

UM-Flint Bridge Program

Mission Statement

The central mission of the Bridge Program at UM-Flint is to provide credit-bearing courses of high quality English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and orientation to U.S. academic culture for international undergraduate students.

Program Outcomes

Students who are enrolled in the bridge program will develop skills of writing, revision, citation, reading, vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar. However, students are not expected to produce completely error-free writing upon completion of bridge program writing courses. It takes a minimum of 7 years of intensive study to become a fluent user of another language and achieving native-like fluency is rare. Rather, students will improve their writing to a level that is critical and coherent. Additionally, students in the bridge program will increase their cultural awareness of U.S. academic expectations, increase their knowledge of university resources, and engage in the university community. Finally, because these students are concurrently enrolled in courses in their major or general education courses, their focus is split between developing their English language skills and content courses. For this reason, developing active learning strategies and time management skills will be a critical component of all bridge program courses.

Bridge Program Students

International students may come from a variety of national, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, but those in the bridge program do not speak English as their first and primary language. Many international students have little knowledge of U.S. culture in general, and university culture in particular, before their classes begin at UM-Flint. These students may feel more comfortable learning through textbooks and worksheets than through talking or conversation (this is often referred to as 'eye learners'). They may not take advantage of opportunities to meet with their instructors individually in office hours or after class, and may be hesitant to speak up in class. They may have a deep understanding of English grammar, and yet still struggle to produce error-free prose. Bridge program classes provide students extra help with these skills that can make them feel more confident and be more successful in their other courses.

Some immigrant students whose first/home language is not English may also have the opportunity to enroll in bridge program courses, based on their writing placement test or the recommendation of the bridge program director. These students often have similar difficulties with English grammar and writing as the international students described above, but may be more familiar with U.S. culture. Newly-arrived multilingual immigrant students with limited exposure to academic reading and writing in English may benefit especially from choosing to enroll in LIN101 or 102.

Context

The UM-Flint Bridge Program is a collaboratively built program that has been influenced by several university stakeholders: the English Department (including the First-Year Writing Program), the International Center, the Student Success Center, the English Language Program, the Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching, Graduate Programs, and several university administrators. The motivation for this program is a result of increasing numbers of non-native-English speaking (NNES) international students enrolling in undergraduate and graduate programs at UM-Flint. All those who have worked on the bridge program recognize that international students add to the diversity of the campus and bring with them valuable skills and interests that increase the value of the educational experience for all students.

As many universities have seen increases in multilingual and international student enrollments, the culture of university writing programs has shifted visibly to better support these students. The First-Year Writing Program at UM-Flint is no exception. As of the Fall semester, 2015, English language developmental courses are available for multilingual students.

Bridge Program Course Descriptions

- LIN101: Academic Skills for Non-Native English Writers
Intensive work developing academic English skills that Non-Native English (NNE) writers will need to succeed at the university. Focus on grammar, vocabulary, and organization of ideas into paragraphs and short essays, with additional support and development of reading skills, vocabulary building, and listening/speaking practice. Special focus on writing organized, coherent and grammatically correct paragraphs and short essays in the style expected of university level writing.
- LIN102: Advanced Academic Skills for Non-Native English Writers
Experience in writing in recognized rhetorical modes, particularly focusing on developing grammar and vocabulary Non-Native English (NNE) writers need for writing persuasive essays. Intensive work in writing organized, coherent and grammatically correct essays in the style expected of university-level writing, with integrated support for developing reading, critical thinking, listening and speaking skills.
- LIN104: Speaking and Listening for Non-Native English Speakers
Support and practice in speaking in formal and informal settings, pronunciation, presentation skills, conversation skills, listening comprehension, note-taking, and cultural integration.

ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL COURSES

- ENG110: College Writing Workshop II
Independent study in the Writing Center for only ESL (English as a Second Language) students who need further work in writing.

Placement Test

All students will take a placement test to determine where in the first year writing program they should start. The international writing placement test is held during the international student orientation. This test will establish the appropriate placement within the first year writing program: LIN101, LIN102, or

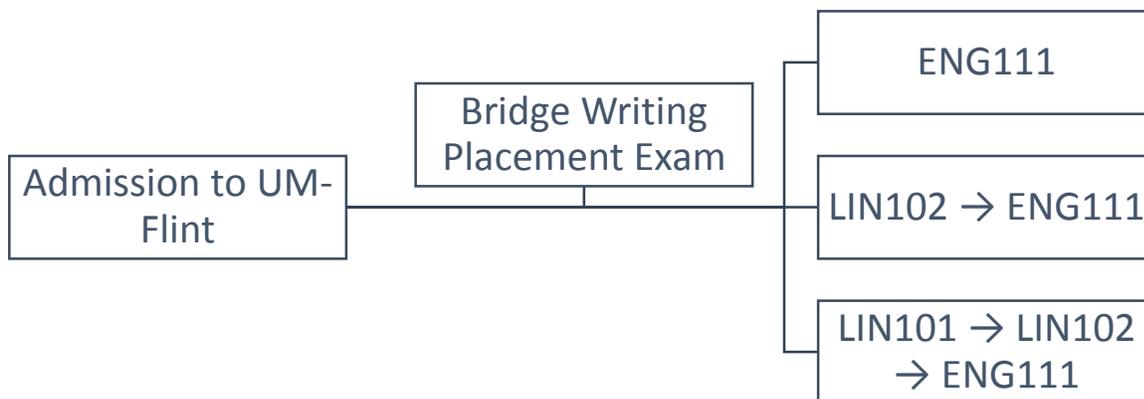
ENG111/109. This test should be taken by multilingual/NNES international students instead of the online placement test required of English-speaking domestic students. The international writing placement test was designed specifically to assess whether students should be placed into the new LIN101/102 courses.

The bridge program placement test is 2 hours long and includes a short reading and prompt that students respond to in an essay format. Students who are placed into ENG111 will need to take the reading test to determine whether they should enroll in ENG100.

The nonnative-English speaking international student placement test will place students into one of three courses:

1. Students are placed directly into *ENG111: College Rhetoric*. They may be encouraged to take one credit of ENG109 or ENG110 for extra support. They will need to take the reading test.
2. Students are placed into *LIN102: Advanced Academic Skills for Non-Native-English Writers* and upon successful completion of this course will move on to ENG111. They do not need to take the reading test.
3. Students are placed into *LIN101: Academic Skills for Non-Native-English Writers* and upon successful completion of this course will move on to LIN102, then ENG111. They do not need to take the reading test.

Figure 1: Flow-Chart of First-Year Writing Placement for with bridge program courses



In addition to LIN101/102, there will also be optional courses students may choose to enroll in. *LIN104: Speaking and Listening for Non-Native English Speakers* is a supplemental course focused on speaking and listening that students may choose to take. ENG110 is a one-credit workshop for ESL writing in the disciplines.