

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Policies regarding Off-Campus Education Unit Designation
for Universities and Health-Related Institutions

In April 2003, the Coordinating Board adopted revisions to its rules governing off-campus education units of universities and health-related institutions. Coordinating Board rules, Section 5.76(i), now provides that “The Commissioner shall establish policies concerning how a location receives designation as a specific type of off-campus educational unit and how to expand educational activities.”¹ This document sets out those policies. (A condensed version is available in the accompanying table.)

I. Purpose

The Coordinating Board views off-campus education units as one means to extend education to students not located within reasonable driving distance of existing institutions. We are developing a more systematic way of tracking and accounting for these units for several reasons. We want to provide the Texas Legislature, the higher education community, and students with better information about the location and scope of higher education activities offered around the state and give visibility to the improved access that these locations provide. This information will also be helpful in statewide planning and coordination and should promote the cost efficient expenditure of educational funds by reducing unnecessary duplication of facilities and offerings.

These policies describe the specific procedures an institution should follow when contemplating establishment of an off-campus education unit. The policies are applicable to all units of public senior colleges, universities and health-related institutions which offer instruction for credit but are geographically separate from their institutions’ main campuses. *Texas Education Code*, Section 61.051(j) is the controlling statute.

II. Types of Off-Campus Education Units and Their Designation

The Coordinating Board classifies off-campus education units into four broad categories: higher education teaching sites, *recognized* higher education teaching sites, higher education centers and branch/special purpose campuses. The off-campus units must be established for purposes within the mission(s) of their parent institutions. The units’ names and activities must be consistent with the mission(s).

- A. **Higher education teaching site** – “an off-campus teaching location that promotes access in an area not served by other public universities. Teaching sites offer a very limited array of courses and/or programs and do not entail a permanent commitment for continued service. Teaching sites may not own facilities, nor are they eligible for state support to acquire or build facilities. Teaching sites do not require Board approval or recognition.” (Section 5.73(7))

¹ All quoted sections in this memo are from Coordinating Board Rules, Chapter 5, Subchapter D, Sections 5.71 to 5.78, unless otherwise noted. The specific rule section will be shown in parentheses if not mentioned in the text of this document.

Institutions may establish teaching sites as appropriate to serve students. *No special notification to the Coordinating Board is required to start a teaching site, except for course and program notifications required by Coordinating Board rules, Chapter 4, Subchapter D, mentioned below.*

- B. Recognized higher education teaching site** – “a higher education teaching site that is recognized by the Coordinating Board and is included in the Coordinating Board’s inventory of statewide teaching sites.” (Section 5.73(12)) If several programs are offered at a teaching site, the parent institution(s) may request that the location become a recognized teaching site. Recognized sites are shown on the Coordinating Board’s main website (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/HELM/>) and on <http://www.collegefortexans.com/> .

To request recognition for a teaching site, send a letter to Dr. Marshall A. Hill, Assistant Commissioner for Universities and Health-Related Institutions, stating:

- the programs that are offered at the site;
- a website link for the site, if available;
- the physical address for the site, including its ZIP Code;
- the proposed name for the site; and
- the names of any other institutions that will participate.

Coordinating Board Administrative Procedures for Recognition of Higher Education Teaching Sites:

Coordinating Board procedures on off-campus education require notification of the intent to deliver a program be given in advance to peer institutions (potentially affected public and independent institutions, and higher education centers) and to the Coordinating Board. (Coordinating Board Rules, Section 4.107) When the Coordinating Board receives a request for recognition of a site, we will verify that we have previously received notification of all programs that are listed as offered there. If the Coordinating Board has received that peer notification and several programs are offered at the site, we will send a letter confirming that the site is “*recognized*.” The site will be added to the Higher Education Locator Maps (HELM) system. If the Coordinating Board has not received prior peer notification for off-campus programs, the institution will be required to send this notification and to stop any publication of the programs offered until peer institutions have had an opportunity to respond (two months).

Recognition may be withdrawn from a site if it ceases to offer several programs. The site may be removed from HELM.

- C. Higher education centers** – Higher education centers must be established by the Texas Legislature or approved by the Coordinating Board for the specific purpose of offering academic credit courses and programs from the parent

institution(s). Higher education centers are of a larger size and offer a broader array of courses and programs than higher education teaching sites. They have minimal administration and (usually) locally provided facilities. Recognition of a higher education center may be withdrawn by the Board.

