

Embedded Associate Degree Frequently Asked Questions

What is an embedded associate degree?

Following the definition of an *embedded credential* [as defined in the Texas Administrative Code](#), an embedded associate degree is an associate degree that is *wholly embedded* in an existing or proposed bachelor's degree program. The function of an embedded associate degree is similar to other credentials embedded in degree programs such as master's degrees in doctoral programs and other embedded certificates.

Why would an institution create an embedded associate degree?

The embedded associate degree is designed to be an offramp for students previously or currently enrolled in a bachelor's degree program who stop out or need to (hopefully temporarily) discontinue their baccalaureate education. The embedded associate provides another mechanism to award students a credential even though they have not yet been able to complete a bachelor's degree. The Coordinating Board recommends that institutions review degree program data and identify which programs students are most likely to stop out of with a high number of semester credit hours and no degree.

Are institutions required to create embedded associate degrees?

The adopted rules do not require any institution to create an embedded associate degree. As noted above, the Coordinating Board expects institutions to be intentional and targeted in the development of these degrees.

Can an institution develop general studies associate degrees?

While universities may have a multidisciplinary studies associate degree embedded in a multidisciplinary bachelor's program, **universities are not permitted to develop stand-alone associate degrees** including a general studies degree similar to those offered at community colleges. Universities are not permitted to advertise stand-alone associate degrees and the Coordinating Board will, at its discretion, review how embedded associate degrees are being advertised on institutional or departmental websites and recruitment materials. **Universities are not permitted to enroll incoming students directly in associate degrees.**

Does this require a SACSCOC level change?

If the institution has not offered associate degree before, it must be approved for a level change with SACSCOC to offer an embedded associate degree. Please review the embedded associate degree criteria on the SACSCOC website and contact your accreditation liaison for more information.

What is the process to submit a request for approval of an embedded associate degree?

Like requests for other degrees, the appropriate form is available [on the Coordinating Board website](#) and institutions should follow the same process used to submit other requests through the Document Submission Portal.

If the institution would like to include an embedded associate degree in a request for a new bachelor's degree, please include the embedded associate degree form as an attachment with the bachelor's degree request. Once the new rules for bachelor's degrees go into effect on September 1, 2023, institutions will be able to provide information about the embedded associate degree directly in the application for a bachelor's degree if they are requesting approval for both at the same time.

Do institutions need to complete a 50-mile notification or submit a planning notification for an embedded associate degree?

No, embedded associate degrees are exempt from these requirements.

Does an embedded associate degree need to have the same CIP code as its associated bachelor's degree?

The adopted rules require that embedded associate degrees must be in the same, related or supporting CIP code. As long as the CIP code relationship is logical and the degree is wholly embedded in a bachelor's degree, institutions have flexibility in assigning CIP codes to the degree programs. CIP codes will be evaluated as part of the staff review of the degree request.

How will the embedded associate degree show up in the Coordinating Board's inventory of degree programs?

Embedded associate degrees will be listed on the program inventory as an associate degree with a footnote indicating that it is embedded. The Coordinating Board is working on updating the program inventory database so that the degree associated with an embedded degree can be listed directly in the inventory.

What does the curriculum for an embedded associate degree need to look like?

Institutions must provide the semester credit hours (SCH) required for core curriculum components, the discipline-specific required courses, and the elective courses that need to be completed for the degree. While embedded associate degrees are not required to include the full core curriculum (except for multidisciplinary associate degrees as required by statute), they must meet accreditation general studies requirements and statutory core curriculum requirements for American History (6SCH) and Government/Political science (6SCH).

Where can I find more information about embedded associate degrees?

The full criteria for embedded associate degrees is located in [Chapter 2, Subchapter D relating to Approval Processes for Academic Associate Degrees](#).