



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM™

MEMORANDUM

TO: University Presidents, Texas Tech University System
President Ronnie D. Hawkins Jr., Angelo State University
President Stacia Haynie, Ph.D., Midwestern State University
President Richard Lange, M.D., M.B.A., Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso
President Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D., Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
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FROM: Chancellor Brandon Creighton & Academic, Clinical, & Student Affairs Committee
Board of Regents, Texas Tech University System
Committee Chairwoman, Regent Shelley Sweatt
Committee Vice Chairman, Regent Don Sinclair

DATE: April 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Texas Tech University System Course Content Guidelines

1. Executive Summary

On December 1, 2025, the Office of the Chancellor issued its [Course Content Oversight and Review memorandum](#), instituting a formal review process for instructional materials to ensure classroom instruction across the Texas Tech University System (TTU System) complies with state and federal law, Board of Regents policy, and system guidance. During this comprehensive review, course content and course information were submitted to the Academic, Clinical, and Student Affairs (ACS) Committee of the Board of Regents for evaluation.

This memorandum outlines guidance developed by TTU System leadership in coordination with the ACS Committee leadership following the review of submitted information. Moving forward, these criteria establish the system-wide standard for all course content and academic offerings across the TTU System.

Concurrently, this memorandum establishes phase-out and closure guidance for certain academic programs. The TTU System is initiating the closure and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) teach-out process for all academic programs “centered on” (see definitions in Section 2) Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), including undergraduate majors, minors, certificates, and graduate degrees. The TTU System will no longer offer academic credentials in these fields, but all currently enrolled students will be able to complete their degrees.

To govern this comprehensive phase-out and ensure statutory compliance for all remaining academic offerings, this document establishes strict course content guidelines. To uphold institutional objectivity, this framework requires the legal recognition of only two human sexes and strictly prohibits the endorsement of a gender spectrum or fluid gender identities as empirical biological science.

To operationalize these standards across all component universities, this document introduces thresholds for SOGI content and establishes the Alternate Materials Rule. The core components of this guidance include:

- **System-Wide Program Phase-Out:** A formal program review, followed by an admissions freeze, to initiate the closure of all academic credentials centered on SOGI.
- **Core Prohibition and Advanced Course Exceptions:** A strict prohibition on SOGI content in all core and lower-level undergraduate courses, requiring alternate materials if primary texts center on or include these topics. Conversely, upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses are restricted but feature clear exemptions for strictly defined academic purposes.
- **Temporary Teach-Out Exemptions:** Carefully delineated, strictly temporary instructional frameworks for certain graduate coursework. Certain SOGI instruction is permitted only for currently enrolled students completing formally identified teach-out programs at the graduate level.
- **Prohibition of Prejudiced Advocacy:** A ban on instruction that advocates for concepts of inherent racial or sexual superiority, inherent bias, or collective guilt.
- **General Exemptions:** Clear protections for independent student-directed research and necessary professional licensure or patient-care requirements.

To reinforce immediate and long-term compliance, this memo requires implementation of guidance, a formal program review and admissions freeze, the standardization of syllabus frameworks across the TTU System, and a requirement for strict faculty adherence to stated syllabus content.

2. Definitions and Content Thresholds

To ensure consistent application across all departments, the following thresholds define how SOGI content is categorized:

- **"Centered On":** Course content, readings, assignments, or lectures are "centered on" SOGI when sexual orientation or gender identity serves as the primary subject, main theoretical framework, central narrative, or driving pedagogical purpose.
- **"Includes":** Course content "includes" SOGI when these themes are present but serve only as secondary background context, demographic data points, or minor components of a broader academic subject.
- **"Incidental Reference":** An incidental reference is a brief, passing, or factual mention (e.g., a short biographical note, a minor character trait, a single sentence in a larger text) that does not occupy sustained instructional time.
- **"Lower-Level" Courses:** Undergraduate courses designated at the 1,000 or 2,000 level.
- **"Upper-Level" Courses:** Undergraduate courses designated at the 3,000 level or above.

3. Two Human Sexes Requirement and Biological Science

State and federal law and TTU System guidance dictate that only two human sexes, male and female, are recognized.

- **Prohibition on Endorsement of a Gender Spectrum:** Instructors may not teach that gender identity is a fluid spectrum, endorse the existence of more than two genders, or decouple gender from biological sex as a factual or scientific baseline.
- **The Intersex/Biological Reality Clarification:** The legal recognition of two human sexes does not prohibit the objective scientific instruction of anatomy, genetics, or endocrinology. Instruction on chromosomal variations, Differences of Sex Development (DSDs), and intersex biological conditions is expressly permitted. However, faculty may not use these biological conditions to advocate for or validate sociological frameworks of fluid gender identities.

