

# MA SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2026–2027

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## WELCOME

The Master of Arts in Sustainable Design Program Handbook has been developed by the Sustainable Design program for use by graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Sustainable Design (MASD) degree program at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD).

The information found in this handbook is accurate to the best of our knowledge as of the revision date. The information and policies contained in this student handbook are presented as a matter of information only and are not intended to create, nor is the handbook to be construed to constitute, a contract between MCAD and any student. MCAD has the right to alter, amend, modify, deviate from, or otherwise terminate any privileges, provisions, or obligations contained in this handbook at any time if it so chooses, with or without notice to a student. If you have any questions about the contents of this handbook, please contact the MASD program at [sustainable\\_design@mcad.edu](mailto:sustainable_design@mcad.edu).

This handbook is intended for use in conjunction with the [MCAD Student Handbook](#) available under the Student Affairs section on the MCAD Intranet. The MCAD Student Handbook covers many policies, procedures, and services of the college not specifically mentioned here, including issues related to image use copyrights and plagiarism. Please consult the MCAD Student Handbook for more information on these and other important and relevant MCAD policies.

**NOTE:** *Email is the primary form of communication for the MASD program. All students are required to check their mcad.edu email at least once every twenty-four hours (when classes are in session) and respond immediately to all official requests.*



## SECTION 1: MASTER OF ARTS IN SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PROGRAM

MCAD's Master of Arts in Sustainable Design (MASD) degree program is a 30-credit, course-based degree of advanced study offered completely online that culminates with a Capstone project, presentation, and review. The MASD was designed exclusively for busy working professionals and an online platform.

MCAD's MASD program blends theory, practice, and leadership courses into a holistic, hands-on training experience. Throughout this 5-semester program, students will gain in-depth and actionable knowledge and experience. Students will have opportunities to put sustainable design theories into practice, develop fundamental problem-solving skills, explore collaborative innovation techniques and processes, and gain entrepreneurial training, creative leadership, and environmental stewardship experience.

- + Intake occurs twice per year (fall and spring semesters).
- + Courses are offered during the fall and spring semesters (no summer semester).
- + Semesters have 15 weeks.
- + The degree was designed to be completed within 5 semesters and at the pace of two 3-credit courses per semester. Exceptions to any program requirements must be approved by the Director of the MASD program.
- + Of the 30 credits, 24 credits are required and 6 credits are electives.
- + In online courses, 1 hour of credit requires approximately 3 hours of work per week for all activities (i.e. reading, viewing, making, scanning, responding to discussion threads, collaborating, etc.). Therefore, a 3-credit online course requires approximately 9 hours per week to complete the necessary activities.
- + **Each 3-credit course is designed to be completed in 135 hours. Students should expect to spend 9 hours each week *per course* for 15-week semesters.** (Note: More hours may be required per week if a student's first language is not English, if a student has a learning disability, and/or during the culminating capstone project and paper, etc.)
- + Students move through the program by taking building-block courses that culminate in the Graduate Capstone Project course (taken as two 3-credit courses, for 6 credits total),

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where students direct an independent, sustainability-focused project in the field that pertains to their specific personal and professional aspirations.

- + Capstone may be the development of a sustainability-focused product, material, system, service, comprehensive research paper, or detailed business plan. Other options may also be considered with the approval of the Director of the MASD program.

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SUSTAINABLE DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

Students must successfully pass a total of 30 credits (10 courses) to complete the MASD degree, with specific requirements as follows:

**STUDENTS MUST TAKE THE FOUR CORE COURSES:**

**12 CREDITS**

- + SD-6500 | Fundamentals of Sustainable Design (3 credits)
- + SD-6510 | Systems Thinking (3 credits)
- + SD-7901 | Capstone Project Development (3 credits)
- + SD-7902 | Capstone (3 credits)

**STUDENTS MUST TAKE FOUR OF THE FOLLOWING FIVE SPECIALIZATION COURSES:**

**12 CREDITS**

- + SD-7530 | Making the Business Case for Sustainability (3 credits)
- + SD-7620 | The Practice of Sustainable Design (3 credits)
- + SD-7630 | Collaborative Product Design (3 credits)
- + SD-7640 | Design for Climate Justice (3 credits)
- + SD-7010 | Graduate Sustainability Practicum\*\* (3 credits) (*see next p.*)

**STUDENTS MUST TAKE 2 ELECTIVE COURSES:**

**6 CREDITS**

Any 2 courses of the following classes may be taken. Additional options from other departments may be acceptable with the approval of the director of the MASD program. potential electives\*

