TO: Alicia Bertone, Dean, Graduate School  
FROM: Jennifer Schlueter, Faculty Fellow for Curriculum, Graduate School  
DATE: 18 October 2018  
RE: Proposal for Graduate Bridge Program

Overview
At our 16 October 2018 meeting, the combined Graduate Council/CAA curriculum subcommittee reviewed the proposed Graduate Bridge Program. With one recommended change, now incorporated, wholeheartedly endorses it.

Background on the Graduate Bridge Program
The idea for the Graduate Bridge Program emerged from requests made in the conversations on the Graduate School that took place in February to April of 2017, culminating in a Summit on 3 May 2017.

The Bridge program advances one of the primary Mission Goals of the Graduate School: “Support programs that will nurture students from intersectional, underserved backgrounds or those with special circumstances that may require some flexibility for initial success.”

The program was thoroughly vetted internally at the Graduate School among the Deans and Directors and their Staff and endorsed on 25 July 2018.

It was presented and received positively at Graduate and Professional Admissions on 18 August 2018, and a process map for implementation was provided by Rich Chappell. This process map is the last page of this document.

It was presented at APAC on 18 August 2018 and received positively, with useful suggestions that were then incorporated. The program description was reviewed by the University Registrar on 18 September 2018 and received comments which were incorporated. It was presented at Graduate Council on 27 September 2018 and received positively, with useful suggestions that were then incorporated. Finally, it was presented at the GA/CAA subcommittee on 16 October 2018 and received unanimous support. The document was re-reviewed and approved by the Registrar (Jack Minor) on 18 October 2018. The document will go back to the Graduate Council for approval and vote on 25 October 2018.
Dear Alicia,

I am writing to let you know that the proposal for the Graduate Bridge Program for Under-Prepared Students, administered by the Graduate School, was reviewed and enthusiastically approved by Graduate Council members at the October 25, 2018 meeting. The proposal is now ready to be forwarded to the Committee on Academic Affairs (CAA) for its review and approval.

Thank you,

Kate Calder
Professor and Chair of Graduate Council
Department of Statistics
Graduate Bridge Program for Under-Prepared Students-
Administered by the Graduate School

Overview

Section G.1
A graduate-admission designation, for up to one full consecutive academic year (SU-AU-SP, in any order) allowing under-prepared students, and others in special circumstances, to have graduate standing before entering a program and a full load of prerequisite and/or degree-applicable coursework.

Rationale

Section G.2
Some individuals and graduate programs would benefit from a bridge graduate program that would support graduate students who may be appropriate recruits for the program, but need additional time, mentoring, coursework, adaptation, or a lower course load to have a successful transition into a full-time graduate program at The Ohio State University. This program would also provide flexibility in acceptance dates and graduate enrollment prior to the student’s transition into a targeted graduate program.

These students would be mentored as a bridge student by their graduate programs as a potential recruit. The programs would design the student’s bridge experience to mature the student’s talent to excel in their programs. The Graduate Bridge Program (GBP) would serve as a conduit for a supportive, flexible, environment for the student’s professional development. The students eligible for this program face challenges in the current graduate admission process that can impede them from fulfilling their educational and, in some cases, professional goals. The GBP would create opportunities for such individuals without impacting the rigors of graduate education at Ohio State, thus providing a professional development opportunity and fostering better opportunities for life-long learning and contributions for these students.

Eligibility for Graduate Bridge Program

Section G.3
It is anticipated that the GBP program may benefit the sectors of student population who would typically not qualify for regular or conditional admit. Five general descriptions of applicants that might benefit from a bridge year are summarized below. (These categories are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive)—

1) Exploring: Those with qualifications and interests in multiple fields and/or who have not been able to make application decisions in time to meet the Graduate School’s program deadlines.

2) Re-Calibrating: Those developing specialized interests late in their under-graduate careers, especially those who want to enter programs with extensive pre-requisites that do not offer rolling admission.

3) Life-Long Learning: Those returning to study who are years away from their last degree and thus may have neither academic records that fully reflect current abilities and interests nor referees who can speak convincingly to the necessary audience in the graduate-academic setting.

4) Late Blooming: Those with an undergraduate grade point average that is skewed (CGPA <3.0) because of weak early performance that does not reflect the scholastic seriousness and achievements of the student or the later years of study;

5) Challenges to Learning: Those students with special circumstances that may make it difficult to
initially succeed in a rigorous graduate program. For instance, under-prepared intersectional students that may reflect a combination of low income and educational sectors, under-represented minorities, first generation graduates, students with disabilities, and/or international students with significant language barriers and Visa restraints who may benefit from the bridge program.

These categories of students may benefit from a year to nurture and develop their talent, but who may not be fully served as non-degree students due to a desire for graduate status to enhance their career development.