4. Course Content Review Scope and Exemptions

Consistent with TTU System guidance, these guidelines apply strictly to classroom instructional activities and instructor-required or recommended course content. The following areas are exempt from restrictions regarding SOGI themes:

- **Student-Directed Work and Research:** General independent student research (e.g., standard term papers) and student-selected performance pieces remain exempt from these content restrictions. However, a strict temporal constraint applies to all formal academic credentialing. Graduate theses and dissertations may only center on SOGI topics as a strictly temporary teach-out exception, explicitly limited to currently enrolled students completing their degrees within formally identified teach-out programs. Upon the conclusive termination of all designated teach-out programs, no degree-culminating student research within the TTU System will be permitted to center on SOGI topics.
- **Faculty Scholarship Exemption:** Although future faculty hiring guidance will prioritize recruitment in alignment with this memorandum, currently employed faculty members may continue to research and publish topics of their choosing.
- **Licensure, Certification, and Patient Care Exception:** If course material centering on or including SOGI themes is strictly required for professional licensure, professional certification, or patient/client care, and this requirement is formally disclosed to the ACS Committee of the Board of Regents, no immediate changes to the course content are required. The ACS Committee may require changes if, upon further review and consultation with the respective Provost, the committee determines the material is not strictly required by the relevant licensing or credentialing body, or if the content disclosed under patient and clinical care is determined not to be strictly required for such care.

5. Theories or Works related to Prohibited Advocacy:

While this memorandum primarily operationalizes the system-wide phase-out of SOGI-centered programs, all academic instruction must also comply with broader state and federal laws and TTU System guidance regarding prohibited advocacy. Therefore, while instructors may include scholarly theories that examine the prohibited advocacy concepts below, they may not pressure students to adopt or endorse them. Any instruction involving these frameworks must be framed rigorously and objectively as theoretical concepts rather than empirical facts.

Furthermore, if theories that advocate these concepts are included in a course, they must be presented alongside alternative scholarly perspectives. To ensure academic objectivity, faculty are prohibited from teaching as absolute truth that:

- One race or sex is inherently superior to another;
- An individual, by virtue of race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, consciously or unconsciously;
- Any person should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment because of race or sex;
- Moral character or worth is determined by race or sex;
- Individuals bear responsibility or guilt for actions of others of the same race or sex; or
- Meritocracy or a strong work ethic are inherently racist, sexist, or constructs of oppression.

6. Alternate Materials Requirement

All courses within the TTU System that are not disclosed under the licensure, certification and patient care exception must follow the Alternate Materials Rule as outlined in this memorandum regarding SOGI content.

The Alternate Materials Rule requires that, subject to the specific exceptions for non-core, upper-level undergraduate and graduate coursework detailed below, in courses where course materials (inclusive of all assigned works, readings, case studies, peer-reviewed research, videos, etc.) are centered on or include sexual orientation or gender identity, alternate materials must be utilized. If instructors choose permissible works that do not center on or include these topics, instructor-led discussions, class assignments, and instructional materials must not focus on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Incidental references should be avoided when selecting primary materials for core courses. If an adopted, industry-standard text includes SOGI content, instructors are not required to physically redact the text, but they must not highlight, assess, or allocate instructional time to it. There are no exceptions to the Alternate Materials Rule for core, undergraduate courses.

Non-Core, Upper-Level Undergraduate and Graduate Exceptions to the Alternate Materials Rule

Exceptions to the Alternate Materials Rule are applicable for non-core, upper-level undergraduate and graduate coursework. These exceptions do not permit an undergraduate course to center on sexual orientation or gender identity as a course topic.

- **Data Sets and Methodological Analysis:** Instructors may utilize demographic data sets that include SOGI variables. During instructor-led discussions, faculty may explicitly define and discuss these SOGI variables as they pertain to survey design, data collection, and statistical analysis. The instruction

must remain focused on methodological mechanics and demographic realities, not sociological advocacy.

