

**CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE**

**Educational**

**P**rogram

**G**uidelines

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Revision of September 2009

Central Texas College does not discriminate in admissions or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, or veteran status.

CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE  
MISSION

**At Central Texas College, we identify and serve our unique, global community needs and provide quality teaching through an accessible learning environment.**

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

I. PURPOSE

This document provides information, procedures, and guidance to be followed in the implementation, administration, and management of educational programs. The guidelines and procedures contained in this document apply to all Central Texas College personnel regardless of location and regardless of the method of instructional delivery. Where policy, with regard to location, varies it will be so noted. The *Educational Program Guidelines* (EPG) references additional publications that are accessible via a web-based format and/or by contacting Instructional and Accreditation Support Services.

Central Texas College District, through its two accredited operating units, Central Texas College (CTC), a two year community college, and American Preparatory Institute (API), an adult high school, deliver the college district's programs and services. Both of these are accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and approved by the appropriate Texas state agencies. The following addresses the programs and services delivered by CTC through the district's campus operating units.

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), <http://www.sacscoc.org>, is the regional accrediting body of higher education institutions that award associate, bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees in eleven southern states and Latin America. CTC is accredited by SACS to award associate degrees and certificates of completion. Texas institutions of higher education adhere to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Rules and Regulations that parallel SACS' *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*.

Board Documents 119, 158, and 270, along with the Strategic Plan, establish CTC policy concerning managing, monitoring, and evaluating educational programs and services. CTC's governance is through the locally elected Board of Trustees and state coordination is received through the THECB, <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>. Both THECB Rules and CTC policies and procedures are parallel.

CTC consists of operating units referred to as campuses; Central Campus, Continental Campus, Europe Campus, Fort Hood and Service Area Campus, Navy Campus, and Pacific Far East Campus. Of these, Central and Fort Hood and Service Area campuses operate within the state of Texas. Locations outside of Texas are referred to in the EPG as locations-at-a-distance.

CTC offers collegiate instruction on a much wider geographic scale than is customary for community colleges. CTC enters educational services contractual agreements with all branches of the military to provide a variety of educational opportunities. Only selected courses are offered to students attending CTC locations-at-a-distance taking coursework toward a degree through traditional classroom instruction. Instruction offered at locations-at-a-distance should be considered as a portion of a larger obligation requested by the government, based on government needs. Each operating unit outside the state of Texas does not constitute a 'campus' in the traditional sense. Specifically, these campuses depend on the military or other governmental agencies to provide both classroom and administrative spaces to meet their needs.

The American Preparatory Institute (API) offers programs that include a high school diploma, basic and developmental academic skills, English as a second language, and general education development (GED) preparation. Specific educational program guidelines are contained in specific API documents that flow down from Board Document 132. API is accredited separately by the Council on Accreditation and School Improvement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The EPG serves as the primary source for educational program information required in the development of Quality Control Plans (QCP). CTC enters educational services contractual agreements with government agencies and all branches of the military to provide a variety of educational opportunities. QCP's may be required by the government to meet a contract obligation. The specific elements requiring evaluation are defined by the government and required by the contract. Upon award of a contract and QCP acceptance by the government, the implementation of the campus/site-specific QCP is integrated into the college's overall institutional effectiveness process.

CTC engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes. Section VII of this document, Institutional Assessment, details the various interwoven processes incorporating a systematic review of programs and services that result in continuous improvement toward the delivery of quality educational programs regardless of location or instructional delivery method.

Amendments or revisions to these guidelines may result from changes in federal and state regulations and requirements or as a result of recommendations from CTC personnel. In all cases, policy amendments and additions will comply with the policies approved by the Board of Trustees. The guidelines and procedures contained in this document apply to all Central Texas College personnel regardless of location. Inquiries and comments regarding this document should be addressed to the Deputy Chancellor of Educational Program and Support Services, the appropriate Campus Dean for Central, Fort Hood and Service Area, Continental, Europe, Pacific Far East, or Navy Campus, and/or the Dean of Instructional and Accreditation Support Services.

This guide was updated on September 30, 2009. The Educational Program Guidelines document is also available through the CTC website; <http://www.ctcd.edu>

## II. PERSONNEL

### 2.1 Faculty

The qualifications required for faculty are detailed in Policy No. 160 Instructor Qualifications and Approval Procedures located in the Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual.

#### 2.1.1 Faculty Evaluation

Faculty evaluations are conducted at the direction of the Campus Dean. Each full-time and part-time faculty member receives a performance evaluation during the initial year of employment and thereafter a minimum of once every three years. Classroom evaluations are performed by a supervisor, a peer, or another qualified professional such as a Government Education Services Officer or Contracting Officer Representative.

The purpose of the evaluation is to identify methods or techniques for improving teaching and student learning. It also ensures that each faculty member is provided a periodic and regular opportunity to review their performance with their supervisor. The supervisor and faculty member thus have an opportunity to discuss performance and establish goals of performance standards to improve teaching and student learning.

#### 2.1.2 Academic Freedom

Academic freedom, like any other freedom, is not absolute. It might be defined as a condition in a social order that permits the individual to enjoy rights determined by the social group, subject to such limitations as are considered necessary for the protection of other persons in the exercise of the same rights and for the maintenance of the general welfare of all.

It is important to understand that academic freedom and its corollary, academic responsibility, have evolved for the protection of the student and the instructor and are essential to the search for academic truth.

Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and are dependent upon a free search for truth and its free expression. Hence, it is essential that faculty members be free to pursue scholarly inquiry without undue restriction and to voice and publish their conclusions concerning the significance of evidence that they consider relevant. Instructors must be free from the corrosive fear that others, whether internal or external to the college community whose vision may differ, may threaten their professional careers or any resulting material benefits.

All faculty members are entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing the subjects that they teach. Whenever they depart widely from the normally accepted

academic fields of knowledge, they should do so on a basis of sound academic principles of research, reason, and conclusion. Their position should always be academically tenable and they should remain within the bounds of good taste and the usual proprieties of public debate. The principle of academic freedom does not protect an incompetent or negligent faculty member or prevent the institution from making appropriate efforts to evaluate the performance of the faculty.

Central Texas College adheres to the concept of academic freedom and its counterpart, academic responsibility, with equal determination. Abuses or indiscretions of either will not be condoned.

### 2.1.3 Academic Responsibility

The concept of academic freedom must be accompanied by an equally demanding concept of responsibility to be shared by the Board of Trustees, administrators, and faculty members.

The essential responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are prescribed by law and are reflected in the by-laws adopted by the Board. The administrators are responsible for assuring compliance with the policies of the Board of Trustees. The standards of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools also serve as guidelines.

The fundamental responsibilities of faculty members as instructors and scholars include maintenance of competence in their fields of specialization and exhibition of such competence. Faculty members, through faculty organizations such as Faculty Senate or individually, can advise the Chancellor. However, faculty members have no role in the governance of the institution.

The educational quality at Central Texas College is a direct result of the selection of its faculty. Central Texas College places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. The commitment of faculty to the Central Texas College mission and its purposes contributes to the effectiveness of the college's educational program.

Exercise of professional integrity by faculty members includes recognition that the public will judge their profession and their institution by their statements. Therefore, they should strive to be accurate, to exercise appropriate restraint, to show respect for the opinions of others, and to avoid creating the impression that they speak or act for the College when they speak or act as private persons.

Faculty members should be judicious in the use of controversial material in the classroom and should introduce such material only as it has clear relationship to their subject field.

