DESIGN + INNOVATION, M.S.

The Master of Science in Design + Innovation program is an interdisciplinary degree combining engineering, business, human ecology, user experience, and art. It is a collaboration between the College of Engineering, School of Human Ecology, School of Business, the Art Department within the School of Education, and the Information School in the College of Letters & Science. The degree will prepare students to solve complex problems by providing them with a robust set of design thinking strategies and tools from multiple perspectives. Graduates will be equipped to work across disciplines and innovate in their respective field. Coursework will include hands-on learning opportunities and is intended to be completed in 12 months.

The Master of Science in Design + Innovation program is not a STEM-OPT program, CIP code: 30.9999 Multi-/Interdisciplinary Studies, Other.

ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. ***Applicants must meet*** the minimum requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/) ***) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).*** Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	February 1*
Spring Deadline	This program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	This program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English must provide an English proficiency test score and meet the Graduate School minimum requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency). This program does not allow exceptions. See minimum scores below.
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	2

*
Rolling admission will begin after October 1, with a final application deadline of February 1.

All application materials must be submitted online through the Graduate School's application portal (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/). Applications will open approximately one calendar year prior to the start of the program. Do NOT send any paper copies of documents by mail (email or paper mail) unless specifically requested to do so by the Graduate Admissions Team. Applications must be complete to be reviewed by the Graduate Admissions Team.

1. Online application: https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/.
2. Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)
3. Creative Brief: We require submission of a creative brief that includes three parts: a) a Statement of Purpose, b) a short Design Prompt, and c) a Portfolio of Past Work. All applicants must upload a Creative Brief that includes all three parts as a single PDF document. This document must be uploaded in the online application "Statement" tab and cannot exceed 4 MB. The 4 MB file limit requires applicants to select their most relevant work and present it concisely.
   Note: We do not accept links to web portfolios in lieu of a PDF portfolio. If, however, you wish to include a reference to a multimedia project that includes video, audio, podcast or other time-based media you may include these as links in your portfolio. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that links are functional. Review of this external material is at the discretion of the admissions committee.
   a. Statement of Purpose: In 250-500 words, please respond to the following question: "Why are you interested in the Master of Science in Design + Innovation program and what do you hope to get out of the program?"
   b. Design Prompt: In 250-500 words, please answer the following prompt: "If you could redesign anything (think broadly: product, process, service, brand, experience, etc.), what would it be? Why? What are the first three things you would do to get started?"
   c. Portfolio of Work: In no more than 10 pages/slides, please tell the story of 2-3 recent projects of which you are proud. Be as visual as possible, including project images and sketches. Make sure to explain project context, key insights, and the design and innovation process you used. The Portfolio of Work must be uploaded as part of the Creative Brief. We do not accept links to web portfolios.
   Note: The MDI admissions committee recognizes that students from different disciplines will have different portfolios of work. The goal of this submission is to demonstrate your critical, analytical, and creative thinking abilities, as well as your promise as a future designer. Focus on telling us who you are, through all of the ways you express your creativity, motivation and drive to design.

4. Unofficial transcripts: All applicants must upload a copy of their transcript from their undergraduate institution and other previous higher education institutions, including other graduate studies. An official transcript is not part of the online application process unless specifically requested in writing by the Admissions Team.
5. Two (2) letters of recommendation: Enter the recommender email contact information into the online application. Recommenders will receive an email with instructions for the survey and recommendation letter upload process. We do not accept recommendation letters via email, paper format, or online portfolios.
6. English Proficiency Scores (TOEFL/IELTS) – required for those whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English. The required proficiency scores are:
   Minimum TOEFL requirement: 92 internet (iBT); 580 paper-based test (PBT)
   Minimum IELTS requirement: 7.0

Minimum IELTS Indicator requirement: 7.0

**Note: We do not accept Duolingo.

Scores are accepted if they are within two years of the start of the admissions term for which applicants are applying. TOEFL scores should be electronically sent directly from Educational Testing Service (ETS) to **institution code 1846** (no department code is needed). IELTS scores should be electronically sent directly from IELTS to **UW–Madison, Graduate Studies.**

7. Application Fee
8. Personal Interview (if necessary) - A personal interview with MDI program staff (in the form of a telephone call or video chat) may be required.

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Students enrolled in this program are not eligible to receive tuition remission from graduate assistantship appointments at this institution.

FEDERAL LOANS

Students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents may be eligible to receive some level of funding through the federal direct loan program. These loans are available to qualified graduate students who are taking at least 4 credits during the fall and spring semesters, and 2 credits during summer. Private loans are also available. Learn more about financial aid at their website (https://financialaid.wisc.edu/).

