Legal Notice: This is a translation of the original document, entitled "Studienordnung für den Masterstudiengang Design der Zürcher Hochschule der Künste" and issued in German. Under applicable law, solely the German version shall be deemed binding.

Zurich University of the Arts
Master of Arts in Design
Degree Programme Regulations (DPR MDE)

13 December 2023

Based on § 2 para. 3 of the Regulatory Framework for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes at Zurich University of the Arts of 2 November 2021, the University Board hereby decrees:

A. General Provisions

§ 1. Subject
In addition to the Regulatory Framework for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes at ZHdK (RF), the Degree Programme Regulations (DPR) set out here govern the Master of Arts in Design.

§ 2. Programme Objective
[1] The Master of Arts in Design provides students with in-depth design knowledge and research-oriented qualifications for design practice, research and education. Coursework focuses on the analysis of design and research methods, and on the application and development of design knowledge, concepts and processes.
[2] The master's degree programme leads to a Master of Arts in Design and also qualifies graduates to pursue an academic career in the respective field.

§ 3. Majors in Design
[1] The master's degree programme compromises the following majors, each awarded 90 credits:
a. Major in Game Design,
b. Major in Industrial Design,
c. Major in Interaction Design,
d. Major in Knowledge Visualization,
e. Major in Trends & Identity,
f. Major in Visual Communication.
[2] The annexes to these DPR describe the MA majors in Design.

B. Admissions

§ 4. Admissions
Programme admissions are governed by the provisions of the Regulatory Framework (RF).

§ 5. Admissions Process and Entrance Examination Committee
[1] The admissions process comprises four stages:
a. The University Office establishes whether applicants meet the University's admissions requirements (i.e. previous education, fulfilment of additional requirements, language proficiency and application documents);
b. Applications are reviewed to verify whether applicants fulfil the admissions requirements for the subject-specific aptitude test;
c. The Entrance Examination Committee verifies whether applicants fulfil the additional requirements and conducts the subject-specific aptitude test;
d. Admissions decision.

[2] The Head of Programme appoints an Entrance Examination Committee. The Committee comprising the head of major and at least two members of the teaching staff[2] of the respective major.

§ 6. Evidence of Language Proficiency

[1] Students must provide evidence of an adequate knowledge of German and English. In the majors Interaction Design and Industrial Design, only proof of sufficient English language proficiency is required; proof of German language proficiency is not necessary.[3]

[2] Students can demonstrate their adequate knowledge of German in one of the following ways:

a. Native speaker;

b. German as a subject that was examined as part of their previous education (passed or at least grade 4);

c. B2 certificate in German that was earned under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or

d. A university degree (BA/MA) in a programme that was taught and examined in German.

[3] Students can demonstrate their adequate knowledge of English in one of the following ways:

a. Native speaker;

b. English as a subject that was examined as part of their previous education (passed or at least grade 4);

c. B2 certificate in English that was earned under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or

d. A university degree (BA/MA) in a programme that was taught and examined in English.

[4] Proof of the required language skills can be provided in the first two semesters. In this case, programme admission is subject to students providing evidence of their language proficiency at the latest by the end of their second semester. Students who fail to meet the language requirements may be expelled.

§ 7. Verification

The University Office reviews the documents listed below to verify whether applicants meet the admissions requirements (previous education, additional requirements, language proficiency):

a. Application form;

b. CV;

c. Digital documentation of artistic practice (visual material, links to published projects);

d. Motivation letter;

e. Outline of a possible research-oriented master's project,

f. Bachelor's degree in accordance with the RF, as well as previous education certificates in accordance with the RF and overarching legislation.

§ 8. Admission to Subject-Specific Aptitude Test

Students who fulfil the requirements set out in § 8 and who have submitted the required application documents are admitted to the subject-specific aptitude test.

§ 9. Subject-Specific Aptitude Test

[1] The subject-specific aptitude test has two parts.

[2] The first part of the aptitude test involves the assessment of the application documents. The positive assessment of these documents is a prerequisite for applicants being invited to the second part of the aptitude test.

[3] The second part of the aptitude test comprises an admissions interview. Candidates may be required to answer further examination questions.

