



# Graduate Outcomes Analysis



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# Executive Summary

(A) The following figures relate to **interior design students graduating in 2017/8**, when surveyed 18 months after graduation:

- 74% were employed or about to start work. However, unemployment was higher than for the UK average (6% of interior design graduates compared to 4% of other graduates).
- Of those who were employed, 74% of ID graduates were in high-skilled occupations including interior design. 18% were in low-skilled jobs; this is twice the UK rate of 9% for graduates.
- Those who had a first or a postgraduate qualification were more likely to be in a high-skilled occupation and were more likely to be working in interior design.

For this same group of interior design students graduating in 2017/18, employment pathways depended partly on demographic characteristics.

- Gender: females were more likely to go into interior design, whereas males went into other professions. Females were also more likely to be in a low-skilled occupation when surveyed.
- Socio-economic group: there was very slight evidence that those for whom neither parent had a degree were more likely to end up in low-skilled jobs. However, further analysis of this would be needed before reaching firm conclusions.
- Ethnicity: Ethnic minorities were more likely to be in a low-skilled occupation when surveyed. It should be noted that this higher than across UK graduates with degrees not in interior design. This suggests there may be particular difficulties for ethnic minorities who have interior design degrees.
- Disability: There was no notable difference between those who had declared a disability and those who had not. It should be noted that the variable for 'disability' encompasses mental as well as physical conditions.

(B) The following figures relate to 2017/18 **graduates in any subject who give their occupation as interior designer**, 18 months after graduation:

- 62% had just finished an interior design course, and another 19% had just graduated from an arts or design course.
- Of those employed in the UK, 53% were based in London or the South. Of those employed overseas, the majority were employed in Asia.
- Most worked in the industry categorized as 'specialised design activities', but 24% worked in retail/hospitality and 14% worked in architectural activities.



# Introduction

The British Institute of Interior Design is the UK's professional institute for interior designers. It assesses the competence of its members, offers training and development opportunities and works to raise professional standards in the wider interior design profession. Historically the BIID has had very limited data on UK interior designers, design practices and design students. The first step in rectifying this was in 2020 when we published the first ever analysis of the diversity of UK interior design students. The next phase our research is this analysis. Whereas our first piece of research looked at the demographics of interior design students this analysis looks at their employment outcomes after they graduate. This report aims to contribute to this by analysing students as they graduate from interior design courses and move on to careers in interior design.

The intended outcome is to assist BIID in understanding young people's paths towards interior design as a career, and to help us focus on particular sub-groups where necessary if this can help improve diversity.

This report is based on the same dataset as our previous report, 'Diversity Analysis of Interior Design Students at UK institutions' provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). HESA surveys graduates of universities across the UK to determine their destinations after university. This is known as the Graduate Outcomes Survey. There was only one year of data from the Graduate Outcomes Survey in our dataset therefore this report uses the results from the 2017/2018 survey, which surveys graduates who completed their studies between August 2017 and July 2018. The survey was carried out in waves between December 2018 and November 2019. Thus graduates were surveyed around 18 months after leaving their studies. Further information on the Graduate Outcomes Survey may be found here: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/graduates>.

In the 2017/18 survey, there were 1,033 responses by graduates of interior design courses that allowed analysis of their destinations; this can be seen in Figure 3.1. However, the rest of this analysis will consider only those who are employed, and for whom employment information is known. This comprises some 716 survey responses, although some survey respondents do not answer all the questions.

**This report on graduate outcomes (Report B) is twinned with another report, on interior design students on higher education courses (Nov-2020).** Both reports use HESA data, cover related periods, and consider the same demographic splits. The results are therefore highly comparable. Thus, this report should be read in conjunction with the report on students. The previous report discussed occasionally below, and is referred to as HESA Analysis Report A (regarding students on-course).

This analysis will also occasionally use the **abbreviation ID to refer to interior design** (e.g. those on interior design courses may be referred to as ID students).

In classifying employments, various standard coding systems are used (see Figure 6.1). For the current analysis we will concentrate on SOC, the standard occupational code. This divides UK occupations into nine 'major groups' according to their skill level and content. Roughly speaking, the top three are considered 'high skill', the next three 'intermediate' and the bottom three 'low skill'. See Figure 6.2.

One great advantage of the Graduate Outcomes dataset is that it has a field specifically for interior designers (as opposed to the general class of all designers); this is not the case for all published surveys and datasets. Interior designers are classified as 'high skill' in the major group '3: Associate Professional and Technical Occupations'.

Further information on SOC can be found on the websites of ONS<sup>1</sup> and HESA<sup>2</sup>.

