

## What Can I Do With MY A&D Degree?



A&D's unique curriculum recognizes that in the rapidly changing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century you have multiple interests and will want to develop multiple talents. We also recognize that there are some basic things every creative person should know and therefore we require certain core studios (courses like drawing, digital, TMP courses in 2-D, 3-D and 4-D media and of course CFC studios) to help you conceive and develop your creative ideas.

A&D offers a variety of studios at more advanced levels. You will choose among them for studio courses that help you explore and develop your skills and talents. While all of this sounds good, the question remains, what can I do with *my A&D degree*? And it is *your degree* because *you* are designing it.

The short answer is that you can do almost anything you want.... but not because you have a BFA or a BA. A BFA or a BA from A&D is a piece of paper attesting to the fact that you completed the requisite number of studio credits and the requisite number of non-studio credits for a total of 128 credits with a C average. What you do with *your degree* is up to you, and what you do with your creativity while at A&D.

Your studio courses will help you develop your skills, interests and creativity. Part time jobs, internships, freelance work and other experiential learning like studying abroad will help you develop your resume, portfolio and career network. No one school or major can teach you everything you need to know to prepare for your first job out of college, let alone what you do for the rest of your life. But the A&D approach reinforces your ability to make choices and learn from those choices while encouraging you to figure out how to get what you want. These are skills you will use forever.

### Getting Started

Allow your first semesters at A&D for exploration. You may think you want to go into advertising, only to find that you love fibers. Or, you may think you cannot make a living as a painter and focus on something about which you have no passion. As you explore various media, don't neglect opportunities outside of classes to explore. These opportunities may come in the form of freelance work, calls for art/design, part time jobs, internships etc. The Career Development Coordinator posts new opportunities on a regular basis at <http://art-design.umich.edu/career>

Once you have identified career fields in which you have an interest, do some research. Read about the field and conduct informational interviews. An informational interview is just what it sounds like: interviewing someone for information. Ask what ever you like!

Sample questions might be:

How long have you been doing this?

What made you interested in doing this?

What is your background?

What do you know now that you wish you had known before you started?

What do you look for when you hire someone?

What is the best advice you can give someone like me?

Do you take on interns?

Get some experience in the field. This may take the shape of a part time job, freelance work or an internship. An internship not only gives you real world experience in your fields of interest, but also allows you to try something on for size. Before interning, you may wish to shadow someone for a day and get a feel for the work, the environment, the people, etc.

A&D has a handout out on internships, and internship opportunities are posted to the A&D web site and the Career Center Connector.

### **The Role of Academic Courses**

Learning can be a means and an end. A&D requires certain academic credits that on the surface may not seem related to your career choice. A liberal arts education helps you learn to learn, and again, this will come in handy for the rest of your life. On the other hand, some academic courses may be very related to your career path.

At a recent presentation by five top advertising companies the question was asked, “What do you look for when hiring?” The answer was, not surprisingly, a strong portfolio, internship or other experiential learning, and a course in marketing. Work with advisors to find the courses that fit your path. Or, look to classes at the Center for Entrepreneurship: <http://cfe.umich.edu/> or the Multidiscipline Design Minor <http://www.engin.umich.edu/minors/multidisciplinarydesign> , or any other minor at the University of Michigan that fits your individual goals.

Certain courses will also be helpful if you wish to be a freelance artist or designer since you will need to be able to market yourself, your talent, and your work. Other useful courses along these lines include Social Psychology (PSYCH 280), Visual and Material Culture (AMCULT 231) and several courses offered through the PAT program: <http://www.music.umich.edu/departments/pat/index.php>

Remember, courses may have pre-requisites so meet with your academic advisor to plan accordingly.

*Interested in art therapy?* Plan to take as many psychology courses as you can since most masters programs require upwards of 15 credits in psychology.

*How about work in film, video, animation?* In addition to your studio courses, take a look at what Screen Arts and Culture (SAC) is offering.

*Work in museums?* Check out History of Art and Museum Studies since these courses will come in handy.

These are just a few examples of how non-studio and studio courses come together to help prepare you for your first career after graduation (and beyond).

A&D's programs allows you to individually craft a major toward your goals, but the responsibility to connect the dots is yours. Work with your Academic Advisor when it comes time to register to make sure that not only are you taking courses you need, but courses that interest you and augment your creative development.

### **Student Organizations**

A&D has three main student organizations as well as smaller (and usually less formalized) groups.

