



## **Collin College Guidelines for Course Substitution/Equivalence**

A reference document designed to assist Collin College faculty and staff with appropriately evaluating proposed course substitutions and/or equivalencies.

Prepared by the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs

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## **Course Substitution/Equivalence at a Glance**

### **Key Considerations for Course Substitutions/Equivalencies in AA, AS, AAT, BSN, and BAT degrees, FOS Certificates:**

#### **Permissible **core course substitutions:****

Approval by the Chief Academic Officer or designee is required after referral from the College Registrar. Requesting a core course substitution is a VERY rare occurrence.

#### **Considerations for **core course equivalencies:****

- Was the course taught on the quarter system or the semester system? (Does the course reach the same level of semester credit hours as the Collin Course it is being proposed to be equivalent to?)
- Does the Proposed course satisfy all student learning outcomes of the required Collin course?
- Does the proposed course meet the definition of the same Foundational Component Area as the required Collin course?
- Did the proposed course teach the required core objectives that are taught in the required Collin course?

Courses are typically evaluated by Academic Advising staff and Office of the Registrar. In the event of a question, the District Discipline Dean (working in conjunction with appropriate discipline lead faculty member or designee) will consider the request for approval.

#### **Considerations for most **Field of Study** equivalencies:**

- Will the proposed course substitution satisfy a core course requirement and a field of study requirement simultaneously, or will the proposed course substitution apply to the FOS requirements only?
  - For a dual FOS and core consideration, follow guidance of the **core course equivalency** above.
  - If for FOS requirement only:
    - Does proposed course teach all SLO's from the required Collin course?
    - Proposed course equivalencies of this type are typically evaluated by Academic Advising staff in conjunction with the office of the registrar. In the event of a question, the lead discipline faculty member and/or the Associate Dean of Academic affairs responsible for the FOS certificate may recommend proposed course substitutions, and they are approved by the District Discipline Dean responsible for the FOS certificate. (Given multidisciplinary nature of some FOS certificates, this may involve interaction with lead faculty members from departments other than the department responsible for the FOS certificate.)

### Considerations for General Education course substitutions in the AAS degree:

- Determine which general education component is the focus for the substitution:
  - ENGL 1301 (Collin requirement),
  - Humanities/Fine Arts (SACSCOC/THECB requirement),
  - Social/Behavioral Science (SACSCOC/THECB requirement),
  - Mathematics/Natural Science (SACSCOC/THECB requirement),
  - an additional general education course chosen from the courses approved for Collin's academic core curriculum that has NOT been used to fulfill one of the prior components. (i.e., One course may NOT fulfill the requirements for more than one general education component.) (Collin requirement)
- All General Education course requirements **MUST** be fulfilled by courses taken from the Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM). While workforce courses (i.e. WECM courses) may be used to fulfill program prerequisite requirements, WECM courses cannot be used to meet General Education requirements in AAS degrees.

The General Education component of AAS degrees is 15 SCH of general education courses in the areas listed above in the first bullet. Approval of proposed substitutions may be initiated by discipline lead faculty member (or designated lead faculty member) and approved by Program Director/Associate Dean/Dean of Workforce programs responsible for the program in question.

### Considerations for course substitutions of Required Technical Content in the AAS degree:

- Evaluate content from the outside course and the Collin course to ensure students have attained the necessary competencies expected of Collin program graduates/completers.
- Consider impact on pre-requisites associated with subsequent courses when approving course substitutions.
- Substitution may leave a balance of required semester credit hours students will need to satisfy with an additional course, (e.g. substituting a 3 SCH course for a 4 SCH course)
- A General education course sequence may be embedded in technical content. If these courses do not fulfill general education requirements, then they may be substituted for as required technical content with no consequences for general education requirements noted in prior entry above. (However, always be certain that 15 SCH of general education courses are present to meet general education requirements for AAS degrees.)

Course substitutions in this category may be initiated by discipline lead faculty members (or designated lead faculty members) and approved by Program Director/Associate Dean/Dean of Workforce programs responsible for the program in question.

