PHD ADMISSIONS AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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(Last updated on December 1, 2014)
PhD Program Description

1. Program Overview
2. Areas of Concentration (Tracks)

1. Program Overview

Within the Design Studies Graduate Program, faculty and students investigate a wide range of subject matter and apply a variety of methods, with the common goal of understanding how design (broadly conceived) relates to, responds to, and affects our lives. The program’s graduate faculty is comprised of interdisciplinary scholars, designers, scientists and artists who mentor and assist graduate students as they build individual programs of study. The Design Studies Department offers a doctoral program with the aim of preparing students for professional design careers, specialized research, college teaching, museum or archival work, community engagement, and entrepreneurial endeavors.

The graduate program in Design Studies is housed within the School of Human Ecology. The PhD program capitalizes on the many rich resources offered at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As a public research university, UW-Madison is known for its high quality of research activity (ranked third in the nation) and comprehensive academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The university environment provides fertile ground for interdisciplinary research necessary for twenty-first century students to prepare for work in a fast evolving discipline with shifting boundaries and growing global connections. UW’s world-class faculty and staff offer innovative approaches to curriculum and research. The UW-Madison campus is home to 40 libraries, nearly 100 research centers, a state-of-art virtual reality facility, and the Chazen Museum of Art (one of the nation’s leading university art museums).

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Design Studies is the highest degree in the field of design research and scholarship. The program is grounded in the production of original and rigorous research. Students are encouraged to shape their own approaches as they develop mastery of the research and communication skills necessary to complete their research agendas. Through a combination of core courses, concentrations, major specializations, and minor specializations, students acquire content knowledge, theoretical foundations, and methodological approaches needed for their work. The PhD culminates in the production of a doctoral dissertation that contributes to the knowledge base in the discipline of design. Graduates of the program have demonstrated their leadership in the field of design practice and education in the U.S. and internationally.

Admission to the PhD program is highly competitive. The PhD builds on knowledge acquired typically through a master’s degree, and provides students with further training to teach and conduct research at the highest level. Competitive candidates will hold a master’s degree (MS preferred) in design, architectural history, environmental design, or other related fields. Promising applicants who do not have sufficient educational background may be admitted, under the condition that he or she take pre-doctoral preparation courses.

The PhD Program currently offers three areas of concentration. Within each area, students are expected to build a self-directed but highly coherent curriculum in close consultation with a major faculty advisor. The tracks are:
- Design History (DH Track)
- Environmental Design Research (EDR Track)
- Textile Science (TS)

Students have the opportunity to apply for funding through teaching assistantship and fellowships, or through sponsored research projects under the direction of individual faculty members. All funding is awarded on a competitive basis.

NOTE: As stated in the School of Human Ecology graduate policies (issued March 2014), students enrolled in the PhD prior to Fall 2014 have the option to complete their degree under the prior policies. Any student entering or readmitted on or after Fall 2014 must adhere to the new requirements.

2. Areas of Concentration (Tracks)

Design History (DH)
Design History seeks to understand design in its historical context, as both a process and a product. Our program defines design broadly to include architecture, interior design, industrial design, decorative arts, and other areas of material culture. The Design Studies Department offers many opportunities for interdisciplinary study on the UW Madison campus, and has strong ties to other disciplines including Art History and Landscape Architecture. Design History PhD students also have access to coursework and faculty members from allied programs, including the Material Culture Certificate and the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Program (a collaborative research degree offered through UW Madison and UW Milwaukee).

Environmental Design Research (EDR)
Environmental Design Research addresses the interaction between people and their built, natural, and/or virtual environments with a clear goal to create environments that are sustainable and responsive to human needs. The faculty and graduates of the program have pioneered studies in environment behavior, evidence-based design, building evaluation, sustainability, aging and environment, children’s environment, environments for special population, and emerging technologies and applications of virtual reality.

