

# Classification and Qualification



# STANDARDS

The California State University System

## Graphic Designer

Class Codes: 0820 - 0822  
Date Established: 12/01/00

### OVERVIEW:

The Graphic Designer is a broad classification with three position skill levels. Positions in this classification are responsible for the artistic and graphic design and creation of print and multimedia materials. Incumbents use both design and production elements to organize ideas visually to convey the desired impact and message to the target audience. Incumbents design and create a wide range of materials including, but not limited to printed materials, classroom lectures, exhibits, training sessions, television broadcasts, videos, web sites and public information projects. Work is used both in classroom instruction and to reach a variety of internal and external audiences. In addition to aesthetic judgement and project management skills, incumbents provide expertise in the development and evaluation of effective communication strategies and techniques.

**Position Skill Level I** - Incumbents at this level typically perform standard assignments related to the creation of communication pieces for instructional or promotional purposes. They prepare layouts and produce materials using standard skills and knowledge related to the design, creation and display of visual print, multimedia and electronic materials. Incumbents often are often under the direction of more experienced designers and work from written instructions.

**Position Skill Level II** - Incumbents at this level work independently on a variety of small to medium scale projects or on a significant portion of a larger project. They often provide some lead work direction to less experienced staff. The work at this level is more complex and broader in scope and includes such assignments as consulting with clients, creating high level visual communications, executing and coordinating multimedia or component communication projects, and developing graphic identity or templates. Work at this level requires more advanced graphic and artistic ability and the use of a wider variety of materials and techniques.

**Position Skill Level III** - Incumbents at the highest level have broad impact by providing overall artistic direction to integrate strategically the university's graphic communication efforts. Incumbents may be responsible for day-to-day graphic operations and for the execution and coordination of the most complex projects and assignments. Their work involves collaborating with clients and other professionals in the development of communications and marketing themes and materials. Work at this level requires art direction, project planning and management skills.

### DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:

Graphic design work is distinguished by the use of professional graphic design, artistic and creative capabilities and the requirement of a foundation in communication theory. Essential to the work is the ability to translate university communication needs into artistic designs to maximize the impact and message to the intended audience. Graphic design projects typically require that the incumbents: consult with clients to understand their communication needs and to ensure that design concepts are tailored to the intended audience; select the visual materials to be used in the communication of information; create visual material including original illustrations or designs as needed; design the placement and appearance of visual material in relation to printed materials; select typographical format; design and plan the effective use of color, tone, and harmony; and design, produce, and coordinate various materials (such as photographs, illustrations, diagrams, text, charts, graphs, slides, computer animation, and web design) required in the production of final products.

**ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS:**

Entry to the first level within this classification requires foundation knowledge in the principles and techniques of artistic and graphic design as well as demonstrated design and artistic skills. This knowledge and skill normally is obtained through a college degree in graphic design, fine arts, or a related field or through technical experience and/or relevant coursework. In addition, strong communication skills and the ability to use and maintain currency with applicable computer software packages and systems are essential to entering this classification.

**POSITION SKILL LEVELS:**

Three position skill levels are defined within this classification. Progression from a lower to a higher skill level is referred to as an *in-classification progression*. The factors used to determine position skill level include: complexity, scope and impact of the work performed; level, type and scope of knowledge required; level of creativity and artistic skill required by the work; autonomy exercised and level of supervision received; position accountability for work results; judgment and discretion required by the position to address and solve problems; and the level and diversity of contacts and interactive capabilities required by the position.

A position is placed at a skill level where the majority of and/or most critical position responsibilities and skill requirements fall in relation to the position skill levels defined below. Management assigns position responsibilities and determines position skill requirements. It is important to note that the position skill level definitions do not delineate entry requirements for each skill level, but are composites of the typical position at each level. Entry qualifications are defined to the first position skill level of the classification. Further progression within the classification depends first, on the need for a position at a higher skill level, second, on the nature of the duties and requirements of the position, and third, on an employee's demonstrated and applied skills and abilities.

**POSITION SKILL LEVEL I****Typical nature of work assignments:**

Work performed is less complex and includes straightforward graphic design work such as layouts and pre-press production of course catalogs, instructional materials, invitations, booklets, newsletters, web pages, etc.

Work is performed under general supervision, often from written specifications or instructions. Artistic direction is provided to ensure consistency of look and theme with other components of a project.

