

FASHION DESIGNER



SALARY

Junior designer ★★★★★

Head of design ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Market dominated by small- to medium- sized fashion houses located in large cities • Jobs in high fashion (*haute couture*), ready-to-wear (*prêt-à-porter*), and mass-market retail

JOB DESCRIPTION

Fashion designers create clothing, shoes, and other accessories. They use their creative expertise and knowledge of textiles, sewing, and manufacturing processes to set trends in color, fabric, and style. Those designers with a high profile often specialize in creating expensive one-off items, whereas the majority of designers work on clothing for the mass market, focusing on certain lines, such as sportswear, men's suits, or knitwear.



CAREER PATHS

This is a highly competitive industry. A degree isn't necessarily required to earn your first break, but you do need to show evidence of your interest and talent, such as a portfolio of fashion sketches, and have lots of determination. With experience, you can reach more senior creative positions in a fashion house or clothing manufacturer, or even start your own business.

ASSISTANT If you are a naturally gifted designer, work experience in a retail store or hands-on dressmaking skills will attract employers. With talent, a good portfolio, and internship experience, you may gain an entry-level job in fashion design.

GRADUATE Studying for a degree in fashion or textile design will develop your skills and teach you the technical and business aspects of clothing design, which will greatly improve your chances of finding a job in the industry.



SPECIALIZED DESIGNER

Focuses on designing clothes for a specific area of the industry, such as menswear, footwear, or swimwear.



FASHION DESIGNER In the beginning, you work on specific design products to fill an identified gap in the market. Creative freedom comes with seniority, or when you start your own company or label.

SKILLS GUIDE



The ability to generate lots of ideas and translate them into viable sketches, designs, and products.



Strong numerical skills for setting dimensions and scale in patterns, and calculating production costs.



Effective communication skills for interacting with design teams and conveying ideas clearly.



Strong market awareness and business skills, especially for self-employed designers.



Strong computer skills for working on Computer-aided Design (CAD) software and other applications.



TECHNICAL DESIGNER Bridges the gap between fashion house designers and manufacturers, focusing on producing patterns that make the most economical use of fabric, and are cost-effective and easy to manufacture.



FASHION STYLIST Advises individuals on fashion. Stylists are typically employed within the modeling, photography, and film industries.



FASHION BUYER Works for retail stores, purchasing stock to sell to the store's customers. Because buyers usually purchase merchandise several months in advance, they must be able to anticipate trends in fashion to meet future demand.

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Art • Fashion • Craft and design • Sewing • Computer-aided Design (CAD) • Mathematics



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A degree-level qualification in fashion, art, or design is helpful. However, a strong portfolio of work is a must.



LIFESTYLE People in the fashion industry usually work long hours. Weekends are required in the lead-up to fashion shows and other launches.



LOCATION The role is based in a studio or workshop. Fashion designers may have to travel abroad to attend fashion shows and fairs.



THE REALITIES A fashion designer's work is often subject to harsh criticism. Deadlines are tight, especially when they are preparing a new collection.

▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **COSTUME DESIGNER** Designs clothes and accessories that actors wear in plays or films. These outfits need to be appropriate for the characters in a production and suit the period or fictional world in which the play or film is set.
- ▶ **DRESSMAKER/TAILOR** Creates made-to-measure items of clothing for customers, and usually runs small independent businesses, specializing in a particular type of clothing, such as customized suits or bridal wear.
- ▶ **FASHION MODEL** Models clothes in order to promote fashion lines to customers and the media. Models appear in fashion shows or in photographs for catalogs, magazines, newspapers, and advertising campaigns.