### 2.1.4 Faculty Loads

Central Texas College has established teaching loads for both full-time and part-time instructional staff. Teaching loads take into account the methodology of instruction utilized, the size of the classes, whether or not they are lecture only, lecture and laboratory combined, or laboratory only and the assistance that might be available from clerical and technical support services. In addition, the faculty load for each faculty member takes into consideration any committee membership, academic advising, grant writing and research, or other outside of classroom activities.

#### 2.1.5 Faculty Compensation

Central Texas College publishes a salary schedule annually in its budget documents that outlines the compensation for both full-time and part-time faculty.

#### 2.1.6 Faculty Organization

The Faculty Senate at Central Texas College serves as the organization for the faculty, both full-time and part-time, to conduct the business of the faculty and make recommendations to the administration. The CTC Faculty Senate exists as a group for promoting education; communication and understanding among the Board of Trustees, the College Administration, and the faculty; professional relationships among members; presentation of the views and recommendations of the college faculty to college administration, Board-appointed Councils, and/or the Board of Trustees as to policies or procedures on academic and professional matters that relate to the educational program and services provided by Central Texas College; and student welfare. The Faculty Senate webpage may be viewed at <http://ctcfacultysenate.org>.

### 2.2 Career Development Personnel

Career development personnel should have a combination of academic preparation and work experience.

#### 2.2.1 Academic Preparation

Guidance, counseling, and career development activities should be provided by professionally trained counselors. A master's degree in guidance and/or counseling or closely related field is required, or a master's degree with significant course work and experience in career development is acceptable. Related academic graduate degree programs include, but are not limited to, student development counseling in higher education and mental health counseling. Professional certifications, including, but not limited to, the state Professional Counseling Licensure (LPC) and the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), are preferred.

In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated competence may substitute for the academic preparation mentioned above. This

should include a combination of both significant course work and experience in career development. Such exceptions must be justified by the institution on an individual basis.

Should paraprofessionals be employed in specific areas such as job placement, they should hold a minimum of a baccalaureate degree.

### 2.2.2 Experience

Career development personnel must have the equivalent of three years work experience in the private sector other than counseling or teaching.

## 2.3 Administrators

Each campus dean will develop specifications of qualifications for its educational department administrators.

## 2.4 Professional Development

Each campus will conduct in-service and professional development activities for faculty and their supervisors. The purpose of these activities is to improve existing skills and develop new skills; introduce and explain new technologies and new and innovative instructional methods; review current regulations; and review and correct deficiencies discovered during evaluation. Faculty attend seminars and workshops where discipline matters and new and innovative instructional methods are presented. Additional professional development is provided to faculty teaching courses in alternative delivery methods.

In order to assist faculty members in their efforts to meet this responsibility, CTC has a wide range of policies and programs centered on professional development. Human Resources Management Operating Policies and Procedures Manual Policy 615 establishes procedures for full-time faculty to take sabbatical leave 'for up to one year to study or travel for the benefit of the Institution, the students, and the employee.' While on sabbatical leave, a faculty member may receive one-half of their normal pay as well as full benefits.

Human Resources Management Operating Policies and Procedures Manual Policy 555 describes the Employee Educational Benefits Program that encourages faculty to pursue educational goals in their discipline and to enhance their potential. The program encourages and assists department chairs and supervisors in urging employees to develop their abilities. Contracts with CTC's military partners at locations-at-a-distance include contract obligations requiring in-service training opportunities for faculty and support for continuing educational pursuits.

STARLINK, is a 'statewide teleconference network that produces and distributes programming to benefit diverse Texas audiences.' Many STARLINK programs are directly relevant to improving classroom instruction in higher education. CTC downloads

and tapes all of the STARLINK videoconference as appropriate. Tapes are catalogued in the CTC library and are made available to faculty upon request. Videoconferences are also distributed to the college's locations-at-a-distance via videotape and via STARLINK's streaming videos accessed online.

In addition to educational opportunities, CTC provides ongoing professional development through the Employee Training Office. The Employee Training Office offers a variety of in-service programs that cover a wide range of topics. Topics may include sexual harassment prevention training as required by Texas Law, workplace safety, or computer software applications.

Professional development activities for faculty are documented through the Faculty Professional Development Plan. The plan and its associated electronic forms are available through [www.ctcd.edu/facsen.htm](http://www.ctcd.edu/facsen.htm). Documentation of professional development hours is submitted through the electronic forms and is collected by the Employee Training Office.

CTC requires and provides training prior to employment and continuously throughout employment for both faculty and staff responsible for distance learning. Training may be delivered face-to-face, online, or through desktop videoconferencing. The method is selected based upon many factors including who is to be trained, frequency of training, locations of trainees, content of training, and availability of training providers. CTC makes online training available through the Faculty Forum in the online course management system Blackboard. In addition to planned training, CTC provides faculty discussion forums and chat rooms to build a sense of community and to offer faculty mentoring among instructors of related fields of study or methods of instruction. Further, the Faculty Forum in Blackboard includes links for pertinent topics such as instructional design, assessment tools, and technology infusion along with updates in course content, accrediting agency criteria, and program and course changes.

The Central Texas College Foundation provides a third important area that fosters professional development by providing three endowments specific to faculty and staff and one that provides a lecture series for faculty, staff, and the community at large.

- CTC Faculty Development Endowment – two major award programs designed to assist the faculty in instructional enrichment and degree enhancement.
- The Christmas Affairs Committee Scholarship Fund – scholarships for any full-time CTC employee to attend CTC.
- The CTC Staff Scholarship – a scholarship for any full-time employee in the CTC tax district or service area.
- The Center for African-American Studies and Research Lectureship Fund – money used to bring “scholars and personalities of note to the CTC Campus for the purpose of delivering lectures on subjects related to African-American history, culture, or philosophy and for other topics of importance to the community.”

### III. PROGRAM DESIGN AND GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Central Texas College follows the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* established by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and in the rules and procedures outlined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The *Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education* (GIPWE) serves as the resource for the development of the EPG section on Program and Course Design. All career and technical education (CTE) courses are found in the common statewide inventory, the *Workforce Education Course Manual* (WECM).

All university parallel courses utilize the Texas Common Course Numbering (TCCN) system and are found in the statewide *Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual* (ACGM). The use of common courses from the state approved lists for university parallel and career and technical education facilitate the portability of credit and transferability to other accredited colleges and universities.

#### 3.1 Program and Course Design

All curricula at Central Texas College are designed to meet the mission and purpose of the college. Each instructional program department chair or program coordinator is responsible for curriculum development and review. The faculty members of each instructional area are responsible for determining the appropriate degree or certificate program content and course design.

All career and technical education (CTE) degree programs resulting in an associate of applied science award should be developed through a systematic process designed to meet the required outcomes identified by business and industry and respond to a regional or local need. In addition, associate of applied science degrees designed to articulate toward baccalaureate degree completion will be comprised of courses found in both the WECM and ACGM. A CTE program may consist of a single award (degree or certificate) or contain multiple awards and exit options of certificates building to an associate degree.

Associate in art and associate in science degree programs along with the general studies program are designed for and ultimately result in college transfer toward baccalaureate degree completion. Revisions may be requested, with the appropriate approvals, in cases where lower division requirements of the receiving institution for a bachelor's degree differ from those required by Central Texas College.

