# Interior Design, an Introduction

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Interior design is one of the most exciting and creative professions. A combination of art, science, and technology, interior design, in practice, manipulates space, form, texture, color, and light to enhance the quality of human life. This book is about interior spaces and their design and about interior design as a profession. The practice of actively designing interior space is a major commitment by those who enter the field, that is, people who work toward improving our built environments.

We spend an increasing amount of our lives indoors in built environments. We wake from a night's sleep in some form of interior space and go to learn, work, or play in another space that gives a sense of purpose to our lives. We may briefly go outdoors to get to the site of our day's occupation, but the amount of time spent outdoors is usually only a fraction of the time spent indoors.

Why should we be concerned about the design of interiors? Well-designed spaces can contribute substantially to our sense of well-being, not just serve as shelters. They can be positive influences on our socialization, learning, and general appreciation of life. People's behavior can be positively or negatively reinforced by interaction with environmental forces.

The task of those who design our interior spaces becomes increasingly important as more people spend greater amounts of time indoors. Designers must devise spaces that serve the basic needs of the users and at the same time create positive and uplifting effects. Properly designed environments are efficient and harmonious (Figure 1.1). They can have a pervasive positive influence, which interiors that are not carefully designed may not have.

## CURRENT ISSUES IN DESIGN

Interior design is a dynamic profession that changes over time as the result of technological advances, research, codes, culture, and environmental factors. Some of the current issues facing interior designers include universal design, globalization, and sustainable design.

### Universal Design

Universal design is a concept that encompasses the design of worldwide environments, spaces, objects, and communication with the intent of serving the widest range of users, regardless of age and physical abilities. Universal design can include accessible design, which specifically focuses on people with disabilities and their right of access

**FIGURE 1.1** This Haworth showroom, in San Francisco, is an excellent example of a well-designed interior that serves the needs of the users and creates a positive and uplifting effect.
*Courtesy of Perkins + Will; Photo Courtesy of Haworth, Inc.; Nick Merrick © Hedrich Blessing*

to entities. However, the two terms should not be used interchangeably. Universal design is involved with more than providing minimal compliance with specific accessibility requirements and guidelines. It seeks to integrate accessible features into the design of the building, interiors, and objects. It addresses the usability issues of spaces and equipment, instead of merely setting standards and minimum requirements, which accessible design does. See Chapter 10 for more detailed information on accessibility. Interior designers are also involved with designing for special populations, which include people of all abilities and ages, including children, the elderly, and those with temporary or permanent special needs (Figure 1.2).

## Globalization

Interior designers often work on a global scale and with multicultural communities and people. This is particularly true today as the Internet and other digital media allow designers and others to communicate worldwide. Designers may encompass a multitude of nationalities, cultural traits, physical needs, and preferences. The use of space and the meaning of color may vary among different cultures, regions, and countries. Materials indigenous to a region may also affect how environments are built. Therefore, designers must be aware of particular cultural beliefs and preferences in order to propose appropriate design solutions for a global market (Figure 1.3).

## Sustainable Design

Sustainable design seeks to reduce the negative impacts on our environments, eliminate nonrenewable resources, and promote the interaction of people and the natural environment. The need for sustainable design is a direct result of global growth in human population, economic activity, damage to the earth's ecosystem, and depletion of natural resources. Sustainability principles include energy conservation and efficiency, recycled or sustainably

**FIGURE 1.2** Mattel Children's Hospital UCLA is designed to serve the needs of its special population.
*Courtesy of Perkins + Will; © fotoworks/Benny Chan*



**FIGURE 1.3** The Park Hotel in Hyderabad, India, infuses a modern, sustainable design with the local craft traditions, and is influenced by the region's reputation as a center for the design and production of gemstones and textiles.
*© Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP | © Robert Polidori*

**FIGURE 1.4** Purdue University's net-zero energy house utilizes hickory flooring, white oak cabinetry, and poplar ceiling beams, which are all environmentally friendly, have longer life cycles, and need less replacement.

*Jim Tetro/U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon*

produced materials, improved indoor environmental quality (such as air), and requiring performance standards for the quality and durability of products that last longer—reducing or eliminating their replacement cycles (Figure 1.4). Sustainable design is also referred to as *green design*, although the latter term can be somewhat overused to include many things that may not be up to sustainable standards.

