

What does it mean to be a FASHION DESIGNER?

Fashion Designers are creative people. They are artists who study fashion trends and then sketch designs for clothes before they are manufactured.

The Key Facts

- ◆ Designers can either start their own company and work for themselves or find a job within another fashion company.
- ◆ Salaries vary hugely depending on how successful the designs are. If you start your own company your salary will be very unpredictable.
- ◆ The design and production process can differ between mass market (clothes shops) and high fashion (designer brands). Some designers specialize in one category of clothes, while others design across a range of clothing and accessories.
- ◆ In Cambodia there are many sweat shops. These are horrible factories where people are paid a very low wage to make clothes. Some designers are trying to get rid of them.



Training

Fashion designers normally study design or art at art school or at college. Raffles International College in Phnom Penh offers diplomas in fashion design. They also require training in sewing and embroidery, too. This is essential so that they can turn their ideas into reality.

Photography is another useful skill to have. The success of a brand depends on whether customers like how the clothes look in photos. Fashion designers often speak other languages, too, in order to share ideas with designers from other countries.

It is also important to know about the history of fashion.



What does the job involve?

Fashion designers study trends and draw the first design for the piece which they want to create. They attend fashion shows or visit manufacturers to select fabrics and materials. Designers work out how the clothes will look on the model and make changes to the prototypes (the first examples) of their designs. The end product is then sold to clothing retailers. They need to be able to understand the garment industry to plan successful designs.

Sometimes they have to go and convince clothing retailers to buy their designs. This may involve travelling to another country.

Creativity

Being able to think for yourself is very important. Nobody is going to think of ideas for you! You need to

be able to create and plan clothes that you think are beautiful.

Self-Confidence

Sometimes people won't like your designs and that might upset you. Designers need to believe in themselves and love their designs enough to keep working and creating things.

The Hours

Some designers have regular hours which they spend in a studio. The hours are not too demanding. Sometimes things can be stressful as they approach a deadline, however.

Motivation

Sometimes designers might struggle to finish a collection or they might be out of ideas. They need to find ways to keep themselves interested and finish their plan.

The Disadvantages

- ◆ It can be very tiring to constantly have to think of new ideas.
- ◆ Sometimes harsh criticism of your designs can be very demoralizing.

Other designers in particular can try and put you down.

- ◆ It takes a lot of work and a long time to build a good reputation.
- ◆ The industry is very competitive.
- ◆ Approaching deadlines can mean long hours and a lot of stress.
- ◆ You can often come across difficult customers.

The Advantages

- ◆ It feels really good to see people wearing things you designed.
- ◆ You have a lot of freedom to work the way you want to, particularly if you start your own business.
- ◆ If you love to travel, a career in fashion can provide lots of opportunities to do so.
- ◆ If you have a flair for fashion the work is varied, creative and fun.
- ◆ If you are successful you will probably have a very good salary.
- ◆ It gives you the opportunity to earn money by expressing yourself, which is something most people can only dream of.