The program and its awards are identified by a Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. The CIP is a federal taxonomy developed by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. It is used throughout the United States by state agencies and national associations to establish standard terminology to improve communication and standardize record-keeping. The 2000 edition may be viewed at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/cip2000/>.

#### 3.2 Sequencing of Courses

In university parallel offerings there must be an orderly, identifiable sequence of academic courses. Courses build upon the student learning outcomes that result in students attaining the required knowledge and skills to transfer to a senior college or university and facilitate successful completion of higher level coursework that may lead to baccalaureate degree completion.

Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate of General Studies degrees require a 42 semester credit hour core curriculum. Students who successfully complete the core curriculum may transfer the block of courses to another Texas public institution of higher education and substitute the block for the receiving institution's core curriculum per the THECB website <http://statecore.its.txstate.edu/>.

The career and technical educational (CTE) offerings leading to an Associate in Applied Science programs must contain an orderly, identifiable sequence of academic and CTE courses with identified student competencies that lead to students' attainment of marketable skills in each occupational certificate or degree award. Programs must demonstrate appropriate sequencing of academic and CTE courses and/or competencies in the curriculum.

For Associate of Applied Science degree completion a general education component constituting of a minimum of 15 semester credit hours must be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics. These courses must be selected from the ACGM and be identified in the TCCNS.

The WECM is organized by six-digit CIP codes that represent instructional program codes, titles, and descriptions for academic and CTE programs offered at postsecondary levels. The THECB assigns CIP codes and rubrics to courses for the purpose of classifying, recording, and reporting statistics for CTE courses. The CIP codes or rubrics are not intended to drive the choice of semester credit hour (SCH) or continuing education unit (CEU) course offerings but to serve as a guide once a college has identified the learning outcomes for a course and or program.

The [WECM](#) website enables colleges to search for courses by CIP code, rubric, number, title, description, learning outcomes, semester credit hours (SCH) and/or continuing education units (CEU).

### 3.2.1 Program and Course Requisites

All college-level, non-developmental courses that are required course prerequisites, co-requisites, and/or requirements for entry into degree or entry-level certificate program must be included in the total hours for the program and must be clearly identified in the proposed degree plan.

### 3.2.2 Developmental Courses

Developmental course hours must not be included in the total credit hours for a program. Developmental course credit hours may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

### 3.3 Semester Credit Hour Assignment (THECB Rules)

For semester credit hour (SCH) program formats, CTC assigns consistent and appropriate ratios of contact hours to SCH for each course in the program according to the ratios and parameters established by the THECB guidelines outlined in the GIPWE. Credit awarded is based on one scheduled lecture hour per week, two to four scheduled lab hours per week, three to six scheduled clinical or internship hours per week, seven to ten practicum scheduled hours per week, and eight to eleven scheduled cooperative hours with one lecture hour scheduled per week for an award of two credits. Standards for assigning SCH are shown based on a 16-week delivery.

|  | <b>Contact Hours</b> | <b>Credit</b> |
|--|----------------------|---------------|
| Lecture  | 16                   | 1             |
| Laboratory                                       | 48 - 64              | 1             |
| Clinical Internship                              | 48 – 96              | 1             |
| Practicum  | 112-160              | 1             |
| Cooperative                                      | 128-176              | 2             |
| (Cooperative includes one lecture hour per week) |                      |               |

### 3.4 Semester Credit for Shortened Courses (THECB Rules)

All shortened courses shall consist of the same number of class contact hours as similar courses offered in a regular session or summer session; that is, normally 48 contact hours. Courses shall also have the same student learning outcomes, requirements, and quality of instruction as regular length courses.

Students may not carry more courses at a time in a shortened format than will give them total credit of one semester credit hour per week of instruction.

No three credit hour course shall consist of fewer than nine days of classes offered over not less than three weeks.

All requirements for three credit hour courses shall apply proportionately to courses for one, two, four, or other credit hour values.

### 3.5 Academic Cooperatives and External Learning Experiences

Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degree programs may require an Academic Cooperative as outlined in the ACGM. The course is designed to integrate on-campus study with practical hands-on work experience. In conjunction with class seminars, individualized goals and objectives are set by the instructor, student, and employer.

In CTE programs, the inclusion of learning experiences external to the usual classroom activities is recommended. Affiliations with external agencies or associations are required for effective instruction and for assistance in school-to-work transition. External learning experiences are generally limited to Texas sites.

### 3.5.1 General Requirements

External learning experiences for which credit is awarded must be under the control and supervision of Central Texas College and all such experiences must be performed under the supervision of an instructor(s) approved to teach in a program specifically related to the work experience.

The instructional department faculty is responsible for assuring that the experiences are consistent with industry standards, and are new and varied; that they support the objectives of the program; and that they emphasize current practices in the field of specialization.

A written competency-based learning plan describing overall student objectives and related work experiences must be developed by the approved instructor in cooperation with the student and employer/sponsor. This plan must be signed by the student, the instructor, and the work-site supervisor. This plan, as well as documentation of the instructor's coordination activities, must be on file in the department and accessible to the student.

External learning experiences may be for paid or unpaid employment. However, under no circumstance may these learning experiences be undertaken solely for student employment.

Only students working toward a degree or certificate in the appropriate CTE program may enroll in a course that provides related external learning experiences.

Only students who have begun employment at approved work sites on or before the official class reporting date may be reported for contact-hour funding.

No more than 336 contact hours per semester may be reported for state funding for each student enrolled in cooperative education. These hours must include at least 16 hours of classroom instruction per semester. A maximum of 1008 contact hours of cooperative education course will be allowed in any program.

Course descriptions clearly show the technical content of each course and student learning outcomes are designed to demonstrate student competencies.

Courses must be properly sequenced and correlated with other courses.

The department is responsible for the approval of all training stations.

Cooperative training must be conducted in state-licensed facilities if licensure is required.

Students who are already employed must follow an approved learning plan comprised of learning experiences beyond those already acquired.

Internships may be offered as a learning experience if learning objectives are clearly defined. This external experience is particularly beneficial when a program requires access to equipment at the business or industry site. Internships may be offered as advanced-skills courses.

### 3.5.2 Specific Requirements for Clinical Education

Central Texas College must be responsible for the clinical instruction, rotation, supervision, and competency evaluation of each student enrolled in clinical education.

Clinical experiences must be governed by a written agreement of affiliation between Central Texas College and the affiliated entity. This agreement must describe the purposes of the affiliation, including the responsibilities and obligations of both parties. Current copies of all affiliation agreements must be on file in the department.

## 3.6 Degrees and Certificates

Central Texas College awards five degrees at the associate level: Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Applied Science, Associate of Applied Science in Applied Technology, and an Associate in General Studies. There is an academic residency requirement whereby at least 25 percent of the semester credit hours required for the degree or certificate program must be taken with CTC.

The Associate in Science and the Associate in Arts degrees are collegiate transfer degrees related to baccalaureate degrees in the arts and sciences.

The Associate in Applied Science degree is a collegiate career and technical education degree that guides and prepares a student for a career; although, some occupational courses in some Associate of Applied Science degree curricula may transfer to colleges offering baccalaureate degrees.

A credit certificate should constitute a building block toward the Associate in Applied Science degree. At least 50 percent of the course credits should be drawn from a focused technical specialty. The remaining courses may be technical or university parallel.

In addition to THECB-recognized degree and certificate awards, CTC may offer institutional awards reflecting a course or series of courses that represent achievement of identifiable skill proficiency or meet students' self-defined educational objectives.

