

Bridging and Laddering Policy for Academic Preparation at LaSalle College Vancouver

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Policy Number	745	Operational Responsibility	Program Directors
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Objectives

LaSalle College Vancouver (LCV) is committed to fostering academic excellence and equitable opportunities for all students, including those who seek to transition, or “ladder,” between credential levels within the institution. The process of bridging and laddering not only facilitates upward mobility and lifelong learning, but also demands rigorous attention to academic preparation, instructional quality, and student assessment. This policy outlines the framework for bridging and laddering students between programs, ensuring that all students are adequately prepared, evaluated by consistent standards, and supported throughout their educational journey.

Scope

This policy applies to all students who bridge or ladder from specific credentials into larger, subsequent credentials in the same or similar discipline to build upon depth, breadth and understanding of a discipline.

Policy Statement

Bridging and laddering students between credential levels—such as from certificate to diploma, diploma to degree, or similar transitions—must be governed by a comprehensive system that guarantees academic integrity and fairness. At the core of this system are processes to ensure:

- Equivalent courses are taught to the same standards, with instructors qualified to the standards of the higher credential, as outlined in the Faculty Hiring Policy (if applicable);
- Consistent evaluation of student learning and performance based on uniform criteria across credential levels;
- Systematic identification and addressing of curricular gaps, including content and skills, breadth, and degree of difficulty;
- Ongoing monitoring of outcomes for bridging and laddering students;
- Documentation of bridging and laddering student work in the context of self-study and external review.

Definitions

Bridging: Structured academic activities, courses, or modules designed to prepare students for entry into a higher credential or a credential in a particular area of study.

Credential Levels: Certificate, diploma, baccalaureate degree, graduate degree, and other recognized academic awards.

Laddering: Progression from one credential to another credential (e.g., diploma to degree), often facilitated by recognition of prior learning and/or transfer credits. Students can use laddering to achieve credits towards different credentials in several different ways including:

- Vertical Laddering: Credits earned from one credential may be used to meet the requirements of a more advanced credential.
- Horizontal Laddering: Credits earned from one credential may be used to meet some of the requirements of a second credential of the same type.
- Reverse Laddering: Credits earned from a more advanced credential into a less advanced credential.

Exclusions

Students who are transferring between different disciplines may be excluded from the policy and may be assessed via the 704 Transfer of Credit and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy.

Provisions

Academic Equivalence and Standards

Course Equivalence

All courses eligible for transfer or recognition between programs must share the same learning outcomes, instructional content, and assessment standards. The equivalence review will include:

- Assessment of course objectives and alignment with higher credential requirements;
- Comparison of course outlines, assignments, and grading rubrics;
- Verification that instructors meet the minimum qualifications for teaching at the higher credential level (if applicable).

Student Evaluation

Students participating in bridging and laddering pathways shall be evaluated using the same criteria as students directly admitted to the higher credential program. This includes:

- Uniform grading standards;
- Use of common assignments, exams, and performance assessments;
- Periodic review and calibration of evaluation tools to ensure fairness and equivalency.

Supporting Procedures

Assessment of Gaps in Student Preparation

All proposals for bridging and laddering must include a thorough analysis of student learning gaps. These must be measured and addressed prior to or as part of the transition process.

Content and Skills Gaps

Programs must assess whether the student's starting program provides the necessary disciplinary content and practical skills relevant to the student's point of entry. The assessment may include:

- Diagnostic testing or portfolio review;
- Faculty evaluation of prerequisite knowledge and competencies;
- Development of targeted bridging modules or supplemental instruction where gaps are identified.

Breadth Gaps

Breadth refers to the range of knowledge and experiences typical of the higher credential. Bridging programs should be evaluated for exposure to required interdisciplinary, elective, or general

education courses. Addressing breadth gaps may involve completion of additional coursework or placement testing.

Degree of Difficulty Gaps

Programs must assess the readiness of bridging students for the increased academic rigor of the higher credential. This assessment should include:

- Analysis of prior coursework's cognitive complexity;
- Review of student work samples for evidence of higher-order thinking, analysis, and synthesis;
- Provision of supplemental academic skills workshops or mentorship where needed.

Proposal Requirements for Bridging and Laddering Initiatives

All new bridging or laddering pathways must be accompanied by a proposal that includes:

- Curriculum mapping to demonstrate course equivalency and alignment;
- Instructor credential verification;
- Documentation of assessment methods for identifying student gaps;
- Strategies for remediating gaps through bridging modules, tutoring, or coursework;
- Plan for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of student outcomes;
- Provision for inclusion of bridging and laddering student work samples in program self-study and external review materials.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Outcomes

Ongoing Monitoring

Programs must collect and analyze data on bridging and laddering students, including:

- Academic performance metrics (grades, retention rates, graduation rates);
- Progression to advanced coursework and completion of program;
- Student feedback on preparedness and transition experience;
- Faculty observations and recommendations.

Documentation for Self-Study and External Review

Samples of bridging and laddering student work—such as portfolios, capstone projects, and major assignments—must be maintained and made available for:

- Internal self-study processes;
- External accreditation or quality assurance review;
- Program improvement and accountability reporting.

Continuous Improvement

Programs must annually review the effectiveness of bridging and laddering pathways, including:

- Analysis of student outcomes and identification of areas for improvement;
- Revision of curriculum and support services as needed;
- Dissemination of findings to stakeholders, including faculty, students, and external reviewers.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Academic Departments: Responsible for curriculum mapping, assessment of gaps, and delivery of bridging modules.
- Faculty: Ensure instructional and evaluation standards are upheld; provide mentorship and support to bridging students.
- Program Leaders: Develop and submit bridging/laddering proposals; oversee outcome monitoring and documentation.
- Academic Leadership: Review proposals, monitor compliance with policy, and facilitate external review processes.

**Conclusion**

LaSalle College Vancouver recognizes the importance of structured, transparent, and rigorous policies governing bridging and laddering between program credentials. By adhering to this policy, the institution safeguards the academic integrity of its programs, supports students in achieving their educational goals, and meets the expectations of external stakeholders and accrediting bodies. Through ongoing evaluation and documentation, the College commits to continuous improvement and the advancement of student success.

Further Information

704 Transfer of Credit and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy

735 Faculty Hiring Policy