



**DOMUS ACADEMY MILANO**

**MASTER IN  
BUSINESS DESIGN**

**OVERVIEW**

MASTER AWARDED BY NABA  
NUOVA ACCADEMIA DI BELLE ARTI MILANO

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## PROGRAM SUMMARY

### QUALIFICATION

(First Level) Academic Master

### PROGRAM TITLE

Master in Business Design

### PROGRAM TYPE

Full Time

### LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

English

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**BUSINESS DESIGN reframes existing business models and past value proposition frameworks with the lens of a human-centered approach. Business Design, with design-thinking at its core finally reconciles current and latent customer needs with business practices and imperatives. Business Design brings sensible and sustainable managerial innovations to life.**

Change is the only constant. Established business and managerial standards are being disrupted, current business strategies are being reframed. Business's goal is no more merely to create customers. Business goals are to successfully integrate the needs of people, leverage technological advances, innovate branding proposing while ensuring sustainable returns on investment. Business Design draws from the designer's toolkit and design-thinking approach to make it possible.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Master in Business Design program creates new connections between the worlds of business and design. Students will work on projects related to the business of design and the design of business. Enlightening and interdisciplinary, the program focuses on how to apply design culture, methodology and sensitivity to a wide range of businesses, including established enterprises, large, medium and small, and start-ups. Students will understand design-driven management strategies as they learn to draft plans for business development, branding, marketing, and communication for the whole company as well as for specific product lines and new ventures.

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 universities and the faculty of the academy are internationally renowned professionals in their field.

### COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this programme students will be able to:

- Defend an approach in understanding the importance of design for production, economy and innovation;
- Analyse and compare trends, consumers behaviour and market insights;
- Appraise existing or disruptive business models and new business ventures;
- Formulate an application of Design Thinking and Innovation Through Design tools and

methodologies;

- Construct a creative approach in applying an entrepreneurial mindset by demonstrating its validity and reliability, through prototyping and application scenarios;
- Develop the mindset to push the boundaries of innovation through new ideas that shape the future of design;

The programme ensures students will gain the skills and attributes to:

- Generate the ability to tackle and solve problems in a self-directed and original way;
- Combine a 'design-based' approach and methodology in non-design fields;
- Collect different research techniques that can be applied to creative processes;
- Examine complex issues, both systematically and creatively, making sound judgments also in the absence of complete data;
- Create a sensibility to identify potential Business Ideas supported by 'design thinking' methodologies;
- Support with advanced relational tools the multicultural working teams.

### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Graduates of the Master's in Business Design can pursue managerial careers in cross-functional roles such as brand and communication strategist, design and innovation manager, business developer and other roles in design-driven companies, branding agencies or consulting and service companies, or start their own businesses.

## 8 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

### CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM (INCLUDING REQUIRED ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCORE)

Eligibility conditions for entering the Master 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

\* *Degree Certificate*

The course is designed for graduates in economics, humanities, design, or disciplines related to the program's field of study that are interested in acquiring organizational and management skills with a multidisciplinary approach. 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.

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 AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Domus Academy prioritizes an original “learning by designing” approach, that is in continuous development to reflect the fast changing world of today.

The teaching methods employed at Domus Academy are designed to help students achieve their individual professional goals along with the learning objective, while also considering their roles as designers in our contemporary world.

The primary vehicle for the “learning by designing” approach is project work. Emphasis is placed on, learning and applying a “problem setting” approach;

- to ensure that students refine their critical skills and apply them throughout their work process;
- to foster a personal creative style and developing an original way of expression;
- to develop research skills, which will enable students to source relevant materials, assimilating and articulating relevant findings;
- to conceive concepts and visions capable to blend creative languages with the actual needs of end users by interpreting a brief, primarily based on a real design assignment, in order to design a project that can match, or even exceed, the company’s expectation.

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.

All Master programs are 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 by the faculty and by visiting lecturers and designers who each have dedicated roles.

The “Program Leader” is 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 and professional path. The Program Leader sustains students in their workshop activities and coordinates the assessment process.










The “Project Leader” is professionals and teachers, chosen among experts of a specific field, whose role is to lead workshop activity, by developing a project brief in collaboration with the Program Leader, inspire and provide guidance to students along the design process, and to take part in the assessment of the projects.

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

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. Most workshop 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.

## STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENT

The program is organized in four main modules including, courses and workshops, followed by a fifth module providing a professional experience period and a final portfolio presentation.

module 1		module 2		module 3		module 4		module 5
								
Course	Core Workshop	Course	Core Workshop	Course	Free/Elective Workshop	Course	Free/Elective Workshop	Professional Experience
4 ECTS	8 ECTS	4 ECTS	8 ECTS	4 ECTS	8 ECTS	4 ECTS	8 ECTS	12 ECTS

FINAL PRESENTATION

### 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 specific topics in preparation for the workshop, and personal branding experiences for the development of the student's professional career.

### WORKSHOPS

The workshops are the main activity of the curriculum. Workshops are project assignments designed to give students a working knowledge of different core subjects. All workshops launch 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 and industrial partners, paying attention to fulfil both educational and professional aims.

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.

The workshop culminates in an open presentation to the faculty and invited professionals. Feedback to students is an integral part of the final assessment provided to students after the presentation. The Program Leader and the Project Leader are available to further discuss assessments with students if needed.

### CORE WORKSHOP

Product Strategy - (8 credits)

Entrepreneurship Through Design - (8 credits)

### ELECTIVE WORKSHOP - (8 credits)

One to be chosen among:

- Strategic Brand Management
- Digital Luxury Communication
- Product Strategy
- Entrepreneurship Through Design

### FREE CHOICE WORKSHOP - (8 credits)

One to be chosen amongst the active didactical offer

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The professional experience is the final step of a process in which students receive a deep and balanced evaluation of their skills and aspirations, in order to build a career, which fits their aims.

There are three kinds of professional experiences; an internship in a company where the students will be hosted in a work environment developing assigned real projects; a field learning experience as a specific work project carried

out on campus in collaboration with a company; and an entrepreneurial journey in order to develop business and managerial skills.

## 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 composed of internal faculty and external professionals. The portfolio realized by each student, and its presentation, allows the Board to evaluate the projects developed during the academic year as well as the growth of the student.

## 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 to 10 points for the Portfolio. Honors may be awarded on the basis of the Board assessment of study programs, portfolio and presentation.

## STUDY PLAN

Students will receive individual study counselling by the Program Leader to establish a Study Plan that reflects their skillset and professional objectives with the academic offer available.

## WORKSHOPS

### CORE WORKSHOPS - COMPULSORY

#### PRODUCT STRATEGY WORKSHOP

Over the last 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 workshop explores corporate cases involving the leading design companies, whose ability to innovate does not merely concern products, but all the elements that contribute to shape a truly global offer encompassing: positioning, image, distribution and communication. The application domain can range from established brands (brand extension), to companies wanting to exploit their potential, to existing companies that want to re-position their business, to new ventures (startups, crowdsourcing). A substantial part of the workshop activity is dedicated to the definition of a business model consistent with the objectives and scale of the project, while exploring the scalability of the solution, feasibility and innovation potential.

#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH DESIGN WORKSHOP

Innovation is the temper of business design. In a world awash



with ideas and new business ventures, what does it mean to frame a business through design? It means applying a design-thinking process to make sure your business idea solved a specific problem; and the solution to that specific problem is capable to generate revenues and profits in the long-term. Because the only distinction that makes sense in business is the one between profitable and non-profitable businesses.

The workshop Entrepreneurship Through Design explores issues, theories, cultures, and methods associated with the goal of designing an “ideal business”, starting from the assumption that every successful business and company is the realization of something that originated as a dream. The aim of this workshop is to develop a business design strategy and a plan, both imaginative and reliable, to initiate new ventures, through means of design methodology, sensitivity and culture to business.

## ELECTIVE WORKSHOP

One to be chosen among the following:

### STRATEGIC BRAND MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

In our consumeristic societies, the craze of luxury brands is a cult for brands that provide meaning. Only by adding a ladder of immaterial values and telling a story about its buyers, can a brand provide this meaning. Hence the reason why luxury and lifestyle brands cannot be analyzed and managed with the same parameters and through the same strategies as mass-tige or premium brands. At the same time, younger and new consumers are redefining the confines of what makes a luxury brand.

The objective of this workshop is to give students solid strategic brand management frameworks to appraise possible strategies and business development opportunities such as new product and services development, brand and line extension, innovative business models, and other growth strategies options.

### DIGITAL LUXURY COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

With an exponential rise of digital media platforms and channels, luxury brand managers are dealing with an extremely fragmented media landscape. Luxury brands need to adapt their communication strategies to each of those platforms, which implies declining their storytelling in multiple formats and with multiplicity. On one hand, they need to give their customers and audience a more personal and active role by inviting them to nourish brand-generated contents. On the other hand, luxury brands must guide the creation of those new contents and counterbalance with the production of innovative and authoritative ones.

