

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

CAREER CENTER



A Guide to Career Options: What Can I do with a Bachelor's Degree in Animation?

Animation Careers

3D Modelers	FX Artist	Multimedia Instructional Designer
3D Tracker	Game Artists and Designers	Production Designers
Art Directors	Graphic Programmer	Production Support Lead
Background Painter	Inbetweener	Special Effects Designer
Character Animators	Independent Filmmakers	Storyboard Artists
Character Riggers	Interaction Designer	Technical Directors
Color Key Artist	Layout Artists	Texture Artists
Compositing Artist	Lighting Technicians	Tools Programmer
Concept Artist	Look Development Painter	Visual Effects Artist
Creative Project Manager	Matchmove Artist	Web Developer
Film and Video Editor	Mathematical Modeler	Visual Development Artist
Flash Directors	Motion Capture Artists	
Forensic Animators	Motion Graphic Artists	

* Job titles may vary based on what area of the industry your skills can be applied in. Many times a creative job will have technical/project specific titles in different industries; this guide is designed to provide a general idea of the type of positions available.

Related Majors and Animation Minors:

Animation	Computer Science	Media Arts
Art and Design	Data Visualization and Development	Media and Cinema Studies
Art History	Digital Cinema	Photography
Communication	Fine Arts	Physics
Computer Games Development	Game Design	Studio Art
Computer Graphics and Motion Picture Technology	Game Programming	Visual Computing
Computer Graphics Software Development	Interactive Media	Media and Cinema Studies

Animation Related Industries and Career Areas

Advertising	Graphic Design Industry
CAD/Industrial Design	In-House Design for Sales or Related Industries
Computer Systems Design and Management	Instructional Technology Industry
Digital Consulting Services	Motion Picture and Video Entertainment
E-Learning	Public Relations/Marketing Departments for Non-Profit and Profit Organizations
Gaming Industry	Software Publishers

Job Descriptions

3D Modelers/3D Tracker: 3D Modelers/Trackers create 3D models and simulate movement in their environments using animation software. 3D modelers/Trackers work closely with technical directors in implementing ideas and bringing their work to life, simulating motion picture camera perspective in a software environment. For more information, go to CG Jobs- Society of Digital Artists website in the references section, or Computer Arts 3D tracking article at http://www.computerarts.co.uk/tutorials/3d_and_animation/3d_motion_tracking.

Art Directors, Creative Project Managers, and Production Leads: People who work as Art Directors, Creative Project Managers, and Production Leads are responsible for maintaining a managerial role to oversee a creative team from concept to project finish. Production and Director positions combine both managerial and artistic skills to lead implementation of a given project. Leadership roles require design and technical skills to best understand methods of project implementation, and to help solve problems within a range of animation departments. For more information on Art Directors, go to www.collegeboard.com.

Character Animator/Motion Capture Artists: Character Animators design and create animate characters using a variety of methods, including but not limited to animation software, 2D animations, puppetry or 3D modeling. Character animators bridge the gap from script to the screen, and work with team members to use their character's movements to tell a story. For more information, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook in the references section.

Character Riggers/Matchmove Artist: Character Riggers manipulate the geometry of their created character in it's interaction with the environment. Character Riggers need a solid knowledge of physics and anatomy to fully understand how their character should react to stimuli within the context of its digital environment. For information on Character Riggers, go to: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/3374429/Learning-Maya-Character-Rigging-And-Animation>.

Color Key Artist/Background Painter/Look Development Painter: People who work as color key artists, background painters, or look development painters are responsible for creating the background paintings and color keys that lighting teams and production teams can use for their projects. These artists help these departments by developing color schemes in animations that will deliver the stylistic goals for their projects, painting/designing animation backgrounds, and working with technical directors to ensure correct light rigging. For more information, go to Career Connections at Animation World Network http://jobs.awn.com/home/index.cfm?site_id=500, or Walt Disney's Animation Careers Website at: http://corporate.disney.go.com/careers/feature_animation_career_info.html.

