



Professional Development

About TxVSN

During the 80th legislative session, Senate Bill 1788 established a state virtual school network to provide online courses for Texas students. The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) legislation set forth the operational, course evaluation, and professional development requirements for this state-led supplemental program that works in partnership with schools.

The Texas Virtual School Network is a clearinghouse cataloging online courses provided by Texas public school districts, open enrollment charter schools, education service centers, and higher education institutions. These eligible course providers are generically referred to as course “provider districts”. After completing a rigorous course review process, each provider district brings its online courses, teachers, knowledge of Texas school procedures, and online processes to the TxVSN statewide catalog.

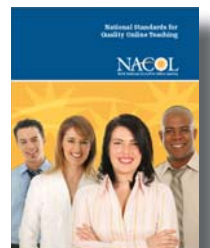
Ensuring Quality Instruction

Online courses provided through the TxVSN are taught by teachers with Texas certification in the course subject area and grade level. In addition, Texas Education Code Chapter 30A requires that any teacher providing instruction for an online course delivered via TxVSN must complete professional development.

Quality professional development for online teachers is important to ensure quality teaching and learning. Research demonstrates that a teacher’s skill in face-to-face teaching does not necessarily transfer to an online environment. In online instruction the teacher must combine both instructional and subject-area knowledge with a working knowledge of rapidly evolving online tools for communication and collaboration, content management, and assessment.



For this reason TxVSN professional development for new or experienced online instructors emphasizes the iNACOL *National Standards of Quality for Online Teaching*. Based on the original Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Standards for *Quality Online Teaching*, the iNACOL standards serve as a comprehensive set of criteria for online instructors. Participants in this standards-based professional development learn research-based strategies for online course content development and adaptation, instructional design, technology tools, assessment strategies, and course management. In the rapidly changing world of online learning, this combination of subject area knowledge and standards-based training provides Texas students with a quality interactive online learning experience. The TxVSN Central Operations has reviewed and identified providers of standards-based professional development. Providers of TxVSN approved professional development are noted on the next page.



Providers of TxVSN Approved Professional Development

Provider:

PD Audience:

- Education Development Center, Inc. **Beginning & Experienced Online Instructors**
- ESC Region 1 **Beginning Online Instructors**
- ESC Region 4 **Beginning & Experienced Online Instructors**
- ESC Region 11 **Beginning Online Instructors**
- ESC Region 16 **Beginning Online Instructors**
- Harris County of Department of Education **Beginning & Experienced Online Instructors**
- Texas A&M University CDLR **Beginning Online Instructors**
- University of Houston Clear Lake **Beginning & Experienced Online Instructors**

For a link to detailed information on each provider's TxVSN approved courses, direct your browser to <http://www.txvsn.org/aboutTxVSN/profDevelopment.aspx>.

1. **How can I get TxVSN certification?** The successful completion of TxVSN approved professional development does not confer a Texas endorsement or certification from the State Board of Educator Certification, but does fulfill a TxVSN professional development requirement as articulated by TEC Chapter 30A.
2. **Where can I find the iNACOL National Standards of Quality for Online Teaching?** First, direct your internet browser www.nacol.org then select Resources on the horizontal navigation bar. Select the National Standards link.
3. **Once TxVSN professional development is completed, when can I teach an online course over the network?** After successful completion of TxVSN approved professional development, an online instructor could be available to teach a course if he/she is employed or contracting with a TxVSN course provider district. This is contingent on the provider district having a need for an instructor matching an individual's subject area certification.
4. **What documentation of TxVSN professional development is needed?** Each provider of TxVSN approved professional development will supply a "document of completion" noting an individual's successful completion of training. Each participant should retain a copy of the "document of completion" as well as give a copy to the course provider district upon request.
5. **Do I get SBEC Continuing Professional Education (CPE) hours for completing TxVSN professional development?** Some providers of TxVSN approved professional development do offer CPE hours.
6. **The timeline, pacing, and cost for TxVSN approved professional development is not the same for each provider. Why?** Each provider of TxVSN professional development establishes its own course cost, pacing, and timeline allowing districts or participants the flexibility to select the program best meeting their needs.
7. **Who pays for TxVSN professional development?** It varies. Some course provider districts may pay professional development fees for instructors while others do not.
8. **Can a course provider district specify the provider of TxVSN professional development a teacher must use?** A course provider district may specify a preferred provider of TxVSN approved professional development for its online instructors.
9. **I am an experienced online instructor. Do I need TxVSN professional development?** All teachers need professional development to remain current in the rapidly changing world of online teaching and learning. However, online teachers with two or more years of experience teaching online academic courses for high school students and/or have a graduate degree in online or distance learning, do not have to take the TxVSN approved professional development. Prospective online teachers should be aware that a course provider district may still require experienced teachers to complete TxVSN professional development as well as have additional policies and requirements for its' online teachers.
10. **Once I have completed professional development, is that all I am required to do?** All teachers must have continuing professional development every three years to continue to meet the requirements to teach via TxVSN.