MASTER IN INTERACTION DESIGN
Touching Innovation

OVERVIEW

MASTER AWARDED BY NABA
NUOVA ACCADEMIA DI BELLE ARTI MILANO

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DOMUS ACADEMY
SCHOOL OF DESIGN

• A knowledge accelerator to deal with a constantly evolving design scenario.

• A live learning platform to enhance design thinking, creativity and professional skills.

• A multicultural Milan-based design arena to investigate global design perspective.

• A bridge to step from classical design approach to new domains.

• A catalyst of excellence to approach innovative design strategies.
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**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

QUALIFICATION
(First Level) Academic Master

PROGRAMME TITLE
Master in Interaction Design

PROGRAMME TYPE
Full Time

HEAD OF INSTITUTE
Claudio Moderini

COURSE LEADER
Nima Gazestani

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT
English

Digital and Communication Technology. Design sensitivity. Business orientation. The Master in Interaction Design was founded out of curiosity for the future and research. At the core of this field lies the creation of a design product, service or space, that can interact with the body or the mind through innovation and technology; it is the addition of digital elements to everyday living; the adoption of digital technology for enriched service experiences; the transformation of design visions into market opportunities. The Master in Interaction Design runs for a challenge, and reveals itself as the desire to bring the authenticity of Italian design to the world of Information and Communication.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Master in Interaction Design aims at providing students/designers with theoretical knowledge and professional skills to carry out a “problem setting” activity aimed at developing concepts, scenarios and strategies based on the introduction of interactive and digital technology in the everyday life environment.

The approach, based on the tradition of Italian design, sees the educational path as an integration and extension of the professional path. The program is structured as an exploration of research and design experiences, that does not only provide the tools for helping students to understand “how” things are done, but also to assist them in working out the reasons why they are done. During the course students will develop theoretical knowledge and professional skills for practicing interaction designing within the corporate and design consultancy context, understand the constitutive features characterizing a specific User Experience, conceive envisioning scenarios and design concepts and earn a critical competence in selecting and applying methods, tools and resources for running a design driven project.

Moreover, Domus Academy ensures that students attending the academy become aware of the great opportunities surrounding them, such as the fact that Milan is an international and design-oriented city with a lot of famous design studios and agencies, research labs, trade fairs and companies. Students at Domus Academy come from about 50 different countries and this fact makes it an international school where different cultures can be met; Domus Academy is part of an international network of university and the teachers of the academy are internationally renowned professionals in their field.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the program, students will have:

- developed a critical understanding of human factor
- Demonstrated an individually driven conceptual research project using design research methods, tools and techniques appropriate to professional standards in the interaction design practices;
- Demonstrated an understanding of the professional field of interaction design and its restraints; developed the ability to deal with requests and being able to interpret their own work in the professional context;
- Demonstrated a critical and personal development in defining and managing advanced process related to the project;
- Effectively demonstrated a reflective and evaluative approach to their own work allowing them to act independently in identifying, implementing and sustaining individual research and practices at a professional level;
- Demonstrated knowledge and critical thinking on design culture and cross-disciplinary approaches related to Interaction Design;
- Demonstrated personal and reflective thinking on the diverse dimensions of interaction design concerning social, technological and business implications.
- Demonstrated the ability of conceiving innovative interactive concepts, solutions and experiences for a variety of diverse industries and sectors;
- Demonstrated self and professional management skills in terms of interaction in a multi-cultural domain, teamwork and time constraints at a professional level;
- Demonstrated an ability to effectively communicate concepts, methods and design proposals through a variety of techniques including visual, oral and prototyping.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Master in Interaction Design aims to form professionals with cutting-edge skills and competencies to attain different strategic and design positions: from Interaction Designer, UX (User Experience) Designer and Creative Director, to roles of Digital Strategist or Design Manager. Graduated students will be in the position to successfully meet contemporary industry requirements as well as start an individual career as self-employed consultants and free-lancers.
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Criteria for Admission to the Program (including required English language score)