The 2030 Challenge is an initiative first put forth in 2003 by the architect Edward Mazria that sets the stage for world reduction of greenhouse gases. It is believed that buildings produce over half of the greenhouse gas emissions on a global scale. The challenge asks the global architectural, design, and construction communities to adopt a series of target dates (2010–2030) as milestones that would result in decreased fossil fuel use, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy consumption. By 2030 the standard is projected to achieve a carbon neutral state for buildings.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Presenting a history of interior design is a difficult task since no specific date, person, or space can be documented as the beginning point. The desire to create functional and pleasant interior environments existed long before freestanding buildings were being constructed. Designing interior spaces can be traced back to early cultures that painted pictures on the walls of their caves and furnished them with pelts for comfort. As people began to plan and construct buildings, the structure and the interior space within it were considered interrelated parts of a whole, which became known as architecture. Interior design, like architectural design, has been a basic part of the planning and building process from the beginning. Yet, the use and acceptance of the term *interior design* did not occur until after World War II. Previously, the term *interior decoration* described the finishing touches applied to the inside of a structure, but "interior decorating" was not recognized as a profession until the turn of the

**FIGURE 1.5** Basic shelters use natural forms of grasses and thatch as design elements to protect the occupants from rain and wind.
*CC-BY-SA-3.0/© Justin Smith*

twentieth century. Like architecture, interior design and its practice have evolved from primitive enclosures to highly sophisticated structures and space enclosures.

## Before the Nineteenth Century

Developing civilizations created shelters to protect people from the elements and serve other basic needs (Figure 1.5). As people became less nomadic, they began to build more permanent shelters. As farming replaced hunting, people gathered into communities, with structures for storage, shelter, and protection from enemies.

The Egyptians produced enough crops that they often needed to store or trade off the surpluses. As their civilization developed, they began to construct temples, ceremonial spaces, and monumental tombs (Figure 1.6). This specialization of buildings and their interiors became more common and could be considered the beginning of nonresidential design.

Greek and Roman civilizations constructed more elaborate and specialized spaces, such as temples, bath houses, and large arenas. They also pondered the meaning of beauty and the proportions of their structures, seeking to create "perfect" buildings (Figure 1.7). Many of these early structures were monumental. Architecture and the design of the interiors were an integral act, not separate endeavors.

As civilizations prospered, structures improved in materials, strength, and flexibility to serve a multitude of needs. Geographical factors also promoted variety in style as people sought to "personalize" their built environments according to the availability of materials and workmanship in a particular area.

By the eighteenth century, interior spaces had become more than simply functional: they served people's sense of taste, décor, and embellishment (Figure 1.8). Many of these interiors were created for the rich to display their wealth and luxury. However, the not-so-rich people were also living in interiors that, while not opulent, provided a continuum of design examples throughout the ages.

During this time, interior decoration was the responsibility primarily of the architects, artisans, and craftsmen. For example, English architects in the 1700s were designing interiors and even their furnishings. This trend was continued in America by later designers and architects, such as Samuel McIntire, Thomas Jefferson, and others before 1900.

**FIGURE 1.6** The Egyptian pyramids at Giza (2723–2563 BC) provided permanence and concealment.
*CC-BY-SA-3.0/Ricardo Liberato*



**FIGURE 1.7** Temple of Athena Nike, Acropolis, Athens. This small temple (427–424 BC) is an excellent example of Greek architecture. The ionic order of columns is graceful, and the symmetry of the structure is well conceived.
*CC-BY-SA-3.0/Dimboukas*

**FIGURE 1.8** Abbey of Ottobeuren, Bavaria (c. 1748). The interior of this space is lavishly decorated and highlighted with colored stucco to imitate marble.

*CC-BY-SA-3.0/Johannes Böckh & Thomas Mirtsch*

## The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Decorating and Integrated Design

Interest in interiors and their furnishings was sustained through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. During this time two distinct design directions developed. The first evolved from the term *decoration*, and the profession of decorating became established. Based on historical traditions, this direction was predominantly concerned with surface ornamentation, color, texture, furnishings, and accessories. The other direction was more concerned with the way things work, and it concentrated on innovation and invention. This design approach began to look at all aspects of interior design in terms of the overall shape of spaces, construction systems, activity patterns, manufacturing processes, and the use of new materials. This approach was predominantly concerned with the integration of all elements within an interior space, to achieve total design harmony. The work of Frank Lloyd Wright in the first decade of the twentieth century characterized this direction. Wright designed innovative interiors in which space was treated as a single entity where all materials, technologies, and ornamentation were integrated. His concept of total integration of all interior elements is called *organic design.* He defined interior space for specific activities by furniture arrangements, rather than with enclosed walls. Wright achieved spatial variety and different areas within a single room by means of stepped floors and ceilings, so openness was not impeded.

