



Twin Cities Campus

Design M.S.

DESIGN GRAD Administration

College of Design

Link to a [list of faculty](#) for this program.

Contact Information:

Design Graduate Program, 240 McNeal Hall, 1985 Buford Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108.

Email: dhagrad@umn.edu

Website: <https://design.umn.edu/>

- Program Type: Master's
- Requirements for this program are current for Spring 2023
- Length of program in credits: 34 to 37
- This program does not require summer semesters for timely completion.
- Degree: Master of Science

Along with the program-specific requirements listed below, please read the [General Information](#) section of the catalog website for requirements that apply to all major fields.

The design graduate program focuses on the study of relationships between humans and their designed environments. This focus is based on the assumption that design and analysis of environments contributes to the improvement of the human condition. The program addresses theory, research, and application, using a shared disciplinary base from the arts and social and behavioral sciences. The goal of the program is for students to analyze, evaluate, and integrate theoretical frameworks related to humans and their designed environments.

Applications submitted to the design graduate program specify a track and degree objective.

Formal tracks are:

Apparel studies (including dress, history, and culture; product development; and retail and consumer studies)
Graphic design
Interior design
Product design

Program Delivery

This program is available:

- via classroom (the majority of instruction is face-to-face)

Prerequisites for Admission

The preferred undergraduate GPA for admittance to the program is 3.00.

Special Application Requirements:

For specific application requirements, including eligibility requirements for each track, see: <https://design.umn.edu/>

Applicants must submit their test score(s) from the following:

- GRE

International applicants must submit score(s) from one of the following tests:

- TOEFL
 - Internet Based - Total Score: 79
 - Internet Based - Writing Score: 21
 - Internet Based - Reading Score: 19
 - Paper Based - Total Score: 550
- IELTS
 - Total Score: 6.5
 - Reading Score: 6.5
 - Writing Score: 6.5

The preferred English language test is Test of English as Foreign Language



Key to [test abbreviations](#) (GRE, TOEFL, IELTS).

For an online application or for more information about graduate education admissions, see the [General Information](#) section of the catalog website.

Program Requirements

Plan A: Plan A requires 18 to 21 major credits, 6 credits outside the major, and 10 thesis credits. The final exam is oral.

Plan B: Plan B requires 28 major credits and 6 credits outside the major. The final exam is oral.

Plan C: Plan C requires 28 major credits and 6 credits outside the major. There is no final exam.

This program may be completed with a minor.

Use of 4xxx courses toward program requirements is permitted under certain conditions with adviser approval.

A minimum GPA of 2.80 is required for students to remain in good standing.

At least 2 semesters must be completed before filing a Degree Program Form.

Students may be required to complete additional credits upon recommendation of their committee.

Design Program Core Requirement (1 credit)

Take the following course:

[DES 8181](#) - Research Ethics (1.0 cr)

Related Field Coursework (6 credits)

Select at least 6 credits in a related field in consultation with the advisor and committee.

Program Sub-plans

Students are required to complete one of the following sub-plans.

Students may not complete the program with more than one sub-plan.

Apparel Studies

This sub-plan is limited to students completing the program under Plan A or Plan B.

Evaluation and Analysis Coursework (6 credits)

Take the following courses, or other coursework with the approval of the advisor and committee, to meet the 6-credit requirement:

[DES 8102](#) - Quantitative research methods and data visualization (3.0 cr)

[DES 8103](#) - Qualitative Research Methods in Design (3.0 cr)

Concentration

Dress, History, and Culture

Theory and Philosophy Coursework (3 credits)

Select one of the following courses in consultation with the advisor and committee:

[DES 8112](#) - Introduction to Design Research, Theory, and Methodology (3.0 cr)

or [DES 8164](#) - Innovation Theory and Analysis (3.0 cr)

Plan A Electives (8 credits)

Take at least 8 credits from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee:

[APST 5193](#) - Directed Study in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 4.0 cr)

[APST 5218](#) - Fashion, Design, and the Global Industry (3.0 cr)

[APST 8192](#) - Readings in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

[APST 8193](#) - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

[APST 8268](#) - Behavioral Aspects of Dress (3.0 cr)

[DES 5165](#) - Design and Globalization (3.0 cr)

[DES 8112](#) - Introduction to Design Research, Theory, and Methodology (3.0 cr)

[DES 8113](#) - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)



DES 8115 - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)
DES 8164 - Innovation Theory and Analysis (3.0 cr)
DES 8166 - Material Culture and Design (3.0 cr)
DES 8167 - Aesthetics of Design (3.0 cr)

Thesis credits

Plan A students take a minimum of 10 thesis credits.

