

SB37-related Core Course Evaluation

Core Course Review Framework

Purpose

This framework is intended to help guide decisions about whether a course satisfies the four SB 37 criteria and should be considered a core course. ***A course should satisfy all four criteria to qualify as a core course; satisfying fewer than all four criteria is insufficient.*** To support reviewers' judgments, the framework provides a structured process for evaluating courses using evidence drawn from course objectives, learning outcomes, assignments, assessments, foundational component areas, and core objectives.

Table 1. SB 37 Core Course Evaluation Framework

SB 37 Criteria	How to Interpret the Criterion for Evaluating a Course	Key Course Review Question
<i>1. Foundational and fundamental to a sound postsecondary education</i>	The course develops fundamental knowledge or skills that provide a basis for further learning and intellectual development.	Should the knowledge or skills taught in this course be considered foundational for a college education?
<i>2. Necessary to prepare students for civic and professional life</i>	The course develops knowledge or skills that help individuals function effectively in society and the workplace.	Does this course prepare students for responsibilities commonly encountered as citizens or professionals?
<i>3. Equip students for participation in the workforce and the betterment of society</i>	The course develops capabilities whose usefulness extends beyond a specific occupation or field.	Are the knowledge or skills developed in this course applicable across many occupations and societal contexts?
<i>4. Ensure a breadth of knowledge consistent with accreditation standards</i>	The course contributes to the range of knowledge areas expected within an accredited degree program.	Does this course contribute to the breadth of knowledge expected within an accredited degree program?

In order to operationalize the four listed criteria, it is helpful to think of them in terms of their defining foci, which follow, and in conjunction with the foundational components of core courses as identified by the Texas Core Curriculum guidelines that appear in the appendix on the last 2 pages of this document. This idea is reflected in Table 2.

1. **Foundational** – Foundational and fundamental to a sound postsecondary education.
2. **Civic & Professional Life** – Necessary to prepare students for civic and professional life.
3. **Workforce & Society** – Equip students for participation in the workforce and the betterment of society.
4. **Breadth** – Ensure a breadth of knowledge consistent with accreditation standards.

Table 2. Foundational Component Supporting the Four SB 37 Criteria *(The shaded entries in each of the boxes below reflects the judgment to be made for each potential core course such that we ask “This course.....”)*

Foundational Component Area	Foundational	Civic & Professional Life	Workforce & Society	Breadth
Communication	Develops fundamental communication knowledge and skills.	Supports effective interaction in civic and professional settings.	Communication skills are broadly applicable across occupations and societal contexts.	Represents a major knowledge domain within the curriculum.
Mathematics	Develops quantitative reasoning and analytical skills.	Supports informed decision making in civic and professional settings.	Quantitative skills are used across many occupations and fields.	Represents a major knowledge domain within the curriculum.
Life & Physical Sciences	Develops scientific literacy and understanding of natural phenomena.	Supports informed engagement with scientific and technological issues.	Scientific reasoning is valuable across many occupations and societal contexts.	Represents a major knowledge domain within the curriculum.
American History	Develops understanding of historical events and institutions.	Supports informed citizenship and civic participation.	Historical understanding can inform decision making in organizational and societal settings.	Represents a major knowledge domain within the curriculum.
Government / Political Science	Develops understanding of political institutions and civic processes.	Supports civic participation and understanding of governmental systems.	Knowledge of institutions and governance can inform professional and societal engagement.	Represents a major knowledge domain within the curriculum.
Social & Behavioral Sciences	Develops understanding of individuals, groups, and societies.	Supports effective participation in civic and professional environments.	Insights into human behavior are applicable across many occupations and societal contexts.	Represents a major knowledge domain within the curriculum.
Language, Philosophy & Culture	Develops understanding of ideas, values, beliefs, and cultures.	Supports engagement with diverse communities and perspectives.	Cultural awareness and ethical reasoning are applicable across many occupations and societal contexts.	Represents a major knowledge domain within the curriculum.
Creative Arts	Develops appreciation and interpretation of	Can support communication, cultural awareness,	Creative and interpretive skills may be useful across occupations	Represents a major knowledge domain within the curriculum.

	artistic expression.	and engagement with society.	and societal contexts.	
UH Option A: Math/Reasoning	Develops logical, mathematical, and analytical reasoning.	Supports informed decision making in civic and professional settings.	Analytical reasoning is broadly transferable across occupations.	Contributes to the breadth of quantitative and reasoning-based knowledge.
UH Option B: Writing in the Disciplines	Develops discipline-specific written communication skills.	Supports professional communication and civic discourse.	Written communication is broadly transferable across occupations.	Contributes to the breadth of communication-related knowledge and skills.

