

Frequently Asked Questions December 2023

Q1: Regarding Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Rule 4.86(b), how does “supportive integrated skills curriculum” relate to corequisite courses or student success courses? Are they similar? Is “College Connect” perhaps the application of those concepts directly to core curriculum courses? If not, and the content is intended to be added to existing courses, how is this different from existing “supplemental instruction” programs at various institutions? If additional content is to be added to a course, how is that expected to affect contact hours and credit hours of those courses?

A1. Integrated skills curriculum objectives are generally not outlined in college-level learning outcomes but support students' learning and mastery of those outcomes. Examples of integrated skills curriculum recommended under the rule may include supplemental instruction, digital learning modules, or other options. An institution should provide integrated curriculum that is aligned with college-level course content to help ensure underprepared students achieve successful mastery of the college-level content. The college-level component should adhere, at minimum, to the learning outcomes and contact hours outlined in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual*.

Q2: TAC Rule 4.86(c) states students must be college ready or show exemption from that statute as non-degree-seeking or non-certificate-seeking students. If students are previously college-ready, what is expected of “supportive integrated skills curriculum” that is beyond the scope of what many institutions already do to support students, e.g., library instruction, tutoring centers, embedded tutors, supplemental instruction?

A2: For college-ready students, there is no further expectation of integrated skills curriculum beyond what institutions already do to support students.

Q3: If students are exempt from the college-ready requirement because they are non-degree-seeking or non-certificate-seeking students, how is that or will that be reconciled with other rules or regulations that require all dual credit students to be on a degree or certificate or pathway?

A3: A student who has successfully earned 14 semester credit hours or fewer of dual credit courses at a public institution of higher education is not required to file a degree plan with the institution – as outlined in Texas Education Code (TEC) 51.9685(c-2) and TAC Chapter 4, Subchapter T, Rule 4.344 – and may be considered non-degree seeking. The proposed TAC, Chapter 4, Subchapter D, Rule 4.86, applies only to a student who has not earned more than 14 semester credit hours of college credit at an institution of higher education and would not be required to file a degree plan with the institution.

Q4: TAC Rule 4.86(g) mentions “formula funding.” How are these rules affected by the new community college funding model?

A4: While the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) anticipates that College Connect Courses offered as dual credit courses will likely be funded in the same way as other dual credit courses with regard to the new community college funding model, especially with regard to students'

completion of 15 hours that apply to academic or workforce programs, it should be noted that rules and policies with regard to the funding model are still under consideration and have not been finally adopted by the board of the THECB.

Q5: Will students who earn college credit by successfully completing a College Connect Course be TSI-met?

A5: If the College Connect Course is designated by the institution as TSI-liable in ELAR or mathematics, the student's successful completion of the college-level course with a grade of A, B, or C will be considered and reported as TSI-met/TSI-complete in the applicable subject area(s).

Q6: Why is the non-degree-seeking TSI exemption available only to students with fewer than 15 SCHs of college-level courses?

A6: TEC 51.9685(c-2) requires all students to file a degree plan with the college "at the end of the second regular semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which the student earned a cumulative total of 15 or more semester credit hours of course credit for dual credit courses successfully completed by the student." Once a student files a degree plan, they are considered degree seeking, and must demonstrate meeting college readiness standards or meet eligibility requirements in TAC, Title 19, Section 4.85 to enroll in dual credit or dual enrollment courses.

Q7: What criteria should be used to determine which students are eligible for a College Connect Course? Would it be like the multiple measures (GPA, grades in ENGL or MATH) that we use with traditional students? Should the college use the same criteria that they currently use for co-requisite courses? Does the college set the criteria or will THECB provide criteria?

A7: Institutions offering College Connect Courses for students who are non-degree/non-certificate seeking and have not met indicators outlined in TAC Rule 4.57 or an exemption outlined in TAC Rule 4.54 may make their own determinations about which eligibility requirements are appropriate. Institutions are encouraged to consider students' career interests and academic pathways in their determination. Subsection (c)(3) has been added to the rules to clarify this option.

Q8: How should we track and report outcomes for dual credit students in a College Connect Course?

A8: The THECB is studying how best to require reporting and tracking for College Connect Courses and will provide more details as they become available.

Q9: When are colleges expected to implement the new College Connect Course?

A9: College Connect Courses are optional for institutions to implement. The board of the THECB approved the rules for the College Connect Courses program at its August 22, 2023, meeting.

Q10: Will this require an MOU between the institution offering the course(s) and the ISD?

A10: Yes, TAC Rule 4.86(f)(2) requires that institutions must enter into an agreement with the secondary school, pursuant to TAC Rule 4.84.