Admission and standards of graphic design

Students who have successfully completed the Art Foundation Program may apply for admission into the graphic design B.F.A. program. Due to the sequence of the required graphic design courses, students are admitted only in the fall semester. All applicants must submit a portfolio of work. The Department of Graphic Design uses the portfolio evaluation criteria established in the School of the Arts for initial acceptance.

Students who wish to transfer into the Graphic Design Program must first apply to the Art Foundation Program for evaluation. A transfer student who has successfully completed the Art Foundation Program must demonstrate equivalent preparation at another institution and student who has successfully completed the Art Foundation Program may apply for admission into the graphic design B.F.A. program. Due to the sequence of the required graphic design courses, students are admitted only in the fall semester. All applicants must submit a portfolio of work. The Department of Graphic Design uses the portfolio evaluation criteria established in the School of the Arts for initial acceptance.

1. Students must complete the required pre- and corequisites of the graphic design program in the order presented in the curriculum outline. This structure enables students to develop knowledge and skills based in graphic design that will prepare them for upper-level studio courses and successful entry into the graphic design profession.

2. Students are required to meet regularly with the department undergraduate adviser each semester on scheduled advising dates to make sure they are completing courses as required and are preparing for the portfolio reviews as needed.

3. Students must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 to be accepted to the graphic design program. Once accepted, students must maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA in GDES courses to continue in the program.

4. A portfolio review of graphic design studio work takes place at the end of the sophomore year. The student’s portfolio, GPA and individual course evaluations are evaluated during this review to determine if the student may continue in the program. Additionally, the following courses must be completed at the end of the sophomore year to be eligible for continuation in the program:

   - GDES 202 Design Technology 3
   - GDES 205 Design Methods and Processes 3
   - GDES 211 Typography I 3
   - GDES 212 Design Form and Communication 3,6
   - GDES 213 Typography II 3
   - GDES 214 Imaging I 3
   - GDES 216 Imaging II 3
   - GDES 252 History of Visual Communication 3

5. A second portfolio review of graphic design studio work takes place at the end of the junior year. The student’s portfolio, GPA and individual course evaluations are evaluated during this review to determine if the student may continue in the graphic design program.

6. Students are required to have a laptop computer and appropriate software upon initial entry into the graphic design program. Students will receive the specific technology requirements upon acceptance into the program. Students have an option to purchase a computer package at an academic discount or lease the same equipment through the School of the Arts Computer Center.

Learning outcomes

Upon completing this program, students will know and know how to do the following:

- **Utilize forms of communication**: With a sense of aesthetics, personal and professional integrity, and message clarity, students will utilize visual and verbal forms of communication to convey ideas and information.

- **Address needs of client and audience**: Students will demonstrate an understanding of their responsibility to client and audience — determining needs, structuring problems and solving problems creatively.

- **Focus on ethics**: Students will solve communication problems with a focus on their positive ethical impact upon culture and society.

- **Embrace technology as a vehicle of communication**: Students will demonstrate the ability to use new and emerging technology as a vehicle of effective communication and a means for the invention of expressive form.

- **Practice design as a dynamic process**: Students will understand and practice design as a process that relies upon intuition, reason, ideation methods and effective research for the creation of appropriate and inventive solutions.

Special requirements

Once accepted, students must maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA in GDES courses to continue in the program. Student GDES course work GPA that falls below 2.5 by the end of the following semester. Students failing to bring their GDES course work GPA to a minimum of 2.5 by the end of the following semester. Students placed on departmental probation for the next semester. Students placed on GDES GPA probation must bring their GDES course work GPA to a minimum of 2.5 by the end of the following semester. Students failing to bring their GDES course work GPA to a minimum of 2.5 by the end of that semester are no longer permitted to continue in the program.

Degree requirements for Bachelor of Fine Arts, Graphic Design (B.F.A.)

