

# Texas Core Curriculum Application Guide

November 2015

## Table of Contents

Definitions and Common Acronyms .....	1
The 2014 Texas Core Curriculum .....	2
Purpose and history of the restructuring of the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC)	
Texas Core Curriculum Resources .....	3
Coordinating Board’s TCC website	
History and elements of the TCC	
TCC beginning in fall 2014	
TCC in years prior to fall 2014	
TCC Submission Portal for making changes to the TCC	
Assessment of the TCC	
Law and rules	
The Roles of the Coordinating Board and Institutions in Maintaining the TCC .....	4
Texas Core Curriculum Components .....	5
Statement of purpose	
Core objectives	
TCC Component Areas	
Table of Foundational Component Area (FCA)	
Core completion requirements	
Transcript coding and notation	
Component Area Option (CAO)	
Overflow hours	
Transfer of Texas Core Curriculum Courses .....	9
Degree-seeking students/concurrent enrollment	
Sending institution/receiving institution	
Grade requirement for the transfer of core curriculum courses	
Transfer of courses without core completion	
Transfer of a complete core curriculum	
Institutional requirements in the CAO	
Designation of overflow hours	
Application of core course credit across FCA and CAO	
Transfer disputes	
Noncompliance with transfer rules	
Changes to the Texas Core Curriculum Over Time .....	13
Institutional core curriculum changes	
Pre-fall 2014 core curriculum vs. fall 2014 core curriculum for native students	
Pre-fall 2014 core curriculum vs. fall 2014 core curriculum for transfer students	

Pre-fall 2014 core curriculum vs. fall 2014 core curriculum for dual credit students

Course Credit for Traditional and Nontraditional Course Work .....	14
AGCM-/TCCN-equivalent courses	
Application of dual credit and credit by exam	
Out of state or Texas independent (private) institution transfers	
Transfer of courses from the core curriculum prior to fall 2014	
Waivers and substitutions	
Accommodations	
Specific Statutory Requirements for Core Curriculum Courses .....	16
Government/political science requirements	
American history requirements	
Suitability of Courses for the Texas Core Curriculum .....	16
Two parts of the Foundational Component Area	
General education courses	
Adherence to the Academic Course Guide Manual	
TCCNS equivalency	
Pre-requisites and co-requisites	
"Skills development" courses	
Honors courses with variable topics	
Sufficient breadth and general survey courses	
Texas Core Curriculum Assessment .....	18
Report of TCC assessment to the Coordinating Board	
Appendix .....	A-1
Texas Core Curriculum 2015 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	
General Questions .....	A-1
Questions Specific to Foundational Component Areas (FCAs) .....	A-3
Questions Specific to Student Transfer .....	A-7
Questions Specific to Assessment .....	A-10
Questions Regarding the Core Curriculum Prior to Fall 2014 .....	A-12

## Definitions and Common Acronyms

**ACGM:** Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual. The official list of approved courses for general academic transfer to public universities that may be offered for state funding by public community and technical colleges in Texas. Courses in the ACGM include a course designation of the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS), a brief description, co-requisites, prerequisites, and in some cases, learning outcomes. Website: [www.thecb.state.tx.us/ACGM](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ACGM).

**CAO:** Component Area Option.

**Coordinating Board:** Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Website: [www.thecb.state.tx.us](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us).

**FCA:** Foundational Component Area.

**TAC:** Texas Administrative Code – rules enacted by state agencies. Coordinating Board rules can be changed only at quarterly Coordinating Board meetings. Any changes to rules are posted in the *Texas Register* for 30 days for public comment before consideration. Website: [www.sos.state.tx.us/tac](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac).

**TCC:** Texas Core Curriculum. Website: [www.thecb.state.tx.us/TXcorecurriculum](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/TXcorecurriculum).

**TCC WebCenter:** Online listing of all courses that form the TCC. Courses are listed by year, institution, and component area. Website: [www.thecb.state.tx.us/CoreCurriculumSearch](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/CoreCurriculumSearch).

**TCCNS:** Texas Common Course Numbering System. The TCCNS is a voluntary and cooperative effort among Texas community colleges and universities to facilitate the transfer of freshman- and sophomore-level, general academic coursework. TCCNS provides a shared, uniform set of course designations for students and their advisors to use in determining both course equivalency and degree applicability of transfer credit on a statewide basis. When students transfer between two participating TCCNS institutions, a course taken at the sending institution transfers as the course carrying the same TCCNS designation at the receiving institution. Website: [www.tccns.org](http://www.tccns.org).

**TEC:** Texas Education Code – statute enacted by the Texas Legislature. Changes to statute can occur only during the Texas legislative session, which meets biennially unless the Governor calls a special session. Website: [www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us).

**University Course Inventory:** A list of courses available at Texas universities. Website: [www.txhighereddata.org/interactive/UnivCourse](http://www.txhighereddata.org/interactive/UnivCourse).

**SACSCOC:** Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Website: [www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org).

**SCH:** Semester Credit Hour.

## The 2014 Texas Core Curriculum

*The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board) restructured the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) starting with the fall 2014 semester.*

In its 2009 report *Designing Texas Undergraduate Education in the 21st Century*, the Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee (UEAC) recommended the Coordinating Board reconsider the Texas Core Curriculum to ensure it reflected the current and future demands for students' knowledge and skills. Considering the larger and ever-shifting global economy and a population in Texas that is changing, the previous core curriculum was perceived as outdated and unwieldy. Some thought assessing the core curriculum in any meaningful way at the institutional level and across the state too cumbersome, with too little transparency for student transfers. The Coordinating Board's Commissioner of Higher Education tasked UEAC members with developing recommendations for a new core curriculum.

From 2009 through 2011, UEAC worked to develop the recommendations for the new core curriculum. The UEAC is charged with providing recommendations to the board regarding the direction the board and institutions should take to enhance undergraduate education in Texas. Members include representatives from public community and technical colleges, universities, health-related institutions, independent colleges and universities, and one non-voting student member. Voting members serve three-year rotating terms, with the possibility of reappointment.

In April 2011, UEAC submitted [Revising the State Core Curriculum: A focus on 21st century competencies](#) to the Commissioner of Higher Education for consideration. Coordinating Board staff used the recommendations to develop the rules that were approved, after public comment, by the Coordinating Board at its October 2011 meeting.

*Resources that guided the restructuring of the TCC*

UEAC members and Coordinating Board staff developed a comprehensive list of resources to guide discussions and deliberations. First, the SACSCOC regulations ([Core Requirement 2.7.3](#)) and Texas Education Code (TEC) [Sections 61.821 and 61.822](#) that govern the core curriculum requirements were reviewed. UEAC members also surveyed the core curricula of public and private colleges and universities across the U.S. to better understand the variety of different curricular models and to identify promising practices in general education. Most importantly, the [Liberal Education and America's Promise](#) (LEAP) initiative of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) was consulted as the basis for developing the six core objectives. The UEAC also considered a document by The Conference Board: [Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce](#).

*Purpose of the TCC*

The Texas Core Curriculum is meant to provide a transferable block of courses that reflect what is often referred to as general education requirements. General education requirements, the

Core, serve a number of purposes. The UEAC always conceived of the Core as meeting not only the requirements of the Texas Legislature, but also SACSCOC general education requirements. Thus, TCC courses must demonstrate, for example, breadth of knowledge. While crafting the requirements of the new Core, the UEAC constantly asked itself, "What is it we believe every student ought to know upon completion of the Core, regardless of major? What are the areas of knowledge that students ought to be exposed to, regardless of major?" General education, the Texas Core Curriculum should provide students with the knowledge to be well rounded and productive citizens. The Core should also provide students with the skills to be successful in the rest of their college endeavors, a lifetime of careers, and life itself. To be successful in the 21st century, one must be a lifelong learner. We can no longer prepare students for a career of a lifetime, we must prepare them for a lifetime of careers. The Core hopes to provide the foundational knowledge and skills to ensure that happens.

