Innovative Courses
Guidance and Examples for the Application Process
November 2021
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The innovative course program allows a high school student to access and receive state elective credit for content *not covered* in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Innovative courses must

- present *unique* content;
- be academically rigorous; and
- address a documented student need.

The application and review process is based in State Board of Education (SBOE) rules: Texas Administrative Code §74.27. Innovative Courses and Programs.
Tips for a Successful Submission

- Ensure all applications sections are complete, accurate, and consistent; incomplete applications will not be considered.

- Consider whether districts can implement the course without further guidance from TEA.

- Write the application in neutral/balanced language that is accessible to all student populations.

- Use the provided styles in the application template and have someone copy edit the application before submission.
“Title” should not duplicate an existing TEKS-based or currently approved innovative course.

“Contact person” should be authorized to address editorial changes requested by the agency.

If the applying organization is a school district, the local board of trustees must approve the application prior to submitting to TEA.
The “Subject area” is based on the related area of the foundation and enrichment curriculum.

If applying for a CTE course, choose the best “Career Cluster” for the course content.

Number of credits should be commensurate with course content, not the amount of time students will take the course.

Consider the appropriate grade level(s) for the course based on content, recommended prerequisites, and (if CTE) the identified program of study. “Grade level” should match the General Requirements section later in the application.
Course Description

The course description is a brief paragraph of approximately 150 words that addresses the purpose of the course. Topics in the description are evident in and supported by the essential knowledge and skills.

**Should:**
- Effectively summarize the unique content and learning outcomes of the course.
- Briefly describe how the course content addresses educational and career opportunities for students throughout the state.

**Should not:**
- Be in bulleted text or other similar format.
- Advocate for a specific instructional methodology or product.
- Address only a district-specific need.
The purpose of the Community Transportation course is to introduce knowledge and skills to empower students to research and access public transportation options in their respective communities. Areas to be addressed include pedestrian and rider safety, navigating public transportation systems, use of technology, and general social skills, including self-advocacy, self-assertiveness, and transportation etiquette. This course provides necessary transportation information, resources, and opportunities that will benefit students in secondary and postsecondary environments as they follow their chosen education or career path.
Course Justification

When completing this section, consider the following questions.

- What makes this course unique in terms of student learning?
- What are students prepared for upon completion of this course? (e.g., next level courses or certification or license)

- Include workforce needs; reach out to your CTE contact for help with gap analysis and skills documentation.
- Address regional or statewide needs using data.
The knowledge and skills in this proposed Film course are not available in any other TEKS-based or innovative course. Currently, Texas supports International Baccalaureate course in Film (both SL and HL), but there is no comparable TEKS-based fine arts course for film. This proposed course would provide an opportunity for all Texas high school students to master the skills and competencies needed to create a film from script creation through marketing and promoting a film. The proposed course supports the goals and objectives of the University Interscholastic League’s Film competition and prepares the student for undergraduate work or a career in film production.
Pilot information (new applications only)

Required elements:

- Clear evidence that the course was piloted with Texas high school students.
- Provides sufficient explanation of the pilot for the course in terms of student outcomes.
- Data are complete, appropriately cited, and clearly presented.
- CTE only: labor market data are included, aligned, and cited.

Produce some context to go along with numbers via narrative description.
According to the Texas Film Commission, the Moving Image Industry is responsible for $1.74 billion in in-state spending as well as 162,000 jobs, making this industry a vital part of the Texas economy. The pilot film course offered this last year in Anywhere HS was modeled on a similar course at the College of Fine Arts at Texas State University. While the proposed course aligns more closely in scope to TH 1353, it also incorporated topics similar to TH 1320 in order to better align to the inquiry and understanding and historical and cultural relevance strands expected of fine arts courses in Texas. TH 1353 is a required course for the BFA in Film Production and has approximately 30 students per semester enrolled. Similar undergraduate degree plans and courses exist at University of Texas-Austin, University of North Texas, and Southern Methodist University.

1. TH 1320. Filmmakers History of Film. This course introduces the student filmmaker to the history of film taken from the perspective of the practicing filmmaker. This is a study of how technological change and art trends inside and outside the medium itself affected the technique, craft, and style of filmmakers from each period.

2. TH 1353. Film Production Practices. This course provides an introduction to the art and practice of filmmaking. Students analyze the components of a film and examines the tools of filmmaking, including the camera, script, sound equipment, and editing software.
Pilot Information (example, cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students Enrolled</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to sit for certifications such as Apple™ Final Cut Pro X or Logic Pro X as well as be prepared for the rigors of a postsecondary film production degree.

Proposed CTE courses must also include information that aligns the application with labor market information (LMI). Applicants may use the statewide or regional LMI information posted on the TEA website: [https://tea.texas.gov/academics/college-career-and-military-prep/career-and-technical-education/lwda-labor-market-information-and-resources](https://tea.texas.gov/academics/college-career-and-military-prep/career-and-technical-education/lwda-labor-market-information-and-resources). Other LMI data sources may also be cited.
Implementation Data (renewal applications only)

Required elements:

- Describes the successful implementation of the course in terms of student outcomes.
- Includes implementation data from last five (5) years or initial approval period, whichever is greater.

- Cites or documents data and other description.
The essential knowledge and skills (EKS) of an innovative course describe in detail what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course.

The EKS for an innovative course must be formatted like the TEKS and must include these sections:

(a) General Requirements
(b) Introduction
(c) Knowledge and Skills
Essential Knowledge and Skills

General Requirements

- List recommended grade levels (same as in Course Information section).
- List any recommended prerequisite courses.
- List the amount of credit to be awarded (same as in Course Information section).

Example

§130.255. Advanced Culinary Arts (Two Credits), Adopted 2015.

