

# 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 program is interdisciplinary because designers face complex problems that defy easy categorization. Students are trained to understand audiences, collaborators and clients in original and authentic ways, combining aspects of fine art studio practice, graphics, digital craft, architecture, fashion and product design to form a hybridized education. Designers, increasingly, need to navigate between and blend disciplines, maximizing resources and working adaptively to create new environments, visuals, messaging and products. The program's strength lies in its ability to support each student's unique interests, providing a custom education, tailored to each individual.

The program sets high expectations, requiring a high degree of discipline and rigor in pursuit of nuanced, meaningful work. Students are inquisitive and open-minded, eager to explore and experiment. In the program, they develop acuity with a variety of tools, materials and processes, combined with a grounding in theory and research. By these means, each student is empowered to develop a unique research focus and body of work.

## Program goals

1. **Creative production:** Students will produce authentic and innovative work, which is personally motivated but broadly accessible, leveraging each individual's unique voice.
2. **Integrated research:** Students will integrate practice and theory, producing rigorous research writing alongside systematically developed tangible outcomes. The program provides multiple opportunities for both individual and collaborative research activities with an applied focus.
3. **Critical perspective:** Students will seek nuanced solutions via patient, thoughtful progress, developing habits of iterative development. Students will practice vigorous, cross-disciplinary exchange, honing their ability to communicate effectively and persuasively.
4. **Cultural impact:** Students will engage and raise social awareness. Students will practice depth of understanding as a pathway to meaningful innovation.

## 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. (<https://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. (<https://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. (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>)

## Other information

The student handbook ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K\\_roL4re57GVua-IUA8XoUDtSMUKZbIf/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K_roL4re57GVua-IUA8XoUDtSMUKZbIf/view?usp=sharing)) is available online.

Apply online today. (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/>)

## 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 (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements/>), applicants must submit the following documentation and meet the following requirements:

- A brief statement of intent that addresses:
  - The reason for graduate study in design studies
  - How previous studies and experiences have prepared the applicant for the M.F.A. program
  - Career objectives and how the M.F.A. program relates to them
- A digital portfolio of visual or written work that includes:
  - Samples of relevant work that show creative thinking, idea development and visualization skills
  - Works that support the ideas shared in the statement of intent
  - No more than 20 individual works
- A prepared presentation (for individuals selected for the interview)
- A resume that highlights the applicant's previous experiences and studies as they relate to graduate study at VCUQatar
- 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.
- Official academic transcripts (secondary and postsecondary) for all university studies
  - 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.
  - 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- A legible copy of the applicant's passports uploaded using the online application
- A non-refundable application fee of \$70 (US) or QAR255 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

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

## Degree requirements

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

- Total of 60 credit hours
- Publication/documentation as specified
- Qualification for degree candidacy
- 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 <sup>1</sup>		6
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>60</b>

<sup>1</sup>

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
<b>Term Hours:</b>		<b>15</b>
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 <sup>1</sup>		3
<b>Term Hours:</b>		<b>15</b>
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 <sup>1</sup>		3
<b>Term Hours:</b>		<b>15</b>
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
<b>Term Hours:</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Total Hours:</b>		<b>60</b>

<sup>1</sup>

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### Contact

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**Program website:** [qatar.vcu.edu/mfa](http://qatar.vcu.edu/mfa/) (<http://qatar.vcu.edu/mfa/>)