## Texas Core Curriculum Resources

### *The Coordinating Board's TCC website*

The Coordinating Board's TCC website lists resources and documentation for the TCC. It is located at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/TXcorecurriculum>. The main sections of the site are:

### *A brief history for the TCC*

This page includes the document *Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics*, which refers to the core curriculum prior to fall 2014 and includes Coordinating Board rules in effect prior to October 2011.

### *Elements of the TCC*

The TCC is a 42-Semester Credit Hour (SCH) core curriculum for all undergraduate students in Texas. The elements of the TCC include a statement of purpose, six core objectives, and nine common component areas.

### *TCC beginning in fall 2014*

Beginning in fall 2014, institutions' TCC are available online at the Texas General Education Core Curriculum WebCenter, located at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/CoreCurriculumSearch>.

### *TCC for years prior to fall 2014*

Students that enrolled prior to fall 2014 may complete their degree program using a TCC from a prior year. Institutions' TCC prior to fall 2014 are available online at <http://statecore.its.txstate.edu/>.

### *The Texas Common Core Curriculum Submission Portal*

Beginning in fall 2014, Texas public higher education institutions may change or make revisions to their TCC once a year. The request for change must be made through the

online [Core Curriculum Submission Portal](#). Instructions on how to make a revision to the TCC, including a timeline to consider, are posted on the page [Core Curriculum Submission and Approval Process](#).

#### *Assessment of the TCC*

The purpose of the assessment of the Texas Common Core Curriculum is for institutions to discover, document, and seek to improve student attainment of the TCC's six core objectives. Institutions will continue the assessment practices required by SACSCOC. Institutions will assess the six core objectives using these practices and submit the report to the Coordinating Board every 10 years on a schedule in accord with their accreditation reaffirmation schedule. Accountability for assessment of the core objectives is at the institutional level.

#### *Law and rules*

The TCC was created by House Bill 2183, passed by the 70th Texas Legislature in 1987. The law is encoded as Texas Education Code Chapter 61, Subchapter S, Sections 61.821 through 61.833.

The Coordination Board rules regarding the Texas Core Curriculum are found in the Texas Administrative Code Chapter 4, Subchapter B, 4.28 through 4.31. In addition to the definitions of the six core objectives and each Foundational Component Area, these rules contain the requirements for transferring credit, concurrent enrollment, transcript coding, substitutions and waivers, accommodations, and assessment of the core curriculum.

## **The Roles of the Coordinating Board and Institutions in Maintaining the Texas Core Curriculum**

#### *Institutions*

Each institutions establishes a set of courses for students to take in fulfillment of the TCC. Each public institution must offer a complete set of core courses that allow students to become "core-complete." Each institution's set of core courses are a part of the TCC. There is one TCC, and it includes the sum of all core courses from all public institutions. ***A course approved as a TCC course at one institution must be applied to the student's set of core courses at any other institution.***

Texas public higher education institutions must provide supporting documentation that shows how a course aligns with all parts of the definitions for its Foundational Component Area (FCA) and how the course implements all core objectives. Core objectives and outcomes should be integrated into the course in a context-based way. A grading rubric may be used to show how core components are weighted in importance for the completion of a course. Enumerating the

elements of an FCA, listing core objective components, or copying learning outcomes from the ACGM is not sufficient documentation.

#### *Coordinating Board*

Coordinating Board staff review every course submitted for inclusion in an institution's core curriculum on a course-by-course basis. Coordinating Board staff review supporting documentation to ensure that each course meets all parts of the FCA definition and incorporates the core objectives required by that FCA. Once approved, the course is added to the TCC and posted in the TCC WebCenter for inclusion in the institution's core curriculum for the following academic year.

## **Texas Core Curriculum Components**

#### *Statement of purpose*

Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students gain a foundation of knowledge about 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 essential for all learning.

#### *Core objectives*

Each core curriculum course must include three or four, out of six, core objectives. The "Table of Foundational Component Areas" on the following page provides a one-page overview.

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 (PR)** – intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
- **Personal Responsibility (SR)** – ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

#### *TCC Component Areas*

There are eight Foundational Component Areas (FCA) and one Component Area Option (CAO). Each FCA has a defined component description, a set number of SCH required for completion of a component, and specified core objectives requirements. FCA definitions are provided in the

“Table of Foundational Component Areas” on the following page. The eight FCA and one CAO are:

- (1) Communication (6 SCH)
- (2) Mathematics (3 SCH)
- (3) Life and Physical Sciences (6 SCH)
- (4) Language, Philosophy and Culture (3 SCH)
- (5) Creative Arts (3 SCH)
- (6) American History (6 SCH)
- (7) Government/Political Science (6 SCH)
- (8) Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 SCH)
- (9) Component Area Option (6 SCH)

#### *Core completion requirements*

A completed TCC requires 42 SCH of core curriculum coursework. Each FCA requires an exact number of either three or six SCH for completion of the FCA (See list on page 5). The CAO requires six SCH. Since courses may be offered in four-SCH format, there may exist overflow SCH from any FCA. Overflow hours can be counted, at the institution’s discretion, as part of the student’s degree requirements or as part of the student’s CAO. (See section Overflow Hours).

#### *Transcript coding and notation*

Numbers recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) must identify each completed core curriculum course on students' transcripts to indicate courses that satisfy core curriculum Foundational Component Area requirements.

The numbers are as follows:

- Communication = 010
- Mathematics = 020
- Life and Physical Sciences = 030
- Language, Philosophy and Culture = 040
- Creative Arts = 050
- American History = 060
- Government/Political Science = 070
- Social and Behavioral Sciences = 080
- Component Area Option = 090

Institutions are responsible for noting when a student’s transcript is core-complete, i.e., when a student has completed the SCH requirement for each FCA for a total of 42 SCH of core curriculum credits.

Foundational Component Area	SCH	● Required Core Objectives			○ Optional Core Objectives		
		CT	COM	EQS	TW	SR	PR
<b>Communication</b>	6	●	●	○	●	○	●
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. 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.							
<b>Mathematics</b>	3	●	●	●	○	○	○
Courses in this category focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships. Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and the application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.							
<b>Life and Physical Sciences</b>	6	●	●	●	●	○	○
Courses in this category focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method. Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on human experiences.							
<b>Language, Philosophy and Culture</b>	3	●	●	○	○	●	●
Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.							
<b>Creative Arts</b>	3	●	●	○	●	●	○
Courses in this category focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.							
<b>American History</b>	6	●	●	○	○	●	●
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. 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.							
<b>Government/Political Science</b>	6	●	●	○	○	●	●
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. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.							
<b>Social and Behavioral Sciences</b>	3	●	●	●	○	●	○
Courses in this category focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.							
<b>Component Area Option</b>	6	●	●	○	○	○	○
<p>a. A minimum of three 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 three SCH of the Component Area Option, an institution may select course(s) that meet(s) the definition specified for one or more of the Foundational Component Areas and include(s) a minimum of three core objectives, including Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, and one of the remaining core objectives, chosen by the institution.</p>							

*Component Area Option (transcript code 090)*

The CAO allows the institution flexibility to incorporate institutional requirements or include specific degree requirements in the core curriculum. Examples are courses such as a writing focus course, a multicultural studies course, an additional mathematics course for engineering majors, or an additional social and behavioral science course for liberal arts majors.

Alternatively, the CAO may provide options for students to choose additional courses from the other FCA. The fourth hour of a four-SCH course that cannot be accommodated by its FCA may also be counted as CAO hours. (See section Overflow Hours).

The *content* of the six SCH in the CAO is defined in rules:

- **Option A:** At least three SCH of the CAO must be aligned and associated with the definition and core objectives of one of the eight other FCA.
- **Option B:** Up to three SCH may be aligned and associated with at least one of the eight FCA definitions and may incorporate one or more core objectives of the institution's choice besides the two core objectives communication skills and critical thinking skills, which are required.