Women also became active in the field of design and interior decorating. Candace Wheeler, who worked with the decorative artist L. C. Tiffany in the late 1800s, wrote an article entitled "Interior Decoration as a Profession for Women." Elsie de Wolfe (1865–1950) has been credited as being the first self-proclaimed interior decorator in America. She was born in New York City and went to finishing school in Scotland. As a member of the upper class and London society, she became used to elegance, refinement, and good taste. She began her career
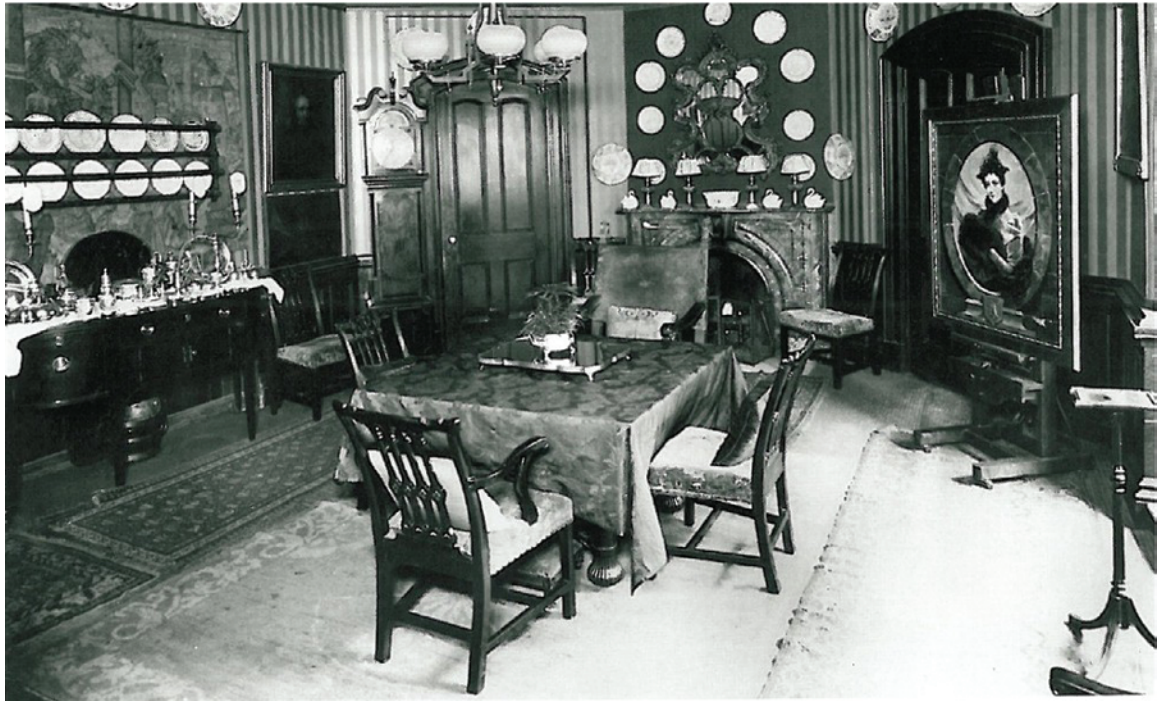
**FIGURE 1.9** Elsie de Wolfe designed this dining room in 1896; it reflected a dark and somber style that was prevalent at that time.

in 1904 as a professional interior decorator and received her first commission in 1905, for the Colony Club in New York City.

De Wolfe had a great impact on the decorating of interiors (Figure 1.9) and inspired other women to enter the profession. However, it was not until 1904 that courses were offered in interior decoration, so it was difficult to obtain formal training. If formal coursework was unavailable or too expensive for some, they learned from magazines or books.

"Interior decorator" became the most recognized title for those who planned surface embellishments of interior spaces. These individuals were concerned with the decorative arts—i.e., ornamentation, finishes, furnishings, and furniture—and dealt primarily with existing spaces.

After World War I, as the middle class became more prosperous, interest in professional interior decoration increased. The sale and manufacture of home furnishings flourished. Department stores, such as Macy's and Marshall Field's, designed elaborate "vignettes" to display their merchandise. In the 1920s the art deco style revolutionized both the exterior and the interior design of office and other commercial buildings. Until that time, men had executed most of the interior design in commercial structures. Dorothy Draper (1889–1969) was one of the first American women decorators to specialize in commercial design. Her commissions included hotels, clubs, restaurants, shops, and hospitals.

After World War II, interiors of buildings demanded more than just decoration of the spaces. As commercial building industries flourished, the interiors became increasingly complex, requiring more attention to the functional needs of the users. Focus began to shift from the decorating of surfaces to establishing functionalism and activity-related support systems. There was also a shift from the exclusive involvement of high-income residential decorating to planning for commercial spaces.

