

TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING
3.7.5.a. EDUCATION GUIDELINE
Establishing a Dual Credit High School Track in Nursing
09/11/2020

This guideline was written in collaboration with a representative from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to guide nursing education programs in establishing a dual credit high school track in nursing. THECB defines dual credit as a system under which an eligible high school student enrolls in college course(s) and receives credit for the course(s) from both the college and high school. Dual credit courses may be taught on the high school campus by an approved instructor or on the college campus. Dual credit courses include both academic and technical courses.

Accreditation of the Institution of Higher Education:

Credits toward high school graduation may be awarded for a course from a public education institution that is accredited by one of the following regional accrediting associations:

- (1) Southern Association of Colleges and Schools;
- (2) Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools;
- (3) New England Association of Schools and Colleges;
- (4) North Central Association of Colleges and Schools;
- (5) Western Association of Schools and Colleges; or
- (6) Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

Since a nursing program is preparing graduates to be eligible to take the licensing examination, the courses offered in high school must be a part of the educational requirements in the approved nursing program. One of the licensure requirements is the signed Affidavit of Graduation from the Program Director verifying that the applicant has completed all requirements in the BON-approved nursing program.

BON staff have determined that establishing a track that includes courses taught during high school constitutes a major curriculum change for the program and requires BON approval.

Essential Aspects of the Dual Credit High School Track (per THECB and BON):

1. There should be an agreement between the high school district and the regionally-accredited college or university.
 - A dual credit agreement is required by rule for any dual credit partnership. ([TAC 4.84](#))
2. The approved nursing program in the college or university must participate in the selection of high school students admitted to the track. The admission criteria should be the same criteria used for students **admitted to the main program**.

- Dual credit rules require that instructors of dual credit courses are selected by the institution of higher education using the same selection methods for instructors on its main campus ([TAC 4.85\(e\)](#)).
3. The Program Director for the BON-approved nursing program shall be the Program Director for the dual credit track.
 - This requirement would have to be included in the dual credit agreement ([TAC 4.84](#)).
 4. Fully qualified nursing faculty from the college or university shall provide instruction for nursing courses. The same teaching and evaluation methods used in the main campus will be used for the high school track.
 - Dual credit rules require that instructors of dual credit courses are selected by the institution of higher education using the same selection methods for instructors on its main campus ([TAC 4.85\(e\)](#)). Dual credit rules also require that, “The college shall ensure that a dual credit course and the corresponding course offered at the main campus of the college are equivalent with respect to the curriculum, materials, instruction, and method/rigor of student evaluation.” ([TAC 4.85\(f\)](#))
 5. The dual credit track shall comply with all requirements in the BON Education Rules.
 - Dual credit rules state that, “Regular academic policies applicable to courses taught at the college's main campus must also apply to dual credit courses.” ([TAC 4.85\(g\)](#))
 6. The BON-approved curriculum including clinical practice and clinical objectives shall be consistent with the main program.
 - Dual credit rules also require that, “The college shall ensure that a dual credit course and the corresponding course offered at the main campus of the college are equivalent with respect to the curriculum, materials, instruction, and method/rigor of student evaluation.” ([TAC 4.85\(f\)](#))
 7. High school students have access to nursing skills and simulation labs for courses involving skills and clinical scenarios.
 - Dual credit rules also require that, “The college shall ensure that a dual credit course and the corresponding course offered at the main campus of the college are equivalent with respect to the curriculum, materials, instruction, and method/rigor of student evaluation.” ([TAC 4.85\(f\)](#))

8. Signed contracts with the clinical affiliating agencies are available.

Major Curriculum Change Proposal:

Nursing programs interested in establishing a dual credit high school track should notify the Board of Nursing (BON) of their intent and provide the information listed below. A plan to establish a dual credit high school track must be submitted by a Board-approved nursing program (not by the partnership high school or school district).

A dual credit agreement between a public institution of higher education and a school/district/secondary school (Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4; TAC Rule 4.84-Institutional Agreements. These agreement does not require THECB approval, but must be included in the Major Curriculum Change Proposal.

Information to Include in the Major Curriculum Change Proposal:

- Name and address of the approved nursing education program
- Contact information for the responsible person for the proposed track (This person is usually the Program Director but may be a qualified designee.)
- Matching tables showing current approved program and dual credit track
- Rationales for any differences between the dual credit track and the traditional track
- Name of the High School District(s) and participating high schools
- Admission criteria for the high school students applying for enrollment
- Rationale for differences in the admission criteria for the two tracks
- Admission process and selection process for the dual credit track
- Expected starting date and graduation date for first cohort from the dual credit track
- Projected month each year for the graduation times for students in the dual credit track from high school and from the nursing program
- Planned admission points each year with projected enrollment numbers
- Location and format of delivery for courses in dual credit track
- Selection of faculty engaged in teaching dual credit track
- Special training for faculty engaged in teaching dual credit track
- Plans for integration of dual credit track students and traditional students during the program
- Consequences when a student is not successful or decides to withdraw from the dual credit track (including any impact on high school graduation)
- Remediation activities planned for at-risk students
- A list of clinical agencies where the students in the dual credit track will carry out their clinical learning experiences
- Site for nursing skills labs and simulation experiences
- Teaching strategies to be used for dual credit track students
- Use of standardized examinations with dual credit track students
- Grading standards for dual credit track students
- Provision of transportation for students in dual credit track
- A complete schedule of nursing and high school courses for each week day and semester during the program (including clinical and lab hours)

Board Staff may request additional information.