

Design, MFA (Boston)

The Master of Fine Arts in Design consists of a first year that is anchored around two studio courses, each of which has multiple options from which students can choose. Students can then construct a personalized learning path by choosing elective courses from three groups: research, design, and technical electives. These electives both prepare students for the thesis and provide the tools to build mastery on a range of topics including experience design, information design, systems thinking, speculative design, social design, data visualization, and human computer interaction.

The thesis sequence follows a modular approach, allowing students to complete the thesis in either the fall or spring semester.

MFA students are required to display their final work in an exhibition, which will showcase student work completed toward the end of the program.

Program Requirements

Beginning with students admitted in the fall of 2026, all students pursuing on-ground master's degree programs must complete a university-level experiential learning requirement. This requirement may be fulfilled through the curriculum, co-op, or other work- or industry-integrated learning experiences.

Complete all courses and requirements listed below unless otherwise indicated.

Milestone

Thesis completion

Core Courses

Code	Title	Hours
Introductory Studio		
During the first year, students complete a studio course based on their intended area of specialization.		
Complete one of the following:		4
ARTG 5100	Information Design Studio 1: Principles	
ARTG 5600	Experience Design Studio 1: Principles	
Intermediate Studio		
Complete one of the following:		4
ARTG 6100	Information Design Studio 2: Dynamic Mapping and Models	
ARTG 6600	Experience Design Studio 2: Group and Interpersonal	
Interdisciplinary Studio		
INAM 6000	Interdisciplinary Critique Studio	4
Thesis Sequence		
Complete each course twice:		16
ARTG 7910	Design Project and Exhibition	
ARTG 7990	Thesis ¹	
Registration in the following is required if the thesis is not completed by the conclusion of the second term of registration for ARTG 7990:		
ARTG 7996	Thesis Continuation - Half-Time ²	

¹ ARTG 7990 is repeatable for credit. However, the third completion of that course will not apply to requirements of this program and will increase the total cost of the program and the duration of the program.

² There is a 1-semester-hour tuition charge for Thesis Continuation - Half-Time (ARTG 7996), and registration is limited to one term.

Electives

Code	Title	Hours
Group A: Theory		
Complete 8 semester hours from the following:		8
ARTG 5110	Information Design History	
ARTG 5120	Research Methods for Design	
ARTG 5310	Visual Cognition	
ARTG 5620	Notational Systems for Experience	
ARTG 6110	Information Design Theory and Critical Thinking	
GSND 5130	Mixed Research Methods for Games	

Group B: Design

Complete 4 semester hours from the following:		4
ARTG 5000	Topics in Design	
ARTG 5130	Visual Communication for Information Design	
ARTG 5610	Design Systems	
ARTG 5710	Design for Dignity	
ARTG 6310	Design for Behavior and Experience	
ARTG 6330	Information Design Mapping Strategies	
ARTG 6555	Graphic Design Synthesis	
GSND 6225	Applied Game Design	
GSND 6320	Psychology of Play	
JRNL 6341	Telling Your Story with Data	

Group C: Technical

Complete 4 semester hours from the following:		4
ARTG 5320	Statistics for Design	
ARTG 5330	Visualization Technologies 1: Fundamentals	
ARTG 5430	Visualization Technologies 2: Advanced Practices	
ARTG 5640	Prototyping for Experience Design	
DA 5020	Collecting, Storing, and Retrieving Data	
EXRE 5020	Developing Extended Realities (XR)	
EXRE 5030	Designing Extended Realities (XR)	
GSND 5110	Game Design and Analysis	
GSND 6340	Biometrics of Design	
GSND 6350	Data-Driven Game Design	
GSND 6520	3D Modeling and Asset Creation Principles	
INSH 5302	Information Design and Visual Analytics	

Program Electives

Complete an additional 12 semester hours from any of the electives listed above. At least one course must be from Group B or Group C.	12
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Interdisciplinary Elective

In consultation with the faculty advisor, complete any Northeastern University graduate coursework for a total of 4 semester hours	4
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Program Credit/GPA Requirements

60 total semester hours required

Minimum 3.000 GPA required