Graduate Admissions

Annual admission to the Master of Design graduate program is on a competitive basis. On average, five percent of all applicants are admitted. The University of Washington Graduate School requires a four-year bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution and a 3.0 grade point average for the last 90 quarter credit hours (or last 60 semester credit hours) earned. The GRE is not required. There is no part-time enrollment option. Students who are admitted begin their studies during the Autumn quarter of the UW academic year.

The ideal candidate for graduate study in Design is an individual with:

1. an undergraduate BA or BFA degree in Industrial/Product Design, Visual Communication/Graphic Design or Interaction Design, and
2. at least 1–2 years of experience in professional design practice. We believe that graduate study is most beneficial for those who have had an opportunity to study and practice in the field. Generally speaking, these are the candidates who have proven to be the best prepared to identify specific areas of interest/focus during the short duration of a master’s program. However, in certain instances, the program will consider students who have more recently completed an undergraduate design program. These students must demonstrate substantial intellectual and form-giving capacity, as well as the ability to work and think beyond the basic tenets of an undergraduate/bachelor’s degree program.

The Design faculty may accept candidates with an undergraduate degree in a field allied with or related to Design—for example, Computer Science, Architecture, Engineering, or Marketing/Advertising/Public Relations/Communication. These candidates have typically experienced specific aspects of design in a professional setting, and wish to expand their knowledge of design while still leveraging a previous academic background. Such students are often considered for an extended 3–year program where they must complete a year of preliminary undergraduate studios (and pass a faculty review) before continuing to graduate-level coursework.

The Graduate Application Process (MDes)

All application materials are submitted online. Application materials sent by mail will not be considered. The online application cycle opens October 1. If you have any questions while submitting your material for review, please write gradart@uw.edu.

- **Application for Graduate Study at the University of Washington** (online). To finalize your application, please submit the $85 application fee. Once finalized, you will no longer be able to update your online app, however the department can view your complete application and answer questions. Your application is not complete without the fee.
- **Transcripts**: Applicants are required to submit an unofficial transcript from each institution from which they have obtained a degree. Applicants who are admitted to the program will be required to submit official transcripts prior to matriculation. Please ensure that the student name and school name appear and that the scan is legible. If you are scanning original transcripts, make sure the pages are oriented upright for screen viewing (vertical or landscape).
- **Letters of recommendation**: Applicants will be prompted to provide the name and email address of three (max. four) recommenders. The recommenders will be sent a link to the online evaluation form via email. Each letter of recommendation should be written by someone who is able to comment on your qualifications for graduate study. As part of the application process you will be given the opportunity to voluntarily waive your right to inspect the completed letters.
- **English Proficiency test scores (for international students)**: Proficiency in English is required for graduate study at the University of Washington. Therefore, every applicant whose native language is not English must demonstrate English proficiency. You can reference [Graduate School Memo #8](#) and [English Proficiency Tests](#) comparison tables for information on the University’s policy. When requesting official TOEFL scores from ETS use institution code 4854 for the University of Washington. TOEFL scores are valid for two years from the test date. The University of Washington only accepts scores submitted electronically by the IELTS test center. The application will also prompt you to self-report your test scores. If you have not yet taken the test, please enter the test date on the form. Official scores must be received by the application deadline. **Note**: The University of Washington Graduate School is phasing out usage of IELTS. IELTS with a test session date after June 1, 2017 will not be accepted.
- **Statement of Purpose**: This statement should clearly articulate your goals and the extent to which the UW MDes program can be expected to prepare you for those objectives. The statement should also describe your
background, specifically in the field of Design. This could include a description of your design process, your work experiences, your intentions in relation to the work you have submitted and what you plan to focus on during your graduate study. You should also reference the particular area of Design (ID, VCD, IxD) in which you are interested.

- **Resume/Curriculum Vitae:** Your resume/CV should summarize your educational background, including institutions and degrees earned. It should also include a summary of professional jobs and academic positions held (e.g. Teaching Assistantships), awards and fellowships, and any relevant publications or recognition. Please keep in mind that the design of your resume should also demonstrate your ability to handle typography, hierarchy and fundamental organizational principles.

- **Portfolio:** The portfolio should demonstrate your knowledge and abilities in the field of Design. You may include up to 20 images of your design work, saved as one PDF which will largely be viewed on a computer screen. The document should include a cover sheet and an image list. The PDF document should not exceed 30MB in size. You are welcome to include web design, animation, or video content as part of your portfolio by inserting links to these sources within your portfolio document. Please note, however, that these should be considered supplementary. You will be prompted to upload your pdf portfolio to the University of Washington online graduate student application.

### Application Deadlines

The deadline for all applicants (U.S Citizen, Permanent Resident or International) to submit both online applications and all required application materials is January 16. Late applications will not be accepted and incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

### After You Apply

Applicants can track whether application materials have been received by logging back in to their UW Graduate School Application. Faculty typically makes admissions decisions in late February and early March. You will be notified of our decision via e-mail.

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