

**POLYU
DES'GN**

Master of Design

Innovative
Business Design

Smart
Service Design

Intelligent
Systems Design

Transitional
Environments Design



The Master of Design (MDes) offers four specialisms:

- Innovative Business Design (IBD)**
- Intelligent Systems Design (ISD)**
- Smart Service Design (SSD)**
- Transitional Environments Design (TED)**

Situated in Hong Kong, a world-class city that blends Eastern and Western influences, MDes provides an international environment for students. While the programme is conducted in English, students engage with the evolving context of Chinese culture, fostering interdisciplinary skills and cultural experiences that enhance their creative, critical, and analytical thinking.

The curriculum encourages the exploration of interdisciplinary design aspects across specialisms, in alignment with global trends. Our diverse faculty, composed of international and interdisciplinary experts, equips students to take charge of their learning and development in the rapidly evolving world of design.

Read Our Prospectus

Sep 2026 Entry



Project Showcase



Apply



IBD

INNOVATIVE BUSINESS DESIGN



IBD is an interdisciplinary specialism designed to equip students with the skills and competencies needed to lead transformational change in organisations and society. Through its comprehensive approach, students gain a deep understanding of the complexities of today's global market, emphasising the critical roles of creativity, innovation and responsible business practices in fostering sustainable growth.



Specialism Leader

Prof. Sylvia Xihui Liu

Assistant Dean (Academic Programmes) and Associate Professor, PhD (PolyU)



Deputy Specialism Leader

Prof. Kevin Denney

Professor of Practice (Social Innovation); Director, Li Ka Shing Design and Innovation Centre

Career Prospects

Graduates could benefit from the programme by equipping the necessary skills and competencies to think critically, challenge traditional business models, and develop innovative solutions to complex problems.

Eligibility

A candidate shall hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent in design, business, humanities, or a technological field from an institution recognised by PolyU, preferably along with two years of relevant professional experience, and shall satisfy PolyU English Language Requirement.

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IBD
Core Team

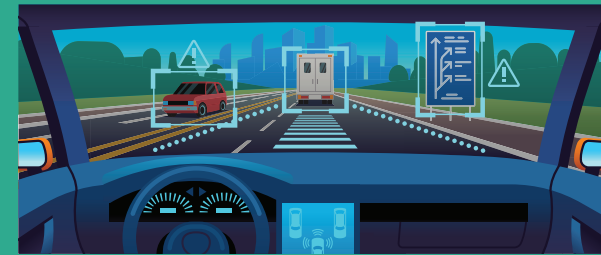


Programme Code
and Subcode

73035-IBD (Full-time)
73035-IBP (Part-time)

ISD

INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS DESIGN



ISD is an innovative specialism centered on interdisciplinarity, integrating intelligent technologies, systems theories and innovative design approaches. It combines professional knowledge from STEAM fields (STEM + Art & Design) to drive transformative industrial innovation. It also supports advanced and competitive industries through the application of cutting-edge technologies and processes, such as AI, Industry 4.0, robotics, and AIoT (AI + IoT), facilitated by systemic design innovations.



Specialism Leader

Prof. Stephen Jia Wang

Director, Research Centre of Future (Caring) Mobility; Chairman, Postgraduate Programme Committee; Professor, PhD (Tokyo University of the Arts)



Deputy Specialism Leader

Prof. Hailiang Wang

Assistant Professor; PhD (HKU)

Career Prospects

Graduates could benefit from the programme by nurturing the creativity and design ability to embrace intelligent (especially AI-enabled) and systemic approaches and developing the awareness of current and emerging technologies in the innovation industry and the advanced manufacturing (e.g., Industry 4.0) environment.

Eligibility

A candidate shall hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent in design, STEM, or a related discipline (e.g. communication, psychology or anthropology) from an institution recognised by PolyU and shall satisfy PolyU English Language Requirement.

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ISD
Core Team



Programme Code
and Subcode

73035-ISD (Full-time)
73035-ISP (Part-time)

SSD

SMART SERVICE DESIGN



SSD is an interdisciplinary specialism dedicated to creating impactful service interventions at the intersection of business, technology, and human ingenuity. It broadens the scope of design beyond traditional commercial practices, focusing on the socio-technical dimension with a critical, systemic, and human-centered perspective in service design. Students enhance their theoretical and practical knowledge of service design through SSD, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the technological, commercial, societal, and organisational contexts. This foundation enables the transformation of design opportunities into innovative and sustainable service experiences.



Specialism Leader

Prof. Shera Hyunyim Park
Assistant Professor; PhD (RCA)

Career Prospects

Graduates could benefit from the programme by equipping the necessary professional skills to meet the demands of careers in the service industry.

