

**Press Release**  
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## **Richard Burbidge and Birmingham City University Students Collaborate**

***Balustrade specialist Richard Burbidge has joined forces with Birmingham City University to find the balustrade system of the future through an exciting product design competition.***

20 talented students on the MA Product Design course have been tasked with developing, designing and making prototypes of a new stair balustrade system. The MA course is delivered by the University's Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (BIAD); the largest centre for art and design outside London.

The students will visit Richard Burbidge's manufacturing facility in Shropshire in June, before undertaking the intensive one-week project. They will produce prototypes for installation on short flight staircases and the designs will then be judged by a panel of industry experts. One winner will receive a prize, plus a week's work experience at Richard Burbidge Ltd, the UK market leader in stair balustrade. Two runners-up will receive voucher prizes and Richard Burbidge is also donating technical equipment to the MA Product Design department, as part of the project.

Avid Richards, Specification and Trade Marketing Manager for Richard Burbidge, said: "This competition is all about pushing the boundaries to find the next generation of stair balustrade. The brief has been kept deliberately open so the students can use their imagination and creativity to best effect. The balustrade concepts simply need to be about safety, decoration, refurbishment or something completely alternative.

"We're really excited about seeing the design ideas and if one of the concepts is deliverable in the real world, then it may well be included in our range in the future."

Graham Powell, Course Director and Product Design Subject Leader for BIAD, said: "We encourage students to undertake real-life projects to help prepare them for senior level design positions within the field. We are pleased to be collaborating with a Midlands manufacturer and are confident that the project will be rewarding for everyone involved."

Richard Burbidge supplies an extensive range of indoor and outdoor balustrade for installation on staircases, decks, patios and balconies. The company has historically specialised in timber products but has used other materials in recent times, including metal, glass and acrylic.

For details of the Richard Burbidge range, visit <http://www.richardburbidge.com>.  
More information on Birmingham City University is available at <http://www.bcu.ac.uk>.

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