

# Textile Designer

## Introduction

Textile designers create designs for printed, woven and knitted fabrics, carpets and wall-coverings. As well as keeping up with current fashion trends, textile designers need to understand how textiles can be used to make things.

## Also known as

- Cloth Designer
- Designer, Textile
- Fabric Designer



## Work Activities

As a Textile Designer, you will create fabrics for clients.

Smaller companies may get you to rework traditional designs. If you decide to work for a larger company then you could create your own designs as well as participating in projects.

When you have finished the design, you will send it to a print laboratory where a sample can be made up and passed on to the Design Director to examine and comment on.

As a Designer-Craftworker, you will usually make your own samples. You may also be responsible for preparing colourways or swatches. These are small pieces or sections of the finished article that you can show to a buying team and retailers. These give everyone involved in the design process a better idea of the appearance and texture of the final product.

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 Textile Designer, you need:

- artistic and creative skills
- knowledge of texture, patterns, dyes and yarns
- an understanding of colour, shape and form
- knowledge of design-related software
- good communication, presentation and negotiation skills
- to work to deadlines and budgets
- problem-solving skills
- good organisation and planning skills
- to pay attention to fine detail
- to keep up to date with new textile design developments
- practical craft skills

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

### **Hours of work**

Textile Designers usually work 39 hours a week, Monday to Friday. Working hours for self-employed Textile Designers may be irregular, depending on the project you are working on. Late finishes and weekend work may be required from time to time, especially as deadlines approach.

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

Employers include in-house design units of textile manufacturers, and specialist studios that work for a number of manufacturers.

### **Self-employment**

Opportunities occur for Textile Designers to work as self-employed, freelance Textile 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 textile design jobs are advertised. Making speculative job applications to potential employers can be useful.

## **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, HND or foundation degree in a subject such as textile or fashion design.

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 or Advanced Level Apprenticeship is also a great place to start. You may be able to take an NVQ as part of your apprenticeship. Take a look at our information article 'Apprenticeships – How do I apply', for more details about applying for apprenticeship positions.

### **Training**

If you would like some training, BTEC offer a level 3 qualification in textile design and manufacture. This course has a range of units to study, which include:

- general textile technology
- fibre and yarn processing
- weaving
- textile finishing
- knitted fabric design
- woven fabric design
- textile testing
- managing information for action within the textile industry

Other courses could be available in your area.

### **Work Experience**

Some entrants have the relevant experience in textile designing. Previous experience working with fabrics will be helpful to get you into this career.

### **Progression**

Many Textile Designers become self-employed. With experience, some move into senior roles within an organisation.

## **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 qualifications
- an Advanced Level Apprenticeship
- the International Baccalaureate Diploma

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.

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 textiles industry are an advantage.

To enter the work or relevant courses, a portfolio of work showing your creative ability is normally required.

### **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.

Various universities and education institutions offer textile-related BAs, via part-time study.

Various educational institutions offer part-time MAs in fashion & textile-related subjects.

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

Relevant courses at various levels in textile design are offered by a large number of centres, by distance learning.

The University of Manchester offers postgraduate diplomas, certificates and an MSc in Textile Technology, via distance learning.

## 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)
- **Skills Development Scotland - Modern Apprenticeships**  
Tel: 0800 9178000  
Email: [info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk](mailto:info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk)  
Website: [www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships)
- **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/)
- **Textile Institute**  
Address: 1st Floor, St James's Buildings, Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6FQ  
Tel: 0161 2371188  
Email: [tiihq@textileinst.org.uk](mailto:tiihq@textileinst.org.uk)  
Website: [www.texti.org](http://www.texti.org)
- **Drapers: The Fashion Business**  
Publisher: EMAP  
Address: Greater London House, Hampstead Road, London NW1 7EJ  
Tel: 020 3033 2600  
Website: [www.drapersonline.com](http://www.drapersonline.com)
- **craft&design**  
Address: PO Box 5, Driffield, 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)

- **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
- Packaging 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