



The University of Texas at Austin
UT High School

The University of Texas High School Special Purpose District

Independent Course Program Policy Guide

2026 - 2027



Independent Course Program

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICT

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Disclaimer: Portions of this handbook were developed with the assistance of the Microsoft Copilot AI system, which was utilized to organize and outline policies.

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General Overview

Our Mission

We partner with students, families, and educators in Texas and beyond through innovative and flexible online learning experiences that foster personal growth and lifelong learning.

Vision

Opening doors to education for a changing world.

Purpose of the Policy Guide

The UTHS Independent Course Policy Guide highlights key program information independent (part-time) learners. For policies regarding the UTHS Diploma Programs, please reference the UTHS Student and Parent Handbook.

Programs Overview

UTHS is a special purpose district operated by The University of Texas at Austin as a public school of the state fulfilling the mission of the Texas public education system to ensure that Texas students receive a quality education that enables them to achieve their potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation ([19 TAC §61.101](#)).

Independent Course Program

Students who enroll in one or a few UTHS online courses include students from Texas, out-of-state, and international locations. The UTHS online courses meet Texas standards for the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and credits may be used to apply to high school diploma programs in other school districts, pending local district policies. Students enrolled in one or a few online courses with UTHS are not eligible for a diploma from UTHS without enrolling in the full-time Diploma Program.

Courses

UTHS courses are open enrollment to students from any school if they meet the eligibility requirements to take a high school course, which includes passing any prerequisite courses.

Eligibility

Students from any school are eligible to enroll in UTHS core subject courses if they passed the 8th grade core subject courses (Math, Science, ELA, and Social Studies) or credit by exams (CBEs). CBEs for acceleration require an 80% passing score (TAC §74.24). Open enrollment in UTHS courses includes access for students enrolled in other high schools or home schools.

Middle School Students

- Middle school students in grades 5 and up are eligible to enroll in high school core courses if they demonstrate passing scores in the corresponding middle school course subjects or credit by exams (80%) as a prerequisite to enroll in a high school subject course (e.g., Students must pass 6th grade math, 7th grade math, and 8th grade math courses or CBEs (80%) to enroll in Algebra I).
- Middle school students in grades 5 and up are eligible to enroll in high school elective courses (e.g., Spanish I) if they passed the prerequisite course requirements.
- Students in grades 4 or below are not eligible to enroll in the UT High School courses.
- Documentation Required for Special Consideration
 - Students below grade 5 may submit a request to enroll in an online UTHS course.
 - The request must include the student's documented performance scores and a signature from their local school district counselor or administrator indicating their approval for the student to enroll in an online UTHS course for high school credit.

Enrollment

Students who are not pursuing a diploma from UTHS **may enroll themselves in courses through the UTHS website** (online) at <https://highschool.utexas.edu/courses>. It is the responsibility of Independent Courses Program students to communicate with their local school district (or home school) counselor to ensure courses selected align to their graduation requirements and adhere to all local school district policies. Courses are available for purchase 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. Students have 140 days from the course purchase/enrollment date to complete their course, including the final exam.

Verification of Enrollment

Students in this program should contact their full-time diploma school for Social Security benefits, work permits, or provide Verification of Enrollment (VOE) for a driver's license.

Registration Enrollment Process

Independent Courses Program students enroll in [courses online](#):

- Go to the Course Listing.
- Click on the title of the course, then “Add to Cart” icon on the right.
- Check-out online through the shopping cart.
- Pay by credit card at time of enrollment for online enrollment or by credit card (select *Checkout as Guest*)

Course Enrollment Fee

Independent Courses Program students pay a course tuition for each semester of coursework, which is \$285 per course. Payment is due in full upon registration.

Course Change and Extension Requests

Course Drop Request

A course may be dropped without academic penalty if the final exam has not been accessed (viewed) or completed. After the student accesses the exam, the course may no longer be dropped, and a grade will be assigned on the student's grade report. Dropped courses become inactive and do not appear on the student's grade report. The [Course Drop Request form](#) must be submitted to EdServices@austin.utexas.edu within the first 30 days of enrollment to be eligible for a partial refund. Courses dropped more than 30 days after the processed date of enrollment are not eligible for a refund.

Course Extensions

UTHS Independent Courses Program students **have up to 140 days** (from the purchase date) to complete each course and take the final exam (and re-exam if necessary). If a student does not complete any part of the course, including the final exam and re-exam (if necessary), a one-time 30-day course extension may be purchased. Students must request the course extension **within one calendar year** from their original course enrollment date and submit the [Course Extension Request form](#). Students are **limited to one extension** per course.

Repeat Course

If a student does not complete their course by the end of the one-time, 30-day extension, they may purchase a repeat (R) version of the course. The student must start the course over from the beginning and pay the \$285 repeat enrollment fee. This repeat enrollment option is only available if the student failed to complete the original course within the required timeline or finished with a final course grade below 70%.

Occasionally, certain courses may have a final course closing date due to changes to the TEKS alignment or content changes, and extensions beyond the 140 days will not be allowed. Communication regarding course deadlines will be posted and distributed to students enrolled in any courses in which these circumstances apply.