Transcripts are not required to show whether a course was approved for Option A or Option B of the CAO or which FCA definition and core objective a course fulfills. The receiving institution must accept as part of a student's core completion any approved course for an institution's CAO without regard to the type of course or its association with an option in the CAO. Each institution must ensure that, according to Coordinating Board rule 4.28(b)(4)(B), not more than three SCH of a student's core curriculum may come from Option B of the CAO.

The Coordinating Board's TCC WebCenter lists CAO courses with a three-digit designation that makes the type of CAO course transparent:

CAO course in Option A:

- 091 - Course aligned with Communication
- 092 - Course aligned with Mathematics
- 093 - Course aligned with Life and Physical Sciences
- 094 - Course aligned with Language, Philosophy and Culture
- 095 - Course aligned with Creative Arts
- 096 - Course aligned with American History
- 097 - Course aligned with Government/Political Sciences
- 098 - Course aligned with Social and Behavioral Sciences

CAO course in Option B:

- 090 - Course without specified Foundational Component Area

*Overflow hours*

By definition, any FCA is complete with either three or six SCH. The fourth hour of a four-SCH course must either be counted as part of the student's degree program or as part of the

student's fulfillment of the CAO requirement. The fourth hour is an overflow hour. The institution is free to make the designation on how an overflow hour is counted.

Examples of four-SCH courses include PHYS 1401, College Physics, MATH 2413, and Calculus.

Typically, an institution will choose to account for an overflow hour in the CAO if all students, regardless of major, must complete a four-SCH course. An example would be if all students are required to complete two courses with four SCH in the Life and Physical Sciences FCA. If only students of select majors are required to take a four SCH course, such as calculus for science and engineering majors, preferably the overflow hour may be counted as part those students' degree programs.

Overflow hours counted as part of the CAO decrease the number of SCH a student has to take, in addition to the overflow hour, in order to complete the CAO requirement. Institutions that count overflow hours in the CAO must make sure that students have one- or two-SCH course options to fulfill their core requirement. The maximum number of SCH allowed in the CAO is six.

Institutions must designate how they apply overflow hours and which hours should be counted as part of a student's core curriculum. This information should be declared on a student's transcript. Advisors and transcript evaluators also can find institutions' designation of overflow hours on the Coordinating Board website at [www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/tcc/TexasCoreInformation.htm](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/tcc/TexasCoreInformation.htm).

## Transfer of Texas Core Curriculum Courses

These definitions are important when considering awarding credit for core courses completed by transfer students:

### *Degree-seeking students/concurrent enrollment*

A student may only be classified as a degree-seeking student at one institution. A student concurrently enrolled at more than one institution is obliged to follow the core curriculum requirements for the institution for which he/she is considered a degree-seeking student. NOTE: A student remains a degree-seeking student at an institution, regardless of an enrollment elsewhere during an intervening summer session.

### *Sending institution/receiving institution*

A student transfers from a sending institution to a receiving (degree-granting) institution by changing the institution where the student was and by becoming degree-seeking at the receiving institution.

### *Grade requirement for the transfer of core curriculum courses*

Coordinating Board Rule 4.25(d)(3), in the section of the rules setting requirements and limitations for transfer of credit, states:

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.

The receiving institution need not accept a course in fulfillment of a students' core curriculum that has a letter grade of D or worse, regardless whether that student's transcript was marked core complete at the sending institution. Coordinating Board rules do not require a grade of "C" or better to receive credit for a core curriculum course either. However, institutions must treat transfer students in the same manner as they treat their native students, according to Coordinating Board rule 4.24(b). The policy of whether or not an institution accepts a course with grade "D" for the fulfillment of the core curriculum must be the same for transfer and native students.

*Transfer of courses without core completion*

Coordinating Board Rule 4.28(e) and (f) states:

- (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 must 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 Foundational Component Areas. Each student must meet the number of semester credit hours in each foundational component area; however, an institution receiving a student in transfer is not required to apply to the fulfillment of a foundational component area requirement semester credit hours beyond the number of semester credit hours specified in a foundational component area.

***A course completed at the sending institution must be counted as fulfilling the student's core curriculum requirements if the course is approved as part of the sending institution's set of courses of the TCC, regardless of whether the same or a similar course is approved at the receiving institution.***

Courses that must be transferred include course credits based on advanced placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) credit, or course credit based on CLEP or institution-based testing. (See section "Course credit for traditional and nontraditional coursework.") After a sending institution designates course credit as part of the student's fulfillment of the core curriculum requirement, all Texas public institutions of higher education must count the credit as part of the core. Core curriculum credit for equivalency of out-of-state courses, courses from

Texas independent institutions, or for courses taken before the TCC was established is at the discretion at each institution evaluating a transcript.

If a student has more SCH than required for a particular FCA, the receiving institution is not required to apply those credits. If a student has less SCH than required for a particular FCA, the receiving institution may impose requirements for the fulfillment of the remaining needed SCH.

*Transfer of a completed core curriculum*

Coordinating Board Rule 4.28(c) states:

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 must be substituted in transfer to any other Texas public institution of higher education 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.

The sending institution must determine if a block of courses fulfills the TCC requirement for a completed core curriculum of 42 SCH. To assist students and receiving institutions, the sending institution is responsible for documenting that a student is core-complete on a student's transcript. The receiving institution must accept and apply a block of courses that fulfil the core curriculum requirement in its entirety.

*Institutional requirements for the CAO*

Many institutions have specific requirements for the CAO (e.g., additional mathematics or communications requirements) that differ from courses incoming students have taken. The acronym CAO incorporates the word "option" because institutions have an option in what kind of courses they offer and require.

If a student transfers with six SCH for the CAO, the number of SCH required for its completion, the receiving institution cannot require the student to take additional SCH, regardless of their requirements for their native students. Requiring additional courses to those already taken would not comply with the statute, which says a student "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." (Texas Education Code Section 61.822 (d)).

If the student completed less than the required six SCH for the CAO at the sending institution, then the receiving institution, after giving credit for the completed hours, can make requirements for the remaining SCH the student still has to take. It is important to note that the receiving institution must keep the best interest of the student in mind when considering whether the required course differs substantially to those already taken.

### *Can the designation of overflow hours be changed?*

The designation of overflow hours may be changed at a receiving institution, if it is in the best interest of the student. For example, if a receiving institution does not allow overflow hours in the degree program, the institution may allow a transferring student to apply the hours to the CAO, if the CAO is not yet complete.

### *Application of core course credit across FCA and CAO*

Students who are not core-complete may present a complex mix of core courses completed at various institutions when they arrive at a receiving institution. The receiving institution should advise the student on the most efficient and effective path to core completion. This may include applying core credit by moving core credit between the CAO Option A and the course's respective FCA, if this allows the student to maximize credits and avoid duplication of effort.

### *Transfer disputes*

The procedures for resolution of transfer disputes can be found in Coordinating Board rule 4.27:

Step 1: Receiving institution shall give written notice to the student and sending institution that the transfer credit was denied. This notice must include the reasons for denying credit and clear instructions for appealing the decision.

Step 2: The student may contact a designated official at the sending or receiving institution for assistance.

Step 3: The two institutions shall attempt to resolve the transfer dispute using Coordinating Board rules and guidelines.

Step 4: If the transfer dispute is not resolved within 45 days of the student receiving written denial to the satisfaction of the student or sending institution, the sending institution may notify the Coordinating Board.

Step 5: The Commissioner (or designee) shall make the final decision.

### *Noncompliance with transfer rules*

If it is determined by the Coordinating 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, formula funding for credit hours in the repeated course will be deducted from the institution's appropriation.

## Changes to the Texas Core Curriculum Over Time

The course offering for the TCC will change over time at each institution, and students will need to be accommodated for making catalog choices.