Eligibility conditions for entering the Master Course are:
• Bachelor Degree or Equivalent
• English Language Knowledge: IELTS 5.0 or equivalent

Applicants are required to submit the Application Package, including:
• Application Form (full and satisfactory completion)
• Copy of Bachelor Degree* or equivalent
• Transcripts of previous study paths
• IELTS 5.0 Certificate or Equivalent
• Detailed Resumé
• Statement of purpose
• Portfolio of projects

The program is addressed to candidates holding a bachelor degree in product design, visual and graphic design, media and web design, architecture, computer science, engineer, communication science, psychology and sociology or disciplines related to the program’s field of study. Admission of students with different degrees or diplomas will be taken into consideration if the applicant is motivated by a research interest towards the program’s topics. Upon successfully completing the program the student will receive a Domus Academy Master Diploma.

Participants who are eligible according to NABA rules will receive an Academic Master from NABA.

* Degree Certificate
Students holding a non-Italian Bachelor Degree shall contact the Italian Embassy or Consulate in the country where the degree was issued in order to ask for the so called “completion documents”, consisting in:

a. Translation into Italian – made by a certified translator – of the student’s Bachelor Degree.

b. Translation into Italian – made by a certified translator – of the student’s Academic Transcripts.

c. “Dichiarazione di valore in loco” (Declaration of Value) of the student’s Bachelor Degree. The “Dichiarazione di valore in loco” is the document attesting that the study qualification obtained in the student’s country of residence is valid for accessing Italian Universities or Academies.
LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

OUR LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES
In the following paragraphs you will find information on the What and the When of our learning, teaching and assessment framework.

The program of the Master in Interaction Design is workshop-based, supported by seminars, tutorials, lectures, work-in-progress sessions, critiques and a series of tutor led projects. Through a pro-active relationship with the Academic Staff, students will lead their project work and be supported through consultative and advisory tutorial guidance.

But first a short glimpse on the Who.
We call “Course Leader” the teacher who has overall responsibility on a specific Master Program, and whose role is to coach students and to support them in the definition of their learning/professional path. The Course Leader sustains students in their workshop activities and coordinates the assessment process.

On the other hand, Project Leaders are professionals and teachers, chosen among experts of a specific field, whose role is to lead workshop activity, by developing a project brief, inspiring and providing guidance to students along the design process, and taking part to the assessment of the projects.

Lectures are usually used for the presentation and discussion of theoretical issues. They will often be supported by group discussions, which provide an opportunity for interaction between Faculty and students, and allow students to extend and examine the issues raised. Some activities require students to work in groups. Teams are carefully selected and suitably managed to ensure that all students are aware of effective group processes and contribute to final project outcomes.

Formal teaching is supplemented by a range of visiting lecturers and visiting professionals; students will have the chance to attend presentations by designers, artists, critics, industry professionals and academics.

Not only will the meeting and exchange of ideas with leading professionals offer students the chance to enrich their knowledge but also favor a better career perspective.

OUR TEACHING METHODS
The teaching methods employed on the program are designed to help students achieve their individual professional goals along with the learning objective. The Master in Interaction Design prioritizes an original “learning by designing” approach that has been developed by Domus Academy over the years. The primary vehicle for learning is therefore the project work. Emphasis is placed on:

• learning and applying a “problem setting” approach, ensuring that students refine their critical skills and apply them throughout their work process;
• fostering a personal creative style and developing an original way of expression;
• developing research skills, which will enable students to source relevant materials, assimilating and articulating relevant findings;
• conceiving concepts and visions capable to blend creative languages with the actual needs of end users by interpreting a brief, often based on a real design assignment, in order to design a project that can match, or even exceed, the company’s expectation.

Student work is constantly supported by the Faculty and by visiting lecturers, and designers.
STRUCTURE

WORKSHOPS
Workshops are project assignments designed to give students a working knowledge of different core subjects. All set projects start with the presentation of a brief, which outlines the subject, scope, and purpose of the workshop.