General Education requirements

University Core Education Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNIV 111</td>
<td>Play course video for Focused Inquiry I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIV 112</td>
<td>Play course video for Focused Inquiry II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIV 200</td>
<td>Inquiry and the Craft of Argument</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approved humanities/fine arts | 3
Approved natural/physical sciences | 3-4
Approved quantitative literacy | 3-4
Approved social/behavioral sciences | 3-4
Total Hours: 21-24
**Graphic Design, Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.)**

**Additional General Education requirements**
- General Education electives 9

**Total Hours**
- 9

**Collateral requirements**

**Art Foundation Program**
- ARTF 131 Drawing Studio 3
- ARTF 132 Surface Research 3
- ARTF 133 Space Research 3
- ARTF 134 Time Studio 3
- ARTF 139 Project 2

**Art history**
- ARTH 103 Survey of Art I 3
- ARTH 104 Survey of Art II 3

**Total Hours**
- 20

**Major requirements**
- GDES 202 Design Technology 3
- GDES 205 Design Methods and Processes 3
- GDES 211 Typography I 3
- GDES 212 Design Form and Communication 3
- GDES 213 Typography II 3
- GDES 214 Imaging I 3
- GDES 216 Imaging II 3
- GDES 252 History of Visual Communication 3
- GDES 253 Theory and Philosophy of Visual Communication 3
- GDES 343 Systems in Design 3
- GDES 345 Print I 3
- GDES 346 Visual Narrative I 3
- GDES 347 Interaction I 3
- GDES 365 Print II 3
- GDES 367 Interaction II 3
- GDES 470 Senior Seminar 3
- GDES 472 Senior Studio (capstone) 3

**Total Hours**
- 51

**GDES electives**
- Select 12 GDES elective credits at the 300- to 500-level 12

**Open electives**
- Select nine open elective credits 9

**Total minimum requirement 122 credits**

**Electives**
- GDES 301 Beginning Letterpress 3
- GDES 302 Book Arts 3
- GDES 308 Web Design 3
- GDES 356 Studio Management 3
- GDES 391 Lecture Topics in Design 1-3
- GDES 392 Research/Individual Study 2-4
- GDES 401 Advanced Letterpress 3
- GDES 403 Design Activism 3
- GDES 404 Typeface Design 3
- GDES 408 Advanced Web Design 3
- GDES 412 Typography III 3
- GDES 413 Package Design 3
- GDES 414 Exhibition and Environmental Graphic Design 3
- GDES 417 Interdisciplinary Team Design 3
- GDES 418 Design Center 3-9
- GDES 445 Problem Seeking 3
- GDES 491 Studio Topics in Design 3
- GDES 492 Design Internship 1-3

What follows is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact your adviser before beginning course work toward a degree.

**Freshman year**

**Fall semester**
- Hours
  - ARTF 131 Drawing Studio 3
  - ARTF 132 Surface Research 3
  - ARTH 103 Survey of Art I 3
  - Term Hours: 16

**Spring semester**
- Hours
  - ARTF 133 Space Research 3
  - ARTF 134 Time Studio 3
  - Term Hours: 16

**Sophomore year**

**Fall semester**
- Hours
  - GDES 202 Design Technology 3
  - GDES 205 Design Methods and Processes 3
  - GDES 211 Typography I 3
  - GDES 212 Design Form and Communication 3
  - UNIV 200 Inquiry and the Craft of Argument 3
  - Term Hours: 15

**Spring semester**
- GDES 213 Typography II 3
- GDES 214 Imaging I 3
- GDES 252 History of Visual Communication 3
- UNIV 200 Inquiry and the Craft of Argument 3
- Term Hours: 15

**Freshman year**

**Fall semester**
- Hours
  - ARTF 131 Drawing Studio 3
  - ARTF 132 Surface Research 3
  - ARTH 103 Survey of Art I 3
  - Term Hours: 16

**Spring semester**
- Hours
  - ARTF 133 Space Research 3
  - ARTF 134 Time Studio 3
  - Term Hours: 16

**Sophomore year**

**Fall semester**
- Hours
  - GDES 202 Design Technology 3
  - GDES 205 Design Methods and Processes 3
  - GDES 211 Typography I 3
  - GDES 212 Design Form and Communication 3
  - UNIV 200 Inquiry and the Craft of Argument 3
  - Term Hours: 15

**Spring semester**
- GDES 213 Typography II 3
- GDES 214 Imaging I 3
- GDES 252 History of Visual Communication 3
- UNIV 200 Inquiry and the Craft of Argument 3
- Term Hours: 15
GDES 253  Theory and Philosophy of Visual Communication  3

| Term Hours: | 15 |

**Junior year**

**Fall semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDES 343</td>
<td>Systems in Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDES 345</td>
<td>Print I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDES 347</td>
<td>Interaction I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDES elective (300- to 500-level)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities/fine arts course (University Core)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Hours:</td>
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**Spring semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDES 346</td>
<td>Visual Narrative I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDES 365</td>
<td>Print II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDES 367</td>
<td>Interaction II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural/physical sciences course (University Core)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Hours:</td>
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**Senior year**

**Fall semester**

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDES 470</td>
<td>Senior Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDES Elective (300- to 500-level)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education electives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open elective (300- to 500-level)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Hours:</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Spring semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GDES 472</td>
<td>Senior Studio (capstone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDES electives (300- to 500-level)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open electives (300- to 500-level)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term Hours:</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Hours: | 122 |

**GDES 202. Design Technology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: successful completion of the Art Foundation Program. A design foundation workshop that emphasizes skills development and application of design technology time and project management, visual thinking, image capturing and editing.

