

ADVANCED TECHNICAL CREDIT (ATC) PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

For the addition, revision and deletion of courses in the ATC Statewide-Articulated Course Crosswalk

PURPOSE

The policies and procedures outlined provide guidance to the statewide committee charged with the review and maintenance of the ATC course crosswalk. The crosswalk consists of content-enhanced high school courses, the college equivalent WECM course, and course competency profiles. Content, relevancy, and accuracy of the ATC Articulated Course Crosswalk is the key to the success of the statewide articulation process.

The Advanced Technical Credit (ATC) 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.

BACKGROUND

ATC 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.” 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** – Secondary courses approved for statewide articulation are 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. College course outcome profiles are available for each ATC course.

Course alignments are detailed in the ATC Statewide- Articulated Course Crosswalk, located at www.atcTexas.org and are hyperlinked to College Course Competency Profiles.

- **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; and 5) articulated course(s) apply to the degree plan.

The Standard Agreement applies to each course in the ATC Statewide-Articulated Course Crosswalk.

Faculty qualifications – High school teachers of statewide-articulated courses must meet minimum criteria required for college faculty teaching WECM courses in AAS degree programs. Teachers must meet one of the two following requirements to be approved to teach a course for Advanced Technical Credit:

Requirement 1: The teacher must have a baccalaureate degree or higher with a major in the teaching discipline.

OR

Requirement 2: The teacher must have a minimum of an associate degree and 3 years verifiable non-teaching work experience directly related to the teaching discipline.

- **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 reviewed, recorded and entered on a statewide database. Qualified teachers receive a certificate of eligibility allowing them to teach specific statewide-articulated courses. Training must be repeated every three years.

The ATC credentialing office, located at Stephen F. Austin State University, maintains a database of ATC-eligible teachers, which can be accessed at www.atcTexas.org.

- **Continuous review** – Courses designated for statewide articulation are subject to periodic review by state-level alignment committees. 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.

The ATC Leadership Committee is charged with assisting in developing a formal mechanism for the continuous, systematic review and improvement of Advanced technical Credit course alignments in subject areas for which alignments have previously been completed. The ATC Leadership Committee is also responsible for a process to address issues related to implementation of the ATC standard articulation agreement.

The policies and procedures outlined in this document provide a formal mechanism for the continuous review process.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Courses Eligible for Statewide Articulation

In order for high school courses and their college equivalents to be considered for inclusion in the ATC Statewide-Articulated Course Crosswalk they must meet four minimum requirements.

1. High School Minimum Course Credits (Units)

Individual Courses – An individual high school career and technology education course may be considered for articulation with a single college course only if the high school course results in the award of one or more high school graduation credits (units).

Series of Courses – The content of a sequence of high school courses of ½ credit (unit) each (or more) equates to the content of one or more college-level courses. A series of courses may include pre-requisites and/or co-requisite courses.

2. Widely Offered

The high school course is widely offered with courses listed in the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) and/or meets specific criteria determined by the ATC Leadership Committee (e.g., high skill/high demand or emerging occupations).

Widely offered means that:

- a. The high school course (or all courses in a sequence) is (area) offered by a minimum of ten school districts

No course will be added to the crosswalk if it is not offered at five Texas community colleges.

3. Secondary School Resources

Courses may be considered for inclusion in the ATC Statewide-Articulated Course Crosswalk if it can be determined that resources can be provided to high school students that are reasonably comparable to those typically available to students taking the college-level course equivalent.

4. Course Level

Individual Courses – An individual high school course may be considered for articulation if the high school course content is junior or senior level.

Series of Courses – The content of the final course in a sequence of high school courses of ½ credit (unit) each (or more) is junior or senior level.

Composition of Subject Area Alignment Committees

1. Subject Area Alignment Committees will be selected by the ATC Leadership Committee or its designee.
2. The committees will be comprised of a minimum of three, preferably five - depending on the quantity of the course offerings, two-year college faculty who have taught one or more of the college courses in the program area within the last three years and a minimum of three secondary school teachers who have taught one or more of the secondary courses in the program area, also within the last three years.

Review Cycle

ATC statewide-articulated course alignments should be reviewed by statewide alignment committees every five years at a minimum.

TEA must be notified of course additions, revisions, or deletions that affect the statewide-articulated courses listed in the state-approved course (Code Table C022).

COURSE ADDITIONS

Courses may be added to the ATC Statewide-Articulated Course Crosswalk by the following procedure:

1. A need is identified by the ATC Leadership Committee or state agencies, or a representative of a school district, college, or Tech Prep consortium petitions the ATC Leadership Committee, with a standardized ATC form "Request for Course Change," stating the high school and/or college course(s) to be added and a rationale for the request, including documentation of demand for the course in the form of the number of students receiving articulated college credit.
2. The ATC Leadership Committee considers the request to see if (a) the course meets minimum requirements for inclusion in the Crosswalk (b) the course does not duplicate a course currently included in the crosswalk and (c) the course can be reasonably applied to an articulated program of study.
3. If it is determined by the Committee that the course(s) meet the criteria the Committee, in consultation with staffs of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency, will make provisions for appointment of a formal subject area alignment committee in the current or future fiscal years, as appropriate.
4. The subject area alignment committee, following the procedures for ATC course alignment outlined below, will make recommendations to the ATC Leadership Committee for adoption, adoption with modification, or rejection.

