

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

**Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining  
Characteristics**

Revised 1999

*Applicable for the Core Curriculum up to and including Academic Year 2014*

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1999**

## **BACKGROUND**

Senate Bill (SB) 148, enacted in 1997 by the 75th Texas Legislature, requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules that include "a statement of the content, component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum," which each institution is to fulfill by its own selection of specific courses. Those rules are included in Chapter 5, Subchapter S, Sections 5.390 through 5.404. The Coordinating Board has adopted this document in order to provide additional guidance to institutions as they refine their core curricula to comply with SB 148 and the Coordinating Board rules that implement the statute. The Assumptions, Defining Characteristics of Intellectual Competencies, Perspectives, and Exemplary Educational Objectives (listed by component area) contained in this document are derived from the Report of the Advisory Committee on Core Curriculum (1997-98). That Advisory Committee based its work on the 1989 Report of the Subcommittee on Core Curriculum, which the Board received and endorsed in accordance with House Bill 2187 of the 70th Legislature. That legislation required all institutions to adopt, evaluate, and report on an undergraduate core curriculum. Each institution should consider these guiding principles carefully as it proceeds with the revision of its core curriculum.

## **ASSUMPTIONS**

In establishing its guidelines for core curricula, the Board has made the following assumptions:

1. Every institution of higher education is required by law to adopt a core curriculum of no less than 42 semester credit hours which is consistent with the Texas Common Course Numbering System and the statement, recommendations, and rules issued by The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

[The Core Curriculum Advisory Committee (1997-1998) has defined "consistent with the Texas Common Course Numbering System" as meeting one of the following criteria: a) the course already has a common course number, b) application for a common course number has been made, or c) the course is not a common course but at least one common course number that may be accepted in lieu of the course is designated by the institution.]

2. If a student successfully completes the 42-hour core at an institution of higher education, that block of courses 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 the receiving institution.
3. Students who transfer without completing the core curriculum shall receive academic credit in 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, with certain exceptions noted in the rules [Chapter 5, Subchapter S, Section 5.403 (h)].
4. The basic intellectual competencies discussed in this document -- reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy -- should inform the components of any core curriculum. Moreover, a core curriculum should contain courses that provide multiple perspectives about the individual and the world in which he or she lives; that stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, and social aspects of life so students understand ways in which to exercise responsible citizenship;

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and that enable students to integrate knowledge and understand the interrelationships of the disciplines.

5. There should be no attempt by the state to prescribe a specific set of core courses or a single core curriculum that would be uniform across all Texas colleges and universities.
6. A core curriculum should be described and assessed by faculty and institutions in terms of basic intellectual competencies and perspectives, and of specified student outcomes, rather than simply in terms of specific courses and course content.

## **DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF BASIC INTELLECTUAL COMPETENCIES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM**

The core curriculum guidelines described here are predicated on the judgment that a series of basic intellectual competencies -- reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy -- are essential to the learning process in any discipline and thus should inform any core curriculum. Although students can be expected to come to college with some experience in exercising these competencies, they often need further instruction and practice to meet college standards and, later, to succeed in both their major field of academic study and their chosen career or profession.

**READING:** Reading at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials -- books, articles, and documents. A core curriculum should offer students the opportunity to master both general methods of analyzing printed materials and specific methods for analyzing the subject matter of individual disciplines.

**WRITING:** Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. Although correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are each a sine qua non in any composition, they do not automatically ensure that the composition itself makes sense or that the writer has much of anything to say. Students need to be familiar with the writing process including how to discover a topic and how to develop and organize it, how to phrase it effectively for their audience. These abilities can be acquired only through practice and reflection.

**SPEAKING:** Competence in speaking is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience. Developing this competency includes acquiring poise and developing control of the language through experience in making presentations to small groups, to large groups, and through the media.

**LISTENING:** Listening at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.

**CRITICAL THINKING:** Critical thinking embraces methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking, used to address an identified task.

**COMPUTER LITERACY:** Computer literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Core-educated students should have an understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities

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associated with the use of technology, and should have the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available.

Some of these intellectual competencies have traditionally been tied to specific courses required of all students during their first two years of college. For example, courses in college composition, together with mathematics, have long been the cornerstone experience of the freshman year. But a single course or two-course sequence in college composition can do little more than introduce students to the principles and practices of good writing. Within the boundary of three to six semester credit hours of course work, neither of these sequences can guarantee proficiency. Moreover, in most curricula there are no required courses specifically dedicated to reading or to critical thinking. Thus, if a core curriculum is to prepare students effectively, it is imperative that, insofar as possible, these intellectual competencies be included among the objectives of many individual core courses and reflected in their course content.