Today, the role of the interior designer has expanded to reflect the highly complex problems that environments pose in our continually changing technological society. Office buildings, hospitals, shopping centers, restaurants, schools, airports, residential communities, entertainment centers, hotels, and public buildings are but a few of the areas in which highly skilled interior designers team up with architects, engineers, planners, and developers to create better environments for a better quality of life (Figure 1.10).

**FIGURE 1.10** A team of interior designers, architects, engineers, and other consultants designed the specialized Baylor Charles A. Sammons Cancer Center at the Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, Texas.
*Courtesy of Perkins + Will; photography by Nick Merrick © Hedrich Blessing*

## INTERIOR DESIGN AS A PROFESSION

The professional interior designer is qualified by education, experience, and examination to enhance the function and quality of interior spaces for the purposes of improving the quality of life, increasing productivity, and protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Interior design has grown rapidly and undergone many changes since the 1990s. It is a distinct, creative professional field closely allied with other design professions. One of the most exciting and expanding professional fields for dedicated students to enter, interior design is becoming more important every day as we remodel and build more interior environments. Interior designers of today and tomorrow must take up the challenge of creating more exciting, more energy conscious, and more technologically advanced environments in less and less space.

### The Interior Designer

An interior designer is a creative person who develops ideas into objects and environments for other people to use or interact with. Although this may seem simplistic, the act of designing is a complex combination of art and science. Interior design is involved with creating or modifying interior environments, including the structure, the life-support systems, the furnishings, and the equipment. In addition, the interior designer must deal with the experiences, needs, and personalities of the people (or users) within. Working with lighting, color, materials, human behavior, and accessories, the interior designer plans and organizes interior spaces to serve specific needs (Figure 1.11).

The term *interior designer* has been defined and endorsed by many professional societies, schools, accrediting agencies, and states and provinces. At this writing, according to the National Council for Interior Design Qualification, the definition of interior design and the responsibilities of an interior designer are as follows:

**FIGURE 1.11** This hospital lobby featuring bright colored furniture and artwork, made or inspired by children, is a place where children and their families feel immediately comfortable. A color-changing ceiling and lava floor tiles that change color when walked on are incorporated.
*Photo Courtesy of Haworth, Inc.*

Interior design includes a scope of services performed by a professional design practitioner, qualified by means of education, experience and examination, to protect and enhance the health, life safety and welfare of the public. These services may include any or all of the following tasks:

- Research and analysis of the client's goals and requirements; and development of documents, drawings and diagrams that outline those needs
- Formulation of preliminary space plans and two and three dimensional design concept studies and sketches that integrate the client's program needs and are based on knowledge of the principles of interior design and theories of human behavior
- Confirmation that preliminary space plans and design concepts are safe, functional, aesthetically appropriate, and meet all public health, safety and welfare requirements, including code, accessibility, environmental, and sustainability guidelines
- Selection of colors, materials and finishes to appropriately convey the design concept and to meet socio-psychological, functional, maintenance, lifecycle performance, environmental, and safety requirements
- Selection and specification of furniture, fixtures, equipment and millwork, including layout drawings and detailed product description; and provision of contract documentation to facilitate pricing, procurement and installation of furniture
- Provision of project management services, including preparation of project budgets and schedules
- Preparation of construction documents, consisting of plans, elevations, details and specifications, to illustrate non-structural and/or non-seismic partition layouts; power and communications locations; reflected ceiling plans and lighting designs; materials and finishes; and furniture layouts
- Preparation of construction documents to adhere to regional building and fire codes, municipal codes, and any other jurisdictional statutes, regulations, and guidelines applicable to the interior space
- Coordination and collaboration with other allied design professionals who may be retained to provide consulting services, including but not limited to architects; structural, mechanical and electrical engineers; and various specialty consultants

- Confirmation that construction documents for non-structural and/or non-seismic construction are signed and sealed by the responsible interior designer, as applicable to jurisdictional requirements for filing with code enforcement officials
- Administration of contract documents, bids and negotiations as the client's agent
- Observation and reporting on the implementation of projects while in progress and upon completion, as a representative of and on behalf of the client; and conducting post-occupancy evaluation reports

Interior design is practiced by interior designers, architects, and space planners. Each has a particular viewpoint and expertise, and the role and merit of each viewpoint will continue to be debated in the schools, the professions, and the professional societies. These debates promote self-evaluation and, hence, advancement of the field of interior design.