### *Institutional core curriculum changes*

Institutions may make changes to the approved core curriculum once per year. Regardless of when the changes are approved within a given academic year, the additions/deletions go into effect the following fall semester, i.e., the following academic year.

As the list of approved courses may change annually, the TCC WebCenter archives core courses by Academic Year, for which the courses are permissible for use.

### *Pre-fall 2014 core curriculum vs. fall 2014 core curriculum for native students*

Students who first enrolled prior to the Fall 2014 Core Curriculum have a choice of catalog. According to Coordinating Board rule 4.28(b)(5)(C):

Any student who first enrolled in an institution of higher education prior to fall 2014 shall, after consultation with an academic advisor, have the choice to:

- (i) complete the core curriculum requirements in effect in summer 2014; or
- (ii) transition to the current core curriculum requirements, in which case, previously completed core curriculum courses shall be applied to the current core curriculum requirements under the same terms as those that apply to a student who transfers from one institution to another. The student shall then complete the remaining requirements under the current core curriculum.

### *Pre-fall 2014 core curriculum vs. fall 2014 core curriculum for transfer students*

When choosing a new catalog during transfer, advisors should guide students to make the best choice of catalog, so that a student is best served and makes the most of SCH already taken.

According to Coordinating Board rule 4.25(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.

### *Pre-fall 2014 core curriculum vs. fall 2014 core curriculum for dual credit students*

Many recent high school graduates are enrolling at an institution with several SCH of dual credit or AP credit completed before fall 2014.

Coordinating Board rule 4.28(b)(5)(A) states:

Any student who first enrolls in an institution of higher education following high school graduation in fall 2014 or later shall be subject to the current Texas Core Curriculum requirements.

Because dual credit/AP students are not high school graduates, students enrolling with dual credit/AP credit enrolling in fall 2014 or later are responsible for completing the current TCC requirements.

## Course Credit for Traditional and Nontraditional Course Work

### *ACGM-/TCCNS-equivalent courses*

The Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) is the official list of approved courses for general academic transfer to public universities that may be offered for state funding by public community and technical colleges in Texas. Courses in the ACGM receive a rubric and number assigned by the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS). ACGM listing or an adherence to ACGM learning outcomes is not the primary deciding factor for approval of inclusion in the TCC; instead, it is a documented alliance with FCA definitions and the implementation of required core objectives within the structure of the course. However, courses with an ACGM listing, or with a declared TCCNS equivalency, must have a content consistent with the descriptions in the ACGM and must uphold the integrity of the TCCNS.

Because students should not be required to repeat content or unnecessarily accumulate hours, the degree-granting institution has discretion in how, or if, to apply a transfer course to the student's core curriculum in cases where the course is not approved as part of the sending institution's TCC but is a TCCNS equivalent to a core curriculum course where the student is degree-seeking.

### *Application of dual credit and credit by exam (AP, IB, CLEP, etc.)*

Credits earned in high school may be applied to a student's core curriculum. Students should receive core curriculum credit in the institution's approved core curriculum for courses with qualified scores, as determined by the institution.

### *Out-of-state or Texas independent (private) institution transfers*

Institutional personnel should evaluate each course to determine whether it demonstrates the fulfillment of content description (FCA definition), core objectives, and semester credit hours required for the appropriate FCA before applying the transferred course to the institution's core curriculum.

Coordinating Board Rule 4.28(j) states:

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.

If these courses are aligned with an FCA's content definition and address the required core objectives should be accepted, regardless of whether the receiving institution offers the same course or a similar course.

It is unlikely a course will be an exact match to a Texas public institution course. However, institutional personnel should use their best judgment and due diligence to assist the student by allowing the student to maximize credits and avoid duplication of effort.

Because students should not be required to repeat content or unnecessarily accumulate hours, the receiving institution can discern how, and if, a transfer course can be applied to a student's core curriculum.

#### *Transfer of courses from the core curriculum prior to fall 2014*

Students who started under the core curriculum prior to fall 2014 have a choice how they proceed. If they choose to transition to the new core curriculum, their previous courses would be treated like courses from a transfer student.

Coordinating Board Rule 4.28(b)(5)(C) states:

- (C) Any student who first enrolled in an institution of higher education prior to fall 2014 shall, after consultation with an academic advisor, have the choice to:
- (i) complete the core curriculum requirements in effect in summer 2014; or
  - (ii) transition to the current core curriculum requirements, in which case, previously completed core curriculum courses shall be applied to the current core curriculum requirements under the same terms as those that apply to a student who transfers from one institution to another. The student shall then complete the remaining requirements under the current core curriculum.

#### *Waivers and substitutions*

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 noted in *Accommodations* below.

#### *Accommodations*

Coordinating Board rules Chapter 4, Subchapter B, 4.28(k) allows for accommodations for students with a medically documented learning disability, including but not limited to dyslexia, dysgraphia, or Asperger's Syndrome. Institution personnel may select a suitable course for substitution and must be able to demonstrate that the course has been approved to fulfill the same FCA at five or more other Texas public institutions.

## Specific Statutory Requirements for Core Curriculum Courses

### *Government/political science requirements*

Texas Education Code 51.301 (first enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1929) mandates that any student receiving an associate or baccalaureate degree is required to complete six SCH of

instruction in government or political science which includes consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas.

Texas community college students complete ACGM courses GOVT 2305, Federal Government and GOVT 2306, Texas Government to fulfill this requirement.

GOVT 2301 and GOVT 2302 were deleted from the ACGM in 2013. Students who have completed the GOVT 2301/GOVT 2302 sequence and have switched to a catalog with the new core may substitute the sequence for GOVT 2305 and GOVT 2306. Students who have only completed GOVT 2301, must take either GOVT 2305 or GOVT 2306. Students who have only completed GOVT 2302 must either complete both GOVT 2305 and GOVT 2306 or must complete either GOVT 2305 or GOVT 2306, while also completing GOVT 2107, a one-SCH course covering federal and state constitutions.

### *American history requirements*

Texas Education Code 51.302 (first enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1955) mandates that any student receiving a degree is required to complete six SCH in American history with the option of three of these SCH focused on Texas history. In addition to the Texas history option, a student may receive up to three SCH for “substantially equivalent work” in an approved senior R.O.T.C. unit.

Approved courses from the ACGM include HIST 1301/HIST 1302, U.S. History I/II, HIST 2301, Texas History, HIST 2327/HIST 2328, Mexican-American History I/II, and HIST 2381, African-American History.

## Suitability of Courses for the Texas Core Curriculum

### *Two parts of the Foundational Component Area*

There are two parts that are separate requirements of each FCA. Both parts are important but independent from each other. The FCA definition specifies the focus of the content of the course and topics to be addressed. The required core objectives address components with which the course content is to be delivered in order to facilitate learning.

### *General education courses*

TCC courses must meet the SACSCOC general education requirements. The TCC overwhelmingly consists of lower-division courses. If an upper-division course is included, it must not have prerequisites and cannot have a substantial overlap with a lower-division course. The course must not be restricted to a single major or groups of majors, and most importantly, the course must not have advanced and specialized content that is not appropriate for the TCC.

### *Adherence to the Academic Course Guide Manual*

The integrity of the Texas Common Course Numbering System and the purpose of content coverage consistent with the descriptions in the ACGM must be followed. An institution may add to the requirements of the ACGM but may not implement changes that would make the course deviate from the purposes outlined in the ACGM.

### *TCCNS equivalency*

Four-year institutions must be mindful that if a course is declared with a TCCNS equivalency that the course is indeed an equivalent course and adheres to the requirements by which two-year institutions offering the course must abide.

### *Pre-requisites and co-requisites*

Courses may have a prerequisite, with some exceptions. The course must meet SACSCOC general education requirements. No upper-division course will be approved if it is substantially comparable in content and depth of study to a lower-division course in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM).