While drawing from campus-wide resources, the faculty and students in EDR closely work with its allies within the School of Human Ecology, which include community psychologists, developmental psychologists, and scholars from consumer science. EDR students also have the opportunity to work with the Landscape Architecture Department, and with the UW-Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Textile Science (TS)
Textile Science investigates on the interaction of dyes and finishes with fibers, yarns and fabrics. Faculty and students in this program focus on sustainability, and work to develop chemicals and processes that are safer for the end-user, textile workers, and the environment. Students achieve this by developing and using chemicals, dyes and finishes, and by reducing the amount of chemicals, water, and energy used in these processes. The DS Textile Lab offers equipment for textile quality control, dyeing, finishing and plasma. The Materials Science Lab offers analytical equipment such as ESCA, an Atomic Force Microscope, an Electron Microscope, and FTIR. Depending on their research interests, students will have the opportunity to work with other UW departments including Chemistry, Material Science, Forestry, or Electrical and Computer Engineering.
Admissions

1. Application Process at a Glance
   - Design Studies admits students for Fall semester only.
   - DEADLINE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their materials by December 15 each year. Visit website (http://sohe.wisc.edu/who-we-are/academic-departments/design-studies-1/graduate-programs/phd/phd-admissions/) for current deadline.
   - All applications and materials must be submitted in electronic format online.
   - Candidates must submit applications to both UW Madison Graduate School and the Design Studies Department.
   - The Design Studies Admissions Committee reviews each application in January.
   - Finalist candidates may be invited for an interview (typically held by video conference, such as Skype).
   - The Design Studies Admissions Committee makes final admissions decisions, and considers students for funding resources (if students have indicated interest in funding on their applications).
   - If a student is recommended for admission, the Design Studies Admissions Committee will contact him / her directly.
   - For Domestic students:
     - UW Madison Graduate School finalizes admissions and sends the official admission letter.
   - For International students:
     - UW Madison Graduate School asks for proof of funding, and assists with documents for visa appointment.

2. Application Process, Step-by-Step
   - Submit application online to UW Madison Graduate School
   - Submit application online to Design Studies Department
   - Submit supplemental application materials online to Design Studies Department, as required by your area of proposed study
   - Submit Funding application (may require supplemental materials)

3. Admissions Requirements
The UW Madison Graduate School sets minimum requirements for admission. However, the Design Studies Department has a more rigorous set of standards than those set by the Graduate School.

- **Degree**
  1. Bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution, or comparable degree from an international institution is required
  2. Graduate Master’s degree in a related field (Master of Science preferred) OR applicable coursework in a related field. The prerequisite degree should contain the appropriate mix of coursework for the preparation of PhD work. The graduate admission committee and the potential graduate faculty advisor jointly determine the suitability of the degree and coursework at the time of admission.
  3. **Outstanding candidates who do not meet the Pre-Doctoral Prerequisites requirement may be considered under “Special Considerations: Admission with Deficiency”**

- **Grades**
  - All grade-point averages are based on a 4.00 scale
  - Minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on the last 60 semester hours (approximately two years)
  - Minimum graduate GPA of 3.3

- **English Proficiency Test Scores**
  - English Proficiency test scores are required for every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English. See UW Madison Graduate School for details and exemptions. Test scores should be sent directly from the Educational Testing Service using the institution code 1846. The required proficiency scores are:
    - TOEFL Minimum: 100 Internet-based (iBT) / 600 Paper-based (PBT)
    - IELTS Minimum: 7.0

A student must meet the minimum scores to be considered for admission. In rare circumstances, outstanding candidates with lower scores may be considered if they demonstrate exceptional strength in other areas. If admitted, the student will be required to complete compensatory English-language courses.

