## 2.7.1

## **Program Length**

The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.

## **Judgment**

| V | Compliant | ☐ Non-Compliant | ☐ Not Applicable |
|---|-----------|-----------------|------------------|
| س | 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 of its degree programs, Angelo State University determines program length based on the required number of semester credit hours. Undergraduate baccalaureate degree programs at ASU require at least 120 semester credit hours, and graduate degree programs require at least 30 semester credit hours; ASU's single associate's degree requires 67 credit hours (ASU Program Inventory).

All new degree plans are reviewed and approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to ensure alignment with relevant rules and laws defined in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), including criteria for new degree programs (19 TAC §5.45 and 19 TAC §5.46). Additional information about ASU degree requirements is provided in ASU OP 10.09, Degree Requirements, which specifies the semester-credit-hour requirements for bachelor's and master's degrees and for the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. The degree requirements defined in ASU OP 10.09 align with the rules and guidelines of the THECB and the SACS Commission on Colleges.

ASU faculty and administration also review each educational program for which academic credit is awarded, including new degree programs and changes to existing curricula, in accordance with the policies and procedures defined in ASU OP 04.05, Approval Process for New Degree Programs and as summarized in Core Requirement 2.7.2, Program content and Comprehensive Standard 3.4.1, Academic program approval. As part of this process, reviewers ensure that the length of all ASU degree programs is determined based on the semester-credit-hour requirements specified in ASU OP 10.09. Criteria governing ASU's program-length requirements by degree level are summarized in Federal Requirement 4.4, Program length. The definition of semester credit hour used by ASU conforms to commonly accepted practices in higher education, as described in Federal Requirement 4.9, Credit hours.

ASU offers one associate's degree, the Associate of Applied Science in Nursing (AASN). The program requirements for this degree are detailed in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, pp. 228–230. In

December 2011, the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System (TTU System) voted to phase out this degree program (Board of Regents minutes December 15-16, 2011, part XI.C.1). This decision was made by ASU and the TTU System in response to changing market conditions and the desire to better position ASU graduates to meet future nursing-workforce needs. ASU accepted the last cohort of AASN students in Fall 2011, and these students will graduate in May 2013. ASU is also phasing out its Licensed Vocational Nurse to Registered Nurse (LVN-RN) transition program and its Second Degree AASN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (AASN-BSN) program. The last cohort of LVN-RN transition students will enter in October 2012 and will graduate in May 2013. The last cohort for the Second Degree AASN-BSN program will enter in May 2012 and graduate in May 2013.

As of Spring 2012, ASU offered 42 baccalaureate degree programs. Another 3 baccalaureate degree programs are being phased out because of low enrollment, and 2 programs are being consolidated, as highlighted in blue in the ASU Program Inventory. Individual program requirements, including required semester credit hours, core curriculum requirements, and major preparatory courses and electives, are listed in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012. See, for example, the degree plan for the Bachelor of Arts in Communication, which illustrates how the required semester credit hours are distributed over the course of the degree program (ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 109).

ASU offers 23 master's degree programs and 1 doctoral degree program. Another 3 master's degree programs are being phased out because of low enrollment, and 1 is being consolidated, as highlighted in blue in the ASU Program Inventory. Individual degree requirements, including semester credit hours, core requirements, major preparatory courses, and electives, are listed in the ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012. See, for example, the degree plan for the Master of Science in Biology, which illustrates how the required semester credit hours are distributed over the course of the degree program (ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012, pp. 58–59).