Interior design is an integral part of the built environment, which in turn is an aspect of environmental design (Figure 1.12). Environmental design encompasses the entire natural and built environment, both interior and exterior spaces.

## Allied Professions

Interior design is closely related to architecture and other professions. Specialists in these other fields work with interior designers in a team effort to create environments that serve users and enhance the quality of life.

### Decorator

As discussed earlier, the decorator's role evolved over time, and today the decorator provides many services in the design field. Although the public often uses the term to refer to interior designers, there are differences between the decorator and the designer. Decorators are involved mostly with decorative surface treatments, accessories, furniture, and furnishings and are not required to have a formal education, experience, or national examination to work in the field.
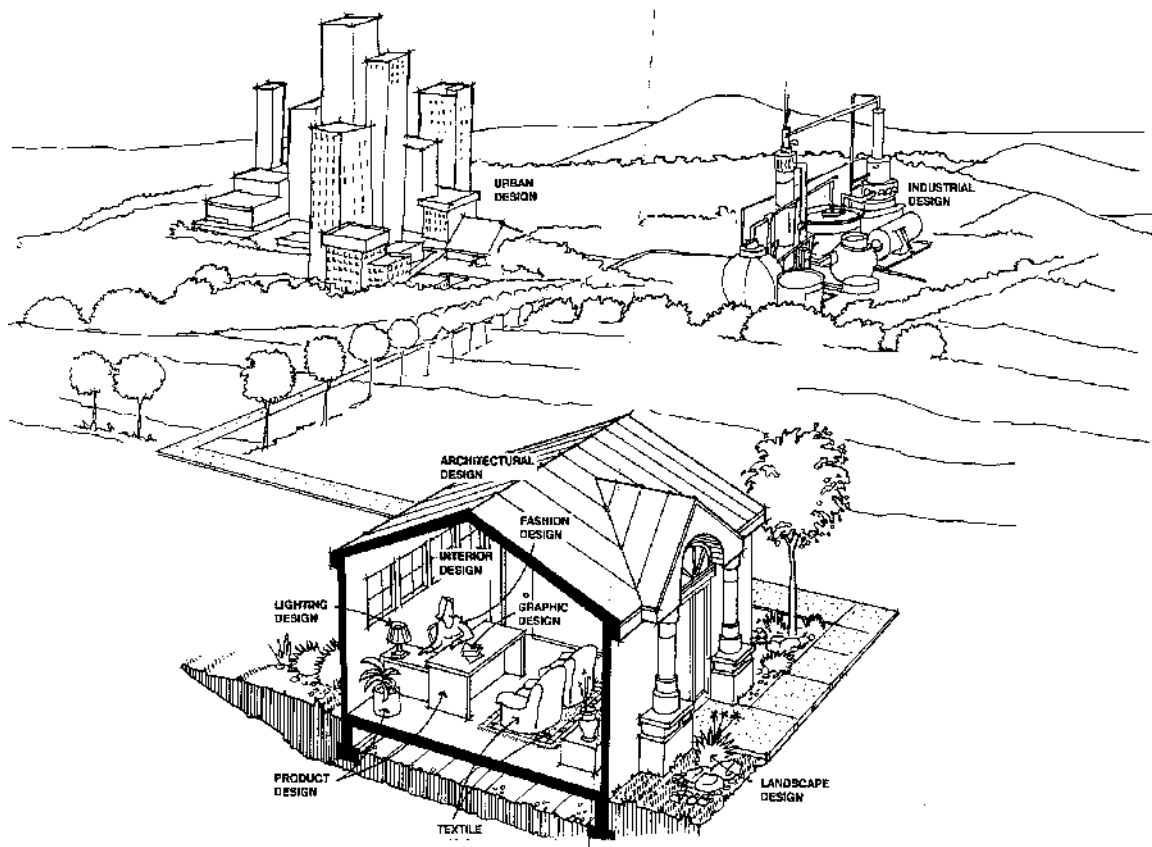


**FIGURE 1.12** There are many areas or fields of design. The basic theories and principles are the same; however, the scale may change.

### Architect

The architect today has been educated, served an internship, and been tested by a national examination to become registered (licensed). The title "architect" and the practice of architecture are protected and regulated by law. Architects design buildings, including the structural, electrical, mechanical, and other systems. Some architects also provide interior design services, including selection of furniture and other furnishings. However, many of these interior services are done by interior designers who are consultants to the architect or are part of an interior design department within the architectural firm.

