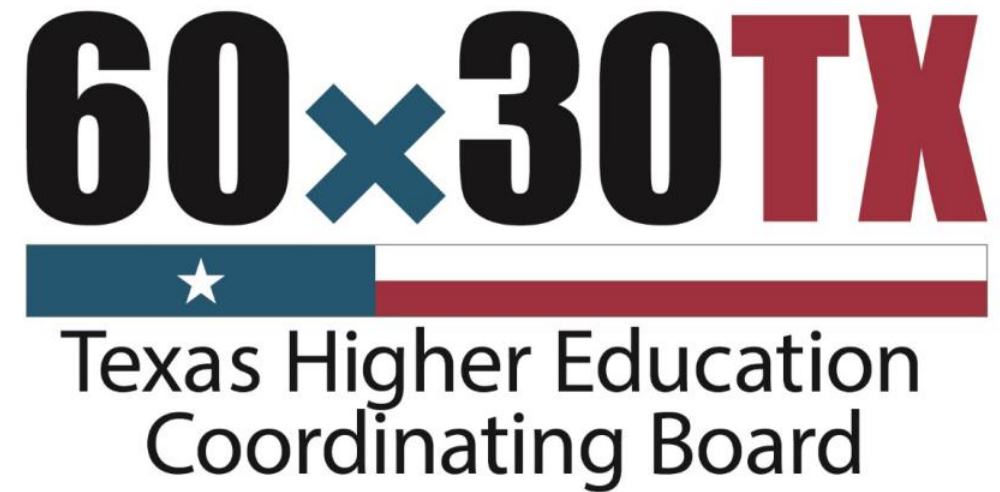


Leveraging the Power of Field of Study to Strengthen Transfer Pathways

Texas Success Center
Guided Pathways Institute

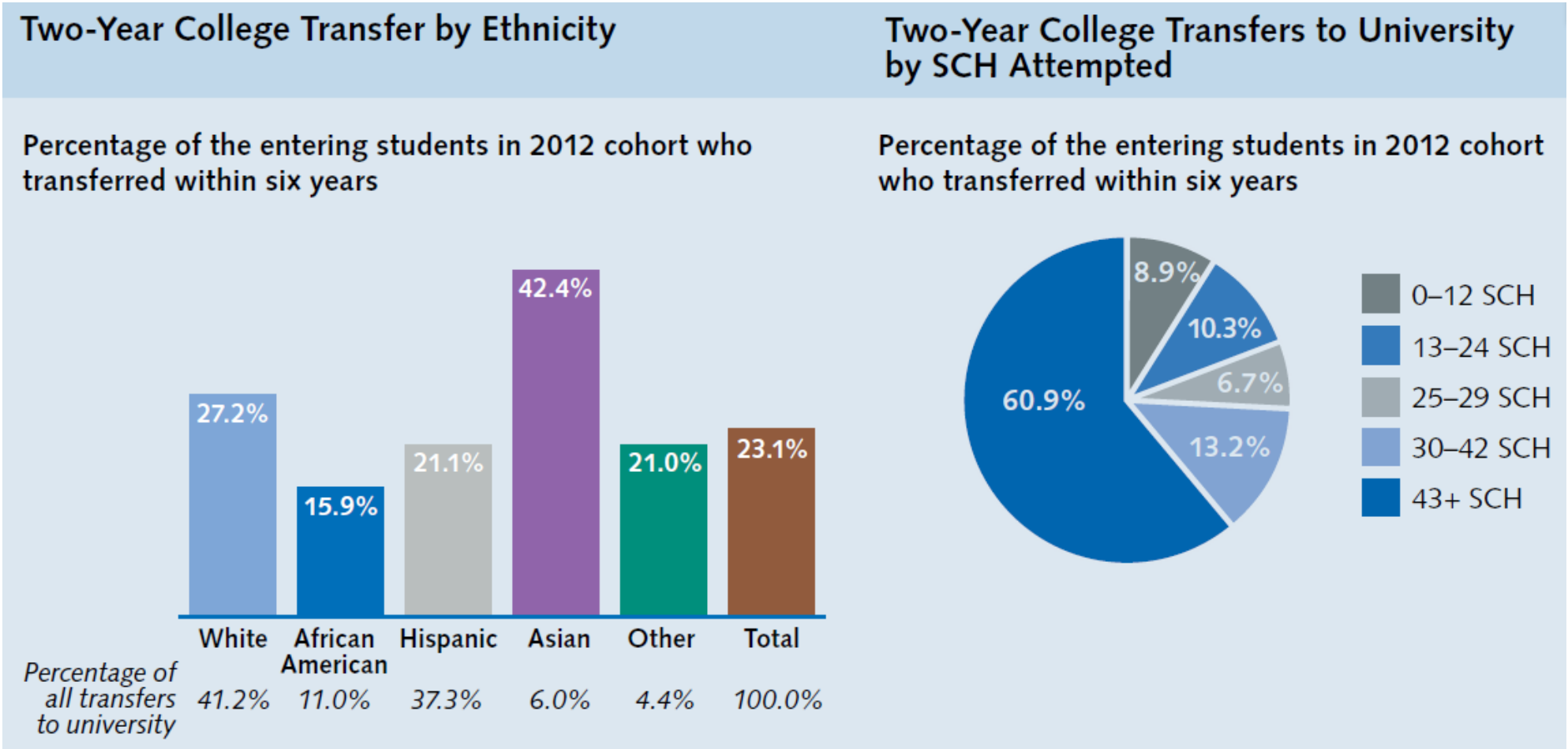


Jenna Cullinane Hege

Rex Peebles

Allen Miche

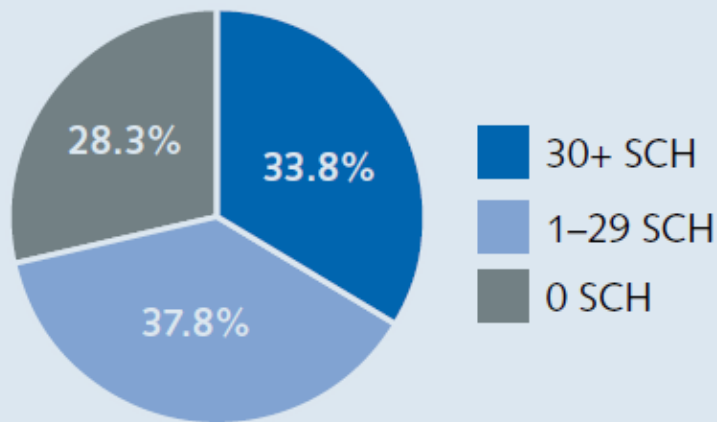
Fewer than 1 in 4 entering 2-year college students transfer within 6 years



Excess hours vary considerably by transfer status

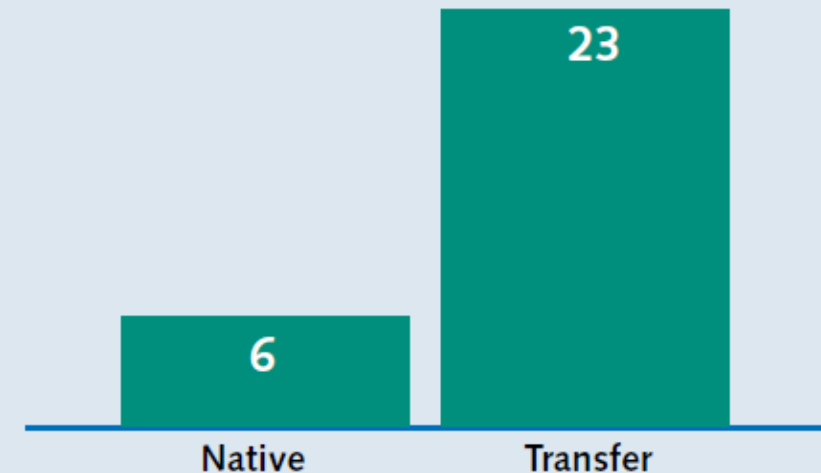
FY 2018 Bachelor's Graduates with SCH at a Two-Year College

Percentage of graduates by SCH taken at a two-year institution any time prior to baccalaureate graduation



FY 2018 Bachelor's Graduates, Transfer vs. Native Student Excess Hours Statewide

Number of excess SCH attempted



Before



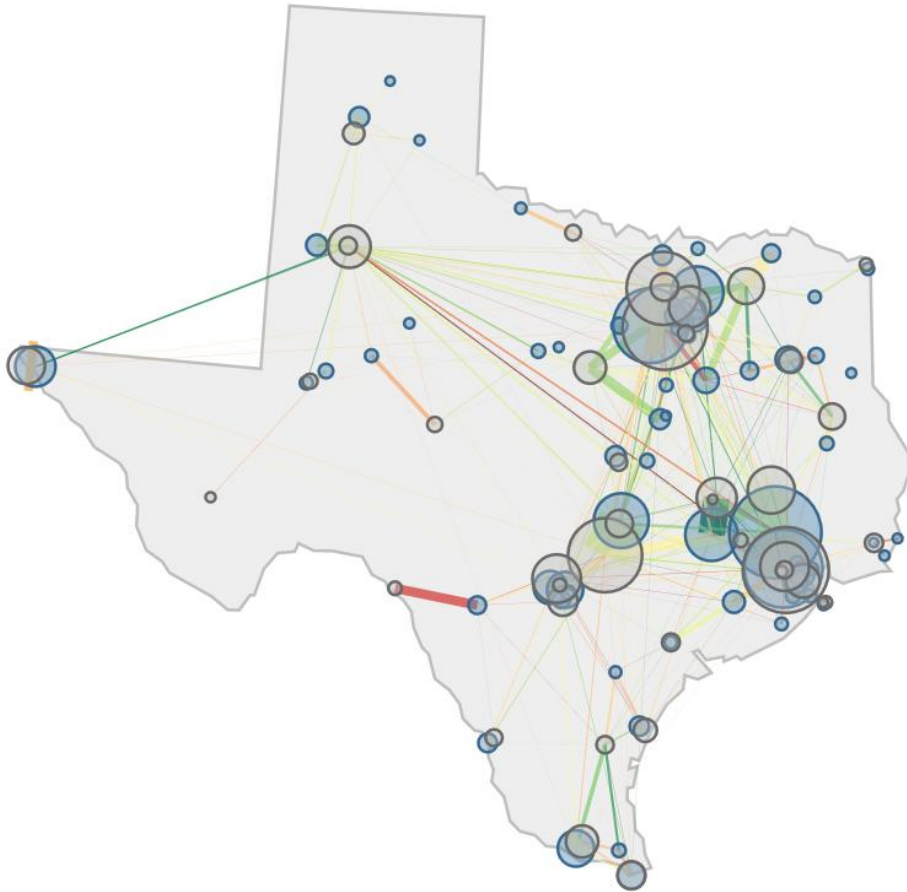
Power of Fields of Study (FOS)

BEFORE

- 1-to-1 articulation agreements
- Heavy information burdens for students & advisors
- Heavy administrative burdens for institutions to develop and maintain
- Credits may transfer but not count to a degree
- Many excess hours for transfer students
- FOS disconnected from programs

AFTER

Texas students transfers to many colleges and universities



- Transfer mobility patterns are complex, not 1-to-1
- Students from a single institution often transfer to multiple institutions

Power of Fields of Study (FOS)

BEFORE

- 1-to-1 articulation agreements
- Heavy information burdens for students & advisors
- Heavy administrative burdens for institutions to develop and maintain
- Credits may transfer but not count to a degree
- Many excess hours for transfer students
- FOS disconnected from programs

AFTER

- Statewide articulation agreements
- Uniform requirements by program for all IHEs
 - ease information burdens
 - reduce administrative burden
- Credits transfer and apply to a major/program
- Few excess hours for transfer students
- FOS seamlessly embedded in guided pathways

After



Session Objectives

- Participants will...
 1. Be knowledgeable about Field of Study curricula and understand how they can be used to guarantee credits transfer **and** apply to a major
 2. Identify opportunities for synergy between guided pathways and Fields of Study
 3. Understand the roles of the THECB and two-year and four-year institutions to achieve 100% compliance
 4. Understand how a sample of current majors/programs at their own institution align to fields of study
 5. Articulate action steps to enhance implementation and to seamlessly embed Field of Study into guided pathways

Agenda

- Overview of Fields of Study
- Review data and reporting
- Institutional **panel**
 - South Texas College
 - Stephen F. Austin State University
- Gap analysis **activity**
- Communication and implementation planning **activity**

Field of Study Overview

What is FOS?