DES 8777 - Thesis Credits: Master's (1.0 - 18.0 cr)

or Plan B Electives (15 credits)

Select 15 credits from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee:

APST 5193 - Directed Study in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 4.0 cr)
APST 5218 - Fashion, Design, and the Global Industry (3.0 cr)
APST 8192 - Readings in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
APST 8193 - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
APST 8268 - Behavioral Aspects of Dress (3.0 cr)
DES 5165 - Design and Globalization (3.0 cr)
DES 8112 - Introduction to Design Research, Theory, and Methodology (3.0 cr)
DES 8113 - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)
DES 8115 - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)
DES 8164 - Innovation Theory and Analysis (3.0 cr)
DES 8166 - Material Culture and Design (3.0 cr)
DES 8167 - Aesthetics of Design (3.0 cr)

Plan B Master's Project (3 credits)

Students are required to register for Plan B Master's Project in the last semester of the program. Take the following course in consultation with the advisor and committee.

APST 8222 - Plan B Master's Project (3.0 cr)

-OR-

Product Development

Theory and Philosophy Coursework (3 credits)

Take one of the following courses in consultation with the advisor and committee:

DES 8112 - Introduction to Design Research, Theory, and Methodology (3.0 cr)
or DES 8164 - Innovation Theory and Analysis (3.0 cr)

Plan A Electives (8 credits)

Take at least 8 credits from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee:

APST 5193 - Directed Study in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 4.0 cr)
APST 5218 - Fashion, Design, and the Global Industry (3.0 cr)
APST 5224 - Functional Clothing Design (4.0 cr)
APST 8192 - Readings in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
APST 8193 - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
DES 5185 - Human Factors in Design (3.0 cr)
DES 5188 - Anthropometrics, Sizing & Fit (4.0 cr)
DES 8113 - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)
DES 8114 - Design Studio (4.0 cr)
DES 8115 - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)
DES 8151 - Product Development: Theory and Practice (3.0 cr)
DES 8166 - Material Culture and Design (3.0 cr)
DES 8167 - Aesthetics of Design (3.0 cr)
GDES 8361 - Color, Design, and Human Perception (3.0 cr)

Thesis Credits

Plan A students take a minimum of 10 thesis credits.

DES 8777 - Thesis Credits: Master's (1.0 - 18.0 cr)

or Plan B Electives (15 credits)

Select 15 credits from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee:

APST 5193 - Directed Study in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 4.0 cr)
APST 5218 - Fashion, Design, and the Global Industry (3.0 cr)
APST 5224 - Functional Clothing Design (4.0 cr)
APST 8192 - Readings in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
APST 8193 - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
DES 5185 - Human Factors in Design (3.0 cr)
DES 5188 - Anthropometrics, Sizing & Fit (4.0 cr)
DES 8113 - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)
DES 8114 - Design Studio (4.0 cr)
DES 8115 - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)
DES 8151 - Product Development: Theory and Practice (3.0 cr)
DES 8166 - Material Culture and Design (3.0 cr)
DES 8167 - Aesthetics of Design (3.0 cr)



[GDES 8361](#) - Color, Design, and Human Perception (3.0 cr)

Plan B Master's Project (3 credits)

Students are required to register for Plan B Master's Project in the last semester of the program. Take the following course in consultation with the advisor and committee.

[APST 8222](#) - Plan B Master's Project (3.0 cr)

-OR-

Retail and Consumer Studies

Theory and Philosophy Coursework (3 credits)

Take the following course:

[APST 8272](#) - Digital Consumers: Theories in Retail and Consumer Studies (3.0 cr)

Plan A Electives (8 credits)

Take at least 8 credits from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee:

[APST 5117](#) - Retail Environments and Human Behavior (3.0 cr)

[APST 5123](#) - Living in a Consumer Society (3.0 cr)

[APST 5193](#) - Directed Study in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 4.0 cr)

[APST 8192](#) - Readings in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

[APST 8193](#) - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

[APST 8268](#) - Behavioral Aspects of Dress (3.0 cr)

[APST 8271](#) - Retailing: Strategic Perspectives (3.0 cr)

[DES 8113](#) - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)

[DES 8115](#) - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)

[DES 8151](#) - Product Development: Theory and Practice (3.0 cr)

[DES 8166](#) - Material Culture and Design (3.0 cr)

[DES 8167](#) - Aesthetics of Design (3.0 cr)

Thesis Credits

Plan A students take a minimum of 10 thesis credits.

