



Graphic Communications, Other CIP Code 10.0399

Introduction – Program of Study

Graphic communications involve desktop publishers, who use computer software to format and combine text, data, photographs, charts, and other graphic art or illustrations into prototypes of pages and documents that are to be printed. Documents may be printed using a high resolution printer, or they can be sent either in print form or electronically, to a commercial printer. Examples of materials produced by desktop publishers include books, brochures, calendars, magazines, newsletters and newspapers, packaging, and forms.

Desktop publishers typically design and create the graphics that accompany text, convert photographs and illustrations into digital images, and manipulate the text and images to display information in an attractive and readable format. They design page layouts, develop presentations and advertising campaigns, and perform color separation of pictures and graphics material. Some desktop publishers may write text or headlines used in newsletters or brochures. They also may translate electronic information onto film or other traditional media if the final product will be sent to an offset printer.

Prepress technicians known as preflight technicians or production coordinators use digital imaging technology to complete many print jobs. Using this technology, technicians take electronic files received from customers and check them for completeness.

Printing machine operators, also known as press operators, prepare, operate, and maintain printing presses. Duties of printing machine operators vary according to the type of press they operate. Traditional printing methods, such as offset lithography, gravure, flexography, and letterpress, use a plate or roller that carries the final image that is to be printed and copies the image to paper. In addition to the traditional printing processes, no plate procedures or nonimpact processes are coming into general use. No plate processes, including digital, electrostatic, and ink jet printing, are used for copying, duplicating, and document and specialty printing. No plate processes usually are done by quick printing shops and smaller printing shops, but often are being used by commercial printers for short runs or customized printing jobs.

Machine operators' jobs differ from one shop to another because of differences in the types and sizes of presses. Small commercial shops can be operated by one person and tend to have relatively small presses, which print only one or two colors at a time. Large newspaper, magazine, and book printers use immense in line web presses that require a larger crew.

For those who are interested in pursuing a career in desktop publishing, an associate degree or a bachelor degree in graphic arts, graphic communications, or graphic design is preferred. Many employers consider the best candidates for prepress jobs to be individuals with a combination of work experience in the printing industry and formal training in the new digital technology. Employers expect workers to have some formal postsecondary graphic communications training in the various types of computer software used in digital imaging.

Assumptions of this Program of Study

High quality programs should meet the following standards:

1. Promote positive working relationships.
2. Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of skill development
3. Use appropriate and effective teaching approaches.
4. Provide ongoing assessments of student progress.
5. Employ and support qualified teaching staff.
6. Establish and maintain relationships and use resources of the community.
7. Provide a safe and healthy learning environment.
8. Implement strong program organization and supervision policies that result in high quality teaching and learning.
9. Integrate academic skills and aptitudes necessary for postsecondary education, gainful employment and a foundation of lifelong learning.

CIP Code

10.0399 Graphic Communications, Other

This is an instructional program that generally prepares individuals to apply technical knowledge and skills to plan, prepare and execute commercial and industrial visual image and print products using mechanical, electronic and digital graphic and printing equipment. Students learn desktop publishing, layout, composition, presswork and bindery as well as photography, flexography, lithography, photoengraving and other graphic arts techniques. Emphasis is on typographical layout and design using computer graphics, photo typesetting, camera and plate making, offset preparation and operation, paper cutting, ink and color preparation, and dynamics, airbrush and screen printing production.

For more information, contact:

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