

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Accountability in Higher Education: Promoting Excellence in Texas Public Universities through Institutional Groupings, Peers, and Benchmarks

BACKGROUND

Texas' Closing the Gaps plan calls for each public higher education institution to engage in an ongoing pursuit of excellence. A strategy for carrying out that goal relies on the selection of institutional peers and benchmarks of performance against which progress can be measured. Because comparisons between institutions are inevitable, institutions have been grouped according to general academic mission and certain key academic indicators such as size and number of graduate programs, research expenditures, and other factors. The groupings are intended to be neither permanent nor prescriptive. Rather, they are to be considered permeable, subject to revision as institutions evolve. The current peer groups for universities include:

- Research
- Emerging Research
- Doctoral
- Comprehensive
- Master's

OVERVIEW

Making accountability more transparent and promoting excellence in Texas universities through institutional groupings, peers, and benchmarks requires:

- Establishing groupings of institutions of similar types and missions
- Determining for each group appropriate measures that reflect institutional performance
- Determining benchmarks against which to measure success
- Assessing progress annually and taking steps to improve performance

University Peer Group Criteria for FY 2014 – FY 2018

In addition to regular review of peer group assignments, review of the criteria for determining placement into Accountability Peer Groups is also important. Criteria for assigning universities to Accountability Peer Groups were first developed in 2004 when the Accountability System was implemented. Those criteria remained unchanged until July 2013 when the Coordinating Board officially adopted revised criteria for universities.

The revision process began in March 2013 when University Peer Group members, at their regularly scheduled spring meeting, developed a list of proposed criteria changes based on group consensus. The Commissioner of Higher Education incorporated the peer groups' suggested changes into his recommendations to the Board. The Board-adopted criteria are listed in this document by institution type. For comparison purposes, a chart on page 6 highlights key differences between the original criteria and the updated criteria.

The approved criteria allow an institution to be grandfathered into its existing peer group, if the institution chooses, while the current criteria are in effect. The Board requested a full review of the criteria in five years. The Coordinating Board also requested that institutional status based on the revised criteria be reported to the Board on a yearly basis beginning July 2014. Institutions eligible to change peer groups will be given the option of reassignment at that time.

RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Research universities provide a broad range of undergraduate, graduate and professional programs, place a greater emphasis on research than universities in other groups, and serve their regions, the state, and beyond. Excellent undergraduate education is a central function, but a significantly higher proportion of these institutions' students are enrolled in graduate and professional programs than is the case in Master's, Comprehensive, Doctoral, or Emerging Research universities.

Research universities are expected to:

- Offer a comprehensive range of excellent undergraduate and graduate programs
- Award 200 or more PhD degrees annually, based on a rolling average of two consecutive years of degree production
- Generate at least \$150 million annually in restricted research expenditures, adjusted for inflation, based on a rolling two-year average (a baseline of \$150 million will be adjusted for inflation each subsequent September starting in 2013 using the CPI-U index). As of September 1, 2016, the adjusted threshold was \$32,183,700.

Texas universities that are presently in this category are:

Institution	Fiscal Year	PhD Award Count	Restricted Research Expenditures (current \$)
Texas A&M University (w/ System & Agencies)	2015	679	\$430,707,549
	2014	688	\$418,123,930
	2013	699	\$392,690,242
The University of Texas at Austin	2015	865	\$388,364,547
	2014	837	\$376,461,033
	2013	838	\$453,338,409

EMERGING RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Emerging Research universities are educational, scientific, engineering, business and cultural resource centers committed to the three-fold mission of teaching, research and service. As universities with extensive educational programs, academic efforts are directed to applied and basic research in selected fields, teaching and scholarship, and creative activities. The

universities encourage faculty members to be active researchers/creators in their respective disciplines and to involve both undergraduate and graduate students in research and creative pursuits.

Emerging Research universities are expected to:

- Offer a comprehensive range of excellent undergraduate and graduate programs
- Award at least 30 PhD degrees annually, based on a rolling average of two consecutive years of degree production
- Generate at least 20% of the research universities' criteria for restricted research expenditures (20% of \$150 million, adjusted for inflation), as determined by a rolling two-year average. As of September 1, 2016, the adjusted threshold was \$32,183,700.

Texas universities that are presently in this category are:

Institution	Fiscal Year	PhD Award Count	Restricted Research Expenditures (current \$)
Texas State University	2015	52	\$16,097,336
	2014	42	\$20,957,182
	2013	53	\$20,944,752
Texas Tech University	2015	289	\$48,774,414
	2014	283	\$46,853,386
	2013	260	\$40,735,021
The University of Texas at Arlington	2015	204	\$31,614,826
	2014	219	\$30,168,446
	2013	149	\$32,082,256
The University of Texas at Dallas	2015	194	\$45,111,033
	2014	178	\$44,204,399
	2013	183	\$43,944,356
The University of Texas at El Paso	2015	78	\$46,821,190
	2014	108	\$40,221,559
	2013	89	\$44,057,028
The University of Texas at San Antonio	2015	106	\$25,026,676
	2014	92	\$23,640,919
	2013	90	\$29,163,969
University of Houston	2015	265	\$64,394,171
	2014	236	\$62,194,303
	2013	224	\$61,151,281
University of North Texas	2015	213	\$16,097,336
	2014	227	\$17,524,364
	2013	180	\$17,748,903

DOCTORAL UNIVERSITIES

Doctoral universities are educational and cultural resource institutions committed to the three-fold mission of teaching, research and service. With extensive educational programs, academic efforts are directed to both applied and basic research in selected fields, teaching and scholarship, and creative activities. The universities encourage faculty members to be active researchers in their respective disciplines and to involve both undergraduate and graduate students in research and creative pursuits.