### **PERSPECTIVES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM**

Another imperative of a core curriculum is that it contain courses that help students attain the following:

1. Establish broad and multiple perspectives on the individual in relationship to the larger society and world in which he or she lives, and to understand the responsibilities of living in a culturally and ethnically diversified world;
2. Stimulate a capacity to discuss and reflect upon individual, political, economic, and social aspects of life in order to understand ways in which to be a responsible member of society;
3. Recognize the importance of maintaining health and wellness;
4. Develop a capacity to use knowledge of how technology and science affect their lives;
5. Develop personal values for ethical behavior;
6. Develop the ability to make aesthetic judgments;
7. Use logical reasoning in problem solving; and
8. Integrate knowledge and understand the interrelationships of the scholarly disciplines.

### **INSTRUCTION AND CONTENT IN THE CORE CURRICULUM**

Education, as distinct from training, demands a knowledge of various contrasting views of human experience in the world. Both the humanities and the visual and performing arts deal with the individual's reaction to the human situation in analytical and creative ways. The social and behavioral sciences deal with the principles and norms that govern human interaction in society and in the production of goods and services. The natural sciences investigate the phenomena of the physical world. Mathematics examines relations among abstract quantities and is the language of the sciences. Composition and communication deal with oral and written language. Each of these disciplines, using its own methodology, offers a different perspective on human experience. Taken together, study in these disciplines provides a breadth of vision against which students can establish and reflect on their own goals and values.

The outcomes which are specified for the disciplinary areas are thus intended primarily to provide students with a perspective on their experience through an acquaintance with the subject matter and methodology of each discipline. They provide students with the opportunity to understand how these disciplines present varying views of the individual, society, and the world, and of appreciating the methods by which scholars in a given discipline organize and

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evaluate data. The perspectives acquired in these studies describe the potential, as well as the limitations, of each discipline in understanding the human experience.

The objective of disciplinary studies within a core curriculum is to foster multiple perspectives as well as to inform and deliver content. Disciplinary courses within a core curriculum should promote outcomes focused on the intellectual core competencies, as well as outcomes related to establishing perspectives, and the basic concepts in the discipline -- methods of analysis and interpretation specific to the discipline.

Institutions are urged to consider development and utilization of appropriate interdisciplinary courses as a means of helping students develop multiple perspectives on the individual in relationship to other people and societies. Comparison and contrast of disciplinary perspectives on an issue within the context of a single course can be a particularly effective instructional device.

### **CORE COMPONENTS AND RELATED EXEMPLARY EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

In designing and implementing a core curriculum of at least 42 semester credit hours, each Texas college and university should select and/or develop courses which satisfy exemplary educational objectives specified for each component area. The following exemplary educational objectives should be used as basic guidelines for selected component areas. Exemplary educational objectives become the basis for faculty and institutional assessment of core components.

Since it is difficult to define exemplary educational objectives for a core curriculum outside of some framework of the general areas of content, the objectives and outcomes described below are suggested as those that meet the intent of Senate Bill 148. The outcomes for student learning provide both guidelines for instruction and a profile of students as they complete each component of a core curriculum. Although these component areas could easily be "translated" directly into disciplinary or departmental terms, it is not necessary to restrict the areas to one or a few departments. These objectives could be met in a number of differing course configurations, including multi-disciplinary courses.

Colleges and universities across the state have specific missions and different roles and scope. The way in which colleges and universities achieve these outcomes will thus vary. These outlines are not intended in any way to impose restrictions on the creativity of the classroom instructor or to dictate pedagogical methods. The emergent profile of the students, however, will presumably have common characteristics insofar as they achieve the specified outcomes. A core curriculum experience will prepare them to learn effectively through the rest of their college years so that they carry these aptitudes for learning into their life careers.

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**I. COMMUNICATION** (composition, speech, modern language)

The objective of a communication component of a core curriculum is to enable the student to communicate effectively in clear and correct prose in a style appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

*Exemplary Educational Objectives*

1. To understand and demonstrate writing and speaking processes through invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation.
2. To understand the importance of specifying audience and purpose and to select appropriate communication choices.
3. To understand and appropriately apply modes of expression, i.e., descriptive, expository, narrative, scientific, and self-expressive, in written, visual, and oral communication.
4. To participate effectively in groups with emphasis on listening, critical and reflective thinking, and responding.
5. To understand and apply basic principles of critical thinking, problem solving, and technical proficiency in the development of exposition and argument.
6. To develop the ability to research and write a documented paper and/or to give an oral presentation.

**II. MATHEMATICS**

The objective of the mathematics component of the core curriculum is to develop a quantitatively literate college graduate. Every college graduate should be able to apply basic mathematical tools in the solution of real-world problems.