- **Graduate Record Examination (GRE)**
  - Design Studies requires all PhD candidates to submit GRE scores. The test scores should be sent to institution code 1846

4. **Application Materials (submitted directly to Design Studies)**

- Online Application to UW Madison Graduate School, with fee
- Official transcripts or academic records for each institution attended.
- All transcripts must be in English.
- Personal Biographical Statement
  - Describe concisely how your personal background and life experiences motivated you to further pursue graduate education. The personal biographical statement is not a statement of purpose that describes your academic plan (no more than 500 words)
- Statement of Purpose
  Statement of purpose is a well-stated and concise document that describe the research you will be conducting if you are admitted to the program. It should include both the area of concentration and specialization and how you plan to do it. If applicable, include your qualification that helps admission committee understand the feasibility of your study plan (no more than 500 words)
- Writing sample, sample scholarly paper
  The writing sample should be sole authored, such as chapter from thesis or published journal articles.
- CV or résumé
- Three Letters of Recommendation

5. Candidate Interviews

- Finalist candidates may be invited for an interview (held by video conference, such as Skype).

6. Funding Application (addendum to Application Materials)

- Submit portfolio of design work, for design-related teaching positions.
- Submit evidence of courses taught as instructor or teaching assistant, if applicable
Degree Requirements

1. Pre-Doctoral Preparation Courses (credit varies)
2. Core Courses (14-15 cr.)
3. Major Area of Specialization (15 cr.)
4. Minor Area of Specialization (9-12 cr.)
5. Qualifying Research Project (3 cr, included as Core Course).
6. Qualifying Exam / Preliminary Examination (no credit allocation)
7. Research and Thesis (3cr. each semester after Preliminary Exams)
8. Foreign Language Requirement (credit varies)

PhD students must complete a minimum of 51 credits. Of these, 38 credits will include Core Courses, courses in a Major Area of Specialization, and a Qualifying Research Project. The remaining 13 credits may be fulfilled through foreign language competencies, independent studies (i.e. to prepare for qualifying examinations), or Dissertator credits. At least 50% of credits (26 of 51 total credits) applied toward the doctorate degree must be from courses designed for graduate work; courses numbered 700 and above or courses numbered 300-699 that assess graduate students separately from undergraduate students generally satisfy this requirement. Students must maintain a 3.3 grade point average to remain in good standing.

The Minimum Graduate Residence Requirement for doctorate degrees is 32 credits. Non-dissertator students may enroll for a maximum of 15 credits per term.

1. Pre-doctoral Preparation Courses

Promising applicants who do not have sufficient educational background may be admitted, under the condition that he or she take pre-doctoral preparation courses; if the student satisfactorily completes pre-doctoral course with a 3.3 GPA or above, the student may subsequently advance to full doctoral student status. Students will work closely with their major faculty advisor to determine appropriate pre-doctoral preparation courses. Pre-doctoral preparation courses vary by track and may include, but are not limited to, the following courses:

Design History
- Art / Architecture / Design History Survey (2 courses)
- Design History or Art History Research Methods (1 course)
- Design History Research Seminar (1 course)

Environmental Design Research
- Introductory research methods (2 courses)¹
- Introductory statistics course (2 courses)²
- Classical Sociological Theory (SOC 475)

¹ Choose one from: INTER-HE 793 Research Methods; HDFS 425 Research Methods in Human Development and Family Studies; C&E SOC/SOC 357: Methods of Sociological Inquiry; or other equivalent courses
Textile Science
  • Introduction to Mathematical Statistics (STAT 312)
  • Applied Regression Analysis (STAT 333)
  • Statistical Experimental Design for Engineers (STAT 424)
  • Introduction to Theory of Probability (STAT 431)

2. Core Courses
14-15 credits

The PhD Core Course curriculum offers an opportunity for all Design Studies students to establish a foundational knowledge of theories, research methods, and seminars relevant to design research. The core curriculum also includes specialized training in instruction and pedagogy; this is requisite for graduate teaching assistant duties (often a source of doctoral funding)\(^3\), and useful for students who wish to pursue academic careers. The core curriculum also includes an independent study that will facilitate the production of the Qualifying Research Project (see description below).