- + SD-6602 | Inspiring Innovation and Implementation (3 credits)
- + SD-6610 | Biomimetic Design (3 credits)
- + SD-6825 | Leadership in Design & Advocacy (3 credits)
- + SD-6810 | Packaging Sustainability (3 credits)
- + SD-7010 | Graduate Sustainability Practicum\*\* (3 credits) (*see next p.*)

**\*NOTE:** *Elective courses are subject to change. Students may not get to choose which electives they take.*

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**STUDENTS MUST SUCCESSFULLY PASS THE FOLLOWING TWO REVIEWS TO  
COMPLETE THE MASD DEGREE:**

In addition to 30 credits of coursework

- + Mid-program Review
- + Final Capstone Review

**\*\*PRACTICUMS**

Graduate Sustainability Practicums are supervised practical work experiences akin to internships. Students may find practicums a useful part of their graduate study, although it is not a requirement of the program. Three practicum credits may be earned toward a student's *Specialization* or *Elective course* credits. Before beginning a practicum or engaging in work that will count toward their practicum credits, students must register for the 3-credit class Graduate Sustainability Practicum (SD-7010). Practicums require that students document their work hours, for a total of 120 hours over the course of one semester, and make periodic submissions to the Director of the MASD program. The Graduate Sustainability Practicum is a Pass / Fail course.

**PURPOSE OF THE PRACTICUM PROPOSAL**

Practicums are academic learning experiences where students work under the mentorship of an experienced professional, a supervisor, either embedded in a company or organization, or with a MASD instructor when doing independent research. Whether working on site, remotely, or doing an independent research project, students apply their skills to real-world projects while learning about the industry/topic, enhancing their skills, networking, and building their portfolios.

There are two types of practicums that are permitted in the MASD program and both have a requirement of having a sustainability focus: 1) Supervised temporary work position (remote or in person) where student takes on a project for a company or organization, and 2) Supervised research or learning experience with a MASD instructor. Supervisors are expected to provide direction, supervision, and feedback on the student's work and work habits. (Please note, in both cases, supervisors are not compensated for their extra work as a practicum supervisor. Students need to be respectful of the time they are asking of their supervisors, be prepared for meetings, and stay on task.)

**PROCESS OF THE PRACTICUM**

Students register for Graduate Sustainability Practicum during the regular advising period (one semester before practicum work takes place). Students then explore opportunities for practicum work, based on their interest and goals. Many students find (virtual or in-person) practicum placements through personal and professional contacts, the Director of the MASD program, or the MCAD Career Development Office. Some students will decide to conduct an independent research or guided learning experience with a MASD instructor instead of a traditional work placement.



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Once students have decided on a project, they must receive preliminary approval of the practicum placement and project. To do so, students schedule an appointment with the Director of the MASD program before beginning the practicum and craft a ~400 word practicum proposal (proposal guidelines available from MASD director) that provides a detailed overview of the student's goal and objectives for the 120-hour practicum. Students are required to manage their own practicum hours, workload, and relationship with their practicum supervisor. It is the student's responsibility to check in with the supervisor and stay on task. It is recommended that students submit work regularly for feedback from supervisors.

**STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO:**

- + Register for 3-credit class Graduate Sustainability Practicum (SD-7010).
- + Find their own placements/projects with the support of MASD Director and/or Career Development.
- + Submit project proposal for approval to MASD Director.
- + Receive practicum supervisor and MASD Director approval.
- + Document all work hours (for a total of 120 hours) in a time log.
- + Check in regularly with the supervisor. Recommended that students submit work regularly for feedback from supervisors.
- + Complete mid-term and final surveys through the online classroom.
- + Submit a time log through the online classroom.
- + Submit a final report (no more than 5 pgs.) to the online classroom.

## SECTION 2: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

### REGISTRATION AND ADVISING

Each fall and spring semester, students are **required** to schedule an advising meeting via online video chat (e.g. Skype, Google Hangout, etc.) or phone with the MASD academic advisor (who also currently serves as the Director of the MASD program) during the designated advising period determined and announced via email by the Director of the MASD program. (Note: Advising period for fall courses occurs during the spring semester prior. Advising period for spring courses occurs in the fall semester prior.)

**Students must read and submit the MCAD Disclosure and Enrollment Form each semester and prior to registration.** The form is available through their MyMCAD account (<https://my.mcad.edu/>). Students must read through the disclosure agreement, click "I agree" and hit "Submit". A copy of the disclosure will be emailed to student MCAD email addresses. **Students will be unable to register for courses until the MCAD Disclosure and Enrollment Form is submitted.**

After meeting with the MASD academic advisor to discuss course selection and progression in the MASD program, students will register for chosen and approved courses by logging into their MyMCAD account. Once registered, **students must ensure that their new course schedules are correct each semester** by reviewing it on their MyMCAD account.