- Texas Education Code, Chapter 61, Section 61.823, Field of Study Curriculum: “If a student successfully completes a field of study curriculum developed by the board, that block of courses may be transferred to a general academic teaching institution and **must** be *substituted* for that institution's lower division requirements for the degree program for the field of study into which the student transfers, and the student shall receive full academic credit toward the *degree program* for the block of courses transferred.”

How FOS Works

- **Substituted:** The FOS is the complete list of all the lower-division courses required for the major. Receiving institutions cannot add any additional lower-division requirements beyond the completed FOS.
- **Degree program:** FOS courses must apply as courses for the major. They can apply to the 120 SCH degree plan as core curriculum options, requirements for the major, or as designated electives.
- A completed block of FOS courses transfers as a block, just like the core. When you are done at one school, you are done at all schools.
- If a student completes only part of the FOS curriculum, then those courses must transfer into a degree program, and the receiving institution can require additional lower-division classes.
- A student can graduate with an associate degree if they have completed either 1) the core curriculum or 2) a Board-approved FOS.
- Each institution must note FOS courses on student transcripts.

FOS Part of a Portfolio of Transfer Student Initiatives

- Degree Plan and Advising
 - Required when a student accumulates 30 semester credit hours
- Core Curriculum
 - 42 semester credit hour core curriculum required of all students
- *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM)*
- Common Course Numbering System
- Programs of Study

60x30TX Goals

- By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.
- By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas.
- By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.
- By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.
- Full plan available here:
<http://www.60x30tx.com/>

How FOS Helps 60x30TX

- *Goal 1: By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.*
- *Goal 2: By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas*
- Completion rates and time to degree for transfer students consistently lag behind those of native juniors. Eight-year average for the Fall 2012 cohort: the completion rate was 84 percent for native students and 67 percent for transfer students.
- Institutions across Texas have been highly creative: improvements to advising, orientation, peer support, first-year experiences, recruitment of transfer students with advisors on college campuses, and many other measures. The Coordinating Board aims for statewide initiatives.

How FOS Helps 60x30TX

- *Goal 1: By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.*
- *Goal 2: By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas*
- Reaching the goals of 60x30TX will require degree pathways that minimize time and hours to degree:
 - The statewide average for native students in the 2012 cohort is 5.5 years to graduate with 10.1 semesters and 134.8 SCH attempted.
 - The statewide average for transfer students in the 2012 cohort is 7.6 years to graduate with 11.4 semesters and 142 SCH attempted: a difference of over two full years.

Source: THECB Transfer Report 2017

How FOS Helps *60x30TX*

- *By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.*
- Reducing time to degree = reducing cost of degree
 - In 2017, native students that achieved junior standing took an average excess of 14 attempted SCH. Transfer students who reached junior standing took 22 SCH (almost one full academic year).
 - Every course in a FOS is guaranteed to transfer and apply to a degree program.
 - Students who follow a FOS will know exactly what courses to take, and by omission what courses *not* to take, as soon as they enroll or begin taking dual-credit courses.

Source: THECB Transfer Report 2017

How FOS Helps *60x30TX*

- *By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.*
- Students may end up paying twice for each course that is not accepted for transfer credit: once at the college, and once to replace it at the university.

2017 Averages	One Course	Two Courses	Three Courses	Four Courses	Seven Courses (average)
College Costs	\$301.80	\$603.60	\$905.40	\$1,207.20	\$2,112.60
University Costs	\$904.20	\$1,808.40	\$2,712.60	\$3,616.80	\$6,329.40
TOTAL	\$1,206	\$2,412	\$3,618	\$4,824	\$8,442

Legislative History

- The Texas Legislature passed the original FOS legislation in 1997.
- Transfer issues were important to the 85th Legislature, part of a larger concern about student debt and rising university costs.
- The THECB was directed to create new FOS, and the THECB set a goal for 25 by the next legislative session.
- Transfer issues remain a high priority in the 86th Legislature, and there are several bills pending. The core curriculum is a primary focus.

Completed FOS

Accounting	Computer Science	Economics	Management Information Systems	Political Science
Architecture	Criminal Justice	Electrical Engineering	Mathematics	Psychology
Biology	Criminology	Engineering Technology	Mechanical Engineering	Radio & Television
Business Administration	Chemical Engineering	English Language & Literature	Mexican American Studies	Social Work
Business/Commerce	Civil Engineering	Finance	Music	Sociology
Communications	Creative Writing	Marketing	Nursing	Technical Writing

Upcoming FOS

Agricultural Business
& Management

Computer Science

Health & Wellness

Kinesiology

Animal Sciences

Drama

History

Media Studies

Communication
Disorders

Fine Arts

Hospitality
Administration

Multidisciplinary
Studies (AAT)

Communications

Health Services

Journalism

Natural Resources
Conservation &
Research

Committee Meetings

- Decide on which lower-division courses are necessary for success in upper-division courses in a major
- Review curricula from programs at representative 2-year and 4-year institutions
- Review approved courses in the ACGM
- Adjust ACGM objectives and descriptions as necessary
- Create new ACGM course if necessary

Sample FOS

- Social Work

Course Title	Course Number	Semester Credit Hours
Introduction to Social Work	SOCW 2361	3
Social Welfare as a Social Institution	SOCW 2362	3
Social Problems	SOCI 1306	3
Statistics	Either MATH 1342 or PSYC 2317	3
Academic Cooperative*	SOCW 2XXX	3
TOTAL		15

Sample FOS

- Business Administration & Management

Course Title	Course Number	Semester Credit Hours
Mathematics for Business & Social Sciences	MATH 1324	3
Principles of Macroeconomics	ECON 2301	3
Principles of Microeconomics	ECON 2302	3
Business Computer Applications*	BCIS 1305	3
Principles of Financial Accounting	ACCT 2301	3
Principles of Managerial Accounting	ACCT 2302	3
Business Principles	BUSI 1301	3
Business Statistics†	BUSI 23XX	3
TOTAL		24

*The learning objectives of Business Computer Applications (BCIS 1305) will be adjusted in the Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) to include additional Excel programming.

†Business Statistics (BUSI 23XX) is a new course that will be included in the ACGM.

Sample FOS

- Civil Engineering

Course Rubric and Number	Course Title	SCH
MATH 2413	Calculus I	4
MATH 2414	Calculus II	4
MATH 2415	Calculus III	4
MATH 2320	Differential Equations	3
CHEM 1409 (or CHEM 1309/1109)	General Chemistry for Engineering Majors	4
PHYS 2425 (or PHYS 2325/2125)	University Physics I	4
PHYS 2426 (or PHYS 2326/2126)	University Physics II	4
ENGR 1304	Engineering Graphics	3
ENGR 2301	Engineering Mechanics: Statics	3
ENGR 2302	Engineering Mechanics: Dynamics	3
ENGR 2332	Mechanics of Materials	3
	Total SCHs:	39

Sample FOS (Integration with Core)

- Political Science

Course Title	Course Number	SCH
Introduction to Political Science	GOVT 2304	3
Federal Government (Federal Constitution & Topics)	GOVT 2305	3
Texas Government (Texas Constitution & Topics)	GOVT 2306	3
Elementary Statistical Methods	MATH 1342	3
TOTAL		12

FOS Isn't Effective If It Isn't Used

- State law does not require that institutions offer all (or any) of the FOS courses.
- All institutions are encouraged to try and use FOS courses as core curriculum options where relevant.
- Two-year institutions are encouraged to support the FOS curricula by offering sections, advising, and degree plans.
- Four-year institutions are encouraged to align their lower-division curriculum for native students with the FOS. If they don't, then each course in the FOS will need to be mapped to equivalents when students transfer in, or elective credit will need to be awarded toward the degree.
- We encourage effective advising to students at the earliest stages.

What can you do if you run into trouble with an institution accepting FOS?

Role of Two-Year Institution

- Informal request for support: Email Rex.Peebles@thecb.state.tx.us or Allen.Michie@thecb.state.tx.us
 - Provide information about the institution and program at issue
 - You can provide documentation (email, etc) if you have it
- Formal complaint: Transfer dispute resolution process

Role of THECB

- Notify and work with universities to understand statute and compliance requirements
- Keep complaints anonymous to the greatest extent possible

Role of Universities

- Align courses to FOS or honor FOS courses completed by identifying course substitutions

True or False?

To make a transfer complaint, a student must be involved and a course has to have been denied transfer or applicability.

FALSE!

Anyone can contact THECB for support to ensure compliance with FOS.

- Institution on behalf of a student
- Institution independent of a particular student
- Student
- Parent

Questions or Comments?

Please contact:

Allen Michie

allen.michie@thecb.state.tx.us

(512) 427-6518

Data & Reporting

Field of Study completions increased 72 percent in 2018

	Field of Study Completion				
Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Count	2911	3404	3528	3922	6756

- 42 institutions reported field of study completions in 2018, an increase of 4 institutions from 2017
- We anticipate more rapid increases in field of study completions in the next few years now that many of the top 25 programs have been approved and have time for implementation

Field of Study completions were most common in criminal justice and business in 2018

Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)	Count
05020300 - Hispanic-American, Puerto Rican, and Mexican-American/Chicano Studies	5
09010100 - Speech Communication and Rhetoric	271
11070100 - Computer Science	194
13120300 - Junior High/Intermediate/Middle School Education and Teaching	27
14010100 - Engineering, General	128
43010400 - Criminal Justice/Safety Studies	2152
50090100 - Music, General	173
51380100 - Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse	304
52010100 - Business/Commerce, General	3502
Grand Total	6756

Reporting by institution

- Refer to handout

Reporting guidance – CBM009 (pg 9.1)

- **Field of Study (FOS) Curriculum Completer.** A student may be reported as a field of study curriculum completer if the student has satisfactorily completed all required courses in the field of study curriculum, regardless of whether or not the student has completed any optional courses that may be offered. No student may be reported as a field of study completer more than once for a particular field of study; the institution that first reports a student as a FOS completer will be recognized as the institution where the student completed that particular FOS. A student must have completed at least one course in a FOS at an institution for that institution to identify the student as a FOS completer. Students may be identified as FOS completers only in fields of study that have been approved by the Coordinating Board. The field of study curriculum can be obtained from the following web address:
- <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=7D02BA60-18B8-11E8-A6640050560100A9>

Support for enhancing reporting accuracy

- Webinar or survey for all institutions with zero or low reporting (FOS <5% of associate completions)
- 1-on-1 follow ups as needed

ACTION ITEM

1. Connect with your reporting official after this event. Ensure they are clear about when and how to report completed FOS. Let them know, we will be reaching out.

