

# Institutional Peer Groups

Public Universities

FY 2026

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## Background

To help meet the goals of Texas' former strategic plan, Closing the Gaps, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board set a strategy that relied on the selection of institutional peers and benchmarks of performance to assess progress. Public institutions were 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 were intended to be neither permanent nor prescriptive. Rather, they were to be considered flexible, subject to revision as institutions evolved. The current peer groups for universities are:

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

## Overview

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

- 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

Our overall goal with the FY 2025 updates was to increase Peer Group criteria alignment with THECB and federal metrics and terminology. Additional adjustments were made to better reflect the goals of the original criteria. These changes took effect beginning with the Accountability data that was posted in spring 2025 and remain in effect. The original Peer Group criteria can be found in the appendix of this document.

## 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 universities in other groups.

### Group Criteria

- Award 200 or more research scholarship doctoral degrees annually, based on a rolling average of two consecutive years of degree production
- Generate at least \$150 million annually in federal and private research expenditures, adjusted for inflation, based on a rolling two-year average. As of September 1, 2024, the adjusted threshold is \$201,987,410. Inflation calculated from [BLS CPI for All Urban Consumers](#)

### Institutions

**Table 1. Research Universities**

Institution	Fiscal Year	Research/Scholarship Doctorates Awarded	Federal and Private Research Expenditures
Texas A&M University*	2024	745	\$619,539,315
	2023	748	\$600,102,369
The University of Texas at Austin	2024	873	\$865,822,423
	2023	865	\$762,515,443

\* Starting with the FY25 reporting year, research expenditures will be reported for Texas A&M University and its service agencies. This will not include Texas A&M System research expenditures. These changes will be reflected beginning with the FY27 Peer Group metrics.

## 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.

### Group Criteria

- Award at least 30 research scholarship doctoral degrees annually, based on a rolling average of two consecutive years of degree production
- Generate at least 20% of the Research University threshold for federal and private research expenditures as determined by a rolling two-year average. As of September 1, 2024, the adjusted threshold is \$40,397,482. Inflation calculated from [BLS CPI for All Urban Consumers](#)

### Institutions

**Table 2. Emerging Research Universities**

Institution	Fiscal Year	Research/Scholarship Doctorates Awarded	Federal and Private Research Expenditures
Texas State University	2024	76	\$55,698,832
	2023	56	\$52,937,549
Texas Tech University	2024	415	\$ 90,387,550
	2023	424	\$88,967,800
The University of Texas at Arlington	2024	229	\$71,124,866
	2023	274	\$63,894,073
The University of Texas at Dallas	2024	236	\$ 111,163,608
	2023	238	\$ 93,979,418
The University of Texas at El Paso	2024	134	\$90,213,425
	2023	143	\$83,840,871

**Table 2 (Continued). Emerging Research Universities**

Institution	Fiscal Year	Research/Scholarship Doctorates Awarded	Federal and Private Research Expenditures
The University of Texas at San Antonio	2024	127	\$71,800,709
	2023	140	\$67,788,601
University of Houston	2024	358	\$109,893,056
	2023	388	\$109,909,986
University of North Texas	2024	284	\$49,258,229
	2023	291	\$36,950,546

## Doctoral Universities

Doctoral universities are educational and cultural resource institutions committed to the threefold mission of teaching, research, and service. With extensive educational programs, academic efforts are directed to 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.