[4] Programme admission is subject to the positive overall assessment of the application documents and of candidates' performance at the subject-specific aptitude test.

[5] Candidates who fail their subject-specific aptitude test may repeat this only once per major[1].

§ 10. Assessment Criteria

The following criteria are used to assess candidate aptitude:

a. Conceptual skills,
b. Creative potential,
c. Critical reflection skills,
d. Communication competence.

[2] The following major-specific criteria apply:

a. Major in Industrial Design:
   — Design competence and technical skills,
   — Open-minded, critical and future-oriented thinking,
   — Interest in a research-oriented engagement with design and technology.
b. Major in Interaction Design:
   — Critical, holistic and ecological thinking,
   — Basic technical knowledge,
   — Ability to understand complex systems,
   — Creative will and originality.
c. Major in Knowledge Visualization:
   — Visual literacy and design competence,
   — Ability to analyse and convey knowledge,
   — Willingness to cooperate with scientific partners,
   — Epistemological interest in design research.
d. Major in Trends & Identity:
   — Design, research and analytical skills,
   — Independent and original understanding of design,
   — Critical, responsible, future-oriented and integrated thinking,
   — Innovative and experimental spirit,
   — Commitment to help shape society,
   — Moderation skills to guide design, strategy, change and innovation processes.
e. Major in Visual Communication:
   — Creative skills in the field of visual communication,
   — Demonstrable interest in design questions,
   — Demonstrable interest in research-oriented and exploratory working methods.

C. Student Performance

§ 11. Credit Requirements

The number of credits required to pass the majors in design is stipulated in the respective programme structures (see Annexes).

§ 12. Assessment Criteria

[1] The following criteria are used to assess student performance:

a. Artistic and creative quality,
b. Theoretical knowledge,
c. Methodological knowledge,
d. Research-oriented, knowledge-generating working methods,
e. Critical reflection skills,
f. Originality of work,
g. Team skills and communication skills (social competence),
h. Adequate use of subject-specific media and methods,
i. Communication and transfer/presentation skills (project/concept delivery).

[2] These criteria are assessed in terms of the programme outcomes stipulated in the Annex.

D. Programme Organisation

§ 13. Exchange Semester

[1] The Head of Programme must approve the type, content, duration and crediting of exchange semesters prior to commencement.
[2] Exchange semesters are credited only if they meet the content and organisational requirements stipulated in a corresponding agreement.
[3] Students are responsible for organising their exchange semester (which can be spent in Switzerland or abroad) themselves.

E. Graduation

§ 14. Major Graduation Requirements

[1] Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Design must fulfil the following requirements:
a. Written and practical master's thesis,
b. Presentation of the master's thesis,
c. Participation in the degree colloquium.
[2] The Head of Programme appoints an examination committee, comprising the head of major and at least two persons (professors or lecturers)[2] from the major and at least one external expert.
[3] Students who wish to graduate from the MA Major in Design must be awarded a "Pass" or at least a grade of 4.0.
[4] Students who are awarded a "Fail" or a grade below 4.0 may repeat their final examinations only once, at the next possible examination date.

F. Expulsion

§ 15. Expulsion

In accordance with § 45 para. 3 of the Regulatory Framework, the Head of Department reserves the right to expel students from a degree programme who:
a. Fail to provide evidence of the required language skills in accordance with the programme regulations;
b. Exceed the maximum period of study or who
c. Fail compulsory electives in accordance with § 30 para. 4 of the Regulatory Framework.

G. Intellectual Property Rights

§ 16. Copyright Ownership

[1] Copyright in all inventions, designs and copyrighted works created in degree programmes is owned by ZHdK.
[2] ZHdK reserves the right to decide on the licensing and transfer of intellectual property rights.

H. Final Provisions

§ 17. Enactment

[1] These Degree Programme Regulations were enacted on 1 February 2024.
[2] These Regulations apply to all students who enter their programme in the 2024/25 autumn semester or thereafter.

§ 18. Transitional Provision

[1] Master's students who began their studies before the 2024/25 autumn semester will graduate from their programme in accordance with the Degree Programme Regulations for the ZHdK Master of Arts in Design of 13 June 2018 and with the respective curricular concept.

