

# MASTER OF ARTS IN DESIGN

The 30-unit, two-year Master of Arts in Design program emphasizes problem-solving methodologies and their application to both conceptual and practical problems. The program is interdisciplinary across visual communication and product design. Students develop a specialized area of focus with assistance from faculty advisors and through engagement with their graduate culminating project (thesis or creative work).

Graduate Advisors: Chu, Chen, Gomes, Hulick, Linn, McVeigh-Schultz, Singer, Trogu

## Program Highlights

User-centered design methods, universal (inclusive) design, design with community partners, and socially motivated projects are particularly strong areas of our teaching, and align with SF State's mission to prepare students to be innovators and leaders in their communities and beyond.

- Faculty expertise ranging from product design to graphic design, visual communication, interactive design, digital modeling and fabrication
- Open to students from both design and non-design backgrounds
- Opportunities to participate in dynamic San Francisco Bay Area design community
- Outstanding faculty to student ratio
- On-site design facilities
- Accessible class schedules to accommodate working students
- International student applicants are welcome

This program is designed for students who want to:

- Study visual communication design/graphic communications and/or product design development from an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Learn and apply contemporary methods used in design research and practice.
- Develop further expertise in a specific area of design studies through an individual, interdisciplinary-based program of study that focuses on specific goals.

The Master of Arts in Design curriculum gives students the opportunity to:

- Develop a specialized advanced study area in visual communication, industrial/product design, or related field.
- Transition to careers in design, design research, design education, and related fields for students who do not have an undergraduate degree in design.
- Prepare for doctoral study in other institutions which emphasize research and professional development in design and related fields.

Students pursuing this program come from a variety of occupational areas. Employment opportunities include preparation for career advancement/enhancement through advanced study in design and related disciplines, acquisition of additional technical skills, and continued research and development activity.

## Admission to Program

In addition to the basic University application requirements, The School of Design graduate application requires a statement of purpose, a résumé, three letters of recommendation, and a portfolio that includes

evidence of creative, technical, and/or written work. The program admits in the fall only. Deadline for admission materials is May 1<sup>st</sup>. The University requires a bachelor's degree or a recognized equivalent from a regionally accredited institution and a satisfactory scholastic average; a minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0. International students are required to submit English Language test scores (TOEFL or IELTS) as well.

Students entering this program normally present an undergraduate major in design, engineering, fine arts, industrial arts, or industrial technology subjects. The program does accept students with other undergraduate majors in cases where students desire to make career changes or do advanced study in design for professional growth. For non-majors, a minimum of 12 additional conditional status units are required by advisement to build design knowledge and necessary skills. After satisfactory completion of 12 units of upper division undergraduate DES courses with required minimum grades, students can transition to classified status. Students may be required to enroll in additional upper division undergraduate DES classes prior to transitioning to classified status depending upon the recommendation of a Graduate Coordinator or other academic advisors. Classified status is required for enrollment in the following classes:

Code	Title	Units
DES 800	Seminar in Design Topics	3
DES 805	Seminar in Design Methodology	3
DES 852	Directed Experience in Design	3
DES 894	Creative Work Project	3
DES 898	Master's Thesis	3

## Program Learning Outcomes

- Prepare to pursue professional work in design firms, teaching, project management, strategic planning for design firms, or management roles in technology.
- Build problem-solving competencies, both conceptual and practical.
- Study visual communication design and product design with an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Work closely with graduate advisors to design an M.A. program that meets their career goals.
- Engage in focused, critical research into a chosen design problem.
- Develop a specialized area of study in graphic design/visual communication design, product design/manufacturing, industrial technology, project management, or digital media.
- Develop a Culminating Experience Proposal and Project reflective of their professional interests.
- Program may help students prepare for doctoral work at other institutions.

## Advancement to Candidacy

A student is advanced to candidacy for a degree when the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form is accepted and approved by the Division of Graduate Studies. All conditions placed on conditionally classified status must be satisfied before a student develops an ATC. For conditionally classified students (42 units), there is a conditional status review before a student is eligible to enroll in 800 level coursework. The Advancement to Candidacy and culminating experience proposal should be filed in the semester immediately preceding registration for the final six units of graduate work. The majority of students complete a Creative Work Project (CWP) as their culminating experience project; however, it is also

possible to complete a master's thesis. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their progress and to work with appropriate advisors to file their university forms and to meet published deadlines.

Students enrolled in the culminating experience Creative Work Project (CWP) must complete this experience within two (consecutive) semesters. Students who fail to complete the culminating experience within two semesters are required to pay a re-enrollment fee for each additional semester until it has been completed. NOTE: Creative Work Oral Presentations (a requirement for degree) are generally conducted spring semester only.

Students are required to complete their culminating experience within five years of initial enrollment.

Students who do not complete the culminating experience requirement (DES 894 for CWP or DES 898 for thesis) in the semester they are enrolled or immediate subsequent semester are required to maintain continuous enrollment through the College of Professional & Global Education (CPaGE) until the degree is earned. Students in the CPaGE course will have access to library and discipline-specific laboratories. The five-year "time to degree" is in effect. Students in the culminating experience continuous enrollment program should maintain frequent contact each semester with their advisor and meet all timelines outlined in the culminating experience proposal document (see policy on Graduate Studies website [grad.sfsu.edu](http://grad.sfsu.edu) (<http://grad.sfsu.edu/>)).

Students who have left the University for more than one semester while completing coursework are not guaranteed readmission to their program.

## Written English Proficiency Requirement

As stated in the graduate studies section of the University *Bulletin*, each graduate student must demonstrate the ability to write American English correctly and effectively.

### Level One

Students in the MA Program in Design will meet this requirement by taking DES 724, Graduate Research Methods and Scholarly Writing, or equivalent as designated by Graduate Coordinator.

### Level Two

Students will meet this requirement by the successful completion of the written phase of the culminating experience work that is part of either the Creative Work Project (DES 894) or Master's Thesis (DES 898).

**Note:** It is school policy that a student must have a comprehensive written proposal approved by the school within one semester prior to enrolling in either (DES 894) or (DES 898).

Upper-division courses may be selected with prior approval of the Graduate Coordinator.

## Design (M.A.) – 30 units

### Core Courses (12 units)

Code	Title	Units
DES 700	Seminar in Design Research	3
DES 724	Graduate Research and Writing Methods in Design	3
DES 755	Seminar in Design Management	3
DES 800	Seminar in Design Topics	3

### Methodology and Experience Courses (6 units)

Code	Title	Units
DES 805	Seminar in Design Methodology	3
DES 852	Directed Experience in Design	3

### Culminating Experience Course (3 units)

Select one Culminating Experience option with the approval of a graduate advisor.

Code	Title	Units
DES 894	Creative Work Project	3
DES 898	Master's Thesis	3

### Electives (9 units)

Select three graduate and/or upper-division courses with the approval of a graduate advisor.