Executive Summary: MS in Design

Department of Art + Design, College of Arts, Media and Design

The College of Arts, Media and Design (CAMD) proposes the Master of Science (MS) in Design, a 32-credit graduate degree that consolidates two existing graduate programs, the MS in Experience Design and the MS in Information Design and Data Visualization, under a unified and more flexible degree structure, while adding Interaction Design as a third concentration to complete the suite of design disciplines in the department. This consolidation responds to natural overlaps between the two existing programs and better aligns the structure with existing CAMD programs such as MFA in Design and BS in Design. Designed as a one-year program with options to extend through co-op opportunities, the MS in Design is proposed to launch on the Boston campus in Fall 2027, drawing on the faculty and infrastructure already in place for the existing graduate programs. It retains the STEM designation under CIP code 11.0105, Human-Centered Technology Design.

The MS in Design is the natural evolution of graduate design education that CAMD has been building for over 10 years. It is developed in direct alignment with the MFA in Design, which similarly consolidates the former MFA in Experience Design and MFA in Information Design and Data Visualization. Together, they establish a coherent and complementary graduate framework: the MS emphasizes professionally oriented outcomes, while the MFA centers studio-based and research-driven creative practice. At the undergraduate level, the MS builds upon CAMD's existing BS in Design and its constellation of design minors in Data Visualization, Graphic and Information Design, Experience Design, and Interaction Design, creating a natural pipeline. Together, the BS in Design, MS in Design, MFA in Design, and PhD in Interdisciplinary Design and Media constitute a coherent suite of design programs within CAMD, reflecting its sustained commitment to design as a discipline.

Market demand for graduates with advanced design competencies is strong and growing. The field has seen a 29.2% increase in designer roles related to web development, digital design, and UX research since 2019, and is projected to grow by 8% through 2033. Around 16,500 openings are expected each year, on average, over the decade, significantly higher than the projected 3% growth rate for all occupations during the same period. The MS in Design is well-positioned to respond to this growing market demand and build upon the

successes of the existing Experience Design and IDDV programs, graduates of which have gone on to secure professional roles in experience design, information design, and UI/UX design across education, healthcare, journalism, consumer technologies, science communication, and marketing and business. This program targets both recent graduates and mid-career professionals seeking advanced competencies in design research, design strategy, and practice.

The MS in Design requires 32 credit hours structured around a shared core curriculum and three concentration-specific pathways: Experience Design (XD), Information Design and Data Visualization (IDDV), and Interaction Design (IxD). All students complete two program core courses (8 credits) chosen from among Research Methods for Design, Notational Systems for Experience, and Prototyping for Design, establishing a common foundation in design inquiry, representation, and making. Students then complete 24 additional credits through the requirements of their chosen concentration.

Each concentration is anchored by a Studio 1 and Studio 2 sequence that places project-based learning at the center of the curriculum. The Experience Design concentration develops holistic, human-centered design interventions across multimodal experiences. The Information Design and Data Visualization concentration prepares students to communicate complex data through rigorous visual and computational methods. The Interaction Design concentration investigates how humans engage with objects, environments, and systems, developing students' capacity to design meaningful exchanges between people and technology.

While each concentration cultivates distinct expertise, students across all three share courses, critique sessions, and collaborative projects, reinforcing the program's commitment to cross-disciplinary thinking. Courses span design theory, design research, design method, design studios, visual cognition, statistics for design, systems thinking, advanced prototyping, and emerging technologies including AI, AR/VR, and data-driven methods. The flexible elective structure draws on offerings from across CAMD and beyond, including courses in extended reality, data journalism, and game design.