I. Course Substitutions/Equivalencies for Core courses in AA/AS/AAT/BSN/BAS/BAT degrees (i.e. transfer and Bachelor's degrees)

A. The **ONLY** Permissible Core Course Substitutions:

1. Per Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) rule Chapter 4, Subchapter B, 4.28(j), *"No institution or institutional representative may approve course substitutions or waivers of the institution's core curriculum requirements for any currently enrolled student,"* **except as provided in Coordinating Board rules [Chapter 4, Subchapter B, 4.28\(k\)](#)**. The rule goes on to state that *"For students who transfer to a public institution from a college or university that is not a Texas public institution of higher education, courses the student completed prior to admission should be evaluated to determine whether they apply to one of the institution's core curriculum component areas. Only those courses the institution has accepted for transfer that can demonstrate fulfillment of the foundational component area content descriptions, core objectives, and semester credit hours required for the appropriate foundational component area or areas should be applied to the institution's core curriculum."*

So this THECB rule involves two cases. The first case involves students with credits earned from other Texas public institutions of higher education. In these situations, subsection 4.28(k), Paragraph (1) states "An institution of higher education may, on a case-by-case basis, approve an accommodation of a specific core curriculum foundational component area requirement... for a student with a medically documented learning disability, including but not limited to dyslexia, dysgraphia, or Asperger's Syndrome." Paragraph (2) goes on to indicate the, "Accommodation shall not include a waiver or exemption of any core curriculum component." Finally, Paragraph (3) defines the type of accommodations that are permitted by stating "An institution may approve for core curriculum applicability a course the institution offers but that is not approved as a part of the institution's core curriculum, if the institution demonstrates that the course has been approved to fulfill the same specific foundational component area requirement at five or more other Texas public colleges or universities."

The only recent example at Collin involves the substitution of PHIL 2303-Logic for 3 SCH of Mathematics in the Core Curriculum. This was only approved following a determination by the ACCESS office that an accommodation of this nature was required for a student. Furthermore, PHIL 2303 was shown to fulfill the required core objectives for the Mathematics FCA at Collin, and that it was a course approved by five or more Texas public colleges or universities for the Mathematics FCA.

The second case involves students transferring credits earned at private or out-of-state institution of higher education prior to admission to Collin College. In these cases, it is possible to evaluate coursework earned at these institutions for core

curriculum application at Collin. Please note that these situations do NOT involve determining whether the credits earned at private or out-of-state institutions are equivalent to Collin College core courses. Rather, the emphasis here is on whether the course credits meet the definition of the foundational component area, whether the course teaches the required core objectives, and finally whether the course credits (i.e. semester credit hours vs. quarter credit hours) can fulfill the credit requirements defined in the Texas Core Curriculum.

A few examples of this latter case have recently arisen at Collin. One in particular involved a course in African American History since 1865 taken at an out-of-state institution. This course was evaluated by the discipline lead faculty member in History for meeting the required conditions noted in the THECB rule, and once those conditions were deemed satisfied, a recommendation was made to the CAO to allow this course to be applied to the American History Foundational Component Area of the Core Curriculum.

2. Approval Path: Requests regarding the substitution of a core course, that involves a documented medical condition should be discussed with the Office of the Registrar and with the ACCESS office. The Office of the Registrar will submit appropriately supported requests to the office of the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or designee for consideration. In the case of courses transferred into Collin College from a private institution or an out-of-state institution that were completed prior to a student enrolling at Collin College, the CAO will consult with the appropriate discipline lead faculty member and district discipline dean to make a final determination on whether a particular course may be allowed to meet a core curriculum component at Collin College.