It is also necessary to operationalize the four listed criteria in conjunction with the core objectives also identified by the Texas Core curriculum guidelines. This idea is reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Core Objectives Supporting the Four SB 37 Criteria

(The shaded entries in each of the boxes below reflects the judgment to be made for each potential core course such that we ask “This course.....”)

Core Objective	Foundational	Civic & Professional Life	Workforce & Society	Breadth
Critical Thinking Skills	Develops analytical, evaluative, and reasoning capabilities central to higher education.	Supports informed judgment and decision making in civic and professional settings.	Critical thinking is broadly transferable across occupations and societal contexts.	Supports learning across knowledge domains but does not itself constitute a knowledge domain.
Communication Skills	Develops the ability to express and interpret ideas effectively.	Supports communication in civic, community, and professional settings.	Communication skills are broadly transferable across occupations and societal contexts.	Supports learning across knowledge domains but does not itself constitute a knowledge domain.
Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Develops the ability to analyze evidence and numerical information.	Supports informed decision making in civic and professional settings.	Quantitative and empirical reasoning are broadly transferable across occupations and societal contexts.	Supports learning across knowledge domains but does not itself constitute a knowledge domain.
Teamwork	Develops the ability to work effectively	Supports participation in civic, community,	Teamwork is broadly transferable across	Does not itself constitute a

	with others toward shared goals.	and professional environments.	occupations and societal contexts.	knowledge domain.
Social Responsibility	Develops awareness of civic obligations and societal impacts.	Supports effective engagement in local, national, and global communities.	Responsible engagement benefits organizations and society across contexts.	Does not itself constitute a knowledge domain.
Personal Responsibility	Develops ethical reasoning and accountability for actions and decisions.	Supports responsible participation in civic and professional settings.	Ethical decision making is broadly applicable across occupations and societal contexts.	Does not itself constitute a knowledge domain.

Final Core Course Review

A reviewer should consider the course related to each SB 37 criterion. A course qualifies as a core course **only if all four SB 37 criteria are satisfied**. The review should also approach the review from a reasonable person standard.

Appendix

Elements of the Texas Core Curriculum

The [Texas Core Curriculum](#) includes 42 SCH designed to establish a foundation of knowledge. Each institution selects specific core courses offered consistent with its mission. Although the courses may vary by institution, core must include the following Foundational Component Areas and Core Objectives.

Foundational Component Areas
Communication (6 SCH): Courses focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.
Mathematics (3 SCH): Courses focus on quantitative literacy in logic, patterns, and relationships. Courses involve the understanding of key mathematical concepts and application of appropriate quantitative tools to everyday experience.
Life and Physical Sciences (6 SCH): Courses focus on describing, explaining, and predicting natural phenomena using the scientific method. Courses involve the understanding of interactions among natural phenomena and the implications of scientific principles on the physical world and on experiences.
Language, Philosophy and Culture (3 SCH): Courses focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures.
Creative Arts (3 SCH): Courses focus on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination. Courses involve the synthesis and interpretation of artistic expression and enable critical, creative, and innovative communication about works of art.
American History (6 SCH): Courses focus on the consideration of past events and ideas relative to the U.S., with the option of including Texas History for a portion of this component area. Courses involve the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role
Government/Political Science (6 SCH): Courses focus on consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. Courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations.
Social and Behavioral Sciences (3 SCH): Courses focus on the application of empirical and scientific methods that contribute to the understanding of what makes us human. Courses involve the exploration of behavior and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, and events, examining their impact on the individual, society, and culture.
UH Component Area Option A--Math/Reasoning (3 SCH): Courses focus on building students' skills in mathematical and logical thinking, including approved courses in mathematics, logic, computer science, and statistics.
UH Component Area Option B—Writing in the Disciplines (3 SCH): Courses focus on communicating effectively in clear and correct prose in a style appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

Writing intensive courses require substantial writing (at least 3000 words, including at least one piece of work done outside of class and returned to the student prior to the end of the term with the instructor's written evaluation of grammar, style, and content).
Core Objectives
Critical Thinking Skills: includes creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. <i>Required for all foundational component areas.</i>
Communication Skills: includes effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication. <i>Required for all foundational component areas.</i>
Empirical and Quantitative Skills: includes manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions. <i>Required for Mathematics, Life and Physical Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences and Math/Reasoning.</i>
Teamwork: includes the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal. <i>Required for Communication, Life and Physical Sciences, and Creative Arts.</i>
Social Responsibility: includes intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities. <i>Required for Creative Arts, American History, Government/Political Science, and Language, Philosophy and Culture.</i>
Personal Responsibility: includes the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making. <i>Required for Communication, American History, Government/Political Science, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Language, Philosophy and Culture.</i>