How Long Does It Take To Become a Graphic Designer?

Graphic designer—what a title, right? For some of us, it’s a dream career, one that we were destined for. Though, like with a lot of destinies, it’s not something that is going to happen over night. It’s something you’re going to have to work for, but for how long? Well the time it takes to become a graphic designer depends on a number of factors. Let us break it down for you.

Factors That Impact The Length Of Time

There are multiple different factors that will affect how long it takes you to become a graphic designer. Not all of them will be relevant to anyone, but we thought we would include as many as possible so you are able to determine exactly how long it will take you to become a graphic designer.

The different factors are how you decide to learn, your current skill level, the time you can dedicate to the process and the length of the job search. We'll dive deeper into each of these factors for you now.

1. How You Decide To Learn

One great thing about becoming a graphic designer is that there isn't just one way to learn how to do it. In fact, there's loads of different ways to learn. For now, we're going to break down how long each of what we consider the three main ways to become graphic designer take—university/college, self teaching and bootcamp-style courses.

First up: university. A lot of graphic designers become graphic designers through the university degree route. A university education is of course a well-founded, traditional way of becoming a graphic designer but how long does it take to become a graphic designer if you take this route? Up to four years, depending on where you are in the world. Graphic Design undergraduate degrees take four years in the USA or three years in Australia and the UK. Though, they can be longer. For instance in the UK if you chose to do an Art Foundation course before heading down the graphic design route, this adds an extra year to the time it takes to become a graphic designer.

Another way to become a graphic designer is to teach yourself.

Over recent years, we've seen a rise in the number of designers who have been teaching themselves all the skills and knowledge needed for a career in the design industry. And the internet has only accelerated this! How long does it take to become a graphic designer if you choose to teach yourself? Well, how long is a piece of string? It's really hard to determine how long it will take to become a graphic designer if you are teaching yourself. It's massively dependent on the techniques and processes you use to teach yourself and how much time you can dedicate to teaching yourself. We'll touch on this further later in this article.

Finally, an ever increasingly popular way of becoming a graphic designer is to take a short "bootcamp" style course, such as the innovative graphic design course we offer at Shillington. Courses like ours are a brilliant way to learn graphic design and become a graphic designer in record time. How long is that?

> *Well, with Shillington's course, it takes just three months full-time or nine months part-time, depending on which course you pick, to become a graphic designer.*

When you graduate you'll leave with a certificate declaring that you're a graphic designer and an all important portfolio to help you go out and get a job. This is noticeably quicker than the university route and likely to be quicker than being self taught as well!

As you can see, how you decide to learn graphic design has a huge effect on how long it takes to become a graphic designer.

2. Your Current Skill Level

Another important factor which will affect how long it takes you to become a graphic designer is your current skill level. By this we mean what graphic design skills you already have.

> *Don’t worry though, your current skill level won’t play a part in whether or not you can become a graphic designer, it will just make a difference to how long it will take you.*

If you’re a complete beginner then, first of all, welcome! You’ve got an exciting and fascinating journey ahead of you. As you’ve just read, there’s a few different ways to learn what you need to know to become a graphic designer. Starting your graphic design education afresh means you’ll have to master things like the Design Principles and other fundamentals of the graphic design process before moving on to the nitty gritty of the programs like Adobe Creative Cloud.

Of course it may take a bit longer to become a graphic designer if you are a complete beginner simply because there’s more you need to learn. This is especially the case if you have decided to teach yourself. Though it’s also important to state that being a beginner doesn’t necessarily mean that becoming a graphic designer will take a long time—as we said before, courses like Shillington’s will propel you into becoming a graphic designer in as little as three months.

On the other hand, if you already have some design experience then your path to graphic design stardom might look a little different. If you’ve got a degree under your belt but feel like your skills aren’t up to scratch or there are some gaps in your knowledge, then self teaching could be the way to go.

> *If you know exactly what it is you need to tune up then it should only take a few months to get back on top of your game.*

Though, if you feel like there’s something seriously lacking then it might be worth retraining from the ground up. This is where a short course like Shillington’s can also come in very handy—in three months full-time or nine months part-time, if you want to keep working at the same time, you can have all

the skills and knowledge needed to work as a practicing graphic designer.