There are three types of higher education centers: Multi-Institutional Teaching Centers (MITC), University System Centers (USC), and single university centers (UC).

1. **Multi-Institution Teaching Center (MITC)** – A higher education center administered under a formal agreement between two or more public higher education institutions. It may also involve one or more private institutions. (Section 5.73(8))
2. **University System Center** – A higher education center administered by a university system or individual institution in a system. (Section 5.73(17))
3. **Single Institution Center** – A higher education center administered by an individual institution.

If a Center has received **authorization by the Legislature**, the parent institution(s) should provide the Coordinating Board with the information listed below within three months of the enabling legislation's effective date. A parent institution is defined in Coordinating Board rules as: The general academic institution or health-related institution that offers its courses, programs or training at an off-campus educational unit. Credit hours are reported by the parent institution and degrees are awarded in the name of the parent institution. The information that should be sent to the Coordinating Board includes:

- the reference of the authorizing legislation;
- the legislated or proposed name for the Center;
- a list of participating institutions that will offer instruction at the site;
- an analysis of local need for programs and a list of the programs that each participating institution would offer;
- a description of any arrangements that have been made to aid community college student transfer and articulation (if applicable);
- if desired, a statement requesting that the center be reviewed by the Coordinating Board for possible placement on the Supply/Demand Pathway (explained later in this document);
- provisions made for access to library resources;
- facility arrangements;
- a description of student services delivery;
- a website link for the site, if available, and
- the physical address for the site, including its ZIP Code.

To receive **Coordinating Board approval to establish a Center** (i.e., where there is no legislative authorization), an institution, system or group of institutions must submit a proposal. The proposal, which would be acted on at a quarterly Coordinating Board meeting, should contain:

- the proposed name for the Center;
- for Centers with more than one participating institution, an outline of the administrative structure;
- a list of participating institutions that will offer instruction at the site;
- a description of the proposed academic oversight of the Center;
- anticipated headcount and full-time student equivalent enrollment for the first five years of operation;
- an analysis of local need for programs and a list of the programs that each participating institution would offer;
- a description of special arrangements that have been made to aid community college student transfer and articulation (if applicable);
- a description of financial arrangements that would support the Center,
- facility arrangements;
- a description of student services delivery;
- if desired, a statement requesting that the center be reviewed by the Coordinating Board for possible placement on the Supply/Demand Pathway (explained later in this document);
- provisions made for access to library resources;
- a website link for the site, if available; and
- the physical address for the site, including its ZIP code.

Criteria that will be used to review a Coordinating Board-authorized Center include: need for the entity based on projected student enrollments, unnecessary duplication of the offerings of existing institutions and centers within one hour's driving time of the proposed center, access for students who might otherwise not enroll in upper-division and graduate courses, faculty resources, prospects for provision of high quality teaching and learning, adequacy of student support services, and need for the proposed programs.

D. **Branch and Special Purpose Campuses** – special types of off-campus education units. The term “campus” in relation to off-campus educational units of public senior colleges, universities and health-related institutions refers to one of the following units.

- **Branch Campus** – a “major, secondary location of an institution offering multiple programs, usually with its own administrative structure and usually headed by a Dean. A Branch Campus must be established by the Legislature or approved by the Coordinating Board.” (Section 5.73(2))
- **A Special Purpose Campus** – a “major, secondary location of an institution offering programs related to specific and limited field(s) of

study, usually with its own administrative structure and usually headed by a Dean. Regional Academic Health Centers are considered special-purpose campuses. Special Purpose Campuses must be established by the Legislature or approved by the Coordinating Board.” (Section 5.73(14))

- **Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC)** — a “special purpose campus of a parent health-related institution(s) that may be used to provide undergraduate clinical education, graduate education, including residency training programs, or other levels of medical education in specifically identified counties.” (Section 5.73(13))

The information to be submitted for a legislatively-authorized or a Coordinating Board-approved branch or special purpose campus is identical to that cited above for establishment of Centers.