Awards should be based on existing ACGM and WECM courses or courses that are part of CTC's approved Unique Need and/or Local Need inventory.

The Associate of Applied Science in Applied Technology degree is designed for military personnel who have attained a skill level three in a US Army military occupational specialty. Credit is awarded for military and civilian education, training, and work experience.

The Associate in General Studies degree is designed for students who seek a flexible degree program. It permits students to plan, with advisement, an individualized program with access to a wide range of academic disciplines and fields of professional study.

Degree requirements are detailed in the Central Texas College catalog.

### 3.6.1 Transfer Degrees – Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate of General Studies

Central Texas College has adopted a 60 semester credit hour (SCH) minimum curriculum that adheres to the requirements mandated by the state legislature and approved by the THECB.

If a student successfully completes the required SCH curriculum at CTC, the course work may be transferred to any other institution of higher education and may be accepted in meeting the lower division degree requirement for a baccalaureate degree. Students are advised to tailor degrees to meet a desired baccalaureate degree from the institution of choice. Academic credit for each of the courses transferred would result in the student not being required to take additional lower division courses at the receiving institution.

University parallel courses are based on the common degree requirements in the baccalaureate degree at the colleges that most CTC students transfer. Degree requirements for the Associate in Arts, the Associate in Science, and the Associate in General Studies are illustrated in the Central Texas College catalog. Students are allowed to petition to make changes in the Associate in General Studies, the Associate in Arts, and the Associate in Science degrees where the freshman and/or sophomore degree requirements of the receiving college differ from CTC's degree requirements. These changes must be approved by the appropriate Instructional Department Chair in coordination with the Dean, Student Developmental Services.

### 3.6.2 Career and Technical Education Degrees—Associate of Applied Science

CTC offers career and technical education degrees that are based on requirements comprised of the competencies required by business, industry, government, and the military. The THECB published GIPWE outlines new program, program revision, and advisory committee requirements. Program advisory committees convene annually to assist in program development, revision, and review. The

industry-based advisory committee is designed to ensure that the program has adequate resources and a well-designed curriculum to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary to successfully meet the needs of business and industry.

Associate in Applied Science degrees and Certificates of Completion must include a capstone course. The capstone course provides a learning experience resulting in the consolidation and synthesis of program competencies.

CTE programs are required to show progress toward meeting the state's approved program Measures and Standards. The THECB publishes a profile of data submitted by the college in an Annual Data Profile. The Profile is reviewed annually and an assessment is made as to the progress being made toward meeting the measures. CTC instructional department conduct an evaluation of performance in meeting the state's approved District Measures and Program-Specific Measures. CTC identifies strategies that are implemented with the intent to continuously move toward improvement.

The Career and Technical Education Program Standards are:

- Program has 15 graduates over three year period;
- 90 percent of program graduates are placed within one year of graduation;
- 90 percent of students tested on a specific licensure exam pass the exam as reported for the most recent year for which data is available;
- Programs with professional credentialing requirements have documentation that they meet the standards of the respective credentialing agency; and
- 100 percent compliance with the THECB *Guidelines for Instructional Programs in Workforce Education*.

A THECB On-Site Review or an internal Desk Audit is conducted every five years. The THECB team members present the findings and recommendations from the review of the mission, strategic planning and institutional resources, effective use of resources, access/effectiveness of Student Services, achievement, and quality of academic areas. The team also evaluates each education program individually.

The following programs adhere to standards established by an external accrediting body or approval agency and after successful completion of the program the student is eligible to sit for the appropriate certification exam.

- Criminal Justice, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCLEOSE) <http://www.tcleose.state.tx.us/>
- Cosmetology, Texas Cosmetology Commission <http://www.txcc.state.tx.us/>

- Emergency Medical Technology, Texas Department of Health [www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/ems/emshome.htm](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/ems/emshome.htm)
- Nursing, Board of Nurse Examiners <http://www.bne.state.tx.us/>
- Board of Vocational Nurse Examiners <http://www.bvne.state.tx.us/>
- Medical Laboratory Technician, National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) <http://www.naacls.org/>

### 3.6.3 Certificate Programs

A certificate program results in a formal award that is a building block to an associate degree, an entry into a career, or in addition to an associate degree that indicates mastery of a prescribed series of courses and competencies with defined employment outcomes.

THECB approved certificate programs are defined by the following criteria:

- Length - Certificate program length is defined as:

Credit and/or non-credit block-time programs of greater than 359 contact hours (regardless of credit hour length).

Semester-length programs of 15 or more semester credit hours and up to 59 semester credit hours in length.

A marketable skills achievement award is comprised of nine to fourteen SCH of CTE education courses or 144-359 contact hours of comparable continuing education. Documentation is required that the award adds to the student's immediate employment.

- Content - Certificate programs are composed of a balanced, coherent sequence of:

Occupational courses and competencies that emphasize the acquisition of career and technical skills required for immediate employment and/or a specialty within an occupational area or the upgrading of skills and knowledge within an occupation.

Related and/or general education courses and competencies integrated into the occupational curriculum that provides appropriate career and technical, academic, and workplace skills.

- THECB Inventory and Evaluation

THECB-approved certificate programs appear on the state approved career and technical program inventory. The approved Associate of Applied Science degrees and certificates are subject to the state program evaluation procedure.

### 3.7 Academic Support Services

Central Texas College provides:

- Adult, continuing, and community education programs for occupational or cultural upgrading;
- Compensatory education programs designed to fulfill the commitment of an admissions policy allowing the enrollment of disadvantaged students;
- A continuing program of counseling and guidance designed to assist students in achieving their individual educational goals;
- CTE programs designed to meet community needs;
- Adult literacy and other basic skills programs for adults;
- Library and other learning resource services; and
- Technical skill tutorials and online mentors for the distant learner.

### 3.8 Course Syllabus and Instructional Materials

#### 3.8.1 Course Syllabus

The Instructional Department Chair is responsible for maintaining a corresponding course syllabus for each college credit course offered. The course syllabi masters are accessible online through <http://www.ctcd.edu/ia/syllabus.htm>. A course syllabus template is used to ensure that required components are addressed. The master syllabi format provides faculty at CTC locations with the course description, minimum course requirements, student learning outcomes, and a link to the instructional materials web page [http://www.ctcd.edu/im/im\\_main.asp](http://www.ctcd.edu/im/im_main.asp).

Course syllabus updates reflecting textbook changes should be completed by faculty prior to the implementation date and submitted to Instructional and Accreditation Support Services. It is important that each course syllabus is revised in a timely manner. Instructional Services will provide immediate notification to CTC locations-at-a-distance and update the web accessible syllabus site.

#### 3.8.2 Instructional Materials

Instructional materials required for each course may vary. The primary instructional resource is a textbook. Textbook selections are recommended by faculty and approved by the Instructional Department Chair. Every effort to keep costs at a minimum and retain textbook editions for an extended period of time is requested.

The process of collecting and disseminating instructional material information is discussed in the Instructional Materials Procedure document [http://www.ctcd.edu/ia/documents/im\\_procedures\\_091407.pdf](http://www.ctcd.edu/ia/documents/im_procedures_091407.pdf). This document

outlines departmental responsibilities and establishes a quarterly reporting tool that encompasses all current instructional delivery methods. Through this process, the most current instructional material requirements are made available to students and faculty through the Instructional Materials web site [http://www.ctcd.edu/im/im\\_main.asp](http://www.ctcd.edu/im/im_main.asp).