Sections 3 and 4 of this analysis discuss the occupations of **graduates from interior design courses**. Section 3 gives top level findings on employment, as well as the impact of their degree class mark and level of qualification, and their geographical distribution. Section 4 then examines the different occupation destinations by certain demographic characteristics: gender, socio-economic group, ethnicity and disability.

Section 5 provides figures on **all graduates who move into interior design, whatever their course subject**. This again includes breakdowns by demographic characteristic.

Although not part of the main analysis, there is an Additional Note after the Appendix which provides some figures on designers from national surveys.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/standardoccupationalclassification/soc>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/occupational/soc2010>



# Interior design graduates: top-level figures

This section considers only the pool of graduates who have done interior design courses (hereafter this will occasionally be abbreviated as ID courses or ID graduates).

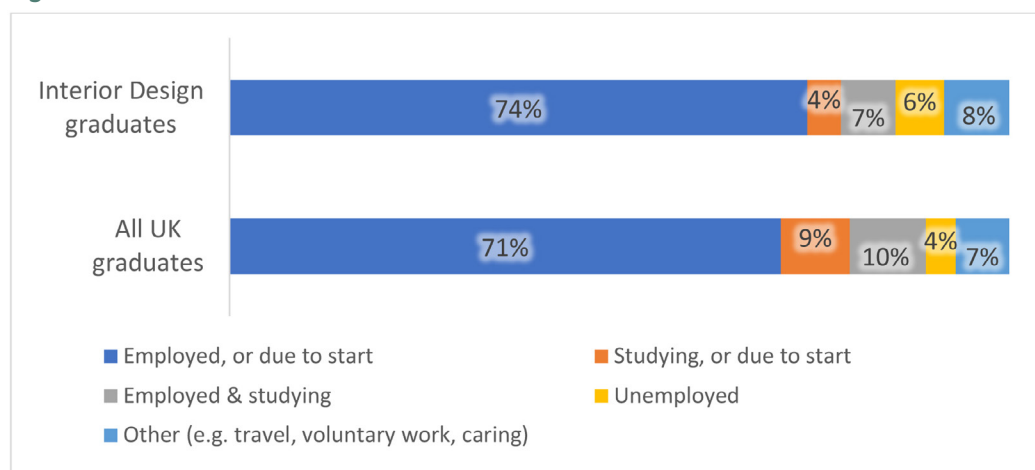
## Employment Activity

Of those who graduated in 2017/18 and responded to the Graduate Outcomes survey around 18 months later, 74% were employed or about to start work. See Figure 3.1.

This graph shows that interior design graduates were more likely than the average UK student to be employed (74% compared to 71%). However, they were also more likely to be unemployed (6%, compared to 4%) and less likely to go into further study (4%, compared to 9%).

Of those with jobs whose work pattern was known, 26% were employed part-time and the rest were employed full-time (this is not illustrated in the graph).

Figure 3.1: Graduate outcomes 2017/18



Note: Bar for 'Interior Design graduates' based on 1,033 survey respondents.

The rest of this paper now only considers those who are in employment and whose employment information is known (based on 716 interior design respondents).

## Occupations

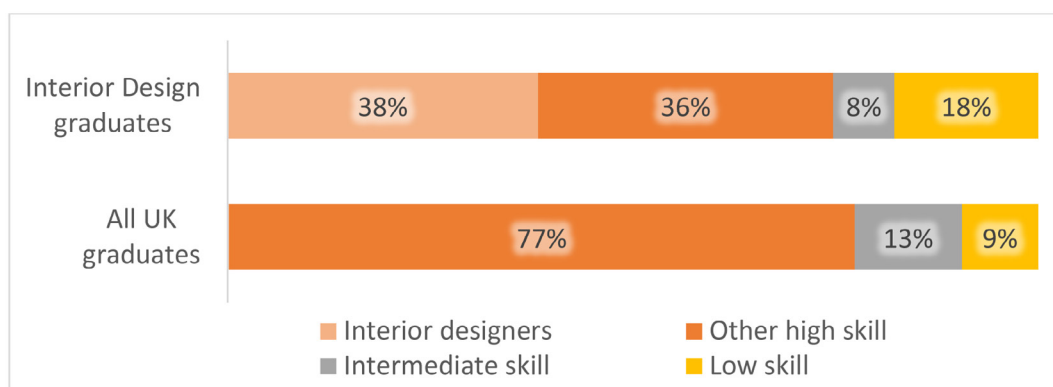
Graduates' responses as to their employment are categorized into occupation types using the SOC classification system. See Figure 3.2. The graph shows that 38% of interior design graduates go on to become interior designers. Other 'high skill' employments for interior design graduates include:

- architectural and town planning technicians: 7%
- designers (graphic designers, furniture designers, product & retail designers): 6%
- draughtspersons: 4%
- architects: 2%
- higher education / other (post-18) educational professional: 2%.

