

### 3.4.1

#### **Educational Programs: All:Academic program approval**

The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration.

#### **Judgment**

Compliant    Non-Compliant    Not Applicable

#### **Narrative**

*Note: Text for all linked documents below can be increased/decreased for ease of reading by pressing your keyboard's Ctrl key while rotating the mouse wheel.*

At Angelo State University, the faculty and administration approve each educational program for which academic credit is awarded, including new degree programs and changes to existing curricula. Proposals for curricular change and new degree programs originate at the faculty level, are developed in accordance with the ASU mission, are reviewed and approved by ASU administrators and the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System, and align with the rules of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

#### **NEW DEGREE PROGRAM PROPOSALS**

New degree program proposals at ASU fall into one of two categories—those developed within an existing departmental structure and those developed with an interdisciplinary focus. Proposals initiated within an existing departmental structure are developed by faculty in the department in conversation with the appropriate college dean and the ASU provost and vice president of academic affairs. Proposals for new interdisciplinary degree programs requiring coursework from several colleges are initiated at the college level. In this case, the deans of the affected colleges appoint an ad hoc faculty committee to develop the degree proposal. In both cases, degree proposals are developed in accordance with the policies and procedures defined in ASU OP 04.05, Approval Process for New Degree Programs. The format for new degree proposals is determined by THECB requirements, as illustrated in the THECB Process for New Degree Programs flowchart and as summarized below.

#### **Programs Requiring Preliminary Authority**

If the proposed program is an engineering program (classified under the Texas Classification of Instructional Programs code 14) or a doctoral program, preliminary authority must be obtained from the THECB, and the Format for Preliminary Authority Requests form is used. On this form, the ASU president and a designee of the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System certify that relevant THECB rules have been met, including criteria related to workforce needs, student demand for the program, and available resources (19 TAC §5.24). Once preliminary authority is approved, the approval process continues using the appropriate new program request forms, as described below.

#### **New Bachelor's or Master's Degree Programs**

For new bachelor's or master's degree programs with projected costs less than \$2 million in the first five years that are not engineering programs, the institution completes the Certification Form for New Bachelor's and Master's Programs. On this form, the ASU president and a designee of the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System certify that the proposed program meets all THECB criteria for automatic approval (19 TAC §5.44(a)), including certification that the program has institutional and governing board approval, that it complies with THECB standards for bachelor's and master's programs (19 TAC §5.45), and that adequate funds are available to cover the costs of the new program.

For new bachelor's or master's programs with projected costs greater than \$2 million in the first five years, the institution completes the New Program Request Form for Bachelor's and Master's Degrees. On this form, the ASU president and a designee of the Board of Regents certify that the proposed program satisfies requirements in the THECB standards for bachelor's and master's programs, which mandate that any new program "must be within the existing role and mission of the institution" and that the new curriculum "should be up-to-date and consistent with current educational theory" (19 TAC §5.45 section 6).

For baccalaureate degree programs, the THECB also specifies minimum standards for areas such as faculty size and qualifications, library resources, and facilities and equipment (19 TAC §5.45 sections 3, 4, and 5). Proposals for new baccalaureate programs must demonstrate that these criteria have been met. New baccalaureate programs must also comply with THECB rules governing the transfer of credit, core curriculum, and field of study requirements (19 TAC §§4.24–34; links to these TAC sections are provided in the Source list below).

For all new bachelor's and master's degree programs, the institution must demonstrate that there is a need for such a new program in the state and the nation; that the new program complements and strengthens the existing programs at the institution; that the new program does not create unnecessary duplication of other programs within the region, state, or nation; and that the program can attract a critical mass of students to make the program self-sufficient based on state formula funding.

### **New Doctoral Programs**

Proposals for new doctoral programs are developed using the New Doctoral Degree Proposal form. On this form, the ASU president and a designee of the Board of Regents certify that the proposed program satisfies requirements of 19 TAC §5.46, which specifies that any new doctoral program should have "a carefully planned and systematic program of study and a degree plan which is clear, comprehensive, and generally uniform but which permits sufficient flexibility to meet the legitimate professional interests and special needs of doctoral-level degree candidates." In the proposal for a new doctoral program, the institution must also demonstrate the following: that the program represents a unique field; that a need exists for doctoral graduates in the field that is not currently met in the region, state, or nation; that existing programs in the state cannot accommodate additional students; and, finally, that the institution will have sufficient resources to develop and maintain a high quality program.

### **Certificate Programs**

In addition to degree programs, ASU offers certificate programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Proposals for new certificate programs align with the THECB criteria for certificate programs (19 TAC §5.48) and follow an internal approval process similar to that of any other new academic program. The

proposals are typically drafted by faculty at the departmental level and then reviewed and approved by the appropriate department head, college dean or graduate dean, College Curriculum Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs. Some certificate programs require only internal review and approval; for others, the institution must notify the THECB, which grants automatic approval, subject to review.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ROUTING AND REVIEW**

Each proposal for a new degree program includes two internal ASU routing forms—the Routing Sheet for New Degree Program Requests and the Request for Curriculum Change form. The Routing Sheet for New Degree Program Requests is used to document preliminary internal review and approval of the proposed program by the appropriate department head(s), dean(s), provost/vice president for academic affairs, and the ASU accreditation liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). If the proposed program or curricular change requires new funding, the initial internal review also includes the vice president for finance and administration and the president. The form requires the proposing department to indicate whether or not the proposal constitutes a substantive change according to the SACS policy statement, “Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges.” Proposers must also provide a brief description of how the program addresses the mission statement, value statements, and academic and strategic plans of ASU.

Once the initiating faculty committee obtains the approvals required on the routing sheet, the full proposal is routed for review and approval to the appropriate administrators and faculty committees, beginning at the departmental level and advancing to college and institutional levels of review. The Request for Curriculum Change form specifies which administrators and committees are required to review and approve different types of curricular change. Minor curricular changes—such as changing a prerequisite within a department or modifying a course description—must be approved by the appropriate department head and dean, the registrar, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs. More significant changes—including course and program additions or deletions, new course titles, or changes in the number of credit hours for a course—must also be approved by the relevant College Curriculum Committee and, where appropriate, the Teacher Education Council (for changes involving teacher certification programs), the University Core Curriculum Committee (for changes involving the core curriculum), and the Graduate Council (for changes in graduate curricula). All significant curricular changes and new program proposals are also reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee. (See ASU OP 04.01, Angelo State University Councils and Committees and the Angelo State University Committees and Councils 2011–2012 for information about the primary responsibilities and membership of these committees.)

Upon review and approval by the University Curriculum Committee, the proposal is forwarded to the provost and vice president for academic affairs and to the university president for review and approval. From there it is presented to the Board of Regents for approval. In accordance with 19 TAC §5.50(b), the Board of Regents must certify, among other things, that new programs “have a curriculum, faculty, resources, support services, and other components of a degree program that are comparable to those of high quality programs in the same or similar disciplines at other institutions” and are “designed to be consistent with the standards of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.”

## **TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD APPROVAL**

Following approval by the Board of Regents, the ASU Office of the President prepares the proposal for submission to the THECB and finally to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. All degree programs approved by the THECB appear on the ASU Program Inventory.

A representative set of example forms for the recently proposed Bachelor of Security Studies in Border and Homeland Security program is provided, including the routing sheet and program request form (BSS Border and Homeland Security routing sheet and program request) and the THECB approval letter for this degree (THECB letter December 16, 2011).