### PART-TIME STUDENTS

**STUDENTS HAVE A MAXIMUM OF FIVE YEARS TO COMPLETE THE MASD PROGRAM; HOWEVER:**

- + The MASD was designed to be completed within 5 semesters and alteration of MASD timeline may lead to complications with course availability, etc.
- + In order to make changes to approved course registrations (drop/add/withdraw), students must receive approval from the Director of the MASD program, as well as the instructor of the specific course.
- + The official **Drop/Add period ends on the last day of the first week of classes** each semester. Approval to drop or add a course must be obtained by the Director of the MASD program as well as the instructor of the specific course. Contact the Director of the MASD program to process the appropriate paperwork.



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- + In order to register for *less than* 6 credits per semester, students must receive approval from the Director of the MASD program. To begin this process, students must schedule an appointment with the Director of the MASD program.
- + Students should always check with the MCAD Financial Aid Office for specifics related to their situation (refer to Section 14: Support Services).
- + **Students must be taking at least 3 credits per semester to be eligible for financial aid.**

**CITATIONS**

The MASD program requires the usage of the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) for all works cited in courses, assignments, and Capstone work. **All images, claims, quotations, and/or data not originally generated by the student must be properly cited using the CMS citation style guide.**

**CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Registration for an online course presupposes that the student will attend and fully participate in all online activities as detailed in individual courses. **Each student is responsible for meeting all course requirements.** Individual course instructors will detail their specific policies and/or the penalties related to late work submission in their respective syllabi. Note that many course instructors will not accept late work (with the exception of family or medical emergencies). Each student is required to carefully review course syllabi at the beginning of each course and contact individual course instructors with questions.

**Grading Criteria**

|         |                  |         |
|---------|------------------|---------|
| A+ 4.00 | A 4.00 Excellent | A- 3.67 |
| B+ 3.33 | B 3.00 Very Good | B- 2.67 |
| C+ 2.33 | C 2.00 Average   | C- 1.67 |
| D+ 1.33 | D 1.00 Poor      | D- 0.67 |
|         | F 0.00 Failing   |         |

**NOTE:** *A letter grade of C- is the minimum for course credits to count toward the MASD degree. In a pass/fail course, a grade of C- (70%) is the minimum required to pass.*

**PASS/FAIL OPTION**

Students may opt to switch from a letter grade to pass/fail in up to two courses (6 credits). This is in addition to courses that are already pass/fail, including Capstone Project Development (SD-7901) and Capstone (SD-7902) and Practicum. This switch must occur by the date assigned as the last day to withdraw from classes, typically three weeks before the end of the





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semester. Program Director approval is required to switch from a letter grade to a pass/fail. Once a student switches to pass/fail in a course, they may not switch back.

**Notes:** *All courses taken as Pass/Fail, e.g. Graduate Sustainability and Practicum, do NOT count towards GPA as no letter grade is assigned. Only courses taken for letter grades can affect, i.e., raise or lower, the GPA. In a “Pass/Fail” course, the equivalent to a grade of C- (70%) is the minimum required to pass.*

**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Successful completion with a **grade of C- or above is required for all courses applied toward the MA**, and all coursework must be taken for credit. Failure to meet course requirements of a C- grade minimum will be recorded with the representative letter grade, credit hours will not be accumulated, and the student will be placed on academic probation (see below). “Incomplete” and “Withdrew” will be recorded in appropriate instances.

**STUDENTS MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TO GRADUATE FROM THE MASD PROGRAM:**

- + Complete all credit requirements.
- + Earn a minimum grade of C- in all courses applied to the MASD
- + Earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.
- + Complete all missing or incomplete grades.
- + File an Intent to Graduate form (available from the Records Office).
- + Pass Final Capstone.
- + Submit final Capstone project presentation to library (via online library portal) for archival purposes.
- + Meet all financial obligations.
- + Participate in an exit interview with the Financial Aid Office for all loan recipients.
- + Complete the online Exit Survey.



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**ACADEMIC PROBATION**

According to college policy, a semester **GPA of 2.0** (this is equivalent to the letter grade “C”) or lower places an MASD student on academic probation for the subsequent semester.

Being on academic probation may change a student’s eligibility for financial aid. Students should check with the MCAD Financial Aid Office for specifics related to their situation. **If the student’s overall GPA does not become satisfactory (GPA over 2.0) the semester following academic probation, dismissal from the program is automatic.**

**INCOMPLETES**

Reasons for requesting an incomplete grade from MCAD’s records office include personal or family medical emergencies or other extreme events outside of the student’s control. Lack of prior planning is not an adequate reason for requesting an incomplete.

