

# TEXTILE DESIGNER



## SALARY

Newly qualified textile designer ★★★★★

Experienced textile designer ★★★★★

## INDUSTRY PROFILE

Increasingly competitive sector, with more applicants than vacancies • Growing demand for textile designers in specialty markets, such as protective clothing and seating for car interiors

## JOB DESCRIPTION

A textile designer designs woven, knitted, and printed textiles that are used to make clothes, fabrics, and furnishings. With an understanding of materials, dyes, patterns, and manufacturing processes, they produce designs for a range of decorative, durable, or protective fabrics. The work involves producing sketches and samples, and liaising with marketing and buying staff to make products that will sell.



## AT A GLANCE



**YOUR INTERESTS** Art • Craft • Fashion • Sewing • Knitting • Design technology • Mathematics • Chemistry • Information Technology (IT)



**ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS** A degree in textile or fashion design is desirable, but it is possible to learn on the job while working in the industry.



**LIFESTYLE** Regular office hours are the norm, but designers may have to work overtime to meet deadlines. Freelance designers can work from home.



**LOCATION** Work is primarily based in an office or studio; designers may need to visit factories during production, or attend client briefings and trade shows.



**THE REALITIES** The work is creatively rewarding. Most textile businesses are based in large cities, so relocation may be necessary to find a good position.

## ▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **JEWELRY DESIGNER** *see pp. 28–29*
- ▶ **CLOTHING AND TEXTILE TECHNOLOGIST** Manages the design, manufacture, and quality control of fabrics, yarns, and textiles. An expert in this field may work on fabrics for clothing, furnishings, medical supplies, or textiles for the car industry.
- ▶ **FURNITURE DESIGNER** Designs furniture pieces and fittings, such as cabinets. Some furniture designers work for manufacturers, creating designs for mass production; others produce items of furniture for individual clients.

**In 2012, four million people were employed in the manufacturing of clothing and footwear in the United States.**



## CAREER PATHS

Without a relevant degree, it may be possible to enter the textile industry as a pattern cutter, creating fabric templates from drawings, or as a machinist, making garment samples. On-the-job training could lead to higher qualifications.

**MACHINIST OR PATTERN CUTTER** You can study for a vocational qualification while working as a machinist or pattern cutter, which will give you valuable experience of the textile industry.



**GRADUATE** Earning a degree in textile design, fashion, or a related subject can help you develop the skills, creative confidence, and industry contacts to progress as a designer.



**TEXTILE DESIGNER** Once qualified, you may work with fashion houses, architects, interior designers, or fabric manufacturers and retailers. You can specialize in areas such as interiors—upholstery, furnishings, and carpets—or technical fabrics, such as those used in fireproof clothing.



**WALLPAPER DESIGNER** Creates patterns and textures for wallpapers and other wall coverings. Most opportunities in this specialty field are freelance, or in working for textile or wall-covering manufacturers.



**FASHION DESIGNER** Designs accessories, shoes, or clothes—for mass-production or limited editions for niche markets—that mimic current trends in fabric, color, and shape, or create a new style.



**INTERIOR DESIGNER** Uses a knowledge of pattern, color, texture, and design techniques to produce interior schemes—which may include textile elements—for interior design studios and architectural firms.



**TEXTILE CONSERVATOR** Works with museums, heritage organizations, and in the antiques trade to restore valuable textiles, such as tapestries, clothing, and wall and floor coverings. This job requires a thorough knowledge of design history, textile structure, and traditional manufacturing methods.

## SKILLS GUIDE



Strong communication skills for liaising with customers, colleagues, and technical and marketing staff.



The ability to evaluate the properties of materials used in specialty and industrial textiles.



Creative flair for experimenting with different designs, materials, colors, textures, and weights.



Good computer skills and knowledge of Computer-aided Design (CAD) software.



Commercial awareness and good business sense, especially if working as a freelance designer.