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MFA in Experience Design

Submitted For: Plan Approval

Response to Commission Action Report May 23, 2017

Members of the Commission,

Thank you for reviewing the MFA in Experience Design proposal for Plan Approval, submitted in February 2017. The following materials address both of the commission's comments on our proposal. Each of the commission's comments precede our responses. An appendix has been included as supplemental information to support our responses.

RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION'S CONCERNS

1. *...it is not clear how the mastery of students will be assessed [see application for Plan Approval, pg. 24; NASAD Handbook 2016-17, Standards for Accreditation II.L.1.(1)-(4)] given the different educational backgrounds of the students entering the program. For example, it is not clear how the institution will evaluate a student pursuing the degree who holds a graphic design degree and a student holding a social science undergraduate degree in an equivalent and appropriate fashion.*

In order to challenge learners from unique disciplinary backgrounds, program, course, and assignment learning outcomes have been developed so they balance design-native and non design-native competencies. This balanced approach is consistent with Experience Design practice, where individuals must integrate knowledge, thinking, and skills that are traditionally regarded as design-native and non-design-native. Thinking and making are integral to this process because the prototypes, artifacts, plans, visualizations, and/or papers produced prove learner competency on objectives and provide a source for critique and subsequent growth across learning outcomes. Each learner, despite their disciplinary background, will be assessed equally across program, course, and assignment outcomes.

This balanced outcome approach is best demonstrated by examining learning outcomes, themselves. Examples below list outcomes, labeled with discipline-specific content they introduce. [DES=design-native; SCIScience-native; ENG=english/writing-native].

Student Learning Outcomes: Experience Design Program-Specific (XDSLO)

1. Develop and conduct in-depth research into human and system behavior for design innovation. **SCI**
2. Analyze and visualize real and perceived factors at a systemic level. **SCI/DES**
3. Apply a wide range of theories and frameworks to experience-centered design processes. **DES/SCI**
4. Develop outcomes with stakeholders via engaging and empowering co-creative processes. **DES/SCI**
5. Create design prototypes and plans with a high degree of formal and functional detail. **DES**
6. Create culturally relevant design outcomes informed by research. **DES**
7. Report design analyses and recommendations effectively for a wide range of audiences. **DES**

Example: XDSLO #4 in action:

"How effectively did the learner engage members of the Buffalo, New York pancake dinner committee in the process of co-creating a new model for fundraising that could be relevant for citizens who prefer a lower-carb diet?"

Example: XDSLO #5 in action:

"How detailed was the design of the grocery store seasonal lettuce tablet kiosk? Was the typographic hierarchy clear? Were images chosen so the color palette was consistent for reinforcing the theme of 'green eating'? Were there enough prototype kiosk screens designed so the client could get a clear idea how it would function and what the experience of using it would be like?"

By balancing learning outcomes across disciplines, learners will be challenged to grow competencies in their expertise area as well as their growth areas. Experienced designers will be challenged to employ research methods and theory that at first may be unfamiliar to them. Those with a science background will be challenged to develop their ability to create and produce formal outcomes and operate an iterative process. Courses in the proposed program will also have balanced learning outcomes. Selected course outcome samples are shown below to demonstrate:

ART 627 Design Research Methods

- » Operate research that produces detailed, high-fidelity data. **SCI**
- » Analyze collected data to produce cogent insights. **SCI**

- » Connect research findings to valid directions for design. **DES**
- » Create relevant design outcomes based on research findings. **DES**

ART 622 Experience Design Methods

- » Develop custom tools that achieve project goals when used with stakeholders in the co-creative process. **DES**
- » Apply experience design methods to visualize real and perceived impacts of design on human behavior. **DES**
- » Select appropriate methods that achieve project goals when working with diverse stakeholders. **SCI**
- » Identify how design outcomes impact human decision making by conducting primary research. **SCI**

