

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Advanced Studies Program

Master in Design Studies Policies and Procedures

2008-2009

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to describe the policies and procedures related to the program requirements stated on the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD) website. Please read it carefully, and also refer to the catalog posted in PDF format on the MDesS program web site. Your advisor is aware of program requirements, but it is your responsibility to make sure these are completed. If you have any questions, please check at the ASP office in room 334.

Basic Requirements

The formal academic requirements for this program are described on the GSD website and should be an integral part of your planning the first weeks of school and beyond. A summary of the requirements is provided here for your reference.

Degree Requirements

A candidate who enters the program will be recommended for the Master in Design Studies degree upon satisfactory completion of 48 units of academic work.

Each student is typically required to complete a minimum of 12 units in his or her area of study from an approved list of courses published each term for each of the primary areas noted below. Each student is also required to complete a substantial research study in his or her area, either via a thesis or an approved 4 unit course that has a research component and culminates in either a scholarly paper or an equivalent project involving independent research. No more than 12 units from the total of 48 may be from independent study courses and no more than 16 units from non-GSD courses.

Applicants granted advanced standing on admission are expected to complete 32 units, 8 units in his or her area from the approved list of courses for his or her area, and complete a thesis, research paper or project as described above. No more than 8 units from the total of 32 may be from independent study courses and no more than 12 units from non-GSD courses.

None of the required units may be fulfilled by courses credited toward another degree.

Residence

Three terms of full-time study in residence is required for students entering into the program during the 2008-2009 academic year. At the discretion of the Admissions Committee, qualified candidates with extensive academic or professional experience may be eligible for one term of advanced placement on admission, enabling them to

complete the program in two terms. Under certain circumstances, students may receive permission to reduce their course load and extend their studies to four terms.

Satisfactory Progress

Please see the GSD website for policy on grades. Note in particular that: For courses taken outside the GSD, passing grades below “B-” or “satisfactory” will be considered equivalent to a GSD “low pass.” Please also review information about deficiency units under “Satisfactory Progress and Termination.” The grade UNSAT is a failing grade.

Program Organization

Program Committee and Program Directors

The Masters of Design Studies is administered by Martin Bechthold and Sanford Kwinter, who are the co-directors of the program. They are assisted by the administrator Barbara Elfman. The directors and administrator have their offices in Room 334 of Gund Hall. Each MDesS student also is assigned an academic area advisor. You will rely mainly on them for advice and direction, but you should keep the MDesS administrator aware of your plans. You will need to petition the MDesS council for a waiver of any rule. Both the MDesS directors and administrator are well versed in the rules of the program and are happy to be consulted about them. There is a MDesS program council that votes as a group on decisions concerning the policies of the program. They meet approximately once a month and waivers may need to go before the council if the decision requires a vote.

Academic Advisor

Each area concentration of the MDesS program is overseen by a faculty member. You will meet them during the first week of school. You should think carefully about your course selection and discuss any questions at this meeting. The program allows you a great deal of flexibility to tailor your courses to your needs. It is also helpful to talk to students who are returning for their third semester. The area faculty advisor is the person to ask academic questions and who can advise you about your thesis or scholarly paper that is part of your requirement for graduation. At times this same faculty member may be your thesis or scholarly paper advisor, but not always. It is important to discuss in your second semester with the advisor your plans for fulfilling the requirement. You will be asked to fill out a form that should be handed in to the ASP office with the details of what you will be doing and who will be your advisor.

Orientation

During the first week of school you will attend orientation. This is an important time to learn about how things run at the GSD. You will bring a brief 2 minute power point about yourself to share at a breakfast meeting held the first week. It is the time to ask questions and learn about the various resources provided by CRG, Loeb Library, Building

services and the program office. Please don't forget to fill out the information sheet and turn it in to the ASP office.

MDesS Research Requirement

As part of the degree requirements each student needs to conduct a substantial research study under the guidance of an advisor. Depending on the concentration area the research requirement can be fulfilled with a scholarly paper or with a thesis.

Scholarly Paper or Research Project

The scholarly paper or research project is completed in the context of a course that has a research component. The scope of the work extends beyond that of a regular course paper or project. The course instructor is the advisor of the paper or project, and he or she needs to be informed of the intention to fulfill the MDesS research requirement in the course.