Eligibility

A candidate shall hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent in design, business, humanities or a technological field from an institution recognised by PolyU and shall satisfy PolyU English Language Requirement.

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SSD
Core Team



Programme Code
and Subcode

73035-SSD (Full-time)
73035-SSP (Part-time)

TED

TRANSITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS DESIGN



TED is a specialism developed to address the unprecedented rural and urban changes occurring in recent decades in Hong Kong and mainland China. It aims to cultivate students' intellectual and practical mastery in analysing and designing diverse rural and urban environments, with implications extending to global contexts. The approach is grounded in an understanding of the sociocultural dynamics of the region, transforming these insights into innovative design strategies and interventions.



Specialism Leader

Prof. Laurent Gutierrez
Professor; PhD (RMIT)



Deputy Specialism Leader

Prof. Daniel Elkin
Associate Professor

Career Prospects

Graduates could benefit from the programme by equipping critical approach to environmental and ecological design for designing systems-level change in our urban environments from being a consumption to a regenerative system.

Eligibility

A candidate shall hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent in spatial design, architecture, landscape design, or urban and rural design or a related discipline (e.g. environmental studies, ecology, biology or urban studies) or an interdisciplinary field (e.g. ecological economics, environmental sociology, or environmental management and technology) from an institution recognised by PolyU and shall satisfy PolyU English Language Requirement.

Read
More



TED
Core Team



Programme Code
and Subcode

73035-TED (Full-time)
73035-TEP (Part-time)

<p>The Backstory</p> <p>Master of Design (MDes) Scheme</p>	
<p>The MDes was the first scheme-based, taught postgraduate programme at PolyU when it was founded in 2004, superseding the MA in Design launched in the 1993. The innovative curriculum aims to foster a learning environment that empowers students in exploring transdisciplinarity, developing new approaches, and becoming an all-around creative talent.</p> <p>In 2009, <i>BusinessWeek</i> rated Design Strategies (MDes) as one of the World’s 30 Best Design Thinking Programmes.</p> <p>In 2022, the MDes launched a refreshed, all-new curriculum under a new vision to nurture proactive leaders and game-changers for the future industry. This new direction was informed by insights and analysis from nearly three years of research, reviews, and consultations with various stakeholder groups. The results are the four specialisms: Innovative Business Design (IBD), Intelligent Systems Design (ISD), Smart Service Design (SSD), and Transitional Environments Design (TED).</p> <p>In 2025, the University Grants Committee (UGC) recognised the MDes as an eligible programme of the Hong Kong Future Talents Scholarship Scheme for Advanced Studies (FTSS) in the priority area of creative industries conducive to the development of Hong Kong.</p> <p>Characterised by high-level flexibility and variety, the MDes gives new impetus to interdisciplinary research and education in the region. Design thinking is, by nature, unorthodox; designers have a broader vision for the world, seeing it as systems to be organised and integrated. Areas of study (specialisms) become sources of knowledge and patterns that inform their work towards generating opportunities arising from global challenges. In the MDes, designers of innovation feel at home in the arts, humanities, science, engineering, and mathematics.</p>	<p>Scheme Leader Prof. Stephen J. Wang</p> <p>Former Leadership (in chronological order) Prof. Sharon Poggenpohl, Prof. John Heskett, Prof. Tim Jachna, Prof. Mingxi Tang Prof. Roger Ball, Prof. Laurent Gutierrez</p>

<p>Leading hub of design education and research for Hong Kong</p> <p>PolyU School of Design</p>
<p>PolyU Design has been an important hub for design education and research for Hong Kong, offering quality undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to nurture creative talent across a wide range of industries. The School of Design is a place where East meets West, allowing students to develop their design expertise while gaining a deep understanding of industry and society, through a unique international and cultural perspective.</p> <p>The School of Design is one of the 11 faculties at PolyU. The University is ranked among the world’s top 100 institutions, with 6 subjects—Art & Design, Hospitality & Leisure Management, Nursing, Architecture & Built Environment, Civil & Structural Engineering, and Marketing — ranked in the global top 25.</p> <p>The excellence of our design education is recognised on both the local and international stage. Internationally, the School was ranked 15th on the <i>Quacquarelli Symonds</i> (QS) World University Rankings by Subject—Art & Design in 2020 and is consistently ranked among the top 25 in the world. Locally, the School is the only government-funded university among 22 degree-awarding higher education institutions in Hong Kong offering design education from undergraduate to doctoral levels taught in English and nurturing more than 1,100 students annually.</p> <p>Located in PolyU’s main campus in Hung Hom, Kowloon, the School of Design provides a high-level, well-equipped environment for design education and innovation within the Jockey Club Innovation Tower (JCIT)—a landmark building designed by Zaha Hadid (1950–2016). Home to PolyU Design, the JCIT features a range of first-class design studios overlooking the campus, along with state-of-the-art labs and workshops, exhibition areas, multi-functional classrooms, lecture theatre. These are complemented by informal spaces designed to foster interaction, idea exchange, and collaboration.</p>

