Master of Fine Arts
Design: Interior Environments
Department of Interior Design | School of the Arts
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
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.

The Professional Entry Level M.F.A. in Interior Environments is an Intense and rigorous, highly sequenced program for second-degree seekers who have a proven record of academic excellence and are interested in pursuing a career in interior design. Brief program details include:

- 60 credit program
- 2 years and two summers
- Full-time enrollment
- Fall semester entry only
- Professional Entry Level track

You will enter the program by attending the Introduction to Interior Design Workshop held approximately six weeks before the fall semester begins. You must successfully complete the workshop to begin the fall semester courses. If you do not pass the summer workshop or candidacy review, you will be invited to apply to the B.F.A. program. At the end of the first year, you must pass a candidacy review to advance into the second year of the program in you are in the First Professional track. An internship is required during the second summer in the program. You are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA while in the program.

Program Retention and Achievement Data

Job Placement
100% of the students that graduated in May 2019 were employed within their first year after graduation.

Acceptance into Graduate Programs
No MFA students applied for another graduate program after their graduation.

Graduation Rates
78% of the students from the class of 2019 graduated within two years.

Retention/Attrition
89% of the students enrolled during the 2017-2018 academic year returned for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Student learning outcomes for this program
Student 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.
Student will demonstrate a foundation in business and professional practices.

Program Overview

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
Review application requirements at arts.vcu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/. Review the VCU Graduate Admissions Protocol section and also the specific Requirements for this program. Some points are:

- 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 - 600 paper/2500 computer/100 internet (Int. students only)

Portfolio
If you have a previous art or design-related degree, you should upload a portfolio. 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, should be submitted online to the university.

If you have any questions about the admissions process or the application, please contact the VCU Office of Graduate Admissions. Contact information can be found at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu/contact/.

Tuition + Fees

Visit www.enrollment.vcu.edu/accounting, where you can access a tuition and fees calculator and find the most current tuition and fees information.

Some additional program-related estimated expenses include:

- Summer Interior Design Workshop $2,500
  (one-time, payable to the Department of Interior Design)
- Laptop computer and software $1,500-2,500
- Books, materials and supplies $1,000-1,500

Technology Requirement
A laptop computer is required for admission to the Interior Environments Professional Entry Level Track Program. Information about the current computer and software requirements is available at arts.vcu.edu/computers. Prior to purchasing a laptop, visit this webpage and select Interior Design from the list for the latest minimum configuration recommendations.
Plan of Study

For current curriculum information, review the program information in the VCU Bulletin online at bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-arts/interior-design/ . Information in the VCU Bulletin will supersede curriculum information on these pages.

Year 1

Summer Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDES 500</td>
<td>Introduction to Interior Design Workshop</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fall Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</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 631</td>
<td>Ethics and Business Procedures</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 651</td>
<td>History and Theory of Int. Environments I</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours 15

Spring* Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</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 522</td>
<td>Environmental Factors for Interior Environments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDES 611</td>
<td>Advanced Graphics for Interior Environments I</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>

Term Hours 15

Year 2

Summer Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDES 693</td>
<td>Interior Design Internship</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX XXX</td>
<td>Open Elective</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours 6-10

Fall Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>

Term Hours 13

Spring Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</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>3-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Term Hours 9-12

60 Minimum required program hours

* Candidacy / Portfolio review takes place during the second semester

Rose Peck, 2015
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 fundamentals to you while entering the Professional Entry Level Track in Interior Environments. During the workshop, three major components of the program are introduced:

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

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

Design Graphics
You 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 you will be introduced to the practice, vocabulary and principles of interior design.

Workshop Topics:
- 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, and more

Lauren Prisco, 2017
Alexis Holcombe, 2017
Candidacy Review

Purpose
Candidacy review is the second of three formal reviews in which the graduate student participates during the program of study. 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 skill 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.

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

Thesis/Creative Project Guidelines
The thesis/creative project for the Professional Entry Level Track is a design project investigating 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 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
In the second year of the program, during the Fall semester, each student will present an initial proposal for their thesis project for faculty review. 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 will include:
- Site documentation and analysis
- Precedent studies and research
- Initial programming
- Bibliography
- Concept development

The proposal book in addition to documentation of the finished thesis project will become the thesis document.
Thesis/Creative Project

Thesis/Creative Project Exhibit
The thesis project will 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 of the program. As the capstone project for the Professional Entry Level curriculum it must demonstrate your proficiency in the following areas:

- Design research and your 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 you exhibit the thesis/creative project. Therefore, the final product must be in a format that can be presented for an extended period without your presence.

Thesis Defense
At an appointed time, you will meet with your committee to defend your thesis project. You will present the project and then answer any questions put forward by the reviewers. After the review, the committee will vote to pass, 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 for your thesis, you must submit their thesis electronically to the Graduate School. Information about this is available on the Graduate School website at www.graduate.vcu.edu/student/thesis.html.
Alexis Holcombe, 2017

Xuan Liu, 2014

Jessie Walton, 2016

Thomas Kennedy, 2016

Sarah Webb, 2016
Course Descriptions

Summer Workshop: Introduction to Interior Design
Provides 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 and 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
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 a design idea synthesized through the development of a design process, investigative research in an individual project of complex scale and scope.
Faculty + Staff

**Roberto Ventura**, LEED AP  
*Interim Chair, Associate Professor*  
M.Arch., Miami University  
BA, Math + Physics, Albion College

**Christiana Lafazani**, NCIDQ  
*Interim Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, 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  
*Associate Professor*  
M.Arch, Architecture, Yale University  
BS, Architecture, University of Virginia

**Emily Smith**, CID, LEED AP  
*Assistant Professor*  
MFA, Interior Environments, VCU  
BS, Interior Design, Virginia Tech

**Lexy Holcombe**  
*Assistant Professor*  
MFA, Interior Environments, VCU  
BS, Interior Design, Virginia Tech  
BA, Political Science, Chatham College (now Chatham University)

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

**Eleanor Campbell-Barton**  
*Adjunct instructor*  
Principal + Director of Interior Design, Glavé & Holmes  
BFA, Interior Design, VCU

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

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

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

**Tim Hamnett**  
*Adjunct instructor*  
Architectural Designer, Baskervill  
M.Arch, Architecture, University of Washington  
BDes Arch, BA, English, University of Florida

**Joanna Gragnani**  
*Program Assistant*  
BA, Art History, University of Virginia
For more information about the VCUarts Interior Design MFA program, please contact:

Robert Smith
Graduate Program 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
instagram.com/vcuinteriordesign

Cover rendering by An Liu, MFA 2017

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.