**GDES 205. Design Methods and Processes. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An in-depth investigation of the theoretical aspects of the design process within the context of designing effective visual communications.

**GDES 211. Typography I. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: ARTF 131, ARTF 132, ARTF 133 and ARTF 134. An introduction to communication problem-solving through the visual medium of language. The fundamentals of typography and typographic design are explored in experimental and practical projects.

**GDES 212. Design Form and Communication. 3,6 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours or 4 lecture and 6 studio hours. 3 credits for Richmond; 6 credits for VCUQ. Prerequisites: ARTF 131, ARTF 132, ARTF 133 and ARTF 134. The relationship of form and communication in graphic design is explored through theoretical and applied projects. The impact of typography and imagery and their syntactic relations upon audience and content is stressed.

**GDES 213. Typography II. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 211. An intermediate exploration of typography as an expressive and functional communication vehicle. Emphasis is placed on defining effective design criteria to meet the reader’s needs, the communicator’s intent and the designer’s formal sensibilities.

**GDES 214. Imaging I. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: ARTF 131, ARTF 132, ARTF 133 and ARTF 134. Enrollment requires successful completion of the Art Foundation Program. A studio course focusing on the use of digital imaging techniques for communication purposes. The processes and techniques for making and working with digital images are explored.

**GDES 216. Imaging II. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 214. A studio course focusing on the creation of visual images for communication purposes. The processes and media for making visual images and the limits of visual literacy are explored.

**GDES 252. History of Visual Communication. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An investigation of contemporary visual communication concepts, media and images, and their role in contemporary society.

**GDES 253. Theory and Philosophy of Visual Communication. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An overview of theoretical and philosophical issues influencing the practice of visual communication design.

**GDES 301. Beginning Letterpress. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An introductory/intermediate printmaking studio course designed for students interested in developing their visual vocabulary in letterpress and relief printing. Students will undertake critical analysis of the letterpress medium and utilize techniques to develop and produce finished editions of each assigned task.

**GDES 302. Book Arts. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An introduction to the tools, materials and craft of contemporary bookmaking. Investigation of bookbinding, handcraft and related techniques.

**GDES 308. Web Design. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: permission of instructor. A course developing the design of websites. Emphasis is placed on the visual design, navigation, development, communication and authoring of websites.

**GDES 330. The Business of Design. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This course introduces basic global economics and general design business concepts such as the free enterprise system, legal forms of business and financial considerations. It also surveys business and management practices such as planning, decision-making, communication, global ethics, marketing, human resources, finance and entrepreneurial skills needed to open a design business. Crosslisted as: IDES 330/FASH 330.

**GDES 343. Systems in Design. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 205, GDES 213 and GDES 216. The study of systematic and methodological approaches to communication design through the solving of complex problems in visual communication. Emphasis is placed on objective process and research in approaches to various professional situations.
GDES 345. Print I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 205, GDES 213 and GDES 216. An introduction to the design process and applied realizations of print-based materials and outcomes. Addresses the form and communication of the printed page from the tradition of print to the organizational principles outside that tradition. Objectives accomplished through lectures, demonstrations and problem-solving.

GDES 346. Visual Narrative I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 205, GDES 213 and GDES 216. Studio course that introduces the conceptual and technical issues involved in the design and production of sequential documents and time-based compositions. Addresses the possibilities and limitations of the integration of word, image, video and sound as they relate to problem-solving in visual communication.

GDES 347. Interaction I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 205, GDES 213 and GDES 216. An introduction to the conceptual and technical issues involved in the design and production of interactive documents and environments. Addresses the possibilities and limitations of computer-generated images, sound and digital video as they relate to problem-solving in visual communication.

GDES 356. Studio Management. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. A study of business and management factors that relate to creative design. Topics include marketing, structure and organization; financial factors; ethical and legal aspects; and management of design, illustration and photography studios.

