

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE/DESIGN

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES/INFORMATION

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE/DESIGN

Commercial design:

- Offices
- Retail
- Healthcare:
 - Hospitals, clinics, medical offices
- Hospitality:
 - Restaurants
 - Bars and clubs
 - Hotels and motels
 - Resorts
 - Theaters

Civic design:

- Airports
- Government facilities
- Educational institutions

Residential design:

- Single-family
- Apartments
- Condominiums

In-store design

Design specialties:

- Bath
- Kitchen
- Lighting
- Ergonomic
- Sustainable
- Elder
- Universal

Renovations

Sales/Marketing

Management

Education

- Design firms
- Architecture firms
- Design divisions of corporations/institutions
- Department stores
- Home furnishings stores
- Building and supplies dealers
- Product manufacturers
- Residential construction companies
- Hotels
- Hospitals
- Federal government departments
- Colleges and universities
- Self-employed/freelance

Interior designers/architects study human and environmental interaction to create safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing spaces through planned use of light, color, mechanical systems, and furnishings.

Learn the creative and business aspects of the field, and how to work effectively on multidisciplinary teams including architects and contractors.

Develop computer aided design (CAD) and building information modeling (BIM) software skills.

Cultivate creative, technical, interpersonal, and management skills for success in the field.

Create and maintain a design portfolio.

Conduct informational interviews with designers in a variety of settings to learn about specialties.

Complete an internship to gain relevant experience.

Join relevant student organizations and seek leadership roles. Become a student member of the American Society of Interior Designers.

Consider studying abroad to gain multicultural experience.

After finishing a design degree and gaining required experience, prepare to take the qualifying exam administered by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ).

Research state requirements to become licensed or and/or certified in a specialty area.

Maintain current knowledge of state and federal building, safety, and accessibility codes.

Exhibit strong communication skills including active listening to meet clients' needs and writing to create work proposals.

Expect to work in a fast-paced environment, meeting deadlines and working on multiple projects at a time.

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Designers' schedules may be influenced by workload, deadlines, and the economy.
Build a network of contacts, especially if you're considering freelance work, to stay current on industry trends and build clientele.
Earn a graduate degree in design to increase opportunities and to pursue a faculty position.
Engage in scholarly research to expand the knowledge base of the profession.

AREAS RELATED TO INTERIOR DESIGN

Those with training in interior design may pursue the following career fields with the right experiences. Some may require additional training or graduate degrees. If these areas interest you, take relevant coursework, complete internships, and pursue related activities to prepare for the fields. For example, someone trained in interior design who wants to work for a design publication should develop strong writing skills, consider minoring in journalism or English, work for a campus or community newspaper, etc.

Some related fields:

- Set design for stage and screen
- Industrial design: lighting, furniture, consumer products
- Media: journalism, graphic design, advertising
- Historic preservation
- Floral design
- Landscape design
- Landscape architecture (degree required)
- Architecture (degree required)
- Engineering (degree required)

- The NCIDQ Examination administered by the Council for Interior Design Qualification (CIDQ) is the broad-based exam for all interior designers and serves as the foundation from which to build for those moving into specialty design areas.
- Interior designers may focus within a design specialty such as hospitality or healthcare industries; some may also focus in a sub-specialty such as restaurants or senior living facilities.
- Consider pursuing additional certifications such as Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist, Certified Healthcare Interior Designer, LEED Professional Credential and/or WELL Accredited Professional.
- Consult the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for industry trends including the numbers of interior designers and firms.