B. Course **Equivalencies** to Collin Core Courses:

1. A related, but slightly different, situation arises when students transfer course work from out-of-state institutions or from independent (private) institutions that are *equivalent* to Collin College core courses in course content. In this case Coordinating Board rule [Chapter 4, Subchapter B, 4.28\(j\)](#) states that, "...courses the student completed prior to admission to a public institution of higher education in the state of Texas should be evaluated to determine whether they apply to one of the institution's core curriculum component areas. *Only those courses that the institution has accepted for transfer that can demonstrate fulfillment of the foundational component area content descriptions, core objectives, and semester credit hours required for the appropriate foundational component area or areas should be applied to the institution's core curriculum.*" (Emphasis added)

The most common issue that arises in this case originates from students transferring from institutions that operate on the academic quarter system rather than the semester system. It is important to note that these issues are fundamentally

questions of course equivalency rather than substitutions. For example, if a student transfers 6 quarter hours (QH) of English composition (i.e. two 3-quarter-hour courses) into Collin College, this is equivalent to 4 semester credit hours (SCH) ( $6 \text{ QH} * 2 \text{ SCH}/3 \text{ QH} = 4 \text{ SCH}$ ) of composition in the semester system. Since this is less than 6 SCH, Collin College would typically accept the two 3-quarter-hour courses as being equivalent to Collin's ENGL 1301 and then require the student to take ENGL 1302 (or ENGL 2311) to complete the Communication Foundational Component Area of the academic core curriculum.

In practice, Collin College routinely establishes a 4 QH course as being equivalent to a 3 SCH course. ( $4 \text{ QH} * 2 \text{ SCH}/3 \text{ QH} = 2.67 \text{ SCH} \approx 3 \text{ SCH}$ ). To be equivalent to ENGL 1301 or to both ENGL 1301 and 1302 at Collin, the courses on the quarter-hour system should also fulfill the foundational component area content descriptions and core objectives in order to be accepted as equivalent to Collin core curriculum courses. There is a measure of judgement involved in this determination as noted on p. 15 of the *Texas Core Curriculum Application Guide* (found on the THECB's website by searching for "WAAR – FAQ- Texas Core Curriculum" under documents) which states that "It is unlikely a course will be an exact match to a Texas Public institution course. However, institution personnel should use their best judgement and due diligence to assist the student by allowing the student to maximize credits to avoid duplication of effort." This document goes on to state, "Because students should not be required to repeat content or unnecessarily accumulate hours, the receiving institution can discern how, and if, a transfer course can be applied to a student's core curriculum."

Other situations that have arisen include requests that a course from an out-of-state or independent (private) institution be evaluated for content equivalency to a Collin course (e.g., technical mathematics courses being considered as equivalent to Collin transfer mathematics courses). In these cases, if the academic advising team (working with the Office of the Registrar) cannot identify a course as equivalent, they may ask one or more offices of Academic Affairs for a determination of equivalency. If a course is deemed equivalent in content to a Collin College core course, then the transfer course in question will also need to be evaluated relative to the appropriate foundational component area content description to be accepted as equivalent to a Collin College core course. (Please note that the route associated with core course substitutions in I.A.1. above might also apply to this situation since the course is coming from an out-of-state or private institution.)

In all such cases, it is strongly recommended that Academic Affairs Offices work closely with the Academic Advising staff to determine how best to resolve these situations in order to treat students equitably across the district. (Please note that if a course is not deemed equivalent to a core curriculum course at Collin College, that same course **may** be used as a transfer *elective* for an associate or baccalaureate degree at Collin College.)

2. Approval Path: Course equivalencies such as those described above are usually evaluated by the academic advising staff working with the office of the Registrar. However, when questions regarding equivalencies arise, they are considered for approval by the District Discipline Dean responsible for the program/department working in conjunction with the discipline lead faculty member (or designee) for the appropriate academic department.

## II. Course Equivalencies for Degrees and/or Certificates incorporating Field of Study (FOS) Curricula

- A. Field of Study Curricula are collections of courses developed by faculty committees convened by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that are guaranteed by statute (Texas Education Code §61.823) to be substituted in transfer to a University for the receiving institution's lower-division requirements for the degree program associated with the FOS curriculum. By THECB rule (Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.32(c)), for the student successfully completing an FOS curriculum, a receiving institution must substitute the block of FOS curriculum courses for the receiving institution's lower-division requirements for the degree program associated with the corresponding Field of Study curriculum into which the student transfers. For students transferring from one institution to another without completing the FOS curriculum of the sending institution, the receiving institution must grant academic credit in the field of study curriculum of the receiving institution for each of the courses that student has successfully completed in the FOS curriculum of the sending institution. Following the granting 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 do not duplicate course content already completed through the FOS curriculum.

