

DESIGN

CAREER GUIDE

**Fine Arts
Career Services**

The University of Texas at Austin

   @UTFACS

UTexas.edu/finearts/careers

FACS@austin.utexas.edu

512-232-7333

FINE ARTS CAREER SERVICES OFFERS:

ONE-ON-ONE ADVISING

Resume and cover letter reviews, mock interviews, graduate school advising and general career exploration. Call us for appointments!

JOB BOARD

Fine Arts Works is exclusively for COFA students and alumni.
Check it out at bit.ly/fawjobs

PROGRAMMING

Tips and Tiffs professional development workshops,
Creative Exchange guest speaker series and info sessions on
FACS-specific initiatives

FUNDING

Intern Scholarship, Professional Development Travel Initiative (PDTI),
New York Seminar Scholarship and more. bit.ly/facsfuns

AND MORE

Online internship classes, New York Seminar spring break trip,
Networking Night and more!

FINEARTS.UTEXAS.EDU/CAREERS - FACS@AUSTIN.UTEXAS.EDU - 512-232-7333

   @UTFACS

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking the next step in thinking about your career as a designer! Whether you are a freshman or nearing graduation, now is a good time to think about your future. This career guide is meant to give you broad information as you picture yourself working in different environments.

You are welcome to meet with Fine Arts Career Services for further guidance! We are here to brainstorm different career paths, give guidance on professional documents or help you find the right job or internship for your goals.

ABOUT DESIGN

Design is about solving a problem and creating new processes, products and services for people. It is human centered: the end-user's needs, wants and limitations are explored at all stages within the design process and development lifecycle.

Though design has a long history, the internet, mobile applications, social media, e-commerce and artificial intelligence have greatly increased both the opportunities available within design and the visibility and awareness of the field.

As you already know, there are many specialized areas of design. The design degree in COFA prepares students for graphic, interaction/UX and systems/service design. Within each segment, there are additional areas of specialization, but we'll focus on the larger segments of design in this guide.

TYPES OF DESIGN

Graphic design uses visual elements including text and images to project information and concepts. Most graphic design is done on a computer and Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign are critical tools for this field. Graphic designers can work in just about any industry from non-profits to agencies to corporation or government.

Interaction/UX design is the process in which designers focus on creating engaging web/software interfaces with logical behaviors and actions. It is essentially the study of design between users and products. The goal of interaction design is to create products that enable the user to achieve their objective in the best way possible.

Systems and Service design are the activities of planning and organizing people, infrastructure, communication and material components of a service or system in order to improve the quality of the interaction. You design according to the needs of customers or participants, so that the service is user-friendly, competitive and relevant.

Other ***related types of design*** include interior design, industrial design, set and exhibit designers, landscape design and textiles design. Though the design program in COFA focuses explicitly in the areas previously mentioned, with the appropriate skillset and internships, you could pursue a career in any of these areas.

PORTFOLIO

The most critical tool during your job search process is your portfolio. If you don't have one already, we recommend developing one online to get familiar with the best methods of presenting your work. Your portfolio should tell the story of who you are as a designer and should highlight your highest quality work rather than a high quantity of work.

Designers are in-demand and can work independently or in full-time positions within corporations, agencies, non-profits or government. Design-led companies are some of the most successful today. Designers can be entrepreneurs and should understand the basics of business. Business skills will help you whether you are an independent contractor, salaried employee or entrepreneur.

SKILLS

The study of design develops aesthetic, system and problem solving skills. A career in design also develops the ability to work cross functionally, think critically, communicate effectively, meet deadlines and maintain composure when faced with the unexpected. Well-developed communication skills along with an eye for spatial relationships and functionality enable graduates to contribute to and succeed in many professions. An effective designer will have both strong technical skills and the ability to think outside the box.

JOB NAMES

Art Director

Branding and Marketing Designer

Character Design

Content Designer

Creative Director

Design Director

Design Manager

Educator

Environmental Designer

Graphic Designer

Information Architect

Mobile Interface Designer

Motion Graphics Designer

Packaging Designer

Principal / Partner / Owner

User Experience Designer

Web Designer

LET'S TALK ABOUT MONEY

Designers are lucky because there is an amazing salary resource just for your industry! Coroflot's Design Salary Guide (www.coroflot.com/designsalaryguide) is a dynamic data collection with over 67,000 individuals reporting their design industries. This database is sortable based on city, job title, and more. Additionally, Glassdoor (www.glassdoor.com) is a great resource to do salary research.

FURTHERING YOUR EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts (MFA) and *Master of Arts (MA)* are the most common design graduate degrees. MFAs are typically awarded for two to three years of academic and studio-based study in fine arts and humanities fields. A bachelor's degree in fine arts is often required for admission to an MFA program. The emphasis in an MFA program is studio practice in a particular area or medium, though a written thesis may be required in addition to an exhibition. Generally, the strongest design graduate programs require a thesis. The MFA is recognized as a terminal degree, so it is possible to teach at a university with one. A Master of Design is equivalent to an MFA in Design but less widely awarded in the U.S.

An MA may be course-based, studio-based or a combination of both. A thesis may be required for completion of this degree as well. The course of study is generally one to two years. Often a bachelor's degree in the area of study is not required for admission.

Other related master's degrees include the Master of Science (MS), Master of Architecture (MArch), Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) and Master of Industrial Design (MID).

...NOW WHAT'S NEXT?

Maybe reading this guide has left you with questions, or feeling unsure about which career opportunities you want to explore.

That is okay!

Setting up an appointment with Fine Arts Career Services is a great way to brainstorm your next steps, whatever your goals may be!