



The FGCE Career Guide

**YOU Can Shape
the Future of
Communications**

Step into the world of print and graphic communications, where creativity, tech, and innovation turn ideas into reality.



**The Foundation
for Graphic
Communication
Education**

**Key Dates for
Students, Parents
and Educators:**

**Every Year
Scholarships Open**

Nov 1

Scholarships Close

May 1

The FGCE Offers
over \$550,000
annually in
scholarships for
students looking
to further their
education!



Learn more at TheFGCE.org

 **The Foundation**
for Graphic
Communication
Education

The FGCE Believes the Future is Bright Now!

The Foundation for Graphic Communication Education (The FGCE) is a non-profit organization that offers undergraduate college and technical school scholarships, educational use grants and graduate fellowship assistance to individuals interested in graphic communication careers.

How we help students in the U.S.:

Connect students

with Print and Graphic Communications educational programs across the U.S.

Offer over \$550,000 in annual scholarships

to students enrolled in college and university programs

Provide continuing education funding

to those working in a graphic arts company

Design Contests to

showcase creativity: Posters, Stickers, T-Shirts and Packaging

Connecting scholarship recipients with employers hiring

Host career days

in partnership with graphics companies and equipment manufacturers

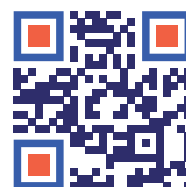
Provide travel funding

for students to attend industry events

Grant Program

The FGCE Educational grant program

provides over \$100,000 each year to Graphic Communication, Print, Visual and Design Technology programs in high schools, trade schools, colleges and universities.



Where Creativity Meets Innovation

Explore the Fast-Growing World of Printing and Graphic Communications

The printing and graphic communications industry is evolving in exciting ways, combining creativity, technology, and problem-solving.

More than 431,000 professionals in the U.S. work in roles that span design, production, marketing, and technology. As transformative tools like digital printing, 3D printing and sustainable materials take center stage, the industry continues to learn, grow and adapt.

What Does it Mean for Students?

For students, it's a field that offers variety, stability, and the chance to see ideas come to life, from concept to creation. Whether you're drawn to design, data, or hands-on production, there's a place to build skills, grow your future and make a lasting impact.



I am incredibly grateful to have been a recipient of a FGCE scholarship. The scholarship helped ease the financial burden of college, allowing me to focus more on my education and professional development. It provided me with the opportunity to further my education and pursue a career in the graphic communications industry, and I truly appreciate the investment The FGCE made in my future.



Riley Habermehl

2025 FGCE Scholarship Recipient

A Career in Print and Graphic Communications Is More Than You Know

Print and graphic communications touch nearly every part of our daily lives.

Understanding the role print, packaging and graphics play in our digitally exhausted world is the first step in seeing how this industry can help inspire a fun, solid and successful career.

Print and graphic communications are all around us—in every package you open, every store you visit, every classroom you learn in... even on every M&M you eat!

Just open your eyes. Take it all in!



Print on the Brain!

Research shows that interacting with print and paper affects our brains differently than using digital devices.

PRINT ENGAGES MULTIPLE SENSES, which encourages longer interaction and creates stronger emotional responses and lasting memories. Physical advertising, in particular, activates areas of the brain linked to value and desire, making it a powerful tool for communication and influence.



Print and Graphic
Communications are:

Creative



Digital



Sustainable



Colorful



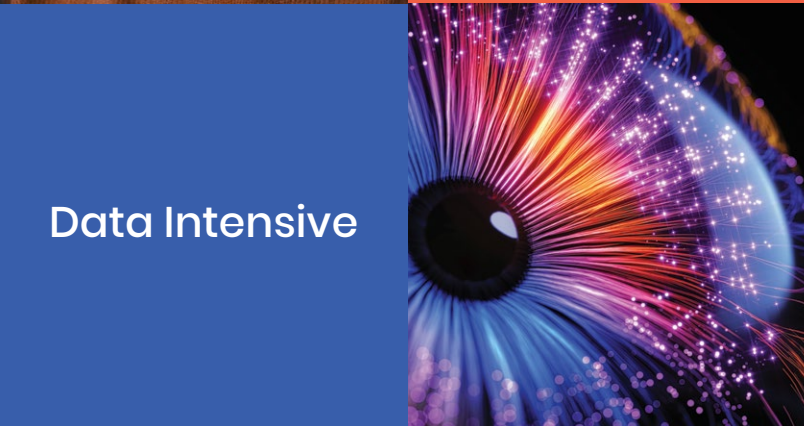
Thoughtful



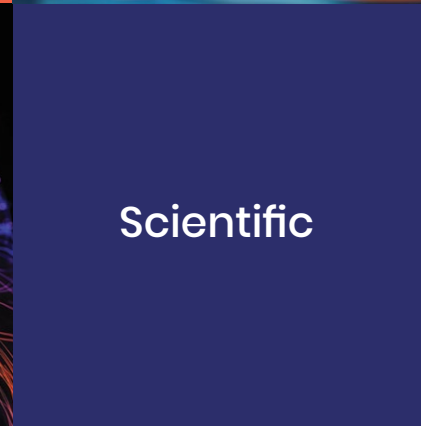
Mathematical



Data Intensive



Scientific





Print is a Big Business... *and Growing!*



Did You Know...

