

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM X-J (15)

Consideration and possible action to adopt proposed amendments to Board Rules, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Sections 4.32, 4.33, and 4.35, concerning implementation of an alternative framework for field of study curricula

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption

Background Information:

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board) proposes adoption of amendments to Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, §§4.32, 4.33, and 4.35, regarding Field of Study Curricula, without changes to the proposed text as published in the May 31, 2024, issue of the *Texas Register* (49 TexReg 3874). The rules will not be republished.

Section 4.32 amendments are designed to allow for two different framework structures for field of study curricula as approved by the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee (TTAC). Subsection (d) outlines semester credit hours for components of the standard field of study curriculum and subsection (e) outlines semester credit hour requirements for components of the alternative field of study curriculum approved by the TTAC.

Amendments to §§4.32(b)(2)(e), 4.33, and 4.35, are designed to change the name of what has previously been called the "alternative" Discipline Foundation Courses to "substitute" Discipline Foundation Courses as to not cause confusion by having an "alternative Field of Study" and "alternative Discipline Foundation Courses." The renamed substitute Discipline Foundation Courses apply only to each institution that requests approval for them. Institutional substitute discipline foundation courses must still be approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education as outlined in §4.35.

The following comments were received regarding the adoption of the amendments.

Comment: The following comments were received from The University of Texas at Austin:
1. Removing the hours limits for DFC and Directed Electives opens the door to compel receiving institutions to accept and apply >12 hours and >6 hours respectively.

Response: The Coordinating Board appreciates this comment but disagrees that the rule removes the hour limits. The hour limits have not been removed for the discipline foundation courses or the directed electives but rather have been moved to separate sections. Subsection

4.32(c) states the required credit hours for the standard field of study curriculum and 4.32(d) states the required credit hours for the alternative field of study curriculum.

2. There isn't any universally agreed upon mechanism to indicate FoS courses on transcripts so receiving institutions don't know that a course is a FoS course and don't necessarily know what to do with it. FoS changes appear to offer two options for FoS, and they seem wildly different, which is confusing. The standard option limits the number of hours in a FoS to 20 whereas the alternative option appears to allow up to 36 hours of DFC and Directed Electives. It's unclear why the standard option doesn't give an hour number for Core courses but the alternative option limits the Core hours to 30. Receiving institutions are required to accept Core courses if they were taken prior to the student enrolling so it seems odd that any hour number is mentioned at all.

Response: The Coordinating Board appreciates this comment regarding transcribing of field of study courses, in order to implement new Texas Education Code, §61.834, sending institutions are required to indicate on a transcript if a student is field of study complete, core curriculum complete, and/or whether the student has completed a Texas Direct degree which consists of either the standard or alternative field of study curriculum *and* the core curriculum. The Coordinating Board also acknowledges that there are inconsistencies in how sending institutions are transcribing field of study curriculum courses as required by 4.32(b)(B) and (e) and will continue to work with institutions to improve this.

Regarding the two options and required hours of the core curriculum in field of study curricula, the rules identify two separate structures – one for the standard field of study curriculum, and one for a new alternative structure that can accommodate fields with more complex curricula. Consistent feedback from faculty in several field of study subcommittees indicated that the standard structure is not compatible with some disciplines, such as biology or engineering that spread the discipline specific curriculum across four years, rather than other disciplines where students can complete the 42-credit hour core in the first two years. For the standard core curriculum, faculty subcommittees identify any required core curriculum courses that need to be completed as part of the field of study, which may vary by discipline. This is why there is not a single specified number of core semester credit hours for the standard field of study curriculum. The alternative field of study curriculum has a limit of 30 semester credit hours for the core to allow for more major-specific content to be taken in the first two years. The transfer student would then complete the core curriculum after transferring to the receiving institution.

The Coordinating Board recognizes that complexity and novelty of the revised Texas Transfer Framework and in the coming months will be providing additional guidance and communication materials on the Framework, fields of study, transcribing and other frequently asked questions related to transfer in the state of Texas.

The amendments are adopted under Texas Education Code, §61.823, which requires the Board to adopt Field of Study Curricula for certain fields of study or academic disciplines.

Elizabeth Mayer, Assistant Commissioner for Academic and Health Affairs, will present this item and be available to answer questions.

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

§4.32. Field of Study Curriculum.