Prior to doctoral candidacy, all PhD students will be expected to enroll in 14-15 credits distributed among the following Core Courses:

1. DS920 Theories and Methods in Design Inquiry (3 credits)
2. Design Studies Seminar (select one as appropriate) (3 credits)
   a. DS 221 Person-environment Interaction (EDR track only)\(^4\)
   b. DS 920 Seminar in Design History (or independent study; topics may vary) (DH track only)
   c. DS 920 Seminar in New Developments in Textiles (or independent study) (TS track only)
3. Research Design and Methods (select one as appropriate) (3 credits)
   a. Methods for Design History (select from Dimensions in Material Culture, Architectural History Methods, or Art History Methods) (DH track only)
   b. DS 955 Practical Research Design and Inquiry (EDR track only)
   c. DS 920 Textile Science Research Methods (TS track only)
4. Graduate Student Instructor Course (2-3 credits)\(^5\)
5. Qualifying Research Project (3 credits, independent study)

3. Major Area of Specialization
15 credits

The major area of specialization provides students with an overview of the knowledgebase and seminal research in their concentration field; coursework in the major area will serve as a foundation for the preliminary exam and dissertation. Students are encouraged to take course that are offered both inside and outside the Design Studies.

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\(^3\) A student who is assigned to a teaching assistantship at the time of admission may take the course(s) during their first semester while fulfilling teaching assistant duties.

\(^4\) This requirement is pending the new joint hire with the Landscape Architecture Department and the new course offered through the new person. Higher course number is necessary. May need to be replaced with independent study.

\(^5\) Choose from www.delta.wisc.edu/Courses_and_Programs/courses_and_programs_overview.html
Department to develop an interdisciplinary framework for their doctoral research. Students may also benefit from courses offered through CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation) traveling scholar program, the academic consortium of twelve major teaching and research universities in the Midwest designed to share specialized courses and resources. 6

PhD students are expected to develop a strong foundation in research methods. Students in the DH track must take at least one advanced methods courses in applicable areas, such as art history or material culture. Students in the EDR track are encouraged to take advanced research methods courses (e.g., advanced qualitative/quantitative, ethnography, GIS) and advanced statistics courses as their dissertation topic requires. Students in the TS track are expected to develop a strong foundation in chemistry, the fundamentals of plasma chemistry, and plasma processing. Technology and chemistry are an important part of textile science track.

4. Minor Area of Specialization
9-12 credits

All PhD students select a minor area of specialization outside their major area of specialization. The minor area should be distinctive but complementary to student’s major area. The UW-Madison Graduate School policy outlines two possible options regarding minor area of specialization:

- Option A: requires a minimum of 10 credits in a single disciplinary program (e.g., Art History, Landscape Architecture). Fulfillment of this option requires the approval of the minor program.
- Option B: requires a minimum of 9 credits in one or more programs forming a coherent topic, and can include course work in the program (e.g., technology-focused virtual reality7). Fulfillment of this option requires the approval of the Design Studies program. The distribution of other credits will be approved by the individual student’s PhD committee.8

6 The Committee on Institutional Cooperation, established in 1958, is the academic consortium of twelve major teaching and research universities in the Midwest, including the eleven members of the Big Ten Athletic Conference and the University of Chicago. Its programs and activities extend to all aspects of university activity except intercollegiate athletics. Member Institutions include Indiana University, Michigan State University, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Pennsylvania State University, Purdue University, University of Chicago, University of Illinois, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Traveling Scholar Program enables doctoral-level students at any CIC university to take advantage of educational opportunities--specialized courses, unique library collections, unusual laboratories--at any other CIC university without change in registration or increase in tuition. For more detailed information including eligibility criteria, conditions of enrollment, and application, visit, http://www.cic.net/home.

7 VR technology focused minor
Require during the first semester: DS 501: Design in Virtual Reality.
Electives:
CS/Psych-770 Human-Computer Interaction (3)
DS 501 Wearable Computing (3)
CS 679 Computer Game Technology (3)
CS 559 Computer Graphics (3)
CS 777 Computer Animation (3)
CS 838 Advanced Modeling and Simulation (3)
CS 838 Advanced Graphics (3)
CS 838 Visualization (3)

