

DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN
M.F.A. Program in Design Research and Development
The Ohio State University

CURRICULUM

The program leading to the Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Design Research and Development is devoted to the development of knowledge and skills possessed by successful designers, such as the critical factors of environmental and social awareness, novel methods for human-centered and systematic analysis, and creative problem-solving. An emphasis is placed on the creation of outcomes that address and contribute to contemporary issues in a global society.

The program is centered on design research with the objective of developing new concepts, theories and outcomes that are tested with methods of evaluation for performance, usability, and user satisfaction. The techniques and tools applied may be those traditional to design practice, or those evolving from experimentation and/or electronic media. Critical to this discovery process is the engagement of a primary research effort.

The following is an example course plan. Courses marked with * are required in the semester shown. Electives and other courses represent the credit hour requirements and suggested distribution, but are flexible in the order that they are taken. This example illustrates a 2.5 year time to degree completion.

<i>Autumn Semester</i>	<i>Spring Semester</i>	<i>May/Summer</i>
Year One		
6100 Methods for Design Research, 3 cr.*	6300 Exploration in Grad Studies, 3 cr.*	Elective – Theory/History, 3 cr.
6200 Foundation for Grad Studies, 3 cr.*	6400 DRD Graduate Studio, 3 cr.*	
6500 Graduate Design Seminar, 3 cr.*	6500 Graduate Design Seminar, 3 cr.*	
Elective – Theory/History, 3 cr.	Elective – Studio/Lab, 3 cr.	
	** <i>First Year Review</i>	
Year Two		
6500 Graduate Design Seminar, 3 cr.*	6400 DRD Graduate Studio, 3 cr.*	Elective – Interdisciplinary, 3 cr.
Elective – Studio/Lab, 3 cr.	6500 Graduate Design Seminar, 3 cr.*	
Elective – Theory/History, 3 cr.	7998 Thesis Project (Independent), 3 cr.	
Elective – Interdisciplinary, 3 cr.	Elective – Studio/Lab, 3 cr.	
	** <i>Thesis Committee Review</i>	
Year Three		
7998 Thesis Project (Independent), 3 cr.		
7999 Thesis Writing (Independent), 3 cr.		
** <i>Masters Examination</i>		

Total Credit Hours: 60

CATEGORY and CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

6100 Methods and Tools for Conducting Design Research (3 credits)

Hands-on learning experiences in using and analyzing design research methods, tools and techniques, user-centered design research (applied ethnography, contextual inquiry, evaluative research, usability) and generative design research.

6200 Foundation for Graduate Design Studies (3 credits)

Seminar addressing graduate expectations, orientation, and available resources in the department and university. This course lays the historical and contextual groundwork of the discipline of design through the study of a broad range of contemporary and emerging research approaches and expertise of department graduate faculty.

6300 Exploration in Graduate Design Studies (3 credits)

Seminar facilitating exploration and discovery in future-oriented domains of design practice and research. Students will practice the tools for exploration including reading, writing, making, planning, and reflection in order to establish their own research path.

Theory/History Electives (9 credits)

Courses providing context, theoretical or practical analysis of historical and/or contemporary concepts in the discipline and topic being studied. Courses should be seminar or lecture format with writing assignments. Courses may be in or outside of the Design department, with an emphasis on multidisciplinary learning.

Interdisciplinary/Collaborative Electives (6 credits)

Ideal courses are project-based with teams comprised of Design and one or more other disciplines. These courses may be offered in the Design department, but collaboration courses consisting only of Design students do not apply. Other courses accepted in this category may be outside of the Design department in which the student is studying and interacting within another discipline, and may effectively be additional History/Theory when necessary for the research.

Studio/Lab Electives (9 credits)

Courses with hands-on experience in or outside of Design for the purpose of advancing skill-sets to be applied in research or for understanding and incorporating experimental or applied practices in other areas of the Arts, Humanities and Sciences.

6400 Graduate DRD Studios (6 credits)

Hands-on learning experiences in the studio or field. Collaborative teams work to explore, identify and/or solve problems. Topics vary depending on the opportunity for sponsored projects, emerging trends in practice and expertise of instructor.

Graduate Design Seminars (12 credits)

Reading, thinking, discussing, reflecting, and writing are used to explore topics of relevance. Topics vary depending on emerging trends in design practice and in the world as well as the expertise and research interest of the instructor.

Thesis Development, Thesis Writing & Project (9 credits)

Thesis production (7998) and writing (7999) courses are taken independently with members of the student's thesis committee.

For detailed information about forming Thesis Committees, the first year review and Thesis Committee Review, please see the Design department's Graduate Handbook at: <https://design.osu.edu/graduate-student-resources>