

Texas Administrative Code

TITLE 19	EDUCATION
PART 1	TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
CHAPTER 4	RULES APPLYING TO ALL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TEXAS
SUBCHAPTER B	TRANSFER OF CREDIT, CORE CURRICULUM AND FIELD OF STUDY CURRICULA

RULE §4.21 **Purpose**

The purpose of this subchapter is to provide for the development and implementation of policies that encourage the free and appropriate transferability of lower division course credit among institutions of higher education, and especially to provide for the smooth transfer of lower division credit through core curricula, field of study curricula, and a procedure for the resolution of transfer disputes.

RULE §4.22 **Authority**

The Board is authorized to adopt rules and establish policies and procedures for the development, adoption, implementation, and evaluation of core curricula, field of study curricula, and a transfer dispute resolution process under Texas Education Code §§61.051(g), and Texas Education Code §§61.821-831.

RULE §4.23 **Definitions**

The following words and terms, when used in this subchapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

- (1) Board--The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
- (2) Commissioner--The Commissioner of Higher Education.
- (3) Core Curriculum--the curriculum in the liberal arts, humanities, sciences, and political, social, and cultural history that all undergraduates of an institution of higher education are required to complete before receiving an academic undergraduate degree. Core curriculum provisions apply to public colleges and universities, and to academic degree programs offered at health-related institutions.

(4) Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC)--a set of courses that will satisfy the lower-division requirements for a baccalaureate degree in a specific academic area at a general academic teaching institution. A field of study curriculum affects academic degree programs at public colleges or universities as designated within the particular field of study curriculum.

(5) Course consistent with the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS)--a lower-division course that meets one of three conditions:

(A) it has an assigned TCCNS number and is listed in the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual;

(B) a TCCNS number and inclusion in the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual have been requested for the course; or

(C) the institution which offers the course has specified at least one TCCNS course listed in the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual that will be accepted in transfer in lieu of the course.

(6) Institution of Higher Education or institution--any public technical institute, public junior college, public senior college or university, medical or dental unit, other agency of higher education as defined in Texas Education Code, §61.003.

(7) The Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM)--an official Board publication that lists a basic core of general academic courses which are freely transferable among all public institutions of higher education in Texas in accordance with the Texas Education Code, §61.051(g). TCCNS numbers are assigned to most courses in the manual.

(8) Faculty member--a person who is employed full-time by an institution of higher education as a member of the faculty whose primary duties include teaching, research, academic service, or administration. However, the term does not include a person holding faculty rank who spends a majority of the person's time for the institution engaged in managerial or supervisory activities, including a chancellor, vice chancellor, president, vice president, provost, associate of assistant provost, or dean.

RULE §4.24**General Provisions**

(a) All successfully completed lower-division academic courses that are identified by the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS) and published in the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) shall be fully transferable among public institutions and shall be substituted for the equivalent course at the receiving institution. Except in the case of courses belonging to a Board-approved Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC), applicability of transferred courses to requirements for specific degree programs is determined by the receiving institution.

(b) Nothing in this subchapter restricts the authority of an institution of higher education to adopt its own admission standards in compliance with this subchapter or its own grading policies so long as it treats transfer students and native students in the same manner.

(c) Institutional policies regarding acceptance of credit for correspondence courses, credit-by-examination, and other credit-earning instruments must be consistent with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' guidelines and must treat transfer students and native students in the same manner.

(d) This subchapter applies specifically to academic courses and degree programs, and does not apply to technical courses or technical degree programs.

RULE §4.25 Requirements and Limitations

(a) Each institution of higher education shall identify in its undergraduate catalog each lower-division course that is substantially equivalent to an academic course listed in the current edition of the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual.

(b) Each university must offer at least 45 semester credit hours of academic courses that are substantially equivalent to courses listed in the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual including those that fulfill the lower-division portion of the institution's Core Curriculum.

(c) All public colleges and universities must accept transfer of credit for successfully completed courses identified in subsections (a) and (b) of this section as applicable to an associate or baccalaureate degree in the same manner as credit awarded to non-transfer students in that degree program.