In the event that an incomplete is recorded, the incomplete **must be resolved by the fifth week of the succeeding semester or a permanent standing grade of F will be recorded for the Incomplete course.** Approval to request an Incomplete from the records office must be attained by the Director of the MASD program as well as the instructor of the specific course. Contact the Director of the MASD program to process the appropriate paperwork.

**NOTE:** *Students who are on academic probation may not request Incompletes during their probationary semester.*

**WITHDRAW FROM CLASS**

Students may officially withdraw from a course and receive a “W” notation on their transcript that does not contribute to their semester GPA. The last day to withdraw from classes is typically three weeks before the end of the semester. Program Director approval and signature is required to withdraw from a course.

**WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM**

Students who wish to “drop” more than 50% of their course load after the Drop/Add period has passed, must officially withdraw from the college. The withdrawal period may last for the duration of the current semester or for up to five years.

In order to make a request to withdraw from the program, students are required to schedule an appointment with the Director of the MASD program and must receive approval to withdraw from both the Director of the MASD program and MCAD’s student affairs office, as well as complete a notification of student withdrawal form. (Note: the withdrawal form is available under the Student Affairs section of MCAD’s Intranet. See Section 14: Support Services for more information.) An official letter grade or “W” (for “withdrew”) will appear on a student transcript for



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all credits attempted but not completed. Contact the Director of the MASD program to discuss options and process the appropriate paperwork.

**READMISSION**

Readmission following dismissal may be granted upon recommendation of the Director of the MASD program after a period of at least one semester. A meeting between the student and the Director of the MASD program begins the process of consideration of readmission.

**PROGRESS TO DEGREE**

In addition to evaluations within individual courses and other important academic milestones (see Section 12), there are two required reviews for students that assess and determine a student's status in progress toward the MASD degree:

- + Mid-program Review
- + Final Capstone

**RECEIVING DIPLOMA**

Graduate diplomas are not automatically mailed to MASD graduates, but will be mailed to a graduate's physical address upon written request in the form of an email to the MCAD Record Office.

After all MASD requirements have been completed and commencement period has passed, any MASD graduates that are unable to pick up their diploma in person from the Records office, and who have emailed a current mailing address to [records@mcad.edu](mailto:records@mcad.edu), will be sent their diploma (in the absence of any holds or missing grades) *upon email request by the student*.



## SECTION 3: CAPSTONE PROJECT OVERVIEW

The capstone project and corresponding research document are the final deliverables to the MASD program and an indication of the MASD candidate's development as a sustainability leader as a result of the graduate experience. In order to best prepare MASD students for their capstone work, students will begin their capstone project work as early in the program as possible, from the earliest idea stage (capstone project proposal) to the final stages (capstone project presentation).

### DEFINITIONS

**Capstone Project:** is the “what” of the student's capstone work. All MASD graduate sustainability capstone projects will result in 1) the design of an innovative [new or improved] product, system, or service with a sustainability focus and 2) project design research document that demonstrates not only the outcomes of the project but also the thought process behind the decisions. There is a final capstone project presentation.

**Capstone Project Presentation:** is the vehicle by which the MASD student communicates their capstone project work. The capstone project presentation cannot be created without developing a capstone project and research document. The capstone project presentation is the means for evaluating the Capstone project work during the final capstone review

### PURPOSE OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

The purpose of the capstone project is for the MASD student to demonstrate that they are capable of leading an independent piece of work with a sustainability focus with clear parameters, goals, objectives, process, and oversight from concept to completion

The required course Capstone Project (total of 6 credits, taken as two courses) is designed to foster independent research, writing, and discussion of ideas toward the development of the capstone project, design research document and capstone project presentation, which are the final outcomes of the course.

Capstone projects vary widely with each MASD student and will pertain specifically to the project goals, objectives, parameters, etc., determined by the MASD student and their instructors.

The capstone project and design research document is worked on simultaneously with preparation of the capstone project presentation.

## SECTION 4: MID-PROGRAM REVIEW

### DEFINITIONS

**Mid-Program Review:** is the process of assessment of a student's mid-program review package, conducted by the Sustainable Design Academic Committee. The mid-program review occurs after the MASD student has completed 12 credits. The ***Mid-Program Review Package*** is the compilation of 1) portfolio work, 2) portfolio work overviews, and 3) Capstone project proposal (see Section 5 for definition and further details).

