Grounded in studio-based instruction and deeply concerned with the human experience, UIC Design programs are organized to reflect and to advance developments in the field. Students develop formal, conceptual, and technical skills necessary to engage in contemporary design practice. Advanced students are provided opportunities to work collaboratively in interdisciplinary teams, often engaging with partners in community or industry. Through exposure to design practices, exhibitions, and critical observation, students experience Chicago as a global design center.

The School offers two undergraduate degrees: Bachelor of Design (BDes) and Bachelor of Arts in Design Studies (BA in Design Studies). The four-year BDes offers focused professional education in a specific discipline, either Graphic Design or Industrial Design. The BA in Design Studies offers a hands-on education in design practices that range from typographic forms and systems to design research methods, and the design requirements for the degree can be completed in three years. Curricula for both programs focus on critical contemporary challenges in the field and prepare students to engage the complex demands of a rapidly changing professional environment.

All UIC Design students participate in the Foundations Program. Students interested in pursuing the Bachelor of Design must complete the full Foundations Program, comprising six studio courses that introduce various techniques in two- and three-dimensional form-making and conceptual visualization in preparation for advanced design studies. Students in the Bachelor of Arts in Design Studies program participate partially in the Foundations Program, taking four studio courses that explore color theory and the use of analog and digital methods in design visualization.

Bachelor of Design
The UIC Bachelor of Design (BDes) offers a focused, studio-intensive professional education that prepares students for direct entry into professional practice in graphic design or industrial design and the related outgrowths of these disciplines in an expanding job market. Upon completion of the full Foundations Program students undergo a portfolio review in consideration for acceptance into a major area of study: Graphic Design or Industrial Design.

Graphic Design
Graphic design makes ideas visible. Instruction combines the art of typography with the skillful rendering of signs, symbols, and images. The practice of graphic design serves to communicate, distinguish, characterize, clarify, brand, instruct, guide, promote, and inform. Students learn to communicate visually—and compellingly—across print and digital media in the service of community, industry, and the greater good.