

**The United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics describes the profession of Interior Designer as follows:**

### **What Interior Architects & Designers Do**

Interior designers make interior spaces functional, safe, and beautiful for almost every type of building: offices, homes, airport terminals, shopping malls, and restaurants. They select and specify colors, finishes, fabrics, furniture, flooring and wallcoverings, lighting, and other materials to create useful and stylish interiors for buildings.

#### Duties

Interior designers typically do the following:

- Determine the client's goals and requirements of the project
- Consider how the space will be used and how people will move through the space
- Sketch preliminary design plans
- Specify materials and furnishings, such as lighting, furniture, wallcoverings, flooring, equipment, and artwork
- Prepare final plans using computer applications
- Create a timeline for the interior design project and estimate project costs
- Oversee installing the design elements
- Visit after the project to ensure that the client is satisfied
- Search for and bid on new projects

Interior designers work closely with architects, structural engineers, and builders to determine how interior spaces will look and be furnished. Interior designers may read blueprints and must be aware of building codes and inspection regulations.

Although some sketches or drawings may be freehand, most interior designers use computer-aided design (CAD) software for the majority of their drawings.

Many designers specialize in particular types of buildings (homes, hospitals, or hotels), specific rooms (bathrooms or kitchens), or specific styles (early American or French Renaissance). Some designers work for home furnishings stores, providing design services to help customers choose materials and furnishings.

Some interior designers produce designs, plans, and drawings for construction and installation. This may include floor plans, lighting plans, or plans needed for building permits. Interior designers may draft the preliminary design into documents that could be as simple as sketches or as inclusive as construction documents, with schedules and attachments.

The following are examples of types of interior designers.

**Sustainable designers** use strategies to improve energy and water efficiencies and indoor air quality, and they specify environmentally preferable products such as bamboo or cork for floors. They may obtain certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) from the U.S. Green Building Council. Such certification indicates that a building or its interior space was designed with the use of sustainable concepts.

**Universal designers** renovate spaces to make them more accessible. Often, these designs are used to renovate spaces for elderly people or people with special needs; however, universal designs can benefit anyone. For example, an entry with no steps may be necessary for someone in a wheelchair, but it is also helpful for someone pushing a baby stroller.

**Kitchen and bath designers** specialize in kitchens and bathrooms and have expert knowledge of the variety of cabinets, fixtures, appliances, plumbing, and electrical solutions for these rooms.

**Lighting designers** focus on the effect of lighting for home, office, or public spaces. For example, lighting designers may work on stage productions, in gallery or museum spaces, or in health care facilities to find appropriate light fixtures and lighting effects for each space.

**Closet designers** design closet space for homes to maximize storage and increase orderliness. They work with both fixed structures and stand-alone storage systems.

### **Work Environment**

Interior designers held about 56,500 jobs in 2010. Most interior designers work in clean, comfortable offices. About 30 percent of interior designers were self-employed, and some of these designers worked from home. Technology has changed the way many designers work. For example, rather than using drafting tables, interior designers now use complex software to create 2-D or 3-D images on the computer.

As shown in the following tabulation, about 27 percent of interior designers worked in the specialized design services industry. About 14 percent of interior designers worked in the architectural, engineering, and related services industry. About 4 percent of interior designers are employed in the construction industry, but many others are heavily dependent on the industry to generate new construction or renovation projects for them to work on. Another 8 percent worked in the furniture and home furnishings stores industry.

Specialized design services	27%
Architectural, engineering, and related service	14%
Furniture and home furnishings stores	8%
Building material and supplies dealers	4%
Construction	4%

### **Work Schedules**

Most interior designers work full time. They may need to adjust their workday to suit their clients' schedules and deadlines, meeting with clients during evening and weekend hours when necessary. Interior designers also travel to the clients' design sites.

### **How to Become an Interior Designer**

Interior designers must be able to work closely with architects and builders to determine the design of the interior space.

Interior designers need a bachelor's degree with a focus on interior design.

### **Education**

A bachelor's degree is usually required, as are classes in interior design, drawing, and computer-aided design (CAD). A bachelor's degree in any field is acceptable, and interior design programs are available at the associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree levels.

The [National Association of Schools of Art and Design](#) accredits about 300 postsecondary colleges, universities, and independent institutes with programs in art and design. The [Council for Interior Design Accreditation](#) accredits more than 150 professional-level (bachelor's or master's degrees) interior design programs.

The [National Kitchen and Bath Association](#) accredits kitchen and bath design specialty programs (certificate, associate's, and bachelor's degree level) in 46 colleges and universities.

Applicants may be required to submit sketches and other examples of their artistic ability for admission to interior design programs.

### Licenses

Licensure requirements vary by state. Many states have laws that restrict the use of the title “interior designer.” For example, in these states, both licensed and unlicensed designers may do interior design work. But only those who pass their state-approved exam, most commonly the [National Council for Interior Design Qualification](#) (NCIDQ) exam, may call themselves registered interior designers.

The NCIDQ exam is the nationally recognized exam required for licensure. (California requires a different exam, administered by the California Council for Interior Design Certification.) Qualification to take the exam include a combination of education and experience. Typically, applicants have at least a bachelor’s degree in interior design plus 2 years of experience.

### Certification

Voluntary certification in an interior design specialty, such as kitchens and baths, allows interior designers to demonstrate their expertise in a particular area of interior design. Interior designers often specialize to distinguish the type of design work they do and to promote their expertise. Certifications usually are available through professional or trade associations and are independent from the NCIDQ licensing examination.

### Important Qualities

**Artistic ability.** Interior designers use their sense of style to develop designs that look great and are aesthetically pleasing.

**Creativity.** Interior designers need to be imaginative in selecting furnishings and fabrics and in creating spaces that serve the client’s needs and fit the client’s lifestyle.

**Detail oriented.** Interior designers need to be precise in measuring interior spaces and making drawings so that furniture and furnishings will fit correctly and create the appropriate environment.

**Interpersonal skills.** Interior designers need to be able to communicate effectively with clients and others. Much of their time is spent soliciting new work and new clients and collaborating with other designers, engineers, and general building contractors on ongoing projects.

**Problem-solving skills.** Interior designers must address challenges such as construction delays or the high cost or sudden unavailability of selected materials while keeping the project on time and within budget.

**Visualization.** Interior designers need a strong sense of proportion and visual awareness to understand how pieces of a design will fit together to create the intended interior environment.

**For more information visit:**

**<http://stats.bls.gov/ooh/arts-and-design/interior-designers.htm#tab-1>**