

BUSINESS, MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN BRANDING/ART DIRECTION

Program goals

The VCU Brandcenter offers graduate study in advertising, branding and experience design. The program offers a Master of Science in Business with a concentration in branding, and it is divided into five focus areas (subconcentrations): art direction, copywriting, creative brand management, experience design and strategy.

The Brandcenter program is focused on preparing students for successful careers. The working environment is similar to that of agencies and their clients. Teams of students work together to develop ideas and campaigns that solve business problems strategically and creatively. They also learn how to present those ideas in engaging and persuasive ways.

After their first year, qualified students are offered internships where they gain experience and foster industry relationships. In their second year, students have the opportunity to network with professional mentors, guest speakers, alumni and recruiters from agencies and organizations around the country. Once students graduate, they become part of a tight-knit alumni network.

Student learning outcomes

1. **Presentation skills:** Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively present/sell their ideas in a clear, concise and compelling manner.
2. **Collaboration:** Students will demonstrate their ability to work together in cross-functional teams/groups (i.e., as art directors, copywriters, creative brand managers, experience designers and strategists) to develop viable business/marketing solutions.
3. **Creative and critical problem-solving:** Students will demonstrate the ability to research consumer culture (via secondary research, syndicated research and qualitative/quantitative research methods) and evaluate consumer media/technology usage habits to develop media-neutral business solutions.
4. **Culture:** Students will demonstrate an appreciation, interest in and openness for different cultures (both national and international) yielding more relevant, culturally savvy business solutions.
5. **Craft:** Students will demonstrate the ability to execute specific skills related to their individual subconcentration.

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 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.

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.

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.

Other information

School of Business policies and procedures for graduate master's degree students are available on the school's website at business.vcu.edu/graduate-studies/current-graduate-students (<http://business.vcu.edu/graduate-studies/current-graduate-students>).

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (<http://www.graduate.admissions.vcu.edu>), and also complete the VCU Brandcenter application at brandcenter.vcu.edu/admissions (<http://brandcenter.vcu.edu/admissions>).

Admission requirements

| Degree: | Semester(s) of entry: | Deadline dates: | Test requirements: |
|---------|-----------------------|--|--------------------|
| M.S. | Fall | Apr 15 (final deadline for international students) | May 15 |

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements>), applicants to the concentration must have a working knowledge of Photoshop and InDesign and knowledge of

layout, design and typography. Applicants must have at least one year of working experience or have taken an undergraduate course or a tutorial in these skills.

Degree requirements

The M.S. in Business with a concentration in branding requires 42 graduate credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. Students devote two years of full-time study to complete the degree requirements. In addition to the VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info>), all students in the Brandcenter must complete a core curriculum as well as courses required for a specific subconcentration and must present a final major project, in portfolio form, before a committee review panel.

Curriculum requirements

| Course | Title | Hours |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Core | | |
| BRND 631 | Craft | 3 |
| BRND 648 | Innovation | 3 |
| BRND 651 | Creative Thinking | 3 |
| BRND 659 | Brand Experiences | 3 |
| BRND 664 | Persuasion | 3 |
| BRND 677 | The Business of Branding | 3 |
| BRND 696 | Advanced Portfolio | 3 |
| Branding/art direction | | |
| BRND 622 | Visual Storytelling | 3 |
| BRND 630 | Problem Solving for Art Directors | 3 |
| BRND 633 | User Participation Platforms | 3 |
| BRND 652 | Concept Development | 3 |
| BRND 653 | Portfolio Development | 3 |
| BRND 670 | Creative Fusion | 3 |
| BRND 673 | Experimentation | 3 |
| Total Hours | | 42 |

Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 42

Graduate program director

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Program website: brandcenter.vcu.edu (<http://brandcenter.vcu.edu>)