



IIE Masters in Design Leadership

Master's

Distance

The IIE Masters in Design Leadership is a coursework Masters directed at people who wish to deepen and enhance their strategic thinking and leadership capabilities by integrating design, innovation and entrepreneurship, business, and research. The purpose of this programme is to equip designers and design thinkers with an understanding of the innovative and integrative potential of design and business planning skills, making it the ideal platform to become a strategic design lead in a design or other enterprise or launch one's own business in the design and creative industries. The qualification allows flexible development of individual design fields while also providing a cross-disciplinary vision for areas of forward-thinking design. Graduates will develop skills to work independently and collaboratively, propose and develop strategic and innovative design-led solutions based on analysis and research evidence, communicate these to different audiences and provide guidance and leadership to project teams, design teams, juniors, and non-designers.

For the creators.

vegaschool.com



IIE Masters in Design Leadership

2 Years Part-Time Distance | NQF Level 9 | 180 Credits | SAQA ID:*

July intake.

Career opportunities

- Design Leads and managers in design businesses and advertising agencies
- Design Leads, project lead or senior in-house designers in “non-design” sectors such as finance engineering, NGOs, education, government
- Owners of Design Enterprises
- Design and Creative Entrepreneurs
- Freelancers
- Design-based Entrepreneurs
- Design Lecturers and Supervisors
- Design Researchers
- Social Innovators
- Managers applying design thinking
- Developers of design-led solutions

Structure

The IIE Masters in Design Leadership consists of five modules.

Year 1 modules

- Design, Innovation and Leadership Discourse
- Design Research Practice
- Design Management and Leadership Practice

Year 2 module

- Design Leadership Challenge
- Minor Dissertation

Modules

This IIE qualification is only available for a midyear intake commencing in July 2025.

2025 Year 1			2026 Year 2		
Semester 1: July 2025			Semester 2		
Code	Module Name	Credits	Code	Module Name	Credits
DILP9511	Design, Innovation and Leadership Discourse	25	DMLP9512	Design Management and Leadership Practice	25
			DERP9511	Design Research Practice	25
Semester 3					
Code	Module Name	Credits			
DELC9512	Design Leadership Challenge	25			
DEMD9519	Minor Dissertation	80			
Year 3	Submission of Minor Dissertation: midyear 2027				

The two theory modules **Design, Innovation and Leadership Discourse** and **Design Management and Leadership Practice**, further students’ specialist knowledge in design, with a focus on leadership and management skills and insights that should enable students to become thought leaders and develop design-led solutions.

The **Design Research Practice** module provides theoretical and practical exposure to the latest processes of enquiry used in design and design research.

The **Design Leadership Challenge** provides a practical opportunity for students to advance their design thinking skills when planning and developing solutions and insights that address complex and challenging problems in business and society. Students work in their own design areas at the appropriate levels within a system and need to demonstrate the ability to address the intended and unintended consequences of interventions and solutions. This module allows for experimentation and innovative development.

In the **Minor Dissertation**, students use academic and professional discourses to investigate, communicate and defend research ideas and findings that contribute to their own research skills and their area of specialisation. Both research modules contribute to equip students with the ability to research and communicate evidence-based design decisions and solutions to different audiences. All the modules develop independent and critical thinking, accountability for self and teams and the level of ethical professional practice required at managerial levels.

Distance delivery includes

- A distance learning system that leads students through the content, prescribed material and activities.
- Distance academic navigators (tutors) who are subject experts and maintain the human experience of the learning process.
- Regular live distance workshop blocks with your distance navigators throughout the semester.
- Distance dissertation supervisors who guide students’ research design, development and learning.
- A dedicated success navigator who supports students throughout the learning journey.
- Access to our distance information centre and resources.

Note: While you can generally structure your study time as you need, there are scheduled distance sessions during which you will get mediated support. Scheduled assessments in the form of online activities, assignments and exams are paced to ensure your studies progress.

What you need in terms of time and materials

- Prescribed textbooks are available for online purchase.
- Distance students need to commit to approximately 12-15 hours a week for distance engagement (most of which is after hours) with material and assessments to succeed.

Please note synchronous sessions generally take place after hours.

Please note that this fact sheet is accurate at the time of publication. The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) reserves the right to alter any of the content prior to commencement of registration due to changes in regulation, policy, market requirements, or any other valid reason.

To succeed in your distance journey, you need to be

- Self-motivated and invested in your learning journey.
- Disciplined and able to balance studying with work and family commitments.
- Able to direct your own studies, maintaining a diligent pace.

To assist you in succeeding in your distance journey, our teaching approach is

- Student-centric: we facilitate your thought processes to foster innovative ideas and creative solutions.
- Authentic: we use real-life examples and case studies.
- Activity-based: We move your learning forward through applied activities and assessments.
- Discussion-based: we ask you questions and stimulate debate to provoke deep thought and insights about course content.

Device and Connectivity Specifications Required for Online Study

- Reliable internet connection (we recommend 5-10 GB of data per month and an internet speed of at least 0.15 Mbps).
- Desktop PC or laptop with at least an i3 processor and 4GB RAM memory.
- Windows 8 or macOS 10.15 (Microsoft Office 365 is available as a free download for IIE students), and Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge Chromium or Firefox.
- A working webcam and microphone.
- An uninterrupted power supply is also highly recommended.

Admission requirements

Minimum Admission Requirements:		Notes
	An appropriate HEQSF Level 8 Honours Degree; OR	An overall qualification average of at least 65%.
	A relevant Postgraduate Diploma or appropriate equivalent; OR	
	An appropriate Level 8 Bachelor’s Degree (480 credits) may also be recognised as meeting the minimum entry requirements to a cognate Master’s Degree programme.	
International	A SAQA NQF L8 Evaluation Certificate in an appropriate field	
Students need to have completed an NQF level 8 qualification in a design-related field e.g. Design Leadership, Communication Design, Digital/Multimedia Design, Experience Design, Interaction Design, Fashion Design, Design Thinking, Future Studies and Social Innovation Design.		

**The programme is approved by the CHE and pending registration with SAQA and the Department of Higher Education and Training.*

THE IIE IS ACCREDITED AS AN INDEPENDENT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION BY THE BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL.



Vega is an educational brand of The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd which is registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as a private higher education institution under the Higher Education Act, 1997 (reg. no. 2007/HE07/002). Company registration number: 1987/004754/07