The field of architecture has produced a series of specialized areas of expertise and practice: specification writers, systems architects, and interior architects, who primarily design the interior of a building. Some architects choose to practice in all areas of architecture, and others focus on a specialized area, such as residence, corporate, healthcare, institutional, or hospitality architecture.

### Landscape Architecture

Landscape architecture is a separate profession concerned with the exterior environment and has its own licensing laws. Landscape architects are involved primarily in site planning and design and in exterior landscaping.

### Other Professionals

Industrial designers work integrally with the interiors industry to produce furniture and other accessories. Sometimes interior designers create these designs, and sometimes they hire industrial designers to design specific objects for the spaces.

Graphic designers also work closely with interior designers to create brand identities for the interior design firm, such as logos, web designs, letterheads, and business cards, as well as branding and signage for interior design projects.

The design of large corporate offices often requires the services of facility planners or managers to oversee the spatial needs of corporations as their personnel and equipment requirements change. A large number of these people are interior designers, yet some positions are filled by management and business graduates who in turn hire interior designers as part of the team.

The engineer also is a part of the team designing environments. Engineers are licensed and generally specialize in such areas as electrical, mechanical, structural, or acoustical engineering.

## Professional Societies

Professional societies and organizations are established to serve and advance the various professions and to represent designers to the public. They provide information, resources, research, continuing education, codes of ethics, lobbying efforts, and many other services for their memberships. Each has its own requirements for and levels of membership. Several societies to which interior designers and design educators belong are listed in this section. Some belong to more than one.

### American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)

One of the largest and oldest interior design organizations is ASID, which has more than 38,000 members. It was formed in 1975 by a merger of the American Institute of Interior Designers (AID), founded in 1931, and the National Society of Interior Designers (NSID). ASID serves to advance the profession of interior design, inform and protect the public, promote design excellence, and strengthen interaction with related professions and industries. ASID provides educational materials and seminars, conventions, newsletters, and related design activities, including student chapters.

### International Interior Design Association (IIDA)

IIDA is a professional networking and educational organization with more than 13,000 members. IIDA was formed in 1994 as a merger of the Institute of Business Designers (IBD), the International Society of Interior Designers (ISID), and the Council of Federal Interior Designers (CFID). IIDA was formed to create an international association that would represent interior designers worldwide. Like ASID, IIDA also provides many programs and services to the profession, public, and students to shape the future of design.

### Interior Designers of Canada (IDC)

IDC was founded in 1972 to serve the Canadian interior design industry, advancing the profession through high standards of education, professional development, professional responsibility, and communication. IDC has more

than 2,000 members, and, with the support of its seven provincial association members, provides a forum for the unified voice of Canadian interior designers, so that the profession will continue to grow and receive recognition and respect locally, nationally, and internationally from government, industry, and the public sector.

### International Federation of Interior Architects/Interior Designers (IFI)
IFI was founded in 1963 in Denmark and is made up of worldwide design institutions, associations, and schools in approximately 50 countries on every continent. It provides many of the services that other societies provide, but it functions primarily as a global forum for the exchange and development of knowledge and experience, in worldwide education, research, and practice. Worldwide, IFI collectively represents over 80,000 practicing interior architects/designers.

### Interior Design Educators Council, Inc. (IDEC)
IDEC was founded in 1967 and serves to advance education and research in interior design. IDEC (more than 900 members) seeks to strengthen communication and education among educators, educational institutions, practicing professionals, and other organizations that promote interior design education. It publishes the *Journal of Interior Design Education and Research* (JIDER), a design research journal.

### Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA)
CIDA was established in 1970 under the name of FIDER (Foundation for Interior Design Education and Research); it was renamed CIDA in 2006. It was developed to evaluate and accredit interior design programs in the United States and Canada. CIDA is composed of a board of trustees made up of representatives from ASID, IIDA, IDC, and IDEC. It is committed to identifying, developing, and promoting standards for educational programs for entry-level interior designers.

### National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ)
NCIDQ was started in 1972 and establishes standards of competence in the practice of interior designers. NCIDQ's main purpose is to protect the health, life safety, and welfare of the public through these standards. NCIDQ serves to identify to the public those interior designers who have met the minimum standards for professional practice by passing the regularly updated NCIDQ examination, which is offered twice a year across the United States and Canada. Its membership is made up of organizations, not individual members. Passing the exam is often required to achieve the highest level of membership in some interior design societies. It is also the qualifying exam for those states that have licensing or registration laws governing the interior design profession.

NCIDQ also developed and administers the Interior Design Experience Program (IDEP), a monitored experience program for graduates of interior design programs, which provides documented proof of the high-quality interior design experience required by state licensing boards and provincial associations for licensure and/or registration. IDEP assists entry-level interior designers in obtaining a broad range of high-quality professional experience, and provides a structure for the transition between formal education and professional practice.