### PURPOSE OF MID-PROGRAM REVIEW

The purpose of the mid-program review is to demonstrate the student's progress in the MASD program, their potential career path, and indicate a student's potential to produce solid capstone work in a timely and professional manner. The mid-program review provides the opportunity for the Sustainable Design Academic Committee to evaluate individual student progress and degree candidacy status.

### PROCESS OF MID-PROGRAM REVIEW

Students who have completed 12 credits or more toward their MASD degree are required to compile and submit specific items (detailed under "Requirements of Mid-Program Review") to the Director of the MASD program for review by the Sustainable Design Academic Committee. The Director of the MASD program sets dates each year for mid-program reviews. After reviewing and assessing student work, the committee provides a critique of the mid-program review package and a pass/no pass grade.

### REQUIREMENTS OF MID-PROGRAM REVIEW

**The creation of a mid-program review package includes the following:**

- + **Portfolio Work:** A portfolio that contains ONLY one 'portfolio piece' for every course during a student's tenure in the MA. (A piece could be one image, a series of images, or an entire student project.) These course-based portfolio pieces are often the results of final project work, but are not limited to final projects. **It is up to the student to select pieces of work that best represent their growth as a sustainability professional. Pieces should be easily viewed and read by the reviewer.** (Be sure text size and image quality are appropriate.) Only courses that students have completed and received a final grade for are required to have representative work. Refer to Section 8: Web-based Portfolio to learn more about the purpose of this collection of work.

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- + **Portfolio Work Overviews:** A brief overview for *each portfolio piece* of work (3 sentences or less for each) that includes the:
  - Year, semester, and course title the work was developed within
  - Sustainability focus of the piece
  - Objective of the piece
- + **Capstone Project Proposal:** See Section 5 for specific details

**DETAILED MID-PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

**By 5:00 p.m. CT of the due date of the mid-program review:**

Set by MASD Director

1. The mid-program review package will be submitted as a **single PDF file** via email with the subject line “STUDENT NAME: Mid-Program Review Package” to the MASD director.
2. The Sustainable Design Academic Committee meets to review individual mid-program review packages.
3. The student **may** be contacted for a meeting to clarify any information about their mid-program review package and/or about their progress in the program.
4. The committee **1.** assesses the package, **2.** provides a critique of the package, and **3.** provides either of the two following grading options:
  - Pass, or
  - No pass

**NOTE:** *transcripts may also be reviewed during this time to aid in decision-making.*

5. The recommendation of the committee is presented to the student in writing via email from the Director of the MASD program. The written statement indicates the decision of the committee and the critique of the package for future use as part of the student’s web-based portfolio (*see Section 6*).
6. The Director completes the mid-program review process by submitting the committee recommendation (pass/no pass) to the registrar for filing as part of the student’s academic file.
7. Students who pass the mid-program review will advance to the Capstone Project Development (SD-7901) course and are considered MASD candidates.



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8. Students who do not pass their first mid-program review will be scheduled for a re-review during the same semester and continue course work as scheduled.
9. Students who do not pass their second mid-program review will be asked to leave the program. These students may petition to the Director of the MASD program to be reinstated to the program after a period of one semester.

## SECTION 5: CAPSTONE PROJECT PROPOSAL

The MASD candidate's capstone project proposal will stem directly from the ideas the MASD student put forth in the proposal and the feedback the student received from the Sustainable Design Academic Committee. The capstone project proposal is intended to prepare the MASD candidate for the next step in their MASD tenure, that is, to begin working on their capstone project and presentation in a directed and concerted manner and to advance to the MASD candidacy stage.

### DEFINITIONS

**Capstone Project Proposal:** focuses on the problem being solved, current efforts, target audience and includes credible, supporting references for the need for this sustainability work. It includes citations in the required CMS format. **The capstone project proposal is submitted as part of the mid-program review package (see Section 4).**

### PURPOSE OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT PROPOSAL

The purpose of the MASD candidate's capstone project proposal is to critically demonstrate the MASD candidate's ability to create a cohesive, provocative final capstone project and presentation for their final capstone review. MASD candidates' capstone work will drive toward a more sustainable solution or concept to an existing need.

### PROCESS OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT PROPOSAL

The capstone project proposal is developed, and written by the MASD student after completing 12 credits, and it is submitted to the MASD Director as part of the mid-program review package for review and feedback by the Sustainable Design Academic Committee (SDAC) (see Section 4). **See the Appendix for the Capstone Project Proposal Rubric used by the SDAC.**

The MASD student completes the capstone project proposal stage by submitting their proposal to the Director of the MASD program.

