

### 3.4.5

#### **Educational Programs: All:Academic policies**

The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These policies are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.

#### **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.*

Angelo State University publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice and disseminates these policies to the students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.

#### **PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF ACADEMIC POLICIES**

ASU academic policies are published in the ASU Operating Policies and Procedures, the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, and the student handbook, all of which are available on the ASU website. The website also provides information related to academic policies, programs, and services.

#### **ASU Operating Policies and Procedures**

The Angelo State University Operating Policies and Procedures (ASU OPs) are publicly available on the ASU website, and an option for conducting searches within the policies and procedures is provided on the ASU OP Manual home page. In addition, the ASU OPs are referenced on many pages of the institutional website, with corresponding links provided to the online manual. Academic policies are primarily found in the following three chapters:

- **Chapter 04, Academic Affairs—General.** This chapter defines general policies related to academic programs and services, including policies that define the roles and responsibilities of various faculty committees in the development and implementation of academic programs and curricula (see, for example, ASU OP 04.01, ASU Councils and Committees; ASU OP 04.05, Approval Process for New Degree Programs; and ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education).
- **Chapter 06, Academic Policies—Faculty.** Policies in this chapter address faculty rights and responsibilities on a range of issues, such as academic workload, faculty development, leaves of absence, promotion and tenure procedures, and evaluation. Some of these policies also define faculty roles and responsibilities related to the development and approval of academic policies (see, for example, ASU OP 06.01, Academic Deans and Department Chairpersons and ASU OP 06.14, Faculty Responsibilities and Duties).
- **Chapter 10, Academic Policies—Students.** Academic policies pertaining to students are found in this chapter, which contains detailed policies on a variety of issues, including, but not limited to, admissions, grading procedures, grade grievance procedures, student performance, academic

status, degree requirements, study abroad programs, and accommodations for students with disabilities. Selected examples of policies from this chapter include the following:

- ASU OP 10.01, Undergraduate Student Admissions
- ASU OP 10.02, Pass-Fail Option
- ASU OP 10.03, Grade Grievance
- ASU OP 10.04, Academic Regulations Concerning Student Performance
- ASU OP 10.07, Undergraduate Academic Status
- ASU OP 10.08, Undergraduate Credit by Examination
- ASU OP 10.09, Degree Requirements
- ASU OP 10.10, Final Examinations
- ASU OP 10.11, Grading Procedures
- ASU OP 10.14, Study Abroad Programs
- ASU OP 10.15, Providing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- ASU OP 10.17, International Undergraduate Student Admissions
- ASU OP 10.18, Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program
- ASU OP 10.21, Undergraduate Transfer of Grade Policy

Many of these student-focused academic policies are also published in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, in the student handbook, and/or on the institutional website.

### **Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs**

The ASU undergraduate and graduate catalogs provide information about the degrees offered by each of the ASU colleges, degree requirements for all majors, courses offered, and faculty information. The catalogs also provide information on admissions, housing, financial aid, and academic policies related to issues such as grading, grade grievances, credit by examination, and transfer credit. See especially the section on Academic Regulations in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012 (pp. 310–375) and the section on Academic Guidelines and Graduate Studies Policies in the ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012 (pp. 28–37).

### **Student Handbook**

The ASU student handbook provides students with general information regarding university policies, rules, and regulations concerning student activities, academic issues, and expected standards of student behavior. Academic policies in the handbook include the following:

- General academic policies related to attendance, schedule changes, withdrawal from the university, and grade grievances (ASU Student Handbook 2011–2012, pp. 5–7)
- Information about student records, including notification of student rights under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (ASU Student Handbook 2011–2012, pp. 8–10)
- The University Honor Code, Code of Student Conduct, and campus disciplinary procedures (ASU Student Handbook 2011–2012, pp. 22–35)
- Student grievance and appeal procedures (ASU Student Handbook 2011–2012, pp. 43–46)

## **Institutional Website**

All of the above publications are available through the ASU website, which is a primary source of information on ASU's academic services and programs. The website includes links to current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies, as summarized in Federal Requirement 4.3, Publication of policies, as well as other useful information for current and prospective students, faculty and staff, and other interested parties. The Current Student page provides links to information about registration and advising, tuition and billing, scholarships and financial aid, residential programs, multicultural programs, health and safety, ASU events and campus life, academic services, facilities, graduation and careers, and university publications. The Prospective Student link leads directly to the admissions office home page where prospective students can find information on admissions, degree programs, scholarships and financial aid, campus maps, tour information, and campus activities. The ASU home page also has special links providing useful information for members of the military, family and visitors, and alumni.