The brief of the workshops is based on research issues defined by the faculty, in collaboration with external professionals (project leaders) and industrial partners, paying attention to fulfill both educational and professional aims.

The workshop culminates in an open presentation to the faculty and invited professionals.

In the development of the projects students will be supported by lectures aimed at broadening their knowledge on the specific investigation theme, inviting designers, researchers, stakeholders and representatives of companies to present their work and ideas as a link between the specific disciplinary perspective and the broader cultural/economic context.

Feedbacks to students are also part of the final assessment given to students after the presentation. The Course Leader and the Project Leader are available to further discuss assessments with students when required.

Students work in multi-cultural and international teams to enhance their capacity for teamwork as well as to expose them to a comparison with different backgrounds and cultures.

Students work in mixed groups to support the building of a common mindset and to share previous experiences.

Students are exposed to different points of view in the design field, working with designers and companies. One of the purposes of this exposure is to give students the broadest view possible of the design field in order to support them in the selection of the area in which to concentrate their future careers.

COURSES
Courses aim at providing students, through a combination of lectures, exercises and tutorials, with the appropriate tools and experiences useful for the developing of their professional career. They encompass topics specific to the chosen curriculum, such as Design Culture, Digital and Physical Prototyping, Research & Design Methods and Tools, and topics related to the development of an individual working style and identity, such as, Business for Design and Personal Branding.
INTERNSHIP
The internship is the key step of a process in which the student is individually followed, in the light of matching the assessment of the students’ skills and aspirations with the requirement of key stakeholders: design and service companies, public institutions, design studios, consultant in creative fields.
It’s the moment when students have the chance to test what they have learned in real working environment. Moreover, it is a unique opportunity to develop a network of personal relationship within the design field of choice.

PORTFOLIO
The Master Program will end with a final exam where the student will present his/her own portfolio in front of an Exam Board.
The portfolio realized by each student permits to evaluate and valorize the projects developed during the academic year.

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM
The main goal of the assessment system is to monitor how students develop the design and technical competencies required to be awarded an Academic Master.
Assessment is done by evaluating each student with a 1 to 30 mark (pass 18 or above) given at the end of every workshop, and through a qualifying examination given at the end of each theoretical course. The admission mark to the final exam is calculated by arithmetic average, which takes in consideration all the marks taken after each workshop.
Students will receive 0-110 (pass 70 or above) as overall evaluation. The Diploma Examination Board may award up 10 points for the Portfolio. Honors may be awarded on the basis of the Board assessment of study programs, dissertations and portfolios.

STUDY PLAN

WORKSHOPS

CORE WORKSHOPS - COMPULSORY

EXPERIENCE DESIGN WORKSHOP
The “Experience Design” workshop explores, by way of studio-based activities, the designing process from the point of view of the people (not users, neither consumers) in their life context. Everyday experiences are built upon the interaction and relationship with information, communication tools, relational spaces as well as interactive objects and services. The starting point resides in the ability to decipher people's needs, expectations and desires. Every person must be considered as an active participant in the definition of the service qualities and their main features. The workshop addresses aspects and contemporary methodologies related to people’s activity and context analysis. It also considers, experience scenario development, solution, validation, and assessment.
The workshop investigates the main domain of User Experience analysis, exposing students to methodologies and best practices allowing them to extract knowledge from primary research activities. The workshop activity will also cover domains pertaining to visual representation and the formalization of knowledge garnered. Students are expected to familiarize with techniques for representing activity flows and complex systems.

TANGIBLE INTERACTIONS WORKSHOP
The “Tangible Interactions” workshop aims at developing projects in the domains of physical computing and haptic interfaces by screening, analyzing and experimenting software and hardware technology in order to develop a confidence with the palette of tools and platforms that constitute the “basis” for designing interactive solutions.
Students will be exposed to a range of selected approaches for
developing both low-tech and hardware/software prototypes. Project solutions and techniques will be considered in a full spectrum moving from simple reactivity to all-round interaction.