This shows the range of professional destinations for interior design graduates.

However, those who have studied interior design are also significantly more likely to be in a low-skill occupation, 18 months after university (18% compared to UK average of 9%). 'Low skill' jobs for ID graduates include retail assistants, customer service occupations, waiters and waitresses, kitchen assistants, and bar staff. This suggests that interior design students graduating in 2017/18 found it harder to find skilled jobs than other UK graduates did.

Figure 3.2: Occupations for interior design graduates, 2017/18



Note: Bar for 'Interior Design graduates' based on 716 survey respondents.

## Occupation of interior design graduates, by degree classification

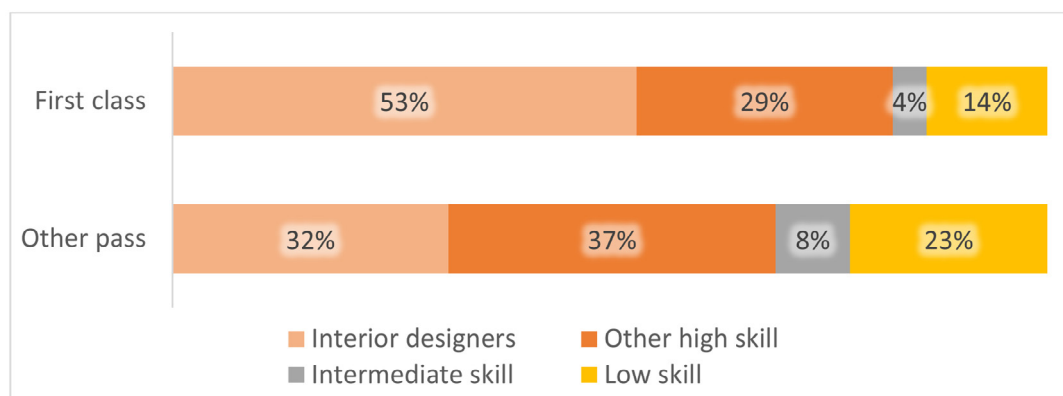
A graduate's occupation depends partly on their degree classification. See Figure 3.3. The graph shows that 72% of students with a first end up in high-skill occupations, compared to 69% of those with a 2:1 or lower class. In particular, those with a first are more likely to be occupied as an interior designer, 18 months after graduation.

Those with a first are also less likely to be in a low-skill occupation than those without. However, the survey still presented a number of individuals with a first-class degree but occupied in retail or customer services.

This finding is important for diversity analysis. HESA Report A (regarding interior design students on course) showed that ethnic minorities were less likely to get a first. This would in turn have knock-on effects for whether they have become interior designers 18 months later.

Note also that these results only concern degrees for which a classmark is given; for example, doctorates are not classed and thus are not reported in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Occupations for interior design graduates, by class of degree



Note: Based on 593 survey respondents for whom both occupation and degree class are known.

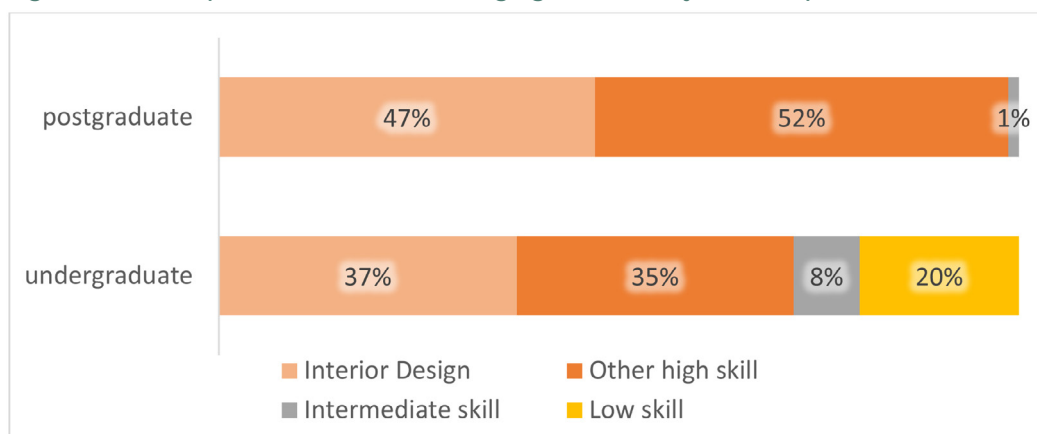
### Occupation of interior design graduates, by level of qualification

A graduate's occupation depends partly on what level of qualification they have. See Figure 3.4.

Of those with postgraduate qualifications and who have a job, 99% are in a high-skilled occupation. After interior design 47%, the next most likely occupations are education 17% and design 10%. Not one of the respondents with a postgraduate qualification was in a low-skill occupation at the time of the survey.

