



CAREER PATHS

GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDENT GUIDE

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This guide has been developed to help you **put your best foot forward** as a design student and as you launch your graphic design career. Review each section carefully to begin your path to success.

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ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

The key ingredients for a successful start include:

HIGH-SPEED, B INTERNET ACCESS

24-hour access is ideal, limited access can be problematic.

THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

Current hardware requirements are

THE RIGHT SOFTWARE

Current software requirements are

BASIC ART SUPPLIES

Pencils, paper and an eraser are essential for most classes. Some classes may require additional art supplies. Check the course description and material requirements for details.

A DESIGNATED WORK AREA

Preferably a quiet location where you can work without interruption.

TIME

While the online schedule is somewhat flexible, a full-time student should anticipate devoting approximately 20-25 hours a week to schoolwork.

A FINANCIAL PLAN

Be sure to remain in close contact with your student finance counselor (Student Common > My Contacts).

A BACK-UP PLAN

Inevitably things go wrong and technical issues cannot be used as an excuse for late work. Be sure to back up work in progress and identify alternative Internet access options should you experience trouble with your home connection.

CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Why are you investing your time, money and energy in pursuit of an education in graphic design? Use this guide to develop your academic and career goals – a clear path to success will help you remain focused and inspired.

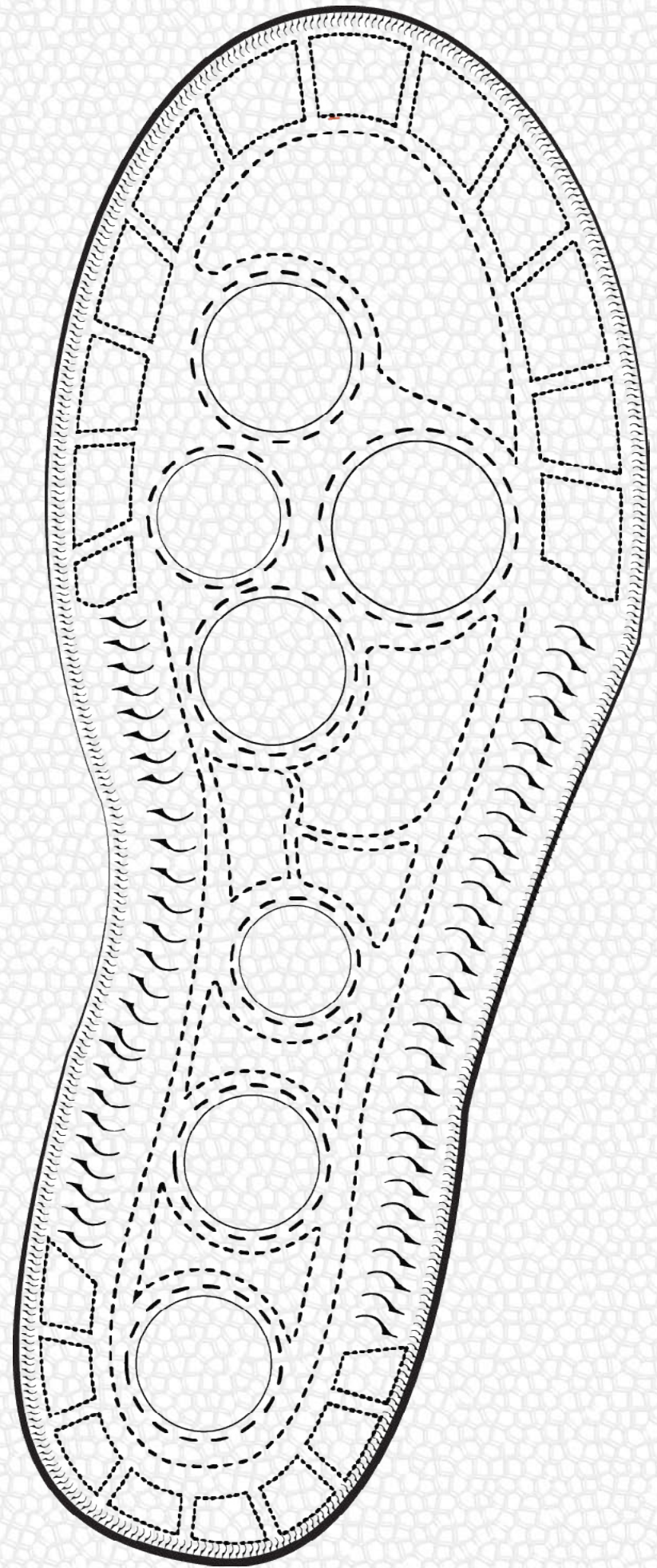
YOUR “THINKING CAP”

Be prepared to push, stretch and grow as a “thinker.” Just as any form of exercise can cause soreness at first, improved strength can be the final outcome.