An example of a course that may not be included in a specific FCA is Calculus II. Calculus II cannot be approved in the Mathematics FCA because the FCA allows only three SCH. Since Calculus I is a prerequisite to Calculus II, students' successful completion of Calculus I makes them core-complete for the Mathematics FCA. An institution may add Calculus II to its Component Area Option (CAO) offering, so that a student can take both courses as part of the core.

A course with a co-requisite that is not part of the core curriculum is not allowed for the TCC.

### *"Skills development" courses*

Certain courses in the ACGM are designated for skills development. The purpose of these courses is to increase a student's skill in a particular activity. While the activities themselves are important, they do not fulfill the purpose of the TCC (See page 5). These courses do not fit the TCC, even though they typically require high-level cognitive skills and their curriculum requires cognitive advancement by the student. Even though the courses are not suitable for the TCC, their curriculum design also may require in-depth critical thinking skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, or social and personal responsibility awareness.

Examples of skills development courses are art studio courses, falling under the rubrics ARTS, DRAM, DANC, and MUSI. These courses teach how to become an artist or how to become better at being an artist. Creative arts courses suitable for the core curriculum focus on appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and involve synthesis, interpretation, and communication about works of art. This is in opposition to a creative arts "skills course," which focuses on expressing human imagination through works of art. In this sense, the term "skills

course” is not a negative term, in that these courses require high-level intellectual endeavor. The TCC does not include “becoming a better artist” as part of the charge of gaining “a foundation of knowledge of human cultures.”

Another group of skills development courses are introductory language courses. The primary focus of these courses is skills development, including vocabulary development, pronunciation, and grammar structures that require practice and memorization. The purpose of these courses is not the exploration of ideas to understand the human condition across cultures nor how to communicate persuasively.

Skills development courses are present in other rubrics of the ACGM. Examples include BUSI 1307, Personal Finance or ENGL 2307 and 2308, Creative Writing I and II.

Some courses may contain both skills and appreciation or scientific understanding. For these courses to be suitable for the TCC, appreciation or scientific understanding must outweigh skills development. An example of such courses is PSYC 1300, Learning Framework.

Care must be taken that the purpose of the course according to the ACGM is amenable to appreciation development. A course must not deviate from the purposes outlined in the ACGM. The distinction between “skills” and appreciation or scientific understanding is an important concept inherent to the descriptions used in the ACGM. Here, sentences such as “exploration of ideas using painting media and techniques,” are used for a course meant to teach art skills, versus sentences such as “interpretation and evaluation of works of art within formal, cultural, and historical contexts,” for a course meant to teach foundations of knowledge of human cultures. The latter course is one suitable for the TCC.

#### *Honors courses with variable topics*

Variable topic courses are generally not acceptable for the TCC. However, specifically designed courses such as a honors topics course or a honors “seminar” with a topic that may vary from year to year may be approved. If the supporting documentation (a) provides a general description of how the course addresses its FCA’s definition and core objective requirements, regardless of topic, and (b) provides an example description of how a special topic is integrated within the general structure of the course.

#### *Sufficient breadth of general survey courses*

Certain courses suitable for the TCC are survey courses that introduce the student to a wider topic, which will allow the student to make connections between events and ideas. Such a course should not be too narrow, in effect giving the broader course title a specific sub-title. For example, the ACGM course MUSI 1310, “American Music” should not be narrowed to one or two single genre(s) of music.

## **Texas Core Curriculum Assessment**

The purpose for assessment of the TCC is for institutions to discover, document, and seek to improve student attainment of the TCC’s six core objectives, and to improve continually the processes by which these objectives are assessed. Institutions will assess the six core objectives and submit a report to the Coordinating Board every ten years, on a schedule in accord with

their accreditation reaffirmation schedule: when institutions submit their reaffirmation materials to SACSCOC, they must also submit their Coordinating Board required report. Accountability for assessment of the core objectives is at the institutional level.

Coordinating Board staff will review each assessment report. The goal of assessing the Texas Core Curriculum, as a state-wide effort, is to monitor the improvement of student learning of core objectives through effective feedback loops and to demonstrate whether the requirements of the Core Curriculum are serving Texas' students as intended.

*Report of TCC assessment to the Coordinating Board*

The assessment report must contain the following components (Coordinating Board rule 4.30):

**I. Assessment of the Core Objectives**

**A. Description of Assessment**

A description of the assessment process for each of the six core objectives. This should include a general descriptions of the overall assessment process, and include the personnel and offices involved in assessing the TCC.

**B. Assessment Methods**

An explanation of measures, methodology, frequency, and timeline of assessment activities.

Note that each core objective is required to be evaluated by at least one direct measure, and it is recommended that each core objective be evaluated by multiple measures, if possible.

**C. Criteria/Targets**

This section should include an explanation of benchmarks and targets used to evaluate the performance of each of the six core objectives. Each core objective must have an attainment target statement, which should include the following information:

- how many targets are being measured,
- what is being measured,
- what measurement tool is being used, and
- what level or score is considered "attainment."

Institutions are free to use any reasonable method of assessment. Multiple assessments, both direct and indirect are permissible. Institutions are encouraged to utilize "authentic" assessment. Authentic assessment involves the use of samples of actual student work. Samples of student work are usually gathered by sampling sections of Core courses or through portfolios containing student work from Core courses. Rubrics, such as the VALUE rubrics, developed by the AAC&U's LEAP initiative, are often used and influenced the work of the

UEAC. Groups of faculty are used to holistically “grade” submitted student assignments.

#### **D. Analysis**

This section should include results, with evidence indicating the level of attainment achieved for each of the six core objectives.

A description of the analysis and interpretation of the results should be included. This should contain a description of the personnel tasked with compiling the data and evaluating the results, and a description of the process by which these results and interpretations are disseminated to faculty, administration, and appropriate stakeholders.

#### **E. Actions and Follow-ups**

Description of actions planned to improve student learning and achievement based on evidence provided by assessment results and evidence of implementation, if any is available. Description of faculty involvement in the process should be included.

### **II. Evaluation of the Assessment Process**

One of the goals of the assessment process is for institutions to evaluate continually the validity and effectiveness of their tools, measures, and processes. The assessment report, therefore, should contain:

- A. a section describing the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process; and
- B. possible action plans to improve the future assessment process.

## Appendix

### Texas Core Curriculum 2015 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### General Questions

Q1: How can an institution change its current core curriculum?

A: Coordinating Board rule, Texas Administration Code 4.31(2), allows each Texas public higher education institution one comprehensive request for change per year. The request should cover all proposed changes to the institution's list of core courses, including the addition and deletion of courses; changes to course numbers, course titles, or course semester credit hours (SCH); reassignment of a course from one Foundational Component Area to another, if appropriate; and other changes, such as placement of overflow hours from FCAs or changes to the institution's core curriculum assessment plan.

Q2: When do changes to the core curriculum become effective?

A: All approved changes to the core curriculum become effective the following academic year after approval. For example, if an institution submits its request to make changes in January 2015, the changes go into effect for the Academic Year beginning fall 2015.

Q3: What is the deadline for submitting changes to the core curriculum?

A: There is no deadline for submitting a change to the core. Institutions may set their own timeline to have changes to their core finalized in time for a new academic year. Institutions should allow a sufficient review period to accommodate a timeline that allows for Coordinating Board review and a response to the review by the institution (See Q4).

Q4: Will the Coordinating Board's approval or disapproval of a change to the core be final?

A: Yes, but only after an appeal, which is part of the following approval process:

1. On a date of its choosing, the institution submits its change request.
2. Within one month, the Coordinating Board staff issues an information sheet listing approved and denied changes.
3. Within one month after the receiving the decision, the institution may respond.
4. Within two weeks after receiving the institution's response, the Coordinating Board staff will reach closure and notify the institution.

