

AUT

A FUTURE IN
**COMMUNICATION
DESIGN**

CAPTURING MOTION
1. Most attitude: look with arms in "Y"
2. Full attitude: look with arms in "Y"
3. Supporting leg bent, torso extended in low air
4. Preparation: large bird arms extended out



WHAT IS COMMUNICATION DESIGN?

When you browse a website, get drawn to an ad or interact with something on social media, you're responding to the work of communication designers.

Communication design, traditionally known as graphic design, is the creation of visuals that spread messages and meanings in new and relevant ways. To do this, communication designers use new emergent media and technologies to collaborate and be responsive to the needs of businesses, communities and organisations.

The aim of communication design is to make an impression on people's understanding, or provoke a change in behaviour or attitude, by communicating messages to identified audiences for specific purposes. While usually visual, the message can also be multi-sensory or interactive.

It's a rapidly changing environment. Career paths are continually redefined so graduates need to be adept and agile across a range of specialised activities and media including web design, branding, interaction design, UX and UI design, illustration, advertising, media design, social technologies, photography, graphic design and art direction.

More than ever designers need to understand and connect with their audiences and design solutions that place people, communities and environments at the centre.

Are you an influencer? Do you want to sustainably and impactfully affect people's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour? Can you come up with lots of different creative ideas? Can you visualise things easily? Do you have strong drawing and storytelling skills and a clear or creative written style? Do you have the ability to communicate your ideas and intentions to others? If you have, or wish to develop, some of the above, then great career options nationally and globally may open up for you through communication design.

OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

The design and creative sector is dynamic, highly competitive and fast changing. To stand out, designers must keep on developing creatively and conceptually, and stay up-to-date with current practice and future trends and technologies.

Interactive is key – As organisations strive to utilise latest mobile technologies, opportunities are expanding for interactive design, user experience design and social media. Design processes, visual and digital skill sets and conceptual understandings underpin communication design practices for a range of digital and web-based platforms, interfaces and collateral, including posters, magazines and analogue and digital publications.

Visual vocab – Continued development of visual vocabulary is driving a lot of marketing and design, according to Quickbase Intuit blog. Imagery, like photos, emojis, animated GIFS, video snippets and carousel images are increasingly preferred to text.

YouTube can reach over 10 times the audience numbers than TV advertising, according to MacGregor Total Ad Ratings.

Gig economy expanding – The growing global trend among design and advertising firms to choose to work with contractors and freelancers, is creating a new portfolio style workforce. Often referred to as the gig economy, this creates initial opportunities for graduates and can provide employers with a test bed for a range of emerging graduate talent.

Collaborative approach growing – Another increasingly popular approach, Codesign encourages collaboration across a range of stakeholders, local and global. Codesign is increasingly common when working on complex projects or to address 'wicked problems'. Design graduates need strong written, visual and oral communication skills to work collaboratively with experts on different sections of a joint project.

WORK SETTINGS

Graduates who have an innate understanding of visual communication, combined with the ability to integrate design skills, are sought after by design and advertising agencies, print production and publishing companies, film and multimedia companies, web design companies, and sign-making companies.

Some find employment in small boutique design studios specialising in branding, moving image, packaging, publishing or a combination of these. They will usually work with a small team of more senior designers. Other graduates join large design teams within major design or printing companies.

There is an increasing demand for designers to work in-house for non-design-related sectors, such as marketing or media departments for radio stations, accounting firms, government departments and manufacturers.

Freelancing is another option for graduates, working on a range of one-off contracts to build up networks and clientele. Often, they team up with other graduates to form small companies or collectives.

Graduates also can start in design agencies as Mac operators, working on existing designs and preparing design work for publication. That experience can lead into creative design roles.

Not all work by designers is client commissioned or commercially driven. Sometimes designers work for an exhibition or create their own designs while doing

commercial work. For example, a typeface designer might design and place an experimental typeface onto their portfolio website alongside other client commissioned typefaces. If it is a good design, other designers will pay to use it.

CAREER SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

Communication and marketing

Designers interested in communicating specific messages to the public find careers in design studios, advertising agencies, marketing departments and creative consultancies. Specialisations include branding, advertising, packaging, publishing, presentation design, environmental graphic design and corporate communications.

There is also high demand in social media roles for communication design graduates' visual communication skills and understanding of virtual communities and networks.

Digital media

Interaction is an increasingly large part of digital media, with user interface (UI) design and user experience (UX) becoming increasingly important in research and design processes. Digital media design skills are in high demand as mainstream communications move into the ever-expanding digital space, including mobile and tablet apps, interactive kiosks, videos, animation etc. Positions include interface designer, graphic designer and digital media designer.

Management

Graduates in communication design also can enter studio and agency management roles, including account management (finding new clients and looking after existing clients' accounts), studio production and marketing. There is high demand for people with design management skills who are well organised and have excellent interpersonal skills.