Doctoral universities offer a wide range of excellent baccalaureate and master's programs and are committed to graduate education through the doctorate in targeted areas of excellence and/or regional need.

Doctoral Institutions are expected to reach **three of the following four criteria** to be included in this group:

- Award at least 10 PhD degrees annually
- Offer at least 5 doctoral-research/scholarship programs
- Enroll at least 150 doctoral-research/scholarship students
- Generate at least \$2 million annually in restricted research expenditures

Texas universities that are presently in this category are:

Institution	FY 2015 PhD Award Count	FY 2015 Doctoral- Research Scholarship Programs	FY 2015 Doctoral- Research Scholarship Students	FY 2015 Restricted Research Expenditures (current \$)
Sam Houston State University	31	8	276	\$2,306,346
Texas A&M University- Commerce	18	6	612	\$2,154,850
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	15	7	189	\$14,693,004
Texas A&M University- Kingsville	1	5	181	\$12,723,245
Texas Southern University	7	7	249	\$952,054
Texas Woman's University	79	20	751	\$1,151,951
The University of Texas–Rio Grande Valley	17	4	243	\$3,061,505

COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES

Comprehensive universities offer a wide range of excellent baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the master's degree. Comprehensive universities may also offer doctoral education in targeted program areas to address particular regional needs and/or in disciplines in which the university is nationally recognized for excellence; in most cases, this is in one or two program areas, but may be as many as five.

Comprehensive universities are expected to:

- Provide access to a broad range of excellent baccalaureate and master's programs
- Possibly provide doctoral-research/scholarship-level education in targeted area(s) of excellence and/or regional need
- Provide excellent preparation not only for the workforce, but prepare students for professional schools and graduate education
- Focus on serving the student population within the region

Texas universities that are presently in this category are:

- Lamar University
- Prairie View A&M University
- Stephen F. Austin State University
- Tarleton State University
- Texas A&M International University
- West Texas A&M University

MASTER'S UNIVERSITIES

Access to exemplary undergraduate institutions is critical to students and communities across Texas. Currently, almost 80 percent of public university students are at the undergraduate level. Master's institutions offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the master's degree. Excellent undergraduate education is the primary mission of these universities, which generally offer smaller classes than would be expected in other universities.

Master's universities are expected to:

- Concentrate on providing excellent broad-based undergraduate education
- Establish seamless transfer and facilitate success for Associate of Arts and Associate of Science graduates
- Offer smaller undergraduate class sizes
- Provide excellent developmental education and retention programs
- Provide access to critical and other excellent master's programs
- Provide excellent preparation not only for the workforce, but for professional schools and graduate education

- Have a critical role in the preparation of certified teachers
- Provide specialized programs recognized for their excellence

Texas universities that are presently in this category are:

- Angelo State University
- Midwestern State University
- Sul Ross State University
- Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College
- Texas A&M University-Central Texas
- Texas A&M University at Galveston
- Texas A&M University-San Antonio
- Texas A&M University-Texarkana
- The University of Texas at Brownsville
- The University of Texas at Tyler
- The University of Texas of the Permian Basin
- University of Houston-Clear Lake
- University of Houston-Downtown
- University of Houston-Victoria
- University of North Texas at Dallas

Peer Group Criteria Changes

The chart below highlights differences between the criteria in place from 2004 to July 2013 and the criteria adopted by the Coordinating Board on July 25, 2013.

Peer Group Category Criteria Changes Adopted July 2013 Research, Emerging Research & Doctoral			
Requirement	Research (all)	Emerging Research (all)	Doctoral (meet 3 of 4)
Award PhDs	100 200 or more annually (rolling 2-year avg.)	20 30 or more annually (rolling 2-year avg.)	10 or more
Generate restricted research expenditures	Baseline: \$150 million annually (to be adjusted for inflation each year, rolling 2 year avg.)	20% of baseline for research universities (rolling 2-year avg.) Baseline: \$14M	Baseline: \$2 million annually
# Doctoral Research/Scholarship Programs	Offer comprehensive range Span at least 15 disciplines	Offer comprehensive range At least 10 programs	At least 5 programs
# Doctoral Research/Scholarship Students	No requirement	At least 150 students	At least 150 students
Black: Existing criteria Red: Requirements removed in 2013 Green: New requirements			