To accommodate the timeline needed to approve changes to the core curriculum, including review and response, institutions should submit change requests in time to publish a new course before the beginning of a new academic year.

Q5: How can an institution respond if a change to its core curriculum is not approved?

A: Coordinating Board staff will make every effort to work with institutions to clarify core curriculum issues. An institution could incorporate core elements in its documentation, or it could make other substantive changes to a course. An institution may request moving a course to a different FCA. An institution, however, may not submit a different course as a substitute for a denied course.

- Q6: How can an institution request a change to its core curriculum?  
A: Institution must enter all requests for change into the online system available through the Core Curriculum Submission Portal at [www.theccb.state.tx.us/TXcorecurriculum](http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/TXcorecurriculum). Institutions are responsible for ensuring that the system completely captures their one-time-per-year request for change.
- Q7: How can an institution request a name change to a course if its course inventory is not yet active for the new academic year?  
A: Institutions cannot request a name change for a course with a course number that stays the same until the Course Inventory ([www.txhighereddata.org/interactive/UnivCourse](http://www.txhighereddata.org/interactive/UnivCourse)) has been rolled over to the new inventory year. To support timely submission of such changes, the Coordinating Board will roll over the Course Inventory to the next inventory year at an earlier date than in years prior to 2015, i.e., on or near February 1 each year.
- Q8: Why are our institution's course titles from previously approved courses deleted from the TCC WebCenter and from the TCC Submission Portal?  
A: The TCC system maintains its list of courses by course rubric and number. If an institution changes its course inventory by changing the rubric and number of a course, neither the previously approved course nor its title and semester credit hours will appear in the system. As soon as the Coordinating Board approves a course for the following academic year, they archive the course's title in the TCC WebCenter for that year.
- Q9: Is there a checklist of topics or items the Coordinating Board requires on syllabi for specific courses?  
A: No, there is no checklist or standard syllabus for any course. However, each course must meet all parts of the Foundational Component Area definition, as defined in the [Table of Foundational Component Areas](#) and also must meet all the [core objectives](#) of its FCA.
- Q10: How can faculty show that a course is suitable for the Texas core curriculum?  
A: Enumerating the elements of an FCA, listing core objective components, or listing learning outcomes copied from the [Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual](#) (ACGM) is not sufficient documentation for demonstrating suitability for the TCC. Supporting documentation that is useful to students, counselors, and faculty should demonstrate how a course aligns with the goals of the new TCC and how the course will implement the TCC's intended goals. Core objectives and outcomes should be integrated into the course in a context-based way.
- Q11: Why was a course listed in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) approved at some institutions but denied at others?  
A: Approval of a course for the TCC does not depend solely on ACGM listing or on adherence to ACGM learning outcomes, but also depends on documented adherence to FCA definitions and the implementation of the core objectives within the structure of the course. A course that does not conform to the description and learning outcomes in the ACGM should not be identified or associated with a Texas Common Course Number (TCCN) when the course is submitted for core approval.

Q12: An institution cannot request approval for kinesiology (KINE) courses. Why?

A: Only courses from rubrics that exist in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) database can be approved as core curriculum courses. The ACGM database includes physical education (PHED) courses, but not KINE courses. The ACGM states that "KINE may be used as an alternate common numbering rubric for PHED courses." Therefore, if a PHED course was approved, the institution may list that course in its catalog as a KINE course with the same course number. There is no rubric distinction between PHED and KINE. Note: only PHED rubrics are listed in the ACGM, since courses with the KINE rubric are identical for equal course numbers and institutions cannot receive double state funding if students enroll in the course twice, i.e., once in each rubric.

Q13: Will a course with a prerequisite or a co-requisite be approved?

A: Generally, courses must meet SACSCOC general education requirements and should not have pre-requisites. Certain exceptions apply, such as course sequences for which there are sufficient SCH in the core curriculum. Examples are two-course science sequences. No upper-division course will be approved if it is substantially comparable in content and depth of study to a lower-division course in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM). A course with a co-requisite that is not part of the core curriculum will not be approved.

Q14: Why was an electrical engineering course denied?

A: A course in the core may not narrowly focus on skills, techniques, and procedures for one specific occupation or profession.

Q15: Why were capstone courses denied?

A: Capstone courses may be denied because they are not designed to be part of the general education portion of the institution's undergraduate curriculum common to all students. Capstone courses usually have multiple, upper-division, prerequisite and advanced standing requirements, and are geared toward specific program requirements.

Q16: Can an honors course with a varying topic be approved?

A: Documentation for a course containing a topic that may vary from year to year must have two parts: (1) a general description that documents how the course addresses the definition of the FCA and the required core objectives, regardless of topic, and (2) an example description of how the special topic is integrated into the general structure of the course.

## **Questions Specific to Foundational Component Areas (FCAs)**

### *Communication*

Q17: Should assessment of the communication core objective in the Communication FCA directly measure all elements of communication, i.e. oral, aural, written, and visual skills?

A: There are three different aspects to consider: (1) Courses in the FCA Communication must follow the definitions of the FCA completely and must involve all literacy skills—oral, aural, written, and visual—as enumerated in the definition. (2) All core courses must address the core objective of communication skills. This does not mean that all courses must incorporate all communication skills. Each course may include skills appropriate for

the course. (3) The assessment of core objectives, including all types of communication skills, establishes outcomes by measuring artifacts from all core courses. The assessment methodology ensures that sufficient artifacts or outcomes are collected from all courses, so that attainment of student learning for the core objectives is measured based on the entirety of the core in aggregate, independent of FCA or courses taken.

### *Mathematics*

Q18: How can we justify our course selections for the Mathematics FCA?

A: It is the responsibility of the institution to document evidence of how specific instructional activities meet the component description of the mathematics FCA and its related core objectives. Every activity in a course syllabus does not need to address every aspect of a course's FCA description and core objectives, but the overall course must address the FCA descriptions and all core objectives.

Q19: What courses should be included in the Mathematics FCA of an institution's core curriculum to accommodate a mathematics developmental education pathway?

A: Texas Success Initiative rules allow a student to meet different standards of college readiness in mathematics. A student might be ready for either any entry-level freshman mathematics coursework or ready only for non-algebra intensive courses. For an institution to accommodate these two mathematics' college-readiness standards in its core curriculum, including both algebra intensive and non-algebra intensive courses in the institution's core curriculum submission is important. Examples of non-algebra intensive courses include Contemporary Mathematics and Elementary Statistical Methods.

Q20: Since only three SCH are required to satisfy the Mathematics FCA, what are an institution's options in applying the extra hours from four and five SCH courses?

A: Each institution must declare how the extra overflow hours in a particular FCA are applied to students' transcripts. The overflow hours may be assigned as either part of the Component Area Option (CAO), as part of the degree program, or both.

Q21: Why was the Calculus II course denied?

A: Calculus II cannot be approved in the Mathematics FCA because the FCA allows only three SCH. Since Calculus I is a prerequisite to Calculus II, students' successful completion of Calculus I makes them core-complete for the Mathematics FCA. An institution may add Calculus II to its Component Area Option (CAO) offering, so that a student can take both courses as part of the core.

### *Life and Physical Sciences*

Q22: What are the options for providing four SCH versions of science classes?

A: There is no difference between a four SCH science course and a three-plus-one SCH course, where the lecture and lab portions are separately listed. Each type of catalog listing requires the institution to declare how the extra overflow hour is applied to their students' transcripts. The overflow hour is either part of the student's

- Component Area Option (CAO),
- degree program, or
- both the CAO and the degree program.

In the case of (a), for a three-plus-one SCH course, the lab may be listed with the courses of the FCA or with the courses of the CAO. For a four SCH course, the lab is not

listed separately. In the case of (b), the lab, if separately listed as a three-plus-one SCH course, is not listed as part of the core courses. For a four SCH course, the one SCH lab portion is not counted as part of the FCA or the CAO. Also, in the case of (b), the overflow lab must not increase the number of required SCH to complete the degree.