[2] In accordance with previous legislation, students must complete their degree programme before the end of the maximum period of study.
[3] Students who interrupt their studies are subject to the new legislation. The terms and conditions of resumption as well as the accreditation of previous achievements are governed by § 34 of the Regulatory Framework for Bachelor's and Master's Programmes.

[1] Resolution of the University Board of 8 May 2024. In Effect from 1 August 2024.
[2] Resolution of the University Board of 16 October 2024. In Effect since 1 November 2024.
[3] Resolution of the University Board of 2 July 2025. In Effect since 1 August 2025.

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DPR MDE

Master of Arts in Design
Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations

13 December 2023

Major in Game Design

Level of Study: Master

Credits: Major (90 Credits)

Qualification: «Master of Arts ZHdK in Design with a Major in Game Design»

Entry-Level Competencies
Newly admitted students will possess:
— Interest in the culture and design of interactive games,
— Innovativeness and eagerness to experiment,
— Affinity with interdisciplinary design and intermediality,
— Analytical understanding of motivational design.

Programme Outcomes
Graduates will:
— Know and be able to reflect on and apply scientific working techniques and methods,
— Know the most important theories and models in the fields of games, game design, game studies and game culture and be able to apply these theories and models in analysing games,
— Be able to critically reflect on the rules and motivational designs of games, society or culture and use them for analytical purposes,
— Be able to use motivational designs, theories and models in designing games,
— Know and be able to use the potential fields of work for game designers in Switzerland, such as research projects, exhibitions and the games industry,
— Be able to engage independently with games, game design or game culture, as well as communicate these and set new trends,
— Be able to reflect on their knowledge of development processes and apply it in team productions.

Programme Structure

Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Game Design must earn at least 90 credits. Students must complete modules from the following areas in accordance with the rules set out below:	
Thesis Development	min. 38 Credits from C-Modules
Practice	min. 17 Credits from C-Modules
Theory	min. 9 Credits from C-Modules
Interdisciplinary Theory & Practice	min. 12 Credits, of which 10 Credits from C-Modules and 2 Credits from CE-Modules
Graduation	min. 14 Credits from C-Modules

Key: C = Compulsory Module; CE = Compulsory Elective Module

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DPR MDE

Enactment and Effectiveness

[1] This Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations was enacted on 1 February 2024. It was approved by the University Board on 13 December 2023.

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DPR MDE

Master of Arts in Design
Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations

13 December 2023

Major in Industrial Design

Level of Study: Master

Credits: Major (90 Credits)

Qualification: «Master of Arts ZHdK in Design with a Major in Industrial Design»

Entry-Level Competencies
Newly admitted students will possess:
— Openness, independence and commitment,
— Curiosity and willingness to experiment with new and established technologies,
— Highly developed conceptual, creative and technical skills,
— Interest in research-oriented and exploratory working methods,
— Interest in critically reflecting on design and technology in social contexts and in helping to shape the future.

Programme Outcomes
Graduates will be able to:
— Contribute a design perspective to debates on technology, society and ecology,
— Deal with new technologies from a functional, aesthetic, entrepreneurial and critical perspective,
— Translate abstract questions into concrete design proposals and ground projects in social, cultural, technological and economic contexts,
— Distinguish technological applications and their impacts and know how to design both,
— Demonstrate a sensitivity to the impact of different technologies on everyday life,
— Apply the necessary skills to communicate and test ideas using appropriate media such as video scenarios, models or prototypes,
— Work successfully in teams on projects requiring input from different disciplines,
— Demonstrate an individual design approach and apply the abilities and skills developed on the programme in a leading role to a specific practice (industry, design agency, research, etc.).

Programme Structure

Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Industrial Design must earn at least 90 credits. Students must complete modules from the following areas in accordance with the rules set out below:	
Thesis Development	min. 38 Credits from C-Modules
Practice	min. 17 Credits from C-Modules
Theory	min. 9 Credits from C-Modules
Interdisciplinary Theory & Practice	min. 12 Credits, of which 10 Credits from C-Modules and 2 Credits from CE-Modules
Graduation	min. 14 Credits from C-Modules

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DPR MDE

Master of Arts in Design
Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations

13 December 2023

Major in Interaction Design

Level of Study: Master

Credits: Major (90 Credits)

Qualification: «Master of Arts ZHdK in Design with a Major in Interaction Design»

Entry-Level Competencies
Newly admitted students will possess:
— Creativity and curiosity,
— Conceptual, design or technological skills,
— Interest in areas such as graphics, product or interface design, physical computing, programming, web and mobile user experience, information visualisation or installations and related artistic practices.