*Exemplary Educational Objectives*

1. To apply arithmetic, algebraic, geometric, higher-order thinking, and statistical methods to modeling and solving real-world situations.
2. To represent and evaluate basic mathematical information verbally, numerically, graphically, and symbolically.
3. To expand mathematical reasoning skills and formal logic to develop convincing mathematical arguments.
4. To use appropriate technology to enhance mathematical thinking and understanding and to solve mathematical problems and judge the reasonableness of the results.
5. To interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables and schematics, and draw inferences from them.
6. To recognize the limitations of mathematical and statistical models.
7. To develop the view that mathematics is an evolving discipline, interrelated with human culture, and understand its connections to other disciplines.

### **III. NATURAL SCIENCES**

The objective of the study of a natural sciences component of a core curriculum is to enable the student to understand, construct, and evaluate relationships in the natural sciences, and to enable the student to understand the bases for building and testing theories.

#### *Exemplary Educational Objectives*

1. To understand and apply method and appropriate technology to the study of natural sciences.
2. To recognize scientific and quantitative methods and the differences between these approaches and other methods of inquiry and to communicate findings, analyses, and interpretation both orally and in writing.
3. To identify and recognize the differences among competing scientific theories.
4. To demonstrate knowledge of the major issues and problems facing modern science, including issues that touch upon ethics, values, and public policies.
5. To demonstrate knowledge of the interdependence of science and technology and their influence on, and contribution to, modern culture.

### **IV. HUMANITIES AND VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

The objective of the humanities and visual and performing arts in a core curriculum is to expand students' knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought. Through study in disciplines such as literature, philosophy, and the visual and performing arts, students will engage in critical analysis, form aesthetic judgments, and develop an appreciation of the arts and humanities as fundamental to the health and survival of any society. Students should have experiences in both the arts and humanities.

#### *Exemplary Educational Objectives*

1. To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
2. To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.
3. To respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.
4. To engage in the creative process or interpretive performance and comprehend the physical and intellectual demands required of the author or visual or performing artist.
5. To articulate an informed personal reaction to works in the arts and humanities.
6. To develop an appreciation for the aesthetic principles that guide or govern the humanities and arts.
7. To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on intercultural experiences.

## **V. SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES**

The objective of a social and behavioral science component of a core curriculum is to increase students' knowledge of how social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events, and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity.

### *Exemplary Educational Objectives*

1. To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
2. To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.
3. To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
4. To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
5. To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.
6. To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.
7. To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.
8. To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.
9. To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.
10. To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
11. To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.
12. To identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.

## **VI. INSTITUTIONALLY DESIGNATED OPTION**

An institution may wish to include in its core curriculum courses that address exemplary educational objectives not covered in the preceding broad discipline categories. Such courses may include computer literacy, kinesiology, health/wellness, interdisciplinary or linked courses, or other courses that address a specific institutional role and mission.



## **Chapter 4, Subchapter B**

### **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**

Please note that The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board makes every effort to ensure that the information published on this Internet site is secure and accurate; however, due to the limitations of Internet security, the rules published here are for information only, and do not represent legal documentation.

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#### **§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.

**Source Note:** *The provisions of this §4.21 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109*

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#### **§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- 832.

**Source Note:** *The provisions of this §4.22 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109; amended to be effective May 23, 2004, 29 TexReg 5056*

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#### **§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) Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS)--a course numbering system for lower-division courses that assigns common course numbers to lower- division academic courses in order to facilitate the transfer of courses among institutions of higher education by promoting consistency in course designation and identification.
- (6) 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 a 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.
- (7) 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.
- (8) 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.
- (9) 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 or assistant provost, or dean.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.23 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109; amended to be effective May 23, 2004, 29 TexReg 5056

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#### **§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.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.24 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109

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#### **§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 institution of higher education 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 institutions of higher education 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 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 4, Subchapter B - Transfer of Credit, Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula 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 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 institution of higher education shall be required to accept in transfer, or apply toward a degree program, more than sixty-six (66) semester credit hours of lower-division academic credit. Institutions of higher education, however, may choose to accept additional credit hours.
- (g) Each institution of higher education shall permit a student who transfers from another Texas public institution of higher education to choose a catalog for the purpose of specifying graduation requirements, based upon the dates of attendance at the receiving institution and at the transferring institution, in the same manner that a non-transfer student may choose a catalog. Each Texas public institution of higher education shall include information about graduation requirements under a particular catalog in its official publications, including print and electronic catalogs.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.25 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109; amended to be effective May 12, 2005, 30 TexReg 2660

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#### **§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.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.26 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109

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#### **§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.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.27 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109

