

Proposal
For A Degree Level
Interior Design Bridging Program
That Bridges
Graduates of the Interior Design Diploma Program
Into
Humber's Baccalaureate in Interior Design

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*Prepared for: The School of Applied Technology
Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning*

Prepared by: Richard Hook

With Contributions from:

*Clive Cockerton, Associate Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences Division
Ann Dean, Planning & Development Office
Kelly Gluck, Coordinator, Interior Design Program
Pam Hanft, Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences Division and Chair, Policy Committee
Rick Embree, Dean, Planning & Development
Dr. Michael Hatton, Vice President Academic
Susan Krausz, Associate Dean, School of Applied Technology
John Mason, Registrar
Joanne McLeod, Planning & Development Office
Bob Moulton, Dean, School of Applied Technology
Patricia Van Horne, Office of the Registrar*

Abstract:

This paper recommends a one-semester, baccalaureate-level Bridging Program through which qualifying Interior Design (ID) Diploma graduates can enter the 4th year of Humber's Interior Design (ID) Baccalaureate. Eligible graduates must have a 75% GPA in the final year of their diploma program and meet the Baccalaureate Math and English admission requirements. The proposed curriculum covers the skill, knowledge and content shortfalls in both professional studies and breadth education identified through a formal 'program outcome gap analysis'. Ultimately, this proposal represents a justifiable improvement over the "2 for 3" transfer agreement contained in the Port Hope Accord. Qualifying diploma graduates who successfully complete the Bridging Program will receive 3 years of baccalaureate credit for 3 1/2 years of qualifying diploma and baccalaureate-level bridging study.

Notably, the proposed curriculum includes 4 breadth half-courses: Research Methods, Statistics, Theories of Beauty and Making Choices in a Complex World of which one is optional. The professional studio course, Context and Connections in Interior Design is proposed as a reading, collaboration, problem and project based course sufficiently flexible to accommodate qualified graduates of qualifying diploma programs from other jurisdictions. Additionally, a 'second independent evaluation' of a major professional project will verify that transfer students have attained the required skills and knowledge. Samples of this student work will be held on file to provide evidence of transfer student capability.

The methodology for developing this program is explained in some detail.

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Bridging Proposal

1. Introduction:

As stated in Humber's formal proposal for Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning (ITAL) status, baccalaureate programs at this college are intended to provide students with greater flexibility to pursue a variety of educational pathways. A critical part of this commitment is barrier-free transferability between diploma and degree programs – an objective advocated by the Council of Ministers of Education Canada.

Given the typical absence of common or parallel curriculum in Ontario, one tends not to find one-for-one equivalency between baccalaureate and diploma learning outcomes. Recognizing this, provincial universities typically compromise by allowing some credit transfer for a limited number of similar diploma courses. This report identifies the actual learning outcomes gap between an applicant's Interior Design (ID) Diploma studies and the related Humber Degree program. It recommends a Bridging Program to fill any "learning outcomes gaps". This degree-level Bridging Program and block transfer of degree-equivalent diploma credits allows transfer students to meet the Baccalaureate requirements by successfully completing one baccalaureate field semester and the 4th year academic semesters of the Degree program of study.

This proposal addresses three fundamental issues:

- First, it uses a program level "learning outcomes gap analysis" to identify the skills and knowledge gap between the related diploma and baccalaureate programs.
- Second, it recommends an intensive, one-semester, baccalaureate-level program to bridge qualifying Interior Design Diploma graduates into the Interior Design Baccalaureate program with the maximum justifiable recognition of prior learning.
- Third, it provides the policies which have been put in place to ensure the credibility of the Baccalaureate in Interior Design.

This proposal conforms to the principles underlying the college's current transfer policies, follows relevant PEQAB requirements and has been developed in consultation with the baccalaureate faculty and the Chair of Humber's Academic Policy Committee.

