

# Advanced Technical Credit (ATC) Program (Statewide-Articulated Courses)

## Information Essential to Two-Year Community, Technical, and State Colleges

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*The Advanced Technical Credit Program is a joint initiative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency that is designed to increase collegiate options and opportunities for students while maximizing resources and minimizing duplication of effort. The program addresses the Texas Higher Education Plan, Closing the Gaps, goals for participation and success, including development of coordinated P-16 programs of study and processes for seamless student transitions.*

The Advanced Technical Credit (ATC) Program is an advanced placement process for students enrolling in postsecondary workforce education programs. The program provides high school students with a method to “start a college technical major in high school.” Under the program, public high schools in Texas have the option to offer content-enhanced courses that provide instruction equivalent to courses listed in the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM). Students meeting criteria outlined in the ATC standard articulation agreement are eligible to receive credit for the corresponding college course(s) listed in the course crosswalk from any college offering the corresponding WECM course(s) and participating in the program.

ATC is specifically designed to address issues related to quality control of instruction, including documentation of high school faculty qualifications and methods for continuous review and evaluation of the articulation process. Key components of the program that address issues related to institutional effectiveness and accreditation criteria are outlined below.

- **Course content and identification** – Beginning fall 2002, each secondary course approved for statewide articulation is identified with unique course numbers and abbreviations assigned by TEA. Course abbreviations are readily identified on the high school transcript (AAR), indicating course content that is enhanced to meet postsecondary requirements. The unique course rubrics provide a method to track enrollment in statewide-articulated courses and to evaluate the effectiveness of the statewide articulation process.
- **Standard Articulation Agreement** – Criteria for award of college credit outlined in the standard agreement include: 1) minimum grade of 80 on all courses in a ATC-required course sequence; 2) junior/senior status for the course(s), or last course in a ATC-required sequence; 3) enrollment in a participating college within 15 months of high school graduation and declaration of a related technical major; 4) completion of six non-developmental college hours in any area, including dual credit, AP, and CLEP; and 5) articulated course(s) apply to the degree plan.
- **Faculty qualifications** – High school teachers of statewide-articulated courses must meet the minimum criteria required for college faculty teaching WECM courses in AAS degree programs. Although a minimum of an associate degree in a field directly related to the teaching area is required, most career and technology certified teachers hold a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in a related field with related work experience.
- **Staff development** – High school teachers of statewide-articulated courses must complete a TEA-required professional development program that includes instruction on collegiate course content delivered by subject-specific college faculty. Educational credentials and work history are recorded and entered on a statewide database. Qualified teachers receive a certificate of completion allowing them to teach specific statewide-articulated courses. Training must be repeated every three years.
- **Continuous review** – Courses designated for statewide articulation are subject to periodic review by state-level alignment committees. Beginning in 2003-2004, a statewide leadership committee, in coordination with the WECM leadership and maintenance project, will provide oversight, guidance, and a mechanism for continuous review and improvement of the statewide articulation process. Competency profiles are under development to provide high faculty with an additional resource to enhance the quality of secondary instruction in statewide-articulated courses.

## **Participation in ATC**

When a college agrees to participate in ATC, a college agrees to grant technical (WECM) credit for statewide-articulated courses to any student that meets the criteria for award of college credit as outlined in the ATC standard articulation agreement. Colleges only award articulated credit for WECM courses they offer. Colleges may continue to develop local articulation agreements if the college courses in question are not listed in the ATC course crosswalk. The college will be listed as a full participant in a publication designed to inform public schools, parents, and students of colleges that will accept statewide-articulated credit.

**NOTE:** Colleges may adopt articulation policies for statewide-articulated courses that are less restrictive than those outlined in the ATC standard agreement. For example, colleges may extend the time limit to enroll in the college beyond 15 months and may post articulated credit immediately upon enrollment. Participating colleges cannot, however, impose additional restrictions for award of credit for ATC courses.

## **SACS and ATC**

*From the Purpose and Philosophy of Accreditation, Section III - Comprehensive Standards  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges*

Policies and practices established for the Advanced Technical Credit (ATC) Program (statewide articulation) address standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, which are relevant to award of articulated credit.

- ATC provides a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for technical advanced placement (articulation) that a participating college elects to adopt.
- Processes are in place to ensure that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to WECM courses.
- Subject-specific college faculty who participate in ATC training of qualified high school faculty, in state-level course alignment activities, and/or in the determination of college-level competencies of statewide-articulated courses, are directly involved in determining high school course content, quality, and effectiveness of instruction.
- Because WECM courses freely transfer among two-year colleges in Texas, it is assumed that high school faculty who are approved to teach statewide-articulated WECM courses by college faculty from one accredited institution in Texas have met articulation requirements for all colleges offering the same WECM course.
- High school faculty teaching high school courses equivalent to associate degree courses not designed for transfer to the baccalaureate degree (WECM courses) must hold a baccalaureate degree in the teaching discipline, or an associate degree and demonstrated competencies in the teaching discipline.
- A state-level data base records credentials, work experience, licensures and certifications, and details of training activities of all high school teachers approved to teach ATC courses.
- A college may award academic transfer upon successful demonstration of student competence as determined by college policy. This competency assessment may include challenge exams and/or processes used to assess credit award for experiential learning.