Institutional Panel

Panel

South Texas College

- Dr. Brett J. Millán
 - Professor-English Department and Adj. Professor-Anthropology and Humanities
 - Assigned to the Office of the VP for Academic Affairs



Stephen F. Austin State University

- Marc Guidry
 - Associate Provost of Academic Affairs



Gap Analysis Activity

Questions related to Business, Nursing, and Criminal Justice

1. Do you currently offer this program or courses in the FOS?
2. Compare your current program/offerings to the FOS.
3. Do you have a recommended sequence for the FOS courses (stand alone) or are they embedded in a program map? Can students take all of the courses within two years?
4. If your program is not currently aligned to the FOS, how can you address discrepancies?
5. If your program is fully aligned to the FOS, how do you advise students to complete the FOS? If your program is NOT currently aligned to the FOS, how do you advise students to complete the FOS?

Please use this link to provide responses

- Gap analysis activity
- <https://forms.gle/qoGRGMES2qi6F6Pe6>
- Your responses will remain confidential and will not be used for any compliance activities. This is an informal opportunity for us to understand the status of FOS implementation in the field.

Aligning to FOS and embedding in program maps

ACTION ITEM

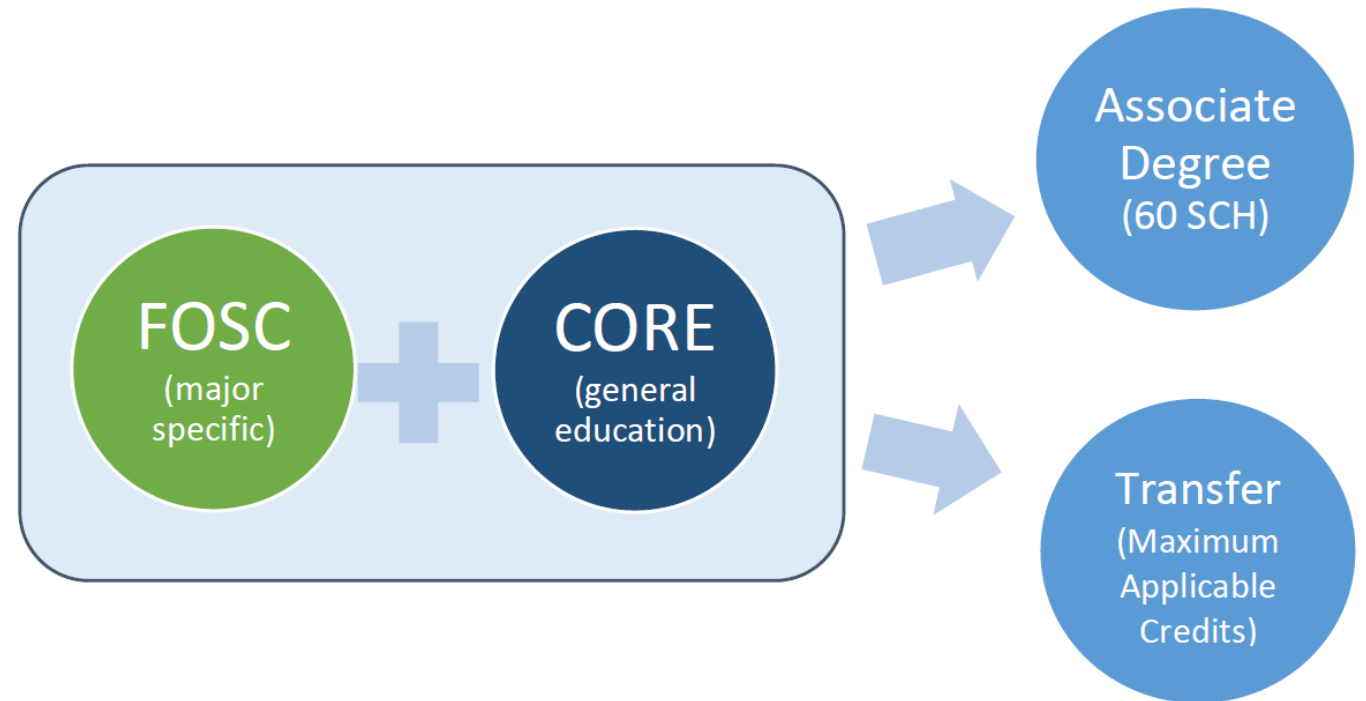
2. Connect with faculty and department leadership to improve alignment of FOS with your program offerings.
Consider how to ease the process of taking and transferring FOS courses for students.

- Are there any supports THECB could provide in this area?

Communication & Implementation Planning

Combined with the Core, Fields of Study help guarantee seamless transfer pathways

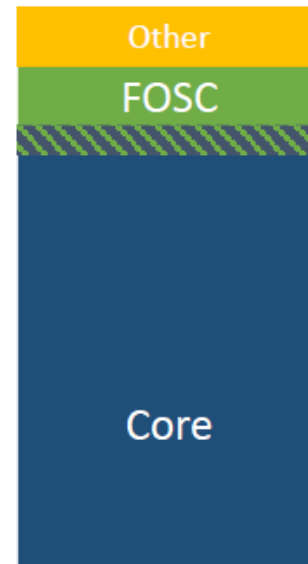
- Fields of Study identify the lower-division courses guaranteed to apply to a major
- Courses within the field of study are:
 - **guaranteed** to transfer to any public college or university in Texas
 - **guaranteed** to apply to the appropriate bachelor's level degree plan
 - No exceptions.
- Students who transfer without completing the entire Field of Study shall receive credit for each course that is successful completed



Field of Study Curricula, by Semester Credit Hour Requirements

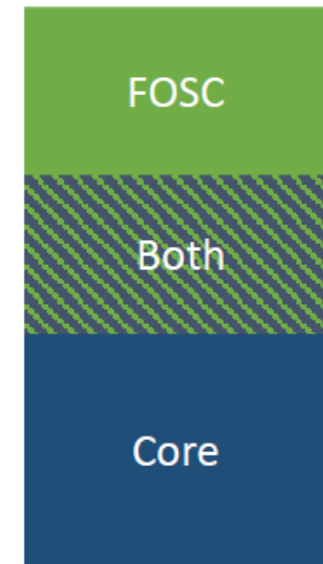
- In practice, the total number of credits earned through the field of study varies by major
- Courses in each field of study are developed by faculty committees representing 2yr and 4yr faculty
- There are two scenarios combining Field of Study and the core
 - Small
 - Large
- There is often overlap between FOSC and the core

Small FOSC (< 18 SCH)



- Communications (12)
- Criminal Justice (15)
- English Language & Literature (12)
- Political Science (12)
- Social Work (15)
- Sociology (12)
- Mexican American Studies (18)
- Psychology (18)

Large FOSC (> 18 SCH)



- Architecture (36)
- Business Administration and Management (24)
- Chemical Engineering (35)
- Civil Engineering (39)
- Electrical Engineering (30)
- Mechanical Engineering (36)
- Engineering Technology (37)
- Music (31)
- Nursing (34)

Implementation Information for Administrators

- Distribute information and oversee compliance
- Encourage faculty participation in FOS development committees
- Review transfer policies, in particular, establish course equivalencies if you do not currently offer a FOS course
- Leverage THECB's *formal* transfer dispute resolution process or *informal* assistance to ensure compliance

Implementation Information for Registrars & Institutional Researchers

- ...“Make it clear to the staff who apply credit for transferred-in courses that the courses from a completed or partially completed FOS are not optional or to be handled on a course-by-course basis, but instead are a block of courses that are required by state law to transfer and fulfill the lower-division major degree requirements for the applicable degree program.”
- Ensure FOS courses are clearly identified on a student transcript
- Ensure completed FOS are accurately reported on the CBM009

Implementation Information for Deans and Department Chairs at Universities

- “One of the most commonly asked questions the Coordinating Board receives is whether a university can add additional lower-division courses on top of what is in the FOS. It is important for deans and department chairs to understand, and communicate to their faculty, that the answer is no—a completed FOS transfers in as a full substitute for the receiving institution’s lower-division requirements for the degree program.”
- Offer enough sections of FOS courses
- identify how the FOS courses will transfer in as course equivalents. Communicate the equivalencies to your transfer partner institutions.
- Add FOS courses to the institution’s core curriculum component area options.
- Revisit the upper-division curricula and the possible prerequisites to align the curriculum with the learning outcomes reflected in the FOS.

Implementation Information for Deans and Department Chairs at Colleges

- Offer enough sections of FOS courses to accommodate student demand.
- Embed FOS into the relevant associate degree programs.
Developing guided pathways and model degree maps may be a good mechanism for reviewing how FOS courses can be incorporated into degree plans and flagged for students.
- Work with members of your partner transfer institutions to identify course equivalencies if the university does not offer the same FOS courses.

Implementation Information for Faculty & Advisors

- Train advisors on how FOS work, ideally as an embedded feature of your programs.
- Support students to take FOS courses
- Take opportunities to communicate with the faculty at transfer partner institutions to discuss the content of shared FOS courses.

Please use this link to provide responses

- Communication and implementation planning:
- <https://forms.gle/w7BUhhGUBvKWiuN8A>
- Your responses will remain confidential and will not be used for any compliance activities. This is an informal opportunity for us to understand the status of FOS implementation in the field.

Communication & Implementation Planning

ACTION ITEM

3. Document the action steps you submitted in the Communication & Implementation Planning activity

- Are there any supports THECB could provide in this area?

Wrap-Up

Review of session outcomes

- Participants will...
 1. Be knowledgeable about Field of Study curricula and understand how they can be used to guarantee credits transfer **and** apply to a major
 2. Identify opportunities for synergy between guided pathways and Fields of Study
 3. Understand the roles of the THECB and two-year and four-year institutions to achieve 100% compliance
 4. Understand how a sample of current majors/programs at their own institution align to fields of study
 5. Articulate action steps to enhance implementation and to seamlessly embed Field of Study into guided pathways

Before



Power of Fields of Study (FOS)

BEFORE

- 1-to-1 articulation agreements
- Heavy information burdens for students & advisors
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- Statewide articulation agreements
- Uniform requirements by program for all IHEs
 - ease information burdens
 - reduce administrative burden
- Credits transfer and apply to a major/program
- Few excess hours for transfer students
- FOS seamlessly embedded in guided pathways

After



Questions or Comments?