[DES 8777](#) - Thesis Credits: Master's (1.0 - 18.0 cr)

or Plan B Electives (15 credits)

Select 15 credits from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee:

[APST 5117](#) - Retail Environments and Human Behavior (3.0 cr)

[APST 5123](#) - Living in a Consumer Society (3.0 cr)

[APST 5193](#) - Directed Study in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 4.0 cr)

[APST 8192](#) - Readings in Apparel Studies (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

[APST 8193](#) - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

[APST 8268](#) - Behavioral Aspects of Dress (3.0 cr)

[APST 8271](#) - Retailing: Strategic Perspectives (3.0 cr)

[DES 8113](#) - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)

[DES 8115](#) - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)

[DES 8151](#) - Product Development: Theory and Practice (3.0 cr)

[DES 8166](#) - Material Culture and Design (3.0 cr)

[DES 8167](#) - Aesthetics of Design (3.0 cr)

Plan B Master's Project (3 credits)

Students are required to register for Plan B Master's Project in the last semester of the program. Take the following course in consultation with the advisor and committee.

[APST 8222](#) - Plan B Master's Project (3.0 cr)

Graphic Design

This sub-plan is limited to students completing the program under Plan A or Plan B.

Completion of the UX MasterTrack Certificate, prior to admission, may apply towards the Graphic Design subplan/track requirements. Student will need to consult with the DGS for approval. Visit: <https://design.umn.edu/academics/explore-all-certificates/ux-design-mastertracktm-certificate> for more information.

Theory and Philosophy Coursework (3 credits)

Take one of the following courses in consultation with the advisor and committee.

[DES 8112](#) - Introduction to Design Research, Theory, and Methodology (3.0 cr)

[DES 8164](#) - Innovation Theory and Analysis (3.0 cr)

Evaluation and Analysis Coursework (6 credits)

Select two courses from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee.

[DES 8102](#) - Quantitative research methods and data visualization (3.0 cr)

[DES 8103](#) - Qualitative Research Methods in Design (3.0 cr)

[GDES 5388](#) ~~(Inactive)~~ (3.0 cr)

Graphic Design Requirements (7 credits)

[DES 8114](#) - Design Studio (4.0 cr)



Select at least one of the following courses in consultation with the advisor and committee.

Take 0 or more course(s) from the following:

- [GDES 8361](#) - Color, Design, and Human Perception (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 8362](#) - The Nature of Representation in Visual Communication (3.0 cr)

Plan Options

Plan A Electives

Take additional courses, as needed, to complete 24 credits of major coursework.

- [DES 8113](#) - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)
- [DES 8115](#) - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)
- [GDES 4131W](#) - History of Graphic Design [WI] (4.0 cr)
- [GDES 4345](#) - Advanced Typography (4.0 cr)
- [GDES 5193](#) - Directed Study in Graphic Design (1.0 - 4.0 cr)
- [GDES 5311](#) - Illustration (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5341](#) - Interaction Design (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5342](#) - Advanced Web Design (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5371](#) - Data & Information Visualization (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5383](#) - Digital Illustration and Animation (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5386](#) - Fundamentals of Game Design (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 8192](#) - Readings in Graphic Design (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
- [GDES 8193](#) - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

Thesis Credits

Plan A students take a minimum of 10 thesis credits.

Take 10 or more credit(s) from the following:

- [DES 8777](#) - Thesis Credits: Master's (1.0 - 18.0 cr)

-OR-

Plan B Electives (8 credits)

Select 8 credits from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee.

- [DES 8113](#) - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)
- [DES 8115](#) - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)
- [GDES 4131W](#) - History of Graphic Design [WI] (4.0 cr)
- [GDES 4345](#) - Advanced Typography (4.0 cr)
- [GDES 5193](#) - Directed Study in Graphic Design (1.0 - 4.0 cr)
- [GDES 5311](#) - Illustration (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5341](#) - Interaction Design (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5342](#) - Advanced Web Design (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5371](#) - Data & Information Visualization (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5383](#) - Digital Illustration and Animation (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 5386](#) - Fundamentals of Game Design (3.0 cr)
- [GDES 8192](#) - Readings in Graphic Design (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
- [GDES 8193](#) - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

Plan B Master's Project (3 credits)

Students are required to register for Plan B Master's Project in the last semester of the program. Take the following course in consultation with the advisor and committee.

Take exactly 3 credit(s) from the following:

- [GDES 8222](#) - Plan B Master's Project (3.0 cr)

Interior Design

This sub-plan is limited to students completing the program under Plan A.

