Sec. 61.001. SHORT TITLE. This chapter may be cited as the Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965.


Sec. 61.002. PURPOSE. (a) The purpose of this chapter is to establish in the field of public higher education in the State of Texas an agency to provide leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system, institutions, and governing boards, to the end that the State of Texas may achieve excellence for college education of its youth through the efficient and effective utilization and concentration of all available resources and the elimination of costly duplication in program offerings, faculties, and physical plants.

(b) In the exercise of its leadership role, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board established by this chapter shall be an advocate for the provision of adequate resources and sufficient authority to institutions of higher education so that such institutions may realize, within their prescribed role and scope, their full potential to the benefit of the students who attend such institutions and to the benefit of the citizens of the state in terms of the realization of the benefits of an educated populace.

(c) Postsecondary education for qualified Texans who desire to pursue such education is important to the welfare and security of this state and the nation and, consequently, is an important public purpose. The legislature finds and declares that the state can achieve its full economic and social potential only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of the individual's capabilities and only when financial barriers to the individual's economic, social, and educational goals are removed. In order to facilitate the removal of those barriers, the board, in consultation with one or more nonprofit entities with experience providing the services on a statewide basis, may provide necessary and desirable services related to financial aid services,
Sec. 61.0515. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR BACCALAUREATE DEGREE. (a) To earn a baccalaureate degree, a student may not be required by a general academic teaching institution to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree.

(b) The board may review one or more of an institution's baccalaureate degree programs to ensure compliance with this section.

(c) Subsection (a) does not apply to a baccalaureate degree awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution before the 2008 fall semester. This subsection does not prohibit the institution from reducing the number of semester credit hours the student must complete to receive the degree.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 1230 (H.B. 1172), Sec. 12, eff. June 18, 2005.

Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE. (a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be required by an institution of higher education to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree.

(b) The board may review one or more of an institution's associate degree programs to ensure compliance with this section.

(c) Subsection (a) does not apply to an associate degree awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution before the 2015 fall semester. This subsection does not prohibit the institution from reducing the number of semester credit hours the student must complete to receive the degree.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 528 (S.B. 497), Sec. 1, eff. June 14, 2013.

Added by Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1155 (S.B. 215), Sec. 33, eff. September 1, 2013.

Sec. 61.0517. APPLIED STEM COURSES. (a) In this section, "applied STEM course" means an applied science, technology, engineering, or mathematics course offered as part of a school district's career and technology education or technology applications curriculum and approved, as provided by Section 28.027,