

# Ceramics Designer

## Introduction

Ceramics designers create designs for pottery products.

Ceramics designers who work for large companies are likely to produce designs for mass-production. Ceramics designers who are self-employed or work for small companies are likely to handcraft their own designs.

## Also known as

- Designer, Ceramics
- Pottery Designer

## Work Activities

As a Ceramics Designer, you will create designs for pottery products. You work either in industry, or as Potters/Designer-Craftworkers who are usually self-employed or work for small companies.

Ceramics Designers who work in industry design goods for mass-production. These include items such as:

- table and ovenware
- wall and floor tiles
- bathroom fittings, eg, toilets and handbasins

In industry, Ceramics Designers work to a brief. This includes details such as:

- the type of ceramics required
- how much money is available for production
- what the product is to be used for
- who is likely to use it

Ceramics Designers then carry out further research. This helps to establish how well existing designs are doing, and what competitors are producing. You also consider technical factors such as kiln temperatures, decorative techniques, and glazes.

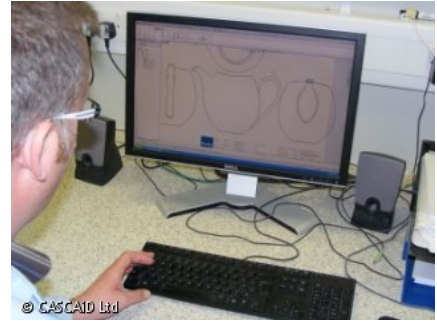
After you have finished their research, you draw your ideas for designs. You show them to clients and Senior Designers or Managers for approval. Changes may then be made, followed by the production of a small number of samples. Industrial Ceramics Designers generally specialise in designing shapes or patterns.

Potters or Designer-Craftworkers are usually based in studios and workshops. You produce goods on a small scale and generally have more of a chance to be creative. These could include functional items such as dinnerware or one-off ornamental pieces.

Potters or Designer-Craftworkers may be involved in some, but not necessarily all, of the stages of the design process. Some combine working to a brief and undertaking research, with being a Ceramic Artist. You use traditional craft methods using a potter's wheel or slipcasting where liquid clay is poured into a mould.

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 a Ceramics Designer, you need:

- creative and artistic skills
- an understanding of colour, shape and form
- patience - it may take several weeks to finish a product
- an understanding of production processes
- the ability to change ideas into a three-dimensional design
- to work to deadlines and budgets
- knowledge of design-related software

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

## Pay and Opportunities

### Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: £24,000 - £25,000
- With experience: £26,500 - £31,000
- Senior Ceramics Designers earn £33,000 - £35,500

### Hours of work

Ceramics Designers usually work 39 hours a week, Monday to Friday. However, late finishes and weekend work may be required, especially as deadlines approach. Self-employed Ceramics Designers may work irregular hours, depending on how much work they have week-to-week.

### Where could I work?

Employers include manufacturers (who may employ Ceramics Designers as freelance or In-House Designers), design consultancies and leading retailers. Some companies specialise in particular work, such as making ceramic tiles.

Opportunities for Ceramics Designers occur in towns, cities and rural areas, often in tourist areas, throughout the UK.

### Self-employment

Opportunities occur for Ceramics Designers to become self-employed, working in consultancy and fixed-term contract work, or to set up as Ceramics Designers and work from home, a shared studio or a workshop.

The ability for individuals to promote their work online from the internet means location is less important for self-employed Ceramics Designers.

### 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](http://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

A common route into this career is from a Foundation course in art and design followed by a degree, HNC, HND or foundation degree in a subject like ceramics or ceramic design. Some three-dimensional design courses combine ceramics with the study of another material, such as glass, plastic, metal and wood.

A great way to get into this career is through an internship. Take a look at our information article 'Internships', for more details.

An Intermediate Level Apprenticeship is also a great place to start. Take a look at our information article 'Apprenticeships – How do I apply', for more details about applying for apprenticeship positions.

## **Training**

Training will mainly be on-the-job.

Some Ceramics Designers are self-taught. Ceramics Designers hoping to find employment in industry may need postgraduate qualifications.

Relevant courses are available throughout the UK. The University of the Arts London offers a ceramic course for beginners that you could try.

## **Work Experience**

Skills gained as an Assistant in a design studio or workshop, or in a design consultancy are valued. Commercial awareness and an understanding of the ceramics industry is an advantage.

To enter the work or relevant courses, you need to have a portfolio of work showing your creative ability.

## **Qualifications**

The usual entry requirements for a relevant foundation course are:

- 1/2 A levels where you'll need an A level in art or in an art-based subject
- GCSEs at grade C/4 or above in 4/5 subjects

Some courses ask that you have a pass in English.

The entry requirements for relevant HNCs, HNDs and foundation degrees are similar to those needed for the foundation course mentioned above.

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.

To enter any course in art and design, you'll need a portfolio of your work.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A level.

