

Foundation High School Program

Frequently Asked Questions

General

1. What does the term “required course” mean?

The term “required course” includes any course for which a student must earn credit to satisfy graduation requirements. Required courses include specific courses listed in the graduation requirements, electives, courses required for the Foundation High School Program under §74.12, and courses required for endorsements under §74.13.

2. May a course satisfy both a foundation and an endorsement requirement?

Yes. A course completed as part of the set of four courses needed to satisfy an endorsement requirement may also satisfy a requirement under the Foundation High School Program, including an elective requirement.

3. Can AP/IB and dual credit courses satisfy elective credit requirements?

Yes. A student may earn state elective credit for any course that is included in or aligns with the TEKS for a course identified in TAC, Chapters 110-118, 126-128, and 130 and for which a student has not already earned credit toward a specific course requirement.

4. May a district require 26 credits for graduation for all students?

Yes. School districts have the authority to establish requirements in addition to what the state requires of students for graduation. This is a local decision.

5. If a specific course can be taught for more than one credit, how will the credit be applied to the new graduation requirements?

If a student earns more than one credit for a specific course, the credit may be applied to an applicable graduation requirement and any additional credit may be applied to an elective and/or endorsement requirement. For example, if a student earns one and one-half credits for successful completion of AP Chemistry, the first credit could satisfy an advanced science requirement and the additional half credit could satisfy an elective requirement.

6. Can a school district that requires additional credits for graduation substitute those additional required credits for Foundation High School Program requirements?

A district has the authority to require credits in addition to those credits required by the state, but they cannot substitute courses/credits for those required by the state.

7. If a school district requires a specific course beyond what the state requires, does that increase the total number of credits a student needs to graduate?

A district has the authority to require credits in addition to those credits required by the state and can choose to increase the total number of credits students are required to earn in order to graduate.

Since a district ultimately decides what courses a student enrolls in, a district also has the authority to require all students to earn credit for a specific course to satisfy an elective requirement. If a district requires a specific course to satisfy an elective requirement, the total number of credits needed to graduate would not be increased.

8. Are there course sequence requirements under the new graduation program?

There are not specific course sequence requirements in the new graduation program. However, districts should pay close attention to prerequisite requirements.

9. How do prerequisites factor into the new graduation requirements?

Prerequisites are identified in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for each course. Prerequisites are requirements unless they are specifically listed as recommended prerequisites.

10. Will the agency provide official forms to document students who choose to graduate foundation only without an endorsement?

Yes. Forms will be available on the TEA website.

English

1. Do districts have the discretion to require English IV as the advanced English course for all students?

Since a district ultimately decides what courses a student enrolls in, a district also has the authority to require all students to earn credit for a specific course to satisfy the advanced English requirement.

2. Can a district limit the options available to students to satisfy the advanced English requirement?

Districts do not have to offer every course option, but if the district does offer a course the SBOE has approved to satisfy an advanced English credit, students may not be denied the credit to satisfy that requirement.

3. Is there a required sequence of courses for English? For example, could a student take Technical Writing then take English III?

There is nothing in rule or law that delineates a specific sequence; however, districts should pay close attention to the prerequisites for each of these courses.

Speech

1. Do districts have the discretion to require a speech course for all students?

Yes. Each school district is responsible for ensuring that students demonstrate proficiency in the speech skills required by §74.11(a)(3). This can be accomplished by requiring a speech course or by other means. This is a local decision.

2. How are school districts supposed to document a student's demonstrated proficiency of the required speech skills?

Documentation of a student's demonstrated proficiency must be included on the Academic Achievement Record (AAR). Additional guidance will be provided in the revised Minimum Standards for the AAR.

3. Can a district use Professional Communications to satisfy the new speech skills requirement?

Yes, school districts have the authority to use Professional Communications to meet the speech requirement. This is a local district decision.

Mathematics

4. Is there still a required sequence for math? For example, does a student have to take Algebra I before taking Math Models with Applications?

No. However, districts should pay close attention to prerequisite requirements when scheduling students in math courses. Please note that prerequisites for some of the high school mathematics courses will change when the revised math TEKS are implemented in the 2015-2016 school year.

5. Is Algebra II a prerequisite for any other advanced math courses?

Algebra II is a prerequisite for some, but not all advanced math courses. Districts should pay close attention to the courses that may satisfy an advanced mathematics course under the foundation program and the courses that may satisfy an advanced mathematics course required for a student to earn an endorsement. Additionally, districts should pay close attention to prerequisite requirements for each advanced mathematics course.