Currently Collin College offers FOS Certificates/Degrees in the following fields: Business, Communication, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Drama, Economics, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Fine Arts, Music, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. All FOS awards are composed of required courses that **must** be completed to earn the FOS certificate and/or associate degree that incorporates an FOS curriculum.

It is VERY important to note that since these awards are intended to facilitate transfer, they are composed of courses listed in the Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM), and many of the courses may be able to serve in two capacities for a student. These courses may fulfill the required programmatic content for the Field of Study Curriculum, and they may also fulfill a required foundational component area of the Academic Core Curriculum. *It is particularly important when evaluating course equivalencies for these awards that Associate Deans/Deans of Academic Affairs work closely with the academic*

*advising staff and the office of the registrar to explicitly define whether a specific course equivalency is being proposed for field of study content only AND/OR whether the same equivalency is being proposed for core curriculum purposes (when that is possible).* Either (or both) of these purposes for the proposed course equivalency should be explicitly stated on the Course Equivalency Form. This consideration becomes particularly important when a student intends to earn an AA or AS degree in conjunction with an FOS certificate. In these situations, some of the required FOS courses may be used to fulfill both Core Curriculum requirements and FOS program content, while other FOS courses may be used solely for FOS program content, and as a result may be used to complete the 18 hours of required electives for an Associate's degree.

*If course equivalencies are being made for Core Curriculum purposes, please refer to Section I.B. of this document.*

If course equivalencies are being made for field of study content only (i.e., for courses that will not fulfill a core curriculum requirement for a student pursuing an Associate's degree), the primary consideration should be based upon whether a proposed course is equivalent in content to the required FOS course. In these cases, *it is incumbent upon Collin College to ensure that **all state-mandated student learning outcomes** from the required course at Collin were covered by the student in the course being evaluated for equivalency.*

It is also VERY important to note that ***only course equivalencies can be considered for FOS curricula***. Because FOS curricula are defined by faculty committees working under the auspices of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to encourage statewide transfer/degree applicability, ***no institution has the right to substitute one course for another in an FOS curriculum***. As a result, only course equivalencies can be considered when it comes to FOS curricula.

To emphasize this point, one specific situation that recently arose at Collin College regarded the Computer Science Field of Study Curriculum that administrators and academic and advising staff should be aware of. The Computer Science FOS Advisory Committee specifically required completion of 4 SCH versions of Programming Fundamentals I, II, and III (COSC 1426, 1437 and 2436) in the current Computer Science FOS curriculum, and a question posed to the Coordinating Board staff about potentially substituting 3 SCH versions of these courses (that are allowable under the ACGM) was answered with an emphatic statement that this was not the intent of the advisory committee that developed the current Computer Science FOS curriculum. Please note that this situation appears to be unique among FOS curricula due to other responses that Collin College has received regarding the substitution of the 4 SCH version of Calculus I for required 3 SCH version of Calculus I that was required in the Economics Field of Study curriculum.

B. Approval Paths:



- a. Proposed course equivalencies in FOS curricula that will fulfill both core curriculum requirements **and** FOS content for the student should follow the approval path described in Section I.B.2. above.
- b. Proposed course equivalencies in FOS curricula that are limited to **FOS content only** are typically considered by the advising staff working in conjunction with the office of the registrar. Requests for course equivalencies that are out of the ordinary may be recommended by the discipline lead faculty member and/or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs/Director responsible for the FOS Certificate and approved by the District Discipline Dean responsible for the Field of Study Certificate. Given the multidisciplinary nature of many FOS curricula, Associate Deans/Directors and Deans considering these requests should work in close consultation with discipline leads (or designees) from the appropriate academic department(s) responsible for the courses in question within the FOS certificate.

