



# State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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August 7, 2007

Dear District Administrator:

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is committed to expanding opportunities for students to meet the graduation requirements in § 118.33 Stats. and Chapter PI 18, the *High School Graduation Standards*.

Chapter PI 18.02 defines “equivalent graduation policy” as “a board policy which meets the credit requirements specified (§ 118.33 Stats.) for each subject area, but which permits selected equivalent courses as long as such courses contain the time allotment and substantially the same objectives to develop the knowledge, concepts, and skills of the course for which an equivalent is proposed.”

This high school course equivalency option for a district is not new; however, the process for seeking DPI approval in the area of agriculture and science course equivalency has been updated.

A relevant question is whether or not an equivalent course meets established university or college entrance requirements. UW System college preparatory entrance requirement states “all University of Wisconsin System institutions require new freshmen to have completed a **minimum** of 17 high school credits. Thirteen of these credits must be core college preparatory from the following areas of study: four credits of English, three credits of mathematics, three credits of natural science, and three credits of social science/history.”<sup>1</sup> DPI is working with the University of Wisconsin System to establish an ongoing process for review and recognition of DPI approved equivalent courses.

When documenting equivalency credit on a student’s transcript, it is important to note that the original course designation does not change; that is, an agriculture course that is approved as equivalent to a science course will remain listed on the transcript as an agriculture course. The district will, however, need to designate the agriculture course as being a science equivalent on the student’s transcript.

Similarly, the required license for the teacher does not change. An agriculture course approved as equivalent to a science course would have to be taught by a teacher who holds an agriculture license.

Use the following process to seek DPI approval for designating an agriculture course as equivalent to a science course:

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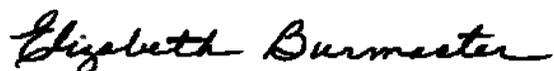
<sup>1</sup> From UW System College Preparatory Course Requirements, UW System website.

1. Form a committee of district personnel that includes both agriculture and science educators. Review the knowledge and skills of the agriculture course the district is seeking equivalency for and compare this to the knowledge and skills identified in the district science curriculum or program. To assist with this process, DPI has completed a crosswalk<sup>2</sup> document between *Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Agriculture Education* and *Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Science*. This crosswalk is to be completed during the review process. DPI has several best practice examples available for agriculture courses that are representative of an equivalent agriculture course. Please refer to <http://dpi.wi.gov/cte/agprogram.html> to find those examples.
2. Request school board approval for the equivalency course.
3. Submit all documentation to DPI using Form PI 1803 - AG. This documentation is to include dates and meeting times, district personnel in attendance, documentation of course content with instructional time allocation specified, alignment to the crosswalk from DPI, and documentation of course approval by the district's school board, including the date of board acceptance of the equivalent course.

All required forms and pertinent other information can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/cte/agprogram.html> on the department website. DPI will review the district's documentation described above and notify the district in writing that the course equivalency has or has not been approved.

Please feel free to contact Jeff Hicken, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education Consultant ([jeffrey.hicken@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:jeffrey.hicken@dpi.state.wi.us), 608/267-9255), or Shelley Lee, Science Education Consultant ([shelley.lee@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:shelley.lee@dpi.state.wi.us), 608/266-3319) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Burmaster  
State Superintendent

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<sup>2</sup> Ag/Sci Crosswalk found at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/cte/agprogram.html>