Work requires a basic level of creativity and ingenuity to develop graphic designs based on stated goals and concepts.

Assignments require some judgment, but standard procedures and protocols are usually followed.

Focus is on own work assignments, rather than providing lead work direction to others, but work may involve providing training to less experienced staff.

Work involves some consultation with originators to ensure communication objectives are achieved.

**Typical knowledge and skill requirements**

Working knowledge of the principles of artistic and graphic design and illustration including the ability to design, layout and prepare finished artwork to develop a visual product.

Working knowledge of applicable graphic, design and desktop publishing software packages and ability to effectively use them to create visual material.

General knowledge of the principles of print design, typeface, color, layout, and production techniques.

Working knowledge of the use of color, tone, shading, harmony and perspective drawing.

General knowledge of systems, techniques and processes used in web site design, photography, printmaking, and other applicable media.

Demonstrated understanding of various communication vehicles and methods.

Basic knowledge of copyright laws, especially relating to creative properties.

Demonstrated ability to understand communication goals.

Strong written/verbal communication skills.

## POSITION SKILL LEVEL II

### Typical nature of work assignments:

Independently produces a variety of more complex instructional and/or promotional communication materials using traditional and emerging tools (e.g., web site design and interactive technologies) to meet the diverse communication needs of the university.

Works independently with very limited artistic direction. Typically determines approaches to projects and priorities.

Uses appreciable creativity to create and execute graphic art and designs, as well as ingenuity to devise new solutions to communication challenges.

Consults with faculty and staff to understand communication needs and goals and provides advice on the most effective techniques, media and materials to best meet needs.

Serves as liaison to vendors.

Provides lead work direction to less experienced staff including coordinating graphic design components and production phase.

Plans and organizes several projects and handles multiple priorities.

### In addition to Position Skill Level I knowledge and skill requirements, work assignments typically require:

Comprehensive knowledge of graphic design and production principles and communication theory including a basic understanding of marketing and promotion concepts.

Strong graphic design skills and artistic ability in order to translate communication needs into an artistic design.

Solid working knowledge of applicable graphic design software packages and hardware systems and peripherals. Ability to use interactive technologies and to create new methods for combining software and graphic packages to address communication and visual product goals.

Ability to understand university level curriculum concepts and convey them graphically.

Thorough knowledge of current campus documents and university-wide publication needs.

Thorough understanding of printing and other vendor services to prepare specifications for printing and other services. Ability to prepare camera-ready materials and a working knowledge of design and electronic prepress processes used in the production of complex publications.

Ability to plan, coordinate and direct graphic art communications projects and handle multiple priorities.

Working knowledge of copyright laws applicable to design work and creative properties.

Ability to consult and communicate effectively with faculty, staff and students and to interpret and translate their needs into effective visual formats.

### POSITION SKILL LEVEL III

#### Typical nature of work assignments:

Provides creative, artistic and lead work direction to others on proper artistic and graphic concepts, techniques and processes.

Work involves planning, organizing and coordinating a variety of complex projects, including budget preparation, costing analyses and vendor management.

Work is often of a strategic, longer-term nature related to developing communication and marketing themes and templates to communicate with key constituents.

Work is performed under general direction and is reviewed against goals and objectives.

Extensive ingenuity and creativity is required in almost all aspects of the work.

Appreciable judgment and discretion is exercised in project management and ongoing client relations

Often provides high level consultation with clients to determine communication concepts and design. Contacts are often at the highest level requiring tact and discretion in providing advice and guidance.

#### In addition to Position Skill Level I and II knowledge and skill requirements, work assignments typically require:

Extensive knowledge of communications and graphic design theory; advanced skills in graphic art, design and illustration; knowledge of production techniques and processes; and a demonstrated understanding of marketing communications.

Advanced skills in complex computer graphics software and interactive technologies including a thorough understanding of file formats and peripheral software (e.g., printing, scanning, film recording) and working knowledge of graphics delivery and implementation software.

Thorough knowledge of applicable copyright laws relative to the use of graphic and textual materials.

Strong art direction, project planning and project management skills.

Ability to work in a variety of media formats such as 35mm slides, broadcast and compressed video, and web site design, including an understanding of the processes and techniques involved.

Extensive knowledge of printing and other vendor services to ensure the most effective use of resources.

Strong consultative and persuasive skills including demonstrated subject matter expertise in key instructional or promotional areas requiring graphic communications support.

Demonstrated ability managing project budgets.