

Product Designer

Product designers design most things we use in our every day life, from chairs and other household items, to mobile phones, computers and other gadgets. They either improve existing models, or design new products.

The Work

You could be:

- designing a wide range of products including household items such as vacuum cleaners, kettles, televisions, computers, telephones, tools, cars or medical equipment
- planning the overall design of a product, working from a brief, making sure it meets customer needs, is easy for people to use, appealing to look at and efficient
- taking into account the production methods, cost, timescales and market demand
- deciding on a suitable material depending on the product
- sketching initial design ideas and using specialised computer-aided design (CAD) programmes to produce final drawings
- making a working model or prototype for testing to make sure the product will work well, and using this to solve any design problems
- presenting proposed designs to managers or clients
- liaising with other professionals such as engineers, model makers and marketing staff
- keeping up to date with current design influences and trends, and production methods.

Pay

Pay rates vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for newly qualified product designers in the UK tend to be in the range £20,000 to £28,000 a year. Experienced designers and those leading a team can earn up to £45,000 a year. Senior designers can earn £65,000 or more.

Freelance designers charge a daily rate or price for a whole project. The amount will depend on your experience and reputation.

Conditions

- You would be based in a studio, office or workshop.
- You may work alone for part of the time, but you would also be part of a team of other professionals.
- You may have to spend some time in the factories which make the goods.
- The factories can be noisy, dirty and dusty.
- You may also have to visit clients at their work sites.

- Hours are normally regular, Monday to Friday, but may be longer when you have to meet deadlines.

Getting In

- You normally need an Honours degree (SCQF Level 10) in product design or other relevant subject.
- The universities of Dundee, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow and Strathclyde, and Glasgow School of Art, offer product design degrees.
- Postgraduate Masters degrees (SCQF Level 11) in product design are offered by the universities of Dundee, Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow, Robert Gordon and Strathclyde
- Other relevant subjects include 3D design, industrial design and spatial design.
- For entry you need 4-5 Highers normally including English and Art and Design. Higher Maths and Physics or a technological subject may also be required.
- You could start by taking an NC (SCQF Levels 4-6) or NQ (SCQF Levels 4-6) (up to 4 subjects at National 4 or 5 for entry) or an HNC (SCQF Level 7) (2 Highers for entry) in similar subjects. This could lead on to an HND (SCQF Level 8) or a degree.
- You need a good portfolio of design work to get into college or university and also later when applying for jobs, to show how you developed your ideas.
- You may be required to have a driving licence.

All applications to Art Schools (Duncan of Jordanstone at the University of Dundee, Edinburgh College of Art at the University of Edinburgh, Glasgow School of Art and Gray's School of Art at Robert Gordon's University) are through UCAS. Apply by 31 January in the year of proposed entry.

Because product designers are needed in all types of industry, there are job opportunities throughout the country. However, many design consultancies are in large cities, particularly in London and south east England.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- creative and imaginative
- able to visualise ideas in 3D
- knowledgeable about different materials and production methods
- skilled in IT including CAD packages
- able to explain your ideas to a wide range of people with different technical skills
- flexible and adaptable as you may have to alter your work to suit the budget
- well organised and able to work to deadlines
- able to accept criticism of your work.

You need to have:

- precision and attention to detail
- number skills for calculating measurements and costs
- a knowledge of engineering principles
- good spatial and visual awareness
- a good eye for design, detail and colour

- project management skills
- business awareness.

Training

- You would train and gain experience on the job working with a senior designer.
- You may need to go on short courses to learn about new software packages that come on the market.
- With experience and qualifications you might take a part time specialist postgraduate course.
- The Chartered Society of Designers (CSD) runs opportunities for Continual Professional Development based on a points system as well as in-house training for employers to send their staff. The Design Business Association (DBA) also offers professional development opportunities.

Getting On

- Depending on the size of the firm you work for, you may gain promotion to a senior designer or team leader post.
- With further experience you may become a design manager, project manager or move into a specialist area such as ergonomics.
- You may need to move to take advantage of promotion opportunities.
- You might set up your own business as a freelance product designer.

Contacts

Chartered Society of Designers (CSD)

Tel: 020 7101 0685

Email: membership@csd.org.uk

Website: www.csd.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/charteredsocietyofdesigners

Design Business Association (DBA)

Tel: 020 7251 9229

Email: enquiries@dba.org.uk

Website: www.dba.org.uk

X: @dbaHQ

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Design-Business-Association/122991906136?ref=ts

Design Council

Tel: 0207 4205200

Website: www.designcouncil.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DesignCouncil

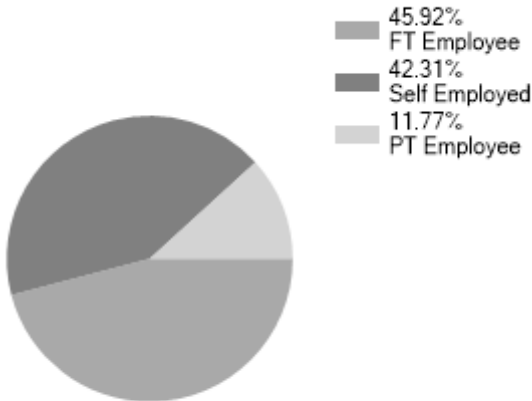
Discover Creative Careers Finder

Website: discovercreative.careers/#

X: @CreativeCareer5

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

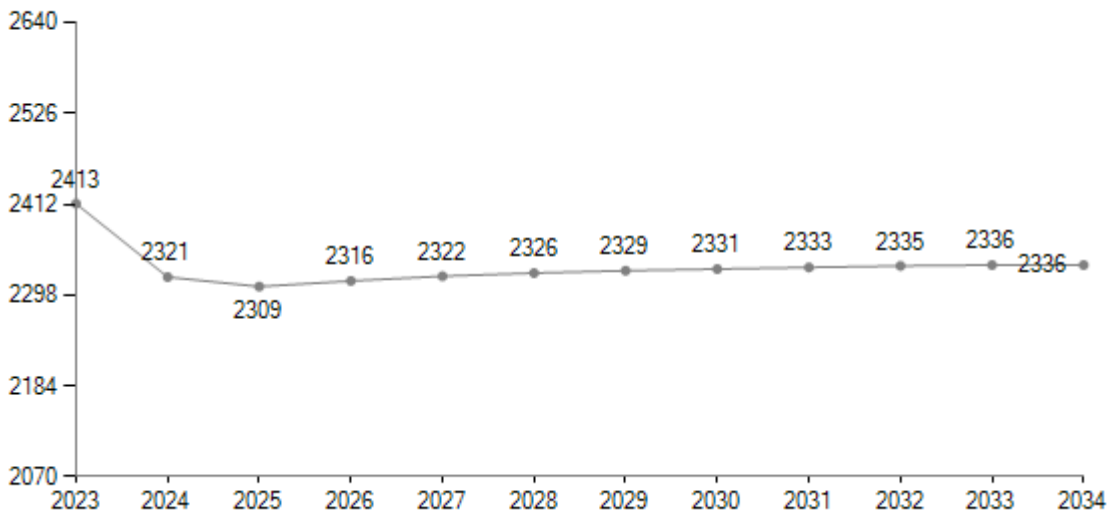


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)