However, those without postgraduate qualifications are less likely to become interior designers by the time of the survey (37%); a fifth are in a low-skill occupation.

Figure 3.4: Occupations for interior design graduates, by level of qualification



Note: Based on 716 survey respondents for whom both occupation and level of qualification are known.



### Industry of interior design graduates

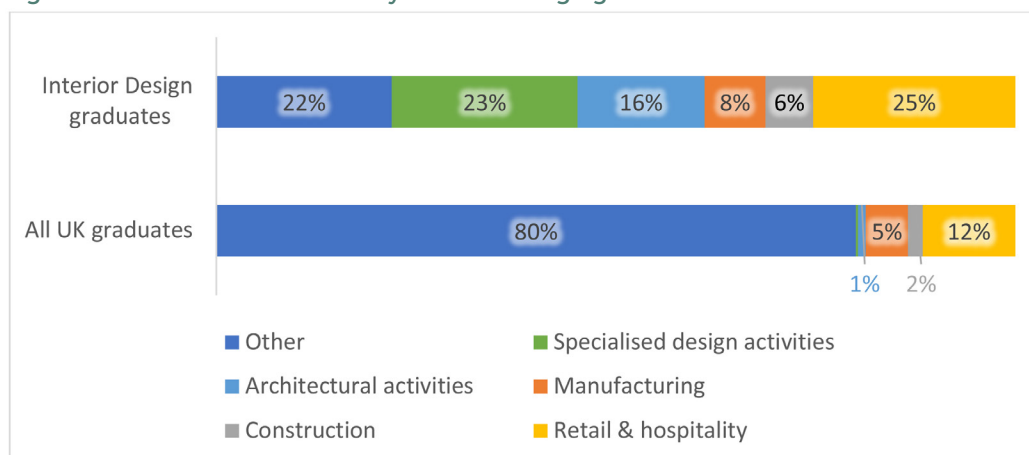
Another way to look at employment pathways for graduates is to consider industry instead of occupation. For example, an individual may work in finance for a large supermarket: then their occupation would be 'finance' and their industry would be 'retail'.

Figure 3.5 shows the industries reported by interior design graduates 18 months after graduating (where they are employed). 23% of them are in the category 'specialised design activities': this is the category that includes interior designers (among Figure 6.1 and Additional Note after the Appendix).

In addition to this, 16% of interior design graduates find themselves working in employments classified as 'architectural activities'; they may or may not be working as interior designers in these employments. Interior design graduates are also more likely than average to enter the industries of manufacturing or construction.

They are also twice as likely to enter the industries of retail & hospitality. This could cover a wide range of occupations (e.g. from sales assistant, to clothing or furniture design), which is why occupation rather than industry is the main focus of this research note.

Figure 3.5: Industries entered by interior design graduates





# Interior design graduates: diversity analysis

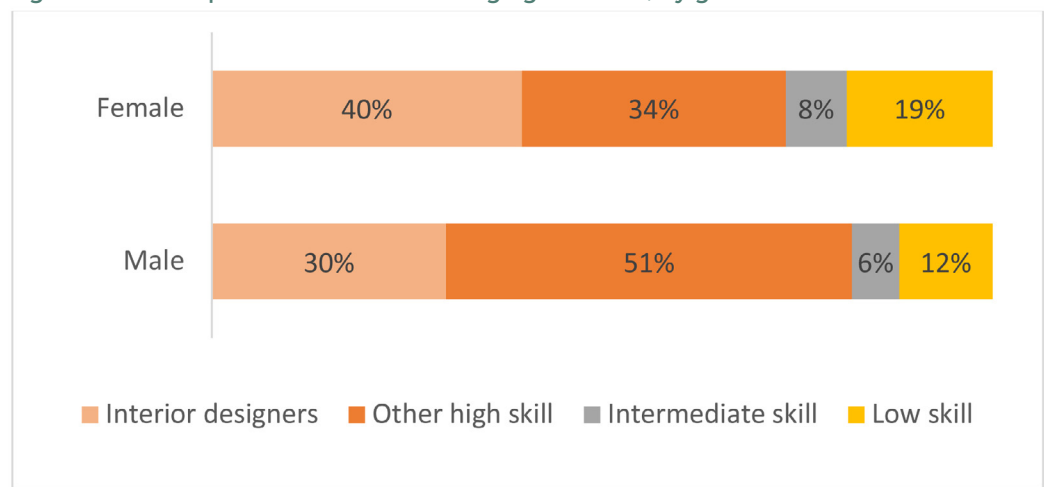
## Gender

Figure 4.1 shows the job destinations of interior design graduates, split by gender.