Thesis

An MDesS thesis involves research that is independently pursued by a student under the direction of a faculty member who has agreed to become the thesis supervisor and who will ultimately approve the completed thesis document. The thesis document must conform to certain guidelines (see below). The thesis is one option for completing the MDesS requirement. Keep in mind that some MDesS areas encourage research papers or projects as a way of meeting the requirement instead of a thesis. The Scholarly paper or project will still need to be in a bound format and turned into the ASP office prior to the degree vote. These dates will be announced each semester by the administrator. A thesis is equivalent to 8 units of coursework and a scholarly paper or project is either completed within a 4 unit class or a 4 unit independent study may be taken after completing the course to continue to work on the paper or project.

Securing a Thesis Advisor

Securing a thesis supervisor is the responsibility of the student. In general, it is suggested that the student initially prepare a brief statement (e.g., no longer than one page) that succinctly outlines the proposed thesis topic and research methodology in a form that can be quickly perused by a potential thesis advisor. The student should also become familiar with the scholarship or research interests of several different potential faculty advisors. Faculty members are much more likely to be excited about sponsoring a student when faculty and student interests are similar. A faculty supervisor may or may not suggest certain conditions before accepting a student to work on a particular topic, e.g., that he or she take a particular course or that an independent study course focusing on "thesis preparation" be taken before the actual thesis semester.

Keep in mind that not all faculty members may wish to supervise thesis students, or a faculty member may already have taken more thesis students than they can manage. A student needs to have only one faculty member to formally oversee the thesis, although in some areas the advisor may suggest that at least one other faculty member serve as a reader and discussant.

Formal Thesis Proposal

Once a student has received the general agreement of a faculty member to serve as a supervisor, the student should begin preparation of a more extensive and detailed thesis proposal. It is suggested that students, in the course of developing their thesis proposal to schedule an individual consultation with a member of the Reference staff of the Frances Loeb Library to aid in the preparation of their literature review, research sources and bibliography. While the exact form of the proposal is to be decided upon via discussions with the advisor, the proposal should generally include the following in brief form:

- A statement describing the key issues and questions to be addressed by the thesis. Major and secondary questions should be identified.
- A succinct literature review as needed.
- A statement of how the thesis fits into the context of relevant theory or on-going research
- An outline of the research hypothesis or point of view.
- A statement of the research methodology to be used.
- A description of data sources, case studies or other specific research sources.
- A description of the proposed thesis “product.”
- A bibliography of relevant works in the field.

This proposal should be submitted to the faculty advisor by the beginning of the semester that the student wishes to pursue the thesis.

Conduct of Thesis

The student and faculty advisor should set up a series of at least three meetings (minimum) during the course of the semester. By the mid-semester meeting the student is advised to have a detailed table of contents for the final document in hand for discussion. By the last meeting the student should have substantially completed all research and be engaged in the process of writing the final document.

Form of Final Thesis Document

Two copies must be given to the MDesS administrator. The thesis which will go to the Loeb Library must be printed on acid free paper 8.5X11 and be bound professionally. The copy for the MDesS office can be bound in a spiral binding with a clear cover and a black back. There should be a cover sheet with Title, Name, Date and Advisor. A template for the sheet can be found in this manual. Any additional electronic materials may also be submitted with the thesis. One copy will be housed in the Loeb Library and one will stay with the MDesS program. If you would like information as to where to bind a thesis please contact the program administrator.

Scholarly Paper

The scholarly paper must be printed on 8.5x11 acid free paper and have a cover sheet that is signed by the advisor. Please use the template in this manual. The paper should have a spiral

binding with a clear cover and black back. A second copy must be given to the ASP administrator to keep in the MDesS office.

Submission Dates

The student should agree with the advisor upon a date for submitting final manuscripts for review and comment, e.g., two weeks before final submission dates, so that there is time for suggested revisions.

All signed and bound theses must be submitted to the MDesS office prior to the degree vote meeting.

Thesis Presentation

A summary of the thesis findings will be presented in a public forum with the presence of the advisor's during the reading week.

General Information

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence of up to two semesters may be approved after the first year of study. Please note that a student must be registered for the semester in which he/she will graduate.

Financial Aid

If you receive financial aid from the GSD you will be required to submit updated financial aid forms in early January of the first year to verify your financial status for the second year.