ART 623 Writing for Design Audiences

- » Support written assertions with clear evidence and rationales. **ENG**
- » Write a range of persuasive essay types consistent with publishing standards in design education, practice, and research. **ENG**
- » Employ a range of visual processes for developing written content. **DES**
- » Create visualizations of data and concepts to effectively support and clarify written content. **DES**

This balanced approach will challenge learners to grow knowledge, thinking, and skills in their growth areas in order to master each learning outcome. The cumulative result will likely be strong performance in a learner's expertise area and growing competency in their growth areas. By structuring the program this way, knowledge, thinking, and skills in undeveloped, growth areas for all learners will be advanced, instead of focusing on simply developing learners' existing expertise areas. A detailed and updated assessment plan for the program has been provided in Appendix A.

2. *The Commission requests a retention plan that includes attention and information pertaining to advise-ment and support, given the likelihood that students will come from different backgrounds and there-fore may struggle with the some of the utilized technologies as they progress through the degree [see NASAD handbook 2016-17, Standards for Accreditation XVII.A.10.].*

A suite of advising and support resources have been developed to assist students in the MFA in Ex-perience Design throughout their progression through the program. A holistic approach was taken to develop a range of resources for students from different backgrounds, including those who may be:

- » New to graduate school after being a practitioner for a long time
- » Unfamiliar with design software like Adobe Premiere and prototyping programs like Invision
- » New to online or hybrid learning and Learning Management Systems like Canvas
- » In need of real-time feedback on course material or concepts addressed in coursework
- » Require consistent feedback on learning progress and performance.

These resources were designed to support student success and in turn, retain students so they may have the best chance of advancing to their chosen careers upon completion. The table below details resources available to students in the Experience Design MFA. Through these resources, students will have access to academic advising, skill development, career advice, assistance with technologies, and the development of a robust learning community will be fostered.

When	Support	Resource	Details
When admitted into program	Graduate School Orientation	Books on essential graduate school study skills and advanced thinking	Students receive a welcome e-mail from the Program Director with assigned reading that introduces graduate-level study skills relevant to Experience Design.
When admitted into program	Academic Advising	Plan of Study real-time Google Spreadsheet	Each student is given access to a Plan of Study Google Spreadsheet that details all required and elective courses in the degree. The spreadsheet is always available to the student and their faculty adviser over the course of the degree to chart progress. The document tabulates credit hours earned and credit hours remaining. A copy of this Plan of Study is included in Appendix B.
One semester	Career Experience	Internship (elective)	An internship elective [ART 640] enables students to work in the field as Experience Designers to gain insights into the requirements of these careers. This experience enables students to build competencies in technologies and processes in the field.
One week into the program	Community, Coursework, Skills Tutorial, Academic Advising	Face to Face Oxford Weekend	First-semester students travel to Oxford, Ohio to meet other members of the cohort and all faculty for coursework and advising. This meeting builds rapport that enables more comfortable communication between students and instructors for the remainder of the program. Time is set aside for any advising or technology questions.
Once per semester, four total times	Community, Coursework, Skills Tutorial, Academic Advising	Face to Face Destination Weekend	All students travel to a destination in the U.S. to meet other members of the cohort and all faculty for coursework and advising. This meeting fosters rapport that enables more comfortable communication between students and instructors for the remainder of the program. Time is set aside for any advising or technology questions.
Once per semester	Academic Advising	Video chat or Slack conversation	Each semester, students are given the opportunity to sign up for advising appointments with their Adviser.
All semester	Career Support	Miami University Career Services	Career services at Miami hosts job fairs, operates mock interviews, and offers job search tools for all students. MFA students would have access to these services by appointment in person or via phone/video chat.
All semester	Coursework, Skills Tutorial	Instructor Feedback on Assignments and Tutorials	Students receive feedback on coursework performance. Any technologies explicitly addressed in a course for project work will be demonstrated by the Instructor, who will facilitate learning on these technologies.
Weekly	Community, Coursework, Skills Tutorial	Open Studio	Every week, a one-hour session is open for students to join a real-time discussion with the Program Director or another Experience Design faculty member in-person or via video. There is no set subject matter for these meetings, so they may serve the function of supporting the learning community or addressing course content.
Weekly	Community, Coursework, Skills Tutorial, Academic Advising	Instructor Office Hours	Course instructors must dedicate at least one hour of office meeting time per 3-hour course. Students can sign up for a time to meet in-person or via video.
On-demand	Community, Coursework, Skills Tutorial	Peer Review	Each cohort will include students from unique disciplinary backgrounds and expertise, which allows students to have colleagues who can help one another with course content and skills.

