



MARYMOUNT
UNIVERSITY

A Guide to Understanding the Field of Interior Design



About this Guide

This guide is designed to give an overview of the field of interior design as a whole and then outline the specifics of pursuing the Master of Arts in Interior Design at Marymount University. This guide's target audience is prospective graduate students considering pursuing a career in interior design. Here at Marymount University, we hope that this guide will give you a better understanding of the benefits that come with the completion of an advanced degree program in interior design at Marymount and how pursuing such a degree can prepare you for professional advancement and success.



About Marymount University

Marymount University is an independent, coeducational Catholic university located in suburban Northern Virginia that was founded in 1950 by the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM). A Marymount education is grounded in the liberal arts, promotes career preparation, and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Marymount also prides itself on providing a graduate education that is immediately applicable to the workplace. As a student-centered learning environment, Marymount is dedicated to the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development of each individual.





About the Author

Thea Scott-Fundling, Director of the Interior Design Graduate Programs, teaches an expansive curriculum of graduate and undergraduate courses in the Master of Arts in Interior Design at Marymount University. Her career spans 25 years of professional experience in design of projects with Brand & Allen Architects in Houston Texas, Hughes Group Architects in Sterling, VA, and Design Matters, PC in Reston, VA. Her expertise extends from strategic planning in office environments, library and learning environments, high-end retail design, residential designs, and museum design management in the U.S. Her work includes projects such as the Herndon Library, the University of Maryland Fire Station, the Reinsch Library for Marymount University, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, D.C.

Professor Scott-Fundling examines the role of interior design in society to inform the process of creating physical spaces that respect end users and the natural world. This involves integrating research with design practice, exploring the perception of interior design's "experiential" aspects emphasized in the user experience, and analyzing how design brings a sense of value, inclusiveness, and accessibility to the built environment.



What is Interior Design?



Interior design is a multi-faceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional and enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants and are aesthetically attractive. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project. Designs must adhere to code and regulatory requirements and encourage the principles of environmental sustainability. The

interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology — including research, analysis, and integration of knowledge into the creative process — whereby the needs and resources of the client are satisfied to produce an interior space that fulfills the project goals.

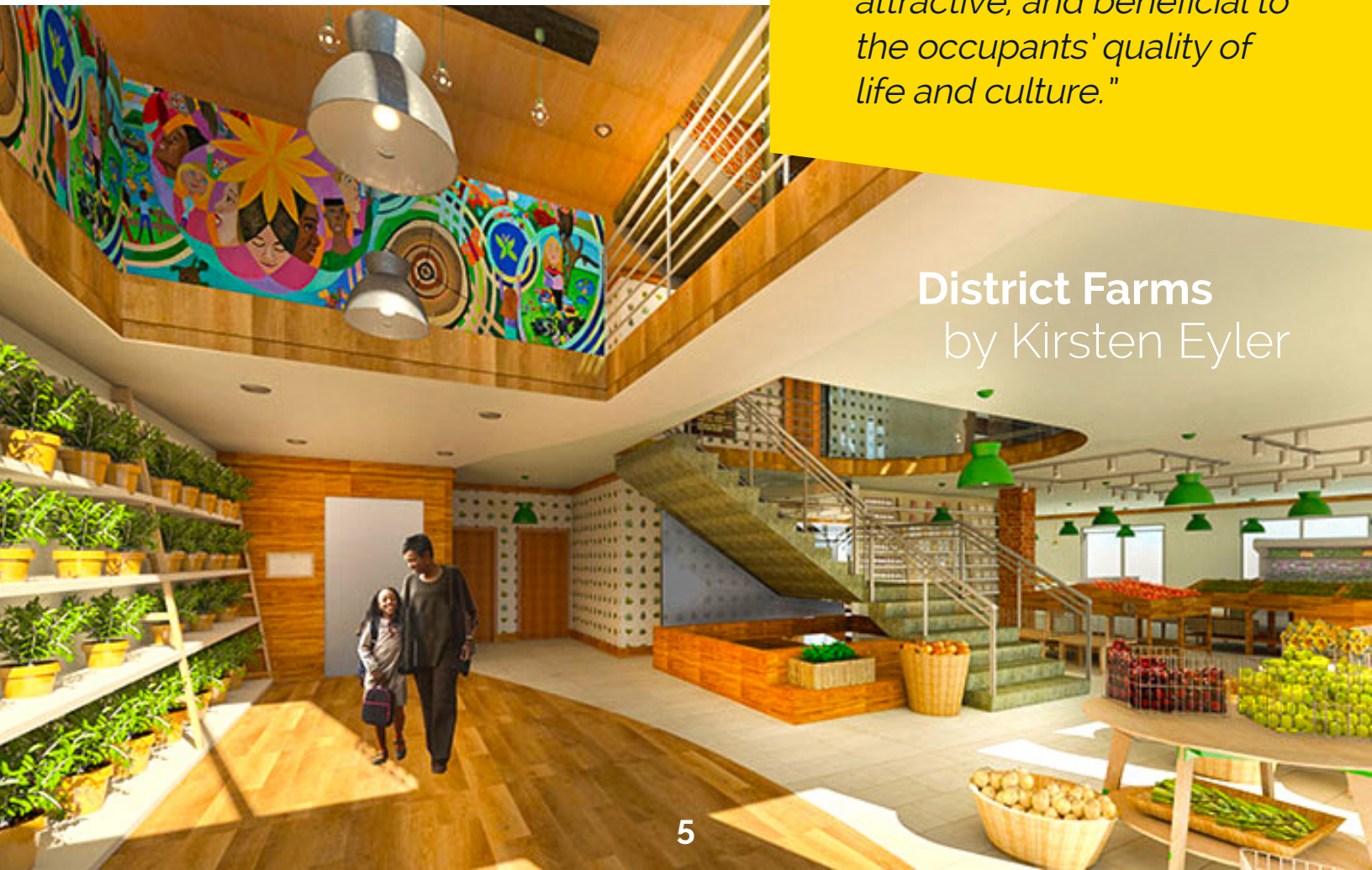
Interior design includes a scope of services performed by a professional design practitioner, qualified by means of education, experience, and examination in order to protect and enhance the health, life, and welfare of the public.

