master of science: design and health
The Master of Science concentration in Design and Health (MS_DH) is a 2.5 semester (fall, winter, spring half) post-professional degree in architecture that examines the impact of the built environment on the human body across multiple scales. The concentration promotes critical assessments of existing design practices, while seeking to catalyze new opportunities for design and architecture to positively influence health.

Given technological advances in science and emerging theoretical frameworks within the humanities, awareness of health-related issues is an acutely global concern. The role of design in the MS_DH concentration works across the grain of the sciences and humanities. As forms of cultural production, health-related issues are distributed between medical models and social models, with the medical model acting as the dominant paradigm. The concentration explores the confluence of these models, and suggests that design thinking is necessary to co-produce new methodologies and ways of effectively engaging the complex relationships between design and health in a global context.

Within a 21st century context this concentration seeks to develop new frameworks for debate regarding the role of design in expanding healthy lifestyles, the challenges of structural-level disparities in access to healthcare facilities and amenities, and the relationship of how pathologies of social systems to design processes and symptom expression. The concentration combines case study and action-based methods in order to deploy multi-disciplinary approaches to understanding health as an individual and collective challenge. Topics of study engage the human body, disparate access to healthcare, hospitals and institutional health systems, and environmental conditions that influence health outcomes. Project-based and case study-based instruction will locate individual and collective actions within institutional and political contexts, thus fostering policy innovations on issues ranging from resource allocation and zoning to transport and agricultural infrastructure.

As urbanization continues to affect health, the impact of urban design will be of particular interest in examining the interplay between population density, transport infrastructure, access to food and water, and overall health.

Participants will be challenged to chart their unique future career path through openly questioning the relationship between architecture, public health and medicine. New forms of practice can emerge, as well as new forms of collaboration, from basic scientific research to technological interfaces within designed objects and buildings.

The University of Michigan is home to a vibrant constellation of academic, professional, and clinical units with which to partner, including but not limited to subject areas of medicine, pediatrics, public health, obesity, sustainability, kinesiology, and biomechanics.
MS_DH required courses
(36 credit hours required for the degree)

MS Proseminar (3 credits)
MS Practicum (6 credits)
MS Capstone (6 credits)
Health: Individual Infrastructures (3 credits)
Health: Civic Infrastructures (3 credits)
Theories in Design and Health (3 credits)
2 architecture elective courses (6 credits)
2 cognate courses (6 credits)