Take a few minutes to become acquainted with the different career options within the graphic design industry. **Click on each icon** to read a brief description of each type of graphic designer.



Before deciding on a specific career path, it is helpful to consider the skills you will need to acquire to be competitive in your chosen field. Graphic designers demonstrate their skill levels and abilities to potential employers in a portfolio of their work. **Click on each icon** in the shoe print to learn more about each skill set.



IDENTIFY A CLEAR OBJECTIVE

As a design student, your primary objective is to develop a strong portfolio presentation that is indicative of your interests and skill level. You should begin to focus on this objective immediately by identifying the type(s) of graphic design work you are most likely to pursue. **What type of graphic designer would you like to be?** Let your natural abilities be your guide.

DO YOU LIKE TO DRAW, DOODLE OR WORK WITH A VARIETY OF MEDIUMS?

Could you be adept at visually simplifying complex ideas or information?

ARE YOU A LOVER OF WORDS AND ALL THINGS RELATING TO TEXT?

Could you enjoy interpreting text, organizing content and paying close attention to detail?

DO YOU RELISH THE BRAINSTORMING PROCESS AND STRIVING TO “PUSH THE CREATIVE ENVELOPE?”

Are you interested in conducting market research and using psychology and other means to influence your audience?

ARE YOU MOST COMFORTABLE WHEN WORKING THREE-DimensionALLY?

DO YOU HAVE A TALENT FOR “PLOTting THE COURSE?”

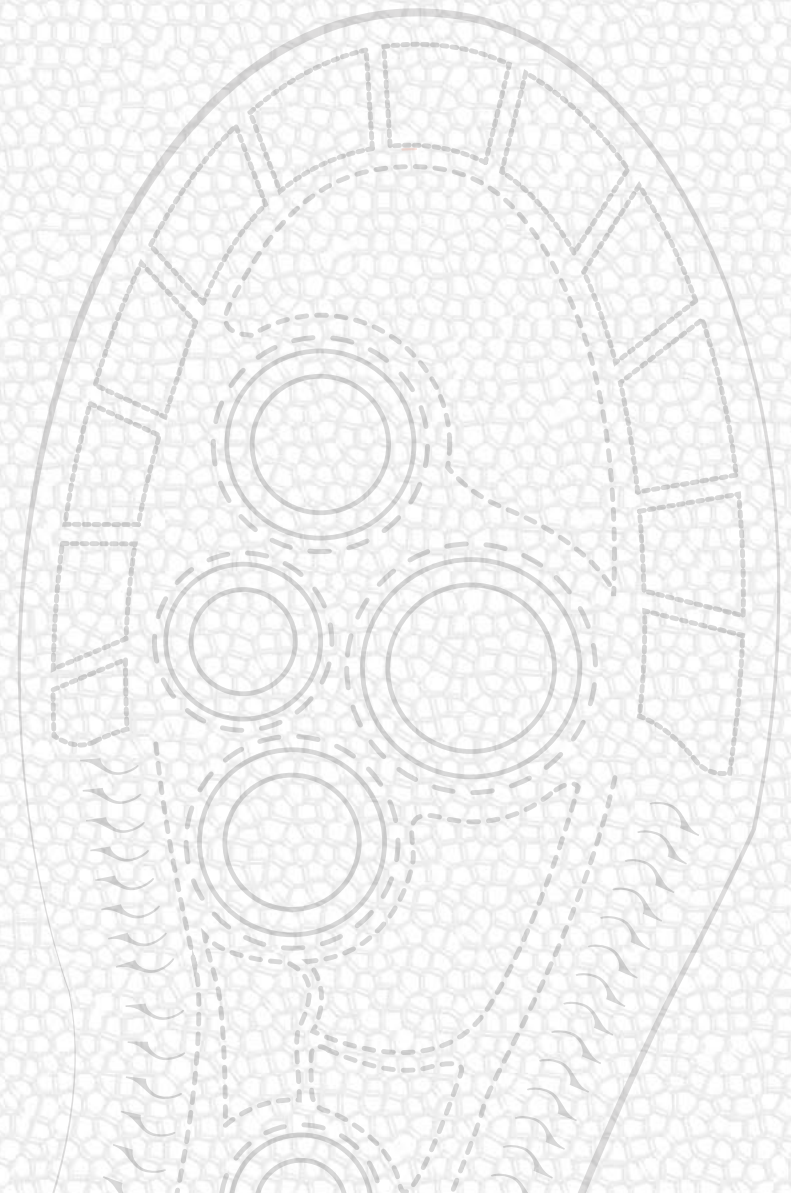
Are you excited by the idea of creating experiences and virtual environments to engage your audience?