Compositing Artist: Compositing Artists work closely with FX Artists and Lighting Directors to develop compositing strategies and achieve an aesthetically balanced overall look. Compositing artists are an important part of creating the final finished animation project, and correcting any errors that other departments may not have anticipated. For more information on Compositing Artists, go to Career Connections at Animation World Network http://jobs.awn.com/home/index.cfm?site_id=500.

Concept Artist: Concept artists design a unique look for a creative project, working closely with other art departments to create a visual style that will be reflected in each part of the project. For more information, go to CG Jobs- Society of Digital Artists website in the references section.

Flash Directors: Flash Directors utilize software to create flash animations. Flash animations are utilized in a variety of contexts, ranging everywhere from fine art to website tutorials. For more information, go to CG Jobs- Society of Digital Artists website in the references section.

Special Effects Designer/FX Artist/Visual Effects Artists: FX artists create images, elements and special effects to achieve goals of art concept and style. FX artists need to have a strong sense of animation, and how things move to realistically portray them in their work, and can also provide support on the tools/software needed to portray these effects. For more information, go to CG Jobs- Society of Digital Artists website in the references section.

Film and Video Editor: Film and Video Editors process, cut and assemble film footage for television, cinema, and other forms of digital media. Usually film and video editors utilize computer editing software in assembling a finished film project. For more information on Film and Video Editing, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos091.htm>

Forensic Animators: These animators help recreate crime scenes or accidents to explain and produce legal evidence. Forensic animators collaborate with other experts depending on the situation they are recreating to produce a realistic outcome backed up by scientific data. For more information on Forensic Animators, go to Stuart Gold's essay "Forensic Animation- Its Origins, Creations, Limitations and Future at: http://www.expertlaw.com/library/animation/forensic_animation.html.

Game Designer: Game Designers utilize technical and artistic skills to conceptualize and create video games. Game Designers take many areas into account when planning games such as skill level, technical limitations, market and sound effects in game. For more information, read the Occupational Outlook Handbook's article on Game Development at: <http://www.bls.gov/opus/ooq/2000/Summer/art01.pdf>

Graphic Artist/Designer: Graphic artists create and apply graphics to communicate ideas in print, online, and other visual mediums. Graphic Designers can apply their skills in a variety of areas, including but not limited to: website design, logo design, signage, document layouts, and advertisements. Graphic artists meet with clients to determine the needs their projects, and then implement these solutions with a focus on design principles. Working conditions are varied, as graphic designers can produce freelance work, work in a small business setting, or be employed by large corporations. For more information, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook in the references section.

Graphics Programmer: Graphics programmers help implement the visual and technical ideas from other departments by developing the code that will be used to execute graphical interface programming. Graphic programmers must have a strong understanding of programming languages utilized in the industry, and the ability to adapt to new technology to meet industry standards. For

more information on Computer Graphics Programming, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook's article on Computer Programming at: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos110.htm>.

Inbetweener: Many animators get their start in the industry by working in the Inbetween department. The Inbetween department is responsible for the continuity of moment between scenes in an animation. Lead Animators draw out the key scenes for an animation, and Inbetweeners are responsible for the character's movements in transitioning between (hence the name Inbetween Department) dramatic key movement scenes.

Interaction Designers: Interaction Designers utilize technical skills in marketing and customer outreach. Develops and implements customer marketing campaigns that directly engage the consumer and many times create opportunities for consumers to generate their own content. Interaction designer's work with many different departments to implement marketing strategies that best fit their employer's targeted audience. For more information, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook in the references section.

