

**Indiana University
Herron School of Art and Design**

**MFA in Visual Communication focusing on Design Thinking + Design Leadership
60 credit hours**

FAQ

APPLICATION Q+A

STUDENT Q+A

SCHOOL / PROGRAM / COMMUNITY Q+A

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APPLICATION Q+A

When is the deadline for application?

To receive priority consideration, a set of complete application materials must be submitted and received at Herron on or before February 1. Applicants who submit materials for the priority deadline will receive admission notification by March 1.

To be considered for the final application deadline, a set of complete application materials must be submitted and received at Herron on or before April 15. Final deadline applicants will be notified of the decision of the Admissions Committee by May 15.

Do all materials need to arrive at IUPUI by the deadline?

Yes. All application materials and supporting documents must be received by Herron's Student Services Offices on or before the appropriate application deadline. Be sure to give your recommenders plenty of advance notice.

Do you allow fall and spring admissions for the MFA program in Visual Communication?

Students pursuing the MFA degree in Visual Communication enter the program in the fall semester only.

Do I need to apply on-line?

Yes, the graduate application is only available on-line. Access the online application from the Herron website. Alternatively, the online application is directly accessed at <https://app.applyyourself.com/?id=iu-ina>

Do I need to submit transcripts?

Yes. Students applying to the MFA degree in Visual Communication must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Please submit all transcripts that document your prior education. The mailing address for transcripts is:

Graduate Admissions, c/o Student Services Office
Indiana University Herron School of Art and Design
735 West New York Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202-5944

Do I need to write an application letter or essay?

Yes. Students applying to the MFA degree in Visual Communication Design are required to submit an application statement. The online application system allows you to upload a 750 word statement. Please describe why you have decided to pursue an MFA degree and why you have decided to pursue an MFA in Visual Communication at Indiana University Herron School of Art and Design, IUPUI. Describe how your professional and personal goals are aligned with the educational goals of Herron's graduate program in Visual Communication. Please demonstrate that you are aware that all MFA programs are not directed with the same goals and objectives.

When thinking about your goals, consider this advice from the admission website of Loyola College: "As for your goals and ambitions, you should try to be as specific as possible. When candidates are asked: why do you want to go to graduate school or what are you interested in doing in this program? A common reply is "I just want to learn—I'm open minded—I want to study a bit of everything—and then I'll decide on my career."

This can be taken to mean that you don't know why you want to go to graduate school and that you have no idea what you are interested in studying. You should try to be more specific, while at the same time showing openness to learning new things."

Apply to schools that fit with your interests. Do your homework. Decide what you want to study based on your career and personal goals. Then find the best schools that will help you meet your goals. Some grad programs in design are research-oriented, requiring a written master's thesis in order to graduate. Others focus on individual creative expressions and the arts. Still others are business-oriented with a focus on professional practice. Some emphasize solitary exploration while others pursue collaborative inquiry.

Your grad school success depends upon identifying the program where you can find harmony between your goals and the objectives of the program & institution.

APPLICATION Q+A

Do I need to submit a portfolio?

Yes. Students applying to the MFA degree in Visual Communication Design are required to submit a portfolio. The nature of your portfolio depends on the nature of your experiences. If you are a recent graduate from an undergraduate program in design, your portfolio will most likely represent the best of your undergraduate studio experiences. If you have been working professionally in a professional field of design, your portfolio will most likely represent client work. In either case, focus as much communication as possible on showing your processes for designing. Do not create a portfolio that contains only designed products. Your portfolio should demonstrate how you think and how you make. Include design “briefs” that define problem / opportunity statements, communication objectives, as well as the audience and context for each project so that your work can be evaluated meaningfully.

If your academic or professional experience is not in design, please submit 3 to 5 professional projects that reflect your academic and past professional interests. Include one-page descriptions of each project, clearly articulating the importance and results of the projects.

Collaborative work should be identified as such and your role in the project defined.