It is not enough for a provider of interior design services to understand how to create spaces that are aesthetically pleasing. It is at least as vital that they can design public and private interior spaces that meet current safety standards, and that the public feels confident in their ability to do that. In today's increasingly competitive marketplace, the NCIDQ Certification demonstrates that you are uniquely qualified through education, experience, and examination to competently practice interior design in all of its facets, including aesthetics and safety standards. More than 30,000 people around the world have earned the prestigious [NCIDQ](#) Certification, the mark of a professional interior designer.

It's complicated. It's dynamic. It's constantly changing — interior design is a profession that works to enhance the human experience with good design that changes lives.

According to the NCIDQ, "Interior design is the art and science of understanding people's behavior to create functional spaces within a building. Decoration is the furnishing or adorning of a space with fashionable or beautiful things. In short, interior designers may decorate, but decorators do not design."

Interior designers apply creative and technical solutions within a structure that are functional, attractive, and beneficial to the occupants' quality of life and culture."

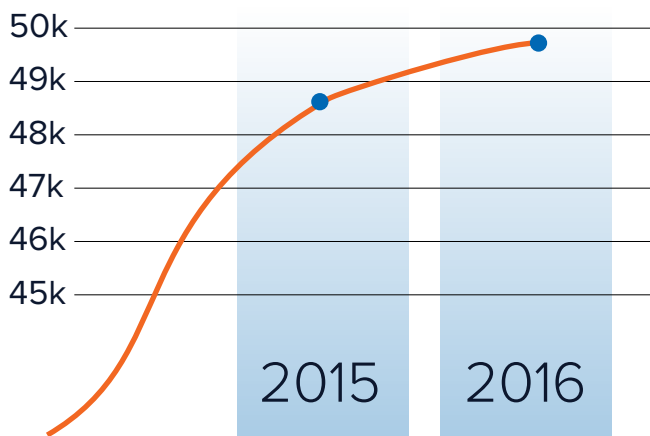


District Farms
by Kirsten Eyler

Career Outlook

What will the job salary and career outlook be for interior designers over the next five years?

Employment of interior designers in the U.S. is expected to grow about 4 percent from 2014-2024. This is a bit slower than the average of other occupations. However, employment of interior designers in specialized design services such as hospitality, healthcare, and commercial/corporate design are expected to grow 8 percent. [25 percent of firms of all sizes and specialties intend to hire new employees in the next year.](#)



[The median annual salary for interior designers in 2015 was \\$48,840, and in May 2016, the median annual salary was \\$49,810.](#)



[Job seekers](#) should look for employment opportunities in high-income areas because wealthy individuals are more likely to remodel or renovate their spaces. And while the studio and classroom afford you opportunities to gain theoretical knowledge and technical skills, an internship/practicum provides valuable practical experience. Practicums and Internships are available with nationally recognized architectural and design firms, furniture and interior retailers, contract designers, and other organizations around the Washington, D.C. area.