Once the capstone project proposal has been submitted as part of the mid-program review package it will be reviewed by the Sustainable Design Academic Committee. **Students who pass the mid-program review will advance to the Capstone Project Development Course, and are considered MASD candidates.**



## SECTION 6: WEB-BASED PORTFOLIO

### DEFINITION

**Web-Based Portfolio:** serves to create a public presence for the candidate's MASD work and as a direct expression of the MASD candidate's individual point of view, opinions, activities, etc., for the candidate's sustainability-focused work created during their tenure within the MASD program.

The web-based portfolio is a website (platform, style, format, etc.) that is created and curated by the MASD candidate that highlights **one example of their work from each MASD course taken** at MCAD. In some cases, teamwork will need to be presented as a portfolio piece; *ensure that all team members are identified and that the student's role in the project is clearly detailed.* Other sustainability work that the MASD candidate has conducted (professional or personal practice) may also be included in the portfolio but all work must be clearly identified as student or non-student work.

### PURPOSE OF WEB-BASED PORTFOLIO

The purpose of the web-based portfolio is to promote reflection on the coherence of a student's academic career. Because MCAD's MASD is a fully online program, the portfolio serves as a means for MASD candidates to make a public presentation or exhibition of their work as is a requirement for traditional master's programs at institutions of art and design. (Note: students may make their portfolios password protected if they do not want to share their work outside of the program.)

### PORTFOLIOS WILL SUPPORT AN MASD CANDIDATE WITH:

- + Preparation and building confidence for their final capstone review
- + Providing a means to reflect on and analyze their academic experiences
- + Preparing a foundation for the development of materials to support and recognize their growth as a sustainability professional
- + Demonstrating a competency-based body of sustainability-focused work

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**THE WEB-BASED PORTFOLIO MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

- + Introduction or About page
- + Short biography (ten sentences or less)
- + Sustainability statement/philosophy (ten sentences or less)
- + Resume
- + Contact information (virtual business card)
- + **Portfolio:** Showcased work with **one** piece of work from every MASD course taken (8 courses plus the final Capstone Project Presentation, for a total of 9 pieces). Each piece must include an accompanying **portfolio work overview** (three sentences or less per each) that describes the assignment and how/why the student approached the problem or design solution. Please see **Section 4: Mid-Program Review for more details about portfolio pieces and overview.**
- + All pieces in the portfolio must be easily viewed and read by reviewers.

**THE WEB-BASED PORTFOLIO MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING, IF RELEVANT, TO SHOWCASE THE MASD CANDIDATE'S SUSTAINABILITY WORK:**

- + Blog (to showcase essay-style work)
- + Professional sustainability-focused work
- + Other ideas approved by the MASD director

MA candidates' web-based portfolios will be created, maintained, and curated by the MASD candidate as part of their professional sustainability practice.

In the Capstone courses, (SD-7901 and SD-7902), the MASD candidate will select the final website platform to develop the web-based portfolio that best meets the professional needs of the project and matches the MASD candidate's ability to build, update, and maintain.



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**IT IS CRITICAL THAT THE FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE CONSIDERED IN THE PLATFORM  
SELECTION PROCESS:**

- + MA candidate is comfortable using the platform
- + Platform meets the professional needs of the MASD candidate and/or project
- + Platform is globally accessible
- + Platform has a professional reputation

MA candidates may design their own sites, add a sustainability page to an existing professional site that they have already deployed, work with a professional web developer, or make use of free website platforms. Some examples of currently available, user-friendly, free website platforms that MASD candidates may select from are (but are not limited to): WordPress, Tumblr, Blogger, Wix, and Weebly; industrial design portfolio sites such as Cloroflot; and graphic design portfolio sites such as Behance.

## SECTION 7: GENERAL ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

During the final capstone review, in addition to the assessment of the capstone project presentation using the Capstone Project Presentation Rubric, MASD candidates will be assessed on their development as a sustainability professional as it relates to their Career Development.

Because sustainability-focused work across all disciplines is expanding rapidly, the intention of MCAD's MASD is to fully prepare students to leave the program with the ability to accelerate their existing careers or to help them to forge novel career paths, possibly even to create job opportunities that do not exist today but will become commonplace for sustainability-minded professionals in the future. To this end, the MASD strives to prepare students for their role in a cutting-edge field by ensuring that they each meet the following **four criteria**:

- 1. Collaborative problem solvers:** Because no global challenge can be solved in isolation by one person or one discipline, MCAD MASD students will engage in cohesive and high-quality paired and group learning experiences. These opportunities will be grounded in creative leadership training, collaborative design processes, and dynamic problem-solving skills.
- 2. Conscious social professionals:** Students will experience student-driven projects in the form of new and/or improved sustainability-focused products, processes, systems, or services. MASD candidates will create novel, accessible, affordable, and sustainability-focused solutions that will address current, global human social and/or economic needs and/or environmental issues.
- 3. Inventors, innovators, and entrepreneurs:** Students will nurture professional development experiences through real-life business interactions, peer-to-peer and teacher-student mentorships, entrepreneurship training, and strategic business planning experience.
- 4. Global community members:** Through various modes of learning and training, students will develop the skills to maintain a forum for interactions and global networking opportunities with their fellow students, MASD faculty members, industry partners, and MCAD alumni.