Students with questions about term bills should see Keith Gnoza, Director of Financial Assistance, Student Services.

The Harvard Educational Loan Program (HELP) offered through Citibank is available to both US and International students. Please see:

gsd.harvard.edu/admissions/financial_aid/HELPLoan.htm for more information or contact FAO at 617-495-5455.

Office Space

Office space is determined each year by the physical needs of all faculty, staff and students. MDesS students may have office space in room 327 at the GSD, at a library carrel in the Loeb Library or via VPN. Physical spaces will include file cabinets and data jacks including network connections. Space in the MDesS room is available daily, but there aren't any assigned desks. It is more of a "hotel" space where you can stop by to use it during the day. There are large lockers located on the third floor for storage. You will need to provide your own lock and they are distributed on a first come, first serve basis in the first weeks of school until filled.

ASP Office

Among the variety of aspects of your life at the GSD, the program office is an important part of the information loop. Not only does the office coordinate allocation of space, delivers student mail and serves as a general resource for information, it is also the first place to go to begin to

solve a problem. To schedule a meeting with one of the Directors, it is best to contact Barbara Elfman at belfman@gsd.harvard.edu. The ASP administrator oversees the MDesS, PhD and DDes programs. During busy times of the year, it is helpful to schedule a time to meet with the administrator if it is more than a quick question. In connection with arranging use of space at GSD or problems pertaining to office and phone issues, Building Services should be notified. Computer Resources should be contacted for any overhead, AV or technical issues. When you arrive at the GSD you will be given an information sheet to fill out during orientation. This is a very important tool for the program to be able to reach you. Please update over the years as addresses and phone numbers can change.

Regalia and Afterwards

At your commencement, you are required to wear cap and doctoral gown and to provide a rented or purchased Harvard masters hood. These are all available at the Harvard Coop. We want to keep in touch after you have completed your studies. Consider signing up via post.harvard.edu Harvard alumni life-long email option. It is also very helpful if you fill out the exit interview form provided by the ASP administrator.

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

MDesS Information Sheet

SECTION I

Name: _____

Area of Concentration: _____

Sex: _____ Citizenship: _____ Visa Status: _____

Year Entered Program: _____

Advanced Placement: ___yes___no

Previous
Degrees/Institutions: _____

Please list home contact information

GSD Email: _____

Permanent Email: _____

Local
Address: _____

Phone: _____

Permanent
Address: _____

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

MDesS EXIT INTERVIEW

SECTION I

Name: _____ Advisor: _____

Field: _____ Sex: _____ Citizenship: _____ Visa Status: _____

Month/Year of MDesS: _____ Year Entered _____

Previous Degrees/Institutions/Dates: _____

Thesis, Project or Scholarly Paper Title: _____

Thesis Advisor: _____

SECTION II

Do you have post-graduation employment? Yes / no [If no, skip to SECTION III]

If yes, please list position title: _____

Please complete the following contact information:

University or Employer _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

SECTION III

Please list home contact information, if available. Email _____

Address _____

Phone _____

The Department congratulates you on your accomplishment and encourages you to keep us informed of any changes to the above contact or employment information. Thank you.

MDesS Research Requirement Approval Form

Please fill out the following form no later than April 14, 2009 and bring the completed copy to the ASP office in room 334. It is imperative that you talk with the faculty member supervising your work prior to completing this form as to what you propose to do to fulfill your research study requirement.

Name: _____

Area of study: _____

E-Mail: _____

Tentative Title: _____

Context of Study:

___GSD 9204 Independent Thesis

Faculty Thesis Advisor

Signature

___Special Project or Paper in Course

Course Name and Number

Faculty Signature

Petition

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Change in rules requested:

Reason for Change (Attach any additional explanatory material):

Comments of Advisor:

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

Signature of Advisor _____ Date _____

ASP Committee Decision _____

Date _____

Models for Design Exploration in Architecture

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in Design Studies

Design and Technology Concentration

At the Harvard University Graduate School of Design

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Signature of the Author.....

Jane H. Doe

Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Certified by.....

Kostas Terzidis

Associate Professor of Architecture

Thesis Advisor

Accepted by.....

Martin Bechthold

Master in Design Studies, Program Director

Professor of Architecture