Design MDes

The Master of Design (MDes) is a two-year degree program for designers who wish to deepen their practice by engaging in advanced research and scholarship, or who are interested in pursuing academic careers. A Master of Design degree is currently considered a terminal degree in the field.

Our program stresses interdisciplinary work and research-driven design practice. Students develop individualized research agendas and courses of study that draw upon the University of Washington’s broad academic community. In recent years, MDes students have taken courses and participated in research projects with the College of Engineering, the Department of Biomedical Informatics, the Department of Psychology, the Department of Communication, the School of Nursing, and the Business School. Recent MDes theses have addressed such wide-ranging topics as healthcare, aviation, urban planning, and information visualization.

Most of our students have undergraduate training in a design-related field and several years of successful professional experience. We occasionally admit students from other disciplines who show exceptional design potential. For these students, we offer a three-year course of study that emphasizes mastery of core design skills while pursuing graduate-level study.

- [Degree Requirements](#)

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- [About](#)
- [People](#)
- [Advising](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [News + Events](#)
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- [Research](#)
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