Master of Arts in Design with Concentration in Interaction Design

The Department of Design advances the professional work of thoughtful, creative, and meaningful design to delight, inspire, and serve the needs of people. Design is the planning that lays the basis for creation and development of every object or system people use. Design programs train students to be problem solvers who consider the aesthetic, functional, and user-focused aspects of an object or a process. This requires considerable integrative research, thought, modeling, interactive adjustments, and redesign.

Interaction Design and User Experience involves researching and fashioning products, services, and systems that are useful, usable, and desirable. Interaction design and user experience offers a human-centered approach to innovation, creatively mediating how businesses engage with customers and how brands and organizations can become more relevant in the marketplace. Broadly speaking, interaction design and user experience defines the contextual behavior of artifacts, environments, and systems.

The Interaction Design program is for prospective students who already hold design-related baccalaureate degrees and are seeking advanced study in a versatile, rapidly growing professional design discipline. Applicants should have at least 2 years of full-time professional work experience in design or a design-related field.

The master’s student in interaction design and user experience should demonstrate the ability to conduct original design research, translate research insights into design input, and produce an interactive artifact of relevance and quality. The graduate will have completed significant course work and a thesis that documents independent discovery and research and will have passed an oral examination on that work. For more information about the program M.A in Interaction Design and User Experience, (http://design.ku.edu/ma-interaction-design/)

The design department offers 2 Master of Arts degrees, which share a core curriculum.

The M.A. in Design Management and Strategy educates students in the theory, methods, and practices relevant to managing design in an organizational and business context. The program gives students the requisite knowledge to augment their professional skills and abilities, perform as effective design managers, and advance their careers.

The M.A. in Interaction Design and User Experience educates students in the theory, methods, and practices of interaction design. It gives students the requisite professional knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform as interaction designers.

KU is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (http://nasad.arts-accredit.org/). The entrance and graduation requirements in this catalog conform to the published guidelines of that organization.

M.A. in Interaction Design Admission

By permission of the Kansas Board of Regents, application for admission to graduate programs in the Department of Design may be refused if available instructional space does not allow addition of more students. The application deadline for Fall is April 1 and October 1 for Spring.

A departmental graduate faculty committee reviews transcripts and evaluates applications to determine admission qualifications. Applicants to the M.A. programs must have undergraduate and/or professional backgrounds judged by the Graduate Faculty to be appropriate preparation for the specialization selected.

A complete application for admission consists of the following materials:

1. Graduate application (http://www.grad.ku.edu/) and application fee (See Admission in the Graduate Studies (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/) section of the online catalog for further information);
2. 1 unofficial copy of the transcript from all colleges or universities attended, showing receipt of a bachelor’s degree, and 1 unofficial copy of the transcript showing any graduate degree or credit earned;
3. 3 letters of recommendation from people in a position to comment on your abilities and performance;
4. Statement of design philosophy and approach;
5. A portfolio of your design work, or if your previous degree was not in a design related discipline, samples of written work or other creative artifacts you have produced. Portfolio should represent the scope of your experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities to date. Please include documentation of each project: the challenge it was intended to address, the process involved, your role and the role of others in its execution. Please upload your portfolio digitally under “other documents” during the online application process. The portfolio is limited to 10 megabytes (not zipped) in PDF format;
6. For international students, a financial statement showing minimum financial support for the first year of study (see the Admissions page on the school’s website (http://www.sadp.ku.edu/)).
7. Evidence of language proficiency if the native tongue is not English.
8. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) test results (preferred).

Submit your graduate application and application materials online (http://www.grad.ku.edu/). Please contact the Admissions Coordinator if you have any questions:

The University of Kansas
Department of Design
Admissions Coordinator
1465 Jayhawk Blvd., Room 205
Lawrence, KS 66045
785-864-3167
jweaver@ku.edu

Course and Credit Distribution Requirements
Total Credit Hours 31

CORE COURSES (12 credit hours)
ADS 710 Advanced Human Factors in Design (3)
ADS 712 Design Strategies & Methods (3)
ADS 765 Interaction Design (3)
ADS 714 Designing Business Services & Consumer Experiences (3)
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RESEARCH
ADS 860 Graduate Synthesis & Applications Seminar 1 x 2 (2)
ADS 861 Thesis Research Seminar (1)

PRACTICA
ADS 890 Thesis (1-8 cr) (3)

ELECTIVES IN DESIGN (9)
Select 3 or more from the following:
ADS 770 Design Cognition (3)
ADS 750 Design Management (3)
ADS 751 Creating Design Scenarios & Simulations (3)
ADS 745 Branding & Design (3)
ADS 740 Special Problems in Design (1-6)

ELECTIVES OUTSIDE OF ART AND DESIGN (5)