

November 10, 2016

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

Subject: 2017-2018 Innovative Course Application

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is now accepting applications for innovative courses for the 2017–2018 school year.

Texas Administrative Code (TAC), [Section 74.27](#), allows school districts to offer innovative courses to enable students to master knowledge, skills, and competencies not included in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Each innovative course must be academically rigorous and address the documented needs of students. Innovative courses must be approved by either the State Board of Education (SBOE) or the commissioner of education. State-approved innovative courses may satisfy state elective credit toward graduation. With the approval of the local board of trustees, school districts and charter schools may offer state-approved innovative courses without modifications.

Before submitting an application for an innovative course, please review the TEKS-based courses and the *Currently Approved Innovative Courses* list. You may discover that an existing TEKS-based course or a currently approved innovative course will meet your curricular needs. A proposed innovative course cannot duplicate an existing TEKS-based or approved innovative course. Innovative course applications that are significantly similar to a TEKS-based course or a currently approved innovative course will be denied. TEKS-based courses can be found in [19 TAC, Chapters 110–128 and Chapter 130](#). A list of currently approved innovative courses is available on the TEA [Innovative Courses webpage](#).

Innovative Course Approval Process

TEA will begin the review of innovative course applications for the 2017–2018 school year from the date of this letter and follow the timeline provided below. TEA will review the applications in the order in which they are received. **Applicants are encouraged to submit innovative course applications as soon as possible.**

The application timeline for innovative courses will be as follows:

Phase One: Applications received by **December 16, 2016**

- During this phase, entities are strongly encouraged to submit innovative applications for 2017-2018 that will require the approval of the SBOE (i.e., courses that contain content that is not addressed in any of the foundation or enrichment subject areas). Applications for innovative courses requiring SBOE approval will be scheduled to go before the SBOE at the January-February 2017 meeting.

- Entities that wish to submit an application for an innovative course that will require the approval of the commissioner of education (i.e., courses whose content falls within the foundation or enrichment subject areas) may also submit applications during Phase One. Applications received by this date will receive a final determination by February 15, 2017.

Phase Two: Applications received by February 15, 2017

- This is the final deadline to submit an application for an innovative course. Applications not received by this date and/or considered incomplete at this date will not be considered for approval.
- Applications for innovative courses received by this date will receive a final determination by April 28, 2017.

Districts and other organizations that wish to submit an application will have access to information and resources to assist with the application process via the [Innovative Courses](#) webpage. Districts unfamiliar with innovative courses and/or the application process are encouraged to review these materials. Additionally, the 2017–2018 innovative course application and procedures may be accessed via the [Innovative Courses webpage](#). Questions related to innovative courses or the approval process, may be directed to Kelsey Kling, Enrichment Program Coordinator, by phone at (512) 463-9581 or by email at innovative.courses@tea.texas.gov.

INNOVATIVE COURSES TIMELINE		
December 16, 2016	Phase One applications due	Applications requiring SBOE approval will be scheduled to go before the SBOE at the January-February 2017 meeting. Applications received by the Phase One deadline will receive a final determination by February 15, 2017
February 15, 2017	Phase Two applications due	Applications received by the Phase Two deadline will receive a final determination by April 28, 2017.
July 2017	Approved list published	The updated approved Innovative Courses list, including PEIMS codes, will publish to the Innovative Courses webpage

Expiring Innovative Courses

The list of expiring innovative courses for 2016-2017 is attached. Each district or organization holding the current application of an expiring course was provided the opportunity to submit an application to renew the innovative course. TEA has received renewal applications for expiring innovative courses as indicated on the attached document. Should you wish to submit an application to renew an expiring course for which an application has not been received, please do so according to the due dates provided in the timeline above.

The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) codes associated with expiring innovative courses will be deleted from the system as of July 2017 if the courses are not renewed. Beginning with the 2017–2018 school year, the courses and associated codes may no longer be available for use. Should you believe that your district has current approval for any of the listed expiring courses, you may submit your documentation verifying TEA approval to Kelsey Kling, Enrichment Program Coordinator, by email at innovative.courses@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Monica Martinez
Associate Commissioner
Standards and Programs

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[Attachment: 2016–2017 Expiring Innovative Courses](#)