ARE YOU ABLE TO LEARN NEW SOFTWARE QUICKLY AND FOLLOW DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS WITH EASE?

Could you be content focusing on the technical side of design while executing the ideas of others?

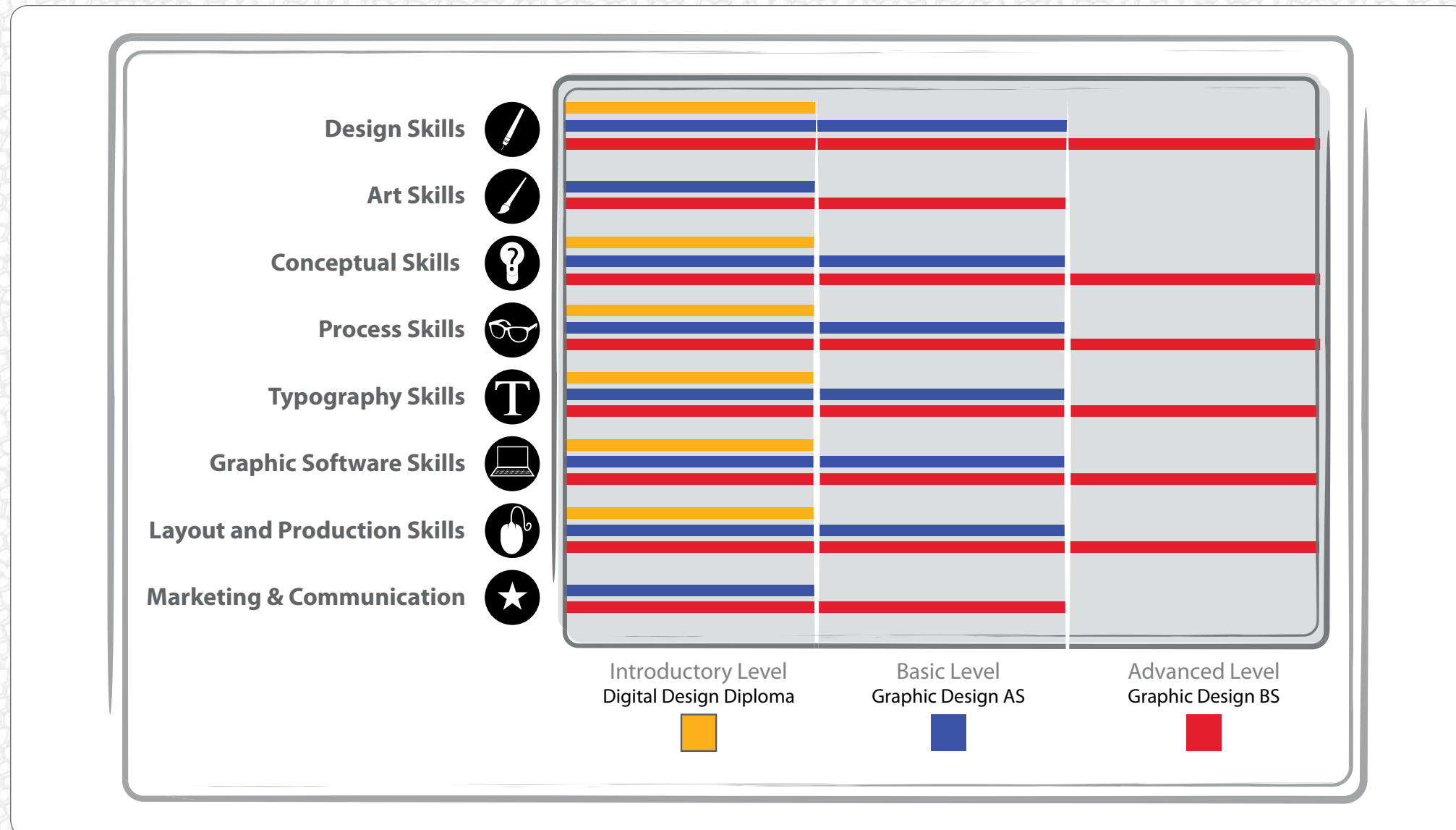
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