(a) In accordance with Texas Education Code, §61.823, the Board is authorized to approve Field of Study Curricula for certain fields of study/academic disciplines. The Board delegates to the Commissioner development of Field of Study Curricula with the assistance of the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee, as defined by Title 19, Subchapter V, Chapter 1. The Texas Transfer Advisory Committee is responsible for convening Discipline-Specific Subcommittees. Discipline-Specific Subcommittees shall provide subject-matter expertise to the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee in developing Field of Study Curricula in specific disciplines.

(b) A complete Field of Study Curriculum will consist of the following components:

(1) Selected Texas Core Curriculum courses.

(A) Selected Texas Core Curriculum courses relevant to the discipline may be included in the Field of Study Curriculum for that discipline.

(B) Discipline-Specific Subcommittees are responsible for identifying discipline-relevant courses from a list of all Texas Core Curriculum courses provided by the Board that may be used to satisfy core curriculum requirements. Each Discipline-Specific Subcommittee shall recommend identified Texas Core Curriculum courses to the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee.

(C) The Texas Transfer Advisory Committee shall recommend the Texas Core Curriculum courses selected for inclusion in a Field of Study Curriculum to the Commissioner who may approve or deny the inclusion of the recommended Texas Core Curriculum courses in the Field of Study Curriculum.

(D) Each institution of higher education must publish on its public website in manner easily accessed by students the Texas Core Curriculum courses selected for inclusion in a Field of Study Curriculum with the cross-listed TCCNS course number.

(2) Discipline Foundation Courses (DFC).

(A) Discipline Foundation Courses are a set of courses within a major course of study, ~~consisting of up to twelve (12) semester credit hours,~~ selected for inclusion in a Field of Study Curriculum for that discipline. These courses will apply toward undergraduate degrees within the Field of Study Curriculum at all Texas public institutions that offer a corresponding major or track, except for those institutions approved to require alternative Discipline Foundation Courses under ~~Title 19, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, §4.35~~ of this subchapter (relating to Petition for Substitute Alternative Discipline Foundation Courses).

(B) Each receiving institution must apply the semester credit hours a student has completed in a Discipline Foundation Course upon the student's transfer into a corresponding major or track. The sending institution must indicate Discipline Foundation Courses on the transfer student's transcript.

(C) Discipline-Specific Subcommittees are responsible for identifying discipline-relevant courses for inclusion on the Discipline Foundation Courses list. The Discipline-Specific Subcommittees must select from courses listed in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide

Manual. Each Discipline-Specific Subcommittee shall report this course list to the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee.

(D) The Texas Transfer Advisory Committee shall recommend the Discipline Foundation Courses selected by the Discipline Specific Subcommittees for inclusion in a Field of Study Curriculum to the Commissioner. The Commissioner may approve or deny the Discipline Foundation Courses recommended by the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee for inclusion in a Field of Study Curriculum.

(E) General academic teaching institutions may submit a request for a substitute ~~an alternative~~ set of Discipline Foundation Courses for a specific program of study according to the process in ~~Title 19, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, §4.35~~ of this subchapter.

(F) Each institution of higher education must report to the Coordinating Board and publish on its public website in manner easily accessed by students the Discipline Foundation Courses with the cross-listed TCCNS course numbers for each course.

(G) The Commissioner must publish the list of Discipline Foundation Courses for each approved Field of Study Curriculum on the agency website with the cross-listed TCCNS course number for each course.

(3) Directed Electives.

(A) Directed Electives are a set of courses that apply toward a major course of study within a Field of Study Curriculum at a specific general academic teaching institution.

~~(B) The Directed Electives for each Field of Study Curriculum must consist of at least six (6) semester credit hours. The Directed Electives and Discipline Foundation Courses components combined may not exceed twenty (20) semester credit hours in total.~~

(B) ~~(C)~~ Faculty from each general academic teaching institution may select a list of Directed Electives for the major course of study corresponding to each Field of Study curriculum. Faculty must select the Directed Electives only from courses listed in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual.

(C) ~~(D)~~ The Chief Academic Officer of the institution shall submit the list of Directed Electives for inclusion in a Field of Study Curriculum with the cross-listed TCCNS course number to the Commissioner not later than forty-five (45) ~~45~~ days after being sent the request from the Coordinating Board. The Coordinating Board shall publish the list of each institution's Directed Electives for each approved Field of Study Curriculum on the agency website with the cross-listed TCCNS course numbers for each course.