(d) Each institution shall be required to accept in transfer into a baccalaureate degree program the number of lower-division credit hours in the program which are allowed for their non-transfer students in that program; however,

(1) No institution shall be required to accept in transfer more credit hours in the major area of a degree program than the number set out in any applicable Board-approved Field of Study Curriculum for that program.

(2) In any degree program for which there is no Board-approved Field of Study Curriculum, no institution shall be required to accept in transfer more lower-division course credit in the major applicable to a baccalaureate degree than the institution allows their non-transfer students in that major.

(3) An institution of higher education may deny the transfer of credit in courses with a grade of "D" as applicable to the student's field of study curriculum courses, core curriculum courses, or major.

(e) All senior institutions of higher education in Texas shall provide support services

appropriate to meet the needs of transfer students. These support services should be comparable to those provided to non-transfer students regularly enrolled at the institutions, including an orientation program similar to that provided for entering freshman enrollees.

(f) No university shall be required to accept in transfer or toward a degree program, more than sixty-six (66) semester credit hours of lower-division academic credit. Universities, however, may choose to accept additional credit hours.

RULE §4.26 Penalty for Noncompliance with Transfer Rules

If it is determined by the Board that an institution inappropriately or unnecessarily required a student to retake a course that is substantially equivalent to a course already taken at another institution, in violation of the provisions of §4.25 of this title (relating to Requirements and Limitations), formula funding for credit hours in the repeated course will be deducted from the institution's appropriation.

RULE §4.27 Resolution of Transfer Disputes for Lower-Division Courses

(a) The following procedures shall be followed by institutions of higher education in the resolution of credit transfer disputes involving lower-division courses:

(1) If an institution of higher education does not accept course credit earned by a student at another institution of higher education, the receiving institution shall give written notice to the student and to the sending institution that transfer of the course credit is denied, and shall include in that notice the reasons for denying the credit. Attached to the written notice shall be the procedures for resolution of transfer disputes for lower-division courses as outlined in this section, accompanied by clear instructions outlining the procedure for appealing the decision to the Commissioner.

(2) A student who receives notice as specified in paragraph (1) of this subsection may dispute the denial of credit by contacting a designated official at either the sending or the receiving institution.

(3) The two institutions and the student shall attempt to resolve the transfer of the course credit in accordance with Board rules and guidelines.

(4) If the transfer dispute is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student or the sending institution within 45 days after the date the student received written notice of denial, the sending institution may notify the Commissioner in writing of the request for transfer dispute resolution, and the institution that denies the course credit for transfer shall notify the Commissioner in writing of its denial and the reasons for the denial.

(b) The Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee shall make the final determination about a dispute concerning the transfer of course credit and give written notice of the determination to the involved student and institutions.

(c) Each institution of higher education shall publish in its course catalogs the procedures specified in subsections (a), (b), (d), and (e) of this section.

(d) The Board shall collect data on the types of transfer disputes that are reported and the disposition of each case that is considered by the Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee.

(e) If a receiving institution has cause to believe that a course being presented by a student for transfer from another school is not of an acceptable level of quality, it should first contact the sending institution and attempt to resolve the problem. In the event that the two institutions are unable to come to a satisfactory resolution, the receiving institution may notify the Commissioner, who may investigate the course. If its quality is found to be unacceptable, the Board may discontinue funding for the course.

RULE §4.28**Core Curriculum**

(a) In accordance with Texas Education Code, §§61.821-831, each general academic institution, community college, and health-related institution shall design and implement a core curriculum, including specific courses composing the curriculum, of no less than 42 lower-division semester credit hours. Health-related institutions should encourage their students to complete their core curriculum requirement at a general academic institution or community college.