III. Supply/Demand Pathway

The Supply/Demand Pathway is “a developmental approach to providing access which allows for the gradual increase of resources as demand grows, operating under the principle of avoiding over-commitment as well as under-commitment of state resources.” (Section 5.73(15))

Section 5.78 of Coordinating Board rules lays out the following steps on the Supply/Demand Pathway:

- Category A. Institutions temporarily test the market both in terms of demand and staying power by providing off-campus courses and/or programs by one or more institutions. Should demand decrease or not materialize, courses and programs can be discontinued and resources moved to areas of greater demand.
- Category B. As demand increases, offerings may be organized through a multi-institution teaching center or as a university system center as a Pathway Education Center. A group of institutions may request that the Board authorize the establishment of a MITC. Alternatively, a university system may request that the Board authorize the establishment of a university system center. In either case, a lead institution should be designated to provide leadership for the center and facilitate the provision of programs and resources from other institutions.
- Category C. After an entity in Category B has attained a full-time equivalent upper-level and graduate enrollment of 3,500 for four fall semesters, the parent institution(s) and Board(s) of Regents may request that the Board review the status of the center and recommend that the

Legislature reclassify the unit as an upper-level general academic institution – a university. Reclassification may be considered sooner if the center attains a fall semester full-time equivalent enrollment of 3,500 followed the next fall semester by a full-time equivalent enrollment of 4,000. The 3,500 FTSE standard approximates the headcount enrollment included in the current university funding formula as the minimum size needed to achieve economies of scale.

When a proposal for a center or campus is submitted or notice of legislatively approved center or campus is given, the parent institution(s) should state whether they want the Coordinating Board to review the center or campus for possible inclusion on the Supply/Demand Pathway.

IV. Reporting and Course/Program Notification For Off-Campus Education Units

Notification of courses and programs proposed for offering at off-campus education units must adhere to the requirements set out in Chapter 4, Subchapter D (Distance Education and Off-Campus Programs). Notification of face-to-face offerings must be sent to potentially affected public and independent institutions at least two months before the course or program is to begin. Institutions may not guarantee that a course or program will be offered until the notification and response process has been completed. Coordinating Board notification is required for programs delivered electronically to groups at off-campus education units.

Institutions will report enrollments at all off-campus educational units, including Centers on the pathway, as specified in Coordinating Board Reporting Manuals. For the purpose of establishing the need for a new institution of higher education and meeting the enrollment threshold of 3,500 FTE students for four fall semesters, internet-based courses and other courses offered in non-traditional formats that do not require the physical presence of the student at the center for a normal number of contact hours will not generally be counted. Exceptions to this general rule may be allowed if prior agreements are approved by the Commissioner, but such exceptions will generally only be made for courses that are substantially supported from the center and represent a significant on-going educational need that can most effectively be served from the center. (Section 5.78(d))

Higher education centers and campuses will be assigned identification numbers (called pseudo-FICE Codes) by the CB's Information Services Division. These numbers should be used in reporting on the CBM-004 as the Other Higher Education Site code for inter-institutional courses.

Teaching sites should be reporting on the CBM-004 using the ZIP Code for the location.

Programs are considered to be offered at a distance when the substantial majority of the program is available through electronic and/or off-campus delivery. [Coordinating Board rules, Chapter 4, Subchapter E, Section 4.104(f)]

A. Names of Off-Campus Educational Units

The names of off-campus education units should reflect the type of unit and have meaning for the public about the level of service available. Names should not convey the wrong impression about the status of a site. Names that are similar to those used for universities or health-related institutions (such as System-City as in the case of UT-Dallas or TAMU-Commerce) should not be used as they suggest the status of a stand-alone institution, not a subunit. Unit names must adhere to Coordinating Board naming conventions described in this policy. Any name not adhering to the convention must be specifically approved by the Legislature or the Coordinating Board.

Naming Convention:

- Teaching site names should contain the words “teaching site.”
- Higher education centers’ official names should contain the word “center.”
- Branch campuses should contain the term “branch campus.”
- RAHCs should be called Regional Academic Health Centers.

Coordinating Board rules require that “A higher education center’s name must be approved by the Board, and may not be changed without prior Board approval.” (Section 5.76(l)). Any change of a center or branch campus’ official name should be cleared with the Coordinating Board before it is announced.

**Recognized Higher Education Teaching Site
Request Form**

A higher education teaching site can become recognized if several programs are offered at the site. Once recognized, the site is shown on included on the Coordinating Board's web-based Higher Education Locator Maps at:

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/HELM>.

Institution Name

Name and physical location of Teaching Site Proposed for Recognition

Name:

Street Address:

City and ZIP:

When were programs first offered at this site? _____

Web links for the site (if available) and/or for participating institutions:

Names of programs offered at this teaching site, degree designations, program CIP code, and, if possible, date of Coordinating Board approval (prior to 1999) or notification (after 1999):

Program Name	CIP Code	Degree Designation	CB Notification
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