



DOMUS ACADEMY MILANO

MASTER IN INTERACTION 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 Interaction Design

PROGRAM TYPE

Full Time

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

English

EXPERIENCE DESIGN is impacting behavior through design. It is a people-centered design direction and a contemporary vision of the design process in which curiosity is the smart ingredient when generating future scenarios and experiences, perceptual spaces, services, strategies, storytelling, identity and brand perceptions. It is when fiction meets reality.

Experience design is built on many dimensions. It is a way of thinking and a particular design approach with a rigorous attitude to qualify the experience of a potential user. The growth of experience design has mirrored the increased use of digital technologies and is today applying technology to life-scenarios by designing new futures.

6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Master in Interaction Design program promotes knowledge, skills and competences to define problems and solutions in the field of interaction and user experience. Students will learn how to adopt digital technology to create enriched experiences. Students will be encouraged to transform their original design visions into market opportunities, thanks to the effective use of the latest hardware and software. 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:

- Identify different creative solutions related to the practice of interaction design in connection with awareness of constantly changing global demands;
- Formulate a personal and reflective thinking approach in the diverse dimensions of interaction design, mindful of the social, technological and business implications of the proposed solution;
- Construct a problem-solving approach to overcome the unexpected and ever changing problems, needs and desires expressed by contemporary users;
- Explain the constitutive features of the user experience discipline in order to integrate them into an interaction design solution;
- Distinguish emerging digital technologies that show

applications and insight in the contemporary interaction design field;

- Develop a deep understanding of contemporary cultural, social, and behavioural trends and their impact on Interaction Design as a discipline.

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

- Classify the principles, methods and tools of user experience design in relation to the investigation and the specific challenge;
- Design a digital and/or physical solution related to the interaction design field in a collaborative, multicultural and multidisciplinary environment;
- Plan complex assignments within given time limits and with limited information about the topic;
- Create a research plan to identify design directions and innovation opportunities;
- Assess different digital and physical prototyping solutions in order to validate and communicate interaction concepts;
- Select the appropriate storytelling technique for the presentation of a project depending on the audience and the expected results.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The aim of the Master's in Interaction Design is to equip professionals with cutting-edge skills and competences so that they can attain various strategic design positions such as interaction designer, experience designer, design researcher and digital designer. Successful graduates of the programme will meet contemporary industry employment requirements and be prepared to embark on a career as a self-employed consultant or entrepreneur.

8 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

* Degree Certificate

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.

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 proactive 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

- Experience Design - (8 credits)
- Tangible Interactions - (8 credits)

Elective Workshop - (8 credits)

One to be chosen among:

- Envisioning
- Experience Design
- Identity Design
- Product Strategy
- Service 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

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 day to day 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.

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

16 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

Through field research, physical or digital analysis, the workshop investigates cultural and social conditions that will have an impact on our society in a medium or long-term perspective for questioning and Envisioning the role of design and designers. The design process starts with questioning the existing conditions with a problem-setting approach where divergence and convergence processes indistinctly alternate. Students are requested to create projects with a strong evocative and narrative focus, designing a synthesis of values that are independent of the specific typology of the examined conditions. Through the use of a wide range of communication tools, including storytelling, storyboards and video scenarios, students are invited to envisioning the possibilities of the future for design and designers. The workshop emphasizes design activities stemming from existing to possible scenarios and revolves around envisioning future scenarios based on the crossing of

innovative emerging technologies with socio-cultural, geopolitical, and strategic values.

IDENTITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

Branding is 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. Brands tends to assume a human connotation and personality, whose core values are represented through the visual image, communication style and behaviors, interaction models, tone and language. Furthermore, the identity of a brand and its success is strictly connected to its ability to leverage and exploit the broad range of media channels, both physical and digital, in order to establish and maintain a rich and reciprocal fruitful conversation with the audience, both current and potential clients.

The Identity Design workshop aims at developing the skills for designing the brand identity of a company, or to extend a pre-existent one. Students are asked 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; and touchpoints.

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

18 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 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.

EXPERIENCE DESIGN WORKSHOP

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

STORYTELLING AND VISUAL NARRATIVE

Storytelling has become today a fundamental design topic; the ability to integrate narration into the design process is an essential component to attract, engage and expand the user experience. The course responds to the growing need to create and deliver original visual content to varied fields ranging from communication of projects, interface design, data visualization, management of social media channels and to micro storytelling. The course provides an intensive exploration of visual and structural elements of storytelling and visual narratives where students engage with the necessary tools to design a user experience and to create user scenarios and storyboards. The course prepares

the students for the challenges and opportunities of the digital market, developing basic knowledge on software prototyping techniques of interactive services using static and dynamic representations.

DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL PROTOTYPING

Prototyping is a crucial aspect of the design process to validate, improve and communicate ideas and concepts; and this is especially true for the experience design field, where designers are asked to deliver projects that deal with human-computer interaction, multimedia contents and storytelling. The Digital & Physical Prototyping course intertwines theoretical insights, with targeted design activities, short assignments and exercises aimed at developing specific competences 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 exploring different approaches to physical, digital and video prototyping including; the use of electronic sensors and microcontrollers to prototype interactive objects; ready to use tools for prototyping mobile interfaces, virtual reality and augmented reality devices; and the exploration of tools and methods for visual and micro storytelling.

DESIGN RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

The course Design Research Methods and Tools explores theories and practices within the field of creative thinking. Students are introduced to different research methods and approaches such as observation and interviewing, idea generation techniques such as attribute listing and brainstorming, and data representation tool such as mind-maps, diagrams and graphs. Through the analysis of different case studies presented by international design firms representatives the course explores the relation between design and research. Students learn how to acquire and manipulate the information they need to kick-start their projects.

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.