(b) Each institution's core curriculum must be designed to satisfy the exemplary educational objectives specified for the component areas of the "Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics" adopted by the Board; all lower-division courses included in the core curriculum must be consistent with the "Texas Common Course Numbering System," and must be consistent with the framework identified in Charts I and II of this subsection. Chart I specifies the minimum number of semester credit hours required in each of five major component areas that a core curriculum must include (with sub-areas noted in parentheses). Chart II specifies options available to institutions for the remaining 6-12 semester credit hours.

Figure: 19 TAC §4.28(b)

Chart I - Institutions must select 36 semester credit hours of the core curriculum according to the parameters described below:

Component Area	Required Semester Credit Hours
010** Communication (English rhetoric/composition)	6
020** Mathematics (logic, college-level algebra equivalent, or above)	3
030** Natural Sciences	6
Humanities & Visual and Performing Arts Must include: 050** Visual/Performing Arts 040** Other (literature, philosophy, modern or classical language/literature and cultural studies*)	6 (3) (3)
Social/Behavioral Sciences Must include: 060** U.S. History (legislatively mandated) 070** Political Science (legislatively mandated) 080** Social/Behavioral Science	15 (6) (6) (3)
Total Minimum Requirements	36

* **Humanities** application of language skills includes a study of literature in the original language, and/or the cultural studies related to a modern or classical language.

** Identifying numbers recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) for use on students transcripts, in order to indicate courses utilized to satisfy core curriculum component area requirements. Student transcripts should also indicate whether a student has completed the core curriculum satisfactorily.

Chart II - To complete the required 42-semester-credit-hour core curriculum, institutions shall select an additional 6 semester credit hours from one or more of the following:

Component Area	Possible Additional Semester Credit Hours (6 Minimum)
011*** Communication (composition, speech, modern language communication skills*)	Up to 6
021*** Mathematics (finite math, statistics, calculus, or above)	Up to 3
031*** Natural Sciences	Up to 3
041*** Humanities (literature, philosophy, modern or classical language/literature and cultural studies**) & 051*** Visual and Performing Arts	Up to 3
081*** Social and Behavioral Sciences	Up to 3
090*** Institutionally Designated Option (may include additional semester credit hours in the categories listed above, computer literacy, health/wellness, kinesiology, capstone or interdisciplinary courses, etc.	Up to 6
Total Additional Hours	6

* **Communication** application of a modern language means the basic proficiency skills acquired during introductory courses and including a working competency in grammar, writing, speaking, and listening/comprehension in a foreign language.

** **Humanities** application of language skills includes a study of literature in the original language, and/or the cultural studies related to a modern or classical language.

*** Identifying numbers recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) for use on students transcripts, in order to indicate courses utilized to satisfy core curriculum component area requirements. Student transcripts should also indicate whether a student has completed the core curriculum satisfactorily.

(c) If a student successfully completes the 42 semester credit hour core curriculum at a Texas public institution of higher education, that block of courses may be transferred to any other Texas public institution of higher education and must be substituted for the receiving institution's core curriculum. A student shall receive academic credit for each of the courses transferred and may not be required to take additional core curriculum courses at the receiving institution unless the Board has approved a larger core curriculum at that institution.

(d) A student concurrently enrolled at more than one institution of higher education shall follow the core curriculum requirements in effect for the institution at which the student is classified as a degree-seeking student.

(e) Except as specified in subsection (f) of this section, a student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another without completing the core curriculum of the sending institution shall receive academic credit within the core curriculum of the receiving institution for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the core curriculum of the sending institution. Following receipt of credit for these courses, the student may be required to satisfy the remaining course requirements in the core curriculum of the receiving institution.

(f) Each student must meet the minimum number of semester credit hours in each component area; however, an institution receiving a student in transfer is not required to accept component core course semester credit hours beyond the maximum specified in a core component area.

(g) An institution may include within its core curriculum a course or courses that combine exemplary educational objectives from two or more component areas of the exemplary educational objectives defined in this section.

(h) Each institution must note core courses on student transcripts as recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO).

(i) Each institution must publish and make readily available to students its core curriculum requirements stated in terms consistent with the "Texas Common Course Numbering System."