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#### **§4.28 Core Curriculum**

- (a) **General:** In accordance with Texas Education Code, §§61.821 - 61.831, 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) **Component Areas:** 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 (the first college-level math course a student completes, including but not limited to introductory statistics, logic, college algebra, or any more advanced math course for which the student is qualified upon enrollment)	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 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 (the second college-level math course a student completes, including but not limited to 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	Up to 6

above, computer literacy, health/wellness, kinesiology, capstone or interdisciplinary courses, etc.	
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) Transfer of Credit--Completed Core Curriculum: 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) Concurrent Enrollment:
  - (1) 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.
  - (2) A student who is concurrently enrolled at more than one institution of higher education may be classified as a degree-seeking student at only one institution.
  - (3) If a student maintains continuous enrollment from a spring semester to the subsequent fall semester at an institution at which the student has declared to be seeking a degree, the student remains a degree-seeking student at that institution regardless of the student's enrollment during the intervening summer session(s) at another institution.
- (e) Transfer of Credit--Core Curriculum Not Completed: 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) Satisfaction of Component Areas: 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) Exemplary Educational Objectives From More Than One Component Area: 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) Transcripts: Each institution must note core courses on student transcripts as recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO).
- (i) Notice: 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."
- (j) Substitutions and Waivers. No institution or institutional representative may approve course substitutions or waivers of the institution's core curriculum requirements for any currently enrolled student, except as provided in subsection (k) of this section. For students who transfer to a public institution from a college or university that is not a Texas public institution of higher education, courses the student completed prior to admission should be evaluated to determine whether they apply to one of the institution's core curriculum component areas. Only those courses the institution has accepted for transfer that can demonstrate fulfillment of the exemplary educational objectives for the appropriate component area or areas should be applied to the institution's core curriculum.
- (k) Accommodations:
  - (1) An institution of higher education may, on a case-by-case basis, approve an accommodation of a specific core curriculum component area requirement as described in paragraph (3) of this subsection for a student with a medically-documented learning disability, including but not limited to dyslexia, dysgraphia, or Asperger's Syndrome.
  - (2) Accommodation shall not include a waiver or exemption of any core curriculum requirement.
  - (3) An institution may approve for core curriculum applicability a course the institution offers but that is not approved as a part of the institution's core curriculum, if the institution demonstrates that the course has been approved to fulfill the same specific core curriculum component area requirement at five or more other Texas public colleges or universities. The Texas Common Course Numbering System course number may be used as evidence of the suitability of the course under this subsection.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.28 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109; amended to be effective August 15, 2006, 31 TexReg 6325; amended to be effective February 18, 2008, 33 TexReg 1324; amended to be effective May 26, 2010, 35 TexReg 4147

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#### **§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."

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.29 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109

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#### **§4.30 Criteria for Evaluation of Core Curricula**

- (a) Each public institution of higher education shall review and evaluate its core curriculum every ten years on the schedule that accords with the institution's accreditation reaffirmation self-study report to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor, 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.

**Source Note:** *The provisions of this §4.30 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109; amended to be effective February 18, 2008, 33 TexReg 1324*

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#### **§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 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 4, Subchapter B - Transfer of Credit, Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula 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.

**Source Note:** *The provisions of this §4.31 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109*

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#### **§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.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.32 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109

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#### **§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.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.33 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109

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#### **§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 of 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.

**Source Note:** The provisions of this §4.34 adopted to be effective May 27, 2003, 28 TexReg 4109

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#### **§4.35 Texas Common Course Numbering System**

- (a) Each institution shall include the applicable course numbers from the TCCNS in its printed and electronic catalogs, course listings, and any other appropriate informational resources, and in the application of the provisions of this subchapter. Institutions that do not use the TCCNS taxonomy as their sole means of course numbering shall publish the following information in their printed and electronic catalogs, course listings, and any other appropriate informational resources:
- (1) The TCCNS prefix and number must be displayed immediately adjacent to the institutional course prefix and number (e.g. ENG 101 (ENGL 1301) at the beginning of each course description; and
  - (2) The printed and electronic catalogs shall include a chart, table, or matrix, alphabetized by common course prefix, listing all common courses taught at the institution by both the common and local course number. For printed catalogs, the chart, table, or matrix should be referenced in a table of contents and/or a subject index.

- (b) Each institutional catalog shall include an explanation of the TCCNS and the significance of TCCNS courses for transfer purposes.
- (c) Each institution shall comply with the requirements of sections (a) and (b) no later than September 1, 2005.
- (d) For good cause, the Commissioner may approve an exemption from the requirements of this section.

**Source Note:** *The provisions of this §4.35 adopted to be effective May 23, 2004, 29 TexReg 5057*