8 The Graduate School's minimum course requirements for the minor include:
- An average GPA of 3.00 on all minor course work;
- Course work must be graduate level (the equivalent of UW-Madison courses 300 level or above; no audits or pass/fail);
- Maximum 3 credits of independent study (e.g., 699, 799, 899, 999);
The Design Studies program offers a unique minor area of specialization in Virtual Reality. Students in both the DH and EDR tracks may minor in this field. All PhD students looking to undertake this option must take the Design in Virtual Reality Seminar during the Spring Semester of their first year. The minor provides a technology-focused approach for students looking to develop new Virtual Reality technologies or to utilize Virtual Reality technologies in their research. The School of Human Ecology houses a newly developed Virtual Reality system to which students undertaking this minor will have full access. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to work with other Virtual Reality and simulation environments around the UW-Madison campus. Students looking to undertake the VR technology minor should be familiar with concepts of computer programming and programming languages.

Students in the TS Track should develop expertise in both technology and chemistry. Students have the opportunity to develop a minor in the emerging field of technical textiles. If a distributed minor is desired, students must take a minimum of 6 credits in technology and 6 credits in chemistry (12 credits total).

5. Qualifying Research Project
3 credits (counts as Core Course)

The Qualifying Research Project is part of the Core Course requirements for every PhD student, and must be completed prior to preliminary exams. The Qualifying Research Project provides students with an opportunity to conduct independent research in their area of specialization in preparation for their dissertation. While limited in scope, the project should be comparable to the final dissertation in terms of its intellectual tone and quality. The project could be a self-contained research paper that could later be incorporated into one of chapters in the final dissertation, building theoretical model for the dissertation, or proposal and conduct of pilot study for their final dissertation. Students are encouraged to disseminate the project broadly, in the format of conference papers or published journal articles in their respective fields.

The Qualifying Research Project may be based on work completed as part of any UW graduate seminar. Students often enroll in an independent study with their major advisor to complete this project. The project must be submitted to and approved by student’s major advisor; the project must receive a passing grade in order for the student to sit for the Preliminary Examination.

6. Preliminary Examination

All PhD students sit for a Preliminary Examination after satisfactorily completing coursework and the Qualifying Research Project. The exam is intended to demonstrate the students’ broad knowledge in the field of design, and specialized expertise in both a major and a minor area. Students must pass the Preliminary Examination before submitting a dissertation proposal, and before advancing to Dissertator status.

- Research and thesis cannot be used to satisfy the minor (e.g., 790, 890, 990);
- No more than 5 credits of coursework completed more than 5 years prior to admission to the Ph.D.; course work taken 10 years ago or more may not be used.
- Design Studies Ph.D. students may still opt for either Option A (e.g., if they want their transcript to reflect expertise in a specific discipline) or Option B. Option B minors will be approved by the student’s doctoral committee.

9 https://blogs.discovery.wisc.edu/kponto/dscvr/
10 MS degree without thesis option, after the completion of this project or after the prelim if a student want to exit the program
7. Research and Thesis

Students with Dissertator status are expected to enroll for 3 credits directly related to dissertation research or production. These credits are generally research and thesis credits, independent studies, or required seminars; they must be at the 300 level or above. Three credits is the minimum credit load per semester for dissertators during each of the fall and spring semesters; this is considered a full time load. Dissertators must register for 3 credits each semester until the Ph.D. thesis is filed.

8. Foreign Language Requirement

Foreign language proficiency may be required for students in the Design History track, if their Major or Minor Areas or dissertation requires work in a language other than English. Students in EDR Track may be required to fulfill the foreign language requirement if the student’s research involves the use of a language other than English. Competency may be acquired independently or through structured coursework, and is assessed through examination. Exams must be taken before students advance to Dissertator status.
## Sample Schedules

1. Design History
2. Environmental Design Research
3. Environmental Design Research with a VR component
4. Textile Science (in development)

### Credit Allocation Key:
- **Core Course:** 14-15 credits
- **Major Area:** 15 credits
- **Minor Area:** 9-12 credits

### 1. Design History

#### First year/Fall semester
- Graduate Student Instructor Course: 3 cr
- Seminar in Design Studies: 3 cr
- Course in Major Area: 3 cr

