The 11 Best Online Graphic Design Programs & Schools Available in 2023



Looking to become a graphic designer online? Studying graphic design online is a great option as it means you can change careers from the comfort of your own home. The events of the past three years have also meant that working from home has become much more commonplace—so learning from home can also give you invaluable remote working skills. Though the events of the past three years have also meant that there's been a lot more online graphic design course options popping up, so we're here to help you make an informed decision.

We're going to take you through the 11 best online graphic design programs and schools to help you make a decision about how to study graphic design online.

1. Shillington’s Online Graphic Design Program

The Shillington Graphic Design Bootcamp was founded in Sydney, Australia in 1997 and has been providing high quality graphic design education ever since. Shillington’s online graphic design course is unlike any other. Over three nights a week for nine months, Shillington’s dedicated, experienced teachers (who are also working graphic designers!) guide you through Shillington’s unique course in real time. With Shillington’s online graphic design course, you’ll learn all the essential skills and programs—Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop and Figma—used by graphic designers, as well as an in depth understanding of how to work as a designer, in l online studios that perfectly replicate a working studio environment.

Shillington online students graduate as talented, well-rounded graphic designers ready to work in a design studio or take on the world of freelance graphic design. What’s best is that the Shillington online graphic design program is offered live in four different time zones—UK (GMT/BST), US East Coast (EST), US West Coast (PST) and Australian East Coast (AEST)—so you can pick which works best for you and your life.

Learn More About Our Online Course

2. Udemy

Founded in 2010, Udemy is an online learning platform, primarily for courses that improve job-related skills. Udemy’s Graphic Design courses offer a variety of different bootcamps and classes that allow you to learn different topics related to graphic design—from the Adobe software to more comprehensive overviews of the profession. A majority of the graphic design online courses on Udemy are delivered through a

series of video lectures and tutorials and downloadable content, so are self-directed learning rather than being led by a dedicated instructor.

One of the most popular Udemy online graphic design courses is their Graphic Design Bootcamps: Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign which teaches students how to use the Adobe programs for logo, web and poster design. It’s made up of 16 hours of video and 13 pieces of downloadable content.

3. Skillshare

Skillshare was founded in New York in 2010 and launched in 2011 for people who want to learn through educational videos. Similarly to Udemy, unlike Shillington’s full graphic design education, Skillshare offers videos for students to learn specific graphic design skills, such as a Beginner’s Guide to Adobe InDesign or a 13 minute video on how to design a book cover. Their self-paced training videos range from short instructional videos like the latter to more in depth training videos that last up to 20 hours.

Skillshare’s simple, self-paced video format has meant that it has attracted some big names in graphic design to its platform, including Draplin Design Co’s Aaron Draplin, book cover designer Chip Kidd and the legendary Paula Scher of Pentagram.

4. LinkedIn Learning

LinkedIn Learning was founded as Lynda.com in 1995, before merging completely with LinkedIn in 2021. Within its 16,000+ courses, LinkedIn Learning offers just under 500 different online graphic design courses. Like Udemy and Skillshare, LinkedIn Learning’s courses offer self-paced video instruction to those who want to learn graphic design online. Some of these online graphic design courses are quick tips and tricks,

while others are more extensive overviews of graphic design and its component parts.

LinkedIn Learning also offers Learning Paths, including one named ‘Become a Graphic Designer’. This online graphic design course is a self-paced course, featuring 27 hours of videos from different instructors that begins with ‘What Is Graphic Design?’ and culminates in ‘Colour Trends’—offering a more comprehensive course to help self-teachers become graphic designers.

5. UAL Short Courses

University of the Arts London (UAL), which was established in 2003, offers a Graphic Design for Beginners course online through Central Saint Martins (CSM). Taught part-time, one day a week (Wednesday or Saturday) over four weeks, UAL’s online graphic design course gives students an intensive and practical start in graphic design by introducing them to 20 key principles of graphic design. The course is taught in UK time (GMT/BST), with each course option happening at different times of day—which may allow more students from around the world to join the live teaching.

As well as taught knowledge, the online graphic design course offered by UAL includes a range of exercises to help practice the skills that students learn on the course. Each course also includes access to a virtual learning environment that contains all the relevant course materials and content and forums where students can support and help each other.

6. Coursera

Founded in 2012, Coursera is an online course provider that partners with universities and other institutions around the world to offer online courses. Coursera’s online graphic design course is Graphic Design Specialization, a partnership

with CalArts (the California Institute of the Arts based in Santa Clarita). The course is broken down into 5 segments—Fundamentals of Graphic Design, Introduction to Typography, Introduction to Imagemaking, Ideas from the History of Graphic Design and Brand New Brand.

An online graphic design course for complete beginners, Coursera is self-paced and takes around six months to complete—at the suggested pace of 3 hours of study a week. Alongside the five courses, there is also a hands-on project that needs to be completed to earn a graphic design certificate.

7. The Graphic Design School

The Graphic Design School (TGDS) was founded in Australia in 2008 as a solely online school, offering several online graphic design courses. TGDS offer the following online graphic design courses: Intensive Foundation Course, CUA40720 Certificate IV in Design, Design For Social Media, Design@Work and Web Design Course.

All of TGDS' courses are self-paced, with students having to set their own schedule to complete the modules in a specified amount of time. For instance, in their CUA40720 Certificate IV in Design, students have to complete 12 modules within 15 months—and TGDS recommend spending 750 hours over those 15 months on all the modules. You can enrol for TGDS' at any time and start learning the very same day.

8. Noble Desktop

Founded in New York in 1990, Noble Desktop is a design and coding school that offers courses both in person and online. One such course is their Graphic Design Certificate course—offered both in New York and online. The course is also offered full-time, which lasts for 1 month and is taught on

weekdays, and part-time, which lasts for 3 months in the evenings or on Sundays.

Each of Noble Desktop's Graphic Design Certificate courses are broken down into four separate bootcamps—Adobe InDesign Bootcamp, Adobe Photoshop Bootcamp, Graphic Design Portfolio Bootcamp and Adobe Illustrator Bootcamp—which all must be completed to gain a certificate. Though, this also allows students to make their own schedule—picking and choosing when they want to complete each bootcamp. The online course is taught live, including 1:1 mentoring with an instructor.

9. Upskillist

Upskillist was founded as Shaw Academy in 2012 and has been offering online courses to people wanting to upskill ever since. They have over 80 courses, including a dedicated online graphic design course. Upskillist's online graphic design course is made up of 32 lessons across 4 modules—Diploma, Intermediate, Advanced and Proficient in Graphic Design—which make up a course that lasts for a total of 16 weeks. Students leave with a diploma certification.

Upskillist online graphic design students can select the number of lessons they want to watch per week, which last between 30 and 45 minutes, so they are able to learn at their own pace through pre-recorded teaching. There are also weekly assessments, a final exam at the end of each of the four modules and a final assessment at the end of the course.

Which online graphic design program is the best option?

There you are! Nine options to study graphic design online. Though, if you want to learn all the essential skills, theory and knowledge to actually change careers and become a graphic designer, and if you want to learn in real-time from

practicing designers in a studio environment, there’s only one place to do that online: Shillington.

Learn more about the Shillington Online Graphic Design Course now or chat to one of our dedicated Course Advisors to hear more about studying with us.

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