Q23: Should institutions develop courses that do not include a lab (as provided in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual, ACGM) for their liberal arts majors?

A: Community colleges should be mindful of degree requirements at four-year institutions for students who transfer. Community colleges should accommodate students whose major does not require a lab at the receiving institution. Community colleges may provide a co-requisite lab, even if the lab is not part of the core, for students whose major requires the lab as part of their program. ACGM courses with learning outcomes require labs as co-requisites.

### *Language, Philosophy, and Culture*

Q24: Why was a language course denied in the Language, Philosophy, and Culture FCA?

A: A course in Language, Philosophy, and Culture must focus on the cultural expressions of the human experience. Such a course analyzes how human experience is both expressed and affected by a culture's ideas, values, and beliefs. A language course by itself may be a "skills development course" but may not necessarily investigate the cultural expression for which that language is used.

Q25: Why are philosophy courses dealing with reasoning and morality denied?

A: A primary focus for courses in the Language, Philosophy and Culture FCA should be the exploration of ideas that foster (nurture, develop, encourage, spur) aesthetic and intellectual creations (works of art, literature, poetry, drama, essays, philosophical/political theories, etc.) and how ideas, values, beliefs and other aspects of culture express human experience. Courses are denied if they do not make the creative processes or creative products within a cultural context a primary focus of the course. Courses that are applied in nature, without an underpinning of substantial exploration and study of the literature or theoretical and cultural development of ideas, do not address the primary focus of this FCA. Supporting documentation must indicate that creativity, as expressed in various cultures, is information a student would acquire.

### *Creative Arts*

Q26: Is the Coordinating Board denying support for the performing arts?

A: No. A set of courses in the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) is dedicated to the performing arts. Such courses may not be appropriate for the core curriculum. Performing arts courses that are predominantly skills-based courses are not appropriate for the core. Courses in the Creative Arts need a primary emphasis on appreciation and history, which means not more than half (50 %) of the curriculum and the final grade is based on a student's skill in performing the art.

*Institutions are discouraged from submitting performance/skills development courses with syllabi contrived to include an inordinate amount of appreciation and history with the intent of receiving approval to include the course in the core curriculum. This is particularly discouraged for the performance/skills development courses listed in the ACGM. The integrity of the Texas Common Course Numbering System and the purpose of*

*content coverage consistent with the descriptions in the ACGM are undermined by such a practice.*

Q27: Why was the course Acting I denied?

A: The supporting documentation must clearly show the course is not primarily a skills development course or practice lab but a general academic course that addresses all aspects of the definition for the Creative Arts FCA, as well as incorporates all required core objectives. The majority of the course's focus should not be "how to be an actor (artist)" but how to appreciate, analyze, or communicate about art, etc. (See FCA definition).

Q28: Why was an independent study, group music lesson, or a drama cooperative denied?

A: Specialized courses that are driven by an individual student's needs or desires are, by their very nature, not suitable for the core because they have no set syllabus or learning outcomes. A generic template syllabus is not adequate for approval.

#### *Government/Political Science*

Q29: GOVT 2301 and GOVT 2302 were deleted from the Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) in 2013. How do institutions accommodate students who have completed GOVT 2301 and/or 2302 but wish to complete the new core curriculum?

A: Students who have completed the GOVT 2301/GOVT 2302 sequence and have switched to a catalog with the new core may substitute the sequence for GOVT 2305 and GOVT 2306. Students who have only completed GOVT 2301, must take either GOVT 2305 or GOVT 2306. Students who have only completed GOVT 2302 must either complete both GOVT 2305 and GOVT 2306 or must complete either GOVT 2305 or GOVT 2306, while also completing GOVT 2107, a one-SCH course covering federal and state constitutions.

#### *Social and Behavioral Sciences*

Q30: Why was a course denied in the Social and Behavioral Sciences FCA?

A: A course in Social and Behavioral Sciences must satisfy both the definition of the FCA and meet the core objectives defined for the FCA. Courses in this FCA focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society and culture.

Courses in the Social and Behavioral Science FCA will contain each of the following four core objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, and Social Responsibility. The inclusion of Empirical and Quantitative Skills is especially important for courses in this FCA and involves the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions.

#### *Component Area Option*

Q31: Our institution does not offer a course under Option B of the Component Area Option (CAO). How can we know if a course taken at another institution was taken under Option B, and therefore, would not align with our institution's core?

A: Every institution has the option of choosing what to offer as part of the CAO. An institution may allow a student to take up to three SCH in course(s) in Option B, which may adhere to one or more of the definitions for the Foundational Component Areas and

for which it may choose any of the core objectives as additional objective(s), in addition to Communication and Critical Thinking Skills. Once a student takes that course, he/she must get credit for the effort, regardless of whether another institution has an Option B course in the institution's core offering or not.

#### *Teamwork and personal responsibility*

Q32: Why was teamwork or personal responsibility not accepted as part of a course?

A: The documentation needs to include details about how each of the core objectives is incorporated into the course. This is particularly important for the Teamwork objective. The mention of "class discussions" does not fulfil this objective. Class participation, as part of Teamwork, could be graded and defined, or there could be specific assignments listed in the syllabus that require teamwork. Similarly, personal responsibility must be incorporated as part of the course's topic and curriculum. It is not sufficient to incorporate personal responsibility by requiring class attendance or timely submission of homework.

### **Questions Specific to Student Transfer**

Q33: How are institutions required to make transparent a student's core course on his/her transcript?

A: All core courses should be marked as such by associating them with an FCA. If a student is core-complete, the transcript should state it.

Q34: How will courses from the [TCCN](#) system transfer from institution to institution when some carry the core curriculum attribute and others do not?

A: It depends on the designation at the sending institution. If a course carries the core attribute identifier at the sending institution, the course would transfer as part of the core credit. Otherwise, the course will count as regular course credit without component area core credit. The degree-granting institution has discretion in how and if a transfer course applies to its core curriculum when the course is not designated as core at the sending institution. However, students should not be required to repeat content or unnecessarily accumulate hours.

Q35: How can a registrar of a receiving institution know if a lab for a four Semester Credit Hours (SCH) science course (or the fourth credit hour for a four Semester Credit Hour math course) was applied to the transferring student's Component Area Option (CAO) or degree plan?

A: This should be transparent from the transferring student's catalog and also from the student's transcript. The transcript should designate the SCH that belong to the core curriculum. The Coordinating Board's [Core Curriculum WebCenter](#) has a link to a table that shows how institutions intend to designate the overflow hours by Foundational Component Area. Also, the designation of overflow hours may be changed at the receiving institution, if it is in the best interest of the student.

Q36: Can a student be required to take additional courses to those already taken as part of the core at the sending institution if the student is not core-complete or is not FCA-complete?

A: If a student took a course that was part of the Texas Core Curriculum at the sending institution, the receiving institution is required by law, Texas Education Code Section 61.822(d), to award credit for the course within the receiving institution's core. Coordinating Board rule 4.28(e) states that a student "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." However, based on rule 4.25(d)(3), a receiving institution may deny credit for a course with a grade of "D".

Q37: Our institution has additional communication and humanities requirements for the CAO, which are different from courses incoming students have taken. Can our faculty require students to take courses to meet these requirements?

A: The acronym CAO incorporates the word "option," because institutions have an option in the kind of courses they offer. For example, if a student successfully completed two physics courses for the CAO, he/she cannot be required to take another humanities course only because it is a requirement for students at the receiving institution. The question is one of time and cost. Requiring courses, in addition to those already taken, is not aligned with the statute, which says a student "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" (Texas Education Code Section 61.822(d)).

