

Endorsements Frequently Asked Questions

General

1. Does every student have to graduate with an endorsement?

No. A student may opt to graduate Foundation High School Program only without an endorsement if, after the student's sophomore year the student and the student's parent or guardian are advised by a school counselor of the specific benefits of graduating from high school with one or more endorsements and the student's parent or guardian files with a school counselor written permission, on a form adopted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), allowing the student to graduate under the Foundation High School Program without earning an endorsement.

2. Can a student earn more than one endorsement?

Yes. A district must allow a student to enroll in courses under more than one endorsement before the student's junior year.

3. Can a student change endorsements? When?

Yes. While a district is not required to offer all endorsements, a district must allow a student to choose, at any time, to earn an endorsement other than the endorsement the student previously indicated from among the available endorsements.

4. I'm concerned that my small district cannot offer endorsements. What endorsements should a district be able to offer?

Without altering the courses that a school district is currently required by SBOE rule to offer, a district should be able to offer at least three of the five endorsements.

Multidisciplinary (all districts are required to offer at least four courses in each foundation subject area, to include English IV, Chemistry, and/or Physics)

Business and Industry (TAC, §74.3(b)(2)(G) requires a district to offer a coherent sequences of courses from at least three CTE career clusters)

STEM (TAC, §74.3(b)(2)(C) requires a district to offer at least six science courses)

5. Will all high schools be required to offer multiple endorsements, even those that focus 100% on STEM/engineering?

No. Statute requires each school district to make available to high school students courses that allow a student to complete the curriculum requirements for at least one endorsement. A school district that offers only one endorsement curriculum must offer the multidisciplinary studies endorsement curriculum.

6. The new graduation rules include the following statement, “This section does not entitle a student to remain enrolled to earn more than 26 credits.” Does this mean that a student cannot earn more than 26 credits?

No. This statement means that a student is not entitled to continue earning credits to earn endorsements indefinitely. A district may permit a student to earn more than 26 credits, but has the authority to deny a student’s request to continue earning credits beyond the 26 if the district determines that the student has sufficient credits to graduate with an endorsement.

7. 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. A student must still earn a total of 26 credits to graduate on the Foundation High School Program with an endorsement.

8. Do districts have the authority to require Algebra II or other specific courses for all endorsements?

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.

9. Who decides what constitutes a coherent sequence of courses?

Each local school district has the authority to determine a coherent sequence of courses and identify courses within that sequence as advanced courses for the purposes of satisfying an endorsement requirement, provided that prerequisites are followed.

10. In some endorsement options there doesn’t seem to be a clear sequence. Will the district determine the sequence in these cases?

Yes. A school district determines the specific set of courses each student must complete to earn an endorsement, provided that prerequisites are followed and that the set of courses meets the requirements of the options listed for an endorsement in SBOE rule.

11. Should planning be approached by picking an endorsement and then planning the courses necessary to obtain that particular endorsement, or should it be approached by first picking courses and then discovering which endorsement area the sequence fits (at a later time)?

This is a local decision.

12. Are students required to meet each of the options listed under an endorsement area, or they required to only meet one of the options?

To earn an endorsement a student must complete any specific course requirements and one set of requirements identified in the endorsement rules. For example, to earn a business and industry endorsement, a student must complete the course requirements for CTE or the course requirements for English language arts electives, but not both.

13. Under the endorsements for which CTE courses are an option, is there a list of “advanced CTE courses that are the third or higher course in a sequence”?

There is not a list of such courses. A school district may define advanced CTE courses keeping in mind the requirement that the course be the third or higher course in a sequence.

14. Can Career Preparation be used as the final course in a sequence for an endorsement for which there are CTE course options?

No. Career Preparation may be used as one of the courses in the coherent sequence, but the final course must come from one of the career clusters listed in the rule.

15. If a student takes two CTE courses in his/her final semester, each from a different endorsement area, which endorsement would the student earn?

If a student takes two CTE courses that align with two different endorsement areas, the local school district must determine which course is part of the coherent sequence of courses for that student. The career cluster of that course would determine which endorsement the student earns. This is a local decision.

STEM

1. Can AP Physics I satisfy the physics requirement for the STEM endorsement?

Yes. College Board Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses may be substituted as appropriate for required courses.

2. Can Principles of Technology satisfy the physics requirement in the STEM endorsement?

Yes. Principles of Technology addresses all of the TEKS for physics and credit may not be earned for both physics and Principles of Technology to satisfy science credit requirements.

3. The fifth option under the STEM endorsement says “a coherent sequence of three additional credits.” What does this mean?

Students may earn a STEM endorsement by successfully completing Algebra II and three additional credits from no more than two of the following categories: the STEM CTE career cluster, computer science courses that may satisfy a STEM endorsement, mathematics courses beyond Algebra II, or science courses. The three additional credits must be a coherent sequence of courses as determined by the local district.

4. Which science courses may satisfy the science option under the STEM endorsement?

The list of science courses that may satisfy a STEM endorsement are identified in TAC §74.13(e)(5).

5. Why is there a discrepancy between the number of courses required to earn a math STEM endorsement and the number of courses required to earn a science STEM endorsement?

There is not a discrepancy in the number of courses. To earn a STEM endorsement in mathematics, a student must successfully complete a total of five courses: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and two additional math courses for which Algebra II is a prerequisite. To earn a STEM endorsement in science, a student must successfully complete a total of five courses: biology, chemistry, physics, and two additional science courses.

Business and Industry

If a student on a business and industry endorsement program chooses a computer programming language to meet the foundation program Languages Other Than English (LOTE) requirement, will these courses satisfy both the LOTE requirement and the endorsement requirement under the Information Technology career cluster?

No. The computer programming courses that are part of CTE are not options for satisfying the LOTE requirement. The only courses that are currently approved to satisfy the LOTE requirement are Computer Science I, II, and III. These courses may satisfy the LOTE requirement and may count toward a STEM endorsement, but not a business and industry endorsement. A student must still earn a total of 26 credits to graduate on the Foundation High School Program with an endorsement.

Public Services

May a student seeking a public services endorsement who is taking a sequence of courses in the Human Services career cluster use a course from another career cluster as part of the coherent sequence of courses?

Yes. A coherent sequence of courses may include courses from any CTE career cluster provided that the final course in the sequence is obtained from one of the CTE career clusters identified under the public services endorsement. Districts must determine locally that courses from different career clusters create a coherent sequence of courses.

Arts and Humanities

1. Is it permissible to substitute an additional arts and humanities course for the fourth science requirement if the student is pursuing an arts and humanities endorsement?

A student pursuing an arts and humanities endorsement who has the written permission of the student's parent may substitute an English language arts course, a social studies course, a LOTE course, or a fine arts course for the additional science credit required to earn an endorsement.

2. Under the arts and humanities endorsement, if a student has taken English IV, can it count as part of the four English elective credits?

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. A student must still earn a total of 26 credits to graduate Foundation High School Program with an endorsement.

3. How many social studies courses are required for a student to earn an arts and humanities endorsement?

The social studies option under arts and humanities requires that a student complete five credits in social studies.

Multidisciplinary Studies

Under the multidisciplinary studies endorsement, what courses will satisfy the requirement for “four advanced courses that prepare a student to enter the workforce successfully or postsecondary education without remediation”?

Each local school district has the authority to identify advanced courses for the purposes of satisfying an endorsement requirement, provided that they meet the definition above.