You may submit a portfolio that contains physical artifacts, digital files or a combination of both. Approach the portfolio as a design project. Consider what projects are included in the portfolio but also consider how the entire body of work is constructed. Use these design criteria to make decisions when creating your portfolio:

1. The portfolio should represent your abilities as a design thinker and design maker.
2. The portfolio should represent your abilities as an information organizer and communication designer.
3. The portfolio should represent your abilities to structure communications appropriately for an audience and context.

If you are submitting digital files, please conform to these technical specifications:

Computer generated pieces may be submitted on CD-ROM or DVD (compatible with Macintosh). Applicants may submit digital portfolios created in Adobe Acrobat, PowerPoint, Director, Flash or HTML. Digital portfolios should be checked to assure that links work properly and all necessary files are included. Applicants are asked to indicate whether special instructions are necessary for the viewing of digital portfolios. An inventory sheet must be attached, including the applicant’s name, title of the piece, medium or programs used, dimensions and date of completion.

Use basic common sense when designing and packaging your portfolio. Many people will handle all of your materials during the entire application process. Design your portfolio so that it will withstand being handled by admissions reviewers as well as postal service employees. Your portfolio packaging doesn’t need to be tricky to be impressive. Consider that you can make an effective, elegant presentation in a three-ring binder.

Please submit no portfolio that measures larger than 24” x 36” x 6”.

IMPORTANT: Your portfolio will be returned **ONLY** if you include return postage and return packaging. Do not include anything in your portfolio that is irreplaceable if lost or damaged. Make sure you remember to include on all of the materials your name, address, and the program to which you are applying.

Portfolios should be sent to:

Graduate Admissions, c/o Student Services Office
Indiana University Herron School of Art and Design
735 West New York Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202-5944

APPLICATION Q+A

Do I need to provide letters of reference?

Yes. Students applying to the MFA degree in Visual Communication Design must provide contact information so that we may solicit two letters of reference that address aspects of your academic or professional performance, knowledge, skills and abilities.

When completing your online application, provide contact information (including names and email addresses) of two people who will write your letters of professional recommendation. The online application system will then send a request to your references asking for their letters of recommendation.

If you have been out of school for some time, letters from employers or clients attesting to your professional skills are desirable. It is better to send letters from employers, clients and coworkers who have recently observed your most valuable skills than professors who may not remember you from 3 or more years ago.

Do I need to take the GRE?

Yes. Students applying to the MFA degree in Visual Communication Design must submit GRE scores for admission. For more information on the GRE, consult <http://www.ets.org>.

Take the test early so that your scores are available by the admission deadline. Many countries offer the GRE (or TOEFL) only in specific months. Planning can thus be very important.

Ensure that original scores from ETS are sent directly to the program. The IUPUI reporting code for GRE, GMAT and TOEFL is 1325.

When should I take the GRE?

GRE scores must be received by the Herron Student Services Office on or before the deadline for the program to which you are applying. Please allow sufficient time for scores to reach us. Results of the computer-based examinations are mailed to IUPUI approximately 10-15 days after testing; results of paper-based examinations take a minimum of eight weeks to reach IUPUI.

May I submit GMAT scores instead?

Yes, Herron will accept GMAT scores in lieu of the GRE. No other substitutions are permissible. Ensure that original scores from ETS are sent directly to the program. The IUPUI reporting code for GRE, GMAT and TOEFL is 1325.

May I submit GRE or GMAT scores for a test that I took in a prior year?

Yes. GRE or GMAT scores must be no older than four years. Ensure that original scores from ETS are sent directly to the program. The IUPUI reporting code for GRE and GMAT is 1325.

Do I need to take the TOEFL test?

TOEFL scores are required for international students unless the applicant's undergraduate degree is from a university in an English-speaking country. Applicants must request that an official copy of their test results be sent directly to IUPUI by the Educational Testing Service. Ensure that original scores from ETS are sent directly to the program. The IUPUI reporting code for GRE, GMAT and TOEFL is 1325.