Programme Outcomes
Graduates will:
— Possess in-depth knowledge of analysing, dealing with and communicating complex design issues and research results,
— Be able to work on relevant questions of interaction design in a research-oriented manner and arrive at new findings and insights,
— Possess a rich aesthetic and methodological repertoire to produce application-oriented or experimental results in a well-aimed manner,
— Be able to successfully undertake complex design projects that include the relevant positions,
— Be able to combine high personal responsibility as well as critical, reflective and interdisciplinary thinking, a strategic approach and action that leads to an individual design stance,
— Be able to occupy leading roles in practice or higher education.

Programme Structure

Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Interaction Design must earn at least 90 credits. Students must complete modules from the following areas in accordance with the rules set out below:	
Thesis Development	min. 38 Credits from C-Modules
Practice	min. 17 Credits from C-Modules
Theory	min. 9 Credits from C-Modules
Interdisciplinary Theory & Practice	min. 12 Credits, of which 10 Credits from C-Modules and 2 Credits from CE-Modules
Graduation	min. 14 Credits from C-Modules

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DPR MDE

Master of Arts in Design
Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations

13 December 2023

Major in Knowledge Visualization

Level of Study: Master

Credits: Major (90 Credits)

Qualification: «Master of Arts ZHdK in Design with a Major in Knowledge Visualization»

Entry-Level Competencies
Newly admitted students will possess:
— Basic knowledge and skills in knowledge visualization, scientific illustration, science communication and/or image-based research processes in design-related scientific disciplines,
— Epistemological interest in specific research and development questions in the field of knowledge visualization, the visual communication of knowledge and/or image-based scientific research,
— Basic image design and image-generating skills in the field of knowledge visualization and visual communication, as well as an interest in interdisciplinary collaboration with scientific research partners.

Programme Outcomes
Graduates will:
— Know scientific working methods and be able to critically reflect on and apply these methods to specific projects,
— Know the communication and knowledge processes of the sciences and be able to take a leading role in the conception and production of scientific images and visualizations,
— Know the most important theories, models, state-of-the-art and best-practice projects in the field of knowledge visualization and visual knowledge and science communication (science to science, scientainment, epistemic visualization),
— Be able to investigate research questions about knowledge visualization using design methods in collaboration with experts, as well as visually process the results and findings and translate these into innovative solution concepts,
— Know the conditions, application possibilities and design aspects of scientific imaging and be able to integrate these independently into knowledge visualization processes,
— Know the requirements for interdisciplinary cooperation with scientists and be able to actively contribute their visual literacy to knowledge visualization (Scientific Visual Literacy), both within the sciences (Science to Science) and beyond, i.e. to transfer knowledge to the wider public (Scientainment / Public Understanding of Science),
— Be able to gain a higher professional qualification based on their individual specialisation and expertise and to independently use their skills to set new, forward-thinking trends in the discipline of visual knowledge transfer.

Programme Structure

Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Knowledge Visualization must earn at least 90 credits. Students must complete modules from the following areas in accordance with the rules set out below:	
Thesis Development	min. 38 Credits from C-Modules
Practice	min. 17 Credits from C-Modules
Theory	min. 9 Credits from C-Modules
Interdisciplinary Theory & Practice	min. 12 Credits, of which 10 Credits from C-Modules and 2 Credits from CE-Modules
Graduation	min. 14 Credits from C-Modules

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DPR MDE

Master of Arts in Design
Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations

13 December 2023

Major in Trends & Identity

Level of Study: Master

Credits: Major (90 Credits)

Qualification: «Master of Arts ZHdK in Design with a Major in Trends & Identity»

Entry-Level Competencies
Newly admitted students will possess:
— A willingness to creatively combine their qualified scientific and design background with sound theoretical knowledge in the fields of design ethnography, design research, trends research and futures research,
— Highly developed skills in the fields of design, research and analysis and an independent understanding of design,
— The ability for conceptual, visionary and strategic (lateral) thinking and a willingness to reflect critically and in a future-oriented manner on design in larger cultural and social contexts,
— An innovative and experimental approach to dealing with existing knowledge and the will to transfer future knowledge into original design projects,
— The desire to help shape society by guiding enterprises and organisations towards sustainable and responsible design, strategy, change and innovation processes.

