

Texas Core Curriculum

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Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board



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Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is to provide leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through 60x30TX, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.

Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The Coordinating Board's core values are:

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

Efficiency: We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

Collaboration: We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

Excellence: We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Texas Core Curriculum

History

In 1987, the 70th Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 2183, which established the first core curriculum with a general intent to ensure quality in higher education. The legislation provided for the adoption and evaluation of general education core curricula by Texas public colleges and universities.

Since 1987, every student who received a baccalaureate degree from a Texas public institution of higher education, regardless of the student's academic discipline or major has been required to complete the state's general education core curriculum. The Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) is defined by the Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 61.821 as:

... the curriculum in liberal arts, humanities, and sciences and political, social, and cultural history that all undergraduate students of an institution of higher education are required to complete before receiving an academic undergraduate degree.

Senate Bill (SB) 148, passed by the 75th Texas Legislature in January 1997, repealed previous legislation concerning either lower-division transfer or core curriculum and sought to resolve concerns regarding the transfer of lower-division course credit among Texas public colleges and universities, while maintaining the core curriculum as one of the fundamental components of a high-quality undergraduate educational experience. More recent sessions of the Texas Legislature have fine-tuned the existing laws regarding core curriculum, but the essentials of the statutes have not changed since 1997.

Published in 1999, the [Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics](#) describes the elements of the core curriculum and related exemplary educational objectives that were in use through academic year 2014. It includes the Coordinating Board rules in place prior to October 2011.

The Coordinating Board relied on advice and recommendations from faculty and administrators at Texas public colleges and universities regarding the content, component areas, and objectives of the TCC. Two advisory committees were convened, one met from 1987 through 1989, and the next from 1997 through 1999. Both committees made recommendations to the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Coordinating Board.

The Coordinating Board revised its rules for the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) at its regular quarterly meeting of the Board on October 27, 2011. Implementation of the revised rules began with the fall 2014 semester. The Coordinating Board based its revisions on recommendations by its Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee (UEAC). UEAC and Coordinating Board staff developed the following documents:

[Designing Texas Undergraduate Education in the 21st Century](#) (2009), and
[Revising the State Core Curriculum: A focus on 21st century competencies](#) (2011).

Texas Education Code

Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 61, Subchapter S, Sections 61.821-61.832, ensures the state-level focus is on excellence in undergraduate education, while facilitating the transfer of lower-division course credit among public colleges, universities, and health related institutions.

Chapter 61, Subchapter S - Transfer of Credit

[Sec. 61.821. DEFINITIONS](#)

[Sec. 61.822. TRANSFER OF CREDITS; CORE CURRICULUM](#)

[Sec. 61.823. FIELD OF STUDY CURRICULUM](#)

[Sec. 61.824. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATIONS](#)

[Sec. 61.825. BOARD EVALUATIONS](#)

[Sec. 61.826. DISPUTE RESOLUTION](#)

[Sec. 61.827. RULES](#)

[Sec. 61.828. CONCURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS](#)

[Sec. 61.829. EFFECT ON OTHER POLICIES](#)

[Sec. 61.830. PUBLICATION OF GUIDELINES ADDRESSING TRANSFER PRACTICES](#)

[Sec. 61.831. PURPOSE OF SUBCHAPTER](#)

[Sec. 61.832. COMMON COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM](#)

[Sec. 61.833. CREDIT TRANSFER FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE](#)

Texas Administrative Code

The Coordinating Board was required by law to adopt rules that include "a statement of the content, component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum," which serves as a framework for a consistent statewide curriculum.

Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B - Transfer of Credit, Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula

[4.21. Purpose](#)

[4.22. Authority](#)

[4.23. Definitions](#)

[4.24. General Provisions](#)

[4.25. Requirements and Limitations](#)

[4.26. Penalty for Noncompliance with Transfer Rules](#)

[4.27. Resolution of Transfer Disputes for Lower-Division Courses](#)

[4.28. Core Curriculum](#)

[4.29. Core Curricula Larger than 42 Semester Credit Hours](#)

[4.30. Institutional Assessment and Reporting](#)

[4.31. Implementation and Revision of Core Curricula](#)

[4.35. Texas Common Course Numbering System](#)

[4.36. Undergraduate Academic Certificate](#)

Elements of the Texas Core Curriculum

The Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) is a 42 Semester Credit Hour (SCH) core curriculum for all undergraduate students in Texas public higher education. Each institution selects the specific courses it will offer to fulfill that framework of the TCC in a way that takes into account the individual role and mission of the institution. The TCC implementation at each institution must receive approval from the Coordinating Board and institutions must evaluate the effectiveness of their TCC at regular intervals.