When	Support	Resource	Details
On-demand	Skills Tutorial	inside.designmiamioh.org resources website	A growing collection of tutorials, resources, and references is curated by Miami University design faculty at inside.designmiamioh.org. This includes video tutorial links, image resources for download, and articles on software and design basics. These resources are available anytime to students in the program.
On-demand	Learning Management System	Tutorials, FAQ's, and information on using Canvas Learning Management System	Each course in the MFA in Experience Design links to Miami University's eLearning office site where training on Canvas Learning Management System can be accessed. Miami University's IT Services is available for live chat assistance and also via e-mail.
On-demand	Skills Tutorial	Atomic Learning	Miami University students have free access to Atomic Learning, where video tutorials and lessons can help students gain new software and technology skills.
On-demand	Community, Coursework, Academic Advising	xdMFA Slack Group	A Slack group exists just for xdMFA students where they can chat with other students and their faculty using the web or their mobile device. This tool enables quick conversations about course content and for coordinating advising activities.

Appendix A: Assessment Plan

Student Learning Outcomes: Experience Design Program-Specific (XDSLO)

1. Develop and conduct in-depth research into human and system behavior for design innovation.
2. Analyze and visualize real and perceived factors at a systemic level.
3. Apply a wide range of theories and frameworks to experience-centered design processes.
4. Develop outcomes with stakeholders via engaging and empowering co-creative processes.
5. Create design prototypes and plans with a high degree of formal and functional detail.
6. Create culturally relevant design outcomes informed by research.
7. Report design analyses and recommendations effectively for a wide range of audiences.

Student Learning Outcomes: Miami University Design Programs (PACES MI)

The Graphic and Experience Design programs in the Art Department at Miami University use a Multiple Intelligences Model (MI) for Design to guide design education. The model developed by Assistant Professor Dennis Cheatham is based on research by psychologists Howard Gardner, Daniel Goleman, John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey, and Robert Sternberg [Gardner, 1983; Gardner, 1999; Gardner, 2007; Gardner, 2011; Goleman, 2005; Goleman, 2007; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004; Sternberg, 1997; Sternberg et al., 2000]. While applied skills like concept, aesthetic, usability, and production are important for designers to develop, modern designers are called upon to be much more than “producers.” The Multiple Intelligences Model for Design allows us to facilitate learning and measure growth in five different areas in coordination with degree-specific learning outcomes. We call this MI model: PACES Multiple Intelligences Model for Design. The five intelligences we assess are: Practical, Analytical, Creative, Emotional, and Social.

- » **Practical Intelligence:** Learners will be able to apply design processes and produce outcomes within practical constraints.
- » **Analytical Intelligence:** Learners will be able to demonstrate relevant and accurate decision making for needs being addressed.
- » **Creative Intelligence:** Learners will be able to generate inventive and engaging outcomes.
- » **Emotional Intelligence:** Learners will be able to accurately interpret and express emotions that are appropriate for the context.
- » **Social Intelligence:** Learners will be able to demonstrate an ability to effectively engage and collaborate with others.

PACES assessments are only formative—this model exists to help learners gauge growth as designers. No transcript-reportable grades are given for performance in these areas. These learning outcomes are assessed at an assignment/project/activity level. Not all activities activate all intelligences, so these are assessed as-needed, per activity. For example, group projects and discussions produce evidence of social intelligence, while individual work does not. A version of the Canvas LMS we use allows learners to see a color-coded, cumulative measure of their performance. These measures are also valuable for learners to use in resumes as they reflect “hard” and “soft” skills.