Layout Artists: Layout Artists create the background for animations. Their design and layout skills are based upon the environment of the character and how the character interacts within an environment. Layout artists must also take into account how other objects in the background interact to give the illusion of depth and perspective. For more information on layout artists, go to Don Bluth's classical Animation page at <http://www.donbluth.com/index.html>

Lighting Technicians: Lighting Technicians use design knowledge of lighting and shadows to create characters and environments that complement project aesthetics. Lighting technicians usually work collaboratively with a lighting department on creating color keys, light rigs, and compositing renderings for their shots. For more information, go to Career Connections at Animation World Network http://jobs.awn.com/home/index.cfm?site_id=500

Mathematical Modeler: People who build mathematical models can apply their skills to a variety of fields to solve complex problems or illustrate processes using math based models. Many times, people who build mathematical models utilize software technology to animate and create 3 Dimensional representations of the processes they are researching. For more examples of mathematical models go to Plus Magazine's interview with a Consultant who creates Mathematical Models at: <http://plus.maths.org/issue45/interview/index.html>

Motion Graphics Artist: This is a general job description for anyone who works with graphics, video and animation technologies to create the illusion of motion. A motion graphics artist can utilize a variety of programs such as Adobe After Effects, Maya, and 3D studio Max. For more information, go to A Digital Dreamer at: <http://www.adigitaldreamer.com/articles/motion-capture-vgames.htm>

Multimedia Instructional Designer: Multimedia Instructional Designers utilize their technical knowledge to teach others using multimedia technologies. Instructional designers are essential in providing new employees or clients with mentoring that will help them utilize the tools and skills that promote the goals of the organization. For more information on Instructional Technology go to: Encyclopedia of Educational Technology at: <http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/>

Storyboard Artists: Storyboard artists plan and create layout for storytelling elements of animation. Storyboard artists are essential to the planning stages of an artistic project, as their storytelling structure dictates the foundation for the rest of the project. For more information, go to CG Jobs- Society of Digital Artists website in the references section.

Technical Director: Technical Directors use lighting and design principles to bring animations to life. Technical directors have a strong foundation in programming and animation software, and can work with artists in a team setting to implement creative ideas using animation software. Technical directors focus on principles such as lighting and rigging in animating their projects. For more info, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook in the references section.

Texture Artists: Texture Artists produce textures to be mapped onto 3-D objects, to complement the visual style of the game. Texture artists are essential in achieving realistic objects, as they can scan or create the textures that will respond to stimuli such as light sources in the 3-D object's environment. For more information, go to the A Digital Dreamer Website as listed in the references section.

Tools Programmer: Tools programmers create and design the software or tools used in implementing a project. Certain animation projects require the use of specialized software to best meet the stylistic and creative style of an animation; tools programmers edit and create the technical tools that will make the animation process easier for other departments. For more information on Tools Programmers, go to A Digital Dreamer Website at:
<http://www.adigitaldreamer.com/articles/video-game-jobs.htm>

Web Developer: This is a general position for anyone who develops a website, either on the internet or a smaller network. Web development can span from coding, developing web applications to maintaining day to day operations through the site. For more info, go to the Occupational Outlook Handbook in the references section.

Visual Development Artists: Visual Development Artists are multi-talented individuals who can use their versatility to help guide the plot elements of an animation. Visual Development Artists work with time-placement continuity in a story, character emotions, and stylistic elements that assist in storytelling. For more information on Visual Development Artists, go to Walt Disney's Animation Careers Website at:
http://corporate.disney.go.com/careers/feature_animation_career_info.html.

Master's and Doctoral Level Careers in Animation and Related Areas

Digital Cinema M.S.

This degree focuses on the technology and practices of cinema production including editing, special effects, and computer generated imaging. For more information go to:

http://digitalcinema.cti.depaul.edu/academics_ms.asp

M.S. in Computer Game Development

This degree is for individuals who are interested in game programming and graphics at an advanced level. For more information go to:

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/academics/Pages/MSInGameDevelopment.aspx>

M.S. in Human Computer Interaction

This degree combines design psychology and technical skills to create user friendly websites and interfaces. For more information go to:

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/academics/Pages/MSinHuman-ComputerInteraction.aspx>

M.A. in Animation

This is an advanced degree which expands upon the technical applications of Animation software. Program focus tends to vary based on the industry concentration the student chooses. For more information on schools that offer an animation degree go to:

<http://www.school-directory.net/animation-schools/masters-degree.html>

Digital Cinema M.F.A.

