

BUILDING PLACES AND SPACES

Urban
designer

Tower blocks and other urban planning disasters of the 1960s are well-documented. To stop that happening again, the urban designer evolved. Urban design is about more than just the design of a building. They look at the layout of buildings, the spaces in between them and the landscapes as a whole. They need to understand how planning works, what makes an area special and how to provide good transport infrastructure. And they work, not just in cities, but in towns and villages too. If you're interested in creating places that look good and the whole community will enjoy, urban design could be for you.

Degree needed

A university undergraduate degree in any subject relating to the built environment or spatial design is a good start. The best subjects to study are architecture, town planning, landscape architecture, geography or engineering. You may then choose to take a postgraduate course in urban design or a related subject. These are offered by universities across the UK.



Emma Appleton at work
Head of enabling, urban design and homes, CABE



Good courses

- Oxford Brookes University
- The University of Greenwich
- Leeds School of Architecture, Landscape and Design

Facts and figures

Starting salary

The typical starting salary in London is £20,000.

Working hours

Typical working hours are between 35 and 40 hours a week.

Days' holiday per year

On average 25 days per year.

Skills and experience

Good teamwork and negotiating skills are important because urban designers have to liaise with clients and other people working on a project.

Would suit

Urban designers tend to come to the profession because they enjoy art and design, are interested in the world we have built around us and want to improve our environment.

Likely employer types

- Planning departments of local authorities
- Private urban design practices
- Architectural and planning firms
- Property developers
- English Partnerships
- The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- Regional development agencies

Jobs are advertised on the Resource for Urban Design Information website www.rudi.net/news.cfm

How many jobs available?

There is work for urban designers across the UK and demand is increasing with the growing recognition of the importance of well-designed urban environments.

Number of people employed in this field

More than half a million people belong to the Urban Design Alliance, a collaboration of leading organisations and professional bodies from which urban designers are drawn, such as the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). However, the number working as urban designers is relatively low.



Meet the expert
Emma Appleton,
CABE

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"Urban design is about helping people make the places where we live and work as good as they possibly can be. It's amazingly satisfying to be a part of that."

Did you know?

Urban designers working for private consultancies may get the chance to work on overseas projects. China is a growing market, for example.

More information

- Read more about urban design events and career information at the Urban Design Group website www.udg.org.uk
- For advice on good examples of urban design, visit the Urban Design Alliance site www.udal.org.uk
- For case studies on urban design projects, visit the Civic Trust www.civictrust.org.uk
- For urban design news and publications, visit the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment website www.cabe.org.uk

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