Please contact:

Jenna Cullinane Hege

Jenna.cullinanehege@thecb.state.tx.us

(512) 427-6148

Implementing Fields of Study

February 2019

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Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through *60x30TX*, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.

Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The Coordinating Board's core values are:

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

Efficiency: We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

Collaboration: We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

Excellence: We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Please cite this report as follows: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2018). *Implementing Fields of Study*. Austin, TX.

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Executive Summary

Fields of Study (FOS) are sets of lower-division courses that are guaranteed by state law to transfer across all Texas public institutions of higher education and apply to degree programs.

FOS contribute to the goals of the state's *60x30TX* strategic plan for higher education. Each FOS is designed by faculty committees to include the necessary coursework for success in the major, no matter to which public institutions of higher education in Texas students transfer. Also, because every course in an FOS is guaranteed by state law to transfer and apply to the appropriate degree program, students can minimize the risk of taking unnecessary courses and incurring the extra expenses that come with them. Students who complete an FOS are finished with their lower-division major requirements for the applicable degree program. Students who do not complete an FOS must still have the courses they completed transfer and apply to the degree program.

FOS help advance each of the four goals in the state's *60x30TX* strategic plan for Texas higher education, particularly the goal of not having student loan debt exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions by 2030. Because every course in a complete or incomplete FOS is guaranteed by state law to transfer and apply to the relevant degree program, students can eliminate the extra time and expense of taking unnecessary courses.

Each FOS is determined by advisory committees consisting of up to 24 faculty with expertise in the field, drawn equally from two- and four-year institutions. Committees may create multiple tracks within the FOS, depending upon discipline specialties or licensing requirements. If necessary, committees can create new courses or revise existing ones in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual*. All FOS are posted in the *Texas Register* for a 30-day public comment period before they are approved by the Board of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

All institutional personnel can assist with FOS implementation.

- Executive Administration can assist with the implementation of FOS by distributing relevant information to faculty and staff, regularly nominating faculty for FOS advisory committees, and reviewing transfer policies to remove barriers.
- Registrars have a key role to play in identifying FOS courses on transcripts and promoting efficient and consistent course equivalencies in transfer.
- Deans and department chairs need to work with faculty to make sure there are enough course offerings and to see if FOS courses can also be used as core curriculum component options.
- Faculty and advisors can make sure students know about FOS courses early in their degree plans to minimize time and money spent on unnecessary courses.

Fields of Study will not help students if public institutions of higher education throughout Texas are not complying with the statute, not offering the courses, or inconsistently applying the regulations. This guide offers recommendations to institutions on how to effectively implement the Field of Study curricula to maximize student benefits while minimizing administrative conflicts.

Background Information on Fields of Study

The Texas higher education *60x30TX* strategic plan prioritizes the creation of effective pathways from the first semester of higher education, through graduation with a manageable amount of student debt, and into the workforce with an identifiable set of marketable skills. There are many pathway projects, from secondary schools to graduate programs, at the local and state level. For example, pathway initiatives and tools approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Coordinating Board or THECB) in recent years include a core curriculum that is guaranteed by state law to transfer between all public institutions of higher education; the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* which lists all of the courses that can receive state funding at community colleges and are guaranteed to transfer across institutions; the Texas Common Course Numbering System, which lets students know what courses are equivalent across institutions despite possible course title differences; and required advising for optimum course selection once a student completes 30 semester credit hours (SCH) to prevent students from taking unnecessary courses.

Other pathway initiatives are the individual articulation agreements between colleges and their university transfer partners. Faculty from the same discipline at both institutions meet to discuss coursework, student needs, and common learning objectives. When the student transfers from the college, the university agrees to accept the transfer credits toward the degree program. The 75th Texas Legislature enacted legislation that requires the state's public universities to accept lower-division coursework for bachelor's degree programs in specific academic areas. FOS function as statewide articulation agreements; they are valid across all public institutions of higher education in the state and are backed up by state law (Texas Education Code, Chapter 61, Section 61.823; see Appendix A).

What is a Field of Study?

An FOS is the grouping of lower-division courses that are *guaranteed by state law to transfer and apply to a degree program*. Just as when students complete the core curriculum at public institutions and are considered core complete when they transfer to any other public institution (even if the receiving institution offers a different selection of core courses), students who complete an FOS curriculum at any public institution have completed the lower-division requirements for their degree program when they transfer to any other public institution (even if the receiving institution offers a different selection of lower-division requirements).¹

Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.32(b), states: "If a student successfully completes a field of study curriculum developed by the Board, that block of courses must be substituted in transfer to a general academic teaching institution for that institution's lower-division requirements for the degree program for the field of study into which the student transfers, and the student must receive full academic credit toward the degree program for the block of courses transferred." The word "substituted" means that the completed FOS transfers

¹ The Coordinating Board also has a related initiative called Programs of Study, which do for workforce certificates and associate of applied science degree programs what FOS do for academic programs. Advisory committees consisting of secondary school faculty, higher education faculty, and industry representatives design sets of courses that give students guidance on what courses from high school onward are guaranteed to transfer and ensure preparation for specific workforce careers.

in as the completed lower-division major requirements at the receiving institution, and the receiving institution cannot require any additional lower-division major coursework for the degree. The receiving institution can continue to set its own lower-division course requirements for its native students in degree programs.

Also, according to Rule 4.32(c), institutions can require additional lower-division courses outside the FOS if a student transfers with an incomplete FOS: "A student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another without completing the field of study curriculum of the sending institution must receive academic credit in the field of study curriculum of the receiving institution for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the field of study 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 field of study curriculum of the receiving institution, or to complete additional requirements in the receiving institution's program, as long as those requirements do not duplicate course content already completed through the field of study curriculum."

Community colleges can award an associate degree to students who complete an approved FOS but only a portion of the 42 SCH core curriculum, if the total for both would exceed 60 SCH. This is helpful for degree programs such as Architecture, Engineering, or Music, where students need to begin taking program courses as soon as possible and stay on track with extensive degree requirements at the lower division (TAC, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 9, Subchapter J, Rule 9.183).

How do Fields of Study work with the core curriculum?

Courses in the FOS can "double dip" with the core curriculum. For example, Calculus I (MATH 2413) is a part of the Mathematics FOS, but it can also fulfill the 3 SCH requirement for the Mathematics component area of the core.

If an FOS course is also used as a core course, the receiving institution cannot add an extra lower-division degree program requirement in its place. The FOS transfers in as the total set of lower-division requirements for the degree program (unless there are also lower-division courses required of all students in the university or college regardless of major).

Appendix H is a shareable infographic about how the FOS integrates with the core curriculum.

How does the Coordinating Board develop and approve Fields of Study?

Advisory committees: The process of creating an FOS begins with Coordinating Board rules authorizing the creation of an FOS advisory committee. Texts of the proposed rules are published in the *Texas Register* for a 30-day public comment period.

After the rules are approved by the Committee on Academic and Workforce Success (CAWS) and the full Board of the THECB, a call for nominations goes out via GovDelivery to presidents, chancellors, chief academic officers (CAOs), chief instructional officers (CIOs), and Coordinating Board liaisons at all public general academic institutions, community colleges, and public and state technical colleges in Texas. By nominating an individual for an advisory committee, each institution pledges to pay the nominee's expenses for the meetings in Austin.

Once nominations are received, Coordinating Board staff select up to 24 faculty members, drawn equally from two- and four-year institutions. For example, if there were 12 nominations from one type of institution but only 8 nominations from the other type of institution, then there would be 16 total members on the FOS advisory committee.

Whenever possible, FOS advisory committee members are selected to provide fair representation of Texas institutions and faculty. Coordinating Board staff aim for balance between the sizes of institutions, accountability peer groups, regions of the state, university systems, community college districts, faculty of all levels, and gender.

The FOS advisory committees are polled for their preference of meeting dates, and then a two-day meeting is held at the Coordinating Board offices in Austin. All meetings are broadcast live and stored on YouTube for full transparency. The first day provides an overview of what FOS are, how they work, and what regulations are in place. Two co-chairs are elected, one from a two-year institution and one from a four-year institution.

Faculty discuss the general needs of the major at the lower division, review the degree requirements at universities, review what courses are available in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual*, and review Coordinating Board data on which courses are most frequently offered and have the highest enrollments. When they are ready to select the specific courses for the FOS, committee members may create more than one track within the FOS if necessary, depending upon discipline specialties or licensing requirements for career paths. Only if it is essential for including crucial content for success in upper-division courses, the committee can create new courses or revise existing ones in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual*.

Public comment: Once the advisory committee has drafted a recommended FOS curriculum, it is distributed to the *Texas Register*, CAOs, CIOs, and Coordinating Board liaisons for a 30-day public comment period to provide further opportunities for faculty input. Every comment is considered by the committee. The committee's responses to the public comments are summarized in the public agenda item pages when the FOS curriculum is up for final approval by the Board of the THECB.

Advisory committees will review each FOS every five years, or sooner if needed, to ensure that the curriculum is meeting the needs of the discipline and the job market.

How do Fields of Study contribute to the state's higher education goals?

FOS help advance each of the four goals in the state's *60x30TX* strategic plan for Texas higher education.

Goal 1: *By 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree.*

Goal 2: *By 2030, at least 550,000 students in that year will complete a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas*

By completing an FOS at any public institution of higher education, no matter where they transfer, students can progress with confidence in two essential elements of a pathway to graduation: 1) the courses they take are guaranteed by state law to transfer for credit and

apply toward a major, and 2) the pre-selected coursework in the FOS has been reviewed by a panel of faculty to ensure that students will have the knowledge and skills necessary for success in upper-division coursework.

Goal 3: All graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

FOS curricula are designed by advisory committees consisting of community college and university faculty from across the state with practical teaching and research experience in the discipline. The committees consider each course carefully for how it prepares students for success in the major and the careers to which those majors lead. Each FOS is revisited periodically to ensure that it reflects the current state of the discipline and the needs of the related job markets.

Goal 4: By 2030, undergraduate student loan debt will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

Because every course in an FOS is guaranteed by state law to transfer and apply to a degree program (even when the total FOS is not completed), students can eliminate the extra time and expense of unnecessary courses. Some FOS courses may also be available as dual credit options, allowing students to begin their degree plan in high school with the certainty that their courses will count toward their baccalaureate degree no matter what public institution they decide to attend.

Even small changes in the number of attempted SCH can have a significant impact on student debt, and by extension, student persistence and graduation rates. Students may end up paying twice for each course that is taken at a community college that is not accepted for credit toward the degree program at a transfer university (Table 1). For example, a community college student may take two courses (6 SCH) in Criminal Justice that the student assumes will count toward a Criminal Justice major after transferring to a university. If the university does not accept those courses toward requirements for the major, and if the student has already used up the lower-division free elective credits (if any) and core curriculum selections, then the student will have paid for the two courses at the college and will have to pay again for the two required university Criminal Justice courses that will count in their stead.