### Group Criteria (meet 3 out of 4)

- Award at least 10 research scholarship doctoral degrees annually
- Offer at least 5 research scholarship doctoral programs
- Enroll at least 150 research scholarship doctoral students
- Generate at least \$2 million (2013 baseline threshold) annually in federal and private research expenditures as determined by a rolling two-year average. As of September 1, 2024, the adjusted threshold is \$2,693,165. Inflation calculated from [BLS CPI for All Urban Consumers](#)

### Institutions

**Table 3. Doctoral Universities**

Institution	Fiscal Year	Research/ Scholarship Doctorates Awarded	Research/ Scholarship Doctoral Programs	Research/ Scholarship Doctoral Enrollment	Federal & Private Research Expenditures
East Texas A&M University*	2024	69	6	359	\$2,358,820
	2023	57	6	381	\$1,801,146
Prairie View A&M University	2024	36	6	164	\$2,033,1640
	2023	30	6	134	\$13,850,194
Sam Houston State University	2024	65	10	372	\$6,534,610
	2023	49	10	363	\$4,260,326
Tarleton State University	2024	18	6	177	\$5,444,861
	2023	26	4	154	\$4,707,926

\* East Texas A&M University was formerly Texas A&M University-Commerce. Name change effective Fall 2024.

**Table 3 (Continued). Doctoral Universities**

Institution	Fiscal Year	Research/ Scholarship Doctorates Awarded	Research/ Scholarship Doctoral Programs	Research/ Scholarship Doctoral Enrollment	Federal & Private Research Expenditures
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi	2024	43	7	275	\$28,193,731
	2023	47	7	263	\$20,838,575
Texas A&M University-Kingsville	2024	21	7	243	\$21,386,522
	2023	24	7	229	\$16,207,450
Texas Southern University	2024	26	7	161	\$4,061,207
	2023	26	7	167	\$5,480,779
Texas Woman's University	2024	235	20	1026	\$3,107,015
	2023	245	23	1,037	\$3,390,050
The University of Texas at Tyler	2024	48	7	214	\$2,828,747
	2023	32	7	195	\$2,141,831
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	2024	74	12	605	\$37,208,991
	2023	45	12	538	\$35,349,672

## 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.

### Group Criteria

- Provide access to a broad range of excellent baccalaureate and master's programs
- Possibly provide research scholarship doctoral-level education in targeted areas(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
- New (FY25): Meet at least one of the Doctoral criteria

### Institutions

- Lamar University
- Stephen F. Austin State University
- Texas A&M International University
- Texas A&M University at Galveston
- University of Houston-Clear Lake
- 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 enrolled 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.

### Group Criteria

- 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

### Institutions

- 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-San Antonio
- Texas A&M University-Texarkana
- The University of Texas Permian Basin
- University of Houston-Downtown
- University of Houston-Victoria
- University of North Texas at Dallas

**APPENDIX**  
**Original Peer Group**  
**Criteria FY14-FY24**

## University Peer Group Criteria (FY14 - FY24)

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. The approved criteria allowed an institution to be grandfathered into its existing peer group while the current criteria are in effect. The Board requested a full review of the criteria in ten years. 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.

#### Group Criteria

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 federal and private 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).

#### Institutions

- Texas A&M University (with system and agencies)
- University of Texas at Austin

## 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.

### Group Criteria

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 federal or private research expenditures (20% of \$150 million, adjusted for inflation), as determined by a rolling two- year average. As of September 1, 2023, the adjusted threshold was \$39,435,018

### Institutions

- Texas State University
- Texas Tech University
- University of Texas at Arlington
- University of Texas at Dallas
- University of Texas at El Paso
- University of Texas San Antonio
- University of Houston
- University of North Texas

## Doctoral Universities

Doctoral universities are educational and cultural resource institutions committed to the threefold 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.

### Group Criteria

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 federal and private research expenditures

### Institutions

- Lamar University
- Sam Houston State University
- Tarleton State University
- Texas A&M University Commerce
- Texas A&M University Corpus Christi
- Texas A&M University Kingsville
- Texas Southern University
- Texas Woman's University
- University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

## 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.

### Group Criteria

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

### Institutions

- Prairie View A&M University
- Stephen F. Austin 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.

### Group Criteria

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

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- 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 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

# **Texas Higher Education COORDINATING BOARD**

This document is available on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website:  
<https://highered.texas.gov>.

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