2. The Process for Identifying the Difference Between Interior Design Diploma and Baccalaureate Programs:

The process adopted to assess the differences between the Interior Design Diploma and Degree program learning outcomes involved:

- a) Establishing that the Bridging Program admission requirement is a 75%¹ GPA in the

¹ In Humber's diploma programs, grades of 76% to 79% reflect a B+. For baccalaureates offered through the

- final year of the related diploma program.(See Appendix A for Humber's Transfer and Bridging Policy.)
- b) Comparing the program level learning outcomes for the two programs and identifying the 'learning outcomes gap' by describing the differences in skills and knowledge (Appendix D). The report also assesses the ID Diploma's breadth curriculum from a content perspective.
 - c) Developing a "Bridging Program" curriculum that will (i) bridge the learning outcomes and content gap up to the point of a student's transfer into the degree program and (ii) confirm each student's ability to be successful in the baccalaureate program at that level.

Attached, as Appendix B and C, are the program learning outcomes that graduates of the ID Diploma (*Interior Design Diploma Program Learning Outcomes, April, 1996*) and the ID Degree (*Humber's PEQAB Proposal for the Baccalaureate in Interior Design*) are expected to master. In interpreting these outcomes, the college has been careful to meet the Council for Accreditation (formerly FIDER) professional accreditation standards. The Council will be reviewing this bridging program in the Spring of 2007 as part of Humber's application for re-accreditation.

The Interior Design Baccalaureate curriculum reflects an interdisciplinary approach and places the practical applications of studio courses into the conceptual frameworks learned in the more theoretical courses. This integration of the curriculum complicates the traditional course-to-course comparisons for the purpose of credit transfer approval. While course-to-course comparisons provide evidence of rigour in the credit granting process, Prior Learning and Assessment (PLAR) literature recommends the comparison of program learning outcomes. This model was adopted to avoid the inflexibility (and sometimes unfairness) of granting academic credit solely on a course-to-course basis.

This gap analysis compares the provincial standard for the ID Diploma with Humber's ID Baccalaureate curriculum. The provincial standard is used for the diploma in an effort to develop a bridging program that would be equally relevant to ID students from other colleges as well as Humber alumni who have not studied the current curriculum.

Humber adopted a "course-by-course approval" methodology to grant baccalaureate-level breadth credits for qualifying general education offered as part of a diploma program. Each decision follows the format outlined in Appendix F. The block transfer of breadth credits is detailed below and summarized in Appendix H.

University of Guelph, the University of Guelph-Humber and Humber, a B+ is equivalent to 77% to 79.

3. The Differences in Learning Outcomes Between the Provincial Diploma and the Humber Baccalaureate in Interior Design:

Appendix D summarizes the learning outcomes gap between B+ ID Diploma completion and the “pass” completion of the 6th semester of the ID Baccalaureate. The elements of the first 3 years of the Baccalaureate program that have not been mastered by the typical Humber diploma graduate with a GPA of 75% fall in 5 broad areas:

3.1 Professional Breadth in Interior Design:

- Integrating relevant business, technical, cultural, economic, environmental, sustainability, historical and political contexts into interior design.
- Reflecting on design thinking and implementing with particular reference to professional considerations, social and cultural relevance and a clear understanding of the interdisciplinary context of design.
- Pursuing independent thought, considering trends and inferring new approaches drawn from an informed analysis and synthesizing interdisciplinary contexts, major schools of design thought, the historical evolution of living environments and different design methodologies.
- Understanding the legal implications of intellectual property and contract law and applying these to design operations.

3.2 Communications:

- Developing baccalaureate-level verbal, written and reading comprehension skill critical to research, critical writing and rational argument.

3.3 Interdisciplinary Understanding of Societal Context:

- Understanding the origin, evolution and current impact on interior design of key themes in society — business, technical, cultural, economic, environmental, ethical, historical and political

3.4 Research and Statistics:

- Criticizing and validating the reliability and accuracy of sources
- Understanding and analyzing statistics
- Managing data
- Assessing research results by applying multiple perspectives and humanistic judgment

3.5 Breadth:

- Gaps explained below in section 4 and summarized in Appendix H.

The above list summarizes the gap for a typical Humber B+ diploma graduate. But there can be significant differences in ID diploma programs among jurisdictions. Breadth requirements, faculty and professional field placement exposure differences can be particularly pronounced. This program's commitment to The Council for Accreditation (FIDER) standards will typically demand additional coursework for those otherwise qualified applicants who must bridge a larger breadth course or professional competence gap than noted above.

