

Overview

What is the MBA in Design Strategy?

Fully immersed in the culture and ethos of San Francisco, the [MBA in Design Strategy](#) (DMBA) program is a launchpad for students to design their careers all while learning to lead complex solutions for twenty-first-century challenges. The STEM-designated, low-residency MBA in Design Strategy program calls to innovators and those with the entrepreneurial spirit to move their practice forward through hands-on learning and creative problem solving.

Our unique setting as the only MBA within a leading art and design school allows for the unexpected. When design and strategy combine, no day is business as usual. Guided by expert faculty who are industry leaders from nearly every professional sector, students collaborate together and with clients outside the classroom to create real-world solutions today. Our alumni go on to take the helm in fields across the globe. They redefine boundaries, build organizations from the ground up, and harness creative tools to foster sustainable change.

How long does it take to complete?

The DMBA is a full-time program. It takes two years (four semesters) to complete. We follow a low-residency ('executive') schedule: **Classes meet once per month, rather than weekly, over a long Thursday-Sunday weekend.** This makes it possible to continue or start working while in school.

Do you offer part-time or online course options?

No, our low-residency, executive-style format allows students to continue to work while earning their degree. The majority of our students work and study simultaneously.

Is the MBA in Design Strategy an accredited full-time program?

Yes. Launched in 2008 and heading into its 17th year, the DMBA program is fully-accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC).

What is the application deadline and process?

Applications for fall go live in mid-October with a priority deadline of January 15. Admitted students will be notified by email in mid-February. [View information about the application requirements and process.](#)

Note: We do not require GMAT or GRE scores. **International students must supply recent TOEFL scores.**

What is the expected cost of tuition and fees?

Please view [CCA's total estimated cost of attendance for graduate programs](#) for current information.

What kind of financial aid is available? Do you have scholarships?

CCA offers financial aid in the form of loans and scholarships to U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents only. The program also awards a very limited number of merit and diversity scholarships to admitted students. Any candidate who submits an application by the priority deadline is automatically placed in the consideration pool for these. **(International students are eligible for merit scholarships only.)** Scholarship decisions are made at the time of admission decisions.

Please contact CCA's Financial Aid office for specific questions regarding aid and award packages. **International students:** Please note that only U.S. citizens qualify for U.S. federally-funded financial aid.

How many students enroll per year?

In order to foster personalized attention for each student, the program typically admits no more than 40 students per year.

I'm an international student can I work while in school?

International students may only hold work-study jobs on CCA's campus during their first year in the program. These are limited to 20 hours per week. After you've completed two consecutive semesters, you can obtain a US work visa, which will permit you to work with an outside employer.

Curriculum

What is the curriculum and course schedule?

Our specialized curriculum prepares you for careers in industries and companies that compete on innovation. Our students learn leading-edge techniques to create, capture, and deliver new and better value across all aspects of an organization. **We are one of the few business programs in the country to integrate AI, impact-driven projects with real-world clients, and strategic foresight studies into the curriculum, along with innovation study field trips to exciting companies all over the Bay Area.**

Courses are hands-on and project-based, with an emphasis on design 'doing' and collaboration. Several courses focus on working with real-world clients, wherein student teams will develop everything from new value propositions, business models, and marketing plans, to operational foundations and future strategies. View our curriculum [online](#).

Can I work or do an internship while attending the DMBA program?

Yes, many of our students either continue their existing jobs or find internships (fall, spring, summer). As we are a 'low-residency' program, and classes are in session only once a month, students have time in between residencies to do this.

Our students come in thinking they're not going to have enough to do and leave wondering how they got everything done!

DMBA Students

What is the profile of your current students?

Our student body veers from the usual makeup of MBA students, as is only to be expected given that this is a totally new kind of design-led MBA that's housed within a well-known 120+ year-old art and design school. Only slightly more than half come from design backgrounds; the rest come from business, NGOs, education, and, increasingly, engineering.

The average age of DMBA students hovers around 30 years old, but plenty of students are in their 40s+ as well as their mid-20s. This reflects our admissions standards: We seek candidates who have at least three years of post-degree professional experience—and many of our students have far more than that. Ours is a rigorous graduate program, taught at an advanced level.

Students come from all over the world, and every continent, with an annual international student body of approximately 30 percent.

Where do alumni go after graduation?

MBA in Design Strategy alums can be found all over the world, making an impact as innovation leaders in business, design, education, government, and NGOs.

They're working in strategic design, innovation, and UX experience at household name companies such as:

- Apple
- eBay
- Facebook
- Amazon
- Microsoft
- IBM
- LinkedIn
- Google
- Adobe
- Salesforce
- Intuit

They're making significant waves in financial services, healthcare, lifestyle, health & wellness, and consumer electronics at companies such as:

- CapitalOne
- Visa
- Kaiser
- Sutter Health
- Stanford Medical
- UCSF
- One Kings Lane
- Everlane
- Fitbit
- Adidas
- Converse
- Samsung
- HP

Our alumni are at the forefront of emerging technologies such as AV, AR, AR/VR, and AI. Some work for start-ups or are running their own and some for major manufacturers. Others work for agencies and consultancies. These companies include:

- BMW
- Renault
- Honda
- Toyota
- Lunar
- IDEO
- fuseproject
- McKinsey
- Deloitte

Our Alumni

What kind of jobs can I do with a DMBA?

Where you go and what you do after graduation is an open field of possibilities. You will leave with the knowledge, skills, tools, and methods that are critical for leading in a world that's volatile, ambiguous, and subject to rapid change.

You will emerge as a creative strategist and leader, able to help any company, in any industry generate, build, and implement the ideas that will keep them competitive. Our alumni titles range from manager/senior manager to VP and C-suite. They work as:

- Design Strategists
- Business Designers
- Product Managers
- Design & Innovation Leads
- UX Researchers
- Customer Experience Designers
- Content Strategists

Are there any current students I can talk to?

Of course! Please [email](#) DMBA Chair Justin Lokitz some background about yourself—what you're currently doing, what your field is, and where you live. He can connect you with a current student who is a close match.

Connect

Are there any alumni I can speak to?

Yes, many! We have over 900 alums working all over the Americas, Asia, and Europe. To be connected with an alum, please [email](#) DMBA Chair Justin Lokitz.

How can I visit the campus?

To schedule a visit, please [email](#) DMBA Chair Justin Lokitz. We encourage prospective students to sit in on classes during any of our monthly residencies. It's the best way to get a sense of the unique experience that is the DMBA.

Visit

Who should I reach out to with questions more specific to the program, its faculty, and students?

If you'd like to further explore the program, and how it might suit your needs, goals, and interests, please [email](#) DMBA Chair Justin Lokitz.