Rubric

Mastery of each outcome will be scored using a rubric scale whose point values coincide with the Miami University GPA scale. When these values are represented as percentages, they align with Miami University letter grades. The most important aspect of this scale are the word labels that contextualize mastery. The highest value [5.0] indicates the highest degree of mastery and the lowest value [0] indicates the lowest degree of mastery in the scale.

Exemplary	Mastery	Developing	Beginning	Incomplete	Missing
extraordinary performance	full competency	approaching competency	basic execution	missing assigned elements	no apparent attempt
5 pts	4.5 pts	4 pts	3.5 pts	3 pts	0 pts

Scoring completed by an individual will be reported as individual values. For assessments when a group scores, the average number of all scores for each outcome will be reported with the closest qualifying word for that score. Scores will be recorded using Canvas LMS or on paper depending on the work and context being assessed (work turned in on Canvas LMS vs. in-person or recorded presentations).

Procedure Used for Assessment

The MFA in Experience Design requires students to complete two courses where all XDSLO and PACES student learning outcomes align directly with project work. ART 627 Design Research Methods takes place during the first semester of the first year and the Thesis Project is operated at the end of students' degree work. We use the "Design Research Project" from ART 627 and the Thesis Defense and Document from students Thesis work as samples of student work for assessment.

All incoming students complete the "Design Research Project," [8-12 students, about 33% of all students enrolled]. All outgoing students complete a Thesis [8-12 students, about 33% of all students enrolled]. Sampling at the start and the end of the degree allows us to measure learner growth. As a culminating project/course, the Thesis will be the primary measure of learning mastery (encompassing the Thesis Report, Thesis Defense, and Thesis Document).

Data Collection Details

Design Research Project

This project is completed in the ART 627 Design Research Methods course and activates learning across all student learning outcomes.

- » **Direct, Course-Embedded Assessment:** Student work sample: Design Research Project
- » **Assessor:** ART 627 Design Research Methods Instructor
- » **Completed:** 1st Year, 1st Semester, at conclusion of course
- » **Sample:** 8-12 students per year (all first-year students)
- » **Assessment recorded in:** Canvas LMS course; data transferred to faculty-shared Google Drive spreadsheet
- » **Representative data:** All students assessed based on the same project at the same time
- » **Goal:** All students demonstrate mastery of each outcome

Thesis

At the end of the MFA Candidate's final semester, a panel of faculty that comprise the Candidate's Thesis Committee will assess student work presented in the Thesis Report, Thesis Defense Presentation and Thesis Document. This project is completed during the ART 700 Thesis course and activates learning across all student learning outcomes.

- » **Direct, Internal and External Assessment:** Student work sample: Thesis Report (basic audio/visual), Thesis Defense (presentation), Thesis Document.
- » **Assessor:** Thesis Committee
- » **Completed:** At conclusion of the MFA Candidate's final semester
- » **Sample:** 8-12 students per year (all exiting students)
- » **Assessment recorded in:** On paper or electronic survey; data transferred to faculty-shared Google Drive spreadsheet

- » **Representative data:** All students assessed based on the same project at the same time
- » **Goal:** All students demonstrate mastery of each outcome

Indirect Assessment: (Perceptions of Student Learning)

When exiting the program, learners will complete an online questionnaire to measure learners' perceptions of each of the student learning outcomes. Each of the following statements will be evaluated on a likert scale where 1=not at all, 2=a little, 3=adequately 4=very well.

To what extent do you believe the MFA in Experience Design program prepared you to:

- » design and operate research to find opportunities for innovation.
- » create engaging and relevant design outcomes based on research.
- » develop design prototypes that are highly detailed.
- » clearly communicate to a wide range of stakeholders.