Difference from Non-Degree and Conditional Designations

Section G.4

Non-Degree: Individuals with an accredited undergraduate degree may currently take graduate courses as non-degree students; however, they have no standing within the Graduate School and, should they subsequently be accepted into a graduate program, could only receive credit for 7 hours towards their eventual degree. The GBP would grant admission into the Graduate School and accrue more degree-readying hours and advance the career development of students.

Conditional admission: This designation requires that a particular degree program petition the Graduate School to waive a requirement or requirements. The student must be able to transition to a regular student on a timeline and obtain the 3.0 average GPA for all graduate work on schedule. Conditional admits who are unsuccessful count against the success-rate numbers of a program, thus there is little incentive for graduate committees to extend chances to prospective students with unconventional profiles. Yet, such prospects might not only be deserving of the opportunity but in position to make unexpected contributions. The GBP could provide such students the chance to prove their readiness for advanced graduate work and to generate faculty relationships without risk to a program’s reputation or metrics for standings.

Mechanism

Section G.5

The Graduate Bridge Program would be a direct admission to the Graduate School for a maximum of 1 academic year. Conditions of acceptance into the GBP include:

1.) a letter of commitment from a Graduate Faculty Member of the Graduate Program to mentor the student, and from the Program (Graduate Studies Chair, Department Chair or Associate Dean of Graduate Studies) to accept the student if the student maintains a GPA of 3.0 in the GBP and meets all other requirements for the program.

Application - The student must connect with a Graduate Faculty Member of a Graduate Program such that a letter of commitment is submitted at the time of application and prior to acceptance. This mentor would be expected to meet with the student and guide course load and selection and make recommendations for tutoring if desired. A template letter of commitment can be found on the Graduate School website. The Letter of Commitment submitted with the application will require a signature of the program advisor and the Graduate Studies Committee Chair and must be uploaded with the application. Programs opt into the GBP when they have a student identified to enroll.

Enrollment – GBP students enroll into the Graduate School. The Graduate School recommends that these students enroll in Summer semester (when schedules permit) for a limited S/U course selection, then enroll for autumn for 3-4 credits of didactic course load (must be minimum of 4 credits for participation in the GBP) and remaining S/U credits, then spring semester for a fuller course load, as deemed appropriate. This approach will help the student
adapt to Ohio State and their potential program with the best opportunity to achieve course grades that would permit success in a graduate program with the goal of achieving the necessary graduate GPA of 3.0 for continuation in the Graduate Program.

Completion—Students must file a Completion of Graduate Program form on GRADFORMS, signed by the Graduate Studies Committee Chair, by the end of term to receive the Bridge Certificate or continue with enrollment in their Graduate Program or any other Graduate Program at Ohio State. Students that achieved the 3.0 minimum GPA would be enrolled into their mentoring Graduate Program to which they have been accepted as a regular graduate student or apply to other Graduate Programs at the end of any term.

Students enrolled in the GBP that want to transfer to another Graduate Program and continue in the GBP, must have a letter on file at the Graduate School signed by the new advisor and Graduate Studies Committee Chair to replace their application letter.

Students that have completed at least two terms of the GBP, have a 3.0 GPA in the GBP, completed a minimum of 12 credit hours, and are in good standing with the Graduate School, would be eligible to receive a Graduate Bridge Certificate designation on their transcript. For students that receive the Bridge Certificate, up to ½ or a minimum of 6 credit hours, could be applied to their continuation in their Graduate Program.

For students that do not meet the criteria for the Bridge Certificate or elect to NOT receive the Bridge Certificate, then credits that meet the requirements of the Graduate Program in which they enroll would be applied to their graduate program. Students in the GBP with a graduate GPA<3.0 may be conditionally accepted into the Graduate Program, but this is not guaranteed by the GBP commitment.

Outcomes

Section G.6

Graduate Bridge Program students may successfully roll into a graduate program at Ohio State or transfer to another institution. Graduate Bridge Program students that successfully complete two semesters or more of the Graduate Bridge Program may be eligible for a Bridge certificate credential notation on Graduate transcripts.

Students in the Graduate Bridge Program are not likely to be eligible for financial aid or graduate associate appointments. Programs can petition the Graduate School for GA appointment approval. Students in the Graduate School Bridge Program are not eligible for Graduate School Fellowships.
Applicant applies directly to the academic program. Ex: PHYSICS-MS

Applicant submits supporting documents

Complete for evaluation?

Y

Program requests evaluation

N

Incomplete notice sent to applicant requesting required materials

GP Admissions

Admit/Deny/ Bridge?

Y

Admit posted to SIS

Bridge

Admit

Deny posted to SIS

N

Last Updated: September 5, 2018

Grad Program

Graduate School