

# Packaging Designer

## Introduction

Packaging designers create designs for containers such as bottles, cartons and boxes. As well as having design skills, packaging designers also need knowledge of packaging materials and processes.

## Also known as

- Designer, Packaging

## Work Activities

As a Packaging Designer, you will create designs for all forms of packaging including bottles, packets, cartons and boxes.

You work on your ideas using design tools such as pens, paints, and design-related computer software. The shape, colour and message on an item's package all need to be taken into consideration.

Once you have an idea of what your client requires (usually in the form of a brief), you make a series of rough sketches, the best of which are refined and presented to the client for approval.

Packaging Designers may also have to research the market to see what type of designs already exist, as well as research the type of customers who might buy the product. It's important that the package and the message on the package communicates what is inside, and entices people to buy it.

When the best ideas have been chosen, you make models to see what your design looks like before it is finalised, and before production begins. You usually work in two-dimensional and three-dimensional design.

You need to be aware of regulations relating to the packaging you are working on. For example:

- labelling and size requirements
- waste and environmental regulations
- copyright, patent and trademark legislations
- health and safety

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 Packaging Designer, you need:

- knowledge of a wide range of packaging materials, such as tin, glass, plastic and card
- an awareness of how designs affect the environment, such as when packaging is thrown away
- knowledge of design-related computer software
- to be creative and think of new ideas
- problem-solving skills
- to keep up to date with new design developments
- good communication, presentation and negotiation skills
- good organisation and planning skills

## Pay and Opportunities

### Pay



The pay rates given below are approximate.

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

### **Hours of work**

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

### **Where could I work?**

Employers are manufacturing companies (as part of an in-house design team), or you could work for a design consultancy. It may also be possible to work for a manufacturing company that specialises in packaging design.

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

### **Self-employment**

Opportunities occur for experienced Packaging Designers in consultancy and fixed-term contract work. You can obtain this work through specialist recruitment agencies.

### **Where are vacancies advertised?**

Vacancies are advertised in design industry magazines/journals, on all the major job boards, on Find a Job, and at Jobcentre Plus.

It's a good idea to build up a network of relevant contacts as not all design jobs are advertised. Making speculative job applications can also be effective.

## **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 graphic design, product design or three-dimensional design. Some of these courses may have options in packaging design.

An Intermediate or Advanced 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.

BTEC level 3 qualifications are available in relevant subjects and are a great vocational alternative to A Levels.

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

### **Training**

Training will mainly be on-the-job.

The Packaging Society provides information on relevant training options.

### **Work Experience**

Skills gained as an Assistant in a design studio or workshop, or in a design consultancy are valued. Experience in related fields, such as advertising or marketing, is also useful. Commercial awareness and an understanding of the packaging industry is an advantage.

### **Progression**

With experience, it may be possible to move into managerial positions. There may also be opportunities to go into

the consulting side of the industry.

## 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 where some courses ask that you have a pass in English

Alternatives to A levels include:

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

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. Experience in related fields, such as advertising or marketing, is also useful. Commercial awareness and an understanding of the packaging industry is an advantage.

To enter this career or relevant courses, you need to have a portfolio of work demonstrating 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.

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

The University of Hertfordshire offers an MA/PgD/PgC in Graphic Design by distance learning.

### Training

The Packaging Society offers a Certificate in Packaging (4-day attendance and online study), and a Diploma in Packaging, (intensive 15-day course by attendance or by online study).

## 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/)
- **Design and Art Direction (D&AD)**  
Address: Britannia House, 68-80 Hanbury Street, London E1 5JL  
Tel: 020 7840 1111  
Email: [contact@dandad.org](mailto:contact@dandad.org)  
Website: [www.dandad.org](http://www.dandad.org)
- **Harrison Scott Associates**  
Recruitment in printing, packaging and paper industries  
Website: [www.harrison-scott.com](http://www.harrison-scott.com)
- **Packaging Society**  
A division of the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3)  
Website: [www.iom3.org/packaging](http://www.iom3.org/packaging)
- **Packaging Futures**  
Address: Eccelston House, Bell Meadow Business Park, Park Lane, Chester CH4 9EP  
Tel: 01244 572172  
Email: [info@mercurysearch.co.uk](mailto:info@mercurysearch.co.uk)  
Website: [www.packagingfutures.com](http://www.packagingfutures.com)
- **Packaging Federation (PF)**  
Address: 8th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP  
Tel: 020 7808 7217  
Email: [dicksearle@packagingfedn.co.uk](mailto:dicksearle@packagingfedn.co.uk)  
Website: [www.packagingfedn.co.uk](http://www.packagingfedn.co.uk)
- **Paper Industry Technical Association (PITA)**

Address: 5 Frecheville Court, Bury, Lancashire BL9 0UF  
Tel: 0161 7645858  
Email: [info@pita.co.uk](mailto:info@pita.co.uk)  
Website: [www.pita.co.uk](http://www.pita.co.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
- Ceramics Designer
- Footwear Designer
- Furniture Designer
- Product Designer
- Vehicle Designer
- Interior Designer
- Jewellery 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