#Females are more likely to become interior designers than males: 40% of female ID graduates become interior designers. Males are more likely to go into other professional careers, particularly various design careers (15%, as opposed to 7% of females being in this category). Males were also more likely to become architects than females (5%, compared to 1% of females).

At the other end of the scale, 12% of males were in low-skill jobs 18 months after graduation. This compares to 19% of females. Those in low-skill occupations were most likely to be sales and retail assistants.

Figure 4.1: Occupations of interior design graduates, by gender



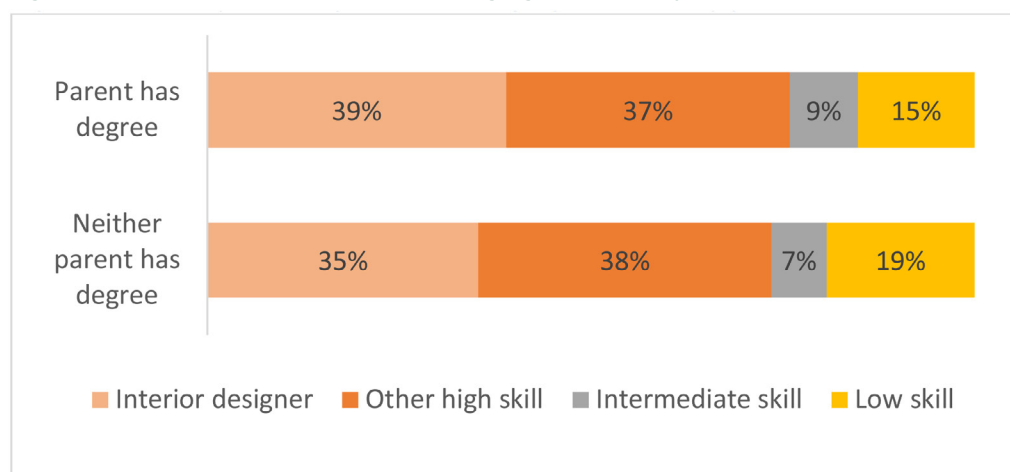
Notes: based on sample of 715 individuals where occupation & gender are known

## Socio-economic background: Parental education.

There is a variable on the dataset to indicate whether graduates have at least one parent with a higher education degree. See Figure 4.2.

The graph shows that there was not an immense difference between graduates whose parents have a degree, and those whose parents do not. However, those whose parents do not have a degree are slightly more likely to end up in a low-skill job.

Figure 4.2: Occupations of interior design graduates, by parental education



Notes: based on sample of 532 individuals

### Socio-economic background: Private school.

On the graduate survey, 490 interior design graduates stated whether they had been to private or state school. However, only 21 of these (4%) said they had been to private school. This is similar to the proportion of interior design students who are privately educated (5%). However it is not a large enough group to allow us to draw conclusions about subsequent occupations pathways, and the results are not reported here.

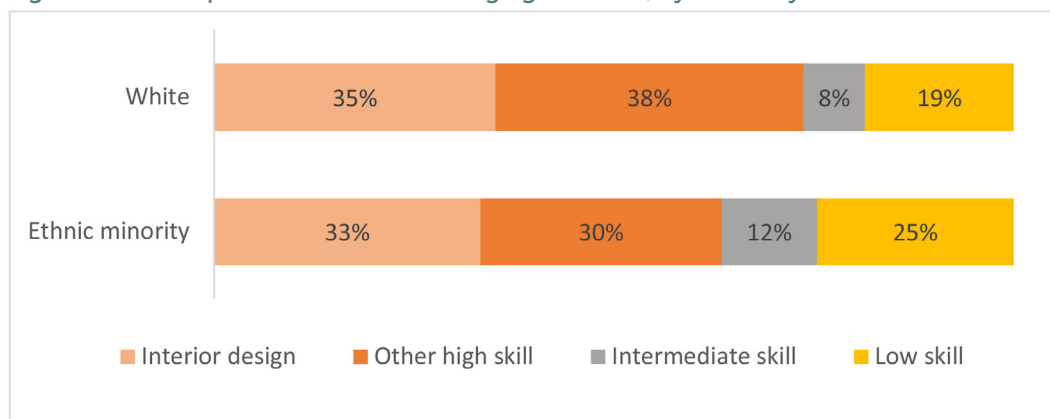
### Ethnicity

Figure 4.3 demonstrates the destinations of interior design graduates split by whether they are white or ethnic minority.

The graph shows that ethnic minority ID graduates were less likely to into high-skill occupations as a whole (63%, compared to 74% of white graduates).

