

Request for Graduate Degree Name Change

Institution: **Iowa State University**

Departments Involved: **Graphic Design**

CIP Discipline Specialty Title: **Graphic Design**

CIP Discipline Specialty Number: **500409**

Level: **Graduate**

Title of New Program: **Master of Arts in Experiential Graphic Design**

Degree Abbreviation: **MA, Major Experiential Graphic Design (XGD)**

Approximate Date to Establish Degree
August 2019

Contact Person

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1. Provide a brief description of the current department/program.

The Graphic Design Department at Iowa State University offers both Masters and Bachelors degrees. The professional Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Graphic Design is a four-year degree, with an enrollment of 226. The BFA provides the foundation for a career in the visual communication profession and prepares students for immediate entry into design practice as well as continued personal and creative growth.

At the Master's level the department offers 3 degrees: a Masters of Arts degree in Graphic Design (MAGD) and Masters of Arts degree in Graphic Design with a Specialization in Environmental Graphic Design (MAGD with specialization), and a Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (MFA). The MA differs from the MFA in that it focuses on creating a smaller body of professionally oriented work, and does not dig as deeply into research and creative scholarship. The MFA is a more in-depth research degree and is considered a terminal degree, for those interested in future university-level teaching. Total graduate student enrollment is 23.

Current Graphic Design Graduate Degrees and Majors
Masters of Arts in Graphic Design (MAGD)
Masters of Arts in Graphic Design with a Specialization in Environmental Graphic Design (MAGD)
Masters of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (MFA)

At this time, the department proposes to eliminate the specialization and change the name of the Major MAGD from a “Master of Arts in Graphic Design” to a “Master of Arts in Experiential Graphic Design (MAXGD)”

Proposed Graphic Design Graduate Degrees and Majors After
Masters of Arts in Experiential Graphic Design (MAXGD)
Masters of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (MFA)

Like the existing Master of Arts in Graphic Design (MAGD), the renamed MAXGD will be a first professional degree for those seeking a degree in graphic design with little or no previous experience in the area. The degree includes seminar courses in graphic design with a graphic design studio concentration, and supplementary courses in theory. This 30-credit degree, as before, focuses on preparing students for visual communication and provides a comprehensive exposure to all aspects of user experience, including but not exclusive to wayfinding, exhibition design, interaction, information design, and placemaking. The requested

name change will better focus on the growing user experience aspect of the profession (see item 2 below).

Students may also use the degree as a complement to a bachelor's degree in graphic design or another design field to enhance their skills and qualifications for employment. It can also be used by those students with an undergraduate degree in a graphic design area who would like to add an additional graduate level study to their coursework prior to entering the profession.

2. Describe reasons (justification) for the proposed changes. Include information about the value of the changes to the department, program, discipline, college, and/or the university.

The primary reason for the proposed Major name change is to align more clearly with best practices in the discipline and provide a degree that best fits the increasing need for professionals with expertise in Experiential Graphic Design.

Within the field of graphic design, the term Environmental Graphic Design is now frequently replaced by the more expansive term Experiential Graphic Design. Whereas Environmental Graphic Design described the application of visual communication in the built environment, it was limited to physical artifacts such as signs and exhibit stands, etc. With digital media now being integrated into both commercial and informational environments, the boundaries that once existed around Environmental Graphic Design are no longer relevant. Today, according to the Society for Experiential Graphic Design (SEGD), "the scope of EGD work has expanded greatly over the past decade, now encompassing ever-more complex projects and integrating new digital technologies. Thanks to the advent of these technologies and the Internet, designers can add layers of content and enhanced information to spaces, connecting people with the specific location and its history and ambience as well as creating a sense of place and helping them find their way. In this new era, both are possible and more often than not, both are demanded by clients."

This evolution of the discipline has caused the Society of Environmental Graphic Design to change its name in 2013 to the Society for Experiential Graphic Design. As the only professional design association devoted specifically to these endeavors, SEG D has confirmed with its name change the significance of the broadening demands that are placed on young designers today. Their board states the need to "change the description of what we do to express the much-expanded scope of work that EGD professionals" [http://:segd.org:beginning-of-new-era-forsegd](http://segd.org:beginning-of-new-era-forsegd)

The Society for Experiential Graphic Design describes that practitioners of the discipline "...set the standards for wayfinding transportation centers, such as signage, for airports, railway and subway stations, hospitals, museums and on city streets and highways. Learning and immersive environments such as museum exhibitions, and public, civic and landscape place-making programs have benefited from the multi-disciplinary talents of designers to shape experiences that orient, inform, educate and delight users and visitors."

