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Master of Arts in Design

Field of Excellence: Interaction Design [MIAD]
Zurich University of the Arts
Departement Design

„Any sufficiently advanced technology is
indistinguishable from magic", Arthur C. Clarke

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Background

Technology changes and augments human interaction and communication. The key question is how its results can improve the quality of our daily lives. The design disciplines must ask such questions and they have methods and expertise such as ‚Human Centered Design‘ to give appropriate answers - by designing objects and spaces, communications, services and… interactions. But only our lived experience can show whether designed solutions can really improve our life.

It is for these reasons that interaction designers strongly emphasise thinking in terms of human experience, as do many architects and even scientists today. Two major approaches to research and education seem to co-exist, each with their different traditions: scientific and design approaches may represent different but complementary methods, ways of thinking, and concepts of quality. Deeper exploration of these qualitative differences does, however lead to a common ground: the question how to progress towards a society which values humans needs.

Since 2000 the Department of Design has offered a programme in Interaction Design, which in 2004 was expanded to include a programme in Game Design and in 2006 a Ph.D. programme in collaboration with the University of the Arts in Linz, Austria, and with Prof. Christa Sommerer. Starting from 2005 we changed the basic educational system from a Diploma-based to a BA/MA-based model (Bologna) and have shaped its increasing specialisation. Today we re-launch the programme with new curriculum pathways, new partnerships, and an international faculty.

Interaction designers work in various areas such as software interfaces, information systems and the internet, physical products, virtual environments, or service design as well as their hybrid interplay. They therefore work in interdisciplinary teams and represent different competencies such as interface design, programming, psychology, user testing, product design, and many others.

Our programme offers a perfect mix of team-based collaborative work with a strong individual research component. Together with internationally known partners like BMW, Frog Design or SDFB [Swiss Design Institute for Finance and Banking] we prepare our students for the increasing requirements in the professional design industry.

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Programme Description

The programme is organised into three coordinated semesters, which are enriched and complemented by basic courses on a departmental level.

In the first semester all students follow the basic courses to reach a common state of knowledge in the field of HCID [Human Computer Interaction Design] and UCD [User Centred Design]. In the Design Studio we extend the basic knowledge in creative and practical based design techniques. In the Design Seminars we train students to read, discuss, and write about basics in communication theory, interaction design theory, and principles of social sciences. The Method Lab courses encourage students to practice basic methods and technologies in the field of interaction design.

The second semester narrows the field of studies down to a more individual focus and prepares all students for their MA dissertations. In the Design Studio we strengthen the practical understanding of design interactions. The advisor as well as external partners from industry, research, or other fields of interest further support students in pursuing their individual curiosity and exploration. In the Design Seminars we ask participants to discuss and publish articles on basic and continuing issues in the field of interaction design and related topics. These disciplinary thoughts and communications can be traced through the use of recent technologies like blogs or wikis. In the Method Labs we construct exemplary experiments in the field of physical computing and concentrate on tangible experience.

The third semester is primarily focused on the Master's project and the written dissertation. Students' work is individually supported by the appropriate faculty members and the external experts.

Goals and visions

Our students should leave the programme with a number of certainties:

- design is „meaningful action" based on methods and intuition;
- structures, myths, and ideologies of dynamic societies and techno-cultures;
- rhetorics of design and technology;
- toolset of interaction design;
- strategies and planning interactions;
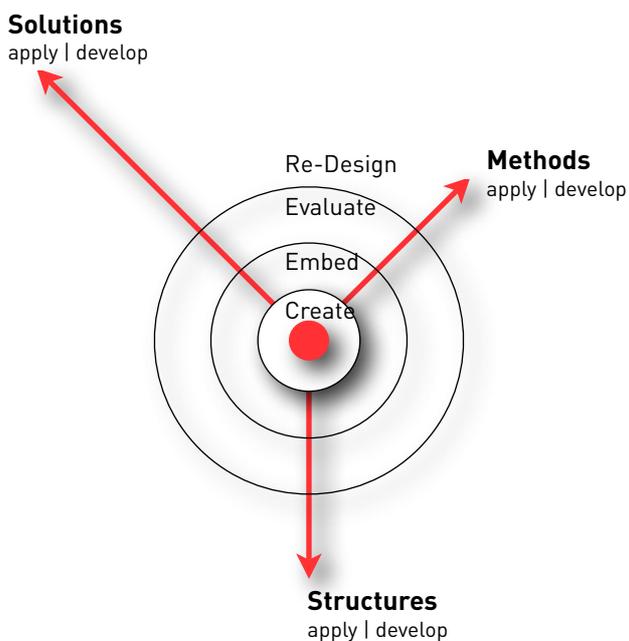
Graduation Requirements

