

# Glass Designer

## Introduction

Glass designers are specialist craft or product designers working in three main areas: studio glass, architectural glass and stained glass. Their aim is to design functional, reliable and cost-effective products.

## Also known as

- Designer, Glass

## Work Activities

As a Glass Designer, you will specialise in craft and design products.

You'll be working with:

- **studio glass** - this involves the design and production of decorative and functional glassware items
- **architectural glass** - this involves the design and manufacture of products such as windows and lighting
- **stained glass** - this is a highly skilled area of design and involves renovation projects, or decorative designs for buildings, for example

You will be involved in every process of designing the product as well as the assembly.

It is often on a self-employed basis.

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 Glass Designer, you need:

- understanding of shape, colour and form
- creative and artistic skills
- the ability to communicate ideas in the form of sketches or models
- an understanding of production processes and the different materials you might use to make glass products
- problem-solving skills
- to work to deadlines and budgets
- good communication, presentation and negotiation skills
- knowledge of design-related software

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

## Pay and Opportunities

### Pay

The pay rates are given below:

- Starting: £24,000 - £25,000
- With experience: £26,500 - £31,000
- Senior Glass Designers can earn more than £35,000



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

Self-employed Glass Designers experience more fluctuation in their incomes, so you may earn a lower figure.

### **Hours of work**

Glass Designers usually work 39 hours a week, Monday to Friday. However, late finishes and weekend work may be required, especially as deadlines approach. If you are a self-employed Glass Designer, you may work irregular hours, depending on how much work you have week to week.

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

Employers include high volume, glass product manufacturing companies, and specialist design consultancies. They may also employ freelance Glass Designers.

Opportunities for Glass Designers occur with manufacturers in towns and cities throughout the UK.

### **Self-employment**

Opportunities occur for Glass Designers to become self-employed, as Designer-Craftworkers and work from home, a shared studio or a workshop.

You may have the ability to promote your own work online so it might be easier for self-employed Glass Designers.

Consultancy and fixed-term contract work may be available for experienced Glass Designers.

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

Vacancies are advertised in design industry magazines/journals, on all the major job boards, on Universal Jobmatch, 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, HND or foundation degree in a subject that includes glass design. These are often three-dimensional or combined design courses. Glass design is commonly studied with ceramics design.

However, you will need at least 5 GCSEs graded 9 - 4 (A\* - C) in maths and English as well.

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. Take a look at our information article 'Apprenticeships – How do I apply', for more details about applying for apprenticeship positions.

### **Training**

Alternatively, there are craft glass-making courses available in some colleges. These cover glass-blowing, decoration, hand-forming and lathe working. These courses may be suitable for Glass Designers who hope to become self-employed. Some courses are available part-time during the day and others are offered as evening classes. A few are available full-time.

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

### **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 glass manufacturing industry are an advantage.

Some people gradually develop a hobby in glass making into a career by selling pieces of glassware they have designed and made themselves.

Most people who enter glass design by this route do so part-time whilst working in other jobs because of the costs of developing a commercial workshop.

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

### **Progression**

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

## 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 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.

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 glass manufacturing industry are an advantage.

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Most people who enter glass design by this route do so part-time whilst working in other jobs because of the costs of developing a commercial workshop.

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.

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.

The University of Sunderland offers an MA in Glass Studies, via part-time, evening courses.

### **Distance learning**

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

### **Training**

Intermediate Level Apprenticeships and Advanced Level Apprenticeships may be available in your area.

### **Funding**

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

The Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass runs competitions and awards to encourage the careers of students and young artists.

## **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/)
- **Glass Training (GTL)**  
 Address: 4 Bridle Stile, Mosborough, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S20 5BR  
 Tel: 0114 2488874  
 Email: [info@glass-training.co.uk](mailto:info@glass-training.co.uk)  
 Website: [www.glass-training.co.uk](http://www.glass-training.co.uk)
- **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)
- **GQA Qualifications**  
 Address: Unit 1, 12 O'clock Court, Attercliffe Road, Sheffield S4 7WW  
 Tel: 0114 2720033  
 Email: [info@gqaqualifications.com](mailto:info@gqaqualifications.com)  
 Website: [www.gqaqualifications.com](http://www.gqaqualifications.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)
- **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)
- **Heart of England Glass**  
 Website: [heartofenglandglass.co.uk](http://heartofenglandglass.co.uk)
- **Society of Glass Technology (SGT)**  
 Address: 9 Churchill Way, Chapeltown, Sheffield S35 2PY  
 Tel: 0114 2634455  
 Website: [www.sgt.org](http://www.sgt.org)
- **Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass**  
 Address: The Glaziers' Company, 9 Montague Close, London Bridge, London SE1 9DD  
 Tel: 020 7403 6652  
 Email: [info@worshipfulglaziers.com](mailto:info@worshipfulglaziers.com)  
 Website: [www.worshipfulglaziers.com](http://www.worshipfulglaziers.com)
- **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

- Ceramics Technologist
- Glass Technologist
- Ceramic Pottery Maker
- Glassmaker