## **DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC POLICIES**

ASU faculty assume primary responsibility for determining good educational practice and play a substantive role in developing and reviewing academic policies. Faculty participation helps ensure that the institution establishes good academic practices that are within the context of the institutional mission.

ASU has established a standard process for developing and approving the ASU Operating Policies and Procedures, which is defined in ASU OP 02.04, Operating Policy and Procedure Manual for Angelo State University, and aligns with the Commission's best practices statement on "Developing Policy and Procedure Documents." Department heads or other appropriate administrators may initiate a new OP affecting their department or division by routing the proposed OP through administrative channels for evaluation and endorsement, as outlined in ASU OP 02.04.

To maintain an accurate and effective body of operating policies and procedures that conform to generally accepted practices and policies of higher education, each OP is also subject to regular review; the review cycle and responsible personnel are identified in each policy. In addition to scheduled reviews, an OP can be revised at any time, if needed. Anyone wishing to recommend revisions forwards the proposed revisions to the personnel identified in the review section of the OP, and the revision process then follows procedures outlined in ASU OP 02.04.

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (PVPAA) reviews policy revisions to determine if they are substantive or non-substantive. For non-substantive changes, the office approves the revised policy, sends a copy to the president's office, posts the revised policy on the ASU Operating Policies and Procedures website, and notifies the university community of the revision (OP Updates web page).

Policies that contain substantive revisions follow the review and approval process for new OPs outlined in ASU OP 02.04. In this process, draft versions of new and revised policies are posted to the ASU Operating Policies and Procedures website for review and comment by the campus community prior to being finalized (OP Drafts web page). The Office of the PVPAA sends an email message to inform the campus community when a draft policy has been posted on the website, allowing all affected constituencies to provide input and participate in the policy-development process. The only policies that are not subject to campus review are those related to personnel or fiscal matters that are mandated by the Board of Regents of the Texas

Tech University System or any Texas governmental entity. New policies and policies with substantive revisions are submitted to the president and, as required, to the Board of Regents for approval.

All academic policies are developed and/or reviewed by the appropriate faculty committee(s). For example, the University Curriculum Committee makes recommendations to the PVPAA on policies related to curriculum and academic programs, and the Graduate Council makes recommendations to the president through the dean of the College of Graduate Studies and the PVPAA on academic policies and programs affecting the graduate program and the graduate faculty (ASU OP 04.01, ASU Councils and Committees). Similarly, the Distance Education Council serves in an advisory capacity to the PVPAA on policy and operational issues related to distance education, and all academic policies, standards, and guidelines for on-campus instruction apply to programs delivered via distance education (ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education), in accordance with the Commission's "Distance and Correspondence Education" policy.

New and revised academic policies affecting the faculty (see ASU OP Chapter 06, Academic Policies—Faculty in the OP Manual) are developed and reviewed by an ad hoc committee composed of five faculty members identified by the Faculty Senate, two deans, and the PVPAA. Once such a policy is drafted, it is sent to the Faculty Senate and disseminated to individual departments through the senators. Members of the ad hoc committee may also be called to speak to the Faculty Senate. All comments from faculty are reviewed by the ad hoc committee and incorporated into the policy as appropriate prior to being submitted through the PVPAA to the president for approval.

Attached is a representative example of minutes from a meeting at which OP 06.01 Academic Deans and Department Chairpersons (Routing Sheet for OP 06.01) was reviewed and approved (ASU Faculty Senate minutes December 7, 2011).

## **APPROVAL PROCESS FOR ASU PUBLICATIONS**

The ASU Office of Communications and Marketing oversees the development and publication of all university advertisements, publications, promotional literature, and other materials used to portray the institution. Responsibilities of the office include 1) reviewing all such materials to ensure that the primary content emphasis is on the institution's educational programs and services and 2) updating the content as needed to ensure that the university represents itself in ways that are clear, factually accurate, and current (Federal Requirement 4.6, Recruitment materials). The office is assisted in these responsibilities by the Office of the President, vice presidents, and deans, as needed, in accordance with the following operating policies and procedures:

- ASU OP 26.02, Approval of Advertising
- ASU OP 26.05, Communications and News Media
- ASU OP 26.10, Publication of Departmental Brochures, Pamphlets and Promotional Materials

Publications not originating in Office of Communications and Marketing begin with the ASU Publication Request Form, which is reviewed by the appropriate department head, dean, and/or account manager and then forwarded to the office of the appropriate vice president for approval before it proceeds to Office of Communications and Marketing for processing. A similar approval process is followed for the ASU website, which is developed, managed, and maintained through a coordinated effort. Information Technology is responsible for overall technical oversight; the Office of Communications and Marketing manages the

home page and principal recruiting pages and supports all academic and administrative sites; and individual academic and administrative units manage day-to-day content for their specific areas.