RANGE OF SKILLS

A range of 'hybrid' skills are required for a fast changing and globally networked future to foster agility, adaptability, resilience, strategic thinking and collaboration. These include:

- Capable of generating a range of ideas, willing to take risks, yet be pragmatic and open to critiquing
- Creative and technical skills to produce content for distribution across all potential platforms
- Understanding the impact of different platforms on content development and digital work flow and how to exploit technological advances
- Hands-on digital integration experience and user awareness
- Ability to work in cross-functional creative/technical teams within and across companies to a brief and deadline
- An understanding of intellectual property legislation regarding piracy and the exploiting of intellectual property internationally
- Fundamental knowledge of layout, typography, hierarchy, colour, iconography, context, popular culture, history, trends and influence
- Problem-solving skills and the ability to work independently but also take ownership of projects whether single, multiple or concurrent
- Competence with industry software Adobe Creative Cloud (InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop and moving image apps eg Premiere or After Effects)
- Management, leadership, business and entrepreneurial skills
- Strategic thinker

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- A creative risk-taker and experimenter
- Empathetic
- Curious with strong interest in the world and culture
- Artistic, imaginative, visual, agile, flexible, good at making connections
- Strong team orientation, highly organised and able to meet deadlines

SALARY GUIDE

Pay range depends on company size and calibre of clients.

Mac operator graduate	\$30,000-\$35,000
Graduate designer	\$39,000-\$48,000
Intermediate designer	\$50,000-\$65,000
Senior designer	\$65,000-\$85,000
Digital creative designer	\$90,000-\$120,000
Account manager	\$70,000-\$90,000
Account director	\$100,000-\$120,000

Sources: payscale.com, enz.org, Hays Salary Guide 2020, Robert Walters Salary Guide 2020, Careers NZ

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (early 2021) and should only be used as a guideline.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

Membership with Designers Institute of New Zealand (DINZ) is recommended.

THE AUT ADVANTAGE

In addition to developing necessary technical skills, AUT communication design graduates learn to research, analyse, think strategically, make informed design decisions, debate and present. AUT offers studio pathways in visual communication, graphic design, advertising, branding, digital media design and communication arts.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Further study in communication design is available at master's and PhD level with a postgraduate certificate for those exiting before completion of a master's. AUT research areas include design innovation, technology and entrepreneurship, brand and strategy, sustainability design, good health design, design education, design history, animation and typography.



ZOE JARVIS

Designer at Serato

Bachelor of Design in Communication Design
– UX pathway

"I'm a junior web designer at Serato, an international DJ music software company founded in New Zealand.

I love designing something for a purpose that goes out into the world for people to interact with. My role includes designing updates for pre-made pages, redesigning old pages, creating new designs for upcoming campaigns, sales and releases of new hardware – all that stuff. Occasionally I do graphic work including creating social media assets for an upcoming campaign, or animations for YouTube videos.

I also get to work alongside the web and UX UI teams, helping create cohesive designs across our company. UX is user experience and UI is user interaction. If the user experience isn't good, users won't come back, so you always want to create a welcoming experience with an easy flow no matter what you're designing for.

Communication is a really big part of the work process here and I feel my time at AUT, especially my final-year project, allows me to work well within this area.

Challenges in this area

The constant speed of change within the web design industry is a big challenge. For example, 10 years ago there was really only one screen size. Now you need design that is responsive and works on a tablet, desktop, laptop and mobile.

Landing a job

I met Serato UX design/researcher Emma Pittar briefly at a conference and she remembered me when she came to our end of year show, liked my work and asked me to have a chat that ended up in me getting a job here.

Serato is such a surreal company to work for, I felt a bit out of my depth when I first started. I was worried I'd mess up. I felt as a graduate I should know everything. But they were so welcoming and kept telling me to ask questions, that I'm only human and will need help. Once I got used to the work processes, my initial worries faded and I started to feel part of the team."

EMPLOYER COMMENT

"Ideas are important – design without ideas is wallpaper. A good designer also has to be able to present and sell their ideas and designs. They also need to pay attention to detail. That is what separates mediocrity from great work. And they need talent.

Zoe's portfolio demonstrated all these things. She was recommended by colleagues I trust and she showcased personal/illustrative work – something I always like to see. I also personally believe drafting/drawing skills are an asset to any designer.

As a new graduate, you need to present your work well and demonstrate you understand the importance of simplicity and clarity. Don't present work that is all over the place stylistically – show some consistency in style and approach. Include personal work if relevant – this shows passion beyond commerce, indicates talent, personality and initiative, and may help separate you from students with a more conventional graduate portfolio."

Matthew Campbell Downes
Creative Director, Serato

USEFUL WEBSITES

Designers Institute of New Zealand

www.designersinstitute.nz

Design Assembly

www.designassembly.org.nz

The Big Idea

www.thebigidea.co.nz

Idealog

www.idealogy.co.nz

Portfolio Recruitment

www.portfoliorecruitment.co.nz

FURTHER INFORMATION

For the most up-to-date communication design information, visit our website:

www.aut.ac.nz/communication-design

EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For other Future Career Sheets visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets

For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through

<https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>

CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)

www.aut.ac.nz/enquire


studenthub@aut.ac.nz

 @AUTEmployabilityandCareers

FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

futurestudents@aut.ac.nz

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CITY CAMPUS

55 Wellesley Street East, Auckland Central


SOUTH CAMPUS


640 Great South Road, Manukau, Auckland

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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, early 2021.

Cover image work by Stacey Purdon 2017,
Bachelor of Design in Communication Design

