



Fashion Designer

Fashion designers use creative and technical skills to design new clothing and fashion ranges. They may design a wide range of goods or specialise in particular areas.

What does the job involve?

- designing a wide variety of items or specialising in one area, such as children's clothing, sportswear, accessories or wedding dresses
- researching next season's trends in fashion, colour and fabric choice
- drawing designs by hand and by computer-aided design (CAD) or graphics software such as Illustrator and Photoshop
- considering the costs of fabrics and manufacturing for mass production
- selecting fabrics and trims to make up samples of clothes
- supervising dressmakers who make the samples
- producing specification sheets or design packs for manufacturers to follow and making sure designs are produced accurately
- presenting designs and samples to clients and in-house departments such as finance and merchandising
- designing clothes for individual customers or clothes for sale in large numbers in high street stores.

Routes and choices while at school:

You will need to try to get at least five GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent qualifications. These should include English, maths and. Other relevant subjects include Art and Design, textiles, IT and fashion design.



Skills You'll need:

- the ability to come up with new ways of doing things
- design skills and knowledge
- the ability to use your initiative
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- thinking and reasoning skills
- the ability to work well with your hands
- excellent verbal communication skills
- to be flexible and open to change
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently



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How to get into this role:

You can get into this job through:

- a university course
- an apprenticeship
- A college course

College

You could do a college course, which will teach you some of the skills and knowledge you need to work in the fashion industry. Relevant subjects include:

- Level 2 Award in Fashion - Sampling Fashion Techniques
- Level 2 Diploma in Skills for the Fashion Industries
- Level 3 Extended Diploma in Fashion Design and Production

Apprenticeship

You may be able to do a fashion studio assistant advanced apprenticeship and follow the product development and production pathway. You could work as a design assistant in a studio, develop your design skills on the job and work your way into a designer role.

This apprenticeship typically takes 18 months to complete as a mix of workplace learning and off-the-job study.

Further information

Career tips

You can create a portfolio of your design work to showcase your skills, which will help you at course and job interviews. Your portfolio should include mood boards, designs, technical drawings and examples of completed fashion items you have made.



Career path and progression

With experience you could progress to senior designer, head of a fashion department or design director. You could move into other aspects of the fashion business like marketing or buying.

You could develop business skills and go freelance or start your own fashion company.

You could teach your skills to students in schools, colleges or universities.

Rates of Pay

Starting salaries for design assistants in the UK tend to be in the range of £16,000 to £18,000 a year rising to around £25,000 a year with experience. Senior designers can earn around £42,000 or more, with top designers earning over £85,000 a year or more.

Some fashion designers work freelance. They charge a fee, which varies depending on the work and their reputation. The better known they are, the more they can charge. A very few do earn very high incomes.