GDES 357. Print II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 345. An advanced studio course devoted to the study of systematic and methodological approaches to the design process and applied realization of print-based materials and outcomes. Emphasizes rigorous objective and experimental research methods in approaches to various professional situations. Objectives accomplished through lectures, demonstrations and team-based approaches to problem-solving.

GDES 365. Studio Management. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 205, GDES 213 and GDES 216. An introduction to the design and production of advanced projects in interaction design and experience design with focus on research, problem definition and team-based approaches to problem-solving.

GDES 370. Design History: 20th and 21st Centuries. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: ARTF 105-106. Study of the major theories and styles on communication arts, fashion and interior environments of the 20th and 21st centuries. Contemporary analysis of cultural conditions and the manner in which designers respond to those conditions. Crosslisted as: FASH 370/IDES 370.

GDES 391. Lecture Topics in Design. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits per semester. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 credits. Topical lectures in design issues and visual communications.

GDES 392. Research/Individual Study. 2-4 Hours.
Semester course; 1-2 lecture and 3-6 studio hours. 2-4 credits. May be repeated for a total of 6 credits. Enrollment requires permission of instructor, approval of faculty adviser and chair. The structuring, research, execution and presentation of an independent project in visual communications under the direction of a faculty adviser. The student will be encouraged to become a self-generating problem seeker and solver with the ability to carry out self-stated goals.

GDES 401. Advanced Letterpress. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 301. An advanced print studio course designed for students interested in exploring their visual vocabulary in digital and letterpress relief printing. Students will undertake critical analysis of the combined media of digital and letterpress and utilize techniques inherent within each technology to develop and produce finished editions.

GDES 403. Design Activism. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. An overview of the ethical issues faced by practitioners in the field of design and proactive roles available outside of the traditional client/designer relationship. The course presents critiques of the various roles that designers play in the areas of marketing, advertising, product development, and as entrepreneurs and content generators. The course includes a component in which problem identification, team work and real-world engagement are required.

GDES 404. Typeface Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Glyph construction is explored through historical and methodological analysis as well as the creation of typographic systems. Formal mechanics of typefaces are emphasized in discussion of their function as vehicles for communication. Both the functional and expressive nature of typefaces are examined through hands-on exercises.

GDES 408. Advanced Web Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 308. Investigation into the design and development of dynamic websites. Introduces database integration, webhost management and advanced coding techniques. Emphasis is placed on the semantic design and development of content-rich websites and blogs.

GDES 412. Typography III. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: GDES 212. Advanced problems in typographic design with emphasis on the development of a personal creative approach to form and communication.

GDES 413. Package Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 213 and 367. Theoretical and studio investigation of three-dimensional structural principals as they relate to the area of packaging, exhibition and environmental design.

GDES 414. Exhibition and Environmental Graphic Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 213 and 366. Study of the presentation of information in large-scale, three-dimensional formats. Exploration of exhibition and environmental design, including developing imagery and typography, understanding the use of "wayfinding" (identification, interpretation and orientation) and human factors, communicating of programmed content.
GDES 417. Interdisciplinary Team Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: GDES 213 and 366. Advanced projects in visual communication in which student design teams solve complex problems requiring collaboration.

GDES 418. Design Center. 3-9 Hours.
Semester course; 2-6 lecture and 3-9 studio hours. 3-9 credits. May be repeated for a total of 12 credits. Enrollment requires portfolio review by faculty. A professional studio to give students practicum experience working with faculty on self-initiated and client-initiated, real-world design projects.

GDES 445. Problem Seeking. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A seminar exploring the nature, scope and implications of defining design objectives in terms of limitations, requirements and potentials of a product's implementation, performance and life cycle.

GDES 470. Senior Seminar. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. An examination of selected theoretical, historical, aesthetic and social areas of concern to the graphic designer. Scholarly research, critical analysis and discussion are expected.

GDES 472. Senior Studio. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. A capstone course oriented toward the creation of a professional portfolio, self-promotional materials and business system. The course culminates in the annual Senior Show.

GDES 491. Studio Topics in Design. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a total of 12 credits. Topical studio focusing on research and experimentation in specialized visual communication media.

GDES 492. Design Internship. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 3 credits. Prerequisites: senior standing. 3.0 GPA or permission of the chair. Supervised pragmatic work experiences. Training is provided under the direction and supervision of qualified professional practitioners.