(D) ~~(E)~~ An institution that does not submit its Directed Electives in accordance with subparagraph (C) ~~(D)~~ shall be required to accept any Directed Elective courses that appear on the Board's list for the Texas Direct Associate Degree for any institution's Field of Study Curriculum.

(E) ~~(F)~~ Each institution of higher education must publish on its public website in a manner easily accessed by students Directed Electives with the cross-listed TCCNS course number.

(F) ~~(G)~~ An institution shall accept and apply directed electives for fields of study upon transfer as long as the directed elective was active on the Coordinating Board's inventory of directed electives at the time the student completed the course at the community college.

(c) Standard Field of Study Curriculum. The standard field of study curriculum shall include the following:

(1) Selected core curriculum courses as prescribed in subsection (b)(1) of this section.

(2) Up to twelve (12) semester credit hours of Discipline Foundation Courses as prescribed in subsection (b)(2) of this section.

(3) At least six (6) semester credit hours of Directed Electives as prescribed in subsection (b)(3) of this section.

(4) The Directed Electives and Discipline Foundation Courses combined components of the standard field of study curriculum may not exceed twenty (20) semester credit hours in total.

(d) Alternative Field of Study Curriculum. The alternative framework for field of study curriculum shall include the following:

(1) Up to thirty (30) semester credit hours of selected Texas Core Curriculum Courses as prescribed by subsection (b) of this section.

(2) A minimum of eighteen (18) semester credit hours, not to exceed twenty-four (24) semester credit hours of Discipline Foundation Courses as prescribed in subsection (b)(2) of this section.

(3) Up to twelve (12) semester credit hours of Directed Electives as prescribed in subsection (b)(3) of this section.

(e) ~~(e)~~ A receiving general academic teaching institution shall determine whether a transfer student is Field of Study Curriculum complete upon the transfer student's enrollment. If a student successfully completes an approved Field of Study Curriculum, a general academic teaching institution must substitute that block of courses for the receiving institution's lower-division requirements for the degree program for the corresponding Field of Study Curriculum into which the student transfers. Upon enrollment, the general academic teaching institution must grant the student full academic credit toward the degree program for the block of courses transferred.

(f) ~~(f)~~ If a student transfers from one institution of higher education to another without completing the Field of Study Curriculum, the receiving institution must grant academic credit in the Field of Study Curriculum for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the Field of Study Curriculum of the sending institution. After granting the student credit for these courses, the institution may require the student to satisfy remaining course requirements in the current Field of Study Curriculum of the receiving general academic teaching institution, or to complete additional requirements in the receiving institution's program, as long as those requirements do not duplicate course content the student previously completed through the Field of Study Curriculum.

(g) ~~(g)~~ Each institution must note the selected Texas Core Curriculum component and Discipline Foundation Courses components of the Field of Study Curriculum courses on student transcripts as recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO).

(h) ~~(h)~~ The Board shall publish on its website the components of each Field of Study Curriculum, including the selected Texas Core Curriculum courses, the Discipline Foundation Courses, and the Directed Electives of each general academic teaching institution.

(i) ~~(i)~~ Effective Dates.

(1) Unless repealed or replaced, Field of Study Curricula in effect as of March 1, 2021, will remain in effect until August 31, 2025, upon which date those Field of Study Curricula expire by operation of law. For Field of Study Curricula that are repealed, replaced, or expire by operation of law, the following transition or "teach out" provisions apply:

(A) A student who has earned credit on or before August 31, 2022, in one or more courses included in a Field of Study Curriculum that exists on March 1, 2021, is entitled to complete that Field of Study Curriculum on or before August 31, 2025.

(B) A student who has not, on or before August 31, 2022, earned any course credit toward a Field of Study Curriculum in effect on March 1, 2021, is not entitled to transfer credit for that Field of Study Curriculum.

(2) After an institution's Spring 2026 enrollment deadline, a receiving institution is not required to transfer a complete Field of Study Curricula that expired prior to that date. A receiving institution may, at its discretion, choose to accept a complete or partial Field of Study Curricula that has expired.

§4.33. Approval of Field of Study Curricula.

(a) In accordance with ~~Title 19, Chapter 1, Subchapter V, §1.239~~ of this title (relating to Duties of the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee), the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee shall review relevant data, coordinate a schedule of discipline-specific course reviews, and recommend Field of Study Curricula to the Commissioner and Board. In creating the schedule for development of Field of Study Curricula, the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee shall prioritize the factors set out in ~~Chapter 1, Subchapter V, §1.239(a)(4)~~.

