Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Program Director: HXDI   *Heather Barker*   Date: 2/5/2025
Heather Barker

Chair, Dept of   Design   :   *Debra Satterfield*   Date: 2/5/2025
Debra Satterfield

Dean, College of the Arts   :   Date: 2/5/2025
Royce W. Smith

Interim Vice Provost Academic Programs: Date: 2/5/2025
Pei-Fang Hung

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Memorandum of Understanding
MA in Human Experience Design Interaction (HXDI) Program
Department of Design
College of The Arts
November 2024

This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the consensus reached by the MA in Human Experience Design Interaction (HXDI) Program within the Department of Design, the College of the Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review (self-study in June 2023, external site visit in March 2024 and final report and MOU in November 2024). It describes the goals to be achieved, and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals, during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.
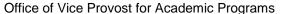
The Design Department offers the following accredited degree programs: Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Interior Design, the Bachelor of Science (BS) in Industrial Design, and the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Design. The Bachelor's programs are all accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). The department's new MA in HXDI (Human Experience Design Interactions) also received NASAD approval for implementation and began accepting its first cohort in fall 2019. The purpose of this review was to fulfill the requirement for a 5-year program review to assess the newly implemented MA HXDI program. After this review, the MA HXDI will be folded into the NASAD accreditation review. This program has therefore not previously been reviewed.

The HXDI program is a three-semester, primarily in-person, accredited, cohort driven program.

Areas of Strengths were identified in the self-study and external reviewers' reports.
- The program's mission and program outcomes align with State of California employment and civic needs, as well as the University mission and vision.
- The program was able to change their CIP code to be STEM eligible, which will allow their International Students to have the option of extended Optional Practical Training (OPT) after finishing the program.
- The program has implemented a strong assessment plan using direct and indirect methods. Direct assessment includes evaluating the metrics of program demand, time to graduation, student retention, number of students requesting incompletes, number of students enrolling in GS700, awards, exhibitions, publications, and success in finding work within 6 months of completing the degree. The development of dashboards to show this data is in process. Indirect assessment includes regular faculty 'think tank' meetings and program discussion sessions with students.
- Curriculum: As part of the original new degree proposal, no new courses were proposed. Following their NASAD accreditation review, faculty followed the

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recommendation that they develop additional electives to support the changing nature and global reach of the discipline as well as the different professional pathways graduates of our degree might take, such as technology, research, global design practice, and business data and strategy. Each of those 8 new courses has been taught at least once.

- High Impact Practices (HIPs) are evident throughout the HXDI curriculum, including participation in the XR hackathon in Stanford, field trips to Adobe and Google in Seattle, and personalized advising. The program has also developed strong external partnerships that are important for students to complete their projects and help with networking after graduation.

- Faculty - the department has some very talented faculty who bring both breadth and depth to instruction in HXDI. In addition, experts from industry team co-teach some of the crucial technical courses to make sure that students are familiar with the latest technologies and methods.

- Student success – This program had graduated ~3 cohorts at the time of the review, during the pandemic. 2-year rates are ~80%, with 4 additional students planning on extending to 3 years or beyond. Only 1 student in this cohort withdrew, indicating a high persistence rate.

Areas of Concern and Opportunities for Development were noted in the reports.
- In the original program proposal documents, cohorts were projected to be between 12 and 15 students per year. Although the cohort intake dipped during COVID, it has now met and exceeded it's projections. With strong international interest it is expected that the program will become impacted, and not be able to take all qualified applicants.

- The program is designed to be 33 units taken over 3 semesters, which means that the program has 2 cohorts taking courses each fall. This poses a high demand on faculty. In addition, many students have requested a slower pace with the ability to take courses over 4 semesters.

- The first few cohorts of students have been mixed in terms of their prior education and experiences. This makes group work difficult. Rather than tightening admission requirements (which may decrease cohort diversity), the external reviewer suggests adding a post-baccalaureate certificate that roughly covers material from the senior year of the undergraduate degree to ensure that all students in the cohort are prepared for the MA degree.

- HXDI has no dedicated staff of its own but relies on support staff from the broader Department of Design. Currently the staffing and facilities seem adequate to the needs of the program but may come under strain as enrollment fills out. As graduate students need more space for their more ambitious and complex projects, the department should develop a plan to secure more lab space.

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It is therefore agreed that the Department of Design will collaborate with the College of the Arts and Academic Affairs to:

1. Develop and implement an assessment plan that includes closing the loop assessment activities. Provide an annual assessment report (due June 1) including progress made towards the actions agreed to in this MOU to the COTA dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinators for Program Review and Assessment. Moving Forward, the MA in HXDI will be on the Department's accreditation cycle. In its 2020 Action letter, NASAD awarded an 8-year accreditation approval, therefore the review cycle will be from 2020-2027. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2027 for 2027-2028 Academic Year accreditation and program review process.
2. Consider curriculum revision:
   a. Develop a roadmap for a 4-semester cohort option.
   b. Add a post-baccalaureate certificate that could draw more students into the Master's degree, as well as better prepare potential students for the Master's degree curriculum.
3. Investigate the opportunity to grow the number of students in each cohort or add another spring cohort as resources allow.
4. Continue to track and analyze student success data as more cohorts complete the program.

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