Understanding Marymount University's M.A. in Interior Design

[Marymount's Master of Arts in Interior Design](#) program strives to nurture intellectual growth, independent learning, and an increased capacity to engage in interior design practice.

The coursework at Marymount will provide an increased understanding of human needs within the built environment as required for practice or education and research. Coursework also fosters an interdisciplinary approach to design, while supporting independent and lifelong learning.

In the classroom, students will focus on design knowledge and skills, as well as a comprehensive design process with emphasis on the development of programming skills. This includes proficiencies that address client or user goals and needs, graphic and written communication, problem solving, critical thinking, ethics, and social responsibility. Scholarly research is promoted through application in coursework and independent learning as well as the thesis or design research.

Graduates of the M. Wilhelmina Boldt Interior Design program at Marymount will be:

- ◆ Prepared with the techniques and skills necessary in competent interior design practice
- ◆ Provided the foundation for the exploration of a specific aspect of the profession
- ◆ Able to understand and conduct scholarly research to expand the profession's body of knowledge
- ◆ Qualified to assume leadership roles in the interior design field

What interior design professional organizations does Marymount partner with?

Marymount partners with ASID and IIDA, interior design professional organizations: Marymount University's student organization for Interior Design majors is the Interior Design Alliance (IDA). As a member, you can join either American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) or the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) or both. The Interior Design Alliance sponsors and organizes special events, lectures on special topics and industry trends, portfolio reviews, and trips for students. Membership in student organizations is a proven way to meet design professionals and jump-start the networking process. ID graduate students are encouraged to join the IDA.

[click to discover more](#)



[click to discover more](#)





According to [ASID](#):

"Design transforms lives and ASID serves the full range of the interior design profession and practice through the Society's programs, networks, and advocacy. We thrive on the strength of cross-functional and interdisciplinary relationships among designers of all specialties, including workplace, healthcare, retail and hospitality, education, institutional, and residential. We lead interior designers in shared conversations around topics that matter: from evidence-based and humancentric design to social responsibility, wellbeing, and sustainability. We showcase the impact of design on the human experience and the value interior designers provide."

According to [IIDA](#):

"The International Interior Design Association (IIDA) is a professional networking and educational association of more than 10,000 members in 8 specialty Forums, 9 Regions, and more than 50 Chapters around the world committed to enhancing the quality of life through excellence in interior design and advancing interior design through knowledge. IIDA membership provides you a support network that connects you to peers, clients, and educators while offering you the opportunity to advance your career through continuing education, industry recognition, and relevant research."



Academic Tracks



Marymount Offers Two Academic Tracks in its Interior Design Program

Whether you are just beginning a career as an interior designer or advancing your current professional interior design knowledge and skills, Marymount University can fit your needs – offering two tracks in our Interior Design program.



[First Professional Degree](#)

66-credit academic track for those with a baccalaureate degree not in interior design or architecture. Students are subject to graduate student academic policies and procedures as stated in this catalog while taking the undergraduate leveling courses.



[Post-professional Degree](#)

34-credit academic track for those with an accredited undergraduate degree in interior design or architecture.

How to Apply for Marymount's Interior Design Programs

Since there are two degree tracks within the M.A. offered at Marymount, [admissions requirements differ based on which academic track you choose.](#)

First Professional Degree

The first professional degree program's mission is to educate professional interior designers to work effectively within contemporary constraints in a changing society and profession and to formulate design concepts for a better human environment.

Students may attend on a full- or part-time basis. In addition to [universitywide requirements for graduate admission](#), applicants must have or expect to earn a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university before enrollment in the first professional graduate degree program.

Post-Professional Degree

The post-professional degree program's mission is to educate practitioners to develop a greater capacity to engage in interior design practice, education, and research, to become more proficient in a specific area of the interior design practice, and to actively engage in research and evidence-based interior design to increase the body of knowledge in the field. Students may attend on a full- or part-time basis.