Conversely, ethnic minority ID graduates were more likely to go into intermediate and low skill occupations. A quarter (25%) of this group were in a low-skill occupation 18 months after graduation (compared to 19% of white graduates); in particular 13% of them were sales or retail assistants. (There is not enough information to examine specific ethnic minorities further, e.g. black or asian).

Figure 4.3: Occupations of interior design graduates, by ethnicity where known



It should be noted that this situation – with a quarter of ethnic minority graduates moving into low-skill occupations – is not the norm across all graduates. If we consider all UK graduates whatever their degree, then 11% of ethnic minority graduates were in low-skilled occupations 18 months after their degree. Further, this is more similar to the rate for white graduates (10%).

Thus, ethnic minority graduates from ID courses are more than twice as likely to end up in low-skilled occupations (25%) compared to ethnic minority graduates from other courses (11%).

We recall from section 3 (and Figure 3.2) that ID graduates in 2018/19 were more likely than other UK graduates to be in low-skilled occupations, possibly because they were finding it harder to find employment. We can now see that this appears to be affecting ethnic minority graduates in particular.

### Disability

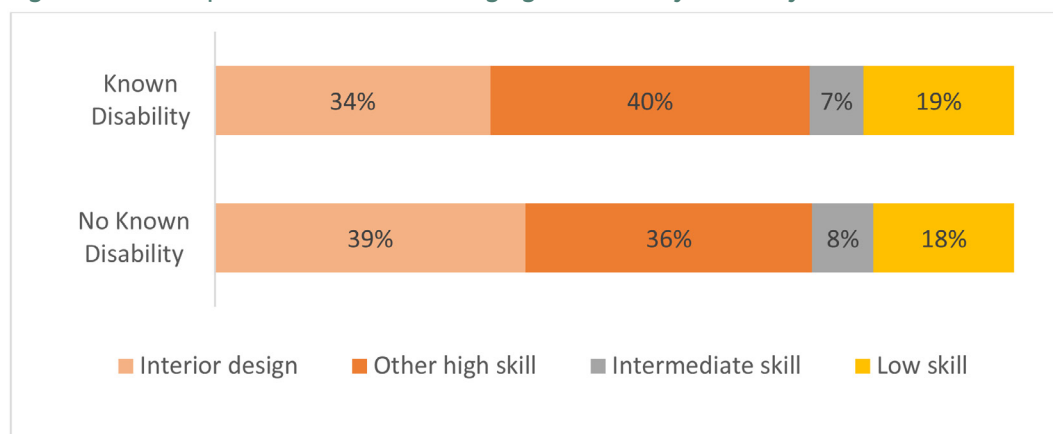
There was no major difference in graduate outcomes between those who declared a disability and those who did not. See Figure 4.4.

Of those with an occupation, 74% of those with a declared disability were in a high-skilled job compared to 75% of those who had not declared a disability. At the other end of the scale, 19% of those with a known disability were in a low-skilled occupation, compared to 18% of those who had not declared a disability. These differences are not large.

There was a slightly larger shortfall when it comes to those doing interior design occupations; there may be some reason that graduates with a declared disability were less likely to go into interior design.

However, analysis of the disability variable is difficult. There is no information as to whether the disability is mental or physical, nor how far it affects an individual's ability to work appropriately in a number of occupations. It is not possible to generalise further without more information.

Figure 4.4: Occupations of interior design graduates, by disability





# New interior designers (from any course)

So far the analysis has concentrated on individuals graduating from interior design courses. However, the Graduate Outcomes dataset allows us to analyse things from a different angle, looking at all graduates moving into interior design occupations, whether or not they did ID at degree level.

## **Characteristics of new interior designers.**

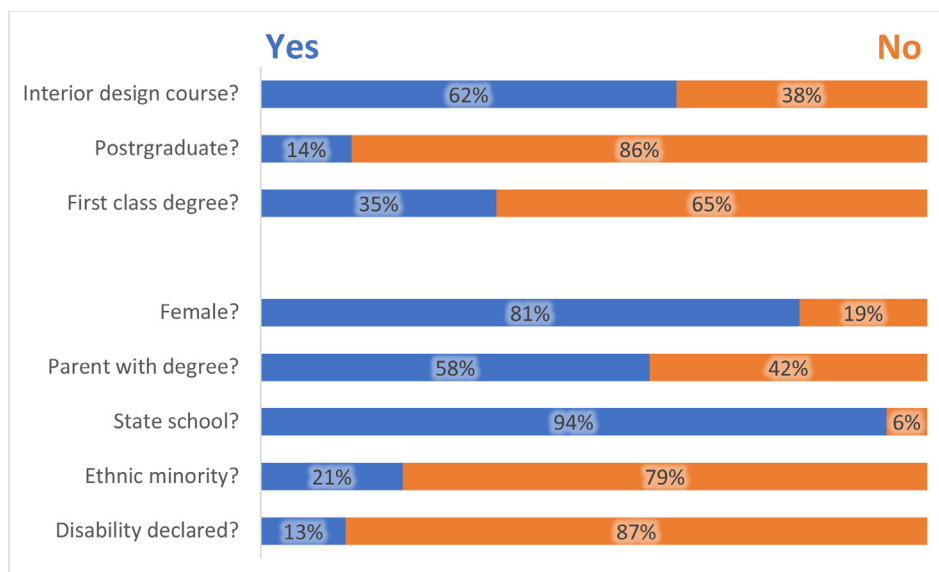
Figure 5.1 summarizes some course characteristics of recent graduates who report that they are in interior design as an occupation. The graph shows that 62% of newly graduated interior designers did ID for their most recent course; the rest come from other courses (although of course they may have studied interior design at an earlier stage). Another 19% of new interior designers have done arts and design courses and 6% have done architecture or planning courses.

