

INTERVIEWING IN DESIGN CAREERS

Design interviews are often more than portfolio reviews. Employers are evaluating:

- ✓ your creative problem-solving
- ✓ your communication skills
- ✓ your design process
- ✓ your ability to explain decisions
- ✓ your collaboration style
- ✓ your adaptability and openness to feedback
- ✓ how you balance creativity with client needs

In many design interviews, employers care just as much about *how you think* as they do about the final product.

WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR

Design employers often look for candidates who:

- ✓ communicate ideas clearly
- ✓ solve problems strategically
- ✓ explain design decisions thoughtfully
- ✓ understand users and audiences
- ✓ collaborate well with others
- ✓ receive feedback professionally
- ✓ adapt to revisions and constraints
- ✓ manage deadlines and priorities
- ✓ demonstrate technical proficiency
- ✓ present work professionally

They are not only evaluating your design skills—they are evaluating how you work with clients, teams, and stakeholders.

PORTFOLIO PREPARATION

Your portfolio should be:

- ✓ organized
- ✓ visually clean
- ✓ easy to navigate
- ✓ tailored to the role
- ✓ focused on quality over quantity

Before the Interview

Review Your Portfolio Carefully

Be prepared to discuss your design process, user or audience needs, feedback and revisions, technical decisions, constraints, and project outcomes.

Choose Strong Projects

Select projects that demonstrate:

- ✓ problem-solving
- ✓ visual communication
- ✓ collaboration
- ✓ adaptability
- ✓ strategic thinking
- ✓ growth over time

Practice Presenting Your Work

Avoid simply describing visuals. Instead, explain:

- the problem you were solving,
- your reasoning behind design choices,
- how feedback influenced the project,
- and the impact of your work.

TALKING THROUGH YOUR DESIGN DECISIONS

Design interviews often focus on *why* you made certain decisions. Interviewers may ask:

- Why did you choose this direction?
- How did user needs influence your design?
- What constraints shaped the project?
- How did feedback affect your work?
- What would you improve about this project?

Strong responses often include:

- ✓ project goals
- ✓ audience or user needs
- ✓ your process and iteration
- ✓ collaboration and communication
- ✓ challenges or constraints
- ✓ measurable outcomes or results

COMMON DESIGN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Why do you want to work for our agency?
- What type of design work interests you most?
- What designers or brands inspire you?

Portfolio & Case Study Questions

- Walk me through your portfolio.
- Which project are you proud of and why?
- Tell me about your design process.
- How do you approach a new design challenge?

- Describe a project that changed significantly during development.
- How do you balance creativity with client or business goals?
- How do you decide when a project is done?

UX/UI & Problem-Solving Questions

- How do you apply feedback to your work?
- Describe a UX improvement you made.
- How do you approach accessibility in design?
- Describe a design choice you defended.
- How do you balance usability and aesthetics?

Collaboration & Feedback Questions

- Tell me about a time you received difficult feedback.
- Describe a project where you collaborated with others.
- How do you handle conflicting opinions during a project?
- Tell me about a time you worked under a tight deadline.
- Describe a situation where you had to adapt quickly.

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS FOR DESIGN STUDENTS

- Tell me about a project that did not go as planned.
- Describe a time you balanced multiple deadlines.
- Tell me about a time you revised a project significantly after feedback.
- Give an example of when collaboration improved your work.
- Describe a creative problem you solved.
- Tell me about a time you had to present your ideas persuasively.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK EMPLOYERS

Strong questions demonstrate preparation and curiosity.

Examples:

- How does your team approach feedback and critique?
- What does collaboration between designers and stakeholders look like?

- How are designers involved in strategic decisions?
- What types of projects would I contribute to first?
- What tools and workflows does your team use?
- How do you measure success for design projects?
- What qualities make someone successful on your design team?

USING AI TO PREPARE

AI tools like ChatGPT can help you prepare more effectively.

Try prompts like:

- “Act as a UX hiring manager reviewing my portfolio.”
- “Generate interview questions for a graphic design internship.”
- “Help me explain my design rationale more clearly.”
- “What questions are common in UI/UX interviews?”
- “Help me practice presenting a branding project.”

You can also upload a job description and ask AI tools to identify:

- ✓ desired technical skills
- ✓ likely interview questions
- ✓ portfolio expectations
- ✓ and employer priorities

FINAL TIPS

- ✓ Focus on explaining your thinking clearly
- ✓ Show process and iteration—not just polished visuals
- ✓ Be open and professional when discussing feedback
- ✓ Practice presenting projects out loud
- ✓ Tailor your portfolio to the role
- ✓ Remember that communication and collaboration matter in design careers

You do not need to sound perfect—you need to sound thoughtful, strategic, prepared, and authentic.