Table 1. Average student costs of excess college SCH (based on 2017 statewide average academic charges).

	One Course (3 SCH)	Two Courses (6 SCH)	Three Courses (9 SCH)	Four Courses (12 SCH)	Seven Courses (21 SCH)
College Costs	\$301.80	\$603.60	\$905.40	\$1,207.20	\$2,112.60
University Costs	\$904.20	\$1,808.40	\$2,712.60	\$3,616.80	\$6,329.40
TOTAL	\$1,206	\$2,412	\$3,618	\$4,824	\$8,442

Source: Coordinating Board

FOS minimize this financial risk to students. Students who plan to major in a field with a THECB board-approved FOS will know exactly what courses to take, and by omission what courses *not* to take, as soon as they enroll or begin taking dual-credit courses in high school.

Implementation Information for Administrators

Distribute Information and Oversee Compliance

Administrators can be most helpful to the success of FOS by ensuring that relevant information and communication from the Coordinating Board is distributed to the appropriate people on campus. This includes making sure that deans and registrars understand the legal requirements for compliance, distributing requests for faculty nominations to the appropriate department chairs, and keeping staff updated with information about FOS in the quarterly update memos that follow each Board meeting. It may be helpful to identify an administrator to oversee FOS participation on campus, collect data for compliance reports, and serve as the liaison for FOS issues between the faculty and administration. Coordinating Board staff are available to work with institutional staff to address questions and provide guidance and information.

Encourage Faculty Participation

Administrators should promote and support nominations to FOS advisory committees. It is important to have voices in the room from a cross-section of institutions when decisions are made about what the lower-division requirements will be for degree programs at every public institution in Texas. Faculty participation also assumes financial support from institutions to support the member's transportation, lodging, and expenses for the meeting dates in Austin. The THECB is aware that this sometimes means a substantial financial commitment from institutions, particularly small institutions in regions far from central Texas, but we hope that administrators will recognize the importance of the committee's work and offer faculty members the opportunity to participate in the committee process.

After an advisory committee proposes an FOS, it goes out for a 30-day public comment period. The proposed FOS is sent out as a memo to all presidents, chancellors, chief academic officers, chief instructional officers, and Coordinating Board liaisons at all Texas public institutions of higher education. Administrators should let relevant deans and department chairs know when an FOS is proposed for one of their degree programs, encourage departments to discuss the proposed FOS at faculty meetings, and send the Coordinating Board any responses and recommendations. The advisory committees consider all responses received, and if changes are made to the proposed FOS, it goes out for a second 30-day comment period.

Review Transfer Policies

Administrators can promote the success of FOS by proactively reconsidering any policies that create barriers to successful transfer, including any policies that prevent lower-division courses from transferring in as the equivalent of upper-division courses with similar course content. Barriers can take many forms (see, for example, the Coordinating Board's annual *Texas General Academic Institutions: Increasing Successful Community College Transfer* report for survey results). For FOS, it is important that department chairs and curriculum committees establish course equivalencies in transfer for courses that their programs may not offer at the lower division.

Resolving Transfer Challenges

If there are any disputes about how transfer credits are applied to programs, an institution has two options. On a more informal basis, an institution (with or without a particular student), a student, a parent, or any other stakeholder can email THECB staff to help communicate FOS statute and ensure an institution of higher education is in compliance. Emails should be directed

to Rex.Peebles@theccb.state.tx.us or fos.contact@theccb.state.tx.us and should provide information about the institution and program at issue. Supplemental documentation of the dispute is welcomed but not required. THECB will, to the greatest extent possible, keep informal complaints confidential.

A second option is to utilize the Transfer Dispute Resolution authority of the THECB, in which two institutions and a student must first attempt to reach a consensus according to Coordinating Board rules (Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.27). Failing that, either institution may notify the Commissioner of Higher Education in writing for a transfer dispute resolution. The Commissioner's determination is final.

Implementation Information for Registrars and Institutional Researchers

Registrars can play an important role in making sure that staff who handle transfer issues are aware of what FOS are and how they work. Most importantly, registrars need to make it clear to the staff who apply credit for transferred-in courses that the courses from a completed FOS are not optional or to be handled on a course-by-course basis, but instead are a block of courses that are required by state law to transfer and fulfill the lower-division major degree requirements for the applicable degree program. If a student has not completed the full FOS and transfers from one institution of higher education to another, the student must receive academic credit for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed and have these courses applied to the major.

Institutional reporting officials are responsible for reporting FOSC completion on the CBM009, the report that captures graduation and other completion outcomes. It is important to document completed FOSC each year, even if a student has also completed the core curriculum or a degree at the same time.

Registrars are responsible for implementing the statutory requirement that FOS courses be identified on a student's transcript. Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.32(e) states that "Each institution must note field of study curriculum courses on student transcripts as recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO)." The Coordinating Board is currently working with TACRAO to develop a common transcription process for FOS.

To assist receiving institutions, college registrars are encouraged to indicate on a student's transcript if a student has completed an FOS. Registrars also are encouraged to identify FOS courses in the undergraduate catalog and sample degree plans, including explanations of how the FOS works. It is especially important for community college students to understand FOS as soon as possible after identifying a planned major so they can select the appropriate courses and minimize the risk of taking unnecessary SCH.

Implementation Information for Deans and Department Chairs at Universities

One of the most commonly asked questions the Coordinating Board receives is whether a university can add additional lower-division courses on top of what is in the FOS. It is important for deans and department chairs to understand, and communicate to their faculty, that the answer is no—a completed FOS transfers in as a full substitute for the receiving institution's lower-division requirements for the degree program. For example, if an institution's Criminal Justice major requires native students to take a lower-division Statistics for Social Sciences course, a transfer student who comes in with the completed FOS in Criminal Justice (which does not include a comparable course) cannot be required to take it, even if the Statistics course is a prerequisite for later upper-division courses.

Here are the possible exceptions:

- If the transfer student comes in with an incomplete core curriculum, the receiving institution could advise the student to take the Statistics course to fulfill the relevant component area of the core.
- An institution can still require lower-division courses that are not specific to the degree program, such as Learning Frameworks, Math, or Language courses that are required of all students at the institution, college, or school, regardless of their major. Non-credit courses such as Introduction to University Studies that are required of all students can also be required, as can developmental education courses that do not count toward the degree program.
- If a student transfers in with an incomplete FOS, the student must be given credit toward the major for the FOS courses that are completed. After that, the student can be treated as a native student and be required to take additional lower-division courses not specified in the FOS, so long as the additional courses do not substantially repeat the content from completed FOS courses.

The Coordinating Board encourages deans and department chairs to work closely with the departments' curriculum planning committees and undergraduate studies committees to help align lower-division curriculum with the FOS. This can be done in several ways:

- Offer enough sections of the courses included in the FOS.
- When FOS courses are not yet available on your campus, identify how the FOS courses will transfer in as course equivalents. It will increase both efficiency and consistency. Communicate the equivalencies to your transfer partner institutions.
- Add FOS courses to the institution's core curriculum component area options. If a course can count toward both the core curriculum and the FOS, it may enable more program flexibility for applying courses to the overall 120-SCH degree program.
- Revisit the upper-division curricula and the possible prerequisites to align the curriculum with the learning outcomes reflected in the FOS.

Implementation Information for Deans and Department Chairs of Community and Technical Colleges

It can be an effective recruitment tool to let students know that the institution offers a full slate of courses that are guaranteed by state law to transfer and apply to degree programs at any public university in Texas. Institutions are encouraged to offer every course in each FOS curriculum with enough sections to accommodate student demand.

Institutions are encouraged to embed the FOS into the relevant associate degree programs, providing students with the opportunity to have a completed FOS if they later decide to transfer to a four-year institution. Developing guided pathways and model degree maps may be a good mechanism for reviewing how FOS courses can be incorporated into degree plans and flagged for students.

Work with members of your partner transfer institutions to identify course equivalencies if the university does not offer the same FOS courses. The specific course content taught in the FOS

courses may influence how the receiving university chooses to use its electives and shape its upper-division offerings.

This may require changes in staffing and teaching assignments, and in some cases, it may mean that enrollments may fall in *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* courses that are not included in the FOS. Please communicate to your faculty that the long-term benefits to students will justify the difficult choices to be made on campus. For example, see Table 1 (pg. 4) for the cost savings to students by not taking courses that do not apply to their degrees. If a student takes just three unnecessary courses that do not apply toward their major after transfer, and if the student then must take three additional courses to replace them at the university, that student will be losing an average of \$3,618 and possibly a full additional semester of time to complete the degree.

Implementation Information for Faculty and Advisors

Faculty and advisors can have a powerful impact on students' educations by making sure they know about the FOS curriculum as soon as they identify their intended degree program. FOS can take a burden off advisors who no longer need to produce multiple transfer guides for multiple institutions or work with individual students to identify what courses will and will not count for credit in degree programs at various universities across the state. The FOS curriculum can be made available in sample degree maps, course selection guides, and course catalogs. If your institution offers FOS courses for dual credit or has outreach programs to area high schools, there are opportunities to publicize the FOS curriculum. The sooner students know about FOS curricula, the less chance there is of them using time and money to take unnecessary courses for their degree programs.

Take opportunities to communicate with the faculty at transfer partner institutions to discuss the content of shared FOS courses. The goal is to not have students unnecessarily duplicating content in courses with different names at different levels. Because FOS courses are fully transferrable and applicable to the degree program, the courses and their applicable fields have the potential to open spaces for faculty to bridge the content of their courses and promote student engagement and degree completion. They may also present new opportunities for collaboration between college and university faculty members.

Appendix A

Texas Education Code, Chapter 61, Section 61.823: Field of Study Curriculum

- (a) The board, with the assistance of advisory committees composed of representatives of institutions of higher education, shall develop field of study curricula. Each advisory committee shall be equitably composed of representatives of institutions of higher education. Each university system or institution of higher education which offers a degree program for which a field of study curriculum is proposed shall be offered participation on the advisory committee for that particular field of study. At least a majority of the members of any advisory committee named under this section shall be faculty members of an institution of higher education. An institution shall consult with the faculty of the institution before nominating or recommending a person to the board as the institution's representative on an advisory committee.
- (b) If a student successfully completes a field of study curriculum developed by the board, that block of courses may be transferred to a general academic teaching institution and must be substituted for that institution's lower division requirements for the degree program for the field of study into which the student transfers, and the student shall receive full academic credit toward the degree program for the block of courses transferred.
- (c) A student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another without completing the field of study curriculum of the sending institution shall receive academic credit from the receiving institution for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the field of study curriculum of the sending institution. Following receipt of credit for these courses, the student may be required to satisfy further course requirements in the field of study curriculum of the receiving institution.
- (d) In developing field of study curricula, the board shall pursue a management strategy that maximizes efficiency, including a management strategy that provides for the decentralization of advisory committees to enable concurrent development of curricula for different fields of study.
- (e) The board, with the assistance of an appropriate advisory committee, shall periodically review each field of study curriculum to ensure alignment with student interest and academic and industry needs.
- (f) Repealed by Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1083, Sec. 25(21), eff. June 17, 2011.

