

Furniture Designer

Introduction

Furniture designers create designs for mass-produced or handcrafted furniture products.

Also known as

- Designer, Furniture

Work Activities

As a Furniture Designer, you will create designs for mass production or hand crafted for individual clients. The products that you could design could be:

- office furniture
- chairs
- tables
- bookcases
- sofas



Firstly you will get a brief from a client. You will then discuss the materials you would like and what the product they want. You could also be working with a specific budget as well.

Furniture Designers also use hand tools such as lathes, machine saws and hammers. You could also use different techniques for the products such as veneering, wood turning and carving.

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 Furniture Designer, you need:

- creative and artistic skills
- flexibility to adapt designs to suit clients' needs
- an understanding of production processes
- an understanding of the different materials you might use to make furniture products
- the ability to change ideas into a three-dimensional design
- to work to deadlines and budgets
- to keep up to date with changes in design and furniture technology
- knowledge of design-related software

Self-employed or freelance Furniture 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 Furniture Designers earn £33,000 - £35,500

Self-employed Designer-Craftworkers are likely to earn at the lower end of the range, especially when they start out.

Some Furniture Designers negotiate royalties for their designs with manufacturers.

Hours of work

Furniture Designers usually work 39 hours a week, Monday to Friday. Working hours for self-employed Furniture Designers may be irregular, depending on how much work you have. However, late finishes and weekend work may be required from time to time, especially as deadlines approach.

Where could I work?

Employers include firms involved in large-scale furniture production. They may employ Furniture Designers as part of an in-house design team, or as freelance Designers.

Other opportunities can be found with design consultancies where Designers work with other professionals in related fields, for example, Interior Designers and Architects.

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

Self-employment

Opportunities occur for Furniture Designers to become self-employed, working in consultancy and fixed-term contract work, or to set up as Designer-Craftworkers 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 Designers.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

Degrees are a common route for Furniture Designers as you can get a better experience of design.

You could take a foundation degree in furniture design or three dimensional design and this would give you a great first step.

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 in furniture design would be really helpful for this career. Take a look at our information article 'Apprenticeships – How do I apply', for more details about applying for apprenticeship positions.

Work Experience

Previous experience within a creative environment will be really helpful for this career.

Training

Some of your training will be on-the-job.

If you would like some training, Williams & Cleal offer weekend courses. It offers a box making course as well as a veneering course, which could help you gain the skills you need to become a Furniture Designer. Williams & Cleal also offer full time courses - check the website for dates and availability.

Other courses could be available in your area.

Progression

Many Furniture Designers become self-employed. With training and experience, it may be possible to move into

managerial positions.

Qualifications

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

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 where some courses ask that you have a pass in English

Alternatives to A levels include:

- a BTEC level 3 qualification in art and design
- a design Advanced Level Apprenticeship
- the International Baccalaureate Diploma

However, course requirements vary, so please check college/university websites very carefully.

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.

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
- **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
- **Chartered Society of Designers (CSD)**
Email: info@csd.org.uk

Website: 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/
- **craft&design**
Address: PO Box 5, Driffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 8JD
Tel: 01377 255213
Website: www.craftanddesign.net
- **London Metropolitan University**
Address: 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 8DB
Tel: 020 7423 0000
Website: www.londonmet.ac.uk
- **Crafts Council**
Address: 44a Pentonville Road, Islington, London N1 9BY
Tel: 020 7806 2500
Email: reception@craftscouncil.org.uk
Website: www.craftscouncil.org.uk
- **Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust**
Address: No 1 Buckingham Place, London SW1E 6HR
Tel: 020 7828 2268
Email: qest@rwha.co.uk
Website: www.qest.org.uk
- **The Furniture Makers' Company**
Address: Furniture Makers' Hall, 12 Austin Friars, London EC2N 2HE
Tel: 020 7256 5558
Email: hello@furnituremakers.org.uk
Website: www.furnituremkrs.co.uk
- **Cabinet Maker**
Tel: 01954 212906
Website: www.cabinet-maker.co.uk
- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**
Tel: 0800 028 4844
Website: ams.careerswales.com/
- **Hiive**
Hiive is the online professional network for creative people.
Website: app.hiive.co.uk/
- **Williams & Cleal**
Email: enquiries@williamsandcleal.co.uk
Website: williamsandcleal.co.uk

Related Careers

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

- Ceramics Designer
- Footwear 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