

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION DESIGN - MASTER OF ARTS (MA)

The master's program in strategic communication design (STCM) crosses traditional divides and champions the global value of innovation by design, pointing to a new way of working, seeing, making and thinking in the 21st century creative economy. It's not only that the boundaries between design disciplines are blurring. So are the boundaries between design and everyday life—between work, play, social innovation, leadership and management, along with an increasing awareness, evolution and dedication to value-driven efforts through and by design.

Students work in an open studio environment in transdisciplinary teams, consider issues from multiple perspectives, learn from community and industry leaders, and emerge with a portfolio of work that showcases design as a process for transforming social relations and contemporary life through the design of innovative products and experiences.

The paths that students travel from start to finish of the STCM can vary, depending on individual interests and goals. We have a required core curriculum that all students in STCM take over three semesters. The core design curriculum functions as a through line, providing a common foundation for all students in the program. This common core curriculum is complemented by a variety of electives developed within our individual studios and select graduate courses offered throughout CU Boulder. Students can choose from a diverse range of elective courses that address their specific individual interests. This arrangement allows students to design an individual degree path buttressed by a solid foundational core.

Requirements

Application Requirements

Applications are reviewed on a rolling admissions basis for the STCM master's. We evaluate applications as they are completed, and acceptances are meted out on a first-come, first-served basis for each prospective qualified student. We accept a maximum of 24 students for the program each calendar year.

Our students have a desire to become design-based leaders, thinkers and doers. The personal statement is an essential part of the student's application. In a maximum of 1,500 words, students should supply long-form answers to the following questions:

- What attracts you to the program at this time? What do you envision as the most compelling opportunities for you as a designer and also a future leader who can lead by design.
- What particular experiences—personal or professional—have prepared you for work in design?
- Why is design important to you and how would you use it to change the world?

How to Apply

The application is listed under Strategic Communication Design on the Graduate School (<https://grad.apply.colorado.edu/apply/>) website.

Required materials, a list of which can also be found in the application, are as follows:

- Three letters of recommendation: These should come from professionals and/or professors. No personal recommendations please.
- Unofficial transcripts.
- Writing sample: A sample of the student's writing that they feel is exemplary and representative of their writing abilities.
- Portfolio: We will be happy to view a portfolio if provided, but submission of a portfolio is optional.
- TOEFL score report: International applicants must have a TOEFL score of at least 600 (IBT 100).
- Application fee: A nonrefundable application fee of \$60 is also required (\$80 for international).
- We do not require STCM applicants to take the GRE.

Contact

For questions regarding the application, please contact executive director David Slayden (<https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/people/advertising-public-relations-and-media-design/david-slayden/>) (slayden@colorado.edu) to speak with you and discuss your ambitions and opportunities to be expected within the program.

Program Requirements

The STCM is a 39-hour professional masters degree program to be completed within a single calendar year—from August to August—over four semesters: Fall, Spring, Maymester and Summer Session D. We follow the CU Boulder calendar (<https://www.colorado.edu/academics/academic-calendar/>) and, in doing so, are guided by a year-long arc from **Foundations** (fall semester) to **Variations and Explorations** (spring semester), to **Solutions** (Maymester and Summer Session D).

The master's degree is awarded for successful completion of 39 credits over four contiguous semesters. 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
Foundations		
CORE (required)		
APRD 5005	Foundations of Critical Making	3
APRD 5006	Introduction to Designing for Entrepreneurism	3
APRD 6871	Special Topics	3
ELECTIVES (required)		
APRD 5002	Experience Design Foundations	3
		Credit Hours
		12

Spring Semester

Variations and Explorations		
CORE (required)		
APRD 5007	Immersive Media Design Through Critical Making	3
APRD 5008	Access to Tools for Entrepreneurism by Design	3
APRD 5017	Parametric Product Design Through Critical Making	3

APRD 6871	Special Topics	3
ELECTIVES		3
APRD 5001	Foundations of Strategic Brand Design	
APRD 5003	Toward a Unified Theory of Brand Equity	
APRD 5004	UX and the Digital Delivery of Products and Services	
APRD 5014	Advanced Practices and Tools of Experience Design	
Credit Hours		15
Summer		
Solutions		
CORE (required)		
APRD 5010	Design Sprint (Maymester)	3
APRD 6871	Special Topics	3
ELECTIVES		6
APRD 5013	Designing for Branded Experiences	
APRD 5015	Brand Design for Sustainable Futures	
APRD 5016	Experience Design and Narratives of Interaction	
APRD 5019	Physical Computing and the Design of Sustainable Change	
APRD 6871	Special Topics	
Credit Hours		12
Total Credit Hours		39