May I submit TOEFL scores for a test that I took in a prior year?

Yes. TOEFL scores must be no older than two years. Ensure that original scores from ETS are sent directly to the program. The IUPUI reporting code for TOEFL is 1325.

Do I need to submit a current resume?

Yes. Please include a current professional resume in your application. Include this document in the package with your transcripts and portfolio.

When will I receive an admission decision about my application?

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STUDENT Q+A

I will complete my undergraduate degree in May. May I apply for this coming fall?

Yes. Students entering the MFA degree program in Visual Communication must hold an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution of higher education. You may apply while your undergraduate degree in process. Final admission requires a completed baccalaureate degree.

I don't have a background in design or art—may I still apply?

Yes. Students entering the MFA degree program in Visual Communication are not required to have a background in design or art. The Visual Communication graduate program at Herron encourages cross-disciplinary research approaches and experiences. However, applicants who do not have previous professional design education or experience may be required to complete Foundational Pre-Graduate studies in design before entering the MFA degree program.

Do I need to take some undergraduate courses prior to beginning the MFA program if my undergraduate degree is not in art or design?

Students applying for the MFA degree program in Visual Communication who do not have previous design education or professional experience may be required to complete Foundational Pre-Graduate studies in Design before entering the MFA degree program. Foundational Pre-Graduate courses in design are offered for graduate credit but do not apply to the MFA degree requirements. One or two semesters of Foundational Pre-Graduate studies may be required before full admission into the MFA program in Visual Communication. Decisions regarding admission into the Foundational Pre-Graduate program are made on an individual basis.

I'm currently enrolled in another graduate school.

May I transfer credits?

No. The Herron Visual Communication graduate program does not accept any transfer credits for work completed at another institution.

May I attend the program part time?

No. Students pursuing the MFA degree in Visual Communication must complete a coordinated curriculum of 15 credit hours each semester. Four semesters of study are sequenced chronologically. The MFA oral and written thesis reviews must be successfully completed within 3 years of the date of entry into the degree program.

May I keep my current job while in the program?

While it may be possible to work while conducting MFA graduate studies in Visual Communication, this degree is designed as a full time program. The majority of courses are scheduled during a 9:00 am to 5:00 p.m. workweek. This degree program is intensive and requires a significant amount of work outside of classroom instruction. All studio based research must be conducted “in residence” on site at Herron School of Art and Design.

Is health insurance available for graduate students?

Students have the option of purchasing student health insurance through the university. For more information go to

<http://www.iupui.edu/~gradoff/health.html>

or email

studenhc@indiana.edu

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SCHOOL / PROGRAM / COMMUNITY Q+A

What degree is awarded upon completion of the graduate program in Visual Communication?

Students who successfully complete the graduate program in visual communication at Herron School of Art and Design are awarded the degree of Master of Fine Art in Visual Communication by Indiana University.

What are the program characteristics of the Department of Visual Communication at Herron?

The Department of Visual Communication is one of 2 departments at Herron School of Art and Design, a professional school established in 1902. Eight faculty members teach in the Department of Visual Communication on a full-time basis.

What are the school characteristics of Herron School of Art and Design?

On June 3, 2005 Herron celebrated the grand opening of its new home, Sidney and Lois Eskenazi Hall, on the campus of IUPUI. This 169,000 square foot facility provides state of the art learning environments to more than 800 Herron students. The school is positioned on the west flank of Military Park and serves as a cultural link for downtown and IUPUI. The Herron Galleries and sculpture gardens enhance the attractions of White River State Park, and neighbor other cultural destinations such as the Indiana Historical Society, Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indiana State Museum, the Indianapolis Zoo and White River Gardens.

For more information see <http://www.herron.iupui.edu>

What are the campus characteristics of IUPUI?