The Master of Design in Interaction Design at the Zurich University of The Arts is a one and a half year program. A total of 90 ECTS credits are required for graduation. Students follow the proposed curriculum and will be required to plan and organise the dissertation project and the written dissertation. We also strongly encourage our students to apply for internships during the summer [3 months]. We are pleased to offer a wide range of interesting partners from industry and research faculties in Switzerland and abroad.

Your research ideas are requested

Our program is open to all of you who are curious about research within the discipline. We look forward to discussing your ideas and visions for the future of interaction design.

Interaction designers shape digital artefacts. The illustration [figure 01] explains possible aspects of your future research and demonstrates the polarity and dialogue between application and development.

Any solution embodies some sort of interaction between humans and their environments. We can differentiate between services [procedures of structured interactions], software [procedures to perform tasks on a computer] and hardware [artefacts for the physical environment]. The concept of interaction design challenges us to find smart solutions that enable humans to influence and enrich complex experiences. On the other hand, we also use solutions and tools ourselves, and any result of our work is unconditionally determined by them. Interaction Designers work with various methods to explain and organise thoughts [intellectually] and work processes. As a result, methodology is an inevitable field of disciplinary insight [and research], which aims to clarify the conditions, the tasks and rules of interaction designers in a multidisciplinary setting of theory and practice. And, finally, our discipline concerns structures in a different way, too: while we work within dynamic structures, following a more or less explicit path of innovation [see above], the more interesting research being undertaken concerns structures of business or society and the question how we can design them in order to optimise our daily lives.

Solutions
apply | develop

Re-Design

Evaluate

Methods
apply | develop

Embed

Create

Structures
apply | develop

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Our Research Programms are open for you

We also offer the following multi-disciplinary fields of research, which are open for all candidates.

Software Visualization

The SoftVis programme is a cross-disciplinary and long-term project for research and scholarship in the area of software visualisation. 'Software visualisation' covers the technical as well as the perceivable formal order of visual representations of information about software systems based on their behaviour, structure, history, or size. In cooperation with the chair of SoftVis at the University of Zurich, we offer a perfect setting between science and design.

Contact: Prof. Jürgen Späth

Institutional Partner

University of Zurich
Department of Informatics
Software Evolution and Architecture Lab
seal.ifi.uzh.ch

Design for Finance and Banking

The Swiss Design Institute for Finance and Banking [SDFB] is a joint initiative between the best Swiss Universities established in 2007. SDFB is funded by several companies from the Swiss banking industry and the international technology hub in Zurich. Our programme is a cross-disciplinary support network for research and scholarship in the area of client-bank interaction studies. Within this initiative you join a famous research environment and a well known field of excellence:
The Swiss banking industry.

Contact: Prof. Dr. Gerhard M. Buurman

Institutional Partner

Swiss Design Institute for Finance and Banking [SDFB], Zurich
www.sdfb.ch

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Game Design Research

The Game Design Research is open for all candidates who are interested in serious games or game research in general.

Contact: Prof. Ulrich Götz

Sonic Interaction Design

Sonic Interaction Design is an innovative and interdisciplinary area of research and practice that explores ways in which sound can be used to convey information and meaning as well as aesthetic and emotional qualities in interactive contexts. The European Science Foundation has recently funded ‚Sonic Interaction Design Action‛, proposed, among others, by a member of our team who is also a Swiss delegate in this network. IAD's faculty contributes to several ongoing projects such as the ‚Closing‛ the Loop of Sound Evaluation and Design‛ project supported by European Commission Sixth Framework Programme.