Course Materials

Course materials, such as textbooks, lab kits, and arts supplies must be provided by the parent, guardian, student or local school District

Independent Courses Program	Course Material	Additional Info
UTHS	Textbooks	Online textbook login information provided within course.
Parent	Computers	Computer Requirements
Parent	Graphing Calculators	Calculator Policy
Parent	Internet Access	Internet Requirements
Parent	General School Supplies	Including spiral notebooks, pens, pencils and highlighters
Parent	Specialty Courses (e.g. English, Art, AP)	Additional reference or art supplies may be needed.

Course End Dates

Students in the UTHS Independent Courses Program (non-Diploma Program) have up to 140 calendar days to complete their coursework, including the final exam and any necessary retake. The official course end date is listed within the Certification/Enrollment Tool in Canvas. To find this date, log into Canvas, click "Account" in the global navigation menu on the left, and select "Certification/Enrollment Tool" from the submenu. Your specific deadlines will be displayed under the "Courses" tab.

Scholastic Honesty

UTHS requires students to adhere to the [UTHS Scholastic Honesty Policy](#) located in Appendix B of the UTHS Independent Course Program Policy Guide. Failure to follow the policy expectations will result in disciplinary action.

Course Grading Policies

UTHS course and exam grades are reported as numerical grades, on a scale from 0-100% with 70% required to pass a course.

Semester Course Grades

Final semester course grades are determined by weighting the graded assignment average as 50% of the overall course grade and the exams as 50% of the overall course grade. ***The lowest possible passing grade for a course is 70%.***

Grade Weights	Course Tasks
50%	Assignments
50%	Exams

Graded Assignments

For each semester course, a student completes an average of 12-18 course graded assignments. These assignments include a variety of formats for the student to demonstrate mastery of concepts, including multiple choice exams, short-answer assignments, essays, lab reports, completed math problems, and project uploads. The grades on these assignments combine to make up 50% of the overall semester course grade.

Assignment Re-submissions

Students may be permitted to redo an assignment after earning a failing grade (below 70%), subject to teacher discretion and specific deadlines. A maximum grade of 70% can be earned on any redone assignment, which will

replace the original failing grade. All redo assignments must be submitted prior to taking the final exam. Absolutely no coursework or assignments will be accepted for credit once the final exam has been submitted.

Course Progression and Pacing

Courses are structured sequentially, meaning assignments must be completed in order as linear prerequisites (e.g., EVAL 01, then EVAL 02, then EVAL 03).

- **Prerequisite Enforcement:** Students may not unlock, take, or submit the final exam until all prerequisite course assignments have been fully completed.
- **Grading Policy for Incomplete Work:** Any assignment that is skipped or left unsubmitted prior to taking the final exam will automatically receive a grade of "0" and will be factored directly into the final semester average.
- **Pacing and Instructor Turnaround:** Instructors are only required to grade a maximum of **three assignments per week**. To avoid missing deadlines, students must maintain a consistent submission schedule rather than stockpiling assignments to complete at the end of the course.
- **Final Cutoff:** Once the final exam is submitted, the assignment submission period is permanently closed. No additional assignments or grading corrections will be accepted, regardless of when the course officially concludes

Course Exams

UTHS students must complete two summative exams and one final exam during each of their semester courses.

Exam Type	How many per semester?	TEKS Covered	% of Final Semester Grade	Is a Retake Available	Eligibility	Max # of Retakes
Summative Exam	Two exams: • 1st Summative Exam • 2nd Summative Exam	TEKS Objectives covered within 6-week period	12.5% each of 2 exams	Yes*	Score on exam is below 70%	1
Final Exam	One final exam	TEKS objectives covered during entire semester	25%	Yes**	Course grade is below 70%	1

**Summative Re-Exams* must be completed prior to submitting the final exam.

***Semester Final Exam Retake Policy*

Re-exam access will be determined and granted by the instructor. The exam retake will average with the first attempt grade if the score improves.

If a student fails to successfully complete and pass their final re-exam to earn a passing semester course average (70% or higher) the student will receive the failing course grade average, which is recorded on their grade report.

Course Drops or Incompletes

For students in the Independent Course Program who drop a course or fail to complete it within the 140-day deadline, the UTHS grade report will not be available for download. The course will remain inactive.

Exam Policies

Secure Exams

UTHS final exams remain secure and are not published or made publicly available.

Student Identification

Students must present a government or school-issued ID, such as a driver's license, a school photo ID, a state-issued photo ID, or a passport, at the time of testing.

Examination Testing Period

Once a student begins taking a final or credit by exam, the exam must be completed within that testing period. If the student fails to complete their exam before the online testing window closes, the exam will be scored as is, without adjustments to the scoring process. Exam timelines are set to allow more time than required to complete a final or six-weeks exam.

Exam Administration

Six-week exams, final exams and credit by exams must be taken using the **Proctorio** secure, online proctoring system on a home computer.

