

Digital Media

(Media Informatics / Media Design)

A Guide for Applying to the Media Informatics Focus for the Master of Science Degree at University of Bremen

1. Preface

The Digital Media program at University of the Arts Bremen and University of Bremen is a combination of media design and media informatics. It aims to build a bridge between arts and science, design and technology. Students apply for admission at one of the two universities depending on their desired focus on arts or science but take courses at both universities together. This is our distinctive feature. This document explains the application for the media informatics focus at University of Bremen leading to a Master of Science degree. Applicants with stronger artistic or design background should apply at the University of the Arts Bremen.

Thanks for your interest in our program!

2. Requirements

As this is a graduate level program, we expect you have already prior competences. You need dependable competences in computer science (programming, algorithms, software engineering). This should include topics involving media and their perception by humans (e.g. computer graphics, HCI, multimedia systems, UI/UX, user studies). Also, you should have some experience with media design (e.g. game design, photography, drawing, painting, videography, music, social media content, gadgets meant for interaction). Also, since media is all about communication, you should be able to express your thoughts, ideas, messages clearly in various forms.

Your computer-science skills usually come from your bachelor's degree. Topics on media and perception may also come from online courses or work experience. The media design experience can be part of projects in your bachelor. It can also be an external activity, e.g. a hobby or online learning. Often both sources contribute. Cultural science courses with relation to media are also a plus. In principle, everything can contribute to every competence. However, if your Bachelor is rather in design, it is probably better to apply at the University of the Arts Bremen for the Media Design focus. If your bachelor is in journalism or cultural sciences, you need very strong additional sources for the media informatics and media design competences required.

We assess your abilities not only through grades or certificates but also through demonstrated work. We want to see what you were practically able to create, in particular in the interplay between design and technology. Also, we want to see your ability to communicate complex things to the point. Thus, we require a portfolio of your work in form of a 5 minutes video. This is explained in detail later.

The program is entirely in taught in English with C1 level required, German is not required. The video helps to assess your English communication skills, but note that for enrollment at the latest an official C1-certificate is needed.

3. Application Grading Process

According to these requirements, your application is graded by an admission commission regarding the following four criteria:

- bachelor grade (CGPA)
- relevance of your bachelor studies to the combination of media informatics and media design competences required
- quality of your portfolio in showing practical competences across media informatics and media design as well as communicating these
- relevant work experience if existing counts as bonus, weighted half as strongly as every of the points above

4. Video based Portfolio

The portfolio is a video of strictly no more than 5 minutes length. It shall show your works in the broad range of digital media and convince us that you have the requirements discussed above. 5 minutes is rather short. Practically this is the time the commission can allocate for each portfolio. Beyond that it is also a challenge for you to communicate the essential points of your work concisely. This is a very essential media skill.

4.1. General

You have much freedom in style and tone. The video shall convey your motivation, your prior experience and your ability to present in a way that conveys this. Usually concise and concrete is a guideline. The most important thing is to include both media informatics (the application of computer science methods to media, beyond just using existing programs) and media design (the conscious choice of shape and appearance to convey meaning).

4.2. Introduction

The video starts with a part where we see you in person and you explain with your own voice briefly your motivation for joining the digital media program. Please be as concrete and concise as possible. Professional equipment is not required, but ensure a clear picture and sound. A smartphone and the room and lights you have available are enough.

4.3. Collection of Works

The main part of the video is your collection of works. These can be part of your studies or extracurricular. Visually we see your work, maybe involving sound as well and in addition you explain what's seen as an off-screen narrator or talking head overlay. The goal is not to show as many works as possible, but rather to show the best you did while covering the range from media informatics to media design.

Please incorporate the following details and hints:

- Prioritize visual demonstration over verbal description, but explain what's necessary to understand your work but cannot be seen.
- Explain, what's the point of your work as concisely as possible.
- Choose roughly 2-5 works that cover the range from media informatics to media design and are your best ones.
- The above numbers depend on how much time an individual work needs in the video. Some e.g. a web app need minutes of explanation, others e.g. a photo, drawing or painting explain themselves in a few seconds.
- Cover different types of work along the range from media informatics to media design and definitely show works that involve programming and that involve design
- The video stays confidential with the commission, for the case that content has restrictions

4.4. Hints for specific types of work

You are free to present your work as you think is best. Here are some hints for different types of works:

- General: State whether you created assets or took them from some source (e.g. stock photos) and which software framework/tool(s) you used. This can also be done visually by overlaid text, in particular if it doesn't fit into your narration.
- General: Group works are fine, but you need to briefly state your personal contribution.
- Web page or app: Screen record a (partial) walkthrough that highlights what the app is about and how complex or elaborate it is. Use the voice over to explain context information that's not directly visible, e.g. about the application or about processing running in the background. Mention, whether icons, logos, pictures etc. are your work, relevant technical challenges and any form of special design process involved.
- Game or interactive experience: Screen record the game in action with audio. Use an excerpt that highlights the quality and extent best. Use the voice over to explain motivating or technical highlights. Mention which assets are your work.
- Computer program relating to media: Screen record the program and explain where the technical contribution lies. This is very general, as there are many types of programs. Highlight both the media relation and the technical challenge.
- Short movie: Show some excerpt or trailer that presents your movie best. Comment, what is your personal contribution, since movies are usually team work.
- Study with humans: Show a picture illustrating the experiment and comment what it is about. If you have complex findings, a statistical chart is good. Otherwise, a verbal remark on the result is best.
- Designs such as packaging, ads, logos, etc.: Show them for some seconds, comment if you want. Make clear, what you did yourself, if not obvious.
- Paintings, drawing or photos: Show them for some seconds, comment if you want. Photos need to show a conscious choice of subject, perspective, light situation and mood to count as a contribution.
- Physical device: Show a video of the device in use or operation. Comment what was the technical challenge. In the development of the device, human machine interaction should play a significant role.
- Thesis: There is no general best way to present a thesis. If the main contribution of the thesis is of one of the types listed above, go with the recommendation of that type. If not, think about a good way to present it. Slides are okay, but need to be more like an elevator pitch talk than a full presentation. In general, showing something is better than only talking about it. If the thesis contains nothing that can be shown well, it is doubtful whether it qualifies for a digital media program.

4.5. Technical Requirements

- not more than 5 minutes
- resolution 1080p is enough
- upload to a cloud service so it streams on common browsers (e.g. YouTube unlisted, Vimeo private link, a major cloud service, university cloud link)
- upload a link to the video (optionally together with a password) as .pdf to the application system
- upload all other documents as .pdf

5. Conclusion

We look forward to creative, technically skilled applicants who are eager to explore the intersection of design and technology.

Thanks for the effort that goes into the portfolio videos.