

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION DESIGN - MASTER OF ARTS (MA)

The Master of Strategic Communication Design (MSCD) is an immersive 39-credit hour program typically completed in a single year. Located in a state-of-the-art studio in the heart of Boulder's entrepreneurial tech community, the MSCD is entirely project-based. With the guidance of industry-driven instructors, our students leverage design's potential as a critical problem-solving tool in a rapidly changing world. This human-centered program evolves students into branding design and entrepreneurial professionals through innovative, intensive and progressive learning experiences.

MSCD graduates have been appointed to leadership design positions in top companies, including Google, Apple, Uber, Saatchi and Saatchi, Twitter and Dropbox—to name just a few.

Requirements

Application Requirements

Applicants to the master's in strategic communication design must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with an undergraduate GPA of at least 2.75. Special accommodations may be made for applicants with ancillary degrees, like pre-law or business.

Because this is a fast-paced, intensive program, applicants are strongly discouraged from working full-time while enrolled.

How to Apply

A complete application to the program must include the following:

- A long-form personal statement showcasing your interest in the program or your experience in the design industry.
- A portfolio showcasing your creative vision and potential. Your portfolio should be uploaded as a PDF alongside your application and should demonstrate your genuine passion for art or design. Your portfolio can demonstrate creativity in any media—basic design, photography, ceramics, painting, digital media, etc.
- One letter of recommendation from professionals or professors. Personal recommendations will not be accepted.
- Unofficial transcripts from all colleges attended.
- A nonrefundable application fee of \$60 (\$80 for international students)
- International students must also demonstrate English proficiency with an acceptable TOEFL (75), IELTS (6.0) or Duolingo (120) score.

Application Deadlines

This program is kept intentionally small by design, to facilitate close relationships between faculty and students, and among peers. To have the best chance of being accepted, applicants are encouraged to submit a complete application before the April 15 deadline.

Exceptionally qualified candidates who miss the deadline may be eligible to apply to the program, if space allows. Contact our graduate admissions team (cmcigrad@colorado.edu?subject=Inquiry%20about%20strategic%20communication%20design%20program) to learn more.

Program Requirements

The Master of Strategic Communication Design (MSCD) is a 39-hour professional master's degree program to be completed within a single calendar year—from August to August—over three semesters: Fall, Spring, and Summer Session D. Students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average and fulfill all requirements in a timely manner.

Plan of Study

Year One

Fall Semester		Credit Hours
APRD 5001	Foundations of Brand Design	3
APRD 5002	Foundations of Experience Design	3
APRD 5006	Design for Startups	3
APRD 5009	Principles of Visual Design	3
Credit Hours		12

Spring Semester

APRD 5003	Advanced Brand Design	3
APRD 5004	Designing the Customer Journey	3
APRD 5008	Designing for Scale	3
APRD 5014	Advanced Tools for Interaction Design	3
APRD 5018	Innovative Technologies for Design	3
Credit Hours		15

Summer

APRD 5011	Digital Design Portfolio	3
APRD 5012	Entrepreneurial Design	3
APRD 5015	Brand Design for Sustainable Futures	3
APRD 5020	Design Leadership	3
Credit Hours		12
Total Credit Hours		39

Learning Outcomes

By the time students graduate, they will have learned the skills required to become full-stack designers. They will have learned the various elements of completing a design project, from design thinking and usability testing, to brand design and leading design workshops. The learning outcomes for the MSCD program are as follows:

- Demonstrate knowledge of both brand and interaction design and the industries used within.
- Develop skills to define complex problems and apply design thinking for innovative solutions.
- Apply foundational UI design practices and system design principles to create scalable, intuitive digital experiences across various platforms.
- Utilize UX design software across human-centered processes with innovative technology.
- Understand user interface guidelines through principles of human perception and cognition and learn how to apply them to the design of everyday things.
- Communicate creative decisions effectively, emphasizing positive business impact.

- Embrace feedback while collaborating effectively in diverse teams, fostering an inclusive and productive environment for decision-making.
- Build an industry-ready professional portfolio.