4. Meeting the Baccalaureate Breadth Requirements -- a Question of Content:

Humber is committed to Humanities education, to its traditional mandate and to offering baccalaureate education to 4000 full-time baccalaureate students in partnership with University of New Brunswick and University of Guelph. Additionally, Humber has approval to offer 9 of its own degrees. In this environment, the transferability of breadth credits to and among the 3 degree granting partners on campus requires close attention to mutually acceptable standards.

Humber has adopted a rigorous transfer policy (Appendix A) that recognizes and designates certain general education courses, which, if completed at a B+ level, qualify for baccalaureate breadth credit transfer. Those diploma students who are planning to transfer are actively encouraged to select these courses to support their transfer application and to proactively maximize the number of transferable breadth credits they can claim. Humber's transfer policy, including the baccalaureate breadth credit standards outlined in Appendix F, reflect those standards used by York University and Ryerson in accepting Humber breadth course credits for almost 2 decades. Typically, diploma breadth courses completed at the required grade level reflect baccalaureate- level workload, complexity, research, content and written expression. Samples of the breadth course outlines that are approved and refused for baccalaureate transfer are held on file and will be available for subsequent external review.

Humber is prepared to grant "block breadth credit transfer" for 5 half-courses based on the breadth of study contained in the ID Diploma curriculum subject, of course, to all other grade and policy requirements being met. Specifically, the 5 breadth course block transfer is for students obtaining a 75% or greater in:

- 4.1 the linked breadth half-course "History of Art" (while there are two "History of Art" courses in the diploma curriculum, one exceeds the PEQAB limit on "linked breadth" and has been omitted from this list.);
- 4.2 the linked breadth half-course "Roots of Design";
- 4.3 the unlinked breadth half-course "Humanities"; and
- 4.4 the 2 unlinked breadth elective half-courses which meet the requirements summarized in Appendix F and which are typically accepted for baccalaureate transfer credits by degree granting institutions such as York and Ryerson.

Transfer students who have met these requirements must complete 6 additional breadth half courses to meet the 11 course requirement for the ID Baccalaureate. As will be developed in

section 5 below, the remaining degree level breadth requirements are exceeded through:

- 4.5 “Research Methods” (an unlinked degree-level breadth half-course in the Bridging Program described in Appendix E);
- 4.6 “Statistics” (an unlinked degree-level breadth half-course in the Bridging Program described in Appendix E);
- 4.7 “Making Choices in a Complex World” (an optional unlinked degree-level breadth half-course in the Bridging Program described in Appendix E);
- 4.8 “Theories of Beauty” (Appendix E); and
- 4.9 3 elective breadth half-courses included in the 4th year of the Baccalaureate curriculum.

This analysis, summarized in Appendix H, demonstrates how transfer students can meet the 11 half-course ID Baccalaureate breadth requirements through a combination of a block credit transfer of qualifying ID Diploma breadth courses completed at the 75% level, successful completion of the Bridging program and the final breadth courses in the 4th year of the Baccalaureate program.

5. Bridging the Learning Outcomes and Content Gap Between the Interior Design Diploma and the Degree - Outlining the Bridging Program:

This section outlines a targeted and demanding one-semester Bridging Program that will bring qualifying ID Diploma graduates to a skill, knowledge and content level equivalent to ID Baccalaureate students entering their 4th year of study. Bridging Program graduates enter the Interior Design Baccalaureate in the 7th semester. Qualifying graduates of the ID Diploma Program can earn their baccalaureate by successfully completing the proposed Bridging Program, the field placement semester and the last year of the Baccalaureate Program.

5.1 Meeting the Breadth Requirement:

Typically, transfer students would enter the 4th year of the ID Baccalaureate and complete the 3 breadth half courses in the graduating year curriculum. This leaves a 3 breadth course gap which the Bridging Program fills. In fact, the proposed Bridging Program contains 4 breadth half courses which are described below and which demand that successful students demonstrate the broad perspective, the critical and analytical thinking and writing skills for successful integration into the 4th year of the Baccalaureate program.