### III. Course Substitutions/Equivalencies in AAS degree programs

#### A. Substitution of one General Education Course for Another in the General Education Component of AAS Degrees

To meet SACSCOC and THECB requirements, the general education component of AAS degrees at Collin College requires 15 semester credit hours (SCH) of courses chosen from those courses that meet the core objectives in specific Foundational Component Area's (FCA) that comprise the academic core curriculum. The required distribution of general education courses at Collin College includes ENGL 1301-Composition I (3 SCH), one course (3 SCH) from Humanities /Fine Arts, one course (3 SCH) from Social/Behavioral Sciences, one course (3 SCH) from Mathematics/Natural Sciences, and one course (3 SCH) from any foundational component area of the academic core curriculum. (Please note that the course used to satisfy this requirement cannot have been used to satisfy one of the other distribution requirements.) This distribution is designed a) to meet a Collin College requirement (ENGL 1301) to ensure that all general education/core objectives are encountered by AAS students in at least one course and b) to meet SACSCOC distribution requirements.

Typically, AAS programs will allow students one of five pathways to complete the general education component for an AAS degree:

- The AAS program may allow students to make their own choices for the distribution requirements (other than ENGL 1301) from among the options available in the academic core curriculum.
- The AAS program may make recommendations to students for courses in each distribution category from among the options available in those categories.
- The AAS program may limit the number of available options in each distribution category to only a subset of those permitted in the academic core curriculum for a particular distribution requirement. This is generally

done to focus the training that a student receives in the general education component of AAS degrees to better support the technical content of the AAS degree, (e.g., only allowing a CHEM or BIOL course to fulfill the mathematics/natural science general education component because those are the most appropriate options to support a particular technical program.)

- The AAS program may define required gen ed courses in one or more general education components with an explicit statement that no substitutions be allowed. This situation most often arises to ensure that students possess the required prerequisite knowledge necessary to successfully complete a program as determined by workforce program faculty and/or as defined by external program accrediting agencies.
- Finally, all four options may be utilized for different distribution categories of the general education component in an AAS degree program.

Student requests for substitutions of one general education course for another may arise for many reasons. It is vitally important that the faculty member, advisor or administrator entertaining a proposed substitution consider the various roles the general education course in question has been designed to fulfill within the AAS program in question. This is to ensure that none of the required program level learning outcomes are lost should the proposed course substitution be approved.

Important Considerations to Keep in Mind:

- The General Education Component of AAS degrees **must** comprise 15 SCH of transfer courses (i.e., ACGM courses) that have been approved by Collin's Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB) as meeting the core objectives for at least one FCA of the academic core curriculum. Specifically:
  - ENGL 1301 teaches the core objectives of the Communication FCA
  - The Humanities/Fine Arts course teaches the core objectives of either the Language, Philosophy, Culture FCA or the Creative Arts FCA
  - The Social/Behavioral Sciences course teaches the core objectives of the American History FCA, the Government/Political Science FCA or the Social/Behavioral Sciences FCA
  - The Mathematics/Natural Sciences course teaches the core objectives of the Mathematics FCA or the Life and Physical Sciences FCA.
  - The final course must teach the core objectives from at least one of the eight FCA's mentioned above, and the course used to fulfill this requirement cannot be used to meet any other general education requirement in the AAS degree.
- The distribution requirements of 3 SCH from Humanities/Creative Arts, 3 SCH from Social/Behavioral Sciences and 3 SCH from Mathematics/Natural Sciences **must** be present in all AAS degrees due to SACSCOC and THECB requirements).

- Student requests to be exempted from one category of general education courses (e.g., exemption from a mathematics requirement/recommendation) should be considered in light of several factors:
  - Does the recommended/required course teach crucial prerequisite knowledge for the AAS degree program?
  - Does the recommended/required course serve as a required prerequisite for a later course in the AAS degree program?
  - Is the recommended/required course required by an external accrediting agency?

If none of the above apply, then the program can utilize the flexibility built into the general education component of AAS degree programs to substitute one general education course for another (e.g., a natural science course substituted for a mathematics course) since the recommendation/requirement was established by the workforce program.

