



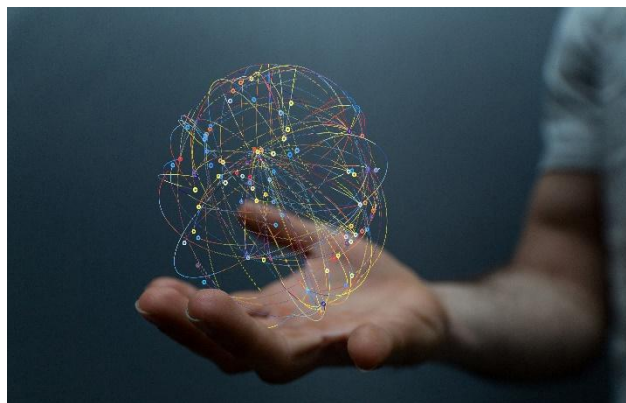
Special Courses and Special Programs of Study

Application Guidance

Tennessee Department of Education

Overview

Special courses and special programs of study (SPOS) allow a local education agency (LEA) or public charter schools an opportunity to offer elective courses to students that may be interesting, part of a special program of study through College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE), or an advanced course. According to the [Special Courses Policy 3.201](#), LEAs and public charter schools shall seek approval from the Tennessee Department of Education (department) for new special courses in advance of each school year in which the special course will be offered by submitting a special course application to the department. The department will make recommendations to the State Board of Education to approve courses for the following school year.



Submission Deadline

All applications must be submitted in ePlan by the designated deadline each spring semester.

Key Steps

- LEAs and public charter schools apply to the department for a special course or SPOS.
- Applications open in January and are submitted through ePlan.
- Applications are reviewed by the department's content coordinators for academic standard alignment and a determination of whether a course submission will be recommended for approval to the State Board of Education.
- LEAs and public charter schools are notified of the department's decision to recommend the course to the State Board of Education through ePlan notifications.
- LEAs and public charter schools have an opportunity to revise a submission if the course was denied at the department level. Resubmissions take place through ePlan.
- Courses are recommended to the State Board of Education at the May meeting for final approval to be used for the following school year.
- Approved special course codes are activated for the following school year.

Pre-planning Application Questions

LEAs and public charter schools can access the application questions prior to submitting the formal application in ePlan. The questions are formatted in a PDF and may be converted to a Word document to allow the user to complete questions and gather required materials.

Application questions can be found on the department's website.

The completed application question packet may be utilized as a presentation tool for local board meetings seeking approval to formally apply for a special course or SPOS.

Statements of Assurance

There are several statements of assurance that LEAs and public charter schools must certify to offer a special course or SPOS. State law, including [T.C.A. § 49-6-1019](#), [T.C.A. § 49-6-2206](#), and [State Board Rule 0520-12-04](#) include requirements pertinent to acceptable course content, funding, and allowable course requests following the Special Course Policy. All statements of assurance for special courses and SPOS are intended to verify the LEAs' and public charter schools' intention to ensure implementation of these, and all applicable legal requirements.

Public Charter Schools

Following the revised Special Course Policy as of October 2022, a public charter school will be required to upload, to the "Related Documents" section, written notice to its authorizer of its intent to seek approval of the special course, including the title and primary objective of the special course on the school's official letterhead.

ePlan User Access Form

The LEA Special Course and Special Program of Study Director role is specific to an instructional supervisor. The only person who is permitted to complete an application in ePlan for special courses or a SPOS is a district-level or public charter school instructional supervisor for either academics or CCTE. Complete the [ePlan User Access form for LEAs](#) with the assignment under "Other Roles" as "LEA Special Course and Special Program of Study Director."

Navigating ePlan

Location of Applications

Navigate to the [ePlan website](#). There are two applications for special courses. One will be titled Academic Special Courses and the second will be titled Special Program of Study. Both can be found under “Search” then “Data and Information.” The fiscal year will be the year that the application is being submitted. To begin completing the application select “Not Started” in the status field and finally select the “search” button. Locate the name of your LEA or public charter school to begin the draft. If the request is for both academic and CCTE courses, then both applications will need to be completed. Otherwise, complete only the application for the content area of need.

Academic Application

Organization Name:	Begins With ▾	<input type="text"/>
Organization Number:	<input type="text"/>	
County:	All ▾	
Fiscal Year:	2026 ▾	
Data and Information:	<div>Academic Special Courses ARP ESSER Liquidation Extension Request CCTE Special Programs of Study Comparability Continuous Learning Plan</div>	
Data and Information State:	All ▾	
Data and Information Status:	<div>All Not Started Draft Started Revision Started LEA Academic Special Courses Director Draft Completed LEA Academic Special Courses Director Revision Completed TDOE Academic Special Courses Consultant Reviewed TDOE Academic Special Courses Consultant Returned</div>	
Data and Information Contact:	All ▾	
Special Options:	<input type="text"/>	
<div>SearchReset</div>		

