

Master of Science in Education in Learning Design

The future of education and workforce development depends on how well learning experiences are designed, developed, implemented, and evaluated. As organizations across industries invest in digital learning, AI-enabled tools, and performance improvement systems, there is a growing demand for professionals who can rigorously design learning that is strategic, measurable, and impactful.

The M.S.E. in Learning Design program (STEM CIP 13.0501) prepares professional instructional/learning designers to lead in the professional field of learning/instructional design and technology, capable of enhancing education, learning, and work performance across diverse populations and settings. The program's graduates will hold various job titles (e.g., Instructional Designer, Learning Designer, Training Development Specialist, Instructional Consultant, Learning Engineer, etc.) working across formal and informal K-16 educational contexts, corporate training environments, military sectors, and non-profit or government organizations.

Built on the Jayhawk Flex competency-based model, the program allows students to progress by demonstrating mastery rather than accumulating seat time. Through authentic, portfolio-driven assessments, students produce professional artifacts such as design outlines, stakeholder strategies, assessment systems, data analysis reports, prototypes, and final learning artifacts. Every competency's course content and assessments are grounded in real-world contexts, ensuring graduates leave with demonstrated capability rather than just theoretical knowledge.

Students develop expertise in learning design across six domains, including (1) Designery Thinking, (2) Instructional Methods, Models, and Artifacts, (3) Principled Assessment and Evaluation, (4) Knowledge Building in the Profession, (5) Learning Technologies, and (6) Project Management. A culminating capstone project (Domain 7) challenges students to synthesize these competencies in solving a complex, authentic learning problem.

Fully online and asynchronous, the program is designed for both working professionals and recent graduates seeking entry into or advancement within the field of learning/instructional design and technology. With clear performance indicators, structured feedback, and flexible pacing options, students can balance graduate study with professional and personal commitments while maintaining high academic standards.

In addition to all University requirements for admission to graduate studies (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/#:-:text=KU%E2%80%99s%20minimum%20admission%20requirements>), applicants to the M.S.E. in Learning Design must also submit and/or meet all the following with the online application to graduate study (<https://gograd.ku.edu/apply/>):

- 1 official transcript of all college records with at least a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Applicants with a grade point average below 3.0 will be considered for admission, but admission is not guaranteed.
- A personal statement: a 1–2-page statement that outlines (1) the applicant's academic and professional backgrounds, and (2) the applicant's professional aspirations after graduating/completing the M.S.E. in Learning Design competency-based program. The program

leadership/admission committee might ask the applicant a few follow-up questions before making a final admission decision.

Please note: Meeting minimum admission standards does not guarantee admission to the program.

These are the admission requirements in place at the time this catalog content was published.

Program Domains & Competencies: The program is organized into seven domains, each with its own competencies, for a total of 30 competencies. Each competency is considered equivalent to one credit hour of course work time.

Code	Title	Hours
Domain 1: Designery Thinking		
LD-C 700	Thinking Like a Designer	1
LD-C 701	Learners and the Learning Environment	1
LD-C 702	Defining Design Challenge and Generating Options	1
LD-C 703	Prototyping, Experimentation, and User Testing	1
LD-C 704	Implementation and Evaluation	1
Domain 2: Instructional Methods, Models, and Artifacts		
LD-C 705	Meeting Diverse Learning Needs	1
LD-C 706	Identifying and Integrating Instructional Models	1
LD-C 707	Documenting Learning Materials and Resources	1
LD-C 708	Collaborating with Subject Matter Experts	1
Once all competencies of Domains 1 and 2 are attained, students can take any number of the competencies from Domains 3, 4, 5, or 6, in consultation with their program advisor. Students are strongly encouraged to follow the sequence of competencies within each domain, but may complete Domains 3-6 in any order they choose, as outlined below and in consultation with their program advisor.		
Domain 3: Principled Assessment and Evaluation		
LD-C 709	Assessment Development	1
LD-C 710	Assessment Validation	1
LD-C 711	Assessment Analysis	1
LD-C 712	Communicating Data and Results	1
LD-C 713	Designing Assessment Feedback Instruments	1
Domain 4: Knowledge Building in the Field		
LD-C 714	Learning Sciences, Theories and Research	1
LD-C 715	Design Approaches, Models, and Design-based Research	1
LD-C 716	Contributing to a Professional Community	1
Domain 5: Learning Technologies in the Field		
LD-C 717	Adaptive Technologies	1
LD-C 718	Collaborative Technologies	1
LD-C 719	Accessible Technology	1
LD-C 720	Media Production	1
LD-C 721	Ethical Technology Integration	1
LD-C 722	New Trends in Learning Technologies	1
LD-C 723	Technology Investment and Sustainability	1
Domain 6: Project Management		
LD-C 724	Planning	1
LD-C 725	Creating Supportive Workflows	1
LD-C 726	Collaborating with Team Members	1
LD-C 727	Collaborating with Stakeholders	1

Once all the competencies above are attained and upon approval from the program advisor, students can take the two capstone competencies (must be taken together) to finish the program.

Domain 7: Capstone in Learning Design (I and II)

LD-C 728	Capstone in Learning Design I (AND)	1
LD-C 729	Capstone in Learning Design II	1
Total Hours		30

At the completion of the M.S.E. in Learning Design program, graduates/professional learning designers will be able to:

1. Demonstrate designerly thinking by applying design processes, prototyping, and iterative testing to generate innovative solutions to complex learning challenges.
2. Conduct critical inquiry into learner needs and contexts, integrating diverse sources of evidence to design effective learning environments.
3. Communicate design decisions and learning solutions clearly and persuasively across modalities—including written, visual, oral, and digital formats—to stakeholders, learners, and professional audiences.
4. Develop, validate, and analyze assessments to measure learning outcomes and communicate results through accessible data visualizations, reports, and presentations.
5. Critically evaluate learning theories, research, and design models to inform and justify evidence-based learning designs for different audiences.
6. Design inclusive learning experiences that ensure accessibility and responsiveness to different learner characteristics.
7. Apply principles of ethical responsibility by ensuring privacy, security, and ethical use of learning technologies, as well as adhering to professional codes of conduct in design practice.
8. Collaborate effectively with subject matter experts, stakeholders, and learners to co-design, adapt, and implement learning experiences that address shared goals.
9. Contribute and manage learning design projects by defining scope, coordinating workflows, and sustaining productive team and stakeholder relationships.
10. Engage with professional communities of practice to contribute to knowledge building, foster continuous improvement, and advance the field of learning design.