The most common examples of these types of substitutions arise when a higher-level general education course is considered for substitution for a lower level general education course in an AAS degree. One example that arises fairly often at Collin involves students reverse transferring the introductory composition and rhetoric course from UT-Dallas. This course (RHET 1302 at UTD) is equivalent to Collin's ENGL 1302. Since ENGL 1302 fulfills the same FCA as ENGL 1301, and since ENGL 1302 teaches students the foundations of college level writing, it fulfills the same broad learning goals that ENGL 1301 fulfills for AAS degree programs at Collin. This generally constitutes an acceptable substitution in AAS degree programs at Collin College, but that decision is one that must be considered by the discipline lead and district discipline dean for the AAS program involved.

A second example involves requests from students that have completed the workforce courses SCIT 1407 Applied Anatomy & Physiology I and SCIT 1408 Applied Anatomy & Physiology II at another community college in Texas to substitute for BIOL 2401/2402- Anatomy & Physiology I/II at Collin College. Assuming the AAS program allows this course substitution (i.e., assuming the catalog does not forbid course substitutions for BIOL 2401/2402), and assuming that the course content of SCIT 1407 and SCIT 1408 is deemed appropriate preparation in the technical field for the AAS program considering the request, then it is possible to allow such a substitution. **However, it is vitally important to know what role BIOL 2401 and/or BIOL 2402 play in the AAS program before making this decision.** If either BIOL 2401 or BIOL 2402 is used to fulfill the required general education component in mathematics/natural science, then making such a course substitution for a student *may* leave that student unable to complete the general education distribution requirement for 3 SCH in mathematics/natural science. As Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) courses, SCIT 1407 and 1408 cannot fulfill the general education requirements for an AAS degree. The student would need to complete any other mathematics/natural science course that is approved as a core course at Collin to fulfill the requirements for Collin to grant an AAS degree. (If this

approach would require the student to complete more than the minimum number of hours for the degree, Collin College cannot require this course of action.) It is strongly recommended that this factor be relayed to the student prior to finalizing a decision on the proposed course substitution so the student can build any additional requirement for a math/natural science general education course into their degree plan. Alternatively, the student may need to work with the Academic Advising staff to identify another math or natural science course the student may have taken to see if it would fulfill the gen ed requirement for the AAS degree.

Finally, a third example that is somewhat more complicated involves an AAS program at Collin College that requires BIOL 2404-Anatomy and Physiology Basic (a one semester survey of Anatomy & Physiology) to fulfill the general education distribution requirement for a math/natural sciences course. If a student that successfully completed BIOL 2401-Anatomy and Physiology I (the first semester of a two-semester sequence in A&P) requested that this course substitute for BIOL 2404, the Collin official considering the request would need to evaluate whether the information learned in BIOL 2401 represents appropriate preparation for the student's chosen AAS program. BIOL 2401 meets the same core objectives as BIOL 2404, and it is a higher-level course than BIOL 2404, so all the *general education requirements* would be met for the AAS degree if the proposed substitution were approved. **However**, since the student has not covered all the content that would normally be covered in BIOL 2404, **this may not be an appropriate substitution for a program to permit**. This is a situation in which the judgement of the program faculty and Director/Associate Dean/Dean will play a major role in deciding whether to approve a specific substitution. (A request to substitute BIOL 2402-Anatomy & Physiology II would be a much easier decision to make in the case outlined here since the two-semester sequence will have covered all of the content covered in BIOL 2404 but in considerably greater depth.)

Approval Path: Generally, these course substitutions relate to decisions that the AAS program made in establishing the program's requirements. As long as the adjustments that are requested meet the general education requirements for AAS degrees (and all of the proposed general education courses have been deemed eligible to fulfill general education requirements for AAS degrees per the Collin College catalog) the approval path may be initiated by recommendation of the discipline lead faculty member and/or Program Director/Associate Dean and approved by the appropriate Dean of Workforce programs.

Student requests to have a course from an out-of-state institution or from an independent (private) institution in Texas declared equivalent to a general education course in an AAS program at Collin should follow the process laid out in section 1.B. above.