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

For information on International Student Funding and Scholarships visit the ISS website (https://iss.wisc.edu/students/new-students/funding-scholarships/).

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS
MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	Yes

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	30 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	15 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Details can be found in the Graduate School's Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) policy (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/)).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. This program follows the Graduate School's GPA Requirement policy (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/)).
Other Grade Requirements	Students must earn a C or above in all coursework. Students may not have any more than two incompletes on their record at any one time.
Assessments and Examinations	None.
Language Requirements	No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
Core Courses - required of all students (18 credits)		
DS 641	Advanced Design Thinking for Transformation	3

INTEREGR 477	Tools for Prototyping and Manufacturing	3
INTER-HE 940	Collaborative Capstone I	3
INTEREGR 941	Collaborative Capstone II	3
One of the following:		
L I S 707	Data Visualization and Communication for Decision Making	3
or DS 620	Visual Thinking for Problem Solving	
One of the following:		
OTM 701	Product Management	3
or OTM 760	Managing by Design	
or MARKETNG 737	New Product Innovation	
or M H R 715	Strategic Management of Innovation	
or M H R 734	Venture Creation	
Specializations [1]		**12**

Students select one specialization in addition to the Core Courses. Students may select courses across the specialization lists with approval of their faculty advisor. 12 credits minimum required.

Product Design

DS/COMP SCI/ I SY E 518	Wearable Technology
DS 527	Global Artisans
DS/ COMP SCI 579	Virtual Reality
CNSR SCI 657	Consumer Behavior
L I S/ COMP SCI 611	User Experience Design 1
I SY E/ PSYCH 349	Introduction to Human Factors
I SY E/ PSYCH 549	Human Factors Engineering
I SY E 552	Human Factors Engineering Design and Evaluation
M E/E C E 439	Introduction to Robotics
M E 449	Redesign and Prototype Fabrication
M E 549	Product Design
MARKETNG 737	New Product Innovation [2]
M H R 734	Venture Creation [2]
M H R 741	Technology Entrepreneurship
OTM 701	Product Management [2]
ART 346	Basic Graphic Design
ART 409	Digital Fabrication Studio
ART 428	Digital Imaging Studio
ART 429	3D Digital Studio I

UI/UX Design

DS/ COMP SCI 579	Virtual Reality
L I S/ COMP SCI 611	User Experience Design 1
L I S/ COMP SCI 612	User Experience Design 2
L I S/ COMP SCI 613	User Experience Design 3

L I S 646	Introduction to Info Architecture and Interaction Design for the Web
L I S 661	Information Ethics and Policy
I SY E/ PSYCH 349	Introduction to Human Factors
I SY E/COMP SCI/ DS 518	Wearable Technology
I SY E/ PSYCH 549	Human Factors Engineering
M H R 734	Venture Creation [2]
M H R 741	Technology Entrepreneurship
ART 346	Basic Graphic Design
ART 428	Digital Imaging Studio
ART 438	History of Graphic Design and Typography
ART 528	Digital Interactive Studio
ART 529	3D Digital Studio II

Communication Design

ART 318	Introduction to Video, Performance & Installation Art
ART 346	Basic Graphic Design
ART 409	Digital Fabrication Studio
ART 428	Digital Imaging Studio
ART 429	3D Digital Studio I
ART 438	History of Graphic Design and Typography
ART 528	Digital Interactive Studio
ART 529	3D Digital Studio II
DS/ COMP SCI 579	Virtual Reality
DS/ LAND ARC 639	Culture and Built Environment
DS 620	Visual Thinking for Problem Solving [2]
L I S 707	Data Visualization and Communication for Decision Making [2]

Design Strategy

CSCS 335	Communicating with Key Audiences
CSCS 455	Entrepreneurialism and Society
CNSR SCI 555	Consumer Design Strategies & Evaluation
CNSR SCI 561	Consumer Engagement Strategies
CNSR SCI 562	The Global Consumer
CNSR SCI 567	Product Development Strategies in Retailing
CNSR SCI 657	Consumer Behavior
HDFS 872	Bridging the Gap Between Research and Action
DS 527	Global Artisans
DS/ LAND ARC 639	Culture and Built Environment
I SY E/ PSYCH 349	Introduction to Human Factors
M E 549	Product Design

M H R 715	Strategic Management of Innovation [2]	
M H R 723	Business Strategy	
M H R 734	Venture Creation [2]	
M H R 741	Technology Entrepreneurship	
MARKETNG 737	New Product Innovation [2]	
Total Credits		**30**

1

These specializations are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Specialization names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

2

Course may be counted towards a specialization area only if it was not taken as a Core Requirement. Students may NOT double count this course for the Core Requirement and the Specialization.

