Master of Fine Arts
Design: Interior Environments
Professional Entry-Level Track
Department of Interior Design
VCU School of the Arts

Virginia Commonwealth University
For more information about this program, please contact:

Christiana Lafazani, Graduate Director
clafazani@vcu.edu
804.828.1713

Department of Interior Design
VCU School of the Arts
P.O. Box 3086
Richmond, Virginia 23284-3086

arts.vcu.edu/interiordesign

Virginia Commonwealth University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution providing access to education and employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, veteran’s status, political affiliation, or disability.
Program Description

The Department of Interior Design offers a Professional Entry Level Master of Fine Arts in Design with a specialization in Interior Environments. The goal of the program is to produce competent creative designers whose design solutions are based on human response in the contemporary environment. Mastery of design skills, development of productive habits, knowledge of resources, and an awareness of interrelated disciplines equip the student with the tools and expertise necessary to pursue creative design careers.

The Professional Entry Level M.F.A. in Interior Environments is for second-degree seekers who have a proven record of academic excellence and are interested in pursuing a career in interior design. The 60 credit program is an intense and rigorous, highly sequenced program that takes two years and two summers to complete. Full-time enrollment and commitment is required. Students are accepted for the fall semester only. The structure of the Professional Entry Level track echoes Virginia Commonwealth University’s undergraduate program in content, but advances students at an accelerated rate. Students enroll each semester in a group of courses, which contains studio, graphics and support classes that interrelate.

All students entering the program must attend the Introduction to Interior Design Workshop held approximately six weeks before the fall semester begins. The summer workshop introduces students to the elements and principles of interior design practice and initiates the development of skills necessary for successful completion of the first year sequence. Students must successfully complete the workshop to begin the fall semester courses. At the end of the first year, students in the First Professional track must pass a candidacy review to advance into the second year of the program. If a student does not pass the summer workshop or candidacy review, he/she could be invited to apply to the B.F.A. program. An internship is required during the second summer in the program. All students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA while in the program.

A laptop computer is required for admission to the Interior Environments Professional Entry Level Track Program. Information about the current computer requirements is available at arts.vcu.edu/resources/students/computing. Before purchasing your equipment, please check with our department for the latest technology requirements. For a list of required drawing and model-building supplies and books, visit arts.vcu.edu/interiordesign/student-requirements.

This program is accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA).
How to Apply

**Deadline**
February 1st for entry into the fall semester of that calendar year.

**Requirements**
- Go to arts.vcu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/ to review the admission requirements and to begin the application process. Review the VCU Graduate Admissions Protocol section and then the Requirements for your major.
- An interview is recommended, but not required.
- Previous university/college transcripts (one official copy)
- Three letters of recommendation to be submitted electronically through the online application process
- Essay: 3-5 page (minimum) sample of academic writing
- Written personal statement (1-2 pages)
- Resumé is required.
- TOEFL - 600paper/2500 computer/100 internet (International students only)
- Portfolio, if you already have an art or design-related degree. You will be directed to app.art.vcu.edu/portfolio to login and upload your portfolio images and/or video.

Please note that all application information, other than transcripts, will be submitted online to the university.

Tuition and Fees

For the most current information, check out [www.enrollment.vcu.edu/accounting](http://www.enrollment.vcu.edu/accounting), where you can access a tuition and fees calculator. The following numbers are estimates based on currently available information.

**Summer Interior Design Workshop**  
$2,500  
(one-time, payable to the Department of Interior Design)

**Tuition and Fees** (per semester):
- Full-time - In-state (9-15 credits)   $7,125
- Full-time - Out-of-state (9-15 credits)   $12,847
- Summer - In-state (9-15 credits)   $6,509
- Summer - Out-of-state (9-15 credits)   $14,048

**Laptop Computer and Software**  
$1,500-2,500

**Books, Materials and Supplies**  
$1,000-1,500
### Professional Entry-Level Track Curriculum

For the most current curriculum information, check the VCU Bulletins online at [www.vcu.edu/bulletins](http://www.vcu.edu/bulletins). The information in the bulletin will supercede the curriculum information on these pages.

#### Summer 1
- **Introduction to Interior Design Workshop** (no credit)

#### Semester 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDES 501</td>
<td>Introductory Graduate Studio I</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 511</td>
<td>Introductory Graduate Graphics I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 521</td>
<td>Adv. Materials and Textiles for Int. Env.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 651</td>
<td>Historic and Theory of Int. Environments I</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Semester credits**: 13

#### Semester 2 *
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDES 502</td>
<td>Introductory Graduate Studio II</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 512</td>
<td>Introductory Graduate Graphics II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 611</td>
<td>Advanced Graphics for Interior Environments I</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 631</td>
<td>Ethics and Business Procedures</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 652</td>
<td>History and Theory of Int. Environments II</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Semester credits**: 15

* Candidacy/ Portfolio review takes place during the second semester.

#### Semester 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDES 522</td>
<td>Environmental Factors for Interior Environments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 601</td>
<td>Advanced Graduate Studio - CDs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 623</td>
<td>Design Research Thesis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 612</td>
<td>Advanced Graphics for Interior Environments II</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 626</td>
<td>Adv. Light and Color for Interior Environments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Semester credits**: 15

#### Semester 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDES 699</td>
<td>Creative Thesis / Project</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 690</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX XXX</td>
<td>Open Elective</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Semester credits**: 9-12

**Minimum Required Program Credits**: 60

---

Important: Students are required to be familiar with all VCU Graduate School policies and current Graduate bulletin information. For this information, visit the VCU Graduate School website at [www.graduate.vcu.edu](http://www.graduate.vcu.edu).
Workshop: Introduction to Interior Design

The summer session workshop typically starts five weeks prior to the start of the fall semester and runs for four weeks, Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am-4:30 p.m.

Purpose
This workshop provides necessary design fundaments to students entering the Professional Entry Level Track in Interior Environments. There are three major components of the program that are introduced during the workshop:

1. Interior design studio practices
2. Design graphics practices
3. Professional issues and practices.

Interior Design Studio
Students will develop design thinking, attitude, process, and ability through a series of exercises in applied design. Emphasis is placed on learning and applying the elements and principles of design through design analysis, critical thinking, process, ideation, and realization.

Design Graphics
Students will be introduced to basic design graphics including sketching, basic architectural drafting, orthographic drawings, and computer graphics programs such as Adobe Photoshop and InDesign.

Design Profession and Practice
Through a series of daily lectures students will be introduced to the practice, vocabulary and principles of interior design.

Topics covered by the workshop:
- Intro to drafting and orthographic projection
- Intro to freehand sketching
- Abstraction
- Concept
- Elements and principles of design
- Design vocabulary
- Critique and discussion
- Model-making techniques
- Basic color
- Intro to human dimension, scale and ergonomics
- Intro to issues in design: universality, sustainability, health.
- Introduction to techniques and materials
- Intro to scanning, printing, Adobe InDesign, modes of presentation
- Orientation to sources: materials library, Cabell Library, print lab, etc.

Workshop Costs
The fee for the workshop is $2,500 per student payable directly to the Department of Interior Design. The fee needs to be paid by July 12th prior to the workshop.

Students should expect to pay up to $500 for materials. Purchase of the laptop computer and Adobe Creative Suite is also required.
Candidacy Review

**MFA in Design – Interior Environments**

**Purpose**
Candidacy review is the second of three formal reviews in which the graduate student participates during the program of study (the admission review is the first, thesis defense is the third and last). The purpose of the candidacy review is to assess the progress of the graduate student and to evaluate whether they have achieved an appropriate level of skills and knowledge in interior environments to proceed to the thesis stage.

**Process**
Candidacy review occurs at the end of the second semester of enrollment in the program. The date for the review is scheduled by the Graduate Director during or after exam week.

The graduate student applying for candidacy assembles their work to date. All projects completed by the students should be represented including work done for support classes and electives. The student should display a variety of information including: sketch books, ideation and rapid visualization sketches, programming notes, a complete range of drawing types and methods, models, computer generated drawings and presentations, papers written, exams, etc.

Each student will gather all their materials and arrange them in an orderly and professional fashion on a row of desks. Location and time will be assigned to this process each year.

**Evaluation**
The faculty will assess the work and vote as to whether each student should be admitted to candidacy. Assessments of the work will be based on knowledge, skills, insight, originality, scope, depth, completeness, quality, and organization. **Students cannot proceed to the thesis phase without achieving candidacy.**

The faculty review will result in one of the following decisions:

- The student meets the department requirements, is recommended for candidacy, and continues in the program.
- The student does not meet departmental requirements, is recommended for additional study, and has candidacy deferred until the next semester or academic year.
- The student does not meet departmental requirements, is not recommended for candidacy, and does not continue in the program.

**Thesis/Creative Project Guidelines**
The thesis/creative project for the Professional Entry Level Track is first and foremost a design project that investigates a specific problem in relationship to the design of an interior space. In this project students develop both the questions and answers to their problem through the completion of a fully realized interior. The project is also the means by which students will demonstrate their mastery of specific skills required to be an interior designer and the appropriate level of competency to be awarded the Master's of Fine Arts degree in Interior Environments.

**Thesis Proposal Process**
During the first week of the Fall Semester in the second year of the program, each student will present an initial proposal for their thesis project for faculty review as part of IDES 623. This initial proposal should include:

- A description of the area of focus and the design problem
- Ideas about an appropriate site or building for the project
- A review of their research to date on their problem and discussion of future research directions

The site chosen for the project should be one for which existing drawings and information can be obtained and that the student can visit personally to verify and observe site conditions.

The faculty will review the initial proposals which will then be approved, recommended for revision, or rejected. Upon receiving approval for the initial thesis proposal, the student will work to develop a full proposal under the guidance of faculty in IDES 623.

The fully developed proposal book, which will be completed by the end of IDES 623, will include:

- Site documentation and analysis
- Precedent studies and research
- Initial programming
- Bibliography
- Concept development

Students should also keep a notebook that compiles all the research materials (notes, information, cut sheets, and copies of articles) collected for the project.

The proposal book in addition to documentation of the finished thesis project will become the thesis document.
An example of an initial proposal:

“I wish to investigate the issue of sustainability in relationship to the restaurant industry. This project will examine the possibility of developing both an environmentally-friendly and healthy approach to restaurant design by overlaying the metaphor of “building as organism” onto a space. By studying the mechanisms and requirements of a healthy body, I hope to uncover principles about health and sustainability that I can apply to its design. . . (include background information, sketches, etc. that help explain the concept).

The site I have chosen is the existing Overnight Transportation Building, which has a unique relationship with both its natural setting in the middle of the James River and the urban setting of downtown Richmond. The building is a two-story brick structure built in 1933 in an Art Deco style and houses approximately 20,000 s.f. of interior space. . . (Show pictures of site and location).

I was inspired to do this project by reading about the holistic and healthy approach to restauranting demonstrated by chef Alice Waters at her restaurant Chez Panisse in Berkley, California, as well as the work of William McDonough. . . (Include larger bibliography and discussion of research).”

Creative Project/Thesis

The thesis project will fully explore the design problem by means of fully designed interior spaces. The work will take place in both IDES 690 and IDES 699 in the final semester in the program. Since it is the capstone project for the Professional Entry Level curriculum it must demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:

- Design research and analysis
- Programming
- Architectural drawing and drafting (both by hand and computer)
- Model making
- Knowledge of materials and furniture
- Lighting design and specifications
- Presentation techniques, graphics, signage
- Design’s relation to social issues and human behavior
- An understanding of design history and theory

It is a requirement for the MFA that the student exhibit the thesis/creative project. Therefore, the final product must be in a format that can be presented for an extended period without the student present.

Thesis Defense

At an appointed time students will meet with their committee to defend their thesis project. The student will present the project and then answer any questions put forward by the reviewers. After the review, the committee will vote to pass the candidate, pass with revisions, or fail the project. Passing the defense is a necessary requirement for the successful completion of the degree.

After receiving approval signatures on the signature page of their thesis, students must submit their thesis electronically to the Graduate School. Information about this is available on the Graduate School web site at www.graduate.vcu.edu/community/thesis.html.
"WE MUST CONSIDER SPACE, LIGHT, COLOR, GEOMETRY, DETAIL, AND MATERIAL AS AN EXPERIENTIAL CONTINUUM.

THOUGH WE CAN DISASSEMBLE THESE ELEMENTS AND STUDY THEM INDIVIDUALLY DURING THE DESIGN PROCESS, THEY MERGE IN THE FINAL CONDITION, AND ULTIMATELY WE CANNOT READILY BREAK PERCEPTION INTO A SIMPLE COLLECTION OF GEOMETRIES, ACTIVITIES AND SENSATIONS."  

STEVEN HOLL
Course Descriptions

**Summer Workshop: Introduction to Interior Design**
The purpose of this workshop is to provide necessary design fundamentals to students entering the Professional Entry Level Track in Interior Environments. There are three major components of the workshop: introduction to interior design studio practices; introduction to design graphics practices; introduction to professional issues and practices.

**IDES 501, 502 Introductory Graduate Design Studio I and II**
Provides accelerated studio instruction for designing interior environments for the entering Professional Entry Level Track student that does not have previous experience in Interior Design. Coursework is highly sequenced and accelerates in complexity as the semester progresses and combines the development of technical skills with conceptual thinking and design development.

**IDES 511, 512 Introductory Graduate Graphics I and II**
Co-requisites: IDES 501 for IDES 511; IDES 502 for IDES 512. Provides accelerated manual and computer graphics instruction for designing interior environments for the entering Professional Entry Level Track student that does not have previous experience in Interior Design graphics. Coursework is highly sequenced and accelerates in complexity as the semester progresses.

**IDES 521 Advanced Material Studies for Interior Environments**
Learn investigation, selection, and practical application of materials and textiles in interior environments.

**IDES 522 Environmental Factors for Interior Environments**
Contemporary theories and techniques in the design of buildings as related to interior design, small structural considerations, HVAC, acoustics, plumbing, and the attributes of building materials.

**IDES 601 Graduate Interior Environments Studio**
Provides advanced studio for designing interior environments that incorporates the development of construction documents and detailing.

**IDES 611 Advanced Graphics for Interior Environments I**
Provides advanced graphics instruction for designing interior environments for the Professional Entry Level Track student. Coursework focuses on the development of technical drawing, rendering and presentation skills for the interior designer.

**IDES 612 Advanced Graphics for Interior Environments II**
Provides advanced graphics instruction for designing interior environments using the computer. Coursework focuses on the development of computer-based skills and software programs such as Autocad and Revit.

**IDES 623 Advanced Design Studies**
This seminar familiarizes students with the expanding body of knowledge about design studies as the subject relates to interior environments for the purpose of developing a thesis proposal.

**IDES 626 Advanced Light and Color for Interior Environments**
Study the illumination and color and its impact on people in interior spaces.

**IDES 631 Ethics and Business Procedures for Interior Environments**
Advanced study of the interior design profession as related to professional and business practices, including responsibilities, services, ethics, business and project management, and marketing.

**IDES 635 Teaching Practicum in Interior Environments**
Observation, instruction, and practice to develop skills in the design, organization, and conduct of courses in interior design. Explores multiple teaching strategies, student development, learning styles, and evaluation techniques.

**IDES 651 History and Theory of Interior Environments I**
Study of the major paradigms, theories, and styles of the built environment (interior design, furniture, and architecture) from antiquity to the late 19th century.

**IDES 652 History and Theory of Interior Environments II**
Study of the major paradigms, theories, and styles of architecture, interior environments, and furniture from the beginnings of modernism to the present day. Contemporary analysis of cultural conditions and the manner in which designers and architects respond to those conditions.

**IDES 690 Graduate Seminar in Interior Environments**
A detailed selected theoretical, historical, aesthetic, and social areas of concern to the interior designer as applied to thesis development.

**IDES 693 Interior Design Internship**
Provides supervised practical work experiences that are coordinated with professional interior designers under the guidance of interior design faculty. Formal arrangements must be made.

**IDES 699 Thesis/Creative Project**
The project must test an design idea synthesized through the development of a design process, investigative research in an individual project of complex scale and scope.
Faculty and Staff

Sharran Parkinson, IIDA, IDEC, Professor, Department Chair
Ph.D., Comparative Arts, Ohio University
M.S., Interior Design, Florida State University
B.A., Graphic Art, Stephens College

W. Camden Whitehead, Associate Professor
M. Arch., Architecture, Virginia Tech
B.A., Art, Averett College

Christiana Lafazani, NCIDQ, Graduate Director, Associate Professor
M.F.A., Interior Environments, VCU
B.S., Interior Design, James Madison University
B.A., Business Admin., School of Business Thessaloniki

Rab McClure, AIA, NCIDQ, Associate Professor
M.Arch., Architecture, Yale University
B.S., Architecture, University of Virginia

Roberto Ventura, LEED AP, Assistant Professor
M. Arch., Miami University
B.A. Math + Physics, Albion College

Robert Smith, Administrative Director, Adjunct Professor
M.F.A., Design: Interior Environments, VCU
B.S. Theology, Kentucky Christian University

Deloris Young, Administrative Associate, Fiscal Manager
Pan-American Business College

Eleanor Campbell-Barton, Adjunct Professor
Senior Designer and Project Manager, Glavé and Holmes & Associates
B.F.A., Interior Design, VCU

Megan Johnson, Adjunct Professor
M.Arch., University of Michigan
B.S. Arch., University of Virginia

Christopher Arias, Adjunct Professor
Owner, Arias LLC Design Service, Richmond, Virginia M.F.A., Interior Environments, Virginia Commonwealth University
B.A., Painting and Printmaking, Virginia Commonwealth University

Shannon Dowling, AIA, LEED, Adjunct Professor
Architect, BCWH
M. Arch., Southern California Institute of Architecture
B. Arch., Virginia Polytechnic and State University

Peter Fraser, Adjunct Professor
President and Owner, Fraser Design Associates
B.F.A. Interior Design, VCU
President, Fraser Design Associates

Heather Boylan-Drew, Adjunct Professor
M.F.A. Interior Design, Savannah College of Art and Design
B.A. Communication, University of Michigan

Student learning outcomes for this program:
Students will demonstrate professional values.
Student work will demonstrate advanced design theory.
Student work will demonstrate advanced knowledge of interior design
Student work will demonstrate effective communication
Students will demonstrate a foundation in business and professional practices.
Campus Map
Monroe Park Campus, Richmond, Virginia

School of the Arts

1 ANDERSON GALLERY 907 W Franklin St
2 BOWE STREET DECK 609 Bowe St, 5th Floor
   Art Foundation Program
   Cinema Program - Studio
3 DANCE CENTER 10 N Brunswick St
   Dance Studios
4 FINE ARTS BUILDING 1000 W Broad St
   Craft/Material Studies Department
   Painting & Printmaking Department
   Sculpture (+Extended Media) Department
   Kinetic Imaging Department - Offices
5 BUSINESS BUILDING 1015 Floyd Ave
   Communication Arts Department (Illustration)
6 THERESA POLLAK BUILDING 325 N Harrison St
   Cinema Program - Offices
   Graphic Design Department
   Fashion Design & Merch. Department
   Interior Design Department
   Photography & Film Department
   Kinetic Imaging Department - Classes
7 W.E. SINGLETON CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS 922 Park Ave
   Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall
   Music Department
   Theatre Department
8 MUSIC CENTER 1015 Grove Ave
   Music Studios
9 BUFORD HOUSE 922 W Franklin St
   Art History
10 GRACE ST. THEATRE 934 W Grace St
   Art Education Department

Administrative and Student Services

11 CABELL LIBRARY 901 Park Ave
12 GINTER HOUSE 901 W Franklin St
   Financial Aid
13 FOUNDERS HALL 827 W Franklin St
   Records & Registration
14 WELCOME CENTER 1111 W Broad St
   ...Other Points of Interest
15 BOOKSTORE 1111 W Broad St
16 SIEGEL CENTER 1200 W Broad St
17 STUDENT COMMONS 907 Floyd Ave
18 SHAFFER COURT DINING CENTER
   810 Cathedral Place
31 Hibbs Building 900 Park Ave

Parking
19 WEST MAIN STREET DECK 801 W Main St
20 BOWE STREET DECK 609 Bowe St
21 WEST BROAD STREET DECK 1111 W Broad St
22 WEST CARY STREET DECK 1201 W Cary St

Dormitories
23 RAMZ HALL 933 W Broad St
24 ACKEL RESIDENCE CENTER 1100 W Broad St
25 BRANDT HALL 710 W Franklin St
26 GLADDING RESIDENCE CENTER 711 W Main St
27 JOHNSON HALL 801 W Franklin St
28 RHoads HALL 710 W Franklin St
29 WEST GRACE HONORS DORM 701 W Grace St
**Online resources**

Department of Interior Design  
arts.vcu.edu/interiordesign  
facebook.com/vcuarts.interiordesign.alumni

VCU School of the Arts  
arts.vcu.edu  
facebook.com/vcuarts  
twitter.com/vcuarts  
youtube.com/vcuarts

Visiting VCUarts  
arts.vcu.edu/admissions/visit-campus/

Applying to VCUarts  
arts.vcu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/

VCU Financial Aid  
www.enrollment.vcu.edu/finaid/

VCU Student Accounting  
www.enrollment.vcu.edu/accounting/

Computers at VCUarts  
arts.vcu.edu/resources/students/computing/

Contact VCUarts  
arts@vcu.edu or 804.VCU.ARTS

**Notes**