- B. Substitution for Required Technical Courses in AAS Degree and Certificate Programs
  - 1. Direct Course Substitutions

- a. Substitutions of an alternative course for a required technical course at Collin are perhaps the most common type of course substitution requests that are received. These requests may arise for a variety of reasons including (but not limited to):
- Program curricular changes (e.g., course terminations at Collin College with students continuing under earlier catalogs.)
  - Transfer of technical coursework from colleges/universities outside of the state of Texas or from independent colleges/universities (i.e., not a Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) course)
- i. Generally, the *most important* consideration to keep in mind as these requests are brought forward is to ensure the student will learn the program competencies that the program advisory board, accreditation agency, and/or program faculty have identified as important for academic and workplace success. While everyone at Collin College has a responsibility to assist students with completing their AAS degrees (or certificates) as quickly and efficiently as possible, it is imperative that faculty members and administrators keep the program level outcomes in mind so that an approved course substitution does not result in a graduate not mastering a key skill, competency or program level learning outcome. Please remember that course substitutions may impact the reputation of the program among the employers hiring Collin's graduates. Thus, during any review of course substitution requests, think carefully about whether the student will carry into the workforce the knowledge employers expect of Collin graduates before approving any technical course substitution.
- ii. A similar consideration arises in the context of ensuring that a student requesting a course substitution will have the prerequisite knowledge necessary for success in subsequent courses in a course sequence. In these cases, faculty members and Directors/Associate Deans/Deans should think carefully about whether the curriculum of a course being proposed for a student's AAS program has adequately prepared a student for subsequent coursework when considering proposed substitutions. (Please also remember that this type of course substitution may require a prerequisite override for a subsequent course if a student will be allowed to continue progressing through the program.)
- b. Approval Path: Course substitutions of one technical course for another in an AAS degree program may be initiated by the discipline lead faculty member and/or Program Director/Associate Dean and approved by the Dean responsible for the workforce program.

## 2. "Degree Completion Hours"

- a. A second common course substitution issue that may arise with the technical content of AAS degrees involves degree completion hours. These emerge from a variety of sources, including but not limited to:
- i) changes in credit hour magnitude during curriculum revisions (e.g., a 4 SCH course being replaced by a 3 SCH course),
  - ii) students transferring to Collin with courses bearing a lower SCH value than Collin offers (e.g., SGNL 1301 in lieu of SGNL 1401)
  - iii) students demonstrating prior mastery of course content through external certification/licensure that a required course is designed to prepare students to obtain, etc.
  - iv) discontinued courses.

These situations may result in the need for a student to take an additional course (or courses) to ensure that the total SCH requirement for an AAS degree is completed. The most important point to keep in mind with these situations is a statement from the *Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education (GIPWE)* published by the THECB which states that 50-75% of the AAS degree should come from “a common technical specialty identified by the program CIP code.” (Generally, the common CIP code is taken to mean a 4-digit CIP code as described in the GIPWE. In many cases this condition may be challenging to achieve given the multi-disciplinary nature of some programs, but the spirit of the statement should be adhered to as faculty and administrators work with students.)

It is strongly recommended that in cases such as these that program faculty members and administrators make every effort to utilize additional courses from the program’s technical content area as electives to help students reach the required level of semester credit hours to complete the AAS degree. If there are no other courses offered at Collin that relate to the technical specialty, other options are available including:

- the use of general education courses that support the technical specialty of the AAS program,
- the use of technical course content in closely related technical fields,
- the use of additional coursework (related to the technical content) that a student may have transferred to Collin but may not have been deemed as equivalent to a Collin course, etc.

In all such cases, it is strongly recommended that faculty and administrators work closely with academic advising to develop plans that are appropriately tailored to the individual student situation, balancing the desire to make transfer as efficient as possible for the student while maintaining the academic integrity of the specific AAS program.

