

CAREER GUIDE FOR SET DESIGNER

SOC Code: 27-1027.01

Pay Band(s): ([Salary Structure](#))

Standard Occupational Description: Design sets for theatrical, motion picture, and television productions.

Exhibit Designer positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Media and Production Services Career Group](#):

[Media Specialist III](#)

While Set Designers within the Commonwealth are all located within the Media and Production Services Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Building Trades](#)

[Architecture and Engineering Services](#)

[Training and Instruction](#)

[Education Support Services](#)

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

Skills

Note: *The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Set Designer commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.*

1. Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
2. Analyzing needs and product requirements to create a design.
3. Managing one's own time and the time of others.
4. Obtaining and seeing to the appropriate use of equipment, facilities, and materials needed to do certain work.
5. Determining how money will be spent to get the work done, and accounting for these expenditures.
6. Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
7. Motivating, developing, and directing people as they work, identifying the best people for the job.
8. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
9. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
10. Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.

Knowledge

Note: The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Set Designer commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

The **Knowledge** of:

1. Design techniques, tools, and principles involved in production of precision technical plans, blueprints, drawings, and models.
2. Theory and techniques required to compose, produce, and perform works of music, dance, visual arts, drama, and sculpture.
3. Materials, methods, and the tools involved in the construction or repair of houses, buildings, or other structures such as highways and roads.

Abilities

Note: The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Set Designer commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

The **Ability** to:

1. Imagine how something will look after it is moved around or when its parts are moved or rearranged.
2. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
3. Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
4. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
5. Come up with unusual or clever ideas about a given topic or situation, or to develop creative ways to solve a problem.
6. Come up with a number of ideas about a topic (the number of ideas is important, not their quality, correctness, or creativity).
7. Match or detect differences between colors, including shades of color and brightness.
8. Communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
9. Choose the right mathematical methods or formulas to solve a problem.
10. Add, subtract, multiply, or divide quickly and correctly.

Tasks

Note: The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Set Designer. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.

1. Integrates requirements including script, research, budget, and available locations to develop design.
2. Presents drawings for approval and makes changes and corrections as directed.
3. Selects furniture, draperies, pictures, lamps, and rugs for decorative quality and appearance.
4. Confers with heads of production and direction to establish budget, schedules, and discuss design ideas.

5. Directs and coordinates set construction, erection, or decoration activities to ensure conformance to design, budget, and schedule requirements.
6. Assigns staff to complete design ideas and prepare sketches, illustrations, and detailed drawings of sets, or graphics and animation.
7. Examines dressed set to ensure props and scenery do not interfere with movements of cast or view of camera.
8. Reads script to determine location, set, or decoration requirements.
9. Estimates costs of design materials and construction, or rental of location or props.
10. Researches and consults experts to determine architectural and furnishing styles to depict given periods or locations.

INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

The occupation of Set Designer has **Artistic** and **Realistic** characteristics as described below:

Artistic — Artistic occupations frequently involve working with forms, designs and patterns. They often require self-expression and the work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

Realistic — Realistic occupations frequently involve work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside, and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.

LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Generally this is not required for Set Designer positions in state government.

EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Labor provides the following information:

Set designers create sets for movie, television, and theater productions. Set designers study scripts, confer with directors and other designers, and conduct research to determine the historical period, fashion, and architectural styles appropriate for the production on which they work. They then produce sketches or scale models to guide in the construction of the actual sets.

A bachelor's degree is required for most entry-level design positions.

Formal training for some design professions also is available in 2- and 3-year professional schools that award certificates or associate degrees in design. Graduates of 2-year programs normally qualify as assistants to designers, or they may enter a formal bachelor's degree program. The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree is granted at 4-year colleges and universities. The

curriculum in these schools includes art and art history, principles of design, designing and sketching, and specialized studies for each of the individual design disciplines, such as garment construction, textiles, mechanical and architectural drawing, computerized design, sculpture, architecture, and basic engineering.

The State Council of Higher Education lists the following Virginia educational institutions offering program in technical theater/theater design and stagecraft: Lynchburg College and Mary Baldwin College.

Ferrum College, Hampton-Sydney College, Mary Washington College, Roanoke College, and Virginia Commonwealth University offer fine arts degrees.

For general information about art and design and a list of accredited college-level programs, contact: National Association of Schools of Art and Design: <http://nasad.arts-accredit.org/>

Virginia's museums and Universities are the primary employers of Set Designers. For more information on the museums in Virginia, see the web site http://www.virginia.gov/cmsportal/education_836/education_1007/museums_1266/index.html

For more information on the universities in Virginia, see the web site <http://www.virginia.gov/cmsportal/education836/education1007/universities1257/index.html>

COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

The Commonwealth Competencies are:

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth

competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm. For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Set Designer**

PAY BANDS	PRACTITIONER ROLES
4	Media Specialist III

PAY BANDS	MANAGER ROLES
4	Media Manager I
5	Media Manager II

Sample Career Path

Media Specialist III

The Media Specialist III role provides a career track for set designers whose expertise levels vary from advanced level to supervisory. Duties may include design projects and promotional objectives and developing stage and set designs.

Media Manager I

The Media Manager I role provides a career track for managers responsible for directing complex design programs. Duties include leadership and creativity in managing: a department that plans, develops, coordinates, and monitors the production of multiple concurrent exhibits and gallery projects that meet aesthetic and conservatorial standards as well as time and budget allowances.

Media Manager II

The Media Manager II role provides a career track for managers responsible for providing leadership and creativity in directing multi-media services used by state agencies for promotional, educational and informational purposes. Areas of responsibility include state distance learning programs and/or graphic communications.

ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

O*NET (Occupational Information Network)

http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network <http://www.vacrn.net/>