In recent years, we have seen an increasing interest in the environmental specialization and experiential aspect of graphic design in our MA students. Thus, eliminating the specialization and changing the Majors' name from the MA in Graphic Design (with or without a specialization in Environmental Design) to the MA in Experiential Graphic Design will reflect the changes occurring in the profession, and will help set us apart from all other Graphic Design degrees across the country since no one else uses this recently popularized title.

3. What will be the effect of the proposed change on current students?

There would be a positive benefit to current students. By removing the "specialization in environmental design" term, we overcome any perception by potential employers that it is a weak or watered down degree; this may also engender greater confidence among prospective students.

In addition, there are currently no other MA degree Majors anywhere using the term Experiential Graphic Design. For this reason, the proposed name change gives our MA students a more unique and focused degree title, making it easier to recruit students and easier for alumni to define their unique point of difference. We do not anticipate disruption for the students since their degree of study will not change in focus.

4. If this is a program/department name change, describe the proposed name is consistent with the mission of the college and university.

The name change would more clearly reflect the mission of both the department and the college. In addition, by more accurately identifying our department as forward-thinking, the proposed name is more consistent with the mission.

Furthermore, the university's vision statement says that Iowa State University will 'lead the world in advancing the land-grant ideals of putting science, technology, and human creativity to work.' By referencing the most recent developments toward an integration of technology and graphic design, our proposed name change more clearly describes how we are aligned with this vision.

The proposed change is also consistent with the Strategic Plan, specifically subgoal 1.5, which is to 'grow the impact and scope of our graduate programs.' With a more accurate and up-to-date degree name, we can more effectively find collaborators, clients, and new ways to impact the state and the world through graphic design.

5. Will the proposed change be consistent with other programs at the university or other universities in the state? If this is a program/department name change, identify other institutions with the same or similar name.

There are no similar degrees in the state in terms of curricular objectives or naming. The University of Northern Iowa has an undergraduate degree in graphic design, but does not have a graduate degree in this subject area. The University of Iowa has similar undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees within the School of Art & Art History. The Media, Social Practice, and Design area offers a BFA, an MA and an MFA in Graphic Design, Intermedia, and Photography. Their Graphic Design graduate curriculum focuses on design thinking, design research, and social practice. The University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Graphic Design Department, as well as having an MFA in Graphic Design, has a Master of Arts in Graphic Design, with two different tracks focused upon research.

6. Is the proposed change consistent with association/accreditation requirements? Have accreditation requirements been addressed?

The ISU Graphic Design department degrees are all currently accredited by NASAD (National Association of Schools of Art and Design). This currently includes the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Master of Arts (MA) degree (with or without the specialization in Environmental Graphic Design) and a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Graphic Design. **This change will not affect accreditation.** The Graphic Design department (along with 3 other departments in the college) will be reviewed again in 2018.

- 7. Describe program configuration changes that will result from the proposed program change, e.g., change in number of credit hours required, etc.**

The major change is that the name of the Major will reflect changes within the field of graphic design. Otherwise, the current MA reflects the theoretical and disciplinary outcomes reflected in the new name.

- 8. What costs will be incurred by the proposed program change? Identify new resources that will be needed in connection with the proposed program change, e.g., facilities, faculty, funds, etc. How will the proposed program change be administered? Provide a three-year analysis of costs resulting from the proposed program change.**

There are no costs associated with this name change. The degree will remain substantially the same and will utilize existing classes (see Appendix A)

No new faculty will be required. The department currently consists of 14 faculty: (1 Chair, 1 Full Professor, 8 Associate Professors, 1 Senior Lecturer, and 3 Lecturers).

Paul Bruski will remain DoGE for this major, Meredith Foley and Stephanie Schoeller will remain support staff.

- 9. Is this intended to be a temporary or permanent change? If temporary, for how long?**

This would be a permanent Major name change.

- 10. What are the workforce needs in the state for the proposed program change? Be as specific as possible and include sources of data.**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), graphic design employment from 2012-2022 is expected to grow by 7% based on upon typical entry-level education, a Bachelor's Degree. Students with Master's may expect greater pay or may enter employment at levels near "Art Director" and employment at this level from 2012-2022 is expected to grow by 3%. In both cases, the BLS cites the need for those educated and

skilled in new digital media (vs. traditional print media) with growth in this area expected to be 35% over the same time period.

11. Provide any other information that might be helpful to the Board of Regents in considering this request.

We have consulted the Department of Art at the University of Northern Iowa, and the School of Art & Art History's "Media, Social Practice, and Design Area" at the University of Iowa, both of which are in agreement with this Major name change (see attached letters in Appendix B).