- b. Approval Path: Course substitutions of this type may be initiated by the discipline lead faculty member and/or the Program Director/Associate Dean and approved by the Dean responsible for the workforce program.
3. Substitutions Affecting Course Sequences of General Education Courses Embedded Within the Technical Content of a Degree or Certificate.
  - a. There may also arise a situation in which a sequence of general education courses, each of which requires the prior course in the sequence as a prerequisite, comprises a portion of the technical content of an AAS degree. In these cases, the first course in the sequence may serve as a required general education distribution requirement, and a proposed course substitution for this initial course may result in students demonstrating technical content mastery without having to complete the entire sequence.

An example of this that arose at Collin in the past involved the following three-course sequence that was embedded within the AAS degree program in Computer-Aided Drafting at one time: *MATH 1314-College Algebra* ---> *MATH 1316-Plane Trigonometry* ---> *PHYS 1401-General Physics I*. In this case the college algebra course was targeted to fulfill the general education requirement for a mathematics/natural science course within the AAS degree program.

A student that completed *MATH 2412-Precalculus Mathematics* or *MATH 2413-Calculus I* (perhaps due to advanced mathematics placement upon entry into Collin College) may have used either of these two courses to fulfill the required general education requirement for the AAS degree. Moreover, either of these courses would fulfill the mathematics prerequisite for *PHYS 1401*, and as a result, for this student, *MATH 1316-Plane Trigonometry* would no longer be necessary for that student to complete the program because it would require the student to repeat coursework that has already been successfully learned. In this situation, the student may request that another course substitute for *MATH 1316* within the program, and the appropriate guidelines for recommending other coursework for the student to complete the AAS degree should follow the guidance outlined above for "Degree Completion Hours" I section III.B.2.

Please note that this does NOT constitute a substitution for a general education course since the Trigonometry course does not fulfill a general education requirement within this program. It is simply a component of the technical content of the AAS program.

- b. Approval Path: Course substitutions of this type may be initiated by the discipline lead faculty member and/or Program Director/Associate Dean and approved by the Dean responsible for the workforce program, although guidance from related District Discipline Deans may be needed to ensure that

students are able to meet required prerequisites for subsequent courses in these sequences.

4. Career and Technical Education Programs of Study (POS)

- a. Texas Education Code §61.8235 directed the THECB to established Program of Study (POS) curricula for a number of workforce programs. Formally, Programs of Study serve a purpose in workforce education analogous to Field of Study curricula in transfer disciplines. POS's are designed to develop agreed-upon curricula that can be readily transferred between state-supported institutions of higher education, allowing students to complete their intended workforce awards in a timely fashion.

As of April 2023, nineteen POS curricula have been developed and approved by the THECB in three major areas of workforce education: Architecture and construction, Health Science and information technology. These POS curricula can be found on the THECB's [Programs of Study](#) website.

The key language in the statute is found in Texas Education Code, §61.8235(f) which states, *"A student enrolled in a board-established program of study who transfers from a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute to another public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute that offers a similar program, **regardless of whether the institution has adopted the board-established program of study**, shall receive academic credit from the institution to which the student transferred for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the program of study curriculum. Unless otherwise required by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the student may complete the program of study at the institution to which the student transferred by completing only the remaining number of semester credit hours the student would need to complete the program of study at the institution from which the student transferred."*

Effectively, this means that if a student transfers to Collin College from another state-supported institution and was enrolled in a THECB-approved POS prior to transfer, the corresponding AAS programs at Collin is required to accept the courses in the POS curriculum and apply them to Collin's AAS degree, regardless of whether Collin has adopted the POS curriculum. More importantly, the Collin College program may not require the student to complete more SCH's at Collin than would have been required at the original institution UNLESS this requirement would violate the accreditation principles of SACSCOC. For example, if a student is enrolled in the Respiratory Care program at another public community college that has adopted the Respiratory Care POS curriculum and subsequently transfers to Collin College's Respiratory Care program, the Collin College Respiratory Care program is required to accept all of the course credits in the approved POS program and apply them toward the Collin College



degree. Moreover, the Collin College program may NOT require the student to complete any more semester credit hours of coursework than would have been required in the POS curriculum unless this would violate the principles of accreditation of SACSCOC.