In addition to [university-wide requirements for graduate admission](#), applicants who have or will have a bachelor's degree in interior design or architecture from an accredited college or university prior to enrollment in the post-professional track must provide the following items to be considered for admission:

First Professional Degree Admission Requirements

- 1 Completed online application.

[Apply Now!](#)

- 2 Official transcripts showing all post-secondary coursework .
- 3 For university coursework completed outside the U.S., an official course-by-course evaluation of your transcript is required from one of these approved evaluation agencies: [World Education Services](#) or [World Educational Credentials Evaluators and College Planning](#). If you submit a course-by-course evaluation, you do not need to send transcripts directly from your school to Marymount. Only send official transcripts to the evaluating agency that you select.
- 4 A personal statement describing your background and motivation for entering the field of study for which you are applying, as well as your rationale for applying to Marymount's Interior Design program.
- 5 Two letters of recommendation that speak directly to your academic and/or interpersonal skills and interests in design.
- 6 Nonnative speakers of English must submit a satisfactory score from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE), or successfully complete ELS Level 112 or Inlingua Level 8 with a score of at least 85% in order to be considered for admission.

Post-Professional Degree Admission Requirements

- 1 Completed online application.

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- 2 Official transcripts showing all post-secondary coursework .
- 3 For university coursework completed outside the U.S., an official course-by-course evaluation of your transcript is required from one of these approved evaluation agencies: [World Education Services](#) or [World Educational Credentials Evaluators and College Planning](#). If you submit a course-by-course evaluation, you do not need to send transcripts directly from your school to Marymount. Only send official transcripts to the evaluating agency that you select.
- 4 A personal statement describing your background and motivation for entering the field of study for which you are applying, as well as your rationale for applying to Marymount's Interior Design program
- 5 A portfolio of student or professional design work.
- 6 Two letters of recommendation that speak directly to your academic and/or interpersonal skills and interests in design.
- 7 Nonnative speakers of English must submit a satisfactory score from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE), or successfully complete ELS Level 112 or Inlingua Level 8 with a score of at least 85% in order to be considered for admission.

Students in the first professional interior design master's degree program should refer to the undergraduate course catalog for [course descriptions](#) and [transfer policies](#) of leveling courses which include:

[FA 104 Color Theory](#)

[FA 202 Introduction to Art History II](#)

[ID 121 Freehand Drafting](#)

[ID 122 Sketching and Rendering](#)

[ID 223 Presentation Drawings](#)

[ID 231 Textiles and Finish Materials](#)



Admission to the program is competitive. Completed applications must be received by the following priority deadlines:

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------|
| ☀️ | April 15 | Summer Semester |
| 🍁 | July 15 | Fall Semester |
| 🌸 | November 1 | Spring Semester |





How is Marymount's M.A. in Interior Design accredited?

The [Council for Interior Design Accreditation](#) (CIDA) has continually accredited Marymount's first professional academic program since [2005](#).

Note: The post-professional program is not accredited because CIDA does not accredit post-professional master's programs.

CIDA is the only accrediting agency for interior design. While graduation from a CIDA-accredited program is not now required for practice, it does ensure that graduates possess the knowledge and skills needed to enter the profession.



The graduate program abides by the CIDA guidelines and standards with these specific objectives:

- ◆ To cultivate intellectual growth, independent learning, and competency in design practice, education, and research
- ◆ To develop proficiency in a specific aspect of the profession of interior design
- ◆ To advance the knowledge, skills, and techniques necessary for the competent practice of interior design
- ◆ To create a framework of inquiry and analysis to increase the body of knowledge in the field
- ◆ To create design solutions that meet specific client and end-user needs

Resources for Aspiring Interior Designers

If you're interested in learning more about the field of interior design, along with the various trends and news in the industry, there are a variety of resources available for that may be of interest to interior design students or professionals alike.

- ◆ [International Interior Design Association Headquarters](#)
- ◆ [Icon American Society of Interior Designers](#)
- ◆ [Dezeen](#)

Next Steps

The Marymount Admissions team hopes that this guide has been helpful in outlining the general career field and overall professional outlook for aspiring interior designers. Our aim is to provide you with resources to reference and conditions to consider as you make plans toward your next academic venture.

Have a question specific to the application and admissions process? Please feel free to contact our graduate enrollment coordinator below.

Sonja Williams

Coordinator, Graduate Enrollment Manager

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For additional information on Marymount University's Master of Arts in Interior Design, visit our website!

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