

External Reviews of TESO/DIMA /2023

Dr. Patrick Pennefather, Dr. Aleksandra Dulic, Kathy Sanford

Executive Summary

This report consists of brief description of TESO and DIMA, two minor programs offered in the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Victoria. The report also includes highlights of each program, key findings of each program and recommendations.

Since 2020, the Minor in Technology and Society (TESO) has been part of the Faculty of Fine Arts, after being previously known as the Interdisciplinary Minor in Technology and Society. The move aimed to enrich the interdisciplinary focus, intensify arts perspectives, and integrate with existing Fine Arts programs. DIMA, an interdisciplinary program, is also offered by the Faculty of Fine Arts. It addresses the intersection of digital culture and art, covering various disciplinary areas within the faculty and incorporating electives from outside Fine Arts. Approved in May 2016, DIMA was first included in the UVic Academic Calendar in May 2017.

The TESO Minor program has experienced gradual growth, adapting to administrative changes and evolving technology. Course content is expanded through special topics offerings and diverse instructors, ensuring the program stays up-to-date with technological developments and innovations. DIMA was created to meet the demand for arts-based technology education, providing experiential learning alongside the popular Film Studies Minor. It aims to fully utilize the Faculty's strengths and offer students a flexible way to develop skills and knowledge in a rapidly growing professional field.

To increase TESO Minor enrollment, especially among Fine Arts students, learning outcomes should be reviewed and updated, with input from a wider community of stakeholders. The program should maintain its distinct identity from DIMA, reflecting Fine Arts perspectives while remaining broad enough to engage other faculties. Assessing individual course learning outcomes and ensuring they cover current technology trends will help strengthen the program's foundation.

Key recommendations include forming an advisory committee for DIMA to revise its curriculum, involving Indigenous faculty in program design, hiring or seconding core faculty, aligning FA346's outcomes with the program vision, and having a dedicated faculty member as DIMA's director. Stakeholders are encouraged to enhance academic advising, incentivize sessionals, increase visibility, and maintain a distinct identity from TESO while encouraging interconnections with TESO. Strengthening TESO's link with Art History and Visual Studies, integrating DIMA into Fine Arts and Computer Science, defining and differentiating student audiences, aligning DIMA's outcomes with industry needs, and clearly defining experiential learning within DIMA will go a long way in building a sustainable program.

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Recommendations

- 1.** We recommend the immediate or near future composition of an advisory committee for DIMA to identify goals and then work from there to revise the curricular offerings of the program.
- 2.** We recommend Indigenous faculty be included on committees involved with TESO and DIMA program designs.
- 3.** We recommend more emphasis on hiring a core faculty member, seconding core faculty from other departments including Visual Art and Music, and having a director who can teach the upper level FA346, and act as the bridge between DIMA and TESO (faculty, course integration, student integration, projects).
- 4.** We recommend that curricular outcomes of FA346 be better aligned with the overall program vision.
- 5.** We recommend that DIMA not be operated on the side of the desk from the Faculty of Fine Arts Office, and that an interested faculty member lead in those responsibilities as director of DIMA. We recommend that academic advising play a greater role in navigating students interested in the type of knowledge areas that TESO and DIMA offer.
- 6.** We recommend incentivizing sessionals for DIMA to ensure deeper commitment and growth within the department.
- 7.** We recommend that DIMA have its own course number to increase visibility to students. In addition, a close review of courses that are scheduled and cross-listed with other units is recommended.
- 8.** We recommend a discussion with research faculty in Fine Arts to gauge whether there are aligned interests in their work and potential involvement with DIMA project-based courses.
- 9.** We recommend that TESO and DIMA should remain as distinct programs, and yet not be siloed.
- 10.** We recommend strengthening the link between TESO and Art History and Visual Studies.
- 11.** We recommend better integration of DIMA offerings for students within Fine Arts but also within Arts and Computer Science.
- 12.** We recommend that the Faculty take advantage of what TESO and DIMA have to offer to the rest of the university to increase EETs.
- 13.** We recommend that DIMA and TESO clearly define and differentiate student audiences.
- 14.** We recommend that DIMA program outcomes be more aligned with outcomes from investigating the needs of the communities of practice students may transition into.
- 15.** We recommend that experiential learning be clearly defined within the DIMA program and addressed at the curricular level if competencies that result from project-based courses are aligned with the program's strategic plan and vision.