

Ceramic Designer

Ceramic designers create a wide range of decorative or functional items such as tableware, tiles and sculptures by shaping and firing clay. They create designs either as a 'one-off' made in a workshop for a client, or for mass production.

The Work

You could be:

- sketching designs by hand, or using 3D computer aided design software, either for your own work, a client, or for a design brief if employed by a company
- working with a wide range of materials such as stoneware, earthenware, terracotta, bone china or porcelain
- hand making pots and vases either by shaping on a potter's wheel, or by hand building, involving rolling coils of clay and smoothing them together
- using moulds or hand operated machinery to create multiple items such as bowls, plates, bottles or decorative pieces
- making and decorating tiles used for floors, walls or fireplaces
- hand building decorative sculptures using slabs or small lumps of clay to build up over a frame or 'armature' for support
- decorating your work either by directly painting glaze to the surface or applying photo transfers, and then stacking in a kiln (oven) for firing
- if working in manufacturing, overseeing the production of work on a factory floor
- keeping up to date with design trends and promoting or selling your work online, at craft fairs, galleries or through a shop.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job
- the type of craft work you are doing.

Starting salaries for ceramic designers in the UK can be in the range of £16,000 to £22,000 a year. Experienced designers can earn more. Many ceramic designers are self-employed or work freelance. They charge a fee, which varies depending on the item designed or made, and on their reputation. The better known they are, the more they can charge.

Conditions

- You would work in a studio, factory or from your own home.
- Working conditions may be noisy, dusty and hot in a workshop environment.

- The work is usually messy, where you can work with liquid plaster, liquid clay (called 'slip'), and powder pigment glazes.
- You sometimes need to use protective gear such as gloves, goggles and an apron.
- You may sometimes work with hazardous substances when mixing coloured glazes, so you need to wear a face mask.
- You might have to work long hours, including evenings and weekends, to meet deadlines.
- You might travel to meet clients, or attend exhibitions, in order to promote and sell your work.

Getting In

- There are no formal entry requirements but most people have a qualification in art and design, specialising in ceramic art or 3D craft design.
- You could take an NC, NQ, HNC, HND or a degree course.
- You do not always need qualifications to get into an NC or NQ, although some courses may require up to 4-5 subjects at National 4 or 5. For an HNC or HND you usually need 1-2 Highers or an NC or NQ, and for a degree, 3-4 Highers including English and Art and Design.
- You normally need a portfolio of art work for entry to college or university.
- If you are very talented and have an extremely good portfolio, you might get into an HNC, HND or degree course with less than the normal minimum academic requirements.
- Gray's School of Art at Robert Gordon University offers a degree course in Three Dimensional Design. Entry requirements are 3 Highers at BBC including English or another English based subject and Art and Design or a technological subject.

For art school courses you need to apply through UCAS.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- artistic and naturally creative
- practical when using tools and materials
- able to use specialist computer software
- accurate and attentive to detail
- knowledgeable about materials and working processes
- able to work under pressure to meet deadlines
- aware of health and safety working procedures
- able to accept criticism of your work
- business aware, if self-employed.

Training

- You would continue to develop your skills and experience through on the job training if employed, or by attending further workshops or courses.

Getting On

- You could set up your own company, making and selling your own designs, or employing others to produce your designs if you are quite successful.
- Getting work is competitive so promoting yourself and building up a network of contacts is important to establish yourself if you are working freelance.
- You could design for manufacturers on a freelance basis.
- There are fewer opportunities for promotion if you work in a small craft workshop.
- You may also do other jobs such as teaching or running a craft shop, to supplement your income.

More Information

Young Scot and Creative Scotland operate the 'Nurturing Talent - Time to Shine Fund', which aims to support young people aged 11-25 and interested in developing creative or artistic skills. Both individuals and groups can apply for funding up to £1,000. For more information see the Young Scot website.

Contacts

Crafts Council

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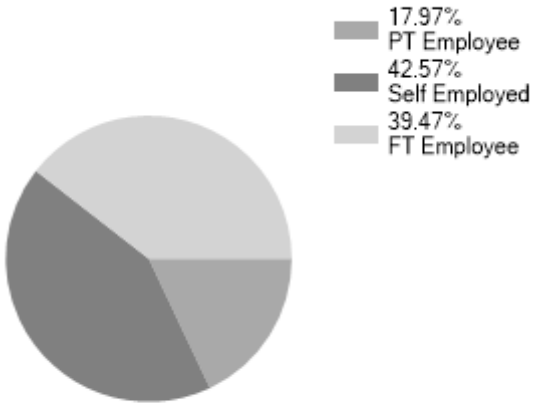
Discover Creative Careers Finder

Website: discovercreative.careers/#

Twitter: @CreativeCareer5

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

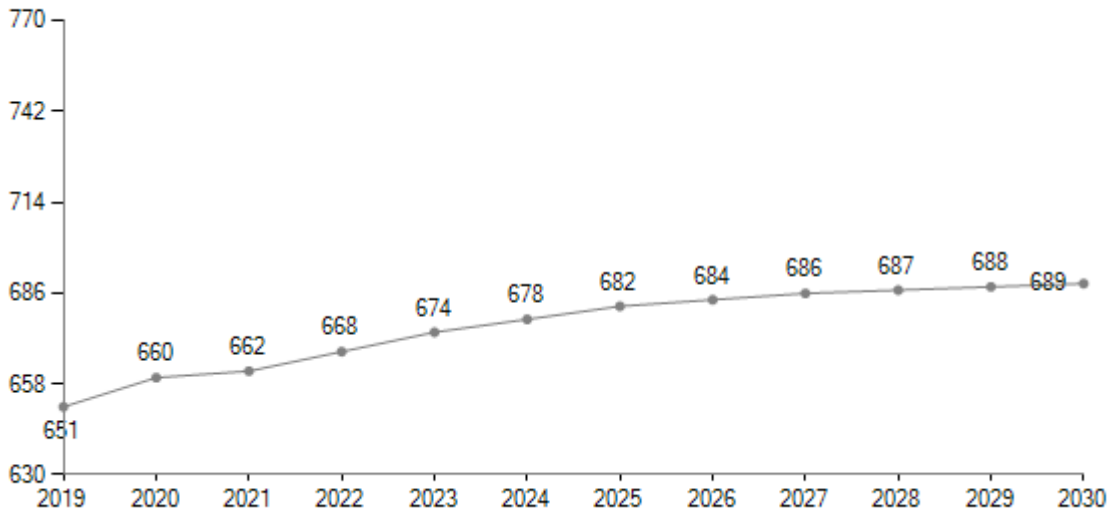


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)