You may find you are initially drawn to a number of career options. That's okay, this is the time for you to explore your choices – you don't have to commit to a particular path immediately and you can always change your mind as you move forward. However, there is an advantage to narrowing your focus by the time you begin to market yourself as a graphic designer. Remember, your portfolio should emphasize the skills associated with the type of design work sought. As such, you are encouraged to work toward establishing specific career goals. **Click the icon below** to check out the student workshop recording for additional guidance.



The AiP-OD Graphic Design department offers three programs – each geared towards achieving a specific overall skill level in graphic design:

- **Introductory Level:** Digital Design Diploma
- **Basic Level:** Graphic Design AS
- **Advanced Level:** Graphic Design BS



ACADEMIC GOALS

Be sure your academic goals are in line with your career goals. (The intensity of the white bar indicates the level of education most likely required for each career option.)

Illustrative Designer

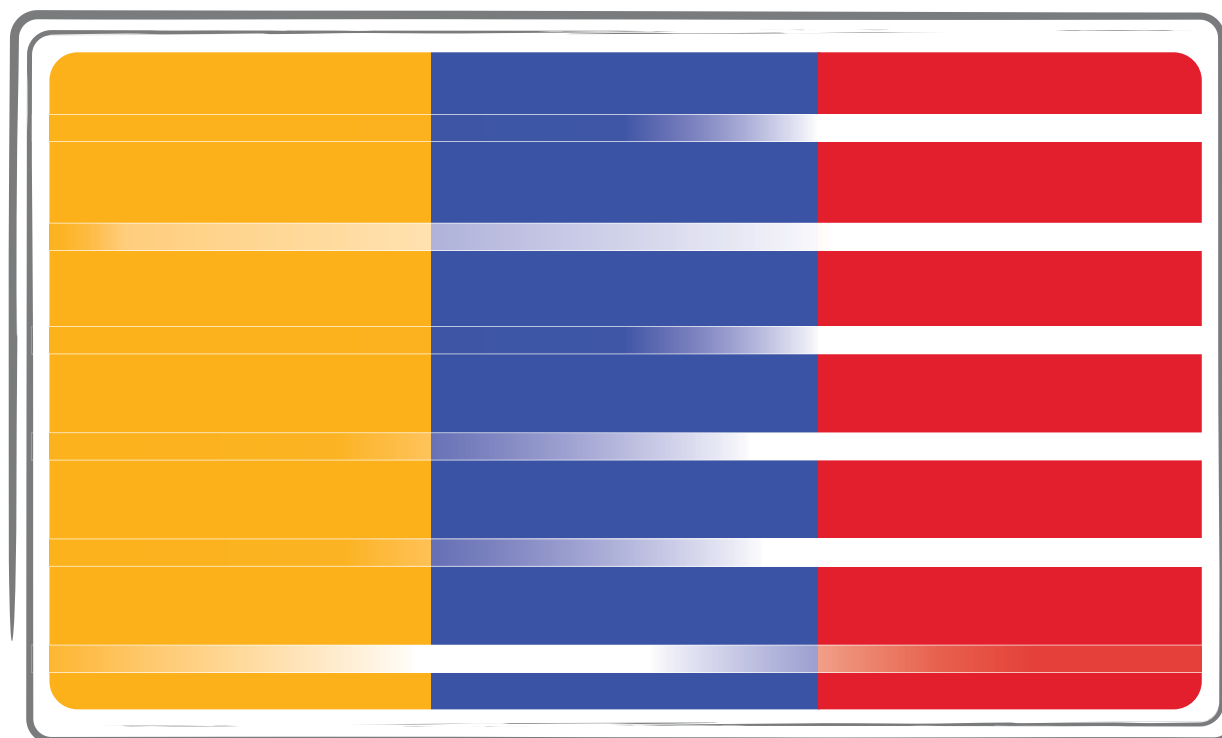
Publication Designer

Persuasive Designer

Packaging Designer

Interactive Designer

Production Artist



Digital Design Diploma

Graphic Design AS

Graphic Design BS

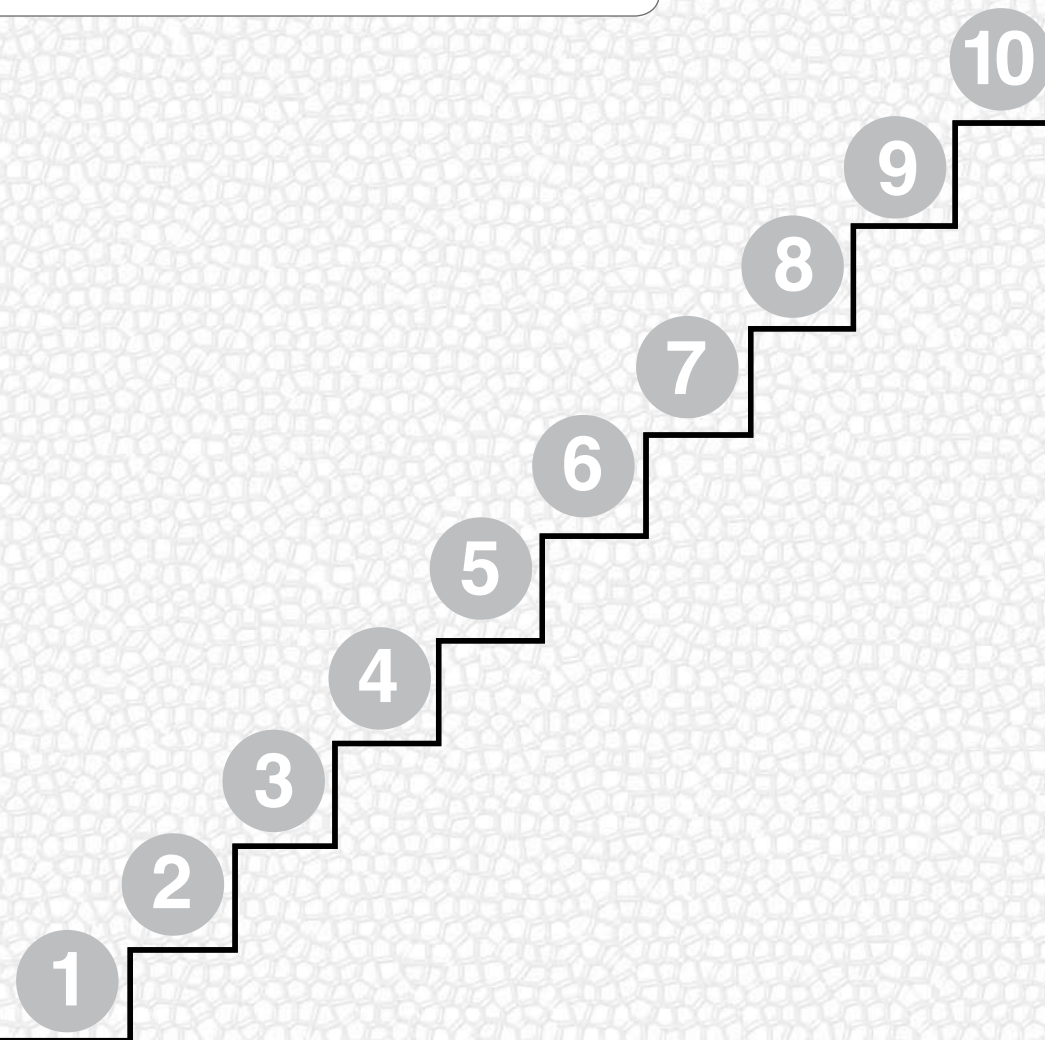
PORTFOLIO OBJECTIVES

Each AiP-OD Graphic Design program offers a series of courses intended to aid in the development of relevant portfolio content. Be sure to invest the time and effort required to successfully achieve the desired learning outcomes that are likely to produce portfolio quality work. Here are a few examples of portfolio worthy solutions from some of our previous students.