Graduate study in the interior design track emphasizes the theory, research, and specialized practice components of design as applied to people's health, safety, and welfare in the interior environment, including culture, sustainability, and issues facing design education. Advances in theoretical knowledge and study of the interactions of humans in interior environments prepare students for teaching and research positions as well as specializations within the professions. A prior degree in interior design or architecture is required for admission to the study interior design at the graduate level.

Theory and Philosophy Coursework (3 credits)

Select one of the following courses in consultation with the advisor and committee:

- [DES 8112](#) - Introduction to Design Research, Theory, and Methodology (3.0 cr)
- [DES 8164](#) - Innovation Theory and Analysis (3.0 cr)
- [DES 8166](#) - Material Culture and Design (3.0 cr)

Evaluation and Analysis Coursework (6 credits)

Select at least one statistics course, and select either DES 8102 or 8103, in consultation with the advisor:



[DES 8102](#) - Quantitative research methods and data visualization (3.0 cr)
[DES 8103](#) - Qualitative Research Methods in Design (3.0 cr)
[EPSY 5261](#) - Introductory Statistical Methods (3.0 cr)
[EPSY 5262](#) - Intermediate Statistical Methods (3.0 cr)
[EPSY 8252](#) - Statistical Methods in Education II (3.0 cr)
[EPSY 8266](#) - Statistical Analysis Using Structural Equation Methods (3.0 cr)
[EPSY 8267](#) - Applied Multivariate Analysis (3.0 cr)

Concentration (8 credits)

Select at least 8 credits from the following in consultation with the advisor and committee:

[DES 5165](#) - Design and Globalization (3.0 cr)
[DES 5168](#) - Evidence-Based Design (3.0 cr)
[DES 5185](#) - Human Factors in Design (3.0 cr)
[DES 8113](#) - Teaching and Assessment (2.0 cr)
[DES 8115](#) - Grant Writing (2.0 cr)
[GDES 8361](#) - Color, Design, and Human Perception (3.0 cr)
[IDES 8192](#) - Readings in Interior Design (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
[IDES 8193](#) - Directed Study (1.0 - 3.0 cr)

Thesis Credits

Take 10 thesis credits.

[DES 8777](#) - Thesis Credits: Master's (1.0 - 18.0 cr)

Product Design

This sub-plan is limited to students completing the program under Plan A or Plan C.

The product design track is creative and interdisciplinary, blending elements of industrial design, engineering, business, and humanities. Combining these disciplines gives you the tools and methods to design products and services (both physical and digital) that are functional, marketable, and human-centered. Our flexible programming gives you the option to deepen your theoretical and practical knowledge of product design and gain hands-on advanced product design experience to augment your background.

Theory and Philosophy Coursework (3 credits)

Select one of the following courses in consultation with the advisor and committee:

[DES 8112](#) - Introduction to Design Research, Theory, and Methodology (3.0 cr)
[DES 8164](#) - Innovation Theory and Analysis (3.0 cr)
[DES 8167](#) - Aesthetics of Design (3.0 cr)

Plan Options

Plan A Coursework

Evaluation and Analysis (3 credits)

Select one of the following in consultation with the advisor and committee:

[DES 8102](#) - Quantitative research methods and data visualization (3.0 cr)
[DES 8103](#) - Qualitative Research Methods in Design (3.0 cr)

Core Coursework (14 credits)

Take the following courses:

[PDES 5701](#) - User-Centered Design Studio (4.0 cr)
[PDES 5702](#) - Visual Communication (3.0 cr)
[PDES 5703](#) - Prototyping Methods (4.0 cr)
[PDES 5704](#) - Computer-Aided Design Methods (3.0 cr)

Thesis Credits

Plan A students take 10 thesis credits.

[DES 8777](#) - Thesis Credits: Master's (1.0 - 18.0 cr)

-OR-

Plan C Coursework

Evaluation and Analysis (4 credits)

Take the following course:

[PDES 5701](#) - User-Centered Design Studio (4.0 cr)

Core Coursework (21 credits)

Take the following courses:

[DES 5185](#) - Human Factors in Design (3.0 cr)
[PDES 5702](#) - Visual Communication (3.0 cr)
[PDES 5703](#) - Prototyping Methods (4.0 cr)
[PDES 5704](#) - Computer-Aided Design Methods (3.0 cr)
[PDES 8721](#) - New Product Design and Business Development I (4.0 cr)
[PDES 8722](#) - New Product Design and Business Development II (4.0 cr)