6. May Math Models with Applications be offered first in the sequence of math courses offered by a district?

There is nothing in rule or law that specifically allows or prevents this for the 2014-2015 school year. However, Algebra I will be a prerequisite for Math Models with Applications when the revised TEKS are implemented in the 2015-2016 school year.

7. May Math Models with Applications be offered concurrently with Algebra I or geometry in the sequence of math courses offered?

There is nothing in rule or law that specifically allows or prevents this for the 2014-2015 school year. However, Algebra I will be a prerequisite for Math Models with Applications when the revised TEKS are implemented in the 2015-2016 school year. Beginning in 2015-2016, geometry and Math Models with Applications can be taken concurrently, provided the student has successfully completed Algebra I.

8. Is Math Models with Applications being phased out?

No. The administrative rules allow students to use credit earned in Math Models with Applications as an option for the mathematics credit required to earn an endorsement for the 2014-2015 school year only. This course will continue to be an option for students to earn the advanced credit required under the foundation program.

Science

1. Does the second science credit have to be taken before the third science credit?

No. The use of the terms “second” and “third” in the rule is not intended to imply a sequence. However, districts should pay close attention to prerequisite requirements when scheduling students in science courses.

2. Can a student take IPC after chemistry and/or physics?

There is nothing in rule or law that specifically allows or prevents a specific course sequence. However, districts should pay close attention to prerequisite requirements for each of these courses.

3. How can AP Physics 1 and 2 be used?

AP Physics 1 may count as a second science credit option or a third science credit option. AP Physics 2 may count as a third science credit option only.

4. Is there anything that prevents a district from offering a course other than biology to ninth grade students?

The administrative rules do not prescribe a sequence. Districts should pay close attention to prerequisite requirements when scheduling students in science courses.

5. What is considered an advanced science course?

The State Board of Education has identified a list of science courses that may satisfy each of the advanced science courses required for graduation.

Social Studies

1. Do districts have the discretion to require both World Geography and World History for all students?

Yes. School districts have the authority to establish requirements in addition to what the state requires of students for graduation. This is a local decision.

2. Can districts place students in a semester of World Geography and a semester of World History to satisfy the combined World History/World Geography requirement?

No. The SBOE must adopt Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for a combined World History/World Geography course before this will be an option available to students.

Health and Physical Education

1. Do districts have the discretion to require a health course for all students?

Yes. School districts have the authority to establish requirements in addition to what the state requires of students for graduation. This is a local decision.

2. Can any TEKS-based course that includes 100 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity satisfy the PE requirement?

Yes. In accordance with local district policy, the required PE credit may be earned through completion of any TEKS-based course that meets the requirement for 100 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per five-day school week. Please note that such a course cannot be used to satisfy another specific graduation requirement.

3. Can a school district add a requirement of moderate to vigorous physical activity to any TEKS-based course and award PE credit for that course?

Yes. A school district may add a requirement for 100 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per five-day school week and award PE credit for that course. Please note that such a course cannot be used to satisfy another specific graduation requirement.

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

1. What courses satisfy the computer programming languages option for the LOTE graduation requirements?

Computer Science I, II, and III may satisfy this requirement until September 1, 2016. The SBOE is expected to revisit these options at a future date.

2. Can CTE computer programming courses satisfy the LOTE requirement?

No. At this time only Computer Science I, II, and III may satisfy this requirement. The SBOE is expected to revisit these options at a future date.

Fine Arts

1. What is a community-based fine arts program?

A community-based fine arts program is a fine arts program that provides instruction in all of the TEKS for a high school fine arts course and that is offered outside of the school day and often off-campus. Examples of community-based fine arts programs include community theatre or dance programs offered at a local dance studio.

Technology Applications

1. May a district continue to require a course such as technology applications for high school graduation that the state no longer requires?

Yes. School districts have the authority to require beyond what the state requires of students for graduation. This is a local decision. If a district requires a TEKS-based course, such as a technology applications course, that is not required by the state, the course could count toward the state elective requirements.

2. What will happen with the computer science courses if they are scheduled to “go away” in 2016?

The computer science courses are not going away. They will continue to be course options for students. These courses are options for satisfying the languages other than English graduation requirement until September 1, 2016. The SBOE is expected to revisit these options at a future date.