RULE §4.29**Core Curricula Larger than 42 Semester Credit Hours**

(a) An institution may adopt a core curriculum under this subchapter in excess of 42 semester credit hours, but no more than 48 semester credit hours, if the courses in excess of 42 semester credit hours are selected from the first five component areas of Chart II of §4.28(b) of this title (relating to Core Curriculum) (excluding additional credit in the Institutionally Designated Option) and are approved by the institution's governing board.

(b) No institution may adopt a core curriculum of more than 42 semester credit hours without approval by the Board if the courses in excess of 42 semester credit hours are selected from component areas other than the first five component areas of Chart II of §4.28(b) of this title (relating to Transfer of Credit, Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula). The Board may approve a core curriculum under this section if:

- (1) It has been previously approved by the institution's governing board;
 - (2) The institution has provided to the Board a narrative justification of the need and appropriateness of a larger core curriculum that is consistent with its role and mission; and
 - (3) No proposed upper-division core course is substantially comparable in content or depth of study to a lower-division course listed in the "Texas Common Course Numbering System."
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RULE §4.30

Criteria for Evaluation of Core Curricula

(a) Each public institution of higher education shall review and evaluate its core curriculum every five years and report the results of that evaluation to the Board. The evaluation should include:

- (1) the extent to which the core curriculum is consistent with the elements of the core curriculum recommended by the Board;
- (2) the extent to which the core curriculum is consistent with the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS);
- (3) the extent to which the core curriculum is consistent with the elements of the core curriculum component areas, intellectual competencies, and perspectives as expressed in Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics adopted by the Board; and
- (4) the extent to which the institution's educational goals and the exemplary educational objectives of the core curriculum recommended by the Board are being achieved;

(b) Each institution's evaluation report must contain at least the following:

- (1) a table that compares the institution's core curriculum with the core component areas and exemplary educational objectives of the core curriculum recommended by the Board;
 - (2) a brief description of the purpose and substance of the institution's core curriculum;
 - (3) a description of the processes and procedures used to evaluate the institution's core curriculum; and
 - (4) a description of the ways in which the evaluation results are being or will be utilized to improve the core curriculum at the institution.
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RULE §4.31**Revision of Existing Approved Core Curricula**

(a) Each public institution of higher education that does not already have a Board-approved core curriculum on file must submit its proposed core curriculum to the Board for staff review and approval. The request for approval should include a description of the goals of the core curriculum, a table showing the institution's core curriculum by component area (based on the model found in Charts I and II in §4.28(b) of this title, relating to Core Curriculum), and a complete listing of courses approved by the institution to fulfill core component requirements, organized to reflect each required and supplemental component area of the core curriculum as detailed in the document Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics, adopted by the Board. Courses should be selected to fulfill component requirements in a core curriculum based at least in part on their ability to meet most of the exemplary educational outcome statements for the component area as described in the document Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics, adopted by the Board.

(b) An institution should follow these procedures to modify its core curriculum to add or delete courses, change the total number of semester credit hours in a non-required component area, or change the total number of semester credit hours required in its core curriculum:

(1) submit to the Board a letter documenting each change to be made, the component area(s) affected, and a rationale for the change;

(2) requests that involve changing the overall number of semester credit hours in the core curriculum or the number in a given component area require documentation of prior approval by the institution's governing board;

(3) the institution shall receive a letter from the Board staff giving notice of acceptance of the proposed changes and/or indicating any changes that do not meet Board-approved criteria.

(c) Upon receiving an approval letter from Board staff, the institution shall make any required changes to its core curriculum and will document those changes in institutional publications.

RULE §4.32**Field of Study Curricula**

(a) In accordance with Texas Education Code, §61.823, the Board approves field of study curricula for certain fields of study/academic disciplines. Field of study curricula shall be developed with the assistance of advisory committees whose membership includes at least a majority of members who are teaching faculty (as defined by §4.23(8) of this title, relating to Definitions for Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula) within the field of study under consideration.

