DESIGN, MASTER OF FINE ARTS (M.F.A.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN DESIGN STUDIES [VCUQATAR CAMPUS]

Program accreditation
National Association of Schools of Art and Design

Mission statement

The M.F.A. in Design with a concentration in design studies defines and inhabits an area between design disciplines. The purpose of the program is to produce designers who are experts at negotiating and utilizing elements of many different fields to construct new tailored experiences.

Tomorrow's designers must be able to understand their audiences, collaborators and patrons in original and authentic ways. Global cultures already experience design in a singular fashion. The practices at VCUQ combine graphics, interaction, engineering, systems, architecture, fashion and product design into a merged experience. Designers who are able to work outside their individual discipline will be at an advantage. The designers of the future will need to navigate between forms of practice, combining elements and skills to create new products, visuals, environments and interactions.

VCUQ is looking for creative, motivated, hardworking, self-directed individuals willing to engage with challenging topics. The program sets high demands on its students, requiring them to familiarize and grasp the myriad of variables involved in meaningful design, while simultaneously having the discipline and rigor to formulate their own assessment of what being a designer — in all its guises — entails today.

Students in this program should be able to question; be open to explore and experiment; stay true to ethical foundations; lead and be bold, while being open and flexible to adjust to shifting paradigms. The school strives to expose students to a variety of tools, materials and methods, while providing the theoretical background and research methodologies that will allow each student to develop their own unique ideas.

The M.F.A. in Design with a concentration in design studies celebrates the amorphous notion of what is called "empirical vagueness," a term that encapsulates the simultaneously analytical, yet intuitive, fashion in which a design endeavor is developed. Students, alumni and faculty all play a role in exploring and fostering this as an essential, if inherently open-ended, calling.

Program goals

1. **Creative leadership:** Students will achieve mastery in creative leadership, with the skills and knowledge needed to achieve success as design professionals and entrepreneurs, educators, and researchers, and they will be able to creatively engage with the broad design community to bring added value to the regional economy, society and culture.
2. **Integrated research:** Students will integrate practice and theory to ensure the highest level of critical knowledge and to make meaningful contributions to pedagogy and teaching in the design disciplines. The program provides increased focus and visibility for individual and collaborative research activity that has an applied focus.
3. **Interdisciplinary emphasis:** Students will achieve high levels of creativity, literacy and knowledge across the design disciplines.
4. **Community impact:** Students will engage and raise social awareness.
5. **Career development:** The program will develop graduates with skills and knowledge to make meaningful contributions to pedagogy and teaching in the design disciplines. It also will provide opportunities that encourage students to engage and present their work in connection with the professional world.

Student learning outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate in speech about their research and studio activities.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate in writing about their research and studio activities.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to practice lifelong learning by dealing with new forms of design practice and other changes in the discipline.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate ideas from historical, social and cultural movements; from policies and theories; and from the dynamics of historical, social and cultural change.
5. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate technologies to projects in their field.
6. Students will demonstrate the ability to synthesize knowledge from different disciplines to solve design problems.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs)

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy)

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info)

Other information

The student handbook (http://qatar.vcu.edu/images/uploads/documents/MFA-ProgramHandbook.pdf) is available online.

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://graduate.admissions.vcu.edu)**.**

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
M.F.A.	Fall	Feb 1	TOEFL: 570 (paperbased), 230 (computer-based) or 88 (Internet-based)

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), applicants must submit the following documentation and meet the following requirements:

1. A brief statement of intent that addresses:
   a. The reason for graduate study in design studies
   b. How previous studies and experiences have prepared the applicant for the M.F.A. program
   c. Career objectives and how the M.F.A. program relates to them
2. A digital portfolio of visual or written work that includes:
   a. Samples of relevant work that show creative thinking, idea development and visualization skills
   b. Works that support the ideas shared in the statement of intent
   c. No more than 20 individual works
3. A prepared presentation (for individuals selected for the interview)
4. A resume that highlights the applicant's previous experiences and studies as they relate to graduate study at VCUQatar
5. Three letters of recommendation from former professors, teachers, mentors or supervisors familiar with the applicant's academic and/or professional ability and aptitude toward graduate study

Note: In the VCUQatar portfolio system, applicants are able to send an online form to each recommender. Alternatively, the applicant can deliver a printed recommendation letter to the Admissions Office. Download a recommendation template to use.