Student Messages

As an entrepreneur with over a decade of experience in interior design, I have found that the IBD programme has **deepened my understanding of the intersection between design, business, and technology**. By collaborating closely with peers from diverse backgrounds, we explore commercial and industrial opportunities, leveraging design as a powerful tool to tackle challenges.



Jingshu (Candy) Li



Kanglan (Connie) Liu

If you are aspiring to extend your boundaries or start your business, I highly recommend the IBD programme. What it taught is **the ability to think adaptively in a complex world**.

I wholeheartedly recommend ISD to **aspiring students who seek to explore the unknown and shape the future**. Its interdisciplinary approach, transformative perspectives, and strong industry collaborations offer a valuable and authentic journey of professional growth.



Linyi Liu



Daniel Lo

This programme has **opened not only doors but also entire new avenues in academia and industry**, broadening my career prospects and instilling in me the confidence to tackle complex challenges. I highly recommend the ISD programme to anyone looking to make an innovative and meaningful impact on society.

What I valued most about the SSD programme was its human-centred and systems-thinking approach, which helped me understand how design can reshape services for greater societal impact. This experience not only **broadened my skill set** but also **clarified my ambition** to work at the intersection of design strategy and social innovation.



Chong leong (Benson) Kuok



Ji Wang

The one-year SSD programme **delivered exceptional value far beyond its duration**, equipping me with invaluable knowledge, unexpected opportunities, and lifelong professional connections. My year as an SSD postgraduate at PolyU stands out as a transformative chapter that continues to shape my professional trajectory.

Student Projects

Tackling transformative challenges shaped by advanced technologies and responsible worldviews.

Innovative Business Design (IBD)



Grow Green—A transformative initiative integrating environmental protection into the milk tea market



VEGO—A transformative business model that turns food waste into value, advancing zero-waste principles and the circular economy

Intelligent Systems Design (ISD)

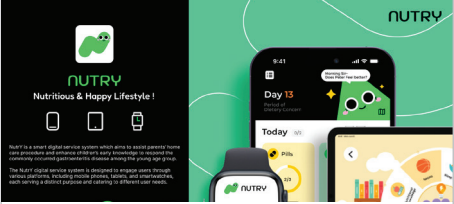


Nomind—emotionally intelligent in-car AI using MBTI-inspired traits for deeper, adaptive interactions.

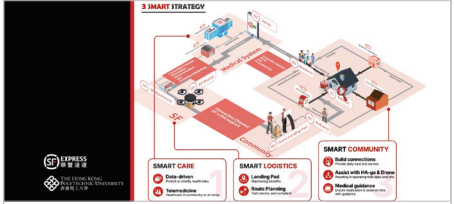


XPLOER—A eco-tourism system-design for millennial adventures in eVTOL

Smart Service Design (SSD)



Skycare with SF Express—enhancing the medication and healthcare experience for Cheung Chau's seniors

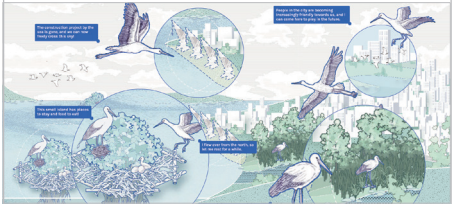


Nutry—A smart digital service system for assisting young children home caring

Transitional Environments Design (TED)



NbSoil Penny's Bay—A project exploring the concept of soil health in Hong Kong's Lantau Island



Building 'Bridges' Between Islands for Herons

Curriculum

MDes comprises four specialisms that share a common curriculum. Students are required to complete a total of 37 credits distributed across the following categories:

Compulsory Common subjects: 6 credits

- Research and Analysis for Design (3 credits)
- Research and Academic Writing (3 credits)

Compulsory Specialism subjects: 15 credits

- Specialism Major (3 credits)
- Lab Studies (3 credits)
- Specialism Studio/ Project (3 credits)
- Capstone Research Project (6 credits)

Elective subjects:

Elective Pool A: 12 credits (4 subjects) + Elective Pool B: 3 credits (1 subject)