COURSE REVISIONS

Entire subject areas or individual course alignments currently outlined in the ATC Statewide-Articulated Course Crosswalk may be revised by the following procedure:

1. A need is identified by the ATC Leadership Committee or state agencies, or a representative of a school district, college, or Tech Prep consortium petitions the ATC Leadership Committee in writing stating the high school and/or college course(s) to be revised a rationale for the revision. Justification may include (a) addition, deletion or revision of a WECM course (b) addition, deletion or revision of a secondary course and (c) change in the number of high schools and/or colleges offering the courses or course equivalents.
2. The ATC Leadership Committee considers the request based on the justification provided.
3. If it is determined by the Committee that a subject area and/or course alignment revision is indicated, the Committee, in consultation with staffs of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency, will make provisions for appointment of a formal subject area alignment committee to consider the revision in the current or future fiscal years, as appropriate.
4. The subject area alignment committee, following the procedures for ATC course alignment outlined below, will make recommendations to the ATC Leadership Committee for adoption, adoption with modification, or rejection of the requested revision.
5. In exceptional situations to be defined by the ATC Leadership Committee, recommendations may be made by the Committee without appointment of a subject area alignment committee.

COURSE DELETIONS

Entire subject areas or individual course alignments currently outlined in the ATC Statewide-Articulated Course Crosswalk may be deleted under one or more of the following conditions:

1. A need is identified by the ATC Leadership Committee or state agencies, or a representative of a school district, college, or Tech Prep consortium petitions the ATC Leadership Committee, with a standardized ATC form "Request for Course Change," stating the high school and/or college course(s) to be deleted and a rationale for the request, including documentation of demand for the course in the form of the number of students receiving articulated college credit.
2. A high school course or course sequence is not or is no longer offered by at least ten school districts and/or the college-equivalent course is not or is no longer offered by at least five two-year colleges.

3. A high school course has been removed from the list of secondary courses approved by the State Board of Education.
4. A college-equivalent course has been removed from the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM).

The ATC Leadership Committee may delete courses from the crosswalk based on the above criteria without additional procedures. In all cases, courses will not be deleted from the crosswalk in the same school year and schools and colleges will receive appropriate notification.

A representative of a school district, college, or Tech Prep consortium also may petition the ATC Leadership Committee in writing stating the high school and/or college course(s) to be deleted and a rationale for the deletion.

The ATC Leadership Committee will consider such a request based on the justification provided, and in consultation with staffs of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency.

COURSE ALIGNMENT PROCEDURES

The content-enhanced high school courses listed in the ATC Course Crosswalk have been found to be substantially equal to the introductory-level college courses indicated. Statewide teams of secondary and postsecondary subject area faculty compare the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for each high school course with the course descriptions, syllabi, and expectations of courses found in the postsecondary Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM). These courses are most often used in technical certificate and degree programs at public community and technical colleges, including Tech Prep programs.

1. A high school course is identified for statewide articulation based on the four criteria listed in the General Provisions.
2. A Subject Area Alignment Committee is formally appointed by the ATC Leadership Committee or its designee.
3. Secondary members of the Subject Area Alignment Committee, under the direction of a facilitator, examine the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the course. In situations where a unique TEKS does not exist for the course, secondary members of the committee will provide clarification to the TEKS, which will become formally documented in the course competency profile.

The TEKS course competencies form the basis of course requirements.

4. Postsecondary members of the Subject Area Alignment Committee, under the direction of a facilitator, examine course descriptions, course syllabi, and competency profiles from a minimum of five two-year colleges that currently offer the course to determine if the course is appropriate for articulation.

From these documents, postsecondary members recommend a list of core competencies that are required to enhance or supplement the TEKS that ensure college-level content and student competencies.

The WECM course competencies define the course enhancements that ensure college-level content.

5. Secondary and postsecondary members of the Subject Area Alignment Committee, under the direction of a facilitator, discuss and compare the TEKS and the postsecondary course competency requirements to determine the secondary course or courses that are the "best fit." It is expected that the high school course TEKS will not include the depth and breadth required for college-level content and student competency.

Therefore, it is critical that the competencies that are required to enhance the secondary course content be clearly identified and outlined for publication in the Course Competency Profile.

6. Members of the committee jointly propose:
 - Course alignments for the proposed subject area crosswalk;
 - Course pre-requisites and/or co-requisites and list them in the proposed crosswalk, if any; and
 - Course competencies required to enhance the secondary TEKS.
7. Members of the committee jointly identify any unique faculty qualifications, required resources (such as specialized equipment or software), and industry-required certifications and list them in the proposed crosswalk. Additional requirements of external accrediting agencies for specific courses will be noted in course outcome profile, as applicable.
8. Recommendations for course alignments that include each of the required elements are formally presented to a sufficient number of representatives of secondary school and subject-area college faculty across the state for review and comment. There should be a minimum of two opportunities for field review and comment.
9. Recommendations for course alignments that include each of the required elements are formally presented to the ATC Leadership Committee for consideration, along with all comments received from the field review process.
10. Upon adoption, the alignment will be added to the ATC Statewide Articulated Course Crosswalk for the next school year.

TEA will assign a unique PEIMS course code for the content-enhanced ATC statewide-articulated career and technology course and will include the course in the annual update of the list of state-approved courses.

RESOURCES

- **TEKS** <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/index.html>

- **PEIMS data standards - Code Table C022**
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/peims/standards/0506/c022.doc>
 - **WECM** <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ctc/ip/wecm2000/index.htm>
 - **ATC** <http://www.atcTexas.org>
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APPENDIX

Sample format for course alignments and competency profiles.