The workshop assignment strategically deals with tangible interaction design and interactive behavior for prototyping physical interactions at different scales, from interactive products and objects, to physical installations and environments.

Students will be asked to evaluate the possibility of testing the concept by identifying the most suitable methods and techniques, and, when applicable, to put them in practice on real test-bed and contexts.

**ELECTIVE WORKSHOP**

One to be chosen among the following:

**ENVISIONING WORKSHOP**

The “Envisioning” workshop concerns cultural and social signals and themes that will have an impact on our society in a medium to long-term perspective.

The workshop emphasizes design activities stemming from ideas to concept scenarios and revolves around envisioning future scenarios based on the crossing of innovative emerging technologies with socio-cultural, geo-political, and strategic values.

The design process starts with the elaboration of design concepts by applying a problem-setting approach where divergence and convergence phases alternate.

Concepts are validated through concurrent activities, such as:

- Activity analysis;
- Context and user understanding;
- Technology road-mapping, etc.

Students are invited to elaborate projects with a strong, evocative and narrative focus, creating a synthesis of values that are independent of the specific typology of product examined using a wide range of communication tools, including story telling, storyboards and/or video scenarios etc. Particular emphasis will be laid on different strategies for sourcing inspiration and drawing actionable insight from the analysis.

**IDENTITY WORKSHOP**

The workshop “Identity Design” aims at developing the skills for designing the brand identity of a company, or to extend a pre-existent one.

The starting point is based on the observation that the relation between people and brands tends to be more and more like a relation between people, in which the brands assume a human connotation and a personality, whose core values are represented through the visual image, communication style and behaviors, interaction models, tone and language.

Branding is, indeed, much more than just the definition of a visual image. It is the creation of a rich and attractive environment, grabbing the consumer’s attention and bringing that person into the brand world, to share those brand values and to become an informal sponsor of the brand.

Aim of the workshop is to create scenarios and concepts, by utilizing a mix of communication strategies and design tools, in order to design the “global brand identity” of a small to medium scale company, a product line and/or a start-up. The topics covered include:

- Visual design, illustration and iconic design
- Brand identity and corporate culture
- Communication strategies: advertising, events, marketing and design strategy

The identity of a brand and it success is strictly connected to its ability to:

- Leverage and exploit the broad range of media channels, both physical and digital
- Establish and maintain a rich and reciprocal fruitful conversation with the audience, both current and potential clients
• Orient and lead the brand “social media presence”

PRODUCT STRATEGY WORKSHOP
Over the last five decades, the design of products has reached a high level of sophistication and complexity. Different design approaches and perspectives have conceptualized visions in manifestos, and this has influenced the design culture at large. The “Product Strategy” workshop aims to develop project proposals able to combine different approaches in a new, innovative and surprising way. The Module explores corporate cases involving the leading design companies whose ability to innovate doesn’t concern just products but all the elements that contributes to shape a truly global offer encompassing: positioning, image, distribution and communication.

The application domain can range from established brands (brand extension), to OGM companies wanting to exploit their potentials, to existing companies that want to level up their business (re-positioning), to new ventures (start ups, crowdsourcing).

Substantial part of the workshop activity is dedicated to the definition of a business model that is consistent with the objectives and scale of the project and that explores the scalability of the solution, feasibility and innovation potential.

FREE CHOICE WORKSHOP
Students are given the chance to select among the active didactic offer in order to end their personal educational path with a strongly autonomous, professionalizing and profiling choice. The student may choose to repeat one of the workshops already developed, enroll in a new workshop coherent with his/her educational path or select a project among the ones offered by the institution as long as it is coherent with the amount of credits required.

COURSES
DESIGN CULTURE
The course Design Culture aims at exploring and discussing a wide range of case studies, sources and testimonials for understanding the nature, languages and values of the contemporary design scene while developing critical and analytical skills.