The objective of this workshop is to support students in appraising effective and innovative digital communication strategies, which can be implemented by lifestyle and luxury brands. In particular, the objective is to design and execute communication concepts and plans focused on generating tangible business results (new customer acquisition and loyalty) and brand image and awareness (customer engagement and advocacy).

### PRODUCT STRATEGY WORKSHOP

Over the last 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 workshop explores corporate cases involving the leading design companies, whose ability to innovate does not merely concern 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 companies wanting to exploit their potentials, to existing companies that want to re-position their business, to new ventures (startups, crowdsourcing). A substantial part of the workshop activity

<sup>18</sup> is dedicated to the definition of a business model consistent with the objectives and scale of the project, while exploring the scalability of the solution, feasibility and innovation potential.

#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH DESIGN WORKSHOP

Innovation is the temper of business design. In a world awash with ideas and new business ventures, what does it mean to frame a business through design? It means applying a design-thinking process to make sure your business idea solved a specific problem; and the solution to that specific problem is capable to generate revenues and profits in the long-term. Because the only distinction that makes sense in business is the one between profitable and non-profitable businesses.

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#### 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. Each 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

#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP: BUSINESS MODELING

Which are the specific characteristics of entrepreneurial organizations? How does one analyze and assess that your organization or your company is growing entrepreneurially? How to systematically map and orchestrate the sources of innovation for a continuous re-definition of your business model? Moreover, every entrepreneurial venture must market products likely to sell within established channels. For these reasons entrepreneurs must have a clear map outlining direct or indirect competitors, distribution and communication channels, current risks and prospective market liabilities. The course focuses on the entrepreneurial process of opportunity identification and exploitation; the nature of entrepreneurial opportunities; the traits of entrepreneurs; and the final definition of a business plan. Students will explore the definition of what entrepreneurship is to its specificities and challenges.

#### ADVANCED BUSINESS FOR DESIGN

Brand managers, entrepreneurs and designers alike need to have a good understanding of the business landscape within which contemporary design-driven brands are inextricably embedded. The course Advanced Business for Design offers students the possibility to deeply understand and practice core aspects of real life business scenarios that determine the economic performance and viability of a company, studio or consultancy. Students will explore fundamental accounting, financial and business planning tools; short and long term profitability aspects; various sustainable business model approaches; and how to build long-lasting competitive advantages. It will provide an overview of the various options to fund innovative projects or enterprises within a long-term horizon and a general framework around intellectual propriety and copyright aspects and regulations.

## STRATEGIC BRANDING

We live in a world of saturated market offers where competition is increasing exponentially. It is vital for brands, businesses and organizations to differentiate themselves from their competitors and potential substitutes and carve out a unique brand and business territory. The course in Strategic Branding has the goal to support students to conduct a correct strategic market analysis - a key success factor for any entrepreneurial and business activity no matter how visionary. It guides them to develop strong and authentic branding strategies in order for new brands to be able to connect emotionally with their customers and cultivate lasting relationships with them. Students will explore analytical frameworks to assess the reasons behind the success of some major brands, both from a strategic and creative point of view; appraise new strategies to effectively define a brand's positioning, consistent with the target audience and the market context; assess how to articulate and apply strong and relevant brand identities, with unique value proposition to differentiate themselves from potential competitors.

## PERSONAL BRANDING

The course examines the job market in branding, digital innovation and business industries. It provides an in-depth overview of job descriptions, defining hard and soft skills. It will describe the recruitment process, from the preparation of resume and portfolio, to job search, job/competition application, and interview preparation and presentation, from a practical perspective, combining lectures, case-studies and in-class exercises and simulations.

An essential component of the course is represented by a 'reality check'. Students will meet with a professional designer who will provide an individual feedback on their cv and portfolio. Students will be asked to review their presentation material and approach and define an individual action plan to build their personal brand.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Professional Experience 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 three kinds of Professional Experiences:

- Internship in a Company/Firm: the students will be hosted in a work environment developing assigned real projects.
- Field Learning Experience: a work project carried out on campus in collaboration with a company and supervised by a project leader. The students will approach contemporary themes and explore a wide range of design subjects in a multidisciplinary environment.
- Entrepreneurship Module: an entrepreneurial journey in order to develop business and managerial skills. The students will be given a specific toolbox of frameworks and approaches both in theory and practice.

In all 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.