#### IV. PROCEDURES FOR APPROVING CURRICULA

The procedures to be used in the review and approval of the various courses and programs are outlined in this Section.

##### 4.1 New Programs and Courses/Changes to Programs or Courses

New programs, new courses, changes to programs, and changes to courses may be recommended in a variety of ways; through individual faculty members, program advisory committees, or requests to contract proposal requirements. The recommendation must be reviewed and approved by the instructional department from which it originates and/or will have ultimate responsibility for content and quality. Recommendations generating from an external source, such as state licensure commissions, are directed to the academically appropriate instructional department chair for curriculum development and review. All recommendations must be submitted for review and approval through the instructional department chair then through the appropriate chain of supervision until it is reviewed and approved by the campus dean. The instructional department, with the approval of the campus dean, submits requests for new courses and programs, and program and course revisions to the Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services. Program and course additions and revisions are reviewed and approved by the CTC Curriculum Review Committee. The Central Texas College Board of Trustees approves all new programs for the college district. Only Associate of Applied Science degree programs are submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for approval and, upon approval, added to the college's inventory of approved degree and certificates in CTE.

Requests for new or revised courses or programs may be made any time during the year. However, approved requests received by December 1 will be effective the fall term or semester of the following year.

Courses approved on an individual basis may become effective when approved by the campus dean and the Deputy Chancellor, Educational Program and Support Services.

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is notified of major institutional changes, defined as substantive in nature, that occur between scheduled reaffirmation periods. The Substantive Change Request is a document requiring a great deal of information from the individual site, the campus, and the college. Policies, procedures, and guidelines relating to

changes of a substantive nature are found at the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges (SACS) website. The Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services coordinates notification to SACS and any substantive change requests.

#### 4.1.1 Assurances for New Programs in Career and Technical Education

Applications for new CTE programs must ensure that the following criteria are met in accordance with guidelines established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

- The institution documents local and/or regional demand for this program.
- Basic and workforce skills are integrated with the curriculum for the program.
- Each program award offers at least one of the following: a capstone, an external learning experience, or eligibility to sit for a certification or licensure examination.
- All course and program prerequisites are identified on the proposed curriculum outline and included in the credit hour/contact hour totals for the program.
- An enrollment management plan for the program is in place.
- The program is consistent with all the requirements from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- The program is consistent with all requirements from other licensing and/or accrediting authorities if applicable.
- An advisory committee composed of representatives from business and industry is directly involved in the creation of this program.
- Adequate funding is available to cover all program costs for the first five years.
- The institution has an improvement plan in place for all CTE programs that do not currently meet Board standards for both graduation and placement.
- Written notice of this application is sent to the appropriate Higher Education Regional Council(s).

- Skill standards recognized by the Texas Skill Standards Board, if they exist for this discipline, are reviewed and considered for inclusion in the curriculum for the program.
- The CTC Board of Trustees approval must be documented.

## 4.2 Courses

### 4.2.1 University Parallel Courses

All university parallel courses, including both transfer and developmental courses, i.e. those not transferable and not applied toward degree completion, are either based on the courses published in the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) or are unique-need courses approved on an individual basis by the THECB.

#### 4.2.1.1 Unique-Need Courses

If a proposed university parallel course does not conform closely enough to one of the courses described in the ACGM, the CTC may request unique-need approval from the THECB. Justification of need must be included in the request. Information regarding special student and/or community needs, degree or field the course will apply, purpose of the course, special qualifications of the faculty, and other pertinent information needs to be provided. At a minimum, two letters that document transferability to senior colleges or universities from the receiving institutions must also be part of the submission documentation. The course must have college level rigor and cannot be a junior or senior level course. The course cannot be a community service, leisure, or avocational course. THECB requirements are detailed in the ACGM.

Unique need courses are approved by the campus dean and the Deputy Chancellor, Educational Program and Support Services and forwarded to the Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Services for submission to the THECB for approval.

#### 4.2.1.2 Course Changes and Additions

Course changes and additions may be made as required. Changes and additions are recommended by the instructional department or campus dean. Course additions and revisions will be processed by the Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services and must be approved by the Deputy Chancellor, Educational Program and Support Services.

### 4.2.2 Career and Technical Education Programs

Career and technical education (CTE) programs and courses are conducted at all campuses. Texas state contact hour reimbursement only applies to students that are taking courses from a Texas campus or a Texas resident distant learner. No state contact hour reimbursement funds are used to support the cost of instruction at locations on the continental or international campuses.

The courses approved for inclusion in the CTC inventory are listed in the WECM. WECM courses are reviewed for currency and relevancy periodically by Texas community college faculty through the WECM Workshops. The course maintenance process for WECM course review is approved by the THECB. Faculty are asked to volunteer to participate on statewide peer review teams. Nominations are submitted for WECM maintenance participation by the Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services.

#### 4.2.2.1 CTE Program Changes

Program revisions may be recommended at any time through the process discussed in Paragraph 4.1. Any revision in program name, course number, course title, course description, total contact hours, number of hours devoted to lecture or laboratory, any addition or deletion of a course or courses, or an addition of a requisite requirement constitutes a program revision and must be submitted to Instructional and Accreditation Support Services.

Program revisions, including revisions recommended by continental and international campuses, are processed and presented by the appropriate instructional department chair.

Revisions presented by the instructional department chair must contain the following:

- Rationale for the requested revision.
- Minutes of the program advisory committee meeting noting discussion of the proposed revisions.
- Revised course descriptions (if applicable).
- Revised curriculum.

When course numbers are changed or courses are added or deleted an articulation scheme must be presented that shows how students enrolled under the old curriculum are able to complete their degree requirements when the program is changed.

The Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services processes CTE program changes. Program revisions will be reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Review Committee, chaired by the Deputy Chancellor, Educational Program and Support Services and, if appropriate, submitted to the THECB for approval.

Only through the approval of the Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services may courses that are not part of an approved AAS degree program be taught. In such instances, only a limited number of courses may be approved, not to exceed 14 semester credit hours.

#### 4.2.2.2 New Career and Technical Education Programs

All new CTE certificate and associate degree programs must be approved by the Board of Trustees. New program approval is based upon demonstrated and documented manpower and job opportunity needs and educational needs of the students. Formal needs surveys must be conducted to document these needs.

CTE programs should be designed primarily for immediate employment of the graduates. Each program must have an occupational objective. Program titles must focus on or be descriptive of the occupational objectives.

If new programs are offered at a distance of more than 30 miles from Central Campus, a Substantive Change Request must be submitted to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services processes the new program and prepares the application to be submitted to the Board of Trustees and to the THECB, and coordinates the preparation of the Substantive Change Request to SACS, if one is required.

#### 4.2.3 CTE Continuing Education Courses

CTE continuing education courses are available in the WECM to meet immediate workforce needs and offer flexible delivery of course offerings. The courses receive the same contact hour reimbursement as the semester credit hour course complement. Students who successfully complete the courses receive continuing education units (CEUs).

A course that is delivered in either a semester credit hour (SCH) or a continuing education unit (CEU) format is defined as a “mirror” course and must be offered as published in the WECM. These courses may include students enrolled as CTC students and receiving SCH along with those enrolled through the continuing education office receiving CEUs. All students are provided the opportunity to master the same competencies and faculty who teach mirror courses meet the qualification standards outlined in CTC Policy 160, College Workforce Education Credit Programs, Section, III.C.3.