Proctorio Requirements

Students must adhere to all the required policies and expectations to successfully complete an exam and receive a valid score using the secure, online Proctorio system on their home computer. Students must follow all requirements, such as;

- showing their ID,
- maintaining a secure testing environment throughout the exam testing period,
- holding up both sides of their blank scratch paper (if allowed for the particular exam),
- showing their cleared approved calculator (if allowed for the particular exam),
- and remaining in view of the camera throughout the testing window.
- This is not an inclusive list of all requirements and directions, which differ per exam subject and are communicated to the student prior to beginning their exam.

See the UTHS website at https://highschool.utexas.edu/final_exams and https://highschool.utexas.edu/credit_by_exam for details to prepare to take exams successfully utilizing Proctorio. Additional directions specific to each exam are provided to the student during the exam administration. ***Students who fail to adhere to all required policies and directions during the online exam administration will result in an invalidated exam with a score of "0" posted in the UTHS exam records.*** Students whose initial final exam was invalidated may retake a final exam one additional time for a course subject to earn a valid score on a second form of the exam. The valid score will replace the prior grade of "0." If the student's second exam attempt results in a second invalidated exam, the score of "0" on the second exam will be final and posted in the gradebook. Students will receive a maximum of two exam attempts for any course subject.

Exam Accommodations

Eligible students with documented 504 or special education testing accommodations on file with UTHS will receive qualifying accommodations based on their current, signed 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP). Please note that due to the asynchronous nature of UTHS online courses, certain accommodations may be limited by the program's design.

To request accommodations, please contact edservices@austin.utexas.edu.

Exam Grade Posting

Proctorio exam reviews and grading may add additional time due to delays during peak enrollment periods (May through July)

Grade Reporting

Students participating in the Independent Courses Program can view and download their final course grades directly within the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS). To ensure local school districts receive these marks, students must link their school counselor to their UTHS grade report by completing the **Enter/Verify Profile** assignment in their Canvas course. UTHS does not mail or email official grade reports to schools. Instead, school counselors are provided with unique login credentials to access and download grade reports directly from the learning management system.

Appendix A: Contacts

Support Availability: UTHS EdServices staff are available from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM (CST) Monday through Friday. Longhorn Helper, our AI bot, is always available at highschool.utexas.edu.

Staff/Department	Email Address/Phone	Type of Assistance Needed:
Ed Services	edservices@uthighschool.org 512-232-5000	• Course Drops/Refunds • Profile Updates • Extension Requests
Director of Independent Learning and Strategic Partnerships	dan.diehl@austin.utexas.edu 512-471-9636	• Exam Invalidation Appeals • Medical Extensions • Program Policy

Physical Address:
UT High School
1616 Guadalupe, Suite 0.134
Austin, TX 78701

Appendix B: Program Links

Independent Learner Course Login

Course Extension Request

Repeat Course Request

Computer Requirements for Online Courses

Proctorio FAQ

Proctorio Troubleshooting Guide

Course Drop Request

Appendix C: Scholastic Honesty

UT High School students in all programs are expected to work independently, without direct supervision, and to conduct themselves responsibly in accordance with that freedom. To obtain the greatest benefit from their coursework, and for the sake of everyone enrolled in our courses, students must demonstrate the willingness to exercise self-discipline, personal responsibility, and scholastic integrity. We expect the coursework and exams that students submit for course credit to be theirs and theirs alone. Plagiarism and other forms of scholastic dishonesty are serious academic violations that will not be tolerated. Scholastic dishonesty encompasses, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student.

"Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying from another student's work.
- Using materials not authorized by a testing proctor.
- Possessing materials that are not authorized by a testing proctor, such as cell phones, lessons, books or notes.
- Knowingly using or soliciting, in whole or in part, the contents of a test.
- Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student without authorization during a test.
- Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself, in taking a test or in completing any course-related assignment.
- Using, buying, stealing, or transporting some or all the contents of a test, test rubric, homework answer, or computer program.
- Failing to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test.

"Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means someone else's work and then submitting that work for credit as if it were one's own.

"Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized collaboration with another person in the preparation of an academic assignment offered for credit.

"Falsifying academic records" includes, but is not limited to, altering or assisting in the altering of any official record of the University.

Scholastic Honesty Guidelines

Phase I: The student has committed their first career offense.

Consequence: Warning from the instructor and loss of points for the particular portion of the assignment with the opportunity to redo that portion of the assignment.

Phase II: The student has committed their second career offense in ANY course.

Consequence: Disciplinary action from administrator, contact of parents, and loss of credit for the particular assignment.

Phase III: The student has committed their second and third offense in the SAME course.

Consequence: Failure of the course (**a grade of 0 on the exam and a 0 for the course grade**).

*If the second and third offenses are in different courses, see Phase II.

Important Information Regarding AI

All student work must reflect the student's own thinking, effort, and ability, as opposed to artificial intelligence. Students may utilize generative AI tools to enhance their understanding and approach to assignments. However, proper attribution is crucial; students must clearly document and acknowledge any use of AI on graded submissions, whether for brainstorming, or refining work. Use of AI during exams or without explicit permission is prohibited. Students are responsible for ensuring their submissions comply with scholastic honesty standards. Please consult your instructor in advance if you have questions regarding the appropriate use of AI tools in coursework.