Students in this program may not take courses outside the prescribed curriculum without faculty advisor and program director approval. Students in this program cannot enroll concurrently in other undergraduate, graduate or certificate programs.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES
PRIOR COURSEWORK
Graduate Work from Other Institutions
Students will not be permitted to use credits from previously earned graduate coursework.

UW–Madison Undergraduate
With advisor approval, up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above may be counted toward the degree specialization areas (not the core degree requirements). These credits may be counted toward the minimum graduate coursework (50%) requirement if they are in courses numbered 700 or above. No credits may be counted toward the minimum graduate residence credit requirement. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

UW–Madison University Special
This program follows the Graduate School's policy for Transfer from UW–Madison University Special Student Career at UW–Madison. (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/)

PROBATION
This program follows the Graduate School's Probation policy. (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/)

1. Good standing (progressing according to standards; any funding guarantee remains in place).

2. Probation (not progressing according to standards but permitted to enroll; loss of funding guarantee; specific plan with dates and deadlines in place in regard to removal of probationary status).

3. Unsatisfactory progress (not progressing according to standards; not permitted to enroll, dismissal, leave of absence or change of advisor or program).

ADVISOR
All students will be assigned an advisor who assists them in planning a course sequence that meets degrees requirements and who will discuss career objectives with the students.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED
15 credits

TIME LIMITS
This program follows the Graduate School's Time Limits policy. (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/)

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS
These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/)
    - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/)
- Dean of Students Office (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (http://www.eao.wisc.edu/) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (https://grad.wisc.edu/) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (https://compliance.wisc.edu/) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/) (for concerns about discrimination)

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances.

OTHER
Additional Prior Coursework Policies (these policies are in addition to the prior coursework policies listed above):

1. **Graduate Program Credits earned in other UW–Madison Graduate Programs:** With advisor approval: a) Students with an earned UW-Madison Master's degree may be permitted to use up to 7 credits toward the MS in Design + Innovation program. b) Students without an earned Master's degree, but who have completed Master's credits, may be permitted to use up to 12 credits in the MS in Design + Innovation program. c) Students with PhD credits or an earned PhD degree may be permitted to use up to 12 credits in the MS in Design + Innovation program.
2. **Undergraduate credits from other institutions:** Undergraduate credits from other institutions are not permitted to be used in the MS in Design + Innovation program.
3. **MAD-UX Certificate Credits:** With program approval, students are allowed to count up to 9 credits. Courses must be 300 level or above, earned "B" or better grade, and earned less than 5 years prior to the start of the MS in Design + Innovation program.

Students are strongly discouraged to pursue positions as Project Assistants, Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants during their time in this program, as the rigor and accelerated nature of this program may not accommodate those work time commitments. Students in this program will not receive the tuition remission that is typically part of the compensation package for a graduate assistantship.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

M.S. DESIGN + INNOVATION PROGRAM RESOURCES

Please visit our program website (https://mdi.wisc.edu/career-development/) for more information.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate creative, independent problem solving skills and entrepreneurial thinking.
2. Apply design tools and strategies on interdisciplinary teams and projects.
3. Communicate effectively both visually and orally.
4. Implement an iterative design thinking process.
5. Demonstrate a hands-on, iterative process that includes making, creating and designing.
6. Gain depth in a field of study that can be applied in a social, global and design context.
7. Apply principles of ethical and professional conduct in a field experience.

PEOPLE

M.S. DESIGN + INNOVATION STAFF

Trudy Watt, School of Human Ecology, Academic Director

Sara Hladilek, College of Engineering, Graduate Student Services Coordinator

Lee DeBaillie, College of Engineering, Program Director

Anna Denucci, Division of Continuing Studies, Enrollment & Recruiting Coach

AFFILIATED FACULTY AND STAFF

Carly Benish, College of Engineering, Shop Manager

Holly Burns, School of Human Ecology, Instructional Specialist

Kristin R. Eschenfelder, Information School (iSchool), College of Letters and Science, Professor and Director

Jenny Grieber, Academic Program Manager, MS Information & Capstone Certificates

Taekyeom Lee, Art, School of Education, Assistant Professor

Matthew Mabee, College of Engineering, Shop Manager

Maggie Muldowney, College of Engineering, Operations Manager

Lennon P. Rodgers, College of Engineering, Director of Grainger Engineering Design Innovation Lab

Lesley H. Sager, Design Studies, School of Human Ecology, Faculty Associate

John Surdyk, Management and Human Resources, School of Business, Director of the Initiative for Studies in Transformational Entrepreneurship and Faculty Director of the Entrepreneurial Residential Learning Community

ACCREDITATION

ACCREDITATION

National Association of Schools of Art and Design (https://nasad.arts-accredit.org/)

Accreditation status: Not accredited. Planned 2025-2026