

3.5.3

Educational Programs: Undergraduate:Undergraduate requirements

The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. (See Commission policy "The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees.")

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 defines and publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

PROCESS FOR DETERMINING DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Primary responsibility for curriculum design and development at ASU rests with the faculty, who help ensure that ASU degree requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. The review and approval process for curricular changes and new degree programs is conducted in accordance with the policies and procedures defined in ASU OP 04.05, Approval Process for New Degree Programs. The process begins internally with discussions among the relevant disciplinary faculty, department head(s), college dean(s), and the provost and vice president for academic affairs regarding the proposed program's coherence and its connection and compatibility with the ASU mission statement. If preliminary discussions indicate that continued review is warranted, a formal degree proposal is developed and routed for approval in accordance with ASU OP 04.05.

As summarized in Core Requirement 2.7.2, Program content, proposals for new degree programs and curricular change are reviewed and approved by the appropriate college curriculum committee(s) and, where appropriate, the Teacher Education Council (for changes involving teacher certification programs), the University Core Curriculum Committee (for changes involving the core curriculum), the Graduate Council (for changes in graduate curricula), and the University Curriculum Committee. Upon review and approval by the University Curriculum Committee, proposals for new degree programs are forwarded to the provost and vice president for academic affairs, who is responsible for the coordination of academic planning, review of all proposed curriculum changes, and proper implementation and evaluation of approved academic programs (ASU OP 01.03, Organization of Angelo State University). The Academic Deans' Council, of which the provost is chair, advises the provost on matters related to academic affairs, and the provost in turn advises the president. The president has final authority for approving degree requirements in accordance with *The Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System*, which "delegates approval of degree requirements and conferral of degrees to the president of each component institution" (Section 05.03, *Regents' Rules*). Following review by the

president, proposals are presented to the Board of Regents for approval prior to being submitted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for final review and approval.

ENSURING ALIGNMENT WITH RELEVANT STANDARDS

At each stage of the review process, reviewers ensure that the proposed program conforms to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs in the given discipline. As a result, all of ASU's programs adhere to principles established at the state and national levels, including those outlined in the Commission's policy on "The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees." For example, each ASU undergraduate program is directly related to the mission of the institution (Federal Requirement 4.2, Program curriculum), includes the appropriate number of semester credit hours (Federal Requirement 4.4, Program length), embodies a coherent course of study appropriate to higher education (Core Requirement 2.7.2, Program content), and requires the completion of a collegiate-level general education component (Core Requirement 2.7.3, General education).

Standards to which ASU's undergraduate programs conform include the institutional requirements specified in ASU OP 10.09, Degree Requirements, and other commonly accepted standards, including the Texas Classification of Instructional Programs taxonomy, the THECB criteria for baccalaureate programs (including criteria for the general education core curriculum), and discipline-specific standards established by relevant accrediting bodies, as summarized below.

Texas Classification of Instructional Programs

ASU's undergraduate programs adhere to the Texas Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) system established by the THECB. This state program classification is based on the United States Department of Education CIP taxonomy. The CIP is the accepted federal government standard for instructional program classifications.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Criteria and Review

All ASU undergraduate programs meet the THECB criteria for new baccalaureate and master's degree programs, which mandate that any new program "must be within the existing role and mission of the institution" and should have a curriculum that is "up-to-date and consistent with current educational theory" (19 TAC §5.45(6)). The general education core at ASU, known as the University Core Curriculum, also conforms to the THECB regulations, which require every public institution of higher education in Texas to establish a core curriculum of at least 42 semester credit hours (19 TAC §4.28). Specific requirements and a coherent rationale for the state's general education parameters are published in the THECB's *Core Curriculum Assumptions and Defining Characteristics (Rev. 1999)*, and detailed information about ASU's core curriculum is provided in Core Requirement 2.7.3, General education and Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1, General education competencies.

The THECB reviews ASU's role, mission, and degree programs at least once every four years in cooperation with the Board of Regents (19 TAC §5.24(c)(1)). As part of this process, the THECB reviews new degree programs to ensure that they are compatible with the institution's stated mission, provide up-to-date curricula consistent with current educational theory, and, when relevant, meet the standards of appropriate accrediting bodies. All new degree programs must meet demonstrated higher education needs

in Texas and the nation. Documentation of the most recent four-year review cycle is provided in Core Requirement 2.7.2, Program content.

