

CAREER GUIDE FOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER

SOC Code: 27-1024

Pay Band(s): 3 and 4 ([Salary Structure](#))

Standard Occupational Description: Design or create graphics to meet specific commercial or promotional needs, such as packaging, displays, or logos. May use a variety of mediums to achieve artistic or decorative effects.

Graphic Designer positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Media and Production Services Career Group](#):

[Media Specialist II](#)

[Media Specialist III](#)

While Graphic Designers within the Commonwealth are all located within the Media and Production Services Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Architecture and Engineering Services](#)

[General Administration](#)

[Public Relations and Marketing](#)

[Training and Instruction](#)

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

Skills

Note: *The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Graphic Designer commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

1. Managing one's own time and the time of others.
2. Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
3. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
4. Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
5. Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem solving and decision-making.
6. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
7. Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
8. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

9. Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
10. Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

Knowledge

Note: *The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Graphic Designer commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The Knowledge of:

1. Circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.
2. Structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
3. Media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods. This includes alternative ways to inform and entertain via written, oral, and visual media.
4. Design techniques, tools, and principles involved in production of precision technical plans, blueprints, drawings, and models.
5. Principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
6. Principles and methods for showing, promoting, and selling products or services. This includes marketing strategy and tactics, product demonstration, sales techniques, and sales control systems.
7. Theory and techniques required to compose, produce, and perform works of music, dance, visual arts, drama, and sculpture.

Abilities

Note: *The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Graphic Designer commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

The Ability to:

1. Come up with unusual or clever ideas about a given topic or situation, or to develop creative ways to solve a problem.
2. Come up with a number of ideas about a topic (the number of ideas is important, not their quality, correctness, or creativity).
3. See details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
4. Imagine how something will look after it is moved around or when its parts are moved or rearranged.
5. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
6. Speak clearly so others can understand you.
7. Identify and understand the speech of another person.
8. Combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).

9. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
10. Arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, and mathematical operations).

Tasks

Note: *The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Graphic Designer. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.*

1. Create designs, concepts, and sample layouts based on knowledge of layout principles and esthetic design concepts.
2. Determine size and arrangement of illustrative material and copy, and select style and size of type.
3. Use computer software to generate new images.
4. Mark up, paste, and assemble final layouts to prepare layouts for printer.
5. Draw and print charts, graphs, illustrations, and other artwork, using computer.
6. Review final layouts and suggest improvements as needed.
7. Confer with clients to discuss and determine layout design.
8. Develop graphics and layouts for product illustrations, company logos, and Internet web sites.
9. Key information into computer equipment to create layouts for client or supervisor.
10. Prepare illustrations or rough sketches of material, discussing them with clients and/or supervisors and making necessary changes.

INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

The occupation of Graphic Designer has **Artistic**, **Enterprising** and **Realistic** characteristics as described below:

Artistic — Artistic occupations frequently involve working with forms, designs and patterns. They often require self-expression and the work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

Enterprising — Enterprising occupations frequently involve starting up and carrying out projects. These occupations can involve leading people and making many decisions. Sometimes they require risk taking and often deal with business.

Realistic — Realistic occupations frequently involve work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside, and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.

LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Generally this is not required for Graphic Designer positions in state government.

The University of Virginia Training Services Group offers a Web Basic and a Web Designer certification. Their web site provides additional information: <http://www.itc.virginia.edu/training>

EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Labor provides the following information:

Graphic designers plan, analyze, and create visual solutions to communications problems. They use a variety of print, electronic, and film media and technologies to execute a design that meet clients' communication needs. They consider cognitive, cultural, physical, and social factors in planning and executing designs appropriate for a given context. Graphic designers use computer software to develop the overall layout and production design of magazines, newspapers, journals, corporate reports, and other publications.

A bachelor's degree is required for most entry-level design positions. Formal training for some design professions also is available in 2- and 3-year professional schools that award certificates or associate degrees in design. Graduates of 2-year programs normally qualify as assistants to designers, or they may enter a formal bachelor's degree program. The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree is granted at 4-year colleges and universities. The curriculum in these schools includes art and art history, principles of design, designing and sketching, and specialized studies for each of the individual design disciplines, such as garment construction, textiles, mechanical and architectural drawing, computerized design, web design and development, sculpture, architecture, and basic engineering.

The State Council of Higher Education lists the following Virginia educational institutions offering programs in graphic design: Marymount University and Virginia Intermont University. Virginia Commonwealth University, Ferrum College, Hampton-Sydney College, Mary Washington College, and Roanoke College offer a Bachelor of Fine Arts.

For more information about graphic, communication, or interaction design careers, contact: American Institute of Graphic Arts: <http://www.aiga.org/>

COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

The Commonwealth Competencies are:

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm. For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Graphic Designer**

PAY BANDS	PRACTITIONER ROLES
3	Media Specialist II
4	Media Specialist III

PAY BANDS	MANAGER ROLES
4	Media Manager I
5	Media Manager II

Sample Career Path

Media Specialist II

The Media Specialist II role provides a career track for graphic designers whose duties range from entry-level to advanced-level. Duties include design and production of graphic products.

Media Specialist III

The Media Specialist III role provides a career track for graphic designers whose expertise levels vary from advanced level to supervisory. Duties include complex photo or image reproduction programs; graphic and/or web page design; design projects and promotional objectives; supervising production; and producing multi-media programs.

Media Manager I

The Media Manager I role provides a career track for managers responsible for directing major exhibit and gallery projects or complex graphic design programs. Duties include leadership and creativity in managing: a department that plans, develops, coordinates, and monitors the production of multiple concurrent exhibits and gallery projects that meet aesthetic and conservatorial standards as well as time and budget allowances.

Media Manager II

The Media Manager II role provides a career track for managers responsible for providing leadership and creativity in directing multi-media services used by state agencies for promotional, educational and informational purposes. Areas of responsibility include state distance learning programs and/or graphic communications.

ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

O*NET (Occupational Information Network)

http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network

<http://www.vacrn.net/>