(b) If a student successfully completes a field of study curriculum developed by the

Board, that block of courses may be transferred to a general academic teaching institution and must be substituted for that institution's lower-division requirements for the degree program for the field of study into which the student transfers, and the student shall receive full academic credit toward the degree program for the block of courses transferred.

(c) A student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another without completing the field of study curriculum of the sending institution shall receive academic credit in the field of study curriculum of the receiving institution for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the field of study curriculum of the sending institution. Following receipt of credit for these courses, the student may be required to satisfy the remaining course requirements in the field of study curriculum of the receiving institution, or to complete additional requirements in the receiving institution's program, as long as those requirements do not duplicate course content already completed through the field of study curriculum.

(d) A student concurrently enrolled at more than one institution of higher education shall follow the field of study curriculum requirements of the institution at which the student is classified as a degree-seeking student.

(e) Each institution must note field of study curriculum courses on student transcripts as recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO).

(f) Each institution must review and evaluate its procedures for complying with field of study curricula at intervals specified by the Board and shall report the results of that review to the Board. These reports shall be submitted following the same timetable as the regular reports of core curriculum evaluations.

RULE §4.33**Criteria for Evaluation of Field of Study Curricula**

(a) Every five years, each public institution of higher education shall review and evaluate its policies and practices regarding the acceptance and application of credit earned as part of a Board-approved field of study curriculum, and reports the results of that evaluation to the Board. The evaluation should include:

(1) the extent to which the institution's compliance with the acceptance of transfer credit through field of study curricula is being achieved;

(2) the extent to which the institution's application to the appropriate degree program of credit earned as part of a Board-approved field of study curriculum facilitates academic success;

(3) the effectiveness of field of study curricula in the retention and graduation of transfer students in those degree programs that have Board-approved field of study curricula.

(b) Each institution's evaluation report must contain at least the following:

- (1) a listing of the institution's degree programs that have Board-approved field of study curricula;
 - (2) a description of the institution's policies and practices regarding applicable Board-approved field of study curricula, including admission-point evaluation of transfer credit, advising practices (including catalogue and website information on existing field of study curricula and advising/counseling practices for enrolled students), and transcribing practices to show field of study participation and completion;
 - (3) a chart or table showing the number of total transfer students for each degree program that has a Board-approved field of study curriculum, for each of the last five years; the chart should indicate year-by-year the percentage of students who transferred having completed the applicable field of study curriculum, the percentage of students who transferred without having completed the applicable field of study curriculum, and any information about progress toward graduation or graduation rates that can compare transfer student performance with non-transfer student performance during the evaluation period.
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RULE §4.34

Revision of Existing Approved Field of Study Curricula

- (a) The Board shall have the authority to modify or revise a Board-approved field of study curriculum when a need for such a revision is identified, as specified in current Board policy and procedures.
- (b) The need for a revision or modification to a Board-approved field of study curriculum may be identified by one the following methods, or by other methods that are similarly appropriate:
 - (1) notice of a change in licensure, certification, or accreditation standards that would affect the field of study curriculum and lower-division requirements for a field of study or academic discipline;
 - (2) notice of a change in curricular structure or content that is part of a pervasive change in the academic discipline served by the field of study curriculum, as documented by national or regional professional organizations, faculty organizations, or other indicators of best practices in the discipline;
 - (3) receipt of a request from at least three public institutions of higher education that are affected by the field of study curriculum under consideration for modification, including at least one two-year and one four-year academic-degree-granting institution. The request and justifications for the request should be made by the chief academic officers of the institutions, in a joint memorandum sent to the Commissioner.
- (c) Any proposed modification or revision to a Board-approved field of study curriculum should be evaluated by an advisory committee convened under the conditions cited in §4.30(a) of this title (relating to Criteria for Evaluation of Core Curricula).

Recommendations for modifications or revisions to a Board-approved field of study curriculum should reflect the advice and wisdom of an advisory committee made up primarily of teaching faculty from the academic discipline(s) affected by the field of study curriculum under consideration.