The course develops the vision that design is an “integrated” activity, capable of perceiving the changes in society, the impact of markets and then transforming into new products, spaces and services, thereby impacting upon strategies of business innovation.

Lectures, group discussions and tutorials are based on the following key concepts:
• Innovation for Design: Analysis of new aesthetic and behavioral trends in the market place including consumption. In addition it also includes new user needs and innovative interactions with objects and services.

• Innovation in Design: Design scenarios and innovative aesthetic and social vision, leading to enrichment and changes in the functional and aesthetic language.

The course embraces different scales of design, from product to interior, from graphic to fashion with the aim to highlight and identify the key factors that determine the quality of a design solution, in a path that connects past, recent and future experiences. Emphasis is given on how people live and behave in contemporary society, their lifestyle, interests needs and aspirations, and how they interact among themselves and with the objects, information and spaces around them.

DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL PROTOTYPING
The course intertwines theoretical insights, with targeted design activities, short assignments and exercises aimed at developing specific competence on how to prototype for interactive products and services, using basic technological solutions, both software and hardware.

Students will apply a wide range of techniques in order to explore different approaches that include, among the others:
• Video Prototyping - how to create stop motion animation

• Hacking Lab - electronic sensors and microcontrollers

• Makers Lab - 3D printing and rapid prototyping
- Mobile Interfaces - ready to use tools for prototyping interfaces

RESEARCH AND DESIGN METHODS AND TOOLS
The course Research & Design Methods and Tools elaborates the relation between design and research, by experimentally applying a wide range of methods and techniques, each addressing and enabling a specific phase of the design process, including among the others techniques for:
- Exploration, analysis and understanding of the context
- Problem setting and solving
- User involvement and participation
- Inspirational benchmarking
- Ideation and concept generation
- Validation and proof of concept
The course proposes the adoption of a co-creational versus a linear approach to the design process that transforms the process itself into a challenge, whose success depends on the ability of the people involved to collaborate and understand the reciprocal cross-disciplinary boundaries.

BUSINESS FOR DESIGN
The course Business for Design offers to students the possibility to understand and put into practice in a real life business scenario the core aspects that determine the economic performance of a company and/or a brand, but also of a studio or consultancy.
In particular the course investigates and elaborates, through the usage of specific analytical and design tools and by applying them to real case-studies, a wide range of “business relevant” aspects, such as:
- The competitiveness of a brand in the market
- The short and long term profitability
- The sustainable business proposition and business model
- The intellectual propriety and copyright/creative common trends and regulations
Lectures, case-studies and focused exercises to get an insight, explore and experiment firsthand the core aspects of business applied to the design field.

PERSONAL BRANDING
The purpose of the Personal Branding course is to develop the appropriate competencies and skills for the identification, creation, and management of the student’s professional identity at different levels that include:
- The ability to present and sustain an argument in front of an audience
- The preparation, organization and production of a personal portfolio of projects
- The ability to prepare and handle a job interview
- The leverage of social media tools for managing his/her own digital presence on the different communication channels
Theoretical classes are alternated with targeted exercises where students can develop and experiment a customized strategy aimed at building step by step a consistent personal identity, aligned with their career development plan.
INTERNSHIP
The internship is the final step of a process in which students thanks to a one-to-one tutorship, receive a deep and balanced evaluation of their skills and aspirations, in order to build a career, which fits their aims.
There are two kinds of internship:
• the first is a working experience in a company active in the disciplinary field;
• the second is an “in campus” internship that i shaped as an intensive workshop in collaboration with a company. This “in campus” internship develops an integrated project strictly related to a practical need (i.e. the resolution of a design problem, or the creation of a brainstorming platform for a new project).
In both cases during this crucial phase students are mentored on a step-by-step basis, and acquire the fundamental experience of dealing with the real world, with real business and with the people working in the field.