**Sub Total:** 9 cr

#### First year/Spring semester
- Theories and Methods in Design Inquiry: 3 cr
- Foreign Language (as needed): 3 cr
- Course in Major Area: 3 cr

**Sub Total:** 9 cr

#### Second year/Fall semester
- Seminar in Design Studies: 3 cr
- Research Methods for Design History: 3 cr
- Minor Area Elective: 3 cr

**Sub Total:** 9 cr

#### Second year/Spring semester
- Course in Major Area: 3 cr
- Minor Area Elective: 3 cr
- Qualifying Research Project (Independent Study): 3 cr

**Sub Total:** 9 cr

#### Third year/Fall semester (As dissingator)
- Course in Major Area: 3 cr
- Minor Area Elective: 3 cr
- Research and Thesis (Independent Study): 3 cr

**Sub Total:** 9 cr

#### Third year/Spring semester and on
- Research and Thesis: 3 cr

**Sub Total:** 3 cr
### 2. Environmental Design Research

**First year/Fall semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student Instructor Course</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Seminar (Person-Environment Interactions)</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Area of Specialization</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 cr</strong></td>
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**First year/Spring semester**

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DS920 Theories and Methods in Design Inquiry</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS955 Research Design and Methods</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor area elective</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9 cr</strong></td>
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**Second year/Fall semester**

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Research Methods (as necessary)</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Area of Specialization</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Area Elective</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Statistics or Area of Specialization (as necessary)</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 cr</strong></td>
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**Second year/Spring semester**

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Area of Specialization</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minor Area Elective</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualifying Research Project</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9 cr</strong></td>
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**Third year/Fall semester (As dissertator)**

<table>
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<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Major Area of Specialization</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minor Area Elective (as necessary)</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Thesis (Dissertation Proposal)</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9 cr</strong></td>
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**Third year/Spring semester and on**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research and Thesis</td>
<td>3 cr</td>
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<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 cr</strong></td>
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### 3. Environmental Design Research with VR

**First year/Fall semester**

- Graduate Student Instructor Course: 3 cr
- Area Seminar (Person-Environment Interactions): 3 cr
- Area of specialization: 3 cr
- **Sub Total**: 12 cr

**First year/Spring semester**

- DS920: Theories and Methods in Design Inquiry: 3 cr
- DS955: Research Design and Methods: 3 cr
- DS 501: Design in Virtual Reality: 3 cr
- **Sub Total**: 9 cr

**Second year/Fall semester**

- Advanced Research Methods (as necessary): 3 cr
- Area of Specialization: 3 cr
- Minor Area Elective: 3 cr
- Advanced Statistics or Area of Specialization (as necessary): 3 cr
- **Sub Total**: 12 cr

**Second year/Spring semester**

- Area of Specialization: 3 cr
- Minor Area Elective: 3 cr
- Qualifying Research Project: 3 cr
- **Sub Total**: 9 cr

**Third year/Fall semester (As dissertator)**

- Area of Specialization (As necessary): 3 cr
- Minor Area Elective (As necessary): 3 cr
- Research and Thesis (Dissertation Proposal): 3 cr
- **Sub Total**: 9 cr

**Third year/Spring semester and on**

- Research and Thesis: 3 cr
- **Sub Total**: 3 cr
Progress to Degree

1. Timeline by Years
2. Steps to Candidacy
3. Dissertation Committee and Proposal
4. Dissertation Timeline and Final Defense

1. Timeline by Year

First and Second Years

- Complete 38 credits of Core Courses, plus language requirement if applicable
- Complete Qualifying Research Project
- Begin identifying dissertation research topic and supporting materials
- Dissertation committee formation and approval

Third Year

- Complete remaining credits required of all PhD students (51 credits total)
- Complete Preliminary Examinations
- Complete Dissertation Proposal
- Begin Dissertation research

Fourth Year and beyond

- Complete any of the remaining credits required of all PhD students (51 credits total)
- Dissertation research and writing
- Final oral defense
- Degree awarded

2. Steps to Candidacy

Doctoral students are officially advanced to candidacy for the doctoral degree after completing the required coursework, submitting a satisfactory Qualifying Research Project, and passing the preliminary examination. During the first two years, students should also begin to formulate a preliminary dissertation topic. Students should make every effort to advance to candidacy within three years from their initial enrollment date.