6. Official academic transcripts (secondary and postsecondary) for all university studies
   a. Submit officially certified copies of all academic diplomas, certificates, national and other major examination results. Transcripts in languages other than English must also include a certified English translation. Transcript(s) must be properly sealed and stamped by the issuing institution and must be delivered to VCUQatar Admissions Office either by hand or post.
   b. The address on the official online application Confirmation Page will list a Richmond, VA address for supporting materials, but all documents should be sent to the VCUQatar Admissions Office.
7. For applicants whose first language is a language other than English, an English language proficiency test with the following minimum requirements:< >TOEFL: 570 (paper-based), 230 (computer-based) or 88 (Internet-based)IELTS: 6.5Note: Test scores must be sent electronically by the testing center. The TOEFL code for admission testing to VCUQatar is 5570. There is no code for IELTS.
8. The English language proficiency tests and standardized testing (TOEFL, SAT, ACT and IELTS) can be taken at the QF Test Center in Education City. Please visit the test center's website to see the latest dates.
9. A legible copy of the applicant's passports uploaded using the online application
10. A non-refundable application fee of $50 (US) or QAR183 for each M.F.A. application (This can be paid by credit card when submitting the online application form or at the VCUQatar's Cashier Office.)

Important reminders

1. All admission supporting materials (excluding exam scores and transcripts) must be uploaded electronically using the VCUQatar online application process at https://ssb.vcu.edu.
2. Original, official TOEFL/IELTS score reports must be sent to VCUQatar via courier or delivered in person to the Admissions Office.
3. Applicants must ensure that letters of recommendation reach the office using either the VCUQatar portfolio application system or the downloadable template.
4. Only complete applications will be considered for assessment.

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info), students must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Total of 60 credit hours
2. Publication/documentation as specified
3. Qualification for degree candidacy
4. Thesis and final research project, exhibition and oral defense

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
DESI 510	Materials and Methods Studio	3
DESI 511	Studio in Digital Design and Fabrication Technology	3
DESI 512	Studio in Visual Communications	3

DESI 520	Design Research Methodologies	3
DESI 601	Interdisciplinary Design Seminar	3
DESI 605	Design Strategies and Ethics for Business	3
DESI 611	Design Studio One	6
DESI 612	Design Studio Two	6
DESI 613	Design Studio Three	6
DESI 620	Design Thesis Research and Formulation	3
DESI 621	Design Research Studio: Leadership and Entrepreneurship	3
DESI 630 or DESI 631	Teaching Practicum in Design Design Internship	3
DESI 690	Thesis Studio	9
Approved studio electives [1]		6
Total Hours		60

1

Approved electives (six credit hours) may be selected from a variety of 500- and 600-level courses offered at VCUQatar and VCU in Richmond. In addition, students are encouraged to enroll in 500- and 600-level elective courses offered by other accredited universities within Hamad bin Khalifa University in Qatar or any other internationally accredited university. Before taking a course outside of VCU, the student must submit a course syllabus to the M.F.A. in Design program director for approval.

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 60.

Sample plan of study

Probationary course work may be required prior to gaining full admission to the program. The amount and type of undergraduate course work will be determined at the time of application, and no graduate credit hours will be awarded for this probationary course work. The decision to grant full admission will be based upon successful completion of the required course work.

Semester 1		Hours
DESI 511	Studio in Digital Design and Fabrication Technology	3
DESI 520	Design Research Methodologies	3
DESI 601	Interdisciplinary Design Seminar	3
DESI 611	Design Studio One	6
	Term Hours:	15
Semester 2		
DESI 510	Materials and Methods Studio	3
DESI 512	Studio in Visual Communications	3
DESI 612	Design Studio Two	6
Approved studio elective [1]		3
	Term Hours:	15
Semester 3		
DESI 605	Design Strategies and Ethics for Business	3
DESI 613	Design Studio Three	6
DESI 620	Design Thesis Research and Formulation	3
Approved studio elective [1]		3
	Term Hours:	15

Semester 4		
DESI 621	Design Research Studio: Leadership and Entrepreneurship	3
DESI 630 or DESI 631	Teaching Practicum in Design or Design Internship	3
DESI 690	Thesis Studio	9
	Term Hours:	15
	Total Hours:	60

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