

### 3.6.2

#### **Educational Programs: Graduate/Post-Baccalaureate:Graduate curriculum**

The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.

#### **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.*

For all graduate programs offered at Angelo State University, the College of Graduate Studies has established a set of common student learning goals that reflect the institution's commitment to ensuring its graduate students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need for ongoing engagement and success in their respective disciplines. These ASU Graduate Student Learning Goals include the expectation that students will demonstrate advanced knowledge, skills, and values appropriate to their chosen discipline, including the ability to conduct research, think critically, and apply new technologies appropriately. In addition, the general admission requirements for the College of Graduate Studies are designed to ensure that students who are admitted to ASU graduate programs are prepared to succeed in a rigorous academic environment (ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012, pp. 10–17, especially pp. 14-16).

At the program level, graduate faculty define discipline-specific admissions requirements, degree requirements, and student learning goals to help ensure that students attain the skills and dispositions essential to graduate education and professional practice in the given discipline. For all graduate programs, the admissions requirements, degree requirements, and course descriptions are published in the ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012, for example, the MBA degree. Student learning outcomes are tracked using the Strategic Planning Online (SPOL) data assessment system; see Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1, Institutional Effectiveness: Educational Programs, for program-specific SPOL reports.

The knowledge and skills expected of students varies with the level of graduate degree, as indicated by the representative program examples described below.

#### **DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

ASU offers one doctoral program, the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT). The lock-step DPT curriculum plan includes sequenced professional courses that establish a knowledge base in foundational, behavioral, and clinical sciences, including, for example, clinical anatomy, neuroscience, pathology, and biomechanics. To ensure student engagement in research and appropriate professional practice, the curriculum also includes evidence-based practice seminars; courses in musculoskeletal examination and management,

clinical education, professionalism, and communication; and hands-on practicum experiences (see the DPT program of study and course descriptions in the ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012, pp. 121-125).

All courses in the DPT program map to the program's student learning outcomes, and faculty are responsible for evaluating student success in achieving targeted outcomes. For example, students enrolled in Physical Therapy 7550 (Fundamentals of Physical Therapist Examination) are assessed via practical examinations and written examinations in which graduate students must choose appropriate tests and measurement tools for given patient cases, provide rationale, demonstrate proper administration, and interpret results with patients/lab partners for a grade by the instructor(s). Please see Comprehensive Standard 3.6.1, Educational programs: Graduate and post-baccalaureate professional programs for more information.

## **MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS AND GRADUATE CERTIFICATES**

Each of the master's degree programs, post-master's certifications, and other graduate certificates offered by ASU are structured to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice, as indicated by the degree requirements and course descriptions provided in the ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012 (beginning on page 50) and as illustrated by the following representative examples:

- The Master of Arts in Communication program includes courses that explore the literature (both theoretical and applied) and ensure student engagement in research and professional practice. For example, Communications 6312 (Qualitative Research Methods) is structured around student engagement of progressive, critically motivated readings that explore qualitative research. Students learn how to conduct research with a qualitative paradigm and understand the complexities of qualitative research.
- The Master of Arts in English program includes courses that explore literature, history, theory, and creative writing as well as courses that ensure student engagement in research and professional practice. For example, in English 6301 (British Literary History), students are expected to be able to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view. Students are required to compose weekly analytical papers over literary works from the eighteenth century. In addition, students must compose a research paper that interprets an assigned work of fiction from the eighteenth century. This assignment also includes the submission and approval of a two-page proposal.
- The Master of Science in Nursing programs includes courses that prepare nurse professionals to provide high quality, safe care for a multicultural society as well as courses that ensure student engagement in research. For example, Nursing 6301 (Design & Methodology of Quantitative and Qualitative Research) prepares students to critically evaluate published research and to utilize research findings to guide practice, select interventions, evaluate course outcomes, and identify problems to be addressed by future research.
- The Master of Security Studies program includes courses designed to increase students' critical thinking and analytic skills in political culture and comparative security policy as well as courses to ensure student engagement in research and professional practice. For example, Security Studies

6312 (Globalization and International Security) requires students to evaluate the potential future international security ramifications of globalization. In required essays, students must conduct social science research to gain a better understanding of the interactions of culture, security, and globalization.

- The Master of Science in Biology program includes courses that provide advanced knowledge and training in field-oriented graduate biology research. For example, Biology 6353 (Limnology) consists of advanced training in the physical and chemical properties of water, while Biology 5435 (Plant Taxonomy) requires students to develop advanced skills in the identification of plant families, including the identification of vascular plants using a dichotomous key.

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

In accordance with ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education, all policies, standards, and guidelines for on-campus instruction apply to programs delivered via distance education. The program for the Master of Science in Applied Psychology, for example, is structured to include knowledge of the literature and to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and professional practice, as reflected in Psychology 6330 (Applied Economic Psychology). The course focuses on an investigation of psychological principles, empirical findings, and research methods to address a wide variety of economic behavior, solve practical problems, and inform public policy.