Society for Art Students (SAS) is the umbrella organization for students at A&D. Want to help shape the future of the school? Join SAS! Get to know your fellow students. Plan events. SAS is the voice of the students at A&D. Find out more by emailing [sasad@umich.edu](mailto:sasad@umich.edu)

American Institute of Graphic Artists (AIGA) has a student chapter at A&D. If you are interested in graphic, media, web design, etc. then this is the organization for you. Find out more about AIGA on line at [www.aiga.org](http://www.aiga.org)

Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA) has a student chapter at A&D. If you are interested in product, manufacturing, shoe design, etc. then this is the organization for you. Find out more about IDSA on line at [www.idsa.org](http://www.idsa.org)

American Advertising Federation (AAF) has a student chapter at U of M. The organization is made up of students from across campus including A&D, LSA and the Business School. In 2007 the U of M team came in second in the national competition for Coca Cola and we have NO ADVERTISING MAJOR.

There are many other student organizations on campus that may be useful in exploring your career interests. For a list of student organizations, please visit the Maize Pages: <http://studentorgs.umich.edu/maize>

By being part of a student group you can further your career development as well as your resume, your portfolio and your career network.

## **Studio Courses Outside of A&D**

Interested in theater? The School of Music, Theater, and Dance offers courses in scenic design, lighting design, costume design, etc. With permission, these courses can count as elective studios in the A&D curriculum. Meet with your Academic Advisor to find out more.

Interested in film and video? The Screen Arts and Culture Department of LSA offers many courses that may count as elective studios. Again, meet with your advisor to find out more.

You are allowed to transfer two studio courses at a more advanced level from another school in the United States. Many students augment their A&D studio work over the summer by taking elective studios in NYC, Chicago, etc. Check with John Luther for transferability of such studios.

When you take studios as part of an International Study program, these studios will most likely transfer to A&D. All A&D students are required to study abroad and employers report that they look very favorably on candidates with such experience. Again, meet with John Luther to check on transferability.

## **What do people with a BFA or a BA do?**

Students who graduated with a degree from A&D in the last few years have gone on to do a lot of things for many organizations, including:

- 212
- ACLU, NYC, Washington Headquarters
- Adams Golf (Plano, TX)
- Admissions (UM)
- Allessee Fellowship
- The Amazing Race (ABC TV)
- American Greetings (China)
- American Greetings (US)
- Artrain Fellowship
- Arts at Michigan
- C Lighting (Atlanta)
- Calty Design
- Campbell Ewald
- CBH Communications (Boston)
- Charles Chang-Lima (NYC)
- Cirque du Soleil
- The Clorox Company
- Conde Nast
- Department of Justice (Washington, DC)
- Design Kitchen
- DishNetwork
- DraftFCB, Chicago and New York
- DreamWorks Animation
- Elizabeth Dow
- Elevate Design (Chicago)
- EnStar Energy
- Environment Michigan
- Freelance artist in clothing design, jewelry design, painting, illustration, web design
- Frog Design (CA)

- Grad School at Harvard, UM Architecture, Cranbrook, Wayne State (art therapy), UM School of Social Work, Eastern Michigan University, etc.
- Haystack Fellowship
- Heidi Weisel
- Heinz Internship (PA)
- Hollywood Sierra Kitchens (CA)
- Ikea (in store design)
- Independent Film Production
- Karikter, San Francisco
- The Katz Watson Group
- Kerosene Creative
- Laran Bronze Casting
- Ledco
- LetsTalk.com
- LSA Marketing and Design
- Luminaire Lighting (FL)
- Marketing for McKinley real estate
- Mars Advertising
- McGraw Hill
- The Michigan Theater
- Mother New York
- MOVE Communications
- MRM Worldwide (NYC)
- Notions Marketing
- The Peace Corps
- Radical Media (Santa Monica)
- Sarkissian Mason
- Selo/Shevel Gallery
- Teaching English in Korea
- Teaching Fellowship (NYC)
- The Golden Touch Group (NYC)
- The North Face (CA)
- UM School of Education (animation design)
- Uproar Communications
- VML (NYC)
- Wall Street On Demand (CO)
- With a Twist Studios
- Xoran Technologies
- Zoe Publishing

Some things you may wish to do will require a Masters degree or some other kind of continuing education or training, while some things can be done with an undergraduate degree alone. As you can see, A&D's curriculum allows for a lot of different opportunities in conjunction with what you gain from experiential learning and networking. Your BFA is designed by *you* for *your* future so take advantage of the resources available not just in A&D but across the University and the world!

**For more information about issues related to career development, contact John Luther, Career Development Coordinator, by stopping at the front desk of the Smucker Wagstaff Academic Programs Center or calling to make an appointment (734) 764-0397**