TEC Section 61.822(d) states, "Following receipt of credit for these courses, the student may be required to satisfy further course requirements in the core curriculum of the receiving institution." So, if the student took only three SCH for the CAO at the sending institution, then the receiving institution, after giving credit for the first three SCH, can make requirements for the remaining three SCH the student has yet to take. The institution should keep the best interest of the student in mind in considering whether the required course differs substantially from those already taken.

Q38: Is an institution required to accept any core course a student takes at another institution, e.g., over the summer?

A: No, a student must follow the curriculum requirements of the institution where the student is seeking a degree. If concurrently enrolled at another institution, a student should be advised on which courses apply to the curriculum requirements at the institution where the student is seeking a degree (Coordinating Board rule 4.28(d)).

Q39: Different types of courses may be approved for the CAO. There are courses for Option A, which may be courses adhering to any other FCA, and there are courses for Option B, which may adhere to one or more FCA definitions and which can contain one or more core objectives aside from Critical Thinking Skills and Communication Skills. How can a receiving institution transfer a course if it does not have a course in the corresponding Option in its CAO?

A: It is not transparent on a transcript whether a course was placed under Option A or B in the CAO. Also, it is not transparent from the transcript, which FCA a course is aligned with, for courses placed under Option A. The receiving institution should accept any course of the CAO from a student's transcript, up to SCH, without regard for the type of course or its association with an Option in the CAO. The Coordinating Board's WebCenter

of TCC courses lists CAO courses with a three-digit designation, which makes the type of CAO course transparent.

Q40: Are transfer students forced to move to the 2014-15 catalog year and, therefore, held to the new curricular requirements because the new core is more “transfer-friendly”?

A: No, the catalog is a student’s choice. According to Coordinating Board rule 4.25(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.” Students who transfer to a new institution beginning or after fall 2014 may be well advised to choose the new 2014-15 catalog because it may save them from taking additional SCH.

Q41: What is the meaning of the sentence in Coordinating Board rule 4.28(b)(5)(A): “Any student who first enrolls in an institution of higher education following high school graduation in fall 2014 or later shall be subject to the current Texas Core Curriculum requirements”? Can students who received dual credit in previous years enroll under an older catalog?

A: The intent is to apply this rule to students who graduated from high school and enrolled at institutions of higher education in fall 2014 or thereafter. A dual credit student is not a high school graduate. After graduation, that student will enter under a catalog that contains the new Texas Core Curriculum.

Q42: Can a student select courses approved in different academic years than the catalog year?

A: There are no Coordinating Board rules regarding this matter. Institutions may allow students to select courses approved in later years. However, a course may not retroactively receive core curriculum credit. For example, Physics 1403 Stars and Galaxies is approved for inclusion in the core curriculum at Institution A in fall 2015. Students who took the course in fall 2014 or spring 2015 may not receive core curriculum credit. The [Texas Core Curriculum WebCenter](#) lists courses by academic year for which the courses were approved for inclusion in the core curriculum.

Q43: Can a student graduate with an associate degree without completing the core?

A: Yes, in some situations. All academic associate degrees must incorporate the institution’s approved core curriculum. However, there are three situations that do not require a complete core curriculum for an AA or AS to be awarded:

1. The SCH for a Board-approved field of study curriculum and the core curriculum total more than 60 SCH; or
2. The SCH for a voluntary statewide transfer compact and the core curriculum total more than 60 SCH; or
3. A community college and a university have an articulation agreement to transfer a specified curriculum, which results in an AA or AS (but not AAT).

Q44: If the student has an associate's degree but has not completed the core due to one of the scenarios in Q43, is the student required to complete the core to receive a bachelor's degree?

A: Yes, to receive a baccalaureate the student must have completed the core curriculum of 42 SCH.

Q45: Is a student considered core complete, who completed their bachelor's degree prior to 1997, but has now enrolled seeking a different bachelor's degree?

A: The core curriculum requirement must be completed for the new degree. This does not mean that a student should not get core curriculum credit for courses taken in the past, even if those courses are not absolutely aligned with the current core requirements. The institution that would grant core credit now should use due diligence in evaluating courses for credit. A student should not be made to repeat work already done. A student transferring in from another state with a completed bachelor degree may have taken six SCH of government. But the student would likely not have taken Texas government as required by statute and would have to do so in order to achieve the new bachelor degree.

### Questions Specific to Assessment

Q46: How can attainment of the core objectives be measured?

A: The method of assessment is to be determined by each institution. The Liberal Education and America's Promise ([LEAP](#)) initiative of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) may serve as a resource for developing all aspects of the core curriculum, including the assessment process. To assist with assessment, the LEAP project includes a set of sample rubrics normed at more than 80 colleges and universities, as part of the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education ([VALUE](#)) assessment guidelines.

Q47: A core course must address all the elements defined for an FCA. To what extent does the assessment of the core measure directly all the elements of the FCA within the course?

A: The purpose of the core assessment is to determine the institution's attainment of the core objectives across the entire core curriculum. For the 10-year assessment report to the Coordinating Board, an institution does not need to measure each element in the FCA definition. This does not preclude the institution from assessing the FCA elements as it sees fit.

Q48: Must each course be measured for each applicable core objective?

A: The targets and attainment of benchmarks for the six core objectives are measured most commonly in aggregate, across the entire core and not separately for each course. That doesn't preclude institutions from measuring certain core objectives on a course-by-course basis, should they find it necessary or desirable.

Q49: If an institution places the theory portion of a course in the core but the laboratory overflow hour in the degree plan, should the objectives of the laboratory be assessed as part of the core assessment?

A: The core assessment report considers the entire body of knowledge gained. Therefore, it would be acceptable to assess teamwork in a science lab, even though the lab is absorbed into a student's degree program.

### **Questions Regarding the Core Curriculum Prior to Fall 2014**

Q50: What has changed with the new core compared to the old: in a nutshell, what is different?

A: The changes include the following:

- The 37 Basic Intellectual Competencies and Exemplary Educational Objectives have been replaced with six core objectives that are incorporated throughout the Texas Core Curriculum.
- Titles of some component areas were slightly changed for clarification and relevance as follows:
  - Natural Science became Life and Physical Sciences
  - Humanities became Language, Philosophy and Culture
  - Visual and Performing Arts became Creative Arts
  - U.S. History became American History
  - Political Science became Government/Political Science.
- There is now one standard requirement of 42 SCH for all public institutions in Texas. According to the previous core requirements, institutions could require SCH ranging from 42 SCH to 48 SCH for their core curriculum.
- The additional components for Chart II were replaced with the Component Area Option (CAO).
- The list of approved courses for all institution will change only once every academic year.

Q51: What has remained the same in the new core curriculum?

A: Commonalities include the following:

- Transcript coding – 010 for Communications, 020 for Mathematics, etc. will remain the same.
- Institutional autonomy – faculty still determine which courses will be chosen for core curriculum consideration.
- No course substitutions except in situations outlined in Coordinating Board rule 4.28(k).
- Complete core and component area completion are fully transferrable.
- Institutions may continue to allow students to use core curriculum courses to fulfill both Texas Core Curriculum and degree requirements.
- No single course may be used to fulfill two FCA simultaneously, even if the course is listed in two separate FCA.

Q52: Can a student choose between the old and new TCC requirements?

A: *Enrolling in an institution of higher education or after fall 2014* – Coordinating Board rule 4.28(b)(5) states that a student who enrolls in an institution of higher education after graduating from high school, or who was admitted under the terms of the Academic Fresh Start program, must complete the current TCC requirements.

*Enrolled in an institution of higher education before fall 2014* – The above rules also state that, after consultation with an academic advisor, the student has a choice to complete the previous TCC requirements or transition to the new TCC requirements. In the latter case, completed core courses will be applied and the student will complete the remaining requirements under the new TCC. The previous core curriculum courses are located on a website hosted by Texas State University: <http://statecore.its.txstate.edu>. This site will remain active through 2018.



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

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