Contact: MA Karmen Franinovic

Institutional Partners

IRCAM, Paris
Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique
www.ircam.fr

Zurich University of the Arts
Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts
ics.zhdk.ch

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Course descriptions

	1. Semester [30 ECTS]	**2. Semester** [30 ECTS]	**3. Semester** [30 ECTS]
Master Minors	Research I [6 ECTS] Production I or Communication I [3 ECTS]	Research II [3 ECTS] Production II or Communication II [3 ECTS]	Research III [2 ECTS] Production III or CommunicationIII [3 ECTS]
Design Studios	Interaction Design	Experience Design	Dissertation Project
Design Seminars	Media and Society	Culture	Dissertation Essay
Workshops	Design Methods [& portfolio]	Design Tools [& portfolio]	Dissertation methodology [& portfolio]

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First Semester

Master Minors I: See our other official website: master.design.zhdk.ch

Design Studio I: Interaction Design[1]
The ‚Design Studio I' provides our students with the foundations of understanding interactions, their qualities, contexts, and rhetorics. Based on a close analysis of examples, we examine appropriate ways for evaluating your ideas. This course is based on both a creative approach to sketching innovative interactions and prototyping as well as multiple rounds of brainstorming, discussion, and refinement.

Design Seminar I: Media and Society
In ʻMedia and Society' we explore technology and media in the context of different ideas and concepts of society. Our research interests are based on a common understanding of the Internet as a social space [structure] which is determined by its constructions, technologies, and usage. In addition we discuss how designers can adress large scale social issues. Together with partners and guest lecturers we undertake practical research on the challenges and opportunities of a global information society and its habits.

Workshops: Design Methods[2]
In this course we introduce, discuss, and apply the basic principles and use of various design methods for the ‚human computer interaction design' process. We focus on examples of HCID in a number of relevant fields such as ‚mobile computing', ‚net-based services', ‚ambient environments', ‚internet of things', ‚wearable computers', ‚location based services', ‚soundscapes', and others.

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1   The Design Studios will be developed in cooperation with our partners.
     The course will also rely on reading the basic literature.

2   **Portfolio:** We ask you from the beginning to develop your own website to keep track of the latest information concerning your studies, your experience, and your success.

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Second Semester

Master Minors II: See our other official website: master.design.zhdk.ch

Design Studio II: Experience Design
'Design Studio II' primarily focuses on the process of designing services from the user perspective. In practical contexts, successful services are those that are useful, appropriate, and desirable for users; they are effective, efficient, and – hopefully – unique. The industry searches for new experiences and services in the digital realm, and we focus on the use and exploitation of ‚experience oriented thinking‘ in real situations.

Design Seminars II: Culture
Based on a close analysis of examples we examine the interplay of technology and culture. In addition to a piece of empirical research, we also discuss various concepts of media cultures with their representations and signifying practices. Against the background of this discourse we analyse the driving and enabling forces of interactive technologies.

Workshops: Design Tools
Physical computing, in the broadest sense, means building interactive physical systems through the use of software and hardware that can sense and respond to the analogue world. Our Physical Computing Lab offers our students a creative framework for understanding the relationships of humans with the digital world. In this workshop, students develop advanced solutions to translate analogue input into a software system or vice versa.

Third Semester

Master Minors III: Master's Dissertation

Design Studio III: Dissertation Project
The Master's project is your most important piece of work, and we try to follow your ‚applied dreams' from the very beginning. The third semester provides you with a face-to-face advisory process to let you shape and realise the project idea in a professional and inspired atmosphere.

Design Seminar III: Dissertation Essay
The dissertation essay is a complementary part of your project. This essay contains a profound description of the process and the methods, the underlying theory of work and a discussion of the results according to the professional discourse. Therefore, the dissertation essay should be a documentation of your work, a documentation of your professional insight and experience as well as a contribution to the knowledge of the discipline.

Workshops III: Dissertation Methodology
In ‚Workshops III' you combine your methods and tools into the design process which supports your creation and ideas.