Programme Outcomes
Graduates will be able to:
— Debate desirable and undesirable futures by systematically exploring, analysing and communicating social and technological developments as well as weak signals of change,
— Recognise traditional structures in enterprise and science in terms of their different interests and logics of action by combining research-related, creative and strategic knowledge, to critically question them and to recognise, critically question and disrupt traditional structures in business and science, including their different interests and logics of action, by combining research-related, creative and strategic knowledge,
— Shape design, strategy, change and innovation processes and conduct futures and trend workshops, as well as initiate, conceptualise, implement and sustainably manage complex inter- and transdisciplinary (research) projects,
— Apply their hard and soft skills in empirical social, consumer, trends and futures research to disciplines such as politics, business and science in a future-oriented manner by employing applied and speculative design methods,
— Apply their keen sense for the designability of the future in larger cultural and social contexts through well-grounded trends knowledge and target group-oriented communication in a convincing and practice-oriented manner,
— Apply digital tools, creative, technical and conceptual skills as well as strategic and organisational abilities flexibly and purposefully as required by research, design or conceptualisation assignments,
— Develop and implement experimental and visionary design concepts in line with strategic visions and economic framework conditions, both independently and in inter- and transdisciplinary teams, as well as implement such concepts on the market,
— Take responsibility in (creative) industry and science by innovating the status quo and by implementing change management processes focused on human life, public welfare and the environment.

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DPR MDE

Programme Structure

Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Trends & Identity must earn at least 90 credits. Students must complete modules from the following areas in accordance with the rules set out below:	
Thesis Development	min. 38 Credits from C-Modules
Practice	min. 17 Credits from C-Modules
Theory	min. 9 Credits from C-Modules
Interdisciplinary Theory & Practice	min. 12 Credits, of which 10 Credits from C-Modules and 2 Credits from CE-Modules
Graduation	min. 14 Credits from C-Modules

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DPR MDE

Master of Arts in Design
Annex to the Degree Programme Regulations

13 December 2023

Major in Visual Communication

Level of Study: Master

Credits: Major (90 Credits)

Qualification: «Master of Arts ZHdK in Design with a Major in Visual Communication»

Entry-Level Competencies
Newly admitted students will possess:
— Highly developed conceptual and design skills in the field of visual communication,
— Interest in design issues and/or questions relating to design as a discipline,
— Interest in research-oriented and exploratory working methods,
— Openness, independence and initiative,
— Curiosity about and commitment to societal developments.

Programme Outcomes
Graduates will be able to:
— Analyse complex design question and communicate research results,
— Work on relevant questions of visual communication in a research-oriented manner and arrive at new findings and insights,
— Purposefully use a diverse aesthetic and methodological repertoire to produce application-oriented or experimental results in a well-aimed manner,
— Successfully undertake complex design projects by incorporating the relevant positions,
— Develop relevant contributions to visual communication discourses,
— Develop an independent design stance by combining high personal responsibility, critical, reflective and interdisciplinary thinking as well as strategic approaches and actions,
— Utilise the knowledge and skills developed on the programme in a leading role in professional practice, higher education or research projects.

Programme Structure

Students who wish to graduate with an MA Major in Visual Communication must earn at least 90 credits. Students must complete modules from the following areas in accordance with the rules set out below:	
Thesis Development	min. 38 Credits from C-Modules
Practice	min. 17 Credits from C-Modules
Theory	min. 9 Credits from C-Modules
Interdisciplinary Theory & Practice	min. 12 Credits, of which 10 Credits from C-Modules and 2 Credits from CE-Modules
Graduation	min. 14 Credits from C-Modules

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