Established in 1938, VCU’s Department of Interior Design ranks among the top ten programs in the United States, according to Design Intelligence magazine.

visit the program online:
arts.vcu.edu/idesgrad

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The department offers two Master of Fine Arts concentrations in Interior Environments: the First Professional MFA track for students with non-design backgrounds, and the Post-Professional MFA track for those with professional design experience and an undergraduate degree in interior design.

CURRICULUM
The First Professional track is a two-year, full time degree program, with a professional internship in the summer between first and second year. Prior to starting the program, students in this concentration attend a five-week introductory summer workshop where they gain foundation skills and initiate the development of a uniquely personal design methodology. The Post-Professional track—also a two-year, full time degree program—offers returning professionals the chance to hone their design sensibility, focus their research interests, and tailor a more customized curriculum, taking advantage of the wide range of course offerings available at VCUArts.

In both tracks, each semester consists of a core project-based design studio course, supplemented by support courses in hand drawing, computer graphics, history, theory, business practices, building systems, sustainable design practices, materials and building systems. Studio courses offer real world and simulated design problems grounded in the poetics of interior architecture, involving manipulation of space, form, color, light, material, and furnishings. Students have dedicated desk space and 24-hour access to the studio, meaning they are able to work together in a supportive, close-knit community that encourages vigorous exchange and constructive peer learning. Additionally, students have access to traditional and cutting edge fabrication equipment for model building and prototyping.

An active relationship with interior design and architecture firms throughout the country allows for professional critiques, guest lecturers, internships, and site visits. Students regularly travel to museums, showrooms, and design firms, and past students have performed professional internships with architecture and design firms from New York to Los Angeles and abroad. Students also can satisfy the summer internship requirement by participating in our Education Abroad Program in Florence, Italy.
Graduate students work with full time faculty members internationally recognized for the quality of their professional and academic work in interior design and architecture. Our award-winning faculty participate in diverse design activities beyond the classroom that include funded research, professional practice, writing, volunteer work, exhibitions, and consulting. These activities keep them current in the field, inform their teaching, and benefit students directly.

As a top urban research university, VCU offers students opportunities to participate in community engagement and interdisciplinary design projects with programs like the da Vinci Center for Innovation, the VCU Medical Campus, the VCU Brandcenter, and Middle of Broad/Storefront for Community Design. Students also have the opportunity to earn post-baccalaureate graduate certificates in areas of study relating to their design research, such as: aging studies, business administration, environmental studies, historic preservation and planning, and homeland security and emergency preparedness. While VCU provides the features of a large and comprehensive campus, the Department of Interior Design offers individual attention to each student. The facilities, faculty, and staff promote a sense of community, warmth, individually-tailored academic advising, and engagement within the department.

We are fully accredited by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA). Following graduation, our alums go to work for some of the nation’s top architecture and design firms, designing spaces featured in the industry’s top publications. Some start their own firms and others begin successful careers as design educators. All of our graduates are eligible to take the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) exam and thereby gain professional certification. After two intensive years, all students who successfully complete our program enter the workforce prepared to adaptively and creatively solve problems, trained to communicate visually and verbally, and empowered to make a difference through design.

Complete information for individuals interested in applying to the program can be found on the VCUArts website.
adts.vcu.edu/apply