Key Faculty

I.   **Prof. Dr. Gerhard M. Buurman**
     Head of the Master Programme
     Dipl. Industrial Designer, Conceptual Design

II. **Max Rheiner, Dipl. Designer FH**
     Dipl. Designer, FH
     Physical Computing

III. **Christian Weber, Dipl. Designer FH**
     Dipl. Industrial Designer, FH
     Product Design

IV. **MA Karmen Franinovic**
     Dipl. Architect, Interaction Designer
     Tangible and Sonic Interaction Design

V.   **Prof. Jürgen Späth**
     Dipl. Designer
     Design and Visualization

VI. **Prof. Ulrich Götz**
     Dipl. Ing. Architect, Game Designer
     Game Design, Game Research

Context

Facilities [IAD & Department Design]

All students must bring their own computer facilities. In addition, we offer first class equipment for all students and studio spaces with full access to the Internet. The University also offers a software package for designers and artists with a wide range of tools and software [premium]. We also maintain video editing suites, model making facilities [3D-printing], a mobile sound studio, and rich multimedia studios.

Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)

The Zurich University of the Arts is one of Europe's largest universities of the arts. Comprising more than 2000 students, the University offers a unique range of programmes from further education opportunities to undergraduate, postgraduate, and research degrees in design, film, art, media, music, dance, theatre, and art education. Our mission is to be at the forefront of learning, research, and practice. While based in Greater Zurich, our influence extends well beyond Switzerland to the international stage. Closely aligning teaching and research, our programmes are designed to promote transdisciplinary work.

Zurich

Zurich is an international city at the heart of Europe. As the largest city in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, it is a place of intellectual work but also a centre of business and culture, an industrial and creative base, and also a destination for visitors from all over the world. The neighbourhood of the ZHdK offers a wide variety of entertainment, sport activities, and culture.

See: http://www.zuerich.com/en/welcome.cfm

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Admissions

Each applicant must have a BA-degree or a higher education degree as well as a minimum of one year of professional experience in design or related fields. To be eligible to apply the applicant must be able to speak English and German on a business level.

Please send your detailed curriculum vitae and at least two letters of recommendation from professors or other experts. For all applicants, a portfolio of work and a conceptual paper about the individual research interests are required with the application. The statement of research interests indicates:

I.   What the applicant has been doing recently
II.   In what direction she or he hopes to go [we are interested to see which major issues the applicant wishes to tackle],
III.   How the research contributes to our discipline and how it is compatible with our design department.

Information Day	1. October 2008
Entry Deadline	20. October 2008
Results sent out	3. November 2008
Interviews	10. - 21. November 2008
Results sent out	1. December 2008
Start of semester:	16. February 2009

The entry deadline for your application and the start of our review process is 3rd March 2009. For detailed information about the application process please visit our website and download the official ZHdK application form.

iad.zhdk.ch

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Your application

We are looking forward to your application and will be glad to give you a more detailed idea about our work in a personal conversation.
Please feel free to contact us.

Contact:

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Web: http://miad.zhdk.ch

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Partners from Industry

I.   **NOSE AG**, Design Intelligence, Zurich
www.nose.ch

II.   **Virtual Identity AG**, Freiburg, München, Berlin
www.virtual-identity.com

III.   **Frogdesign**, Stuttgart, Amsterdam
www.frogdesign.com

IV.   **BMW AG**, Center for Corporate Research, Munich
www.bmw.com

Institutional Partners

I.   Indiana University
Human-Computer Interaction Design
Prof. Dr. Erik Stolterman
www.informatics.indiana.edu/hcid/default.asp

II.   University of Zurich
Departement of Informatics
Prof. Dr. Harald Gall
Software Evolution and Architecture Lab
seal.ifi.uzh.ch

III.   Swiss Design Institute for Finance and Banking [SDFB], Zurich
www.sdfb.ch

IV.   University Of Arts And Industrial Design
Prof. Dr. Christa Sommerer, Prof. Dr. Laurent Mignonneau
http://www.ufg.ac.at/sommerer-mignonneau.384.0.html

V.   IRCAM, Paris
Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique
www.ircam.fr

VI.   Zurich University of the Arts
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