CCTE Application

Organization Name:	<div>Begins With ▾</div> <div></div>
Organization Number:	<div></div>
County:	<div>All ▾</div>
Fiscal Year:	<div>2026 ▾</div>
Data and Information:	<div>Academic Special Courses</div> <div>ARP ESSER Liquidation Extension Request</div> <div>CCTE Special Programs of Study</div> <div>Comparability</div> <div>Continuous Learning Plan</div>
Data and Information State:	<div>All ▾</div>
Data and Information Status:	<div>All</div> <div>Not Started</div> <div>Draft Started</div> <div>Revision Started</div> <div>LEA CCTE Special Programs of Study Director Draft Completed</div> <div>LEA CCTE Special Programs of Study Director Revision Completed</div> <div>TDOE CCTE Special Programs of Study Consultant Reviewed</div> <div>TDOE CCTE Special Programs of Study Consultant Returned</div>
Data and Information Contact:	<div>All ▾</div>
Special Options:	<div></div>
	<div>Search</div> <div>Reset</div>

Cover Page

The first section to complete in ePlan is the cover page. This series of questions require details for the point of contact who will be responsible for any correspondence regarding the application. Only a district-level supervisor or public charter school instructional supervisor may apply for special courses and SPOS. Ensure all contact information provided is accurate.

Academic Course Details

The course details outline the nature of the course content and how the course was developed. The applicant will provide a detailed justification for offering this course within their school(s). A thorough and specific course description is also required. LEAs and public charter schools should be prepared to provide all Tennessee academic standards covered throughout the course.



Not Applicable Selection

There is an allowance of up to ten courses that may be applied for within an academic's application. For all courses that are not being applied for, the "N/A" checkbox must be marked at the top of each course detail page prior to submitting as "LEA Academic Special Course Director Draft Completed."

A screenshot of a web form. At the top, there is a checkbox labeled "N/A" which is highlighted with a red square. Below this is a dropdown menu with the text "Which content area best describes academic course 2?" and "Select...". Underneath is a text input field with the label "Course Name: Be specific and include district name in the course title." and a "Select..." dropdown for "Course Level".

CTE Program of Study Details

Program of study details will be submitted by course year. If the course is intended to be a beginner level course the questions in section "Year 1," are required to be completed. Mostly, CCTE SPOS applications will require all four course years to be entered, thus completing the course work for the four-year program. However, single special courses may be submitted that are CCTE content but are not considered part of a program of study. The applicant will need to select the course year appropriate for the course work



and complete that section only for an isolated CCTE special course.

The course details outline the nature of the course content and how the course was developed. The applicant will provide a detailed justification for offering this course within their school(s). A thorough and specific course description is also required. LEAs and public charter schools should be prepared to provide all academic standards taught throughout the course.

Related Documents

In the “Related Documents” section, the applicant must upload a series of documents.

Academic Standards

- Download the provided academic standards template. Complete the document with all academic courses that will be taught during the course. Then, upload the completed document to the “Related Documents” section.

CTE Market Data Summary

- This data must be uploaded on district letterhead with a title that includes “Market data + SPOS title.” Upload the completed document to the “Related Documents” section.
- Complete only for the CCTE Special Programs of Study application.



Public Charter Schools

- Upload a copy of written notice to its authorizer of intent to apply for a special course or special program of study that includes the following:
 - The uploaded Word document or PDF must be completed on official school letterhead, signed by the principal, and dated prior to the date of application.
 - The notice must include the course title and primary objective of the special course or special program of study.
 - A separate notification must be completed for each course and or special program of study that will be applied for.

Notifications

The point of contact may be sent an email notification through ePlan on progress of the application review. Please ensure the point of contact checks for emails or comments from ePlan related to the special course or special program of study applications. Failure to respond to requests for additional materials or content-related questions may result in a denial of the requested special courses.

The notification(s) may include if the course(s) is/are being recommended to the State Board of Education, if additional information is needed, or if the course(s) is/are being denied.



All documents must be submitted to ePlan and are not accepted via email. All courses that will be recommended to the State Board of Education will be heard during the May meeting. Following the State Board of Education meeting, course codes will be activated for approved special courses and special programs of study.

Official Status Letter

An official status letter will be attached to an email via ePlan and sent to the point of contact prior to the formal recommendation to the State Board of Education. This letter should be maintained by the LEA or public charter for the duration of the course(s) approval period. It serves as the formal documentation of the course status and includes any state course codes to be used upon State Board of Education approval.

Appeals

The LEA or public charter school may appeal a denial of a course by submitting additional documentation to ePlan that would support a recommendation to state board for approval. The department coordinator will provide you with the necessary information to assist you in an appeal.

Additional Information

Contacts

For questions specific to the application process, please contact Lacey Noel at Lacey.Noel@tn.gov.

For questions specific to CCTE, please contact Candi Collier at CTE.Questions@tn.gov.