The ID Bridging program curriculum includes 4 breadth courses:

Making Choices in a Complex World investigates the origin, evolution and current impact of societal themes that affect how individual and community choices are made. It adopts a cross disciplinary and issues based approach, focuses on the cultural context of decision making and stresses critical analysis through oral and written criticism. It relies heavily on student readings to provide the context for, and underlying theory to support, each week's topics, class discussion/presentations and written assignments. The course outline is included in Appendix E.

The Bridging program's second breadth course, Theories of Beauty (Appendix E), considers a

number of theoretical models and conceptual frameworks that have been used to compare and assess various notions of beauty. It assesses representative examples from the history of a number of artistic and cultural traditions. The course draws examples from sculpture, painting, calligraphy, ornamentation, product design and architecture.

The purpose of *Research Methods* is to equip the students with a knowledge and understanding of key concepts and methodologies associated with both qualitative and quantitative data analysis and research design. The course will focus on the fundamental skills required to assess data generated and collected. It will provide a process for applying the basic steps required in sorting, organizing, summarizing and describing variables as well as testing and measuring different sorts of linkages and associations between and among variables. Additionally, the course will analyze experimental designs which are most effectively utilized in confirmatory research studies where the subject under investigation is well formulated, a theoretical paradigm exists to guide the research and testable hypotheses can be developed. These designs attempt to establish causal relationships between interventions and outcomes. The course will also investigate and interpret surveys which are research designs used to assess and quantify the predominance of problems, needs within the community or client populations/cohorts, patterns of service utilization and consumer satisfaction. Measurement, sampling and statistical techniques relevant to both surveys and experimental design will be addressed. In addition, the course will investigate ethical protocols in research, the interpretation of results, the explanation of findings and the effective communication of data.

The approved course outline for this baccalaureate-level course is included as Appendix E.

The *Statistics* course is an introductory course in which the emphasis is on the application of statistical methods in design. Topics include descriptive statistics, probability and probability distributions, estimation and hypothesis testing, correlation and regression. Students are introduced to multiple regression and time series as a significant application of statistics in design.

The approved course outline for this baccalaureate-level *Statistics* course is included in Appendix E.

5.2 Meeting the Professional Skill and Knowledge Requirement:

The professional skills and knowledge gap summarized in section 3.1 above may vary over time and across jurisdictions. For this reason, the college developed 5 criteria for “professional skill and knowledge bridging” that could successfully ladder transfer students with a range of professional skills and knowledge into the 4th year of the Baccalaureate:

- each student’s **professional skills and knowledge must be assessed individually** to verify learning outcomes gaps,
- each student’s **learning must be guided by an individual learning plan** approved by both the student and the professor,
- each student’s **learning must be evaluated by a major project or portfolio** of professional work relevant to the learning plan,
- each student’s **ability must be independently verified by two fully qualified**

evaluators, and

- **samples of various levels of student work will be held on file to validate professional standards.**

To accommodate the diversity of students entering the ID Baccalaureate program, the *Context and Connections in Interior Design* course features the curriculum flexibility necessary to address the differences in the students' professional skill and knowledge gap. Each student's "gap" will be identified in three ways: a) the faculty analysis of the admissions portfolio, b) a review of the students diploma program documentation and c) a challenge test of practical skills in CAD, drawing and drafting. Faculty collaborate with the student to develop a suitable learning plan which will facilitate efficient learning and enhance the student's ability to pursue subjects related to his/her emerging career objectives.

This course stresses individual coaching, 'problem-based' projects, library research, reading assignments, group collaborations and studios. Each student must submit a comprehensive project or portfolio to demonstrate achievement of the learning goals set out by the professor and the student at the beginning of the course. The faculty member's assessment of the project or portfolio will be validated by a second evaluation by a respected design professional. Samples of this assignment will be held on file to demonstrate program standards during the external review of the program. (The program outline is included in Appendix E.)

To pass this course, bridging students must demonstrate a professional skill set equal to that of the baccalaureate class they will enter.

The model for the Bridging Program is summarized in the following diagram.

Interior Design Bridging Program

Summary Model

Diploma Program:

3 year I.D. Diploma Program

Diploma students considering transfer are encouraged to take breadth courses that quality for baccalaureate credit transfer. These courses are offered, on campus, each semester

Bridging Program: (Winter Semester)

Admission to Bridging Program

75% GPA in final diploma year

Block transfer of approved breadth credits

Portfolio affirming the potential to integrate into 4th yr.