Appendix B

Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.32: Field of Study Curricula

- (a) In accordance with Texas Education Code, §61.823, the Board approves field of study curricula for certain fields of study/academic disciplines. Field of study curricula shall be developed with the assistance of advisory committees whose membership includes at least a majority of members who are teaching faculty (as defined by §4.23(8) of this title, relating to Definitions for Core Curriculum and Field of Study Curricula) within the field of study under consideration.
- (b) If a student successfully completes a field of study curriculum developed by the Board, that block of courses must be substituted in transfer to a general academic teaching institution for that institution's lower-division requirements for the degree program for the field of study into which the student transfers, and the student must receive full academic credit toward the degree program for the block of courses transferred.
- (c) A student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another without completing the field of study curriculum of the sending institution must receive academic credit in the field of study curriculum of the receiving institution for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the field of study 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 field of study curriculum of the receiving institution, or to complete additional requirements in the receiving institution's program, as long as those requirements do not duplicate course content already completed through the field of study curriculum.
- (d) A student concurrently enrolled at more than one institution of higher education shall follow the field of study curriculum requirements of the institution at which the student is classified as a degree-seeking student.
- (e) Each institution must note field of study curriculum courses on student transcripts as recommended by the Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO).
- (f) Each institution must review and evaluate its procedures for complying with field of study curricula at intervals specified by the Board and shall report the results of that review to the Board. These reports shall be submitted following the same timetable as the regular reports of core curriculum evaluations.

Appendix C

Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.33: Criteria for Evaluation of Field of Study Curricula

(a) Every five years, each public institution of higher education shall review and evaluate its policies and practices regarding the acceptance and application of credit earned as part of a Board-approved field of study curriculum, and reports the results of that evaluation to the Board. The evaluation should include:

- (1) the extent to which the institution's compliance with the acceptance of transfer credit through field of study curricula is being achieved;
- (2) the extent to which the institution's application to the appropriate degree program of credit earned as part of a Board-approved field of study curriculum facilitates academic success;
- (3) the effectiveness of field of study curricula in the retention and graduation of transfer students in those degree programs that have Board-approved field of study curricula.

(b) Each institution's evaluation report must contain at least the following:

- (1) a listing of the institution's degree programs that have Board-approved field of study curricula;
- (2) a description of the institution's policies and practices regarding applicable Board-approved field of study curricula, including admission-point evaluation of transfer credit, advising practices (including catalogue and website information on existing field of study curricula and advising/counseling practices for enrolled students), and transcripting practices to show field of study participation and completion;
- (3) a chart or table showing the number of total transfer students for each degree program that has a Board-approved field of study curriculum, for each of the last five years; the chart should indicate year-by-year the percentage of students who transferred having completed the applicable field of study curriculum, the percentage of students who transferred without having completed the applicable field of study curriculum, and any information about progress toward graduation or graduation rates that can compare transfer student performance with non-transfer student performance during the evaluation period.

Appendix D

Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.34: Revision of Existing Approved Field of Study Curricula

(a) The Board shall have the authority to modify or revise a Board-approved field of study curriculum when a need for such a revision is identified, as specified in current Board policy and procedures.

(b) The need for a revision or modification to a Board-approved field of study curriculum may be identified by one the following methods, or by other methods that are similarly appropriate:

- (1) notice of a change in licensure, certification, or accreditation standards that would affect the field of study curriculum and lower-division requirements for a field of study or academic discipline;
- (2) notice of a change in curricular structure or content that is part of a pervasive change in the academic discipline served by the field of study curriculum, as documented by national or regional professional organizations, faculty organizations, or other indicators of best practices in the discipline;
- (3) receipt of a request from at least three public institutions of higher education that are affected by the field of study curriculum under consideration for modification, including at least one two-year and one four-year academic-degree-granting institution. The request and justifications for the request should be made by the chief academic officers of the institutions, in a joint memorandum sent to the Commissioner.

(c) Any proposed modification or revision to a Board-approved field of study curriculum should be evaluated by an advisory committee convened under the conditions cited in §4.30(a) of this title (relating to Criteria for Evaluation of Core Curricula). Recommendations for modifications or revisions to a Board-approved field of study curriculum should reflect the advice and wisdom of an advisory committee made up primarily of teaching faculty from the academic discipline(s) affected by the field of study curriculum under consideration.

Appendix E

Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 1, Subchapter A, Rule 1.6: Advisory Committees

(a) The Board may appoint advisory committees from outside the Board's membership to advise the Board as it may deem necessary.

(b) The use of advisory committees by the Board shall be in compliance with the provisions of Texas Government Code, Chapter 2110 regarding the composition and duration of committees, the reimbursement of committee member's expenses, the evaluation of committees, and the reporting to the Legislative Budget Board.

(c) An advisory committee is automatically abolished on the fourth anniversary of the date of its creation unless it has a specific duration prescribed by statute or the Board reestablishes the committee. A written statement shall be prepared by the Commissioner or his or her designee for each advisory committee setting forth the purpose of the committee, the task of the committee, the manner in which the committee will report to the Board, the date on which the committee is created, and the date on which the committee will automatically be abolished. The written statements shall be maintained on file in the Board offices.

(d) Purpose and Duties of Advisory Committees. The purpose of an advisory committee shall be to give the Board the benefit of the members' collective technical expertise and experience with respect to matters within the Board's jurisdiction. An advisory committee's sole duty is to advise the Board. An advisory committee has no executive or administrative powers or duties with respect to the operation of the Board, and all such powers and duties rest solely with the Board. The specific purposes and tasks of an advisory committee subject to this subchapter shall be identified in Board rules.

(e) Composition of Advisory Committees.

(1) The composition of advisory committees created by the Board, including subcommittees or workgroups with non-advisory committee members, shall contain no more than 24 members in compliance with the requirements of Texas Government Code, Chapter 2110.

(2) The Board shall make reasonable attempts to provide balanced, geographic representation, consonant with Texas Government Code, Chapter 2110, on all advisory committees. A rule or other action may not be challenged because of the composition of an advisory committee.

(3) This section does not apply to an advisory committee to the extent that:

(A) another state law specifically states that Texas Government Code, Chapter 2110 does not apply; or

(B) a federal law or regulation:

(i) imposes an unconditional requirement that irreconcilably conflicts with the requirements of Texas Government Code, Chapter 2110; or

(ii) imposes a condition on the state's eligibility to receive money from the federal government that irreconcilably conflicts with Texas Government Code, Chapter 2110.

(f) Membership Terms. Except as otherwise provided by law, advisory committee members shall serve terms as determined by the Board.

(g) Membership. The Board shall solicit nominations and make appointments from such nominations for membership on advisory committees from presidents and chancellors, or the respective designee. For advisory committees that include members not associated with an institution of higher education, the Board shall solicit nominations from appropriate entities, such as stakeholder organizations whose membership consists of the type of representative the advisory committee is seeking. Except as otherwise provided by law, all members of advisory committees are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Board. Board members may not serve on advisory committees. If an advisory committee member resigns, is no longer associated with the nominating institution or entity, dies, becomes incapacitated, is removed by the Board, otherwise vacates his or her position, or becomes ineligible prior to the end of his or her term, the Board may appoint a replacement who shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

(h) Attendance. A record of attendance at each meeting of advisory committees shall be made. Except as otherwise provided by law, if a member of an advisory committee misses three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings or more than half of all the regularly scheduled meetings in a one-year period, without approval by a majority vote of the Board, that member automatically vacates his or her position on the advisory committee and the Board may make an appointment to fill the remainder of the unexpired term of the vacancy.

(i) Reimbursement. Members of advisory committees shall not be reimbursed for expenses unless the Board expressly authorizes reimbursement. The Board may also, in its discretion, reimburse the expenses of members of any duly authorized subcommittee of an advisory committee.

(j) Presiding Officer. Except as otherwise provided by law, each advisory committee shall select from its members a presiding officer, who shall report the committee's recommendations to the Board. The Board may, at its discretion, appoint other officers of advisory committees or allow committee members to elect other officers at their pleasure.

(k) Manner of Reporting. Advisory committees shall report any recommendations directly to the Board at a Board meeting determined in consultation with agency staff, including the Commissioner of Higher Education. Advisory committees shall also provide an annual or biennial report to the Board to allow the Board to properly evaluate the committee's work, usefulness, and the costs related to the committee's existence, including the cost of agency staff time spent in support of the committee's activities.

(l) Subcommittees or Workgroups. Advisory committees may organize themselves into subcommittees or workgroups. One member of each subcommittee or workgroup shall serve as the chairperson. Subcommittee or workgroup chairs shall make written reports regarding their work to the presiding officer of the advisory committee. A subcommittee or workgroup of an advisory committee may include members who are not members of the advisory committee, but must include at least one member of the advisory committee.

(m) Meetings. Advisory committees shall meet at the call of the presiding officer or the Board. All advisory committee and subcommittee meetings shall be open to the public and broadcasted via the web, unless prevented by technical difficulties.

(n) Monitoring of Advisory Committees and Records.

(1) The Board shall monitor the activities of advisory committees.

(2) Agency staff shall record and maintain the minutes of each advisory committee and subcommittee meeting. The staff shall maintain a record of actions taken and shall distribute copies of approved minutes and other committee documents to the Board and to advisory committee members on a timely basis.

(3) Minutes kept for advisory committee meetings and reports required under subsection (k) of this section shall be maintained in a form and location that is easily accessible to the public, including making the information available on the Board's website.

Appendix F

Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 9, Subchapter J, Rule 9.185: Academic Certificates

A college may award an academic certificate to a student who completes:

- (1) the college's approved core curriculum; or
- (2) a Board-approved field of study curriculum; or
- (3) fifty percent of the courses specified in a voluntary statewide transfer compact.