Foundation

- Design Methods (Advanced)
- Design Project Management
- Design for Transformation
- Designing Services
- UX Design Fundamentals
- Prototyping and Scripting
- Design for the Biosphere
- Design for Change
- Design Systems Thinking

Specialism Major

- Innovate with Lifestyle and Culture
- Advanced Service Design Methods and Tools
- Socio-Technical Service Ecosystem
- Systemic Innovation and Designing Future Services
- Theories in Interaction Design
- Advanced Visualisation and Interaction
- Regenerative Ecosystems Design
- Territories, Societies, and Spatial Complexes

Interdisciplinary Studio/ Project

- Interdisciplinary Project
- Interdisciplinary Studio
- Regenerative Environments Design

Lab Studies

- Lab Studies in Human Cyber-Physical Systems
- Lab Studies in Systems Design
- Lab Studies in Intelligent Systems Construction
- Lab Studies in Data-Driven Service Design
- Lab Studies in Applied Technologies for Territorial Design

Academic Integrity and Ethics Requirement subject: 1 credit

- Academic Integrity and Ethics in Science

Application and Admission Information

Timeline

Appication Period 2025/07/02 -2026/04/30	→	Review Deadlines 2025/10/15 Early Round ↓ 2026/01/15 Main Round ↓ 2026/04/30 Extended Round	→	Academic Year 2026/2027 Starts 2026/08/31
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Application Procedures

Online Application (eAdmission)

polyu.edu.hk/admission

Additional Supporting Documents

- Personal Statement
- Two Letters of Recommendation Letters,
- Transcripts and Certificates
- Design Portfolio/ Self-Introduction Presentation
- Copy of English Test Results (Min. score: TOEFL iBT 80, IELTS 6.0)



Interview

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview to explore how specific specialisms align with their personal and professional development goals.

Student Visa Application

Applicants with a student visa, IANG visa, or dependant visa (issued at age 18 or above) are classified as “non-local students.” All non-local students must obtain a student visa to study in Hong Kong.

Non-local applicants are required to submit a student visa application to the Hong Kong Immigration Department via PolyU upon admission. Please note that processing may take 8 to 10 weeks. It is advisable to submit the application, along with all required documents, to PolyU as soon as you receive either a conditional or firm offer.

<p>A Talent Hub and City Full of Opportunities</p> <p>Hong Kong</p>		
<p>Explore why Hong Kong is a top destination for design studies, offering a vibrant city, innovative ecosystems, and world-class education.</p> <p>A Cosmopolitan City with Vibrant Culture</p> <p>Hong Kong is a global city known for its diverse culinary scene, dynamic urban environment, and high safety standards, making it an ideal place for international students.</p> <p>Thriving Innovation, Technology, and Startup Ecosystem</p> <p>Hong Kong is a hub for innovation, with a booming startup scene and cutting-edge technology, providing design students with opportunities to engage in creative industries.</p> <p>World-Class Education and Service Industries</p> <p>Hong Kong is home to five universities ranked among the top 100 globally, offering exceptional design programmes, a bridge for both mainland and global exposure, and non-local student friendly policies, and strong industry ties for internships and networking.</p> <p>Supportive Visa Policies for Non-local Students: Study and Career Opportunities in Hong Kong</p> <p>Hong Kong offers supportive visa policies for non-local students, including a temporary arrangement that lets full-time postgraduates take part-time jobs during their studies—enhancing their understanding of the local work culture. After graduation, the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG) scheme allows eligible students to stay for up to 24 months, offering a new starting point for their careers.</p>		
<p>Study Design in Hong Kong</p> 	<p>Living in Hong Kong – Budgeting Guide</p> 	

