

Interior Decorating

Interior designers make interior spaces functional, safe, and beautiful for almost every type of building: offices, homes, airport terminals, shopping malls, and restaurants. They select and specify colors, finishes, fabrics, furniture, flooring and wall coverings, lighting, and other materials to create useful and stylish interiors for buildings.

Work Environment

Many interior designers worked for the specialized design services industry or for architectural, engineering, and related services industries. Many persons in this field start their own companies and are self employed.

How to get Qualified

Interior designers need a bachelor's degree with a focus on interior design.

A bachelor's degree in any field is acceptable, and interior design programs are available at the associate's, bachelors, and master's degree levels. Classes include interior design, drawing, and computer-aided design (CAD).

Voluntary certification in an interior design specialty, such as kitchens and baths, allows interior designers to demonstrate their expertise in a particular area of interior design. Interior designers often specialize to distinguish the type of design work they do and to promote their expertise. Certifications usually are available through professional or trade associations and skills training organizations.

Other qualifications/skills required:

Artistic ability. Interior designers use their sense of style to develop designs that look great and are aesthetically pleasing.

Creativity. Interior designers need to be imaginative in selecting furnishings and fabrics and in creating spaces that serve the client's needs and fit the client's lifestyle.

Detail oriented. Interior designers need to be precise in measuring interior spaces and making drawings so that furniture and furnishings will fit correctly and create the appropriate environment.

Interpersonal skills. Interior designers need to be able to communicate effectively with clients and others. Much of their time is spent soliciting new work and new clients and collaborating with other designers, engineers, and general building contractors on ongoing projects.

Problem-solving skills. Interior designers must address challenges such as construction delays or the high cost or sudden unavailability of selected materials while keeping the project on time and within budget.

Visualization. Interior designers need a strong sense of proportion and visual awareness to understand how pieces of a design will fit together to create the intended interior environment.

Job Outlook

Employment of interior designers is expected to increase by 19 percent from 2010 to 2020, about as fast as the average for all occupations. Designers will be needed to respond to consumer expectations that the interiors of homes and offices meet certain conditions, such as being environmentally friendly or more easily accessible.

Companies typically budget money over many years so that they can afford remodeling efforts when necessary, regardless of economic conditions. In addition, as part of creating their corporate image, more companies are expected to take advantage of opportunities to use new furnishing and design concepts to make their interior space easily identifiable.

Employment for interior designers in specialized design firms is expected to grow by 27 percent from 2010 to 2020. As interior designers focus on increasingly specialized design areas, there will be a greater need for them to collaborate with other designers and in other design-related fields.

By specializing in a unique area of design, interior designers can use their knowledge of products to better fulfill customer requests.