Appendix G

Current and Upcoming FOS

The list of approved and currently active FOS is available at this website:

www.thecb.state.tx.us/fos

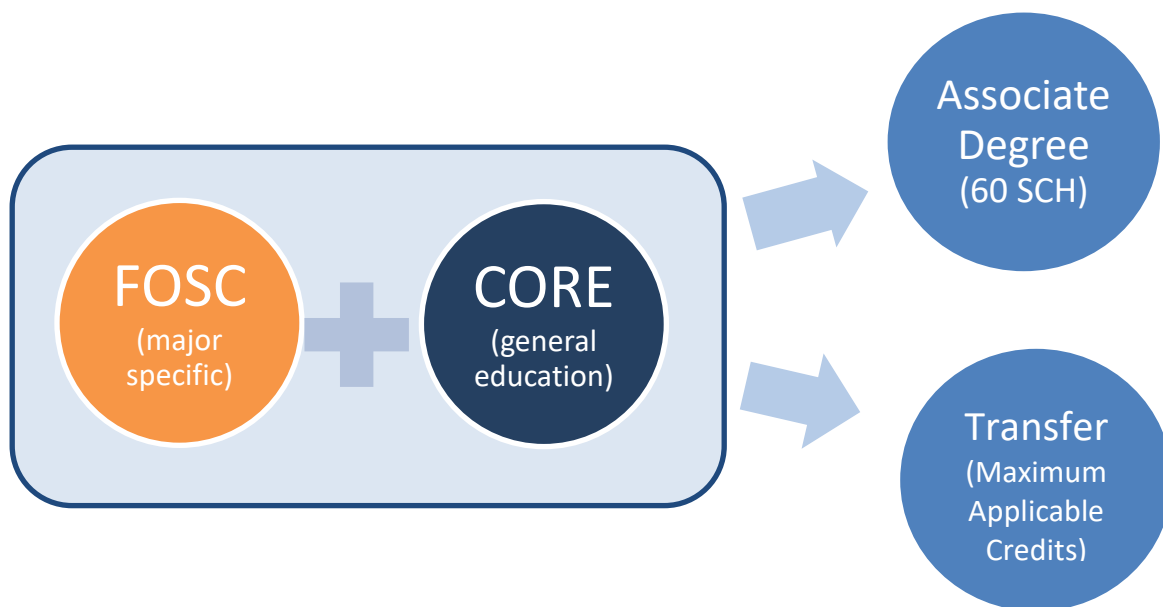
Appendix H

Infographic on Integration of FOS and Core Curriculum

(see following pages)

Fields of Study Curriculum: Improving Transfer and Minimizing Credit Loss in Texas

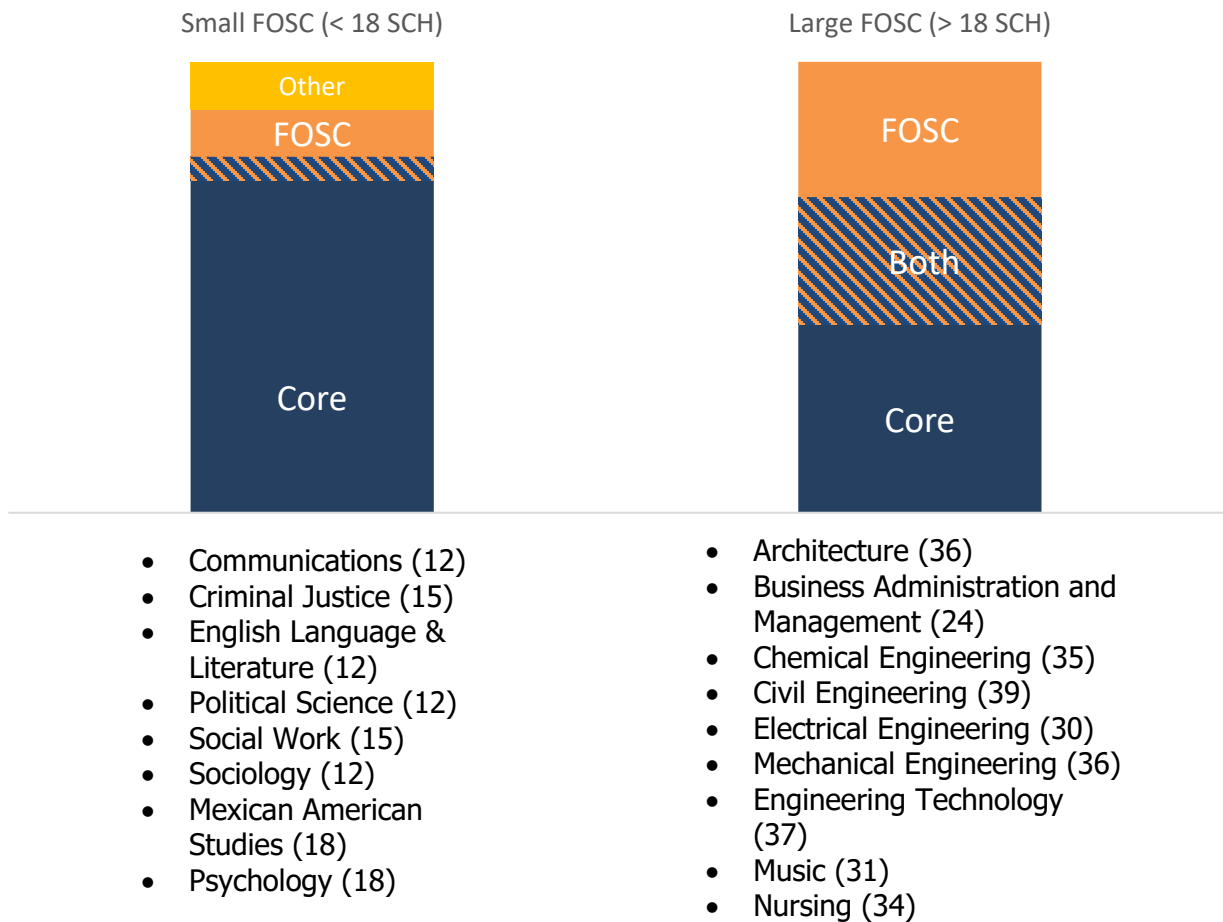
In Texas, Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC) is one of the most important policies to support efficient upward transfer with minimal loss of credit. FOSC is a set of courses that fulfill lower-division requirements for a specific major or degree plan. Combined with the Core Curriculum, FOSC can help a student reach an associate degree and/or be prepared for efficient transfer to another institution. Courses within FOSC are **guaranteed** to transfer to any public college or university in Texas and are **guaranteed** to apply to the appropriate bachelor's-level degree plan. No exceptions. A student who transfers without completing the entire FOSC shall receive credit for each of the courses the student successfully completed in the FOSC.



In Practice, the Total Number of Credits Earned through the Field of Study Curriculum Varies by Major

In practice, the total number of credits students will earn through FOSC and the core curriculum will vary based on the number of semester credit hours included in the FOSC. The number and content of courses contained in each FOSC are identified by faculty committees representing two-year and four-year institutions who determine the knowledge and courses necessary to prepare students for upper-division coursework in a particular major.

Field of Study Curricula, by Semester Credit Hour Requirements



The graphic above displays two possible scenarios combining FOSC of different sizes with the core curriculum. The core curriculum contains 42 semester credit hours in each scenario. There is often some degree of overlap between the FOSC and the core.

1. **Small FOSC:** Several FOSC require students to complete 18 SCH or fewer major-specific lower division courses. One example is communications with 12 SCH. Students pursuing these majors must take other non-major degree requirement courses to earn a 60 SCH associate degree or may wish to transfer with their guaranteed FOSC and core hours.
2. **Large FOSC:** Other FOSC contain more than 18 SCH, such as business (24 SCH), electrical engineering (30 SCH), and nursing (34 SCH). In cases where an FOSC contains more than 18 hours, credits earned to satisfy lower division major requirements in the FOSC will also satisfy lower division general education requirements in the core curriculum.

Appendix I

Frequently Asked Questions

The frequently asked question document is available at this website:

www.thecb.state.tx.us/fos

What is a Field of Study?

A Field of Study (FOS) is a selection of lower-division courses that are guaranteed by state law to transfer and apply to a degree program. Usually an FOS is somewhere between four and eight introductory-level classes, selected to provide students with a solid introduction to the field and prepare them for success in upper-division courses. If a student takes all the courses in an FOS and then transfers to another Texas public institution of higher education, the FOS is guaranteed to transfer as a block and be applied to the appropriate major. If a student has completed (1) the Texas common core curriculum; (2) the university or college courses required of all students regardless of major, if any; and (3) the FOS, then the student is finished with all the lower-division courses for the degree program. This is true even if the institution to which the student transfers requires a different selection of lower-division courses for their own freshmen or sophomores, and even if the institution has prerequisites for their upper-division courses that are not included in the FOS.

What courses can be in an FOS?

An FOS can consist of any courses from the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual*. In rare cases, new courses can be created for the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* to serve the needs of an FOS. An FOS may draw from several disciplines and may include courses outside of the main field of the major. For example, the Business Administration and Management FOS includes courses in Math, Economics, Accounting, and Business Computer Information Systems as well as courses from Business.

Can a course “double dip” and count toward both the core curriculum and an FOS?

Yes, the same course can count toward the core curriculum and an FOS. For example, if a student plans to transfer from a community college to a university and major in Psychology, the student can take General Psychology (PSYC 1301) and have the same 3 semester credit hours (SCH) count toward both the Social & Behavioral Sciences component area of the statewide core curriculum and the Psychology FOS.

What if students take fewer, or more, lower-division courses than the ones included in the FOS before they transfer?

If students take fewer courses than the complete FOS, then each FOS course the students did take is guaranteed to transfer and apply. If students do not transfer the complete FOS as a block, the receiving institution can require them to take additional lower-division, non-FOS courses and prerequisites up to the maximum number of SCH for the degree program.

If students take more lower-division courses than are required for the FOS, the students and their advisors may want to look at the degree plans at the institutions to which the students want to transfer and consider what additional courses they may need to prepare for upper-division courses. Some lower-division courses may transfer in as electives. Most universities will transfer in a maximum of around 60 SCH, so students will need to choose any extra courses wisely.

What is the advantage of completing an FOS rather than a student self-selecting the courses needed before transferring?

Coordinating Board data show that it takes Texas transfer students an average of 7.6 years to graduate, with 11.4 semesters and 142 SCH attempted. The most efficient and least expensive way to graduate is to take 4 years, with 8 semesters and 120 SCH. The data reveal that most transfer students are taking far too many courses that do not apply to a degree program. Prior to the development of an FOS in a degree field, community college students would have to rely on advisors and university catalogs to determine what courses are most likely to transfer to the university to which they planned to apply. If a student did not get admitted to that targeted university, or if the student changed plans, then the student may have taken several unnecessary courses and may have to take several additional requirements at the new university. All of these courses take valuable time and money. With an FOS, a student can be certain that the block of courses will transfer and apply toward the degree with no additional lower-division major requirements at any public institution.

What if a student can't complete the full FOS and the full core curriculum in two years (60 SCH) before the student transfers?

There are several FOS—such as Architecture, Music, and Engineering programs—that have over 18 SCH. These cannot be completed alongside the entire 42 SCH core curriculum in the 60 SCH before transfer from a two-year institution. If students complete the FOS and then transfer the courses as a block to a university, students can complete the core curriculum in their third and fourth years at the university while taking the upper-division requirements for the major.

Does the transfer of an FOS work just from a two-year to a four-year institution?

FOS courses are guaranteed to transfer and apply to degree programs at all Texas public institutions of higher education, including community colleges, state and technical colleges, universities, and health-related institutions. This means the courses will transfer and apply from a two-year to a four-year institution, from a two-year to a two-year institution, from a four-year to a two-year institution, and from a four-year to a four-year institution. Students who are enrolled at more than one institution simultaneously, or who attend several institutions on their path toward a baccalaureate degree, can now work on their lower-division degree requirements with confidence that every course will apply to a degree.

Do FOS Advisory Committees violate Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards?

SACS accreditation requires faculty input on program development. Each FOS is developed by a committee of faculty actively teaching in the discipline, the same way that degree plans are assembled at individual institutions. Additional faculty committees are assembled by the Coordinating Board to regularly review and update the courses in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual*, the listing of approved community colleges courses that are used to create FOS curricula. Faculty members at Texas public institutions are the only ones who determine the courses in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* or in any FOS curriculum.

