



# Definition of Interior Design

Interior design is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants, and are aesthetically attractive. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell, and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project. Designs must adhere to code and regulatory requirements, and encourage the principles of environmental sustainability. The interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology, including research, analysis and integration of knowledge into the creative process, whereby the needs and resources of the client are satisfied to produce an interior space that fulfills the project goals.

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 life, health, 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, life-cycle 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.<sup>1</sup>

Interior design is a unique profession with a unique body of knowledge. It involves more than just the visual or ambient enhancement of an interior space. While providing for the health and safety of the public, an interior designer seeks to optimize and harmonize the uses to which the built environment will be put.

In interior design, decisions are made regarding health, safety and welfare, including the complex issues of indoor air pollution, space planning, design for special need populations, fire-safe fabrics and other materials, relevant codes and standards, product durability and quality, lighting, color, etc. It is more than the application of aesthetics. Interior design requires a specialized domain of knowledge and analytical skill, and acute judgment to utilize that knowledge in the creation of spaces which are functionally safe, efficient and aesthetically pleasing.

The education and testing of interior designers is directed toward the scope of practice in interior design. Interior designers' knowledge of elements of engineering and architecture is not intended to permit practice of those professions, but rather to provide the interior designer with the ability to recognize when it is necessary to engage other appropriate experts in a project.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of interior design provided by National Council for Interior Design Qualification. ASID endorses this definition.