## **SECTION 8: SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **BOOKS**

Required books for MASD courses are listed on [my.mcad.edu](http://my.mcad.edu) when students register for courses. They are also listed on [canvas.mcad.edu/books](http://canvas.mcad.edu/books). The MCAD Art Cellar does not stock books, but they are available for online order at [amazon.com/shop/mcadartcellar](http://amazon.com/shop/mcadartcellar).

### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

The Office of Career Development works collaboratively across the college, providing student career integration opportunities and employment consultation while enriching external opportunities and visibility in creative industries for students and alumni.

Career Development manages the MCAD Internship Program where students learn about professional industries, build skills, network, and expand portfolios by working with an experienced professional. Internships, part-time and full-time jobs, and freelance opportunities are posted online at <http://mcad.joinhandshake.com>. This site, available only to students and alumni, allows users to submit documents (resumes, cover letters) for critique and browse employer pages.

The Career Development staff is available to meet one-on-one with students and alumni to assist with career development. Topics include assistance writing and editing resumes, cover letters, and other professional correspondences; career exploration and industry research; interviewing practice; networking strategies; and industry-specific practices. Individual drop-in meetings are available during office hours; however, scheduled appointments are strongly encouraged. Request an appointment on Handshake.

### **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION**

Students who have a learning disability, even those who do not plan to seek accommodations, are strongly encouraged to register with the Director of MCAD's Learning Center (see Learning Center below for more information). This will ensure that students have access to all of the services and accommodations that are available. Learn more about disability accommodation.

All accommodations are determined on an individual, case-by-case basis by the learning center director, and in consultation with faculty and administrative staff. For more information about these services, please contact the Learning Center at 612.874.3671.

### **FINANCIAL AID**

Students who are U.S. Citizens may be eligible for financial aid. Students are encouraged to apply for financial aid with the help of the MCAD Financial Aid Office. The total amount of financial aid a student may receive is based on the family's financial situation and the cost of



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attendance. While the amount of financial aid a student may receive is dependent upon financial need, the student must also be making satisfactory academic progress to be eligible for federal funds. **Students must be taking at least three credits during any semester to be eligible for financial aid.** Types of financial aid students may qualify for include the Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, Federal Graduate Plus Loan, and/or an alternative education loan through a lender.

**MCAD INTRANET**

The MCAD Intranet is a clearinghouse of important information for all MCAD students, staff, and faculty. **It is highly recommended that MASD students use the MCAD Intranet as their first stop to get the information they need.** All of the offices, services, and access points listed below (and more) are available on MCAD's Intranet.

**IMPORTANT PAGES TO NOTE FOR MASD STUDENTS ARE MCAD'S:**

- + [Art Cellar](#), [Bookstore](#), and [MCAD Merch](#)
- + [Business Office](#) – Tuition bill questions
- + [Career Development](#) – Support seeking opportunities and employment consultation
- + [Financial Aid Office](#) – Questions related to student loans
- + [Learning Center and Accessibility Services](#) – Academic support for writing, tutoring, disability accommodation, and time management assistance, *see below*
- + [Library](#) – Resources
- + [Teaching and Learning Excellence](#) – Online Learning support in course design, instructional technology, pedagogy, and Blackboard and Canvas help
- + [Records Office](#) – Registration, transcript, diplomas, etc.
- + [Student Affairs](#) – Academic Advising, Mental-health Counseling, Student Activities and Events, Learning Center, and Records.
  - [MCAD Student Handbook](#)
  - [Title IX Reporting Form](#) and [Title IX Policy](#)
  - [Emergency Resources and Parachute Fund](#)
- + General resources:
  - Access to mcad.edu Gmail account
  - Access to Blackboard
  - [Help Desk](#) – Computer Support, for trouble logging into student accounts
  - [Academic Calendar](#) – Semester start and end dates; holidays; deadlines
  - LinkedIn Learning – Video access, learn how to do nearly everything here!
  - [Knowledge Base](#) – Concise help with common issues on Blackboard and beyond)



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**LEARNING CENTER**

MCAD's Learning Center is an academic support center and enrichment resource for all students. The learning center offers assistance with: writing (every level and style), limited **software support, time management** and study skills, and professional development.

