

4.2

Program curriculum

The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded.

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.

In fulfillment of the institutional mission to deliver “undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines,” ASU offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs through the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Graduate Studies, and Health and Human Services (ASU Program Inventory). ASU also offers a variety of certificate programs, all of which have curricula that are part of existing majors. The curricula for all ASU academic programs, including those offered through distance education, are directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded, as outlined below.

ALIGNMENT WITH ASU STRATEGIC PLAN

As the focus of the strategic plan, the ASU mission guides institutional planning and operations at all levels, including academic program review and approval (Core Requirement 2.4, Institutional mission; Comprehensive Standard 3.1, Mission). All program curricula are designed to align with Master Goal #4 of the ASU strategic plan, which states that ASU “offers undergraduate and graduate curricula and co-curricula to support students’ intellectual and personal growth, to address issues relevant to society, and to meet the demands of State of Texas initiatives and the marketplace” (Vision 2020, Master Goal #4).

To ensure ongoing alignment of program curricula with the institutional mission and strategic goals, all educational programs, including those offered through distance education, are routinely assessed as part of the campus-wide assessment process. To guide assessment of student learning, ASU has established university-wide learning goals by degree-level (ASU Undergraduate Learning Goals and ASU Graduate Learning Goals). These institutional goals reflect the mission of the university and are linked to faculty-defined program learning goals and course learning objectives. Collectively, these student learning goals guide the planning and assessment process for academic units (Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1, Institutional effectiveness: educational programs).

CONSISTENT WITH GOOD PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In accordance with requirements of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), all undergraduate degree programs at ASU are based on a set of foundational academic courses that comprise the University Core Curriculum (Core Requirement 2.7.3, General education; Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1, General education competencies). In addition, each major has an established number of

semester-credit-hour requirements, including appropriately sequenced lower- and upper-division courses and, if applicable, appropriate specializations. All programs also include the appropriate number of electives and an academic minor, typically related to the major. Degree requirements are published in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, which includes information about the University Core Curriculum and descriptions of individual degree programs. See, for example, the degree requirements for the Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting.

Graduate programs at ASU are structured to build upon foundational undergraduate education and to provide students with advanced knowledge and skills in their chosen field. Degree requirements for each program are published in the ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012, which includes information about prerequisite courses, the total number of semester credit hours required to complete the program, the discipline-defined set of core courses, the number and type of elective courses allowed, and descriptions of the courses offered in the degree program. Examples of degree requirements for specific programs begin on p. 50.

ASU employs a number of internal and external review processes to ensure that each of its degree programs, including those offered through distance education, embodies a coherent course of study that is compatible with the ASU mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. Proposals for new degree programs or significant curricular change 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 THECB, as summarized in Core Requirement 2.7.2, Program content and Comprehensive standard 3.4.1, Academic program approval.

Faculty experts in each discipline maintain primary responsibility for determining the required coursework for academic programs and establishing how such requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices, as described in Comprehensive Standard 3.5.3, Undergraduate program requirements and Comprehensive Standard 3.6.4, Post-baccalaureate program requirements.

In addition, several of ASU's degree programs are accredited by specialized accrediting organizations (ASU Program Accreditation). 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.