Meet degree admission requirements

****Theories of Beauty**

Research Methods

****Making Choices in a Complex World**

Statistics



Context and Connections in Interior Design

Baccalaureate Program:

Co-op Semester
(Summer Semester)

Degree Semester 7
(Fall Semester)

Degree Semester 8
(Winter Semester)

Courses equivalent to the English & Math Admission Requirements are offered in each Semester

Note: ** Either *Theories of Beauty* or *Making Choices in a Complex World* is optional

After the bridging program was developed, the learning outcomes listed in the course outlines were compared to the gap analysis (Appendix D). Through this process the development team and the baccalaureate faculty verified that a fully qualified bridging program graduate should integrate without professional or generic skill or knowledge handicaps into the 4th year of the ID Baccalaureate. Additionally, it was concluded that the collaborative projects, the problem centered curriculum and the workplace focus of the final baccalaureate semesters will be enriched by adding new students with different perspectives and a more practical design background.

6. Structural Guidelines and Policies for the Interior Design Bridging Program:

5.1 Admissions to the Bridging Program:

- Completion of a qualifying 3 year Interior Design Diploma with a GPA of 75%
- Portfolio indicating the potential of integration into the 4th year of the Baccalaureate Program
- A university-level Grade 12 Math earned at 65% or DMAT100 or equivalent
- A university-level Grade 12 English earned at 65% or equivalent
- Admission to the Bridging Program also offers 'conditional admission' to the Interior Design Baccalaureate (conditional on meeting all Bridging Program and degree program admission requirements)

5.2 Grading:

- Grading will reflect 3rd year baccalaureate-level intellectual ability, knowledge, communications skills and professional design applications
- A pass grade in *Making Choices in a Complex World* will reflect an understanding of broader societal issues and an ability to apply, in their analytical thinking, paradigms and intellectual frameworks drawn from different disciplines. Cogent and critical argument, both written and spoken, is required.
- A pass grade in *Theories of Beauty* will reflect an ability to apply, in their analytical thinking, paradigms and intellectual frameworks drawn from a number of disciplines. Cogent and critical argument, both written and spoken, is required.
- A grade of 65% or better in *Context and Connections in Interior Design* will reflect breadth of understanding of the cross-disciplinary context in which interior design is practiced and demonstrate depth of application to the professional assignments.
- Each student's readiness for transfer will be verified. One major design project will be independently assessed by an industry leader. Samples of these

assignments will be held on file in preparation for external review.

- Entry into the Baccalaureate requires a Bridging Program GPA of 65%, a minimum of 65% in the *Context and Connections in Interior Design* and a pass in all other ID Bridging Program courses. This grade reflects the minimum level of skill and knowledge that would permit a baccalaureate student to continue into the 4th year of the program

5.3 Faculty:

- Faculty will have taught courses at the degree level and have met the college's requirements for baccalaureate teaching.

5.4 Curriculum:

- All course outlines are included as Appendix E.

5.5 Credit Transfer:

- A block transfer of credits towards the Baccalaureate program will be assigned upon successful completion of the ID Bridging Program.

7. Recommendation and Summary:

This paper recommends the approval of this one-semester, baccalaureate-level Bridging Program through which qualifying Interior Design Diploma graduates can develop the additional skills and knowledge to confidently enter the 4th year of Humber's Interior Design Baccalaureate. This permits the granting of up to 3 years of baccalaureate credit for 3 ½ years of prior academic study (3 years of diploma study plus one semester of baccalaureate-level bridging). It requires that graduates of the ID Bridging Program demonstrate the mastery of learning and breadth of content equivalent to a baccalaureate student who successfully completed the 3rd year of the program. The quality is assured by a third party evaluation of a professional assignment and/or portfolio which will be held on file in preparation for formal external review.

A review of current PEQAB guidelines, related college policy and benchmark PLAR practice, leads the development team to the conclusion that the proposal meets requirements and represents sound academic practice.

Recommendation: Approval of a one-semester Interior Design Bridging Program as outlined in this proposal.