How are the courses chosen for the FOS? What do I do if I have a suggestion?

FOS courses are selected by an advisory committee of up to 24 faculty in the discipline with an equal number of community college and university representatives, drawn from a spectrum of public institutions across the state. They have an open meeting at the Coordinating Board offices in Austin which is broadcast live and preserved on YouTube. The courses they select then go out for a 30-day public comment period. The committee members then consider every recommendation, and if changes are made to the FOS, it goes out for another 30-day public comment period until the committee has determined that the proposed FOS represents the best selection of courses for the needs of students and institutions. Advisory committees will meet periodically to reconsider existing FOS and keep them up to date.

If you have any complaints or suggestions about an FOS, please send them to fos.contact@theccb.state.tx.us.

Where can I get more information?

Updated information about current FOS is available on the Coordinating Board website: www.theccb.state.tx.us/fos

Information about FOS Advisory Committees is available here: <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/fosadvisorycomms>

If you have any questions about FOS, please send a message to fos.contact@theccb.state.tx.us, or call Allen Michie, Program Director, at (512) 427-6518.



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This document is available on the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us).

Contact Information

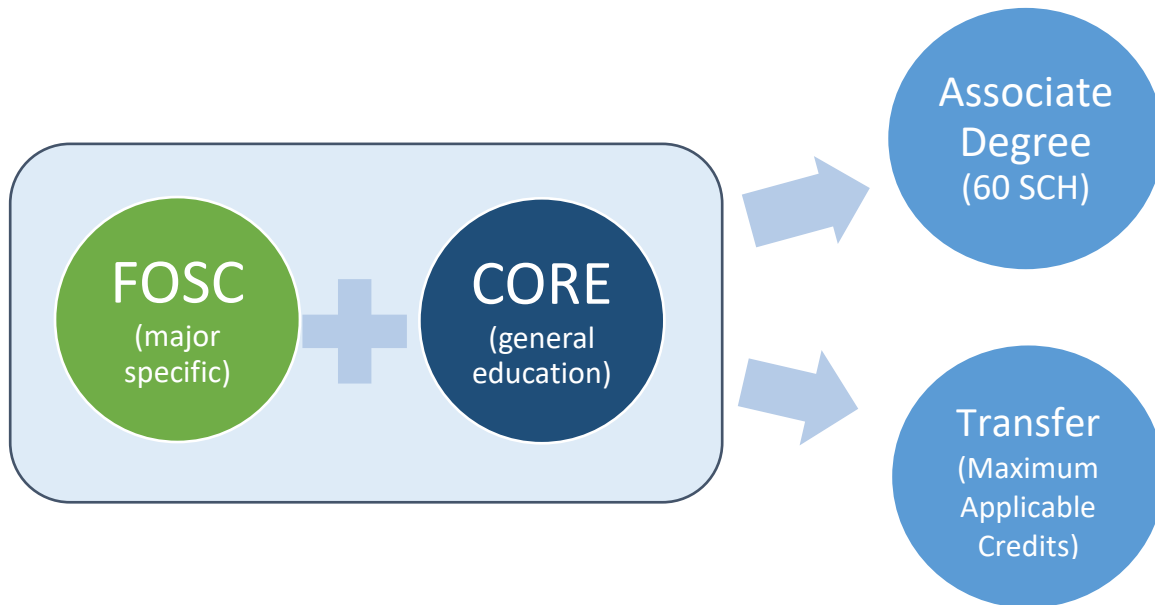
Please contact Coordinating Board staff if there is anything we can do to help your campus effectively and efficiently implement FOS.

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Fields of Study Curriculum: Improving Transfer and Minimizing Credit Loss in Texas

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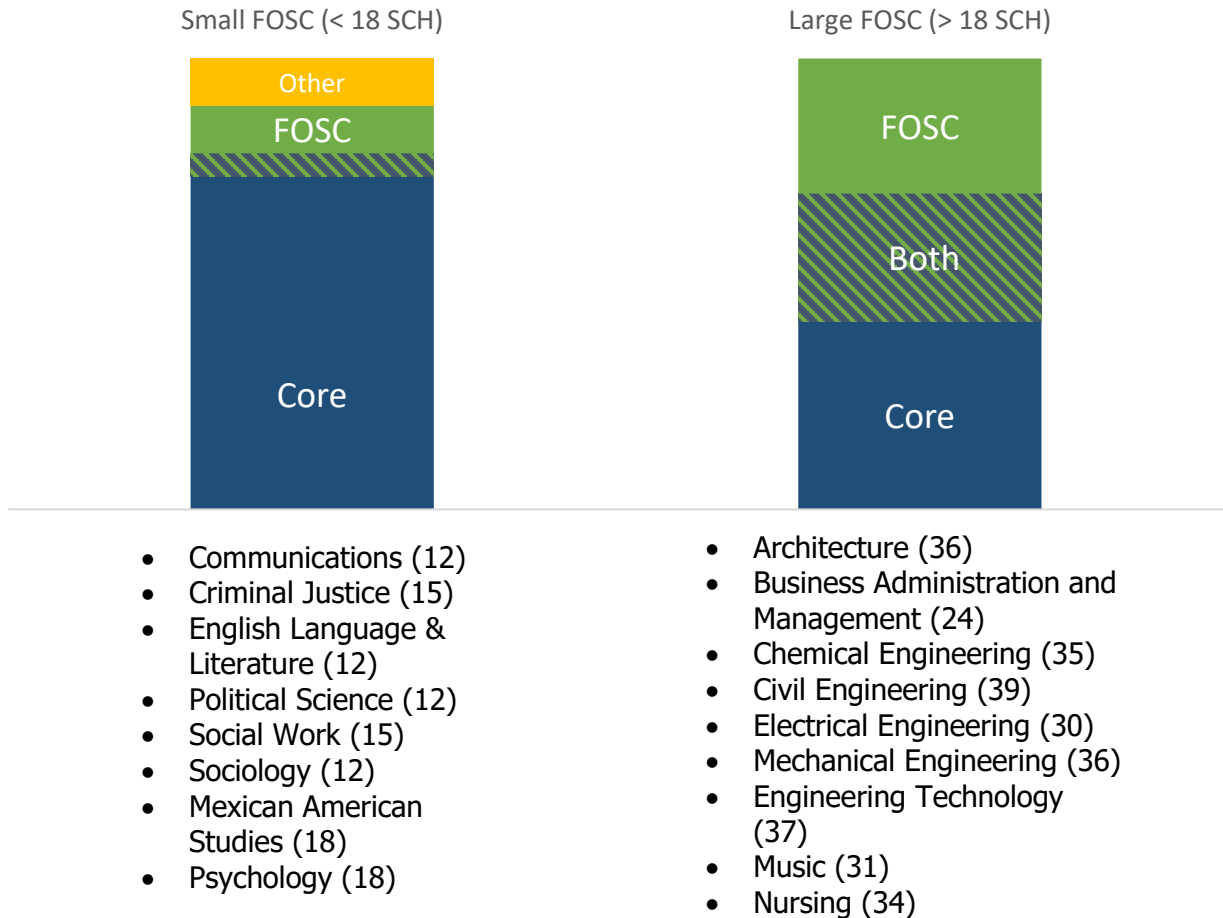


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For more information, please visit the [Field of Study Curricula webpage](#) on the THECB site and refer to the Texas Education Code Section 61.823.

Field of Study Curricula, by Semester Credit Hour Requirements



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Field of Study Completion, 2014-2018

Sorted Alphabetically by 2018

This report lists the number of Fields of Study completed by year and institution. The number of FOS completed as a percent of associate degrees completed in 2018 is included as a relative measure of scale at an institution. Completed FOS are reported on the CBM009.

Discussions with reporting officials suggest FOS completions are being under-reported. The numbers reported here also underestimate of the impact of FOS because if a student transfers with an incomplete FOS then each completed FOS course is also guaranteed to transfer and apply to the degree program.

Institution	Field of Study					Associate	FOS as a %
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2,018	2,018	of Associate 2018
Alamo CCD-Northeast Lakeview College					93	305	30%
Alamo CCD-Northwest Vista College					1,175	2,547	46%
Alamo CCD-Palo Alto College					388	1,493	26%
Alamo CCD-San Antonio College					958	3,210	30%
Alamo CCD-St. Philip's College					171	1,194	14%
Alvin Community College	56	70	91	28	75	868	9%
Amarillo College	216	161	216	229	205	1,200	17%
Austin Community College	340	454	212	194	207	3,413	6%
Blinn College District	8			10	9	1,998	0%
Cisco College					7	426	2%
Collin County Community College District	170	227	268	271	322	2,649	12%
Dallas CCCD-Brookhaven College	25	51	41	77	79	1,099	7%
Dallas CCCD-Cedar Valley College	8	6	7	7	11	648	2%
Dallas CCCD-Eastfield College	49	49	48	51	83	1,408	6%
Dallas CCCD-El Centro College	4	6		8	14	917	2%
Dallas CCCD-Mountain View College	26	51	48	53	46	955	5%
Dallas CCCD-North Lake College	30	32	47	37	81	1,223	7%
Dallas CCCD-Richland College	51	49	73	108	141	2,305	6%
Del Mar College	111	64	77	44	24	1,422	2%
El Paso Community College District	382	415	438	642	575	3,581	16%
Galveston College					109	293	37%
Grayson College	61	6	14	33	11	566	2%

Hill College	19	2	1			414	0%
Kilgore College	72	48	75	47	48	672	7%
Laredo College	9	4	1	4	3	1,066	0%
Lee College		6	6	17	18	1,145	2%
Lone Star College-CyFair	93	130	206	147	84	2,052	4%
Lone Star College-Kingwood	25	44	81	66	44	1,120	4%
Lone Star College-Montgomery	31	33	65	35	24	1,372	2%
Lone Star College-North Harris	39	40	71	52	35	1,375	3%
Lone Star College-Tomball	25	18	33	31	33	587	6%
Lone Star College-University Park	10	12	54	41	40	786	5%
McLennan Community College	97	130	116	117	135	1,270	11%
Panola College	18	8	6	9	28	363	8%
San Jacinto CCD-Central Campus	39	36	28	30		2,190	0%
San Jacinto CCD-North Campus	10	17	31	52	1	935	0%
San Jacinto CCD-South Campus	19	35	36	34	1	1,592	0%
South Texas College	572	863	836	1024	1,120	4,183	27%
Tarrant CCD-Connect				4		53	0%
Tarrant CCD-Northeast Campus	22	23	28	80	2	1,238	0%
Tarrant CCD-Northwest Campus	12	17	17	43		919	0%
Tarrant CCD-South Campus	7	25	14	30	99	936	11%
Tarrant CCD-Southeast Campus	39	45	35	49	88	1,386	6%
Tarrant CCD-Trinity River Campus	4	16	10	23		1,100	0%
Temple College					30	544	6%
Trinity Valley Community College	20	16	9	9	11	1,025	1%
Tyler Junior College	192	195	189	186	128	1,508	8%
Grand Total	2911	3404	3528	3922	6,756	82,987	8%

* 42 institutions had at least one FOS completion in 2018