In summary, your current skill level does affect how long it takes to become a graphic designer but there are different options you can take to make that time shorter—it all depends on the next factor…

3. Time You Can Dedicate To The Process

Potentially the most important thing to consider when thinking about how long it takes to become a graphic designer is the actual time that you yourself are able to dedicate to learning, studying and practicing all your new skills and knowledge.

> *Like with any creative discipline, it's not just as simple as just picking up a pen—there's things to be learnt and hours to be put in to get there.*

As you've already read, the different routes to learn how to be a graphic designer are on totally different timescales and require very different levels of input.

> *So, you should carefully consider how much time you can and want to dedicate to becoming a graphic designer.*

For example, if you choose to study graphic designer at university, it is highly unlikely that you'll spend all day, every day learning how to become a graphic designer. It will be more slow paced and there will be time outside of the classroom where you'll be left to your own devices. This is a good way of learning for some, but not for others.

Self study is probably the most dependent option on the time you are able to dedicate to the process. If you spend your whole time learning and practicing then you should be able to become a graphic designer relatively quickly. But, this option

also means that you can pick up a book or practice a program whenever you have a spare minute—meaning that your path to becoming a graphic designer can ultimately last as you want it to.

Finally, if time is something you have on your hands and you want to become a graphic designer in as little time as possible, then a short Bootcamp or course like Shillington's is the right direction for you to take. It will enable you to become an industry ready graphic designer in an incredibly short amount of time.

4. The Job Search

Education is not the only thing you'll have to manage on your path to becoming a graphic designer.

> *The final part of that journey is looking for and landing yourself a job.*

Whether freelance, in house or in a studio, once you are working as a graphic designer then your journey is complete (or, in other ways, just beginning).

How long it takes to become a graphic designer does depend on how long it takes you to get your first design job—even if you've learnt everything you need to know already. The job search, like any job search, is difficult to determine exactly how long it will last. Though, if you plan well and apply for the right kinds of jobs, then the time it takes can be significantly shorter. The best place for your job search is online jobs boards tailored specifically to graphic designers and other creatives.

Once you've found the perfect job for you, the next step is to apply. Most design job applications will require you to submit your portfolio, a CV and a cover letter. These will show the employer the amazing things you can create and learn more

about you and why you would be great for the job. Make sure that each application is tailored to the job you're applying for. No copying and pasting—you'll definitely get caught out!

If your application is successful, then there's the interview! The interview itself will usually last roughly an hour to an hour and a half. You may be asked to talk through some of the projects in your portfolio. Or, an interviewer may ask you to pick a project or two from your portfolio and walk them through the process. So, be prepared to be able to talk about your work, the process of it and why you thought it was successful. Obviously there will be other questions too—for a foolproof guide to the types of questions you will get and how to answer them, head over to this blog post.

The application process—from applying to a job offer—can vary depending on the company or studio you are aiming for. Though, the whole process is likely to last around a month or so if you are successful.

> *Depending on your luck, the process of landing yourself a design job could come around within a month to six weeks after graduating—but it does often take a little longer than this!*

Once you do get that job offer, you'll have a fruitful career with a competitive salary to look forward to.

There you have it! What we can take from this is that the time it takes to become a graphic designer is up to you. It's your choice how you want to learn, how much time you are able to give to learning and how much you want to get yourself a job. Though, ultimately, the time it takes to become a graphic designer can be anywhere between around six months to five years.

The shortest option is to sign up for a bootcamp like Shillington's innovative graphic design course. Since 1997,

Shillington has been teaching people to become graphic designers in just three months full-time or nine months part-time (meaning it’s great for learning whilst you work too!). With hundreds of graduate success stories across the world, Shillington is the best way to learn graphic design no matter where you are in the world. As well as our six campuses in London, New York, Manchester, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, you can also study online from the comfort of your own home and chose a timezone to suit you.

https://www.shillingtoneducation.com/blog/how-long-to-become-graphic-designer/