What is the Study of Industrial Design?

Industrial Design (ID) is a broad field that includes the design of all kinds of products—toys, furniture, housewares, electronics, etc. Designers help define a problem they are solving through conducting research and needs assessments; they brainstorm creative ideas to address the problem; they sketch, illustrate, diagram, or otherwise communicate their ideas—both visually and verbally; they create prototypes to facilitate testing of their ideas; and they then refine their design based on testing results and feedback. Industrial designers typically work in teams with other designers, including designers with other specialities (landscape architects, graphic designers, user experience designers, etc.) or engineers.1

ID students learn problem-solving methodologies, product research, drawing skills (both by hand and by computer), three dimensional model-making techniques, materials, manufacturing processes, ergonomics, design theory, and marketing principles. These skills are applied in the design of many new and innovative products which eventually comprise the student’s portfolio.

What kind of job would an Industrial Designer have?

The Bachelor of Science degree program in Industrial Design prepares graduates to begin work as practicing designers in corporate, consulting, or entrepreneurial positions. ID is a highly competitive, professional service of creating and developing concepts and specifications that optimize function, value, and appearance of products and systems for the mutual benefit of both the user and the manufacturer.

Examples of businesses that consult with Industrial Design firms where alumni work:

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Gatorade

Volkswagen

Nike

Microsoft

Alumni Employment

Positions:
Industrial Designer
User Experience Designer
Director of Product Development
Research & Strategy

Companies:
Astro Studios, San Francisco, CA
BlindTec, Provo, UT
Burn Design Lab, Vashon Island, WA
Freerange PDX, Portland, OR
Hopkins Kunkle, Inc., Seattle, WA
Michael Courtney Design, Seattle, WA
TEAGUE, Seattle, WA
Tether, Seattle, WA
Ziba Design, Portland, OR

A study of ID graduates from 2007-2013 found that 98% are working as professional designers in their field.

Program/Degree Quick Facts:

- Bachelor of Science in Industrial Design
- 12 students per year
- 148 major credits to graduate
- NASAD (National Association of Schools of Art and Design) accredited program
- Median industry salary: $59,6102
- Average starting salary: $54,8573

Resources: 1: idsa.org/what-industrial-design-primer-beginners; 2: bls.gov/ooh/arts-and-design/industrial-designers.htm; 3: based on data collected from survey of past five years of graduates from WWU’s Industrial Design program

To learn more, visit our website: www.edu/engd/id-advising
Industrial Design (ID) Program Information
Western’s ID program is a rigorous and highly competitive program with a sequential prerequisite structure. Many courses are only offered once per year. Students must be accepted as a Pre-Major (details below) in order to enroll in ID courses. Junior and Senior students have shared studios with personal work spaces, a sink, microwave, and fridge. The ID program includes a well-equipped shop with wood and metal machinery; a walk-in paint booth; and instruction in the use of these facilities. As students enroll in other courses within the Engineering department, they have access to CNC machining, rapid prototyping, injection molding, composite materials, electronics, and soft-tooling labs.

Transfer Students:
Students who would like to transfer into the ID program will need to spend at least three years of coursework at WWU. Suggested transfer courses (in addition to GURs) include the equivalent of: ART 109, 110, 120, 203, 230, 320/350, 230/340, Art History courses, ENG 101, MATH 115/118, PHYS 114 + 115, and ECON 206. Bolded courses would be the ones to prioritize. Students should check Western’s Course Transfer Equivalency Guide to confirm that classes are directly transferrable: https://admin.wwu.edu/pls/wwis/wwsktcat.TE_Catalog

Application Process:
Students must initially apply for entrance as a Pre-Major in ID. Applications are accepted three times per year: February 14, April 22, and October 22. Students must submit an Entrance Portfolio showcasing their best creative work. Pieces should include sketches, 2D designs, 3D designs, and computer skills. Students should show multiple stages of creating a piece (i.e. rough sketch, technical drawing, photo of finished project). Students must have been accepted to WWU to apply to be a pre-major in the ID program. Once a student is accepted, they may begin enrolling in ID courses. There are typically twenty four students accepted as pre-majors each year. For detailed information on the Entrance Portfolio requirements, visit www.wwu.edu/id/entrance.shtml.

After students have completed the required courses for the first two years in the Plan of Study, they submit their work for the Sophomore Portfolio Review. This is held in June each year, and in addition to their portfolio, students must submit a design statement, resume, academic transcripts, and course record. Generally twelve students are accepted into the program as full Majors each year. Students may choose to reapply if they are not accepted their first time, however, there is no guarantee of acceptance on reapplication, as the process is competitive. Advising is available for students who decide to pursue a different major at that time.

Internships:
Internships are strongly recommended as part of a student’s Plan of Study. Students generally participate in a summer internship between Years 3 and 4. Below is a list of where some alumni have interned:

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<td>Bose</td>
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For more information on the field of Industrial Design, visit: www.idsa.org or www.core77.com