Review by External Accrediting Organizations

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools conducts an institutional evaluation for reaffirmation of accreditation every ten years. In addition, several of ASU's undergraduate degree programs are accredited by specialized accrediting organizations (ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 2). These professional and external organizations provide an additional level of review to ensure that ASU's programs are appropriate to higher education and embody a coherent course of study aligned with national standards.

DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with the Commission's "Distance and Correspondence Education" policy, the ASU faculty also assumes primary responsibility for ensuring the rigor and quality of ASU's distance education programs. Programs offered via distance education are approved through the usual curriculum approval process, as outlined above. All relevant policies, standards, and guidelines for on-campus instruction apply to programs delivered via distance education. As with on-campus programs, the selection of courses and programs to be offered via distance education is the purview of the appropriate academic unit, which is also responsible for overseeing the program to ensure currency of the program, its courses, and resources. Each program has defined learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree awarded (ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education).

PUBLICATION OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Clear, complete, and consistent information about each undergraduate program is published in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog. The undergraduate catalog includes the following statement concerning graduation under a particular catalog:

To receive a degree from Angelo State University, a student must fulfill all requirements for the degree as set forth in a particular University Catalog as amended. Several choices are allowed: (1) Graduation may be under the requirements of the current University Catalog. (2) Graduation may be under the Catalog of the year in force when the student first registered at Angelo State University or when the student registered at an accredited Texas community college prior to transferring to Angelo State University. (3) Graduation may be under the requirements of the Catalog for any subsequent year in which the student was registered at Angelo State University or when the student was registered at another Texas public institution of higher education prior to transferring to Angelo State University. Each of these provisions is subject to the limitation that all requirements for a degree from Angelo State University must be completed within six years from the date of the Catalog selected. For example, a student who chooses to graduate under the requirements of the 2005–2007 University Catalog must complete all requirements for the degree under that Catalog prior to August 2011. Otherwise, a later Catalog must be selected. However, when a student is enrolled at Angelo State University during the second academic year included in a two-year Catalog, the six-year limit extends from the beginning of the second academic year of the Catalog. (ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011-2012, pp. 331-332)

ASU Undergraduate Catalog

Degree requirements published in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog include information about the University Core Curriculum (pp. 361–363), descriptions of individual degree programs (pp. 54–288), and information about online learning (for example, p. 239). Each program description includes information about the total number of semester credit hours required to complete the program, specific course requirements in the major, requirements for a minor, the number of semester credit hours allowed for elective courses, and descriptions of the courses offered in the degree program. The catalog is accessible via the ASU website and can be downloaded by students.

ASU Website

The ASU website also provides information pertaining to undergraduate program degree requirements. The Current Students page, which can be accessed from the ASU home page, includes links to a number of ASU web pages relating to program requirements. For example, the academic majors page provides a list of available majors including options, which in turn link to departmental pages detailing degree programs, course descriptions, scheduling information, and other department-specific information; the predeclared advising page links to the University Core Requirements; and the Distance Education page links to pages that provide information about online degree programs and courses. The Current Students page also includes a link to the University Catalogs page, from which students can download the current ASU Undergraduate Catalog. When there is a disagreement between the website and the university catalog, the catalog takes precedence.

Ramport

Another vital link on the Current Students web page is the link to the RAMS page, from which students can enter the ASU RamPort site. RamPort is a powerful tool that provides students with dynamic degree program information as they progress through their academic careers. On Ramport, students can request a detailed degree evaluation. If the student has filed a degree plan, the degree evaluation will provide a summary of the degree requirements that have been met and those requirements yet to be accomplished. Information provided in the degree evaluation includes the number of semester credit hours in the academic major, other required hours for the major, hours in the minor, elective hours, advanced hour requirements, GPA requirements, and undergraduate residency requirements. In addition, students can perform a “what-if” analysis—using degree requirements from any recent catalog for any academic major and any minor—to obtain a degree evaluation based on the course credits they have earned to date. The evaluation shows what requirements under the specified scenario have already been met and which have yet to be met. A sample Detailed Degree Evaluation is provided in Comprehensive Standard 3.5.2, Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree.