Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design
Department of Interior Design | School of the Arts
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
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For more information about the VCUarts Interior Design BFA program, please contact:

Robert Smith
Administrative Director
smithrd@vcu.edu or 804.828.1713

Department of Interior Design
VCU School of the Arts
325 N. Harrison St
Richmond, Virginia 23284

arts.vcu.edu/interiordesign

Cover model and drawing by Lydia Felton

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What do Interior Designers do?

Interior designers conceive and create imaginative and innovative solutions that transform environments into functional, beautiful and inspirational spaces. This pursuit for the effective development of space, user safety, beauty, and function has contributed to the maturity of the present-day interior design profession.

Contemporary interior designers solve spatial problems through a strategic process that involves:

- Interviewing clients and defining their specific needs.
- Researching and analyzing the spaces and sites.
- Conceptualizing the spaces through 2D and 3D drawings, diagrams and renderings.
- Selecting materials, finishes, furniture and equipment.
- Communicating the construction of designed spaces to clients, architects and contractors through floor plans and elevations.

We prepare students to become professional interior designers by giving them a strong art and design foundation combined with advanced courses that focus on the professional study and examination of interior design. Students start discovering creative design possibilities conceptually and from there begin exploring and developing practical design solutions and applications for all types of interior environments. As a complement to their studies, they are also required to complete a professional design internship.

For a more detailed description of the interior design profession, visit the NCIDQ website at ncidqexam.org/about-interior-design. This site also explains the differences between interior design and interior decorating, terms that are sometimes used interchangeably, but differ widely in purpose and goals.
The Department of Interior Design at VCUarts is one of the most well-established of its kind in the United States. We offer a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Interior Design and a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Design: Interior Environments. Both programs are accredited by CIDA, the Council for Interior Design Accreditation.

Our Bachelor of Fine Arts program is an intellectually rigorous and studio-based experience grounded in the issues of interior architecture. Our curriculum balances academic study with professional training and allows students gain both conceptual knowledge and technical skill.

We are devoted to developing a foundation of design, building on the principles, theory and fundamentals of design from the perspective of the interior environment. Our graduates are prepared with the skills and knowledge that can facilitate the transition into an entry-level interior design position at a successful firm or corporation, or entry into programs of advanced study.

Our undergraduate students come from all over the United States and abroad. They participate in national design competitions and professional internships in architecture and design firms and have access to scholarships and financial aid. Throughout the year, field trips to New York, Washington, D.C. and other locations in the United States are available to students. The department currently sponsors a study abroad program in Florence, Italy, during the summer, and students have access to other study abroad opportunities through the university.

The Department of Interior Design boasts strong faculty, an active relationship with the professional community, an engaged alumni base and extensive resources for students, including individual work stations for each student. Students are required to serve internships in a professional design setting and receive training in all areas of design, including presentation and communication skills.
The mission of the Department of Interior Design is to foster excellence in Interior Design education and prepare students for a career in interior design or entry into programs of advanced study. Following are the standards for the BFA in Interior Design program.

1. Students who have successfully completed the Art Foundation Program may enter the program in the fall semester only.

2. Students who wish to transfer into the Interior Design program must first apply to the Art Foundation Program for evaluation. A student must demonstrate equivalent preparation at other institutions and submit a portfolio of work for review by interior design faculty. Transfer students admitted into the program must complete all major requirements determined to be missing from their academic design experience.

3. Students must complete the required prerequisites and corequisites of the program in the order presented in the curriculum outline.

4. Students must earn at least a 2.5 GPA on all work before entering the program, in the semester immediately before entering the major and each semester they continue in the program. Students must maintain a minimum grade of C in each studio in order to continue to the next semester of studio courses.

5. Students are required to have a laptop computer and appropriate software upon entry into the interior design program. An interior design student materials and supplies kit also is required upon entry into the program; it contains a variety of drawing supplies for graphics and interior design studios.

6. Students with experience in interior design or related fields may challenge some interior design courses based on regulations for "Credit by Examination" as stated in the current VCU Bulletin. Students must be accepted into the Interior Design program and challenges are based upon demonstrated experience, portfolio work and professional years of experience. A list of courses that may be challenged can be found in the online VCU Bulletin at bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/arts/interior-design.

7. A student majoring in interior design who does not enroll in courses in the major as a full-time student for three or more consecutive semesters (including summer) must reapply to the program, submitting a portfolio and undergoing a grade review.

The full version of these standards can be found in the VCU Bulletin online at bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/arts/interior-design.
How to Apply

All students, whether new or transferring from another college or university, who wish to enter the Department of Interior Design must first successfully complete the VCUarts Art Foundation program.

VCUarts continues to review applications until all spots are filled.

To view the most current application requirements:

Go to arts.vcu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/ and select the status that most applies to you (Freshman, Transfer, or Change of Major).

Select “Art Foundation (Visual Art & Design)” to view current application requirements and deadlines.

From here, you can review deadlines, access the Common Application, submit transcripts, and view additional application requirements, including test scores and how to submit your portfolio.

If you are an international applicant, make sure to review any additional requirements on the Global Education Office website at international.admissions.vcu.edu/apply/undergraduate/.

Program Retention and Achievement

Job Placement
93% of the students who graduated in May 2013 were employed within the first year after graduation.

Acceptance into Graduate Programs
100% of students from the May 2013 graduating class who applied to graduate school were accepted (three students).

Graduation Rates
91% of the students from the class of 2013 graduated in four years.

Retention/Attrition
92% of the students enrolled during the 2011-2012 academic year returned for the 2012-2013 academic year.
Portfolio

After your application has been processed, you will receive an email with a link to the supplemental materials upload site. Your portfolio must be submitted online through this website. The School of the Arts does not accept physical portfolios.

**Portfolio Requirements**

Submit 12 to 16 works of art that you have created within the past two years that show your promise in visual art and design. Present your strongest work and demonstrate your potential to develop a diverse set of skills and ideas should you be accepted into VCUarts. We prefer to see a diverse range of 2D and 3D media. Drawing from observation is recommended, while copying anime, cartoons, graffiti or tattoos is discouraged.

Images may be submitted in the following formats:

- .JPEG, .PNG, .GIF, .TIF, .TIFF, .BMP, .TGA

Videos may be submitted in the following formats:

- .M4V, .MOV, .MP4, .TLV, .ASF, .MPEG, .MPG, .MKV

Images can be up to 5 MB each. Video can be up to 30 MB each.

All videos must be less than 3 minutes. The total maximum time for all moving images cannot exceed 5 minutes.

Expenses

For the most current information on tuition, fees, and other expenses, including a tuition and fees calculator, go to [accounting.vcu.edu/tuition](http://accounting.vcu.edu/tuition).

The university and/or the department require additional resources, such as a laptop computer, textbooks, materials and supplies. For information about these additional resources and expenses at [arts.vcu.edu/interiordesign/student-resources](http://arts.vcu.edu/interiordesign/student-resources).
Plan of Study

This is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements of a BFA degree within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact an adviser before beginning course work toward a degree. For course descriptions, go to bulletin.vcu.edu/azcourses/ides.

**Year One – Art Foundation**

ARTF 131 Drawing Studio  
ARTF 132 Surface Research  
ARTF 133 Space Research  
ARTF 134 Time Studio  
ARTF 139 Project (two sections)  
ARTH 103 Survey of Western Art I  
ARTH 104 Survey of Western Art II  
UNIV 111 Focused Inquiry I  
UNIV 112 Focused Inquiry II  
Quantitative literacy course (university core)  
Social/behavioral sciences course (university core)  

32 credits

**Year Two – Sophomore**

IDES 201 Introductory Interior Design Studio I  
IDES 202 Introductory Interior Design Studio II  
IDES 211 Interior Graphics I  
IDES 212 Interior Graphics II  
IDES 231 Fundamentals of Interior Design  
IDES 251 Historic Environments: Ancient through 19th Cen.  
IDES 252 Historic Environments: 20-21st Cen.  
IDES 311 Advanced Interior Graphics I  
UNIV 200 Inquiry and the Craft of Argument  
Natural/physical sciences course (university core)  

32 credits

**Year Three – Junior**

IDES 301 Interior Design Studio I  
IDES 302 Interior Design Studio II  
IDES 312 Advanced Interior Graphics II  
IDES 321 Interior Materials and Textiles  
IDES 323 Light and Color in Interior Environments  
IDES 422 Building Systems  
IDES 431 ID Business Practices  
Art/design elective  
General education elective  
Humanities/fine arts course (university core)  

32 credits

**Year Four – Senior**

IDES 400 Senior Interior Design Studio I  
IDES 401 Senior Interior Design Studio II (capstone series)  
IDES 441 Senior Seminar I (capstone series)  
IDES 442 Senior Seminar II (capstone series)  
IDES 493 Interior Design Internship*  
Art/design elective (300-400 level)  
General education elective  
General education elective (300-400 level)z  

24 credits

120 total minimum required credits

* The required internship can be completed during the summer after the junior year, or during the senior year.

The VCU Bulletin is the official source of program information and supercedes information provided in this handbook. To access the section on Interior Design, go to bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/arts/interior-design.
Faculty & Staff

Christiana Lafazani, NCIDQ, Interim Department Chair
MFA Program Director, Associate Professor
MFA, Interior Environments, VCU
BS, Interior Design, James Madison University
BAD, Business Administration., School of Business Thessaloniki

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

Rab McClure, AIA, NCIDQ
Interim Associate Chair, Associate Professor
M Arch., Architecture, Yale University
BS, Architecture, University of Virginia

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

Emily Smith
Assistant Professor
MFA, Interior Environments, VCU
BS, Interior Design, Virginia Tech

Robert Smith
Administrative Director, Assistant Professor
MFA, Design, Interior Environments, VCU
BS Theology, Kentucky Christian University

Hillary Fayle
Program Coordinator
MFA, Craft/Material Studies, VCU
BFA, Fiber Design, Buffalo State College

Eleanor Campbell-Barton, Adjunct instructor
Senior Designer and Project Manager,
Glavé and Holmes & Associates
BFA, Interior Design, VCU

Sara Desvernine Reed, Adjunct instructor
PhD, American Art, University of Delaware
MA, Art History, VCU
BA, Art History, University of Colorado at Boulder

Peter Fraser, Adjunct instructor
Owner, Fraser Design Associates
BFA, Interior Design, VCU

Jillian Chapin, Adjunct instructor
MFA, Design, Interior Environments, VCU
BS, Marketing Management, Virginia Tech

Annie Frankfort, Adjunct instructor
MFA, Design, Interior Environments, VCU
BA, Psychology, Washington and Lee University

Additional (and Amazing) Adjunct Instructors:
Britta Bielak
Jennifer Fell
Tim Hamnett
Melinda Harvey
Therese Lange
Shari Perago
Erin Richardson
VCU-Q(atar)

VCU-Qatar’s BFA program in Doha, Qatar, was established in 2000 and is linked to our BFA program through a common curriculum, goals and objectives. Students can apply to spend a semester at VCU-Q and continue their design studies while experiencing another culture up close and in depth. As an exchange program, students from VCU-Q can also spend a semester at VCU in Richmond. In addition to Qataris, students at VCU-Q come from many other countries, adding to the exchange of cultural ideas and enrichment of knowledge within our studio environments. For more information on VCU-Qatar, visit qatar.vcu.edu.

Florence Study Abroad

In collaboration with the Graphic Design and Fashion Design departments, Interior Design students have the opportunity to take summer courses in Florence, Italy, at the VCU International Design Institute. The summer courses apply directly to the BFA degree major requirements. The program is sponsored by VCU’s Global Education Office and our department.

Photos from qatar.vcu.edu website.
Fallingwater

Each fall, interior design sophomores and first-year graduate students take a day to visit Fallingwater, the Frank Lloyd Wright architectural masterpiece in Mill Run, Pennsylvania. Students tour the entire site and have opportunity for further study through sketching and photography. While the day trip requires a long bus ride to and from Fallingwater, it also provides opportunity for new design students to bond through the experience of great design.

Student Organizations

Student-led chapters of national and international Interior Design professional organizations offer students opportunities to meet other design students, learn from design professionals through seminars and events, and travel to conferences and trade shows. Organizations with a presence at VCU include:

- ASID American Society of Interior Designers www.asid.org
- IIDA International Interior Design Association www.iida.org
- IFDA International Furnishings and Design Association www.ifda.com

www.facebook.com/ASID-VCU-Student-Chapter-156623281026749/

www.facebook.com/IIDAVCU/
Studios

The Department of Interior Design values and nurtures a studio environment for all students. Each class (sophomore, junior, senior) has a studio allocated to it, allowing each student to have a place for the duration of the academic year. Studio professors and students can arrange the furniture in a way that best suits their needs. Students have access to the studios at all hours, seven days a week, during the academic year. The studio environment fosters collaborative learning, allowing students to learn from each other and, in the process, get to know each other in a supportive atmosphere.

Model Shop

The department’s Model Shop houses various mini-woodworking machines suitable for building models, and also houses a lasercutter and a 3D printer. The lasercutter offers students an opportunity to create higher levels of detail of their design models. This equipment is in addition to the portable wood shops located in each design studio. The Model Shop is staffed by trained graduate teaching assistants and work study students. To learn more about the Model Shop, visit arts.vcu.edu/interiordesign/model-shop/.
Internships

As part of the BFA in Interior Design program, students must complete a design internship. Internships within the design community, supervised by someone with a requisite design degree and experience, offer students an opportunity to experience the “real world” of a design firm.

Students are eligible to enroll in the three-credit internship course after the completion of their third (junior) year in the program and the interior design business practices course. With the support of the department, students independently research interior design or architectural firms, communicate with firms that are of interest to them, and apply for available positions.

Students can intern at firms that offer the types of design that might be of interest to them, such as hospitality, residential, healthcare, offices, etc. We also encourage students to explore opportunities in locations that best suit their needs and interests, whether in Richmond, Virginia, in their hometown, in a larger metropolitan area such as Washington, DC, New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, or even abroad.

mOb studio

mOb is a partnership of VCUarts Graphic, Fashion, and Interior Design. These departments operate an experimental design lab that works to realize the potential of design to shape the City. Senior level students can apply to spend one or two semesters at mOb studio, which is located literally the middle of the Broad Street corridor at 205 E. Broad St. in Richmond.

mOb partners with the Storefront for Community Design, Richmond’s non-profit design assistance center that facilitates access to design and planning resources for small businesses, non-profits, and individuals in the City. Together they form mOb+Storefront, joining the energy, enthusiasm and expertise of VCU students and faculty with Storefront’s community connections.
Online

Department of Interior Design  arts.vcu.edu/interiordesign
facebook.com/vcuarts.interiordesign.alumni
instagram @vcuinteriordesign
intdesign@vcu.edu or 804.828.1713

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twitter.com/vcuarts
youtube.com/vcuarts

Visiting  arts.vcu.edu/admissions/visit-campus/
Applying  arts.vcu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/
Contact  arts@vcu.edu or 804.VCU.ARTS

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youtube.com/user/VCU
twitter.com/VCU
virginiacommonwealthuniversity.tumblr.com

Financial Aid  finaid.vcu.edu
Student Accounting  accounting.vcu.edu

Sherry Chen
Miriam Weirich