

# U-Shaped Desks

These are the 5 most commonly asked questions about u-shaped desks for commercial office environments, with straightforward answers to help you make a confident, well-informed purchase decision.

## Top 5 Questions — U-Shaped Desks

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### How much room do I need for a U-shaped desk?

A U-shaped desk requires significantly more floor space than any other desk configuration. The overall footprint typically spans 8–10 feet wall-to-wall in width and 6–8 feet front-to-back in depth. To use the desk comfortably, a private office of at least 12 feet by 12 feet is required to allow adequate clearance for the chair, for a guest to sit across the main surface, and for traffic flow around the desk. For rooms with an inward-swinging door, 12 feet by 14 feet is recommended to prevent the door from hitting the desk or chair. Private offices of 150 square feet or larger are the ideal setting — smaller rooms will create a cramped installation that blocks normal movement and egress. Always measure the room and draw the desk footprint to scale before purchasing.

2

### What are the three surfaces of a U-shaped desk and how are they used?

A U-shaped desk consists of three distinct work surfaces: the main desk (primary computing and primary work surface, typically 66–72 inches wide), the return (a side surface extending perpendicular to the main desk, typically 42–48 inches long), and the bridge or credenza (the back surface connecting the two returns, typically 48–72 inches wide). The user sits in the center of the U configuration and can swivel to access all three surfaces without standing. The main surface faces outward and is where primary computer work, calls, and visitor interaction occur. The return provides a secondary zone for reference materials, a secondary monitor, or phone equipment. The bridge or credenza behind the user is ideal for storage, a printer, or materials accessed frequently during the workday. The total accessible work surface area of 8–12 linear feet is roughly double a 6-foot straight desk.

**3****What is the difference between a U-shaped desk with a bridge and one with a credenza?**

A bridge is a narrower connecting surface — typically 36–42 inches deep — that links the two return surfaces to complete the U shape. It provides a useful third work zone but primarily functions as a pass-through surface rather than a full storage unit. A credenza used as the back component of a U-desk replaces the bridge with a full-depth storage piece — enclosed cabinets, drawers, and sometimes open shelves — that spans the back wall at desk height (29–30 inches). The credenza option adds significant built-in storage capacity across the entire back width of the workstation, making it the preferred specification for roles that require immediate access to files, reference materials, and supplies without leaving the workstation. The trade-off is higher cost and greater visual weight. For executive offices and high-output roles, the credenza-back U-desk is the most functional configuration.

**4****What storage configurations are available for U-shaped desks?**

U-shaped desks offer storage across all three wings of the configuration. The main desk can be specified with one or two pedestals (BBF, FF, BF configurations) on either side. The returns can also include pedestal storage at the knee opening end or along the outer panel. The bridge or credenza back surface — when specified as a storage credenza — adds doors, drawers, and shelves spanning the full back width. Cable management is more complex on a U-shaped desk than on straight or L-shaped desks because three separate surfaces must all be managed; specify grommets on the main surface and at least one return, and plan cable routing between surfaces through internal channels rather than external cable trays. The combination of pedestal storage on the main desk and a storage credenza at the back creates one of the highest-capacity individual workstation storage configurations available.

**5****Who benefits most from a U-shaped desk?**

U-shaped desks are most appropriate for professionals with high-output, multi-task roles who genuinely use 8–12 feet of surface area consistently throughout the day. Common beneficiaries include executives and senior managers who need space for multiple monitors, reference documents, phone, and guest-interaction surface simultaneously; architects, engineers, and designers who work with large-format drawings alongside digital screens; financial analysts who run multiple screens with printed reports alongside; attorneys and paralegals who work with large volumes of paper documents and digital research simultaneously; and any professional where having everything within a chair swivel prevents constant interruptions to retrieve materials. U-shaped desks are not appropriate for users whose primary work is on a single laptop — the desk footprint is wasted if most of the surface remains empty.

Have more questions? Our office furniture specialists are ready to help.

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