

**DATE:** July 23, 2015

**SUBJECT:** University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, Interior Design, Master of Science (MS) and Interior Design, Master of Interior Design (MID)

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The proposed graduate programs in Interior Design at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga are in response to a renewed interest in this field due to an increase in design specializations, emergence of evidence-based design and lack of qualified interior design faculty. The two proposed programs – Master of Science (MS) and Master of Interior Design (MID) will allow baccalaureate trained interior design professionals to achieve this advance training. The MS graduate will be prepared for evidence-based practice in the specialized area of urban revitalization. The MID graduate will be similarly prepared for specialized practice as well as applied research and college teaching.

The proposed graduate programs will build upon a strong undergraduate program with existing faculty expertise and facilities in place. The programs will fill a state and regional gap identified through two external needs assessment. Currently, there are no opportunities for students to gain graduate training in interior design in the State of Tennessee.

Students in the proposed programs will enroll on a full-time basis with MS students completing the 36 hour program in four semesters. The MID students are projected to graduate in six semesters after completing the 51 hour program. Both proposed Interior Design graduate programs will emphasize research, communication, community engagement, critical thinking and ethical behavior.

**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Fall 2016

**1.1.20A MISSION:** The proposed MS and MSID programs support the UTC mission of an “engaged, metropolitan university committed to excellence in teaching, research, and service, and dedicated to meeting the diverse needs of the region through strategic partnerships and community involvement.” The proposed graduate programs will enhance the mission through its community partnerships and focus on urban revitalization. The external reviewer noted program strengths were connections with non-profit organizations that would provide real-world design opportunities for students.

The proposed Interior Design MS and MID programs are in alignment with the goals outlined in the THEC 2010-15 Public Agenda for Higher Education, specifically the focus on strengthening Tennessee’s Knowledge Economy and increasing the number of graduate degrees awarded to the state’s residents.

**1.1.20B CURRICULUM:** The proposed curricula for both programs will allow students to specialize in areas of urban revitalization ranging from sustainability to historic preservation. These areas of specialization will allow students to conduct current and relevant research as well as have meaningful involvement with the community. The MS curriculum will prepare students for design practitioners. The MID curriculum will prepare students for a career as an interior design professor with a balanced focus on teaching, service and research/creative scholarship. All MID students will be required to take at least one course in curriculum development and will be given opportunities to gain teaching experience.

The proposed curricula for both programs share a major core, field practicum requirement, and a thesis or capstone project option.

**Interior Design Program Structure by Degree**

	<b>Master of Science MS</b>	<b>Master of Interior Design MID</b>
<b>Major Core</b>	15 credits	21 credits
<b>Specialization</b>	12 credits	12 credits
<b>Cognate Area</b>	3 credits	9 credits
<b>Thesis/Capstone</b>	9 credits	9 credits
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>36 credits</b>	<b>51 credits</b>

**1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS:** Applicants must meet university-wide and program admission requirements. Program admission requires a personal narrative, portfolio of undergraduate and professional work, and three professional letters of reference. Applicants must also complete an interview.

**Projected Program Enrollment and Productivity**

The enrollment projections are based on admissions of 10 students in the first year of implementation. Students will have the opportunity to take classes year round or may choose a fall and spring model. Students enrolled in the proposed MS program can potentially graduate in four semesters, whereas MID students can graduate in six semesters.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
<b>2016</b>	10	--
<b>2017</b>	25	5
<b>2018</b>	35	13
<b>2019</b>	35	15
<b>2020</b>	35	15

**1.1.20D FACULTY:** Currently, the four full-time members in the Department of Interior Design are well-suited to teach in the proposed MS and MID degree programs. The department also relies on 13 adjunct faculty members representing the fields of Interior Design, Architecture, and Industrial Design. The department will add one new faculty member for the first two years of the program.

**1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES:** In January 2015, UTC opened a new library which will provide the research materials and resources for the proposed Interior Design graduate programs. Budget projections include \$10,000 for upgrading the needed library resources.

**1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION:** The proposed MS and MID degrees will be offered through the Department of Interior Design. The department is located in the UTC College of Health, Education, and Professional Studies. The department chair will serve as the graduate program coordinator.

**1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES:** Students will have access to a wide range of support resources, including advising and mentoring support from departmental faculty. The proposed programs will have the support of numerous community partnerships. These partnerships will help to provide resources, field practicum experiences, and mentorships.

**1.1.20H FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:** The budget includes allocations for renovation of space and equipment. Space needs will include a dedicated graduate studio, seminar space, and offices for new faculty and a graduate assistant. Equipment needs are related to the graduate studio and seminar space. The new studio and seminar space will be outfitted with projection systems and computer software programs.

**1.1.20I NEED AND DEMAND:** UT Chattanooga conducted two separate needs assessment for the proposed programs. The first was conducted in 2013 by the Center of Applied Social Research. The second was conducted in 2014 by Kronley and Associates. Both assessments indicated a clear evidence of interest and workforce need. The demand for interior designers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is expected to increase by 13 percent from 2012 to 2022.

The Interior Design Educator's Council also indicated a shortage of interior designers qualified to teach at the college level. The proposed Master of Interior Design program will focus on preparing design professionals for a career in academia. The 2014 report submitted by Kronley and Associates indicated the "proposed degree programs in Interior Design have been developed to meet recognized needs in the community, in the academy and in the interior design field."

**1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION:** Currently, there are no Interior Design graduate programs in Tennessee.

**1.1.20K COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS:** N/A

**1.1.20L DIVERSITY AND ACCESS:** The Department of Interior Design is committed to diversity and access and expects these programs will produce a diverse pool of graduates.

**1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION:** The Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) is the accreditation agency exclusively for undergraduate Interior Design programs. In 2012, the undergraduate program was reaffirmed accreditation by CIDA for six years.

The proposed graduate programs will be evaluated using student feedback on course evaluations, faculty evaluations, evaluations of field practicums, review of thesis/capstone projects and exit interviews. Additionally, the department's Professional Advisory Board, which is composed of local and regional design professionals, will be used to assure that the program is meeting the demands and needs of employers.

**1.1.200 EXTERNAL JUDGMENT:** External reviews of the proposed programs were conducted during an institution site visit on March 3-4, 2015 by Dr. Jill Pable, Professor of Interior Design and Director of Graduate Studies at Florida State University. Dr. Pable strongly recommended approval of both programs and noted the following strengths:

“In summation, my assessment of the MS and MID proposals with regard to their scope, orientation and goals are that they serve a necessary function for the interior design field in this geographical region and embrace a logical orientation toward the pragmatic area of urban revitalization. Based on my experience with graduate programs in this field, these proposals appear academically viable, supportive of the Tennessee workforce, and achievable in the context of available resources and those that will be made available to the program.”

**1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT:** The proposed Master's programs will be funded through additional tuition revenues generated by the program and institutional reallocation of funds is needed only for the initial year of program implementation.

**1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING:** An annual performance review of the proposed programs will be conducted for the first five years following program approval and will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and other metrics set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.