### American Institute of Architects (AIA)
AIA was founded in 1859 and has more than 83,000 members. Although the organization is composed primarily of licensed architects, many interior designers are also architects and belong to this organization in addition to others. The AIA has several national and state committees on interior design that are open to both interior designers and architects. These cooperative committees also collaborate with many of the other professional organizations.

### Building Owners and Managers Association International (BOMA)
BOMA is an international organization of over 17,000 commercial real estate professionals and developers, including owners, managers, design professionals, and real estate providers. BOMA provides programs in advocacy, education, and research throughout the world.

### National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA)
NKBA is a nonprofit trade association for kitchen and bath professionals. It began in 1963 as AIKD (American Institute of Kitchen Dealers) and changed to NKBA in 1983. It has over 40,000 members. Through individual experience and testing, it offers the CKD (Certified Kitchen Designer) program and certification.

### The Retail Design Institute (RDI)
RDI, which was founded in 1961 as The Institute of Store Planners, is dedicated to the professionals involved in the planning, design, and construction of retail establishments. In 2010, it was renamed the Retail Design Institute to reflect its worldwide membership of over 1,000 professionals.

### The Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA)

IESNA is the recognized authority on illumination and has a diverse membership (over 8,000) of professionals involved with the design, manufacturing, and distribution of lamps, sources, accessories, and luminaires. These include designers, architects, engineers, contractors, manufacturers, and distributors. The society publishes technical documents; standards; design guidelines; lighting energy management materials; and lighting measurements, calculations, and testing guides.

### The Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA)

EDRA is an interdisciplinary organization founded in 1968. It comprises an international membership of about 500 and is dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of environmental research. It seeks to improve the understanding of the interrelationships between people and their natural and built environments. The organization seeks to help create environments responsive to human needs.

### U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC)

USGBC is a nonprofit organization committed to a prosperous and sustainable future for our nation through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings. It is composed of more than 18,000 member companies and organizations, and more than 140,000 LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Professional Credential holders. USGBC leads a diverse constituency of builders and environmentalists, corporations and nonprofit organizations, elected officials and concerned citizens, and teachers and students. USGBC's vision is that buildings and communities will regenerate and sustain the health and vitality of all life within a generation. USGBC supports this effort by providing educational programs and services to the building industry, public, and students, which gives the organization the flexibility to grow and respond to a rapidly changing market. One of USGBC's main focuses is the development of the LEED® Green Building Rating System™, which is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, $CO_2$ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. (See Chapter 10 for more detailed information.) USGBC also developed an Emerging Professionals program, which provides educational opportunities and resources to young professionals, with the goal of integrating these future leaders into the green building movement.

## ENTERING THE FIELD OF INTERIOR DESIGN

To become a professional interior designer, a person should have the proper academic training and a period of work experience in the professional field. In addition, in states that have passed a licensing act, the interior designer must pass the National Council for Interior Design Qualification exam and be registered with a state board. As interior design becomes more complex and technologically advanced, an academic preparation is of prime importance.

## Academic Preparation

Many colleges, universities, and design schools in the United States and Canada offer academic programs for the education of interior designers. Today, more than 400 such programs are offered, ranging from four- or five-year baccalaureate degrees to two- and three-year degrees with varying titles. However, most programs are for four years and lead to either a bachelor of arts, a bachelor of fine arts, or a bachelor of science degree.

Interior design curricula are ever changing to accommodate the vast amount of knowledge and training needed for an expanding and complex profession. The introduction of the accrediting body CIDA in 1970 (see previous section) met the needs of standardizing the educational content of these programs. CIDA has established a set of minimum basic accreditation criteria for interior design programs and has become the officially recognized accrediting agency for interior design education. CIDA establishes guidelines for educational institutions to follow to apply for membership and to be reviewed for accreditation. These institutions' programs are then accredited if they meet the CIDA standards. The agency also has set procedures for periodic reviews of member schools' programs, and it schedules revisits as necessary to ensure that the schools adhere to CIDA standards. The names and locations of CIDA-accredited schools can be obtained from its website at www.accredit-id.org or by contacting its national headquarters, which is located in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

### University and College Programs

Interior design education at institutions of higher learning is generally offered in one of three basic programs: art and design, home economics, or architecture. Within each of these basic areas, some variance exists in the way the program is structured, administered, and philosophically based. For example, an interiors program might be a subcomponent of an architectural department or school. The emphasis of such an interiors program might be parallel to the education of an architect. Or one might find an interiors program, along with industrial and graphic design, as a part of the "applied" arts. Interiors programs can also be associated with home economics. However, most home economics programs have been restructured to emphasize today's consumer and the behavioral sciences, rather than homemaking skills.

