboards, and many other types of materials. This field also includes signs, architectural graphics, and film, television, video, the Internet and computer-related imagery.

In a large agency, they work on a team with the art director, a creative director, and the assistant art director. After the client approves the design, a layout artist orders the type and produces the graphic designs. Then a paste-up or mechanical artist prepares the final copy. A graphic artist or designer is able to do all of these tasks and any of these people may call themselves graphic artists or designers. The amount of design involved in the job depends on the type of employer and the amount of direction provided by the director. Their task is to inform and persuade a specific audience with images.

Web graphic designers are responsible for all graphic content, creations and development of websites and other integrative on-line environments.

Working Conditions

Working conditions may vary according to the type of artwork being prepared and the employer. Generally, graphic designers work in clean, well-lighted areas in such places as office buildings, art studios, department stores,

and printing or industrial plants. Odors from glues, paints, inks, or other materials may be present. Medical and scientific illustrators spend time in laboratories or in hospital operating rooms. Artists spend much time standing or sitting at a drawing board/worktable, or sitting at a computer workstation. Freelance work can be done in a home studio. Occasional travel may be necessary to visit client and vendor locations.

Training, Other Qualifications

Training requirements for visual artists vary, depending upon the specialty. Although formal training is not strictly necessary for fine artists, it is very difficult to become skilled enough to make a living without some training. On-the-job training may be offered by some employers. A Certificate may be acceptable for some employers, but more likely you will need at least an Associate degree. Many colleges and universities offer degree programs leading to the Bachelor in Fine Arts (BFA) and Master in Fine Arts (MFA) degrees. Coursework usually includes core subjects, such as English, social science, and natural science, in addition to art history and studio art.

Delta College offers an Associate's in Applied Arts in Electronic Media/Graphic Design. The Graphic Design program concentrates on helping you develop creative thinking processes, solutions to specific design problems, and aesthetic awareness. It will give you the technical knowledge and skills demanded of today's artist/designer for

output of printed and digital communications. As a graphic designer, you will plan, design and draw illustrations for all types of advertisements, displays, television commercials, books, magazine articles and advertisements, posters, calendars and hundreds of other items. You will also create movie and television cartoons, be involved in fashion illustration, greeting card illustration, industrial design, multi-media, software design, web page design and many other kinds of art work.

Job Outlook

Nationally, there were more than 220,000 graphic designers employed in 2005. Employment is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2014. As the fields of advertising and design continue to expand with the economy, commercial artists with average ability and little specialized training are expected to encounter competition for beginning jobs and have limited advancement opportunities. Increased Internet advertising will result in favorable employment opportunities.

Earnings

Commercial artists' earnings depend on skill, education, type of artwork, geographic area, and the employer. The earnings of a free-lance commercial artist may vary according to the artist's individual fees and reputation, as well as the nature and amount of artwork sold.

Nationally, in May 2006, graphic designers had a average annual salary of \$43,830. Fine artists, including painters, sculptors and illustrators earned a national average of \$47,100. Multi-media artists and animators earned an

average of \$58,030. Graphic designers in Michigan (May 2006) earned annual salaries of \$46,010. Salaries for selected areas in Michigan for May 2006 were:

| Area | Annual Salary |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Ann Arbor | \$44,100 |
| Battle Creek | \$33,310 |
| Detroit | \$49,770 |
| Flint | \$36,280 |
| Grand Rapids | \$45,760 |
| Kalamazoo | \$39,360 |
| Lansing | \$40,430 |
| Muskegon | \$31,470 |
| Saginaw | \$31,700 |

Related Occupations

Architects, Photographers, Floral Designers, Interior Designers, Art Teachers, Webmaster and Internet Page Designer and Painters and Sculptors.

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Sources: Occupational Outlook Handbook, MI Occupational Information System, Delta College Catalog, The Occupational Information Network, and Eureka.

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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