Requests for a Special Topic or Local Need course must be submitted to the Director, Continuing Education for THECB approval. Local Need courses require 30 to 60 days to receive THECB approval.

Special courses that a campus or locations-at-a-distance desire to offer for either college credit or continuing education units must be submitted to the Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services on the [New Course Approval Form](#). The course title, description, minimum learning outcomes, and contact hours must be submitted before a course alpha designation and number will be assigned.

#### 4.2.3.1 Guidelines

Continuing education courses are designed to meet the training needs of people in occupations that require less than a baccalaureate degree but there is a documented occupational need.

Applications for courses with less than seven contact hours must include appropriate documentation to verify that the specific type and length of training is required by local, state, or national licensing, certifying, regulatory, or accrediting agencies. There are certain instructional areas that offer professional development course options.

Courses of greater length than 359 hours must be approved as programs.

Course titles should emphasize content rather than teaching methodology or delivery system; therefore, course titles should not include terms such as workshop, seminar, panel, conference, or symposium.

#### 4.2.3.2 Program Procedures

Permanent transcripts are maintained for both credit courses and continuing education courses. Transcripts are not prepared for avocational courses that do not award CEUs; however, class rolls are maintained for these courses. As procedures for developing, approving, conducting, and evaluating courses are discussed in other documents, this document provides guidance for courses awarding CEUs in more detail than the other courses.

CEUs are awarded to individuals for participation in selected continuing education courses. These courses are relevant to the student's continuing education and/or job requirements. Behavioral or performance objectives are prepared for each course and are used as the basis for measurement of progress, periodic feedback, and final assessment. These objectives must be measurable or observable, clearly stated, and focused on the level of performance expected of the learner.

To facilitate identification, continuing education courses that award CEUs have a zero as the second digit in the course number (example: ITSW 1014 Data Entry). Courses selected to award CEUs are approved by the Director, Continuing Education. For locations-at-a-distance, continuing education courses are submitted by the appropriate Campus Dean on the New Course Approval Form and then forwarded to the Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services. The course designation is assigned for inclusion in the course inventory.

Instructional departments offering courses outside of their regular semester/term offerings that are structured to meet specific educational needs of a targeted audience coordinate the courses with the Director, Continuing Education. The Director, Continuing Education normally schedules all Central Campus continuing education courses except those courses offered on a continuing or repetitive basis.

#### 4.2.3.3 CTC Designed Continuing Education Courses

Types of courses:

- Avocational Courses

Examples of avocational courses that may be offered might include, but not be limited to, food and entertaining, conversational languages, alternative health, physical improvement, creative arts, financial planning.

While some avocational courses provide opportunities for skill achievement that later can be applied to the job market, avocational courses must be offered on a cost recovery basis to ensure that funds generated from college credit and CEU courses are not used for those students who enroll for avocational purposes.

- Prevocational and Basic Skills Remediation Courses

These skills may be taught within a continuing education course and must be tied directly to the job or occupation that the course is designed for.

- Conversational Foreign Language

Foreign languages for very specific occupational areas may be approved, e.g., Conversational Spanish for Law Enforcement Personnel, Allied Health, Construction Trades, Retail Sales.

- Seminars, Conferences, and Symposiums

- Exam Review Courses

An example is the Real Estate Salesman's Exam Review course.

- Personal Development Courses

Examples of these courses may be: Time Management; Stress Management; Speed-reading; Charm and Poise; Public Speaking; Assertiveness Training; Transactional Analysis; Personal Appearance, and You; and/or How to Build Memory Skills.

#### 4.2.4 Dual Credit and Course Articulation

##### 4.2.4.1 Dual Credit Approval

Dual Credit courses are approved by the Deputy Chancellor, Educational Program and Support Services and are courses that a high school student takes from Central Texas College and receives credit for the course at both the high school and community college.

##### 4.2.4.2 Course Articulation Approval

Course Articulation is approved by the instructional department chair whereby a student receives credit for a course taken at one institution and the credit is held in escrow until after the student has enrolled in Central Texas College and met specified enrollment procedures before the course credit is applied toward degree completion. Articulation of course credit assists students in making a smooth transition from one level of education to another without experiencing delays or duplication in learning. Examples of articulation at CTC include; 2+2 programs and 2+2+2 programs that continue the articulation toward baccalaureate degree completion.

#### 4.2.5 Approval for Courses and Programs Taught in Texas on Military Installations and Locations Out-of-Service-Area

To receive state funding for university parallel courses, CTE programs, and CTE continuing education courses taught in Texas on military installations and at out-of-service-area locations, it is necessary to obtain approval of the Central Texas Higher Education Regional Council. The college's service area is defined by the Texas legislature to include the following counties: Bell, Burnet, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Llano, Mason, McCulloch, Mills, San Saba, and Florence High School only in Williamson County.

The Dean, Instructional and Accreditation Support Services is responsible for processing requests for offering courses and programs at out-of-service-area locations and on military installations in Texas.

Requests are coordinated with the Dean, Fort Hood/Service Area Campus and approved by the Deputy Chancellor, Educational Program and Support Services.

## V. CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE

The CTC Curriculum Review Committee consists of representatives from the faculty to include, at a minimum, a representative from English, mathematics, science, social science, speech, or fine arts, CTE program faculty representative, and a Distance Education and Education Technology representative. The committee also includes, at a minimum, the following Deans: Central Campus, Continental Campus, Fort Hood/Service Area Campuses, Navy Campus, Pacific Far East Campus, and Europe Campus or designated representative, Student Services, and Instructional and Accreditation Support Services. The Deputy Chancellor, Educational Program and Support Services appoints the faculty representatives and serves as Committee Chair.

The Curriculum Review Committee reviews and approves all college curricula changes to ensure that the changes are logical and improve programs, and that the curricula comply with the SACS requirements, with THECB Rules and Regulations, and with Central Texas College degree requirements.

The Curriculum Review Committee meets, at a minimum, once a year. If appropriate the meeting may be held via an electronic format.

## VI. DISTANCE EDUCATION

To ensure that the college complies with the role and mission as defined by the state, this section provides standards for programs and courses offered at out-of-district, locations-at-a-distance, or multi-media delivered instruction.

### 6.1 Out-of-District

#### 6.1.1 Standards and Criteria

Lower division off-campus or out-of-district resident credit courses must be comparable to on-campus courses. They must meet all the standards that the institution requires of its undergraduate courses offered on-campus. Quality criteria and standards include, but are not limited to the following:

Faculty members teaching off-campus or out-of-district must be regularly employed faculty members or must meet the same standards, review, and approval procedures used by the institution to select faculty responsible for on-campus courses. The ratio of full-time to part-time faculty in off-campus or out-of-district locations should be comparable to similar offerings on-campus. Major differences must be justified.

Faculty contact hours with the classes must be equivalent to those of the same course when taught on-campus.

Course instruction must be conducted by the faculty member of record.

The supervision, monitoring, and evaluation processes for faculty who teach off-campus and out-of-district must be comparable to those for on-campus instruction.

The provisions for support services and training for faculty who teach off-campus and out-of-district courses must be comparable to those provided for on-campus faculty.

Facilities for off-campus and out-of-district courses should be comparable to the facilities available for corresponding on-campus courses.

Students must have library privileges and have adequate library resources convenient for use at the out-of-district location.

The organization, content, and delivery of off-campus courses and out-of-district courses, and the processes for evaluating these factors, must be equivalent to those used by the institution in on-campus courses.

