

Artworker

Introduction

Artworkers take designs that have been created by a designer and prepare them for print production. This involves making changes and corrections to the design.

Artworkers use computer graphics software in their work.

Also known as

- Mac Operator
- Graphic Artist
- Mac Artworker

Work Activities

Once a Graphic Designer or a Packaging Designer has created a design for a product - and it has been approved by the client - a lot of work still needs to be done to it before it's ready for final production.

For example, a design shown on a computer screen can look very different when printed out. This is because computers show images by using different colours compared to printing presses, and much more detail can be seen on a printed sheet.

As an Artworker, you will take designs and check them, making any corrections or changes to the text, images or layout.

To do this, you'll use a wide range of graphics software packages.

Some of the designs you might work on could be for:

- brochures and leaflets
- adverts and posters
- stationery and logos
- packaging
- exhibition displays

You'll begin your work by referring to the design brief and print specification for the project - so they know what needs to be done and by when. Then you will discuss the project with Designers and print requirements with the Printers.

Some of the tasks you might perform as an Artworker include:

- resizing and sourcing photos or images
- correcting or changing colours in a design
- checking proofs for visual or textual errors
- adding text to a design or making changes to it
- producing mock-ups
- archiving old files, images and design work

Although you are not usually involved in the creative aspects of designing, you may be asked to finish a design off, following a particular style or format. For example, you may be given the design for a brochure and be asked to add more pages in the same style.



Once you have finished making changes to the design, you'll need to make sure it's ready for print. The design needs to be in the correct print format with enough space given so it looks good when it has been trimmed.

You'll print out a sample copy of the design to check it before you give it to the Printer. You must set up all the design files and save them on to disk so the printer has all the information they need, ready for printing.

Most Artworkers work in studios alongside Designers, and Art Directors or Studio Managers.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

To become an Artworker, you will need:

- to be very accurate in your work
- a wide knowledge of computer graphics software packages
- to work well to deadlines
- good communication and organisation skills
- to work well on your own and with others
- the ability to take instructions from others, eg, Designers

Although Artworkers aren't generally involved in the creative aspects of designing, an awareness of creative techniques and design is useful.

Self-employed or freelance Artworkers will need business and marketing skills.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: £20,500 - £22,500
- With experience: £24,000 - £27,000
- Senior Artworkers earn £29,000 - £32,000

Hours of work

You will usually work 39 hours a week, Monday to Friday. However, late finishes and weekend work may be required, especially as deadlines approach.

Artworkers can sometimes be the first step towards becoming a professional Graphic Designer. There is some blurring of the roles of Artworker and Designer and in some organisations the titles are interchangeable.

However, this is not the most usual route to becoming a Graphic Designer.

Where could I work?

Employers are small commercial design studios, advertising agencies, exhibition companies, firms involved with point of sale and display, television, film and audio visual companies, and publicity departments in large organisations.

Opportunities for Artworkers occur with employers in towns and cities throughout the UK.

Self-employment

Opportunities occur for Artworkers to work on a freelance, self-employed basis.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in local/national newspapers, on recruitment and employers' websites, and on Find a Job (www.gov.uk/jobsearch).

Social media websites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook, are a great way to network, find vacancies and get in contact with possible employers. Make sure that your profile presents you in a professional manner that will appeal to potential employers.

Take a look at our General Information Article 'Finding Work Online'

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

Most people enter this work after taking a relevant course, for example, in desktop publishing or computer graphics software. These courses can be studied part-time at college.

Some Artworkers enter this career by training on-the-job and building their skills as they go along.

An Intermediate Level Apprenticeship is a great place to start. Take a look at our information article 'Apprenticeships - How do I apply?' for more details.

Training

Training will mainly be on-the-job.

However, if you would like some training, the International Career Institute offer a graphic design and desktop publishing online course. The units you could be studying include:

- graphics software
- marketing and advertising
- setting up a studio
- colour theory
- history of computer graphics
- digital camera basics
- webpage layout
- getting creative
- what is design?
- graphics tablet
- page layout
- digital print
- pixel painting
- graphics with text
- web graphics

Check the website for dates and availability.

Other courses could be available in your area.

Progression

Some Artworkers progress towards graphic design positions.

Work Experience

Previous experience gained using desktop publishing software are useful for this career.

Qualifications

Employers may ask for some GCSEs at grade C/4 or above to enter this work. However, this varies from organisation

to organisation.

The following vocational qualifications could help you to stand out from the crowd:

- a BTEC level 2 or level 3 qualification in art and design or graphic design
- City & Guilds level 2 qualification in art & design 2D and 3D techniques

Knowledge of relevant computer graphics software packages is the most important requirement for this job.

To get onto an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship, you'll usually need at least 2 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, possibly including English and maths.

Adult Opportunities

Age limits

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

Skills/experience

Skills and abilities gained using desktop publishing software are essential.

Courses

Courses at various levels are offered by a large number of centres, by distance learning. Relevant courses have titles such as desktop publishing, or relate to specific software packages for print, such as QuarkXPress, Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, and for web packages, such as Dreamweaver and Flash.

It may also be possible to enter this field of work via a Design Intermediate Level Apprenticeship.

Further Information

Contacts

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**
National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
Tel: 0800 015 0400
Email: nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
Website: www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- **Skills Development Scotland - Modern Apprenticeships**
Tel: 0800 9178000
Email: info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
Website: www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships
- **ScreenSkills**
Skills for the creative industries
Email: info@creativeskillset.org
Website: www.creativeskillset.org
- **Creative Choices**
Publisher: Creative & Cultural Skills
Email: info@creative-choices.co.uk
Website: www.creative-choices.co.uk
- **The Tech Partnership**
Skills for business and information technology
Address: 1 Castle Lane, London SW1E 6DR
Tel: 020 7963 8920

Email: info@e-skills.com
Website: www.e-skills.com

- **BCS: The Chartered Institute for IT**
Address: First Floor, Block D, North Star House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1FA
Tel: 0845 3004417
Email: custsupport@bcs.uk
Website: www.bcs.org
- **Creative & Cultural Skills**
Skills for craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts and visual arts
Email: london@ccskills.org.uk
Website: ccskills.org.uk
- **Design and Art Direction (D&AD)**
Address: Britannia House, 68-80 Hanbury Street, London E1 5JL
Tel: 020 7840 1111
Email: contact@dandad.org
Website: www.dandad.org
- **Harrison Scott Associates**
Recruitment in printing, packaging and paper industries
Website: www.harrison-scott.com
- **artsHub**
Publisher: Arts Hub UK
Website: www.artshub.co.uk/uk/
- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**
Tel: 0800 028 4844
Website: ams.careerswales.com/
- **Tech Partnership**
Email: info@thetechpartnership.com
Website: www.thetechpartnership.com/

Related Careers

- Medical Illustrator
- Design Assistant
- Fashion Designer
- Graphic Designer
- Metal Engraver
- Visual Merchandiser
- Commercial Illustrator
- Signmaker
- Ceramics Designer
- Footwear Designer
- Furniture Designer
- Product Designer
- Vehicle Designer
- Interior Designer
- Jewellery Designer
- Packaging Designer
- Textile Designer
- Costume Designer
- Theatre Designer
- Musical Instrument Technician
- Picture Researcher
- Technical/Scientific Illustrator
- Model Maker
- Picture Framer

- Designer
- Illustrator
- Artist
- CGI Artist
- VFX Artist
- Nostalgist