Figure 5.1 also demonstrates some demographic characteristics; for example, 81% of new graduates moving into interior design are female.

This can be compared against the evidence in HESA Report A, which gives demographic splits for students on course (particularly Report A's Figure 3.1). For example, 13% of those on ID courses report a disability, and 13% of those declaring their occupation as interior design report a disability. Thus, there is no evidence that those who declare a disability are any less likely to move on into interior design.

In most cases, there is no major difference between the demographic split for ID students and those later in interior design as an occupation. However, for ethnicity the difference is larger. 29% of those on ID courses are ethnic minority, compared to 21% of those starting out in interior design as an occupation. This could partly be explained by the fact that a fifth of interior designers come from arts and design courses (where ethnic minorities are less well represented: see Report A, Figure 6.1). Still, this figure suggests that ethnic minorities are on ID courses may be less likely to enter interior design as an occupation.

Figure 5.1: Demographic & course characteristics of recent graduate interior designers, where applicable for each field, 2017/18

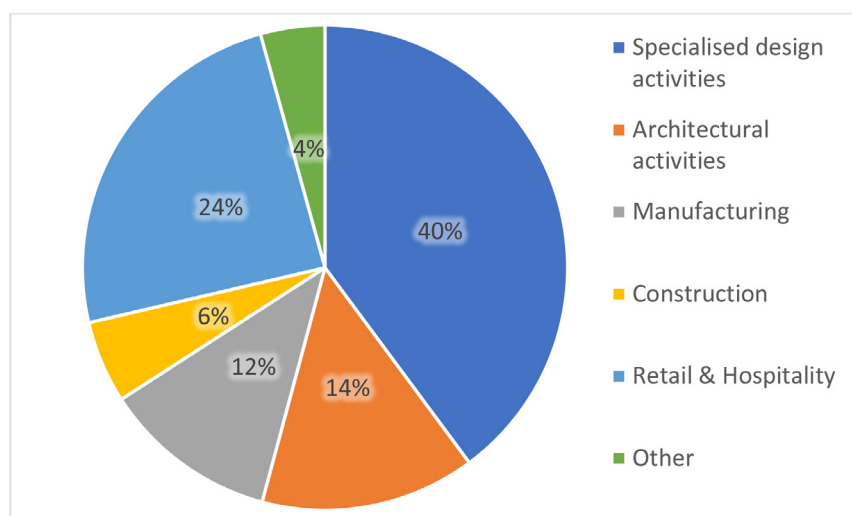


### Region of employment for new interior designers.

The Graduate Outcomes survey asks those with occupations to state where their employment is based. Of those who responded, 83% stayed in the UK. Figure 5.2 shows the distribution of the recently graduated interior designers based in the UK, where known. More than half (53%) are in London and the South. Only 11% are in the three home nations outside England.

Of those who became interior designers overseas, 59% are employed in Asia and 20% in the EU. Most of those who are now employed overseas were also domiciled overseas before starting their degree (i.e. they have come to the UK to the study and then left for employment).

Figure 5.2: Region of employment of recent graduates who are interior designers, where known, 2017/18



Notes. Graph based on 307 graduates in interior design occupations (whatever their course of study was). Regions defined as follows: North = North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber. Midlands = West Midlands, East Midlands, East of England. South = South East, South West.