## **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 gained as an assistant in a design studio or workshop, or in a design consultancy are valued. Commercial awareness and an understanding of the ceramics industry is an advantage.

To enter the work or relevant courses, you need to have a portfolio of work showing your creative ability.

### **Courses**

If you don't have the qualifications needed to enter your chosen degree or HND course, a college or university Access course (eg, Access to Art and Design) could be the way in. No formal qualifications are usually required, but you should check individual course details.

They can lead to relevant degree/HND courses.

It's also possible to do a part-time Art Foundation course, which leads to a degree or HND course. Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses are also available part-time, often in the evenings and/or in the daytime. Relevant City & Guilds courses are also available.

Universities and colleges of higher education (HE) will usually consider applications from candidates who don't meet their usual entry requirements, especially those with experience in arts, crafts or design. You should check the admissions policy of individual universities and HE colleges.

### **Distance learning**

Bath Spa University offers an MA in Design: Ceramics, available to study via distance learning.

### **Funding**

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust offers grants of up to £15,000 to people wishing to set up craft/design businesses.

The Elephant Trust offers grants of up to £2,000 for artists working on particular projects.

## **Further Information**

### **Contacts**

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**  
National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)  
Tel: 0800 015 0400  
Email: [nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)
- **ScreenSkills**  
Skills for the creative industries  
Email: [info@creativeskillset.org](mailto:info@creativeskillset.org)  
Website: [www.creativeskillset.org](http://www.creativeskillset.org)
- **Creative Choices**  
Publisher: Creative & Cultural Skills  
Email: [info@creative-choices.co.uk](mailto:info@creative-choices.co.uk)  
Website: [www.creative-choices.co.uk](http://www.creative-choices.co.uk)
- **Creative & Cultural Skills**  
Skills for craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts and visual arts  
Email: [london@ccskills.org.uk](mailto:london@ccskills.org.uk)  
Website: [ccskills.org.uk](http://ccskills.org.uk)
- **Chartered Society of Designers (CSD)**  
Email: [info@csd.org.uk](mailto:info@csd.org.uk)  
Website: [www.csd.org.uk](http://www.csd.org.uk)
- **Getting into Art & Design Courses**  
Author: James Burnett Publisher: Trotman  
Website: [trotman.co.uk/our-books/getting-into-art-and-design-courses/](http://trotman.co.uk/our-books/getting-into-art-and-design-courses/)
- **Proskills UK**  
Skills for process and manufacturing industries  
Address: Centurion Court, 85b Park Drive, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4RY  
Tel: 01235 833844

Email: [info@proskills.co.uk](mailto:info@proskills.co.uk)  
Website: [www.proskills.co.uk](http://www.proskills.co.uk)

- **Prospect4u**  
Careers in manufacturing  
Website: [www.prospect4u.co.uk](http://www.prospect4u.co.uk)
- **craft&design**  
Address: PO Box 5, Drifffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 8JD  
Tel: 01377 255213  
Website: [www.craftanddesign.net](http://www.craftanddesign.net)
- **Crafts Council**  
Address: 44a Pentonville Road, Islington, London N1 9BY  
Tel: 020 7806 2500  
Email: [reception@craftscouncil.org.uk](mailto:reception@craftscouncil.org.uk)  
Website: [www.craftscouncil.org.uk](http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk)
- **British Ceramic Confederation (BCC)**  
Address: Federation House, Station Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 2SA  
Tel: 01782 744631  
Email: [bcc@ceramfed.co.uk](mailto:bcc@ceramfed.co.uk)  
Website: [www.ceramfed.co.uk](http://www.ceramfed.co.uk)
- **Studiopottery.co.uk**  
Address: 13 Blunts Wood Road, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH16 1ND  
Email: [info@studiopottery.co.uk](mailto:info@studiopottery.co.uk)  
Website: [www.studiopottery.co.uk](http://www.studiopottery.co.uk)
- **Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust**  
Address: No 1 Buckingham Place, London SW1E 6HR  
Tel: 020 7828 2268  
Email: [qest@rwha.co.uk](mailto:qest@rwha.co.uk)  
Website: [www.qest.org.uk](http://www.qest.org.uk)
- **Elephant Trust**  
Address: 512 Bankside Lofts, 65 Hopton Street, London SE1 9GZ  
Tel: 020 7922 1160  
Email: [ruth@elephanttrust.org.uk](mailto:ruth@elephanttrust.org.uk)  
Website: [elephanttrust.org.uk](http://elephanttrust.org.uk)
- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**  
Tel: 0800 028 4844  
Website: [ams.careerswales.com/](http://ams.careerswales.com/)
- **Hiive**  
Hiive is the online professional network for creative people.  
Website: [app.hiive.co.uk/](http://app.hiive.co.uk/)

## Related Careers

- Medical Illustrator
- Design Assistant
- Fashion Designer
- Graphic Designer
- Artworker
- Metal Engraver
- Visual Merchandiser
- Commercial Illustrator
- Signmaker
- 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