Indiana University Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI), the third largest university campus in Indiana, is located in the heart of a metropolitan area of 1.7 million people and is home to a vital and growing museum and cultural community. At IUPUI, over 29,000 students are served by the largest number of degree programs in the state. IUPUI is composed of 18 schools including Business, Liberal Arts, Science, Education, Informatics, Law, Medicine, Library Science, Social Work, and Herron School of Art and Design. Although the campus is less than thirty years old, IUPUI has experienced rapid growth and represents a dynamic campus where change, innovation, and community collaboration are vital parts of everyday life. The campus is well on its way to becoming a model for urban higher education for the twenty-first century, committed to serving the needs of both non-traditional and traditional students.

For more information about IUPUI, visit

May I arrange to meet with someone for a tour and more information?

Faculty and staff encourage all prospective students to visit Herron if possible. Such visits enable prospective students to determine if Herron's curriculum, atmosphere, and academic rigor match their educational/professional needs. Please email the admissions office at

herrart@iupui.edu

or call 1-317-278-9400 for an appointment or more information.

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What cultural experiences are available in Indianapolis?

Indianapolis is known as the Crossroads of America as more interstate highways bisect the city and state than any other city in the country. The IUPUI campus is adjacent to many of Indiana's major cultural institutions: the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Indiana Repertory Theater, and the Indiana Historical Society. Indianapolis is home to many major museums including Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian and Western Art, Indiana State Museum and Indianapolis Museum of Art, the seventh largest art museum in the country. For more information about Indianapolis visit these websites:

<http://www.iupui.edu/community/indy/>

<http://www.indy.org/>

<http://www.indydt.com>

<http://www.culturalindy.org/>

<http://www.nuvo.net/>

<http://www.indianapolismonthly.com/toc.html>

Where can I find information and advice about moving to Indianapolis?

IUPUI offers a limited number of graduate student townhouses.

For more information visit

http://life.iupui.edu/housing/grad_housing.asp

Indianapolis offers a wide variety of neighborhoods from a thriving downtown area, historical Irvington to growing suburbs. The following websites offer more detailed information regarding Indianapolis neighborhoods, rental properties and realtors:

<http://www.indy.com/>

<http://indianapolis.apartments.com/>

http://www.realtor.com/Regional_Real_Estate/indianapolis.html

Consult Indianapolis Downtown Inc. for a map of downtown Indianapolis

<http://www.indydt.com/dtneighborhoodmap.html>

Canal Square Apartments and Canal Overlook Apartments are located across the street from Herron School of Art and Design:

<http://www.canalsquareapartments.com/>

Canal Overlook Apartments are adjacent to the IUPUI campus

<http://canaloverlookapartments.com/>

Lockfield Gardens and Gardens of Canal Court are adjacent to the IUPUI campus

<http://www.sextonproperties.com/index/index.html>

For quality ratings on Indianapolis apartments, consult these resources

<http://www.apartmentratings.com/rate/IN-Indianapolis.html>

<http://www.thinwallstalk.com/category.jspa?categoryID=88>

FINANCIAL Q+A

What is the tuition for the MFA program?

Tuition for residents of Indiana is based on the rate of \$470 per credit hour.

Tuition for non-residents of Indiana is based on the rate of \$820 per credit hour.

The MFA degree in Visual Communication requires all students to complete 60 credit hours of required study at IUPUI.

What additional fees are charged by IUPUI?

Additional fees for graduate education are listed on the “Paying for College” section of the IUPUI website.

<http://www.iupui.edu/paying/>

Is financial aid available for graduate students?

Yes. All graduate students at Herron are evaluated for various kinds of financial aid including Teaching Assistantships and Herron Graduate Student Scholarships. You do not need to apply for Teaching Assistantships and/or Herron Graduate Student Scholarships. Your completed application will be used to determine these merit-based forms of financial aid. If you do not wish to be considered for these forms of financial aid, please clearly indicate this choice in your statement of intent.

Are other sources of financial aid available for graduate students?

Yes. There are many sources of financial aid including loans available for graduate students. Begin your research by reading information on the “Paying for College” section of the IUPUI website.

<http://www.iupui.edu/paying/>