There are **TENS OF THOUSANDS** of U.S. based print, packaging and graphic communication companies

How Big is That, Really?

That is more than **MCDONALDS AND SUBWAY** combined!



How Much is it Worth?

Currently estimated at **\$129.21 BILLION** in sales

Is it Growing?

YES! Projected to reach **\$169.49 BILLION** by 2033

Let's Get Started

Explore the Possibilities. The following pages offer a variety of career pathways and salary ranges available in the graphic and print communications field. Job titles utilize many different skills and passions, including:

- **Creative**
- **Prepress**
- **IT**
- **Mechanical**
- **Machine Operations**
- **Administrative**
- **Sales**
- **Customer Service**

As technology evolves, so do the opportunities within organizations that produce visual media. Many skills and interests in this field often overlap in a single role or open doors to new career paths. The potential for growth, creativity, and success is great!

“

I did not expect to see print growing the way it is. People want displays, marketing tools, promotional items. It is good to see that the technology is progressing to fill the need.

Kayla D. McDonnell

2025 Graduate, FGCE Scholarship Recipient



Creative

Graphic Designer

Combining art and technology, working with images, graphics, text and color, designers create visual concepts and problem solve to communicate ideas that inform, inspire and captivate consumers.

Average \$60,000

Range \$40,000–\$80,000

Illustrator

An illustrator creates drawings for physical and digital products, used in publications, greeting cards, calendars, packaging, and digital illustrations.

Average \$60,000

Range \$40,000–\$80,000

Packaging Engineer

Design and test prototype balancing material costs and efficiencies with structural integrity and sustainability.

Average \$103,740

Range \$58,707–\$183,300

Prepress/Desktop Technician

Prepress technicians prepare digital files by retrieving graphics and text, adjusting them for print reproduction, gathering client approvals and ensuring they meet printing specifications. They may also create plates and run digital presses.

Average \$25/hr

Range \$13–\$53/hr

Prepress Digital/ Art Director/Designer

Responsible for the overall visual style and images for a project. Includes creating visual concepts, graphic design and preparation of digital files for printing. Can include photography, illustration and color management.

Average \$28/hr

Hourly \$10–\$89/hr

Prepress Manager

The Prepress Manager ensures the graphics and design of a project are prepared to specification and formatted correctly for output.

Average \$76,490

Range \$35,986–\$138,375

Technical

Customer Service Rep/Planner

Plans jobs for production from prepress to packaging of product, shipping and mailing.

Average \$57,917

Range \$24,600–\$107,625

IT Manager/Administrator/Tech

Responsible for integration and operation of all hardware and software for the company including equipment.

Average \$108,381

Range \$37,318–\$230,625

Job Estimator

Understanding required of all production equipment and materials required to produce job along with current market conditions.

Average \$62,506

Range \$30,750–\$141,923

Mail Specialist

Responsible for the preparation and processing of direct mail projects. Manages quality and ensures compliance with postal regulations. They operate mailing equipment, manage and process client data, and may also be involved in printing and finishing tasks related to mail pieces.

Average \$27/hr

Range \$14-\$40/hr

Packaging Computer Operator

Equipment troubleshooting, mechanical adjustments

Average \$41,600 (earnings vary depending on experience with top earners over \$58,000 annually)

Range \$38,000-\$58,500

Plant Manager

Involved in job production from files to delivery of finished product. Customer interaction and knowledge of production processes required.

Average \$123,268

Range \$46,125-\$246,000

Scheduler, Production Planner, Traffic Manager

Understanding and use of software for scheduling and job tracking. Works with all production managers, customer service and sales.

Average \$68,831

Range \$32,109-\$165,230

Mechanical

HOURLY PRODUCTION POSITIONS

Bindery & Finishing Operators

A Bindery Operator operates and maintains machinery to bind, fold, and finish printed materials like books, catalogs, boxes and more. They ensure final products meet quality standards by using equipment to cut, fold, glue, trim, and bind printed sheets.

Bindery Multi Competency Operator

Average \$23/hr

Range \$10-\$38/hr

Bindery/Perfect Binder Operator

Average \$22/hr

Range \$15-\$39/hr

Press Operators

Printing press operators set up, operate, and maintain printing presses to produce various printed materials like magazines, posters, packaging and large graphics. They produce print design files, manage color, handle materials, and oversee press performance.