If an off-campus course has no on-campus counterpart, that course must meet all the quality criteria in these regulations.

Students enrolled in an off-campus or out-of-district course must satisfy the same requirements for admission to the institution and to the program that the course is a part, and to the course itself, as are required of on-campus students.

Students enrolled in off-campus and out-of-district instruction must be provided adequate academic support services including:

- Academic Advising
- Counseling
- Library and Other Learning Resources
- Tutorial Services
- Financial Aid

Each course offered for off-campus and out-of-district instruction must include a procedure for monitoring, assessing, and providing timely feedback to students regarding their progress and performance equivalent to those used in on-campus courses. Standards for success or failure must be of equal rigor as those for on-campus courses.

## 6.2 Locations-at-a-Distance

### 6.2.1 Standards and Criteria

Programs and courses offered at locations-at-a-distance must meet all the standards that the institution requires of programs and courses offered on-campus

and those specified by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Quality criteria and standards include the following:

Faculty members teaching courses offered at locations-at-a-distance must meet the same standards, review, and approval procedures used by the institution to select faculty responsibility for Central Campus courses.

Faculty, in face-to-face instructional format, must offer the course for the approved number of contact hours as the same course taught on Central Campus. If there is a variance in contact hours, the course length must accommodate the assurance that the minimal learning outcomes are able to be covered sufficiently.

Course instruction must have the oversight of the faculty member of record and the ultimate evaluation of student success.

The supervision and evaluation processes for faculty who teach courses at locations-at-a-distance must be comparable to those for Central Campus instruction.

The provisions for support services and training for faculty who teach courses at locations-at-a-distance must be comparable to those provided for Central Campus faculty.

Facilities and equipment for locations-at-a-distance should be comparable to the facilities and equipment available for corresponding Central Campus courses.

Students must have adequate learning resources convenient for use at the locations-at-a-distance.

The organization, content, and delivery of courses at locations-at-a-distance, and the processes for evaluating these factors, must be equivalent to those used by the institution in on-campus courses.

If locations-at-a-distance courses or programs have no Central Campus counterpart, they must meet all the quality criteria in these regulations.

Students enrolled in a course at a location-at-a-distance must satisfy the same requirements for admission to the institution, to the program the course is a part, and to the course itself, as are required of Central Campus students.

Students enrolled in locations-at-a-distance must be provided academic support services including:

- Academic Advising

- Counseling
- Library and Other Learning Resources
- Tutorial Services
- Financial Aid

Each course offered at locations-at-a-distance must include procedures for monitoring, assessing, and providing timely feedback to students regarding their progress and performance equivalent to those used in Central Campus courses. Standards for success or failure must be of equal rigor as those for Central Campus courses.

### 6.3 Electronic Delivery

A variety of electronic delivery systems are available for faculty to provide instruction to students. Students enrolling in such courses must have access to technology appropriate to the delivery method. Instruction may be delivered through multimedia combining print materials, CTC-developed curriculum guides and tests, CD-ROM, videos, and hand-held devices such as personal computing devices or iPods. Electronic delivery courses are developed, updated, and maintained by Distance Education and Educational Technology along with technical support.

Faculty meet the same rigorous qualification and evaluation requirements as those in traditionally delivered courses. Each student's progress is measured continuously through ongoing assignments submitted to and interaction with the instructor. Student interaction with the instructor and collaboration with other students is accomplished in several ways; personally with on-campus review and discussion sessions, online with email and chat rooms, or by phone and postal mail. Faculty and online administration information is found at the Distance Education and Education Technology website [online.ctcd.edu](http://online.ctcd.edu).

### 6.4 Distance Education Standards

In order to facilitate the evaluation of distance education throughout the United States, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, representing the regionally accredited member institutions, has agreed upon the following definition and principles. Distance education is defined, for the purposes of accreditation review, as a formal educational process where the majority of the instruction occurs when student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ correspondence study, or audio, video, or other media technologies. This agreement is based on an extension of the *Principles of Good Practice* developed by the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education. The Commission adopted the principles in June 1997 and they were updated in May 2000.

Additionally, the THECB adopted the *Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degrees and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically* July 1997 and last updated them in January 14, 1999. These principles parallel SACS' adopted principles.

#### 6.4.1 Curriculum and Instruction

Programs provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty, and among students.

The institution's faculty assumes responsibility for and exercises oversight of distance education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.

The institution ensures that the technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the programs.

The institution ensures the currency of materials, programs, and courses.

The institution's distance education policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software or other media products.

The institution provides appropriate faculty support services specifically related to distance education.

The institution provides appropriate training for faculty who teach in distance education programs.

#### 6.4.2 Evaluation and Assessment

The institution provides self-assessment tools to students to measure their capability to succeed in distance education courses.

The institution evaluates the educational effectiveness of its distance education programs, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction to ensure comparability to on-campus programs.

The institution ensures the integrity of student work and the credibility of the degrees and credits it awards.

#### 6.4.3 Library and Learning Resources

The institution ensures that students have access to and can effectively use appropriate library resources.

The institution monitors whether students make appropriate use of learning resources.

The institution provides laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs.

#### 6.4.4 Student Services

The institution provides adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support the educational programs including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, delivery of course materials, placement, and guidance and counseling.

The institution provides an adequate means for resolving student complaints. The *Distant Learner Handbook* contains the grievance process.

The institution provides to students advertising, recruiting, and admissions information that adequately and accurately represents the programs, requirements, and services available.

#### 6.4.5 Facilities and Finances

The institution possesses the equipment and technical expertise required for distance education.

The institution's long range planning, budgeting, and policy development processes reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment, and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance education program.

## VII. INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

### 7.1 Institutional Effectiveness System Focus

The foundation for planning, assessment, and continuous improvement is Central Texas College's (CTC) well-publicized mission, purpose, and vision statements, as well as the CTC philosophy and current strategic goals. In these statements, CTC shows its commitment to providing a quality educational experience to its students. CTC's current mission statement provides a clear definition of its purpose and is appropriate to community colleges in Texas and to its own specific educational role. The mission statement explicitly describes the institution's role in the community, with specific attention to its characteristics, academic components, student services, and continuing education, to support economic development in central Texas. CTC's published mission statement addresses all of the requirements in the Texas Higher Education Code.

The Director, Institutional Effectiveness has the responsibility for, and authority to design, implement, direct, and modify the assessment system, to include data collection, analysis, and reporting.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) engages the institution in an ongoing quest for excellence that demonstrates how well the institution fulfills its stated purpose. In addition, the OIE operationalizes institutional effectiveness through continuous improvement of institutional programs, services, and use of precious institutional

resources. The IE system creates linkages between institutional goals and strategic planning that is supported by unit and departmental plans. The office documents quality and effectiveness by employing a comprehensive system of planning and evaluation of teaching, student learning, institutional research, support services, administration, and educational support through broad-based, integrated, and appropriate use of evaluation results to continuously improve institutional performance.

## 7. 2 Strategic Planning

Assessment at Central Texas College (CTC) is ongoing through the college's Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The mission of the Institutional Effectiveness System (IES) is to elicit faculty, administration, staff, and student involvement in the development of assessment and planning supported by sound research that enhances the quality of the above programs. Additionally, the IES monitors and demonstrates continuing improvement that includes all of the following:

- Institutional effectiveness plan/strategic plan with measurable outcomes
- Instructional programs assessment plan
- Quality Enhancement Plan
- Improvement plan for administrating Perkins annual application
- Documented application of evaluation results to show improvement of outcomes

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's State-Level Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Process, <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/ctc/ie/default.htm>, is a comprehensive initiative designed to evaluate and verify the effectiveness of public community and technical colleges in Texas. The IE process permits CTC to make systematic use of evaluation results to continuously improve instructional program performance, services, and the quality of CTC's workforce education programs.