There is no one way to teach interior design, and both CIDA and interior design educators recognize this. In fact, the CIDA guidelines allow for the various programs to provide a particular emphasis and vary their curricula, while still meeting the required CIDA standards.

### Private and Specialized Institutions

Four- and five-year programs at institutions of higher education (often state supported) are not the only means available for a student to prepare for the design profession. Numerous two- and three-year programs in community colleges or at technical, vocational, and even specialized private institutions also provide a basic foundation in interiors. Some students begin their preparation in these places and continue their baccalaureate studies elsewhere. Some graduates of these two- and three-year programs become paraprofessionals or technical assistants, and may eventually become professional designers.

## Work Experience and Internships

An interior designer must have not only an academic preparation but also work experience before becoming qualified to sit for the NCIDQ exam. Usually this means post-educational employment with an established interior designer or related professional, such as an architect. Entry-level experience should include exposure to and guidance in all the various aspects of an interior design practice—not just drafting or some other narrow focus of professional practice. The length of experience varies in accordance with the educational background, type of firm, and the particular tasks the designers perform.

The Interior Design Experience Program (IDEP), a monitored experience program developed by NCIDQ, as described previously, for graduates of interior design programs, provides documented proof of the high-quality interior design experience required by state licensing boards and provincial associations for licensure and/or registration.

Most schools recognize a need for exposure to professional practice before a student graduates. These schools arrange intensive internships in a design or related firm to give their students valuable insight and a hands-on educational experience that cannot be duplicated in the academic setting. The duration of time for an internship can vary from school to school, but generally ranges from a few weeks or more to a full summer.

A few schools offer a more concentrated work experience through a cooperative education (co-op) program. These programs alternate between on-campus coursework and off-campus work experiences, to provide a balance of academic and practical work preparation. Co-op programs take longer, as students are generally placed in work environments for 12 to 15 weeks and must complete four or five work experiences. A co-op program may extend a student's graduation date by one or more years.

## Career Opportunities

Many career opportunities are available for the graduating interior design student. Interior design firms, architectural firms, furnishings dealers (residential and nonresidential), and retail establishments all employ interior designers. Positions are also found with in-house design services of various corporations, hospitality businesses, institutions, government agencies, and healthcare facilities. In addition, design careers are found in education, research, historic preservation, and many other specialized areas.

A student can enter the interiors field at an entry-level position and advance to become a senior designer, a manager, and even a principal of a firm. Salaries and benefits vary greatly in the interiors field, depending on the type of services offered, location, volume of business, and reputation of the designer.

## Licensing Interior Designers

Many professionals are licensed by the states, which test and monitor these individuals to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Licensing (sometimes referred to as registration) is also a means to protect the title and control the qualifications for practicing a particular profession—especially educational prerequisites, experience requirements, and ethical standards. The interior design profession has moved toward licensing for the protection of the title "interior designer"—and, in some states, the practice as well. Most of the activities that interior designers are involved with, such as space planning, interior construction and detailing, lighting, drawings and specifications, project management, building code regulations, and on-site inspection, are concerned with the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Therefore, interior designers are obligated to act in a professional and ethical manner and accept liabilities related to their work. The main reason for licensing interior designers is to ensure standard qualifications and competence for people performing work in the profession.

Licensing acts are on a state or provincial basis, and consist of two main types: a title act and a practice act. A title act is concerned with protecting the use of certain titles for individuals who have met specific qualifications and who have registered with a state board. This type of licensing act assures the public that anyone using the title has professional qualifications. A practice act establishes what an individual may or may not do in the practice of a profession. Anyone engaging in a profession with a practice act must meet certain professional qualifications and be registered with a state board.

The major intent of either act is to indicate to the consumer and general public which individuals are qualified to practice according to specific criteria of education, work experience, and tests. However, a title act does very little to limit who can engage in practice, whereas a practice act can make such limitations.

At this writing, many states have enacted either a title act or a practice act for the interior design profession. It is clear that the profession will become more and more complex, require more knowledge of the technical aspects of interior design, and become more accountable for the environments the designers create, as indicated by the increased number of lawsuits involving design projects.

The future will see more states pass title and/or practice registration acts and require licensing, as interior design gains recognition for protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare. Interior designers who are certified as a result of these acts will enjoy increased legal and public recognition.


## FOR FURTHER READING

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