Press Operator Heatset / Web

Average \$20/hr

Range \$12-\$51/hr

Press Operator Sheetfed-60" Wide Format

Average \$23/hr

Range \$15-\$36/hr

SALARY POSITIONS

Maintenance Manager

Maintain production equipment and sometimes facilities. Must have a working understanding of equipment and electrical. Works with contractors.

Average \$81,698

Range \$30,750–\$149,714

Packaging Folder Operator

Average \$51,750

Range \$52,120–\$56,000

Packaging Prepress/ Premedia Operator

Average \$57,125

Range \$58,250–\$61,800

Packaging Press Operator – Digital Toner

Average \$56,400

Range \$48,750

Packaging Press Operator – Flexographic

Average \$57,500

Range \$52,000–\$62,630

Packaging Press Operator – Wide Format Inkjet

Average \$57,000

Range \$54,520–\$59,800

Post-Press/ Bindery Manager

Implements the finishing part of the job and works closely with mailing, logistics and fulfillment to ensure all ship as scheduled.

Average \$85,845

Range \$43,050–\$154,775

Pressroom Manager

Responsible for operation of press equipment to meet production schedules and efficiencies. Works with maintenance for preventative measures.

Average \$85,845

Range \$43,050–\$154,775

Administrative

Accounting Specialist A/P or A/R

Generates customer invoices and reviews received invoices for accuracy. Works with Estimating, Purchasing and Finance Manager.

Average \$49,858

Range \$19,966–\$107,967

Human Resources

Assists with finding and hiring new employees, works with current employees as a resource for healthcare, 401K if available, misc. employee issues.

Average \$87,384

Range \$31,564–\$240,875

Mailroom/Fulfillment Manager

Works with CSR and the customer to gather list information and determine the best production method for efficiency and timing.

Average \$72,377

Range \$35,875–\$105,606

Purchasing Manager

Sources vendors for materials and procures needed materials for the plant. Works with sales, customer service, and production management.

Average \$62,611

Range \$34,645–\$131,200

Safety and Environmental Health Manager

Sets and enforces all safety requirement for equipment and building. Monitors environmental requirements for materials and files reports.

Average \$73,030

Range \$29,405-\$128,125

Shipping/Receiving Manager

Generates shipping paperwork and schedules required for shipment method. Receives and documents all materials delivered to the company.

Average \$65,104

Range \$31,775-\$107,625

Business & Marketing

Business Development/Marketing

Marketing for the company and works with sales to create promotional pieces to drive new business.

Average \$101,654

Range \$41,000-\$312,625

CFO, Controller, Finance Manager

Knowledge of processes and costs associated with the business necessary to provide detailed financial reports to management.

Average \$129,884

Range \$31,980-\$897,900

General Manager, COO, Vice President

Responsible for all aspects of the business, with a focus on business development, finances, and company growth

Average \$190,401

Range \$26,650-\$615,000



I think that current students should know that no matter what part of the industry you go into, **there are people who want to help you succeed.** It will take some time to get used to, but the print and prepress people really value being able to pass knowledge around and network. Using that to your advantage is a great way to help grow your career and self confidence in a new role.

Megan Brown

2023 Graduate, FGCE Scholarship Recipient

Packaging Plant Manager

Leads all daily packaging operations, manages staff, and ensures safety and quality goals are met.

Average \$136,300

Range \$111,300-163,500

Sales Representative

Establishes, develops and manages a customer base. Collaborates with all departments in the company.

Average \$140,244

Range \$30,750-\$799,500

VP Operations

Responsible for all aspects of company operations with an eye on profitability. Researches technology improvements.

Average \$138,458

Range \$49,381-\$256,250



Annual Foundation Supporters

The FGCE has many industry partners who believe in investing in the future generation in Print and Graphics.

LEGACY SOCIETY

\$10,000 or more annually

Charles Zunk
Jeff and Karen White
GLGA
Printing and Imaging
Association of Georgia
Seattle Club of Printing
House Craftsmen
Dscoop
Dr h.c. Niels and
Mary Winther

PRINT HERITAGE

\$5,000 or more annually

Heidelberg USA
Henry Dunlap Trust
John and Chris Berthelsen
Nancy Hughes
Print and Graphic
Communications Association

FRANKLIN CLUB

\$1,000 or more annually

Christine Burkey
GCEA
Gerald Nathe
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Interprint Inc.
Thomas Brinkman
Susan and Andrew Boehm
Amy Brinkman Whitaker
HP Inc.

CENTURY CLUB

\$100 or more annually

Jules Van Sant
Dr. Kevin King
Robert Whitton
Regis Delmontagne
Print UV Productions
Derek Gordon

IN-KIND DONATIONS

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