## 7. 3 Program Assessment

Central Texas College's planning and evaluation of educational programs and services is systematic and interrelated. Planning of educational programs is at the heart of institutional planning described previously. Educational programs are assessed at the course, program, and institutional level by students, faculty, and appropriate administrators, and are held accountable to the standards by internal and external agencies and accrediting bodies. In addition, programs are also evaluated by the military, business and industry, program advisory committees, the local workforce development board, and federal and state legislation. Evaluation results are integrated into the institutional planning system at the institutional and unit/departmental levels.

## 7.4 Quality Enhancement Plan

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is an assessment of student learning and fulfills a critical accreditation requirement of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The plan involves unit/department assessment of

student learning and demonstrates results in the annual *Report Card*. This process is a component of the overall institutional assessment system.

### 7.5 Locations-at-a-Distance

Central Texas College (CTC) locations-at-a-distance review their programs and services based upon a specific order for educational programs by the United States government. The order is outlined by a contract/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that does not obligate the location to provide all CTC programs and services. In meeting the delivery portion of the contract/MOU, each CTC location-at-a-distance is considered a portion of the larger, institution-wide planning and evaluation effort and is held accountable to the established educational program standards. The obligation of each location-at-a-distance contributes to the college's effectiveness of accomplishing its mission. The priorities for locations-at-a-distance are established through the campus deans to ensure that the goals of the institutional assessment processes are met.

A federal reporting tool used to improve programs and services at CTC locations-at-a-distance is the Military Installation Voluntary Education Review (MIVER). The MIVER project, administered by the American Council on Education, provides resources for institutions and installations participating in MIVER reviews. CTC adheres to the *MIVER Principles of Good Practice* and completes the required self-study for locations-at-a-distance. The results of the MIVER visit are used to improve programs and services provided to the student soldier.

The United States Air Force has designed, through the Air Combat Command (ACC), an Education Assessment Program (EAP). This program follows an established Quality Education System (QES) to determine whether collegiate programs delivered on an air force base are supporting the Air Force mission and meeting the academic needs of the student population. CTC adheres to the EAP and follows the published QES Assessment Guide, filing periodic reports to the ACC and preparing for team visitations.

## VIII. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM SUPPORT SERVICES

### 8.1 Library and Other Learning Resources

#### 8.1.1 Oveta Culp Hobby Memorial Library (OCHML)

The OCHML serves students, faculty, and staff on-campus and in the service area by providing information resources, services, and instruction in the library. The library is open 78 hours per week during semesters. This ensures access to resources in circulation, reference, microform, and the multimedia lab. Online availability through the library's website, [www.ctcd.edu/library/pg-lib.htm](http://www.ctcd.edu/library/pg-lib.htm), provides access to the online catalog, licensed databases, electronic journals and books, an online reference librarian, and other resources. The library provides access to materials not owned by the library through interlibrary loan. Further access to resources and services at other libraries comes through participation in

the TexShare Program, a state resource-sharing program that allows reciprocal borrowing privileges at Texas public and academic libraries. The TexShare Program provides access to state-selected databases, available to all currently enrolled students and currently employed personnel.

Formal instruction is provided through scheduled orientations and workshops as well as through informal instruction to individuals and groups at point-of-need. Students, faculty, and staff at locations-at-a-distance have access to OCHML resources and services through the library's website and those in distance education courses have a link to the library website from the Distance Learning webpage. Reference librarian assistance may include providing information for a paper or an answer to a reference question, suggestions for search terms and subject headings, and guidance to useful resources. In addition, OCHML supports faculty with Turnitin.com, an anti-plagiarism site may be accessed by individual faculty members.

Locations-at-a-distance library services such as reference and circulation are available at the military library at each installation and at public and academic libraries in the area surrounding each installation. Students enrolled in courses at locations-at-a-distance have access through the OCHML website to a reference librarian, interlibrary loan, and may check out books with a remote library card. Users are issued a library card by completing a form provided on the OCHML website and may request books to be sent to them via regular mail. In addition to the library resources, distance learners may use publisher websites as provided online or on CD-ROM as well as links to content relevant websites.

The library's Multimedia Services Department supports a variety of services to the campus, including providing educational technology equipment and software, training faculty and staff in pursuing educational technology, setting up multimedia classrooms for instructional departments, providing audiovisual and duplicating services, and providing multimedia setups for on- and off-campus programs. The department manages the library's student computer lab offering 52 computers with Internet access, access to the online catalog and databases, word processing and spread-sheet software, and course-related software. The lab also has technology to support Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, TV/VCRs for viewing instructor-assigned videotapes, and, on instructor request, CD-ROMs, tape recorders, and other equipment needed by students to complete their assignments.

CTC and Texas A & M University-Central Texas, a public four-year university, share OCHML. Each school maintains a separate budget, collection, and staff that are collaboratively integrated to provide services and resources to the students, faculty, and staff of both institutions and to the general public. CTC holdings at OCHML are combined with those of Texas A & M University-Central Texas under a partnership agreement. The total collection available is approximately 120,000 volumes (CTC 78,845 volumes), 422 periodical subscriptions (CTC 324 subscriptions), online databases representing a broad scope of academic

disciplines, electronic books, and a law library with print and online resources of federal and Texas state statutes, regulations, and cases.

### 8.1.2 Learning Resource Center

The Developmental Studies Department's Learning Resource Center (LRC), located at Central Campus, supports Adult Basic Education, General Education Development, and students in career and technical education programs. The LRC provides textbooks, audiovisuals, and supplies; word processing programs, reading, mathematics, and English preparation for college; and mathematics and reading instruction for nursing students. The LRC offers a number of services to students including remedial tutoring in reading, writing, and mathematics; guidance on how to write papers; testing for the Skills Center; and pre-testing in mathematics and reading for the Nursing Department.

## 8.2 Student Affairs and Services

The institution ensures that all students have access to those learning resources and services needed to support the institution's purpose and programs. Central Texas College (CTC) offers support programs, services, and activities for traditional on-campus students, for off-campus and out-of-district students within the Texas service area, and for students at locations-at-a-distance.

CTC offers a variety of student support programs, services, and activities that are consistent with its mission as a public two-year comprehensive community college. Programs include career planning and placement services, disability support services, child care services, transportation services, international student services, learning disabilities services, placement testing, limited English proficiency tutoring, veterans counseling, and financial aid assistance. CTC also provides academic recognition through the Dean's Honor Roll, Epsilon Delta Pi, and Phi Theta Kappa Academic Honor Society, and offers academic leadership opportunities in a variety of student organizations.

Support programs and services provided at locations-at-a-distance are suitable to the particular condition of the contract obligation and Memorandum of Understanding provisions. Using technical solutions and Internet tools, CTC makes all support services and activities readily accessible to the distance learner through the internet, by email, or by phone. The distance learners may also receive face-to-face help at any of CTC's locations-at-a-distance.

At each enrollment, the distance learner receives a message containing 'getting started' information and resources. Additional resources for support services information may be found in the course catalogs, the CTC website, the *Student Handbook*, and through a variety of student support services manuals/brochures.