At what level do you believe the MFA in Experience Design program helped you to:

- » work within practical constraints.
- » make relevant and accurate decisions for different needs.
- » generate inventive and engaging outcomes.
- » accurately interpret and express emotions.
- » effectively engage and collaborate with others.

Assessment Results and Closing the Loop

Findings will be compiled by the Graduate Director of Experience Design before the end of the final exam period each spring semester. Results will be reported to faculty in IMS and Design, and will be the focus of the last Experience Design Program meeting each May. This discussion will inform program goals and curricular changes that may take place over the summer. The Graduate Director of Experience Design will compile an Annual Assessment Report which will be reported to the University in the Annual Assessment Report by the end of June. The Annual Assessment Report will be kept for inclusion in program review documents.

Other Means of Measuring Student Success

The MFA in Experience Design invites all graduates to complete a feedback survey and share their impression of the program. We also track graduate job placement and careers, keeping in touch with graduates via e-mail and social media.

The Miami University Retention Committee with the support of The Office of the Provost and the Office of Institutional Research [OIR] guides and implements the university's student success evaluation and assessment. Student success is measures through national surveys and projects (e.g., the National Survey of Student Engagement, CIRP Freshman survey, Collegiate Learning Assessment, College Senior Survey, Your First College Year, HERI Faculty Survey, Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, and the Voluntary System of Accountability) as well as in-house graduate survey and alumni survey.

Appendix B: Plan of Study

Plan of Study Template - Year 1

course	cr	earn	dep	no	status	yr	type	place	stuc	theo	meth	spec	thes	notes
	0	-60							-12	-9	-15	-18	-6	
Fall	0	0							0	0	0	0	0	
Winter	0	0							0	0	0	0	0	
Spring	0	0							0	0	0	0	0	
Summer	0	0							0	0	0	0	0	

Plan of Study Template - Year 2

course	cr	earn	dep	no	status	yr	type	place	stud	theo	metf	spec	thes	notes
	o	-6o							-12	-9	-15	-18	-6	
Fall	o	o							o	o	o	o	o	
Winter	o	o							o	o	o	o	o	
Spring	o	o							o	o	o	o	o	
Summer	o	o							o	o	o	o	o	

Plan of Study Template - Year 3

course	cr	earn	dep	no	status	yr	type	place	stuc	theo	meth	spec	thes	notes
totals	0	-60							-12	-9	-15	-18	-6	
Fall	0	0							0	0	0	0	0	
Winter	0	0							0	0	0	0	0	
Spring	0	0							0	0	0	0	0	
Summer	0	0							0	0	0	0	0	