You can find Chicago Manual of Style resources on the CMOS website and in the Writing Resources section of MCAD's Learning Center Intranet website:

- + [The Chicago Manual of Style](#)
- + [MCAD Editorial Style Guide](#)

**Be pre-emptive! Seek help early and often.** Students may contact the learning center to arrange an appointment via email at [learning\\_center@mcad.edu](mailto:learning_center@mcad.edu).

**LIBRARY SERVICES**

The MCAD Library is dedicated to supporting MASD student research needs during their tenure in the MASD program. The library provides research assistance to students ranging from preliminary topic development to in-depth research consultation to citation verification. **Online resources** include article and image databases, e-books, interlibrary loan articles requests, and instructions for making the most of your local resources. All resources are available from the MCAD Intranet. Many resources will require your MCAD login as authorization.

For questions, students should check the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section available in the [Knowledge Base](#). Please contact the Library Director with questions at [library@mcad.edu](mailto:library@mcad.edu) or 612.874.3791. Messages will be answered Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. CDT. Every effort will be made to reply to messages within forty-eight hours.

**MCAD.EDU ACCOUNT**

When students are actively enrolled in the MASD program, they will have continuous access to an official MCAD Google email (Gmail) account that ends in “@mcad.edu.” Email is the primary form of communications for the MASD program. **All students are required to check their mcad.edu email at least once every twenty-four hours during semester sessions and respond immediately to all official requests.** All MCAD-related notices and messages will be sent to students' mcad.edu accounts including but not limited to: Blackboard and Canvas classroom announcements, instructor messages, important information from records, online learning, business office, financial aid, and the Director of the MASD program. Students may access their Gmail accounts from MCAD's Intranet.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE**

All MASD classes are asynchronous, meaning that there are no specific all-class online meeting times, though there are shared weekly deadlines. Students can access their online course(s) on [Canvas](#).



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It is recommended that students set aside ample time each week to work on their online course(s). **In general, students should expect about 9 hours of course work every week of the semester for each course (for a 15-week semester).** The most successful students log in nearly every day to work and interact with their classmates.

**It is expected that students log in at the start of each week** to plan their time appropriately to meet all due dates, particularly courses with greater levels of student interaction and collaboration.

Check MCAD's website for up-to-date information about upcoming online courses at MCAD: [my.mcad.edu](http://my.mcad.edu).

**IF STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH THEIR ONLINE COURSE(S), TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE CAN HELP:**

- + Email [tale@mcad.edu](mailto:tale@mcad.edu)
- + Call 1.800.874.MCAD ext. 4 or 612.874.3618
- + [MCAD Knowledge Base](#)
- + [Canvas](#)

**SERVICE BUREAU**

Students will not have access to the MCAD Service Bureau. This is the on-campus office for printing services and is unavailable to online students.

**SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH**

The MASD program has an active social media outreach program. Join the conversation!

- + [MCAD Sustainable Design Program](#)
- + [MA in Sustainable Design Blog](#)
- + [MASD LinkedIn Group](#) – public
- + [MASD Network LinkedIn Group](#) – private
- + [MASD Facebook Page](#) – public
- + [MASD Alumni Facebook Group](#) – private, MASD Alumni only
- + [MASD Student Facebook Group](#) – private, MASD current Students only
- + [MASD Slack Group](#) – private, invitation only, MASD Students, Alumni, and Faculty





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**STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

One of the benefits of being a student is having a student ID card, which you can use to get discounts!

Students in the online programs can get an MCAD Student ID card by clicking the link below and filling out the following form by the first day of the semester.

+ [Online Student ID Card](#)

Are you in the Twin Cities? Instead of completing the form, you can feel free to visit [Campus Safety](#) () on campus at MCAD to create a student ID card that will allow access to the building and various resources.

**QUESTION?** Email [tale@mcad.edu](mailto:tale@mcad.edu) or [campus\\_safety@mcad.edu](mailto:campus_safety@mcad.edu)

**STUDENT ACCOUNT INFORMATION**

Students are required to activate their online student account by entering their official MCAD username and password at [mybill.mcad.edu](http://mybill.mcad.edu).

**TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT HELP DESK**

MCAD's Technology Support Help Desk provides support to the entire college community, seven days a week. Many questions are answered in our extensive Knowledge Base. Or fill out a help request form to open a ticket with a help desk specialist. Contact them at [computer\\_support@mcad.edu](mailto:computer_support@mcad.edu) or 612.874.3666.

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*Updated August 2026*

