



AIGA Professional Design Certification Syllabus

Delivery Method: Online, Asynchronous

Contact: support@mindedge.com

Prerequisites/Co-requisites: None

Required Texts and Resources: MindEdge course bundle

Course Description:

This online course provides learners with a fundamental understanding of the most critical areas in design. Throughout four segments, learners will explore the varied tasks, such as design principles, design methods and tools, the role of research, copyright and intellectual property, employment law, ethics, accessibility, diversity and inclusion, leadership, business strategy, and fundamental accounting and finance principles, that entrepreneurial designers must master to be successful. This self-paced course offers an assortment of interactive exercises, videos, case studies, and self-assessments that engage students and provide opportunities to practice fundamental design skills.

Topics covered in the course:

- Design Foundations
- Standards of Professional Practice
- Business Fundamentals for Designers
- Law for Designers

For any questions or concerns related to content, IT, and accommodations, please contact support@mindedge.com.

Students will have access to the course for 1 year. Completion of all components of the material will take approximately 30 hours. Students are able to self-pace their progress through the material, as all content is delivered online and asynchronously.

Grading:

A student's grade in the course will be based on their performance on a final, cumulative exam. The final exam is composed of **80 multiple-choice questions**. Students will have 2.5 hours to complete the exam.

If students do not earn a passing score of 70% on their first attempt, they will have the opportunity to take the exam **2 additional times (3 total attempts)**. Students must wait 24 hours between exam retakes.

Honor Code:

At MindEdge, we believe in the power of online learning and the power of learners to improve their lives through education. We believe in the honesty and integrity of our learners and the ability of our courses to further competencies in critical subjects crucial to personal and professional development.

When taking MindEdge courses that may confer college credit equivalency, we use additional measures to ensure the integrity of end-of-course exams and projects. This includes the use of online proctoring software. End-of-course exams are those built in a self-contained MindEdge “course”—separate from the material used for learning review and study. It’s expected that learners focus exclusively on the exam when taking the exam.

- Referencing the course materials used for learning is not permitted.
- Reviewing other course materials on separate devices or screens is not permitted.
- Working in tandem or communicating with others—either in your immediate proximity or via digital methods (text, chat, FaceTime, etc.)—is not permitted.
- Using alternate browsers or browser windows and search engines of any kind to aid in answering exam questions is not permitted.

The use of the proctoring software is to help ensure these activities don’t happen. Learners are expected to abide by the proctoring process, including the verification of a learner’s true identity as the registered exam taker by providing appropriate and valid identification.

Should the proctoring process raise any flags of suspicion on the items above, MindEdge will contact the learner with the information provided by our provider.

Should MindEdge have sufficient proof that the rules of this honor code were not followed, the learner will not have the opportunity to earn college credit or other continuing education units, as applicable. Any applicable fees paid to any party to take the course are not eligible for a refund of any kind.

Learning Outcomes

Course-level learning outcomes are listed below.

- Define key concepts relevant to effective design practices, including design thinking, prototyping, and UX principles
- Explain how designers apply data and analytics to improve their business practices
- Explain the principles of project management and effective team leadership
- Identify different leadership styles and describe the role of effective negotiation and emotional intelligence for leaders in the field of design
- Recognize the importance of ethical leadership, accessibility, diversity, and inclusion for design professionals

- Explain the role of finance, business strategy, and strategic planning for business leaders and entrepreneurs in the design field
- Define key legal concepts relevant to designers, including intellectual property rights, ADA, and section 508
- Explain different business and employment structures and recognize the legal elements of contracts used in design businesses

Learning Objectives

Below, learning objectives are listed according to topic.

Design Foundations

- Define key concepts relevant to effective design practices
- Identify areas of specialization and potential career paths for designers
- Recognize the application of design in different contexts
- Identify elements of design and how to apply them in practice
- Explain basic web design principles and how to apply them
- Differentiate between basic UX principles and how to apply them
- Define prototyping and recognize prototyping strategies
- Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Explain the role of data in design and define key terms related to data analytics
- Explain common analytical techniques for business and quality improvement
- Identify methods of ensuring the quality of data
- Explain basic data management techniques
- Recognize methods for promoting creativity and innovation in teams and organizations
- Define and describe the phases of design thinking
- Recognize key project management principles and how to apply them to design projects
- Recall common tools and technologies for design and describe how different tools are used in day-to-day design tasks and practices

Standards of Professional Practice

- Recognize the common ethical challenges businesses face
- Identify and explain five traditional ethical frameworks for evaluating decisions and actions
- Recognize common ethical issues for designers in practice
- Explain the function and importance of codes of conduct
- Identify warning signs of ethical problems
- Recall common characteristics of ethical leadership
- Identify employment issues that raise ethical questions
- Define whistleblowing and explain conditions under which it becomes more common
- Identify the elements of corporate social responsibility

- Identify key goals of accessibility
- Identify principles of accessible design
- Analyze accessibility principles applied to design concepts
- Define the relationship between accessibility and inclusive designs
- Define and distinguish between diversity and inclusion
- Identify best practices for promoting inclusivity in the workplace
- Define unconscious bias
- Recognize how to incorporate inclusion into remote and hybrid work settings
- Describe the importance of inclusive design and its relation to diversity and inclusion
- Interpret the relationship between inclusion and accessibility
- Identify elements of inclusive leadership practices

Business Fundamentals for Designers

- Identify leadership styles and methods
- Recognize best practices for leading and managing teams
- Define emotional intelligence and describe its role in effectively managing teams and client relationships
- Identify primary HR responsibilities
- Describe key aspects of performance management systems
- Recognize how to effectively coach team members
- Recall key elements of effective negotiation
- Identify project management tools and techniques
- Identify project planning principles
- Define business strategy and describe steps for strategic planning
- Recognize the entrepreneurial mindset
- Define strategic communication
- Identify methods for strategic planning in marketing
- Define the importance of budgeting and financial planning
- Define double-entry accounting
- Recognize the steps that make up the accounting cycle
- Identify the primary financial statements
- Differentiate between the four major pricing strategies
- Describe the value of performing breakeven analysis
- Define financial (ratio) analysis and explain its objectives

Law for Designers

- Define intellectual property and explain how it applies to design professionals
- Identify the four major types of intellectual property
- Recall factors used to determine fair use of copyrighted materials
- Define how licensing provides permission to use intellectual property

- Define ADA and Section 508 compliance
- Identify the common goals of accessibility laws and guidelines
- Recall specific ways websites and webpages must comply with accessibility laws
- Define Universal Design and explain how it accommodates those with disabilities
- Identify the five titles and four pillars of ADA
- Recognize the purpose of the Rehabilitation Act and the requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Recognize different legal structures in business
- Identify key differences between independent contractors and employees
- Define the legal elements involved in forming a contract
- Define nondisclosure agreements