Effective for those entering in the fall 2014, the preliminary examination should be taken after satisfactorily completing required coursework, Qualifying Research project, identification of a dissertation topic, but prior to dissertation proposal approval. The examination is intended to demonstrate the students’ knowledge in both major and minor areas as well as their broad knowledge in the field of design. Steps to candidacy are outlined below.
Step one: Dissertation topic
A student must develop a dissertation topic in consultation with the student’s major faculty advisor prior to the preliminary examination. The dissertation topic should be a concise, one page description of research question, methods, and possible outcomes. The topic at this stage is preliminary in nature but will serve as a basis for formulating some preliminary examination questions.

Step two: Dissertation committee
Doctoral students form a five-person graduate advisory committee as soon as they develop a dissertation topic. Minimum UW-Madison Graduate School requirement for graduate committee are:

1. The chair or co-chair of the committee must be Graduate Faculty\(^{11}\) from the student’s major program;
2. Doctoral committees must have at least five members, four of whom must be UW Graduate Faculty or former UW Graduate Faculty up to one year after resignation or retirement. At least one of the five members must be from outside the student’s major field (often from the minor field).

Step three: Scheduling Preliminary Examinations
Doctoral students must complete the Request for Preliminary Warrant form through the Graduate Admissions Coordinator\(^{12}\) to submit it to the Graduate School PhD office. The form must be submitted at least three weeks before the scheduled exam date. Students are highly encouraged to submit the request to the Graduate Admissions Coordinator five weeks in advance. The official Preliminary Warrant will be returned to the student’s advisor, who will bring it to the preliminary exam. (The Request for Preliminary Warrant form must be submitted to the Graduate School by the student prior to the term in which they wish to establish dissertator status. The warrant can be held for a period no longer than the semester in which it was issued. This allows time for a student to make up deficiencies prior to submission of the final warrant.)

Step four: Taking the Preliminary Examination
Preliminary Examination questions are solicited from committee members by the student’s major faculty advisor, who prepares them for the student. The student chooses between two exam formats:

1. Take-home exam: the student receives questions in advance. The student writes the examination and submits responses within five days. In this case, the expectation is that references and formal citations are included.
2. In-class exam: the student receives questions shortly in advance. The student sits for the exam in an assigned room on the UW campus. Response time is limited to 2 1/2 days. A computer may be requested, but the student may not bring his or her own. In this case, there is no expectation of formal citations.

Every student answers five questions drawn from four general areas. Definition of these four areas will rest with the student’s committee. The areas are:

- Research methods
- Major area: theory and application of concepts
- Major area: research literature, historical and contemporary perspectives
- Minor area (can relate to distributed minor foci)

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\(^{11}\) Faculty associates may not serve as graduate advisors but might serve on committees.

\(^{12}\) Mary Mead in DS office currently serves as the Graduate Admissions Coordinator
Students may ask their advisors to show them sample questions from previous preliminary exams. While examples are useful, students should keep in mind that exam questions are always tailored for each individual student and his or her area of interest.

Step five: Evaluation of the Qualifying Examination
The completed exam is distributed to the committee members by the major faculty advisor. The committee responds with an evaluation two to three weeks following the receipt of exam. The committee generally meets informally with the student to discuss the exam, or at the very least, committee members provide feedback to the student. The criteria for passing the preliminary exam are not monitored by the Graduate School and are at the discretion of the DS faculty. The policy recommended by the DS Graduate Committee is:

Each member casts one vote. Each individual faculty member is primarily responsible for the evaluation of the question she/he submitted, although they read all questions and make the evaluation on the general competence of the responses. The levels of evaluation are: Pass with Distinction, Pass, Pass with additional work required, and Fail.

