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/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Deadline</td>
<td>February 1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Deadline</td>
<td>This program does not admit in the spring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Deadline</td>
<td>This program does not admit in the summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)</td>
<td>Not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Proficiency Test</td>
<td>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 (<a href="https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency">https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency</a>). This program does not allow exceptions. See minimum scores below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Instruction</th>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Credit Requirement</td>
<td>30 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Residence Credit Requirement</td>
<td>16 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement</td>
<td>15 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Details can be found in the Graduate School’s Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) policy (<a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Graduate GPA Requirement</td>
<td>3.00 GPA required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation GPA Requirement Policy</td>
<td>This program follows the Graduate School’s GPA Requirement policy (<a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grade Requirements</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS**

None.

**Language Requirements**

No language requirements.

**REQUIRED COURSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DS 641</td>
<td>Advanced Design Thinking for Transformation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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:
LIS 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 MHR 715  Strategic Management of Innovation
or MHR 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
LIS/ 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/ECE  439  Introduction to Robotics
M E  449  Redesign and Prototype Fabrication
M E  549  Product Design
MARKETING 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
LIS/ COMP SCI  611  User Experience Design 1
LIS/ COMP SCI  612  User Experience Design 2
LIS/ COMP SCI  613  User Experience Design 3
LIS 646  Introduction to Info Architecture and Interaction Design for the Web
LIS 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/ COMP SCI/ DS  518  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
LIS 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
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.

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.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES**

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures ([https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/](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/](https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/))

**PROBATION**
This program follows the Graduate School’s Probation policy. ([https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/](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/](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/](https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/))
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures ([https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure](https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure))
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures ([https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/](https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/))
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs ([https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/](https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/))
  - Dean of Students Office ([https://doso.students.wisc.edu/](https://doso.students.wisc.edu/)) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
  - Employee Assistance ([http://www.eao.wisc.edu/](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/](https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/)) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
  - Graduate School ([https://grad.wisc.edu/](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/](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/](https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/)) (for conflicts involving students)
  - Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff ([http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/](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/](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):

### Course List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHR 715</td>
<td>Strategic Management of Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHR 723</td>
<td>Business Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHR 734</td>
<td>Venture Creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHR 741</td>
<td>Technology Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKETING 737</td>
<td>New Product Innovation  ^2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Credits** 30

^2 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/](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/](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.accredit.org/](https://nasad.accredit.org/))

Accreditation status: Not accredited. Planned 2025-2026