(b) At the direction of the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee and in accordance with ~~Title 19, Subchapter V, Chapter 1 §1.242~~ of this title (relating to Duties of the Discipline-Specific Subcommittees), a Discipline-Specific Subcommittee shall review institutions' current program requirements and data about transfer students' course-taking and success in that discipline and recommend to the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee courses required in the Field of Study Curriculum for that major.

(c) The Texas Transfer Advisory Committee may consider for recommendation to the Commissioner Field of Study Curricula recommended by Discipline-Specific Subcommittees and any request by an institution for substitute alternative Discipline Foundation Courses as described in §4.35 of this subchapter (relating to Petition for Substitute Discipline Foundation Courses) ~~§4.34(d) – (k)~~.

(d) The Texas Transfer Advisory Committee's approval of a Field of Study Curriculum requires approval by a supermajority vote of two-thirds of the general academic teaching institution representatives who are present and voting and two-thirds of the public junior college representatives who are present and voting.

(1) If the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee fails to approve a Field of Study Curriculum, the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee may vote by a simple majority of all members present and voting to request that a Discipline Specific Subcommittee reconvene in an attempt to address any ~~and~~ concerns identified by the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee.

(2) Upon final recommendation of the Discipline-Specific Subcommittee, the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee may reconsider a vote to recommend to the Commissioner approval of a Field of Study Curriculum.

(e) The Commissioner may approve or deny a Field of Study Curriculum recommended by the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee.

(f) Before making a final determination whether to approve or deny a Field of Study Curriculum recommended by the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee, the Commissioner shall provide for informal notice and comment by publishing each proposed Field of Study Curriculum in the Texas Register In Addition section for a minimum of thirty (30) ~~30~~ days. The Commissioner shall consider any comments prior to approving or denying the Field of Study Curriculum. The Commissioner's decision is final and may not be appealed.

(g) The Commissioner shall report to the Board at each quarterly meeting on each Field of Study Curriculum the Commissioner approved since the last Board meeting.

(h) The Commissioner shall annually provide a written report to the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee members with information on all approved Field of Study Curricula.

§4.35. Petition for Substitute ~~Alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses.

(a) An institution may request the Commissioner to approve substitute ~~alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses based upon the following criteria:

(1) The institution demonstrates that approved Discipline Foundation Courses significantly vary from the institution's lower-division curriculum for a given major; or

(2) The institution demonstrates based on evidence that students completing approved Discipline Foundation Courses are not successful in the institution's upper-division curriculum.

(b) The Chief Academic Officer of an institution that requests substitute ~~alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses based on the criteria in this rule must submit a petition for substitute ~~alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses in writing to the Commissioner, along with a written, evidence-based rationale. The Commissioner shall promptly notify the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee of the request for substitute ~~alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses.

(c) Upon notification by the Commissioner, the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee shall evaluate the institution's request for substitute ~~alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses based upon the number of students affected, how the substitute ~~alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses would impact transfer, and any other criteria as decided by a majority vote of public junior college representative members and general academic teaching institution members present and voting.

(d) After review of the criteria, the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee shall vote on whether to recommend the substitute Discipline Foundation Courses ~~alternative-DFC~~ to the Commissioner. A majority of the public junior college sector representatives and a majority of the general academic teaching institution sector representatives who are present and voting must both vote in favor for the substitute Discipline Foundation Courses ~~alternative-DFC~~ to advance to the Commissioner for approval.

(e) No more than thirty (30) ~~30~~ days after its vote on the petition, the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee shall provide a written report to the Commissioner explaining the rationale for the action taken by the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee on the request for substitute ~~alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses.

(f) No more than thirty (30) ~~30~~ days after receiving the written report from the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee, the Commissioner shall consider the Texas Transfer Advisory Committee report and make a final determination whether to approve the substitute Discipline Foundation Courses ~~alternative-DFC~~. The Commissioner's decision is final and may not be appealed.

(g) The Commissioner shall inform the Board at the next quarterly meeting of all decisions to approve or deny petitions for substitute Discipline Foundation Courses ~~alternative-DFC~~.

(h) The Coordinating Board shall maintain a public website that includes a list of all substitute ~~alternative~~ Discipline Foundation Courses approved by the Commissioner.