This degree focuses on the aesthetic and design principles of cinema production, but highlights the technical skills needed to produce a project. For more information, go to:

http://digitalcinema.cti.depaul.edu/academics_ma.asp

M.S. in Computer Graphics and Motion Technology

This degree is for students interested in developing their technical and visual skills in the computer graphics industry. For more information go to:

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/academics/Pages/MSinCOMputerGraphicsandMotionTechnology.aspx>

M.S. in Software Engineering

This degree provides students with the skills necessary to engineer software systems. Areas of focus in this degree include architectural modeling, objected oriented analysis, and design. For more information go to:

<http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/academics/Pages/MSinSoftwareEngineering.aspx>

Visual Effects and Animation Master Degrees

There are many variations of programs that involve specializations of the skills that may be transferable to a career in Animation. A good resource for students is **Degree Directory** at <http://degreedirectory.org> a website that allows students to search for the latest university programs related to Animation.

Animation Internship Titles

- Temp/Assistant Animators
- Production Assistant Interns
- Film and Video Assistant Editors
- Inbetweener Departmental Assistant
- Walt Disney Imagineer
- Digital Development Intern
- Web Design Intern
- Video Game Jr. Technology Intern
- General Film Development Intern
- Storyboard Design Intern
- Motion Pictures Creative Group Intern

***In order to search for more internship titles, you can visit DePaul's eRecruiting website at <http://depaul.erecruiting.com>.**

Online Resources:

- About.com's Computer Animation Page: <http://animation.about.com/>
- A Digital Dreamer: <http://www.adigitaldreamer.com/>
- ACM Siggraph: <http://www.siggraph.org/>
- AnimationJobs.net: <http://www.animationjobs.net/>
- Animation Magazine: <http://www.animationmagazine.net/>
- Animation World Network: <http://www.awn.com/>
- Creative Directory Services: <http://www.creativedir.com>
- CG Jobs- Society of Digital Artists website: <http://jobs.cgsociety.org/>
- Directory of Animation Schools: <http://www.school-directory.net/animation-schools/masters-degree.html>
- Don Bluth's Classical Animation Page: <http://www.donbluth.com>
- Women in Games International: <http://www.womeningamesinternational.org/>

Job Search Websites:

- AnimationJobs.net: <http://www.animationjobs.net/>
- Animation Nation: <http://www.animationnation.com/ubb/ultimatebb.php>
- Animation World Network: <http://jobs.awn.com>
- Creative Directory Services: <http://www.creativedir.com>
- CreativeHeads.Net: <http://www.creativeheads.net/>
- CG Jobs- Society of Digital Artists website: <http://jobs.cgsociety.org/>
- Career Center's erecruiting website: <http://depaul.erecruiting.com>
- Collegegrad.com: <http://www.collegegrad.com>
- CollegeRecruiter.com: <http://www.collegerecruiter.com>
- Careeronestop.org: <http://www.careeronestop.org>
- Careerbuilder.com: <http://careerbuilder.com>
- Chicago Filmmakers Organization: <http://www.chicagofilmmakers.org/navabout.htm>
- City of Chicago Film Office: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/FilmOffice/>
- Dreamworks Animation: <http://www.dreamworksanimation.com/>
- Midwest Film Forum: <http://www.midwestfilmforum.com>
- Indeed.com: <http://www.indeed.com>

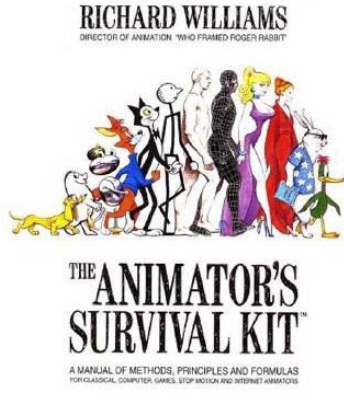
Salary Links:

- **Salary.com:** <http://www.salary.com>
- **Wage web:** <http://www.wageweb.com>
- **NACE Salary Survey 2008:**
http://careercenter.depaul.edu/_downloads/sschartSP08.gif
- **Indeed.com's Salary Search:** <http://www.indeed.com/salary>
- **Monster.com's Salary and Benefits Information:** <http://career-advice.monster.com/salary-benefits/home.aspx>
- **Vault.com's Salaries and Compensation:** <http://www.vault.com/salaries.jsp>
- **Collegegrad.com's Salary Information:**
<http://www.collegegrad.com/salaries/index.shtml>
- **Careeronestop.org's Salary Information:**
<http://www.careeronestop.org/SalariesBenefits/SalariesBenefits.aspx>

DePaul Organizations:

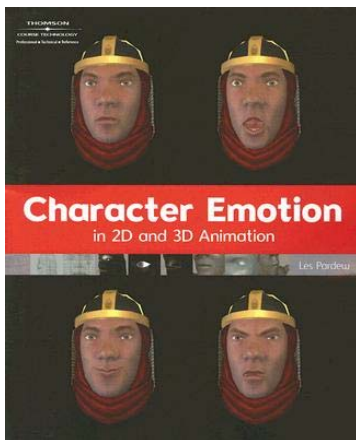
- **Animation and Digital Media Society:** Promotes a network of students to share knowledge of animation and computer graphics. Students can work on group projects together, get help on their animations, view animation showings, and enter their work into competitions. For more information email: ADMS.depaul@gmail.com
- **CDM Undergraduate Peer Mentoring Program (UPM):** This program was created to help undergraduate computing students become accustomed to college life by pairing them up with a peer mentor with more experience in their program. For more information, search for UPM on DePaul's Student Life Demon Direct site: <https://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/slif/organizations/demondirect.aspx?>
- **DePaul Chapter of ACM-W:** Promotes opportunities for women in computer science and provides a community that promotes academic excellence in the CDM program. ACM-W is a sister organization of the HerCDM and Digital Divas groups. For more information, go to: <http://clinton.cs.depaul.edu/digitaldivas/index.html>
- **DePaul Filmmaking Organization:** This organization acts as an outlet and networking society for DePaul's student filmmakers. Students utilize their common interest in film to produce documentaries and other cinema projects. For more information, search for DePaul Filmmaking Organization on DePaul's Student Life Demon Direct site: <https://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/slif/organizations/demondirect.aspx?>
- **DePaul Fundamental Research in Academic Gaming Club (DeFrag) – DeFrag** studies Video Game Development and allows students to implement programming software tools to create video game environments. DeFrag also hosts gaming events and brings speakers to campus to talk to students about their career in the gaming industry.
- **Japanese Media Appreciation Club (JMAC):** This student community serves as a place where students interested in Japanese culture and animation can connect with each other. Many of the members of this club are avid anime fans, and enjoy watching Japanese Animation movie screenings.
- **Upsilon Pi Epsilon:** Upsilon Pi Epsilon is an Honor Society for computing and information sciences that offers a free membership for a year after a student is invited to join by invitation. Members also may earn scholarships for their participation and interest in computing. For more information go to: <http://clinton.cs.depaul.edu/upe/home.asp>

DePaul University Library Resources:



The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles, and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion, and Internet Animators by Richard Williams

The Animator's Survival Kit: A Manual of Methods, Principles, and Formulas for Classical, Computer, Games, Stop Motion, and Internet Animators by Richard Williams is a great resource for budding Animators looking to improve their skills. The guide provides the foundation for the processes and tools used in producing quality animations, and tips on improving your characters facial expressions and movements.



Character Emotion in 2D and 3D Animation by Les Pardew

Character Emotion in 2D and 3D Animation by Les Pardew teaches animation students how to portray feelings and render facial expressions to character animations. This book is meant as a more in-depth guide to the design principles behind portraying animation, and seeks to educate students on how to make their characters drama believable.



Becoming a Digital Designer: A Guide to Careers in Web, Video, Broadcast, Game and Animation Design by Steven D. Heller

Becoming a Digital Designer: A Guide to Careers in Web, Video, Broadcast, Game and Animation Design by Steven D. Heller is a great resource for animation students looking to start a career in the world of digital design. This book covers everything from portfolio design, job search strategies, to interviews from animators at the top of their field for advice to new job seekers.