Plan of Study Template - Courses

course	cr	earn	dep	no	status	yr	type	place	stud	theo	meth	spec	thes	notes
REQUIRED														
Experience Design Studio	3		ART	650	required		studio	hybrid	3					required destination weekend
Experience Design Studio	3		ART	650	required		studio	hybrid	3					required destination weekend
Experience Design Studio	3		ART	650	required		studio	hybrid	3					required destination weekend
Experience Design Studio	3		ART	650	required		required	hybrid	3					required destination weekend
Thesis	3		ART	700	required		studio	online					3	final year, semester 1
Thesis	3		ART	700	required		studio	online					3	final year, semester 2
Design Research Methods	3		ART	627	required		studio	hybrid				3		every fall - required at start - oxford weekend
Design Research Theory	3		ART	651	required	A	seminar	online		3				fall - only year A
Experience Design Methods	3		ART	622	required	A	studio	online				3		spring - only year A
Writing for Design Audiences	3		ART	623	required	B	studio	online				3		fall - only year B
Designing for Access	3		ART	624	required	B	studio	online				3		spring - only year B
Systemic Design	3		ART	625	required	C	studio	online		3				fall - only year C
Methods of Dissemination	3		ART	626	required	C	studio	online				3		spring - only year C
A History of Design	3		ART	555	required		seminar	online		3				every fall
Special Topics Design Studio	3		ART	560	required		studio	online					3	every fall
Usability and Digital Media	4		IMS	513	required		seminar	hybrid					4	often available summers, some winters
Ethics and Digital Media	3		IMS	524	required		seminar	online					3	often available summers
RECOMMENDED														
Applied Experience Design (Walt)	3		ART	536	recommended		SASA	florida					3	every summer
ELECTIVE OPTIONS														
Visualization	3		IMS	504	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Interactive Bus Communication	3		IMS	507	elective		seminar	online					3	
IMS Visual Rhetoric	3		IMS	511	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Web and Social Media Analytics	3		IMS	514	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Social Media Marketing	3		IMS	518	elective		seminar	hybrid					3	
Digital Branding	3		IMS	519	elective		seminar	online					3	
Advanced Web Design	3		IMS	522	elective		seminar	hybrid					3	
Digital Innovation & Entrepreneurship	3		IMS	533	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Practicum (Interactive Media Studio)	4		IMS	540	elective		seminar	oxford					4	
Game Design	3		IMS	545	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Principles and Practices of Man-Machine Interaction	3		IMS	555	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Web Interaction Programming	3		IMS	557	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Adv 3D & Simulation	3		IMS	561	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Prototyping, Pipeline & Production	3		IMS	587	elective		seminar	oxford					3	
Web and Interaction Design (IMS)	3		IMS	677	elective		seminar	hybrid					3	
Internship	3-6		ART	640	elective		seminar	onsite					3	1-12 hrs, max 12, only 6 count toward graduation
Experience Design Internship	3		ART	645	elective		studio	oxford					3	
Photography IV & V	3		ART	557	elective		studio	oxford					3	
Sculpture IV & V	3		ART	571	elective		studio	oxford					3	
Drawing	3		ART	620	elective		studio	oxford					3	
Printmaking	3		ART	645	elective		studio	oxford					3	
Graduate Seminar in Art History	3		ART	680	elective		seminar	oxford					3	

Plan of Study Template - Progress

semester	cr	earnd		semester	cr	earnd		stud	theo	meth	spec	thes
Fall	0	0		Fall	0	0						
Winter	0	0		Winter	0	0						
Spring	0	0		Spring	0	0						
Summer	0	0		Summer	0	0						
	0	0		Fall	0	0						
				Winter	0	0						
Fall	0	0		Spring	0	0						
Winter	0	0		Summer	0	0						
Spring	0	0		Fall	0	0						
Summer	0	0		Winter	0	0						
	0	0		Spring	0	0						
				Summer	0	0						
Fall	0	0		Fall	0	0						
Winter	0	0		Winter	0	0						
Spring	0	0		Spring	0	0						
Summer	0	0		Summer	0	0						
	0	0			0	0						
required	60							12	9	15	18	6
planned	0							0	0	0	0	0
remaining	-60							-12	-9	-15	-18	-6

Plan of Study Template - Report

course		cr	earnd	dep	no	status	yr	type	place	stud	theo	meth	spec	thes	notes
Plan of Study	Department of Art	MFA in Experience Design													
student name															
Thesis Advisor/Lead Faculty	Dennis Cheatham, Assistant Professor of Communication Design														
MFA in Experience Design Program Requirements (60 semester hours)															
Experience Design Studios	600 level	12	o												
Experience Design Theory	500-700 level	9	o												
Experience Design Methods	600 level	15	o												
Specialized Knowledge	500-700 level	18	o												
Thesis	700 level	6	o												
	Total	60	o												
Fall 20xx			o							o	o	o	o	o	
Spring 20xx			o							o	o	o	o	o	
Summer 20xx			o							o	o	o	o	o	
Fall 20xx			o							o	o	o	o	o	
Spring 20xx			o							o	o	o	o	o	
Summer 20xx			o							o	o	o	o	o	
Fall 20xx			o							o	o	o	o	o	
Spring 20xx			o							o	o	o	o	o	
	Total		o	(min 60 hours)											
The student listed above has completed requirements for the MFA degree in Experience Design:															
signature:															