Master of Arts Program in Design
School of Design

San Francisco State University
School of Design
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Program Highlights
- Faculty expertise ranging from product design to graphic design, visual communication, user experience, web design, digital modeling and fabrication
- Open to students from both design and non-design backgrounds
- Opportunities to participate in dynamic San Francisco Bay Area design community
- Outstanding faculty to student ratio
- On-site design facilities
- Accessible class schedules to accommodate working students
- Diverse campus community
- International student applicants are welcome

Program Overview
The MA in Design is a professionally accredited program, meeting the needs of a broad range of students seeking to deepen their scholarly activity through research and making. The MA Program at San Francisco State University offers a dynamic educational experience within a diverse, supportive, community. MA students are active initiators of original creative projects exploring contemporary issues in design and culture. In this, they are well-supported by highly-experienced faculty in both classroom and workshop environments.

The MA Program is intended for students who want to pursue professional work in design firms, project management, design for user experience, management roles in technology, and/or teaching. The School of Design’s emphasis on problem solving competencies facilitates our students’ ability to address questions, which are both conceptual and practical in nature. Students generally choose a focus in graphic design/visual communications, product design, user experience design, and/or curriculum development for their final creative project.

The School offers two program tracks leading to the MA: a 30-unit option for students entering with undergraduate degrees in graphic or product/industrial design, visual communication, and closely related majors; and a 42-unit option for those with degrees in liberal arts, sciences or fine arts (in order to gain the necessary foundational skills). The curricula for both the 30-unit and 42-unit tracks can be tailored to a students’ interest through choice of electives.

MA Program in Design
The MA Program sees design as a means of exploring a wide variety of contemporary issues, including social, technological, economic, and environmental ones. We recognize that design is no longer simply a professional service, but rather a way of connecting our interests and values to a global, economic and sociocultural framework—that should involve an understanding of human behavior and consider the broader context. The program promotes inclusive/universal design, user centered design, and socially engaged design.

Graduate students are expected to demonstrate a high level of independence, motivation and competence in developing a Creative Work Project (CWP), our equivalent to a thesis project. The CWP is a culminating project that allows students to develop an original voice for both verbal and visual expression of an area of design thinking.

**Admission**
The School of Design graduate application requires a statement of purpose, a résumé, three letters of recommendation, and a portfolio showing evidence of creative, technical, or written work. GRE Written Analytical scores are not required but may be submitted if available. The program admits students in the fall semester only. The deadline for admission materials is May 15th. Additionally, the University requires a bachelor’s degree or a recognized equivalent from a regionally accredited institution with a minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0. International students must submit TOEFL or IELTS scores.

Applications are accepted through Cal State Apply.

Many applicants have an undergraduate degree in design or a related field, but this is not necessary for admissions. The School of Design does accept graduate students with other undergraduate majors. For non-majors, a minimum of 12 additional units are required in order to build the necessary base of skills. Applications from international students are welcome.

**Written English Proficiency Requirement**

Level One: Students will take DES 724 within their first year of study.

Level Two: Students will meet this requirement by the successful completion of the written phase of the culminating experience work that is part of either the Creative Work Project (DES 894), or the Master’s Thesis (DES 898).

**Program Requirements**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DES 700</td>
<td>Seminar in Design Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES 755</td>
<td>Seminar in Design Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES 800</td>
<td>Seminar in Design Topics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES 724</td>
<td>Graduate Research Methods/Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
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*The following graduate courses as approved by the graduate advisor:*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DES 805</td>
<td>Seminar in Design Methodology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES 899</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>3</td>
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*One of the following:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DES 894</td>
<td>Creative Work Project (3)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES 898</td>
<td>Master’s Thesis (3)</td>
<td>3</td>
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*Graduate Elective: Select 3 Units of graduate level (700 or higher)*

*Electives: Select 9 Units of upper division undergraduate (300 or higher), or graduate level classes.*

**Total** 30