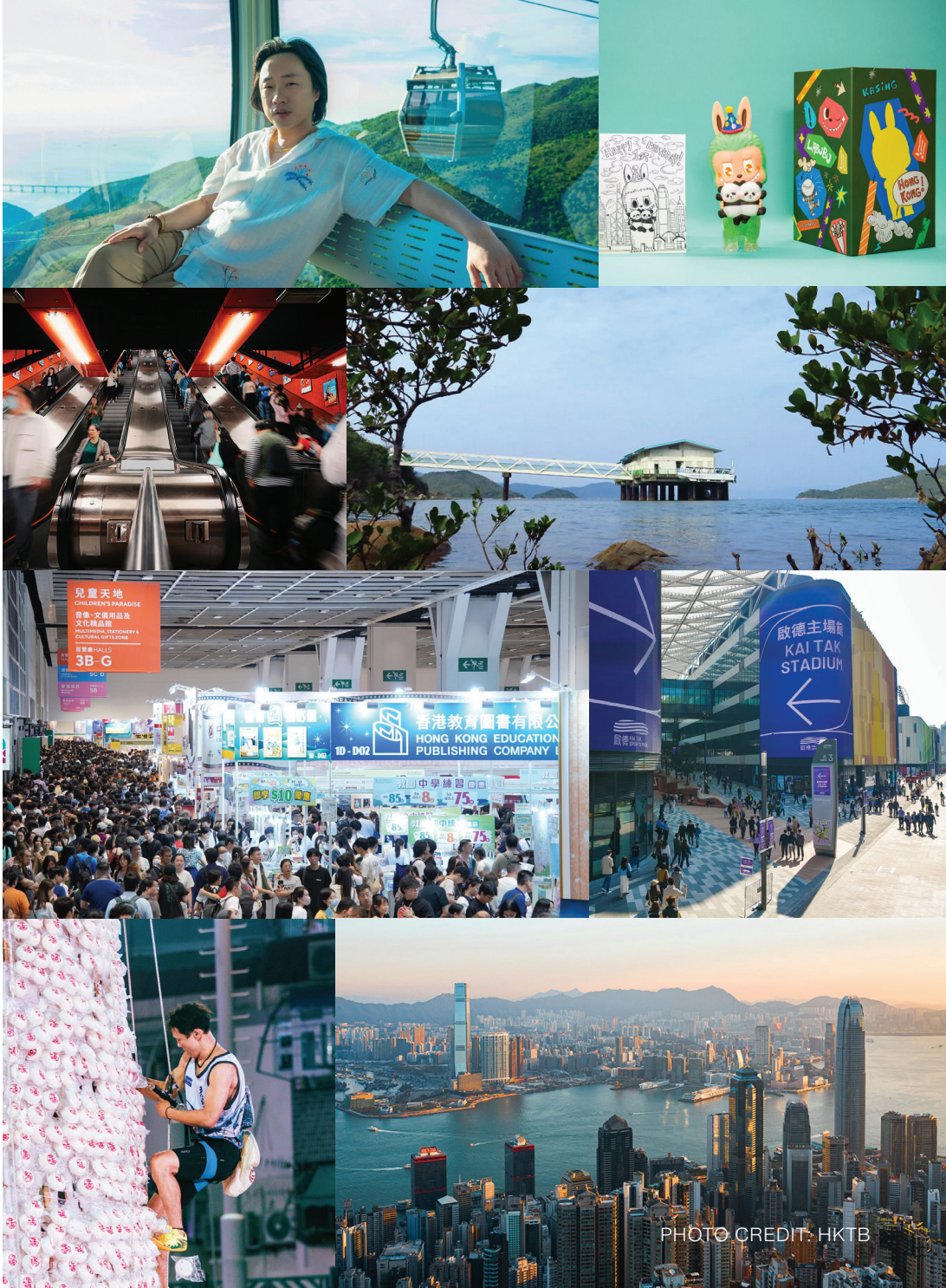



PHOTO CREDIT: HKTB

Programme Essentials at a Glance

Mode of Study	Full-time: local and non-local students Part-time: local students only
Funding Type	Self-financed
Normal Duration	Full-time: 1 year Part-time: 3 years
Tuition Fee	Per credit: HK\$7,400 Total: HK\$266,400 (for 36 credits)
Class Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All classes are held during the day on weekdays. • Except for the Academic Integrity and Ethics Requirement subject, all other classes are conducted face-to-face, and attendance requirements may be enforced. • The academic year comprises three semesters, including a summer term, which is dedicated to intensive collaborative work and project development. Internships are not permitted during the study period.
Mode of Application Processing	Applications are processed on a rolling basis. Review of applications will start before the deadline and continue until all places are filled. Early applications are therefore strongly encouraged.
Initial Registration Credits	9 for local full-time students 6 for local part-time students 12 for non-local full-time students
Financial Aid	<p>Hong Kong Future Talents Scholarship Scheme for Advanced Studies (FTSS) for the 2026/27 academic year</p> <p>The scholarship will subsidise the programme tuition fee for awardees, capped at HK\$100,000 per student, after they pay a minimum tuition fee of HK\$47,000.</p> <p>Local students admitted to approved programmes in 2026/27 are eligible to apply, regardless of the programme's duration or mode of study.</p> <div>  <p>About FTSS</p> </div>

School of Design
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hung Hom, Kowloon
Hong Kong

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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
School of Design (PolyU Design)

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Information printed in this booklet is as of the above last edited date. Programme details including tuition fees are subject to revision. Should there be any discrepancy between this booklet and the Study@PolyU (www.polyu.edu.hk/study/pg) or other related websites, the information contained in the electronic versions is final.

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School of Design

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