

Your Degree in Visual Communications...What Next?

What skills have I gained from my Visual Communications degree?

The course aims to equip students with the skills required to work as visual designers at an independent and professional level. The course also aims to develop each student's ability to respond to design communication problems in an inventive and creative manner. Students will have developed their knowledge of the design process, production techniques and the professional business environment.

Core skills gained from a Visual Communications degree include:

Technical Skills	Non-technical 'Soft' Skills
Mastery of Visual Communications	Organisational
Digital skills	Attention to Detail
Analytical Ability	Time Management
Problem-solving	Teamwork & Leadership
Decision-making	Responsibility
Evaluation and Critique	Communication & Interpersonal (Ability to get on with people of all levels)
Strategic-thinking	

Other key characteristics required for employment in Visual Communications roles:

- Presentation Skills
- Creative skills

In the Visual Communications course, you are encouraged to explore your creativity, to push the boundaries, visualise your ideas.

What can I do with my Visual Communications degree?

Employment prospects are wide and varied. All graduates will be comfortable working as part of a multi-disciplinary team, managing projects and possibly starting their own business. Areas of specialist employment include e-Learning, games development, interaction design, 3D design and animation, interactive programming and audio technology.

The main areas of employment are:

- Graphic Design/Creative Director/Project Manager
- Advertising/Branding/Promotion/Packaging
- Photographer/Illustrator/Animator/Motion Graphic
- Designer/Web Designer
- Printer/Print Management/Account Manager

Jobs where your degree would be useful include;

- Media planner
- Multimedia specialist
- Programme researcher, broadcasting/film/video
- Public relations officer
- Runner, broadcasting/film/video
- Television/film/video producer

Finding Employment

Employers seeking final year/postgraduate students or recent graduates generally advertise their roles as either *Graduate Jobs* or *Graduate Programmes*.

In most cases companies are offering a full-time permanent role to a graduate as part of the programme. Competition for places is tough as large numbers of students apply for a small number of places with organisations. Many organisations recruit between October and December so final year students need to be on the lookout as soon as the academic year starts. Recent graduates can often apply too but check with the organisation first.

Tip: Companies often advertise graduate programmes or graduate jobs on the jobs page of a College/University Careers Service website as well as on www.gradireland.com

- Check the jobs page on CIT's Careers Service website; <http://www.mycit.ie/careers>.
- Register with gradireland to get email alerts on employment opportunities as well as job search advice; www.gradireland.com
- Pick up free copies of the **Gradireland Directory** for Ireland (north and south) and, '**Ireland's 100 Leading Graduate Employers**', which is available at CIT's Careers Service, 2nd Floor, Student Centre.

What are the class of 2015 doing?

Printsave	Graphic Designer
OC Creative Design	Freelance Graphic Designer
OLiver Ireland	Junior Graphic Designer

Oasis	Visual Merchandiser
Zoodigiam	Junior Art Director
Stephen Scully Photography	Commercial Photographer
Huguenot	Junior Graphic Designer
Dennehy's Health and Fitness	Assistant Manager
VoxPro	Customer Service

Work Experience

Internships are a common way of finding work and building up experience, making contacts and increasing your portfolio. The design world is small and design agencies will recommend interns who have impressed them, or contact them if there are suitable opportunities in the future.

Courses often provide the opportunity to work on projects with leading businesses and organisations. There may also be opportunities to take an optional work placement in industry or to work abroad as part of the Erasmus programme.

Participating in relevant competitions and exhibitions can help you to promote yourself and build up your contacts. You could also try and get some work experience, for example working for a film production company, television channel or even a magazine, or do some voluntary work on local projects

Typical Employers

Graduates typically enter careers in the media, cultural and creative industries. Areas of work include television and radio, film and video, digital media, computer games, journalism, writing and publishing, PR and media practice.

A range of employers employ media studies graduates, including:

- communications agencies;
- the Civil Service;
- further and higher education institutions, such as colleges and universities;
- local government;
- marketing organisations;
- media companies;
- the newspaper industry;
- PR consultancies;
- publishing companies;
- TV and radio companies.

Skills for your CV

Your degrees included a mix of theory and practice, covering a broad range of subjects that give you skills in:

- critical analysis;

- research;
- a broad commercial and cultural awareness of the media and creative industries;
- teamwork;
- initiation and development of creative work in writing, audio-visual or other electronic media;
- a flexible, creative and independent approach to tasks;
- the ability to work to a brief and meet deadlines.

Courses focus on the communication of information across different mediums. The ability to communicate information clearly and effectively is an essential skill all employers look for.

Postgraduate Study

Gaining a postgraduate qualification brings with it many benefits. It enables you to gain further, more specialised knowledge in your field of study. It can give you a specific technical, vocational or professional qualification and facilitate you in developing a range of key skills including; research, analysis, evaluation and written communication.

There are also many related and ‘conversion’ post grad courses if a graduate wishes to change direction/branch into another sector.

For further information, go to the ‘Further/Postgraduate Study’ link on the Students page of our website; <http://www.mycit.ie/careers>. Also look at www.qualifax.ie.

For further information please contact the Careers Service on 021 4335772.

Some examples of post grad study (there are many more!);

- ***DIT – MA Design Practice - Professional – Visual Communications***
- ***Queens University Belfast – MA Film & Visual Studies***
- ***CIT - Professional Master of Education (Art and Design)***
- ***CIT - MA in Public Relations with New Media***
- ***CIT - MA in Journalism with New Media***
- ***CIT - MA in E-learning Design and Development***

Further Resources

Gradireland publications – are available at the Careers Service or download a copy, from www.gradireland.com

For career opportunities in the UK see www.targetjobs.co.uk

Tip: If you are unsure about what direction to take after your degree, the gradireland Careers Report is a useful tool for matching your personal information and preferences to potential careers. Log on and register at www.gradireland.com to use the report.

Tip: If you want to find out more information about what is involved in any of the job titles listed in this document, check out the *A to Z Occupation List* on www.careersportal.ie

www.creativecareers.ie

Links to jobs, creative spaces for rent/hire, intern and volunteer opportunities and training. Also has an excellent links page, providing a list of resources divided by heading for further research.

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/> provides career information, entitlements and career tools for young people in the UK.

www.vaireland.org

Voluntary Arts Ireland, a body that seeks to promote involvement in voluntary art, particularly cross-border.

Job vacancies for the organization are also advertised here.

<http://www.create-ireland.ie> Website of Create, the national development agency for collaborative arts, linking artists with each other and with the community.

<http://visualartists.ie/category/jobs-ops/> Jobs in UK

<https://ccskills.org.uk/> Apprenticeships and Career Info UK