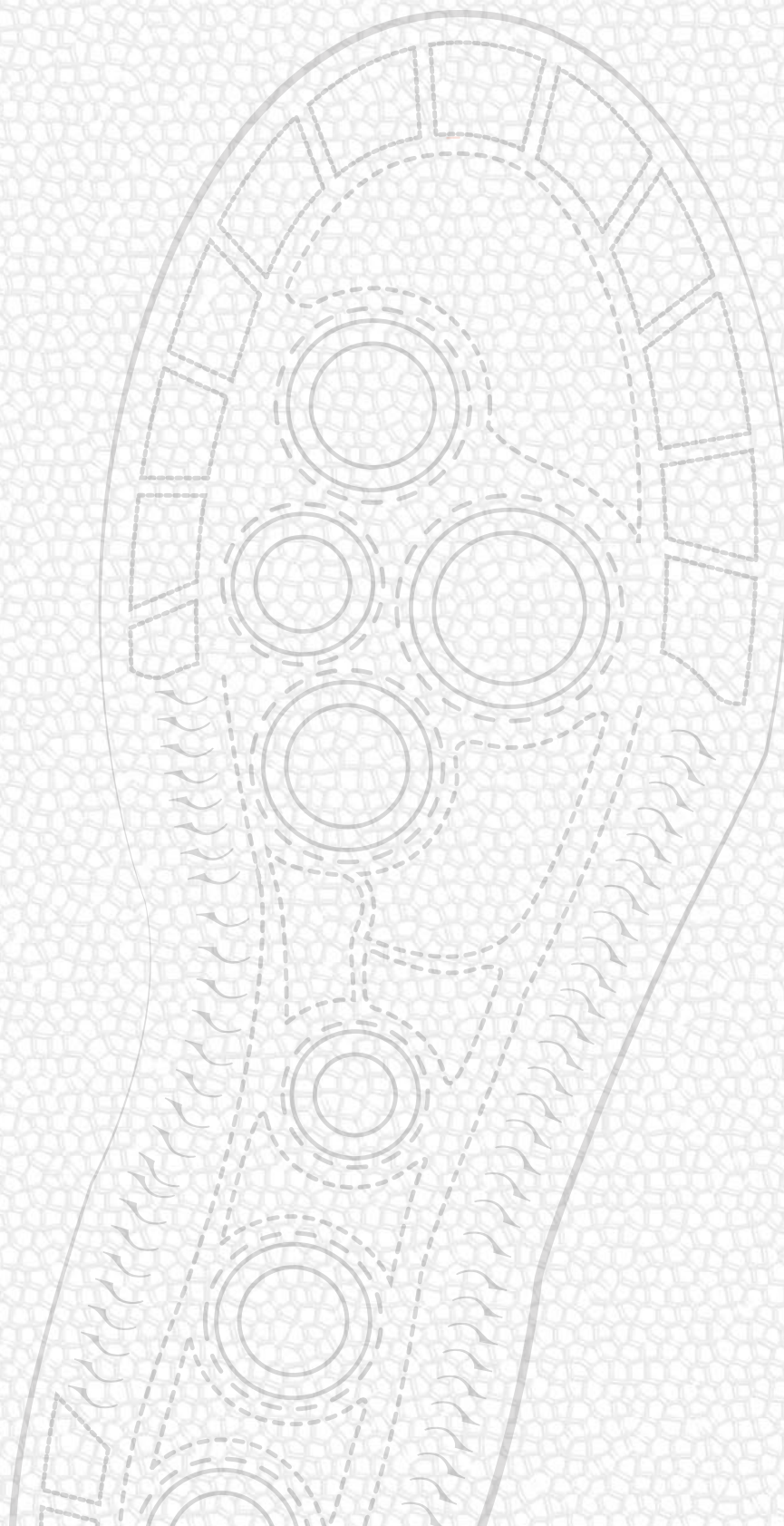
HOW CAN YOU ACHIEVE THE SKILL LEVELS NECESSARY TO DEVELOP A COMPETITIVE PORTFOLIO?

What is the secret to launching a successful career in graphic design? A portfolio that demonstrates the appropriate skill levels for the type of design work sought.

Click on each number for success tips.



Click on each icon for additional information



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