(a) General requirements. This course is recommended for students in Grades 10-12. Prerequisite: Culinary Arts. Students shall be awarded two credits for successful completion of this course.
Introduction

- Outlines how the proposed course aligns with or complements existing courses in the same subject area; use TEKS or approved innovative courses for examples.

- Includes both the course description and cluster (if applicable) in the introduction.

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**Proposed New Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications course**

(b) Introduction.

(1) Career and technical education instruction provides content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant technical knowledge and skills for students to further their education and succeed in current or emerging professions.

(2) The Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications Career Cluster focuses on careers in designing, producing, exhibiting, performing, writing, and publishing multimedia content including visual and performing arts and design, journalism, and entertainment services.

(3) [Proposed course description here]
Knowledge and skills statements (KS) are broad statements of what students must know and be able to do. These statements must—

- Be written in complete sentences.
- Address the individual (“the student” rather than “the students”).
- Use present tense (rather than future or conditional tense).
- End with the phrase: “The student is expected to:”

All student expectations (SEs) listed under the KS should be clearly associated with the topics of the KS.
General Employability Skills.
(1) The student demonstrates general employability skills by maintaining basic requirements of personal health, hygiene, and grooming. The student is expected to:

Fundamentals of Real Estate.
(4) Principles of Real Estate. The student communicates the elements of ethical practice of real estate as a license holder. The student is expected to:
The student expectations (SEs) state specifically what a student must know or how a student should demonstrate knowledge. The SEs must—

- Begin with an active verb.
- Employ a variety of verbs that demonstrates a level of rigor appropriate for the subject matter and recommended grade level.
- Be observable and measurable.
- Relate directly to the knowledge (KS) statement.
- Describe what skill or knowledge must be taught rather than how to teach it.
Essential Knowledge and Skills (example)

**General Employability Skills.**

(1) The student demonstrates general employability skills by maintaining basic requirements of personal health, hygiene, and grooming. The student is expected to:

(A) evaluate the importance of grooming, hygiene, and appearance in personal and professional settings;

(B) select and maintain clothing to maximize appearance for a variety of possible employment experiences; and

(C) evaluate the effects of a balanced diet on health, appearance, and effective job performance.
Essential Knowledge and Skills

- SEs should employ a variety of active and rigorous verbs.
- Principles or introductory courses might primarily rely on the “apply” and “analyze” level verbs and also employ some higher order verbs.
- Advanced or practicum level courses should use more higher-order verbs from the “evaluate” and “create” levels, but may still need to explain new ideas.
When integrating innovative courses into an approved program of study, it is important to construct knowledge and skills in a clear progression from Level 1 to Level 4, using overlapping and increasingly rigorous verbs.

- integrate, create a plan, create new strategies
- interpret, evaluate, adapt, assess
- classify, explain, analyze, evaluate
- examine, identify, compare, classify
Potential issues to avoid:

- Using verbs that are not observable and measurable (e.g., explore, understand, recognize)
- Describing student activity rather than skill demonstration
- Repeating a skill instead of increasing the rigor of the skill
- Organizing SEs under an unrelated knowledge statement
- Including too many concepts in individual SEs
Cite five to ten recent resources that will be helpful to the student in learning the course content. All published resources must be cited using Chicago Manual of Style (CMS).

**Should:**
- Be accessible to the student
- Include a variety of resources such as textbooks, recent articles, industry websites
- Integrate the use or application of technology

**Should not:**
- Require specific products or applications
- Be limited to an applicant’s authored materials
**Recommended Activities and Assessment**

**Activities:**
- What are some opportunities for students to demonstrate learning?
- How do the recommended activities relate to course content?

**Assessment Methods:**
- What are some authentic ways to evaluate learning on a daily or weekly basis?
- What is a reliable summative demonstration of the standards?

*Consider these questions when listing activities and assessments. Five to ten representative examples in each section are sufficient and should be clearly linked to course content.*
Recommended Educator Certifications

- Recommendations should align with the content and career cluster established in the teacher assignment rules. TEA will have final approval of these requirements.
- Teacher assignment rules are found in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 231, Subchapter E.

An assignment for Human Growth and Development, Grades 9-12, is allowed with one of the following certificates.

1. Any home economics or homemaking certificate.
2. Family and Consumer Sciences, Composite: Grades 6-12.
3. Health Science: Grades 6-12.
4. Health Science Technology.
5. Health Science Technology Education: Grades 8-12.
7. Vocational Health Occupations.
8. Vocational Health Science Technology.
Required Trainings and Costs

- Course-specific trainings must be listed in addition to the recommended educator certifications.
- If there is a cost associated with completing any required trainings, that information must be included in the application.
- The information cites where or from which organizations teachers may receive trainings.
If there are specific equipment or instructional technology needs, please list those in this section. Additionally, if cost estimates for those needs are known, please also include that information.

Use this section of the application to include any information that you think may be helpful to TEA in reviewing your application.
Review and Approval Process
If your application will be submitted from a district, make sure you know process and timeline for getting local board approval prior to submission.

Follow all directions in the separate instruction document as well as those embedded in the application.

Consider submitting the application by the optional feedback deadline: December 1, 2021. Staff will review your submission and provide guidance for your final application.
Approval Process Cycle

October: Application window opens

Dec/Jan: Course applications due to TEA

January-May: TEA collaborates with applicants to produce high-quality courses

May/June: Courses approved by the Commissioner and SBOE

July: PEIMS codes for new courses assigned
Most courses will require negotiation between TEA and the applicant. This may require one or more rounds of editorial work on the part of the applicant.

TEA will employ internal content-area and curriculum specialists to review the courses. You may expect to see comments or suggestions from multiple reviewers.

Negotiation will continue until you receive final determination from TEA.
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