One of the most important provisions of the TCC is that it allows students who successfully complete a 42 semester credit hour (SCH) core curriculum at one institution to transfer the entire set of completed courses to another public Texas higher education institution without having to repeat any core courses. Students who transfer without completing the entire 42-SCH core curriculum also receive credit for each of the core courses they successfully complete. Although the courses included in the TCC may vary by institution, every Texas higher education institution's core curriculum must include the following Foundational Component Areas and semester credit hours:

- Communication (6 SCH)
- Mathematics (3 SCH)
- Life and Physical Sciences (6 SCH)
- Language, Philosophy and Culture (3 SCH)
- Creative Arts (3 SCH)
- American History (6 SCH)
- Government/Political Science (6 SCH)
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 SCH)
- The Component Area Option (6 SCH)

The government/political science requirement was first adopted by the Texas Legislature in 1929, codified in TEC [Section 51.301](#). The American history requirement was first adopted by the Texas Legislature in 1955, codified in TEC [Section 51.302](#).

Students have flexibility to choose courses from an institution's core curriculum. However, that flexibility may be limited by the student's major. For example, most science majors have prescribed math and science requirements as part of their degree program requirements. Students should always consult with an academic advisor or counselor at their institution to determine what courses they should take.

Statement of Purpose

Given the rapid evolution of necessary knowledge and skills and the need to take into account global, national, state, and local cultures, the TCC must ensure that students will develop the essential knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, in a career, in their communities, and in life.

The TCC Statement of Purpose is:

Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning.

Core Objectives

Each core curriculum course must include three or four, out of six, Core Objectives. Definitions for the six Core Objectives for the TCC are as follows:

- **Critical Thinking Skills** (CT) - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- **Communication Skills** (COM) - effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- **Empirical and Quantitative Skills** (EQS) - manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- **Teamwork** (TW) - ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
- **Social Responsibility** (SR) - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
- **Personal Responsibility** (PR) - ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

Foundational Component Areas

There are eight Foundational Component Areas (FCA) and one Component Area Option (CAO). The CAO may provide options for students to choose additional courses from other FCA. Each FCA has a component description as definition, a set number of Semester Credit Hours (SCH) required for completion of a component, and specified Core Objectives requirements. The table on the following page provides a summary of this information.

Foundational Component Area	SCH	● Required Core Objectives			○ Optional Core Objectives		
		CT	COM	EQS	TW	SR	PR
Communication	6	●	●	○	●	○	●
<p>Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively.</p> <p>Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.</p>							
Mathematics	3	●	●	●	○	○	○
<p>Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships.</p> <p>Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.</p>							
Life and Physical Sciences	6	●	●	●	●	○	○
<p>Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method.</p> <p>Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.</p>							
Language, Philosophy & Culture	3	●	●	○	○	●	●
<p>Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience.</p> <p>Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.</p>							
Creative Arts	3	●	●	○	●	●	○
<p>Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination.</p> <p>Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.</p>							
American History	6	●	●	○	○	●	●
<p>Courses in this category focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the United States, with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area.</p> <p>Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.</p>							
Government/Political Science	6	●	●	○	○	●	●
<p>Courses in this category focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas.</p> <p>Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.</p>							
Social and Behavioral Sciences	3	●	●	●	○	●	○
<p>Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human.</p> <p>Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.</p>							
Component Area Option	6	●	●	○	○	○	○
<p>a. A minimum of 3 SCH must meet the definition and corresponding Core Objectives specified in one of the foundational component areas</p> <p>b. As an option for up to 3 semester credit hours of the Component Area Option, an institution may select course(s) that:</p> <p>(i) Meet(s) the definition specified for one or more of the foundational component areas; and</p> <p>(ii) Include(s) a minimum of three Core Objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining Core Objectives of the institution's choice.</p>							



This document is available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website:
<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>

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