A student cannot pass the exam if more than one failing grade is given. If the exam is failed, the student may request to retake the failed portion(s) of the exam only once; the second exam must be taken within one semester following the first exam. The committee for a repeated exam must be composed of the same faculty members. If additional work is required it will be arranged with the major faculty advisor in consultation with committee members.

If committee members agree that the student has passed, the student must make certain that all committee members sign the warrant. The student gives a copy of the signed Warrant to Graduate Admissions Coordinator and returns the official Signed Warrant to Graduate School PhD office.

3. Dissertation Committee and Proposal

Dissertation committee formation guideline
After successfully formulating a preliminary dissertation topic, completing the preliminary examinations, and prior to completing a dissertation proposal, a candidate should form a dissertation committee in close consultation with their major faculty advisor. The committee is composed of five members. The chair or co-chair must be a member of the DS Graduate Faculty.

Dissertation proposal
After successfully completing the preliminary examination and advancing to PhD candidacy (or dissertator status), a student must complete a written dissertation proposal and submit to the student’s dissertation committee for approval. The general format for a dissertation proposal will vary according to the student’s area of concentration. Students should consult with their major advisor regarding the appropriate form and content.

A sample from the EDR track is provided:

I. Proposed title
II. Background and Literature Review
General problem/content area, research questions
Current theory, research or creative activity
Literature appropriate to the area of concern
Perceived need for, or expected contribution of the study

III. Parameters of the Study
- Statement of the problem
- Underlying assumptions
- Objectives/hypotheses
- Working (operational) definitions

IV. Procedures
- Materials
- Methodology
- Subjects (if any)
- Source of data/design
- Time schedule broken into target dates for each phase

V. Expected Outcomes

VI. Pilot Study Design and Outcomes

VII. Bibliography

VIII. Resources required and statement of availability (e.g., studio, laboratory, equipment, supplies, computer consulting and use, statistical consulting) and Timeline of the research

If a dissertation research involves human subjects, the student are required to complete on-line training and the research must be conducted according to an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved human subjects protocol. For more information on these requirements, see the Human Research Protection Program at the Human Subject’s Protections website which includes links to the training, protocol submission, and other information.13 Most doctoral dissertations in Design Studies are reviewed by the Education and Social/Behavioral Science Institutional Review Board (IRB). The student’s advisor is officially responsible for the dissertation project, and must complete the training as well.

The proposal is presented to and approved by the student’s five-person committee.

A student should make every effort to complete his/her dissertation proposal within six months of advancing to candidacy.

4. Dissertation Timeline and Final Defense

A dissertation is required of all PhD students at UW-Madison. A PhD dissertation demonstrates the student’s ability to design and conduct original research, further contribute to the knowledge base of the design research and scholarship.

The student is allowed five years to complete the degree after passing the Preliminary Exam and achieving Dissertator status. If more than five years has transpired, the student must retake the Preliminary Examination or petition the DS Graduate Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School for an extension of one year.

13 http://www.irb.wisc.edu/.
During the process of completing the dissertation, the student should remain in close contact with his or her faculty advisor and the other members of the committee. To graduate with a doctoral degree, the student must inform the DS Graduate Chair and make his/her intent known to the Graduate School in the final semester. After arranging a dissertation defense date, the student must obtain the PhD warrant through the secretary in the DS Program Office. This must be filed with the Graduate School a minimum of three weeks before the oral defense date. The Graduate School will then send a warrant to the department, and the advisor will obtain signatures at the defense.

The finished dissertation should be approved by the advisor before it is distributed to other committee members. The complete draft should be given to the committee at least one month prior to the scheduled defense date. It is recommended that the full dissertation committee have a pre-defense meeting with a short presentation by the candidates and use the opportunity to refine the final defense and modify the written dissertation should the need arise. Once the committee agrees that the pre-defense presentation is acceptable, the final defense is conducted. The final defense is open to the faculty and students of the university.

Students should follow all guidelines for Dissertators that are established and published by the Graduate School, including how to file a copy of the dissertation at Memorial Library. Copies of the dissertation are also provided to the members of the committee, and the student is expected to file a copy in the Harris Collection.