- **Biographical Context:** Discussion of the biographical information of historically significant individuals may be included as contextual background. Such references must be purely incidental, and instruction and assignments must not make gender identity or sexual orientation the primary focus.
- **Upper-level, Undergraduate Public Policy:** Discussion of active public policy, proposed legislation, and legal frameworks that intrinsically include or are centered on gender identity or sexual orientation is permitted when analyzing primary source material. Analysis of primary works under this exception (such as textbook commentary) is permitted if the analysis is strictly objective legal or policy analysis and lacks advocacy for contemporary matters. The assigned primary sources (e.g., court briefs, legislation, judicial opinions) and permitted secondary analysis may reflect societal concepts of gender identity, but they must be analyzed objectively as subjects of public or legal dispute, rather than endorsed as biological fact.
- **Historically Intrinsic:** If a syllabus or course materials cover a specific historical movement, author, or event where SOGI is inextricably linked to the subject's historical significance (e.g., the Harlem Renaissance, the AIDS epidemic, Alan Turing), faculty may teach these subjects; however, the instruction must remain focused on objective literary/historical analysis, not contemporary SOGI advocacy.
- **Clinical Psychology and Health Services:** An exception is granted for upper-division undergraduate and graduate-level coursework within clinical, counseling, and school psychology programs. Instructors in these specified courses may include and evaluate SOGI topics exclusively through the lens of objective clinical assessment and current DSM diagnostic criteria. To maintain alignment with state and federal law and TTU System guidance, this instruction must not endorse fluid gender identity as an empirical biological reality that supersedes the two-sex requirement, nor may programs compel students to personally affirm gender ideology, provided the student demonstrates the ability to deliver standard, non-discriminatory clinical care.

Additional Exceptions for Graduate Coursework

Exceptions detailed below related to SOGI theory and frameworks and advising graduate researchers are strictly temporary. Instruction on these theories is only permitted for currently enrolled students within formally identified teach-out programs in graduate programs.

- **Advising Graduate Researchers:** *[Strictly Temporary]* To effectively prepare graduate students for independent research, faculty are temporarily permitted to teach the foundational theories of their discipline, including those centering on SOGI. Instructing students on how to apply these theories as practical analytical tools is recognized as a necessary and objective component of thesis and dissertation preparation strictly for currently enrolled students completing their degrees within identified teach-out programs.

- **SOGI Theory and Frameworks:** *[Strictly Temporary]* Instruction involving scholarly theories that conceptualize gender as a fluid spectrum or posit the existence of more than two genders must not present these concepts as objective, scientific, or biological facts. If included in temporary teach-out coursework, such concepts must be explicitly situated and taught strictly as theoretical frameworks, historical perspectives, or analytical lenses utilized by scholars within specific academic disciplines.
- **Graduate-Level Public Policy and Current Events:** To accommodate the rigorous academic inquiry required in non-educator-preparation graduate coursework (such as law, sociology, and public administration), instructors are permitted to broadly analyze active public policy, legal frameworks, and current events involving SOGI using both primary sources and secondary theoretical literature. To maintain strict alignment with TTU System guidance, these topics must be examined objectively as subjects of legal or political dispute; faculty may not endorse sociological concepts of fluid gender as empirical biological science superseding the recognized two-sex baseline.

These exceptions do not permit a graduate course to center on SOGI as a course topic outside of the formal phase-out processes. Graduate courses that include but do not center on SOGI and are not included in a program that will be phased out must comply with the Alternate Materials Rule and exceptions outlined within this memo.

7. Program Closures and Additional Direction

- **Comprehensive Program Review and Admissions Freeze:** To initiate the phase-out of SOGI-centered academics, the Provost of each component institution must lead a review to identify specific degree programs, official tracks, majors, minors, and certificates that meet the "centered on" threshold. Provosts must submit their finalized reports and program lists to the Office of the Chancellor no later than June 15, 2026.

Following this review, institutions must implement a freeze on all admissions and declarations for these identified programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. During the subsequent teach-out period, component institutions must ensure that the temporary exemptions for SOGI instruction apply exclusively to graduate coursework. Undergraduate courses on a teach-out plan must comply fully with the Alternate Materials Rule and only utilize SOGI content as permitted by the non-core, upper-level undergraduate exceptions.

- **Standardize Syllabus Framework & Adherence:** Currently, syllabi vary significantly across courses, lacking a consistent format or required information—such as required readings or daily course schedules. Because compliance with course content guidelines relies on a clear, verifiable accounting of instructional materials, the TTU System will collaborate with institutional provosts to develop standardized syllabus templates. This uniformity will ensure that course materials can be efficiently evaluated by both students and component institution leadership and compliance teams. Additionally, faculty are explicitly required to clearly disclose all covered topics in their syllabi and faithfully adhere only to those stated contents.