

# NCAD – SHAPING DESIGN IN IRELAND AND BEYOND



**NCAD plays a crucial role in developing design practitioners and researchers to meet the growing demand for designers in Ireland and beyond, and helping shape the nature of the discipline.**

# NCAD

NCAD offers the richest and most diverse range of postgraduate design programmes on the island of Ireland. We have a shared belief in the transformative potential of an NCAD education to equip our graduates with the bold curiosity and the new design thinking which society critically needs.

We are ambitious to find new ways to work with each other and the wider community, to continuously redefine and expand the boundaries of design practice, to make a difference and, as our mission states, to change the world.

**The School of Design at NCAD aims to produce graduate students who will be leaders in their field through practice-based research, enquiry, experimentation and design development at the highest level.**

The School's taught and research programmes, at masters and doctoral level, create a stimulating and challenging environment in which students can develop their analytical, critical and communicative abilities, their professional knowledge of contemporary design practices and debate, and their own design practice.

The quality of our design education and research is globally recognised, and NCAD is the top ranked art and design institution in Ireland, and in the top 50 institutions in Europe (*QS world university rankings by subject – academic reputation*).

Students are at the heart of everything we do at NCAD; a creative force who learn using imagination and action, through bold and curious thinking, and through making and doing. Just as NCAD is a national institution like no other, an NCAD design education is like no other.

## **Demand for designers and design skills**

As Design Practice evolves at a pace, it is clear that there are considerable design skills gaps in Ireland at all levels from junior designers to leadership roles.

Design roles have doubled in the past five years, from around 23,000 in 2014 to 44,000 in 2019.

The report *Together for Design*, commissioned by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs forecasts the need for digital, product and strategic design skills over the years 2020 to 2025.

The report finds that by 2025 occupations in digital, product and strategic design could see a growth

between 21,000 to 33,000, accounting for 2.8% of all jobs in Ireland. NCAD offers a range of postgraduate programmes that explicitly address these skills gaps, providing courses that meet the design needs of industry and wider society.

Read the full report here: <http://www.egfsn.ie/all-publications/2020/together-for-design.pdf>

## **The evolving definition of Design**

The definition of design has evolved rapidly in recent years as technological advances impact our design capabilities, while societal shifts demand increasingly sophisticated, human-centred, and strategic design responses.

While two thirds of designers work for organisations employing less than 50 people, research has shown an emerging cohort of designers working in-house across a broad range of sectors and organisation size; from finance to food, health to pharmaceuticals, design permeates every industry and sector.

In a world where users' expectations for simpler and more elegant solutions are very high and the lines between hardware, software and services are blurring, design becomes a critical capability and strategic differentiator. Where previously design was seen solely as the remit of graphic designers, fashion designers, product and industrial designers, and a few other clearly defined roles, there has been a steady evolution to include those who employ design processes, services, and systems. Design thinking is now a preferred approach in business strategy, consultancy and research, while technological

disruption has brought capabilities such as User Experience (UX) and User Interface (UI) design to the fore, becoming a core offering of multidisciplinary design practices.

Looking across the design landscape, it is apparent that the evolution of design means that it is no longer just for products and services. Executives are using this approach to devise strategy, manage change, and drive business growth (Design Council, 2018).

Realising that design can be a powerful conversion tool with the ability to turn strategy into tangible business results, companies in the healthcare, technology, finance, transportation, and entertainment sectors are leaning on and investing in optimised design strategies to support their evolution and growth. This shift means that design is now reaching beyond the aesthetic, it is about applying the principles of design to the way people work.

Design students at NCAD start with concepts and questions, challenging established design precepts and socio-cultural, ethical and technical assumptions to ensure that they don't simply play a role in shaping objects, materials and spaces for today's customers, but begin to define the very nature of what society may need, want and desire in the future. The School of Design at NCAD aims to create a design culture engaged in ongoing debate on all aspects of design; a culture that thrives on new ideas, new ways of doing things and new areas of exploration and meets the challenges of a rapidly evolving world.

Read the full Design Practice in Ireland Report here: <http://www.idi-design.ie/about/news/the-design-practice-in-ireland-report/>