For more DePaul library resources, go to:

<http://library.depaul.edu/>

What do Employers Look For in Animation Majors?

There are 4 main things that employers look for in Animation majors:

1. **Creativity and the ability to put ideas into action-** Employers seek creative individuals who can bring something new and exciting to their projects. Employers also look for fluency or number of ideas illustrated, so it is good to have a diverse range of projects within your work. A portfolio of design work can be extremely helpful in showcasing your best work, and is an essential tool in showing that you can make your projects happen.
2. **Technical Skills-** Employers look for technical knowledge in Animation majors, and familiarity with the software applications used to create animations. In addition to being able to utilize animation software, employers may also look for programming experience, and other technical abilities that show that the animator can bridge the gap between ideas and implementation of a project.
3. **Knowledge of Design Principles-** Employers want to see aesthetic design work that takes into consideration principles of design and art theory. This also includes being able to utilize production tools to create a cohesive design.
4. **Interpersonal Skills-** Many creative projects require working in a team or collaborating with different departments to achieve a final result. Individuals should be able to communicate their ideas in a respectful and effective manner, and be able to adapt to the needs of the team.

Getting Started- 4 Steps:

1. Know Yourself

Think about what has attracted you to Animation and why it is the right major for you. It is important that you think about who you are, what you like, and what is important to you when thinking about why you have chosen Animation as a major.

- What are your interests?
- What are your skills and abilities?
- What values are important to you in choosing a major and career?
- How does your personality relate to choosing a major and career options?

2. Explore and Choose Options:

Once you have chosen Animation as a major, ask yourself these questions:

- What are all of the available concentrations within Animation?
- What are the academic requirements for an Animation major?
- What types of jobs are associated with Animation major?
- How do you connect skills and education with career options?
- How do you make decisions and set goals about career choices?

3. Gain Knowledge and Experience

Once you make decisions about the direction you would like to take with a career path in Animation, you can begin to gain knowledge and experience:

- Gain professional experience through on-campus employment, co-ops, internships (UIP), and part-time jobs
- Look for additional opportunities to volunteer, study abroad, assist with research, or get involved with community service activities
- Attend relevant Career Center workshops such as: How to Find On-Campus Employment, How to Find an Internship, Introduction to Resumes and Cover Letters, Interviewing Skills, How to Prepare for Graduate School
- Find job shadowing and practice interviewing opportunities through the Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK) Program
- Join student and/or professional organizations
- Meet with your career advisor and/or faculty in psychology for insight into internships opportunities
- Talk with your academic advisor for recommendations on courses and major requirements

4. Put It All Together

Once you have gained experience and learned the necessary tools to find opportunities, you can begin the job search process:

- Attend relevant Career Center workshops such as How to Work a Job & Internship Fair, Job Search strategies, Advanced Resume and Cover Letters, How to Build a Portfolio, Advanced Interviewing, and Negotiation Skills
- Participate in practice interviews
- Meet with a peer career advisor or career advisor to discuss job search strategies
- Create a portfolio of your work and accomplishments and practice presenting it
- Attend the Career Center's job and internship fairs
- Consider DePaul's On-Campus (OCI) opportunities

For more information, visit <http://careercenter.depaul.edu>

References

Animation World Network: <http://www.awn.com/>

Animation Magazine: <http://www.animationmagazine.net/#>

ACM Siggraph: <http://www.siggraph.org/>

A Digital Dreamer- <http://www.adigitaldreamer.com/>

Creative Directory Services: <http://www.creativedir.com>

CollegeBoard- <http://www.collegeboard.com>

Gold, Stuart. "Forensic Animation- it's Origins, Creations, Limitations and Future" from Expertlaw.com:

http://www.expertlaw.com/library/animation/forensic_animation.html.

Freiburg Marianne. Career Interview: Mathematical Modeling Consultant. Plus Magazine 2007. <http://plus.maths.org/issue45/interview/index.html>

Learning Maya: Character Rigging and Animation.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/3374429/Learning-Maya-Character-Rigging-And-Animation>

O*NET Animation Major Page:

<http://online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/27-1014.00>