### Industry of interior designers.

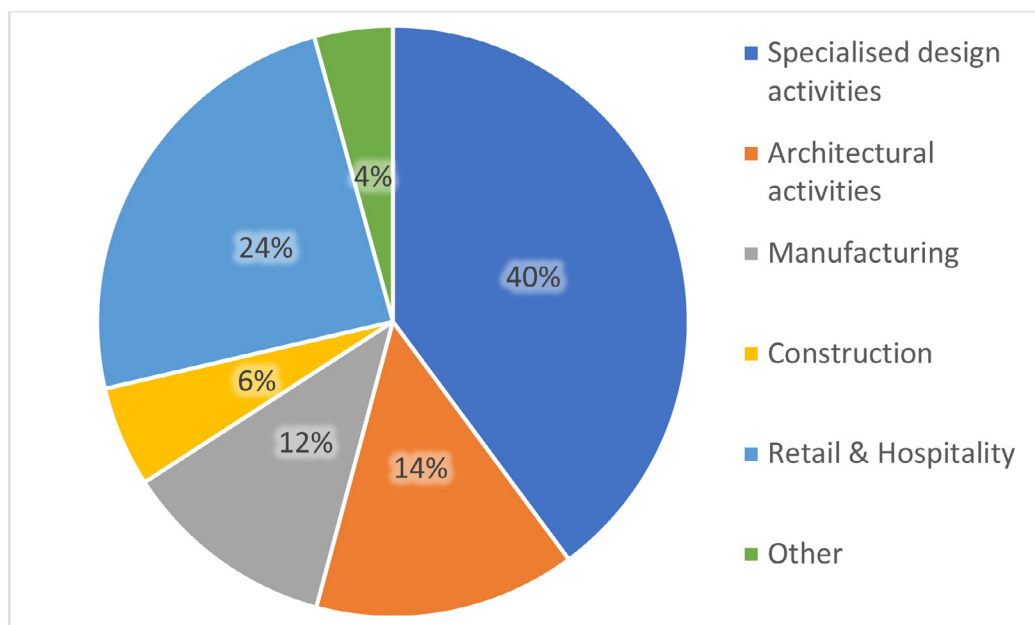
Turning now to industry, we see that only 40% of those with the occupation 'interior decoration designer' comes into the industry 'specialised design activities' (which would include interior design firms, for example). See Figure 5.3.

Nearly a quarter (24%) work in retail and hospitality. This may be broken down further; the majority of these work in retail in specialized stores selling 'hardware, paints and glass' and 'furniture, lighting equipment and household articles'.

The rest of 'interior decoration designers' are spread across other industries such as architectural activities, manufacturing and construction. Within manufacturing, most work within 'manufacture of kitchen furniture' and 'manufacture of other furniture [not office or shop furniture]'.

This sub-section has looked at the range of industries for those whose occupation is 'interior designer'. As a side note, it is possible to do this cross-referencing in the other direction: we look at the range of occupations whose industry is 'specialized design activities'. It transpires that 19% of those in the industry 'specialised design activities' have the occupation 'interior decoration designer'. The rest of those in 'specialised design activities' are a variety of other design types, particularly graphic designers but also including product & clothing designers, marketing associates and web designers.

Figure 5.3: Industry of recently graduated interior designers, where known, 2017/18



# Appendix

Figure 6.1: Codes for designers in various international classification systems

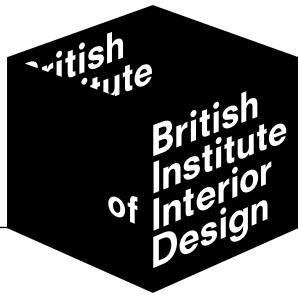
Name	Full name	Usage	Group	Sub-group	Notes
<b>SIC</b>	Standard Industrial Classification of Activities	UK	<b>74:</b> Other professional, scientific and technical activities	<b>74.1:</b> Specialised design activities.	Specific examples include boot and shoe design; lace and jewellery design; clothes, fashion and costume design; textile or wallpaper printing design; calico printers design; interior designers; interior decorators; graphic design; furniture design; calico printers designing.
<b>SOC</b>	Standard Occupational Classification	UK	<b>34:</b> Culture, media and sports occupations	<b>342:</b> Design occupations.  <b>3422:</b> Product, clothing and related designers.  <b>34221:</b> Interior decoration designers.	Category 34221 is not reported separately for national surveys, but does appear on the HESA dataset for graduate outcomes.
<b>ISCO</b>	International Standard Classification of Occupations	International	<b>F:</b> Design and Creative Services	<b>3432:</b> Interior Designers and Decorators	Used by the International Labour Organization. Latest version is 2008 (known as ISCO-08).

Figure 6.2: 'Major groups' in SOC classification system

Skill level	SOC major group
High	1. Managers, directors and senior officials
High	2. Professional occupations
High	3. Associate professional and technical occupations
Intermediate	4. Administrative and secretarial occupations
Intermediate	5. Skilled trades occupations
Intermediate	6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations
Low	7. Sales and customer service occupations
Low	8. Process, plant and machine operatives
Low	9. Elementary occupations

Note: Interior designers belong in SOC major group 3, "Associate professional and technical occupations".





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