

## 2.7.2

### Program Content

The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

### 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 employs a number of internal and external review processes to ensure that every degree program it offers embodies a coherent course of study that is compatible with the ASU mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

#### **FACULTY OVERSIGHT OF DEGREE PROGRAMS**

Primary responsibility for curriculum design and development at ASU rests with the faculty, who help ensure that ASU degree programs demonstrate appropriate course content, sequencing, and linkages among program components (see also Comprehensive Standard 3.4.1, Academic program approval and Comprehensive Standard 3.4.10, Responsibility for curriculum). Furthermore, 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 in Federal Requirement 4.2, Program curriculum.

All undergraduate degree programs at ASU are based on a set of foundational academic courses that compose the common general education curriculum, known as the University Core Curriculum, and an established number of semester-credit-hour requirements in each major, 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 core curriculum requirements and descriptions of individual degree programs such as the BBA in Accounting. 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.

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 as, for example, for the MBA and MPAC programs in Accounting.

All ASU undergraduate and graduate programs adhere to the Texas Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), which was established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board based on the United States Department of Education CIP taxonomy. The CIP is the accepted federal government standard for instructional program classifications.

## **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS**

At ASU, 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, college dean, 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. Department heads from any existing programs that may be affected by the proposal also participate in the discussions. If the proposed program is interdisciplinary, early discussions will include faculty representatives, department heads, and deans representing all of the disciplines, departments, and colleges affected by the proposal. 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, which reflects requirements for new degree programs defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

The review process ensures that new degree programs and curricular changes are documented, reviewed, and approved by the appropriate ASU faculty and administrators as well as by the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System prior to being submitted to the THECB for final review and approval. At each stage of the review process, reviewers ensure that the proposed program meets relevant THECB requirements. Criteria for new baccalaureate and master's degree programs 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(1) and (6)). Criteria for new doctoral programs specify that any new program should have "a carefully planned and systematic program of study and a degree plan which is clear, comprehensive, and generally uniform but which permits sufficient flexibility to meet the legitimate professional interests and special needs of doctoral-level degree candidates" (19 TAC §5.46(10)).

Proposals for new degree programs are reviewed and approved by the appropriate college curriculum committee and, where appropriate, the Teacher Education Council (for changes involving teacher certification programs), the Core Curriculum Committee (for changes to the core curriculum), and the Graduate Council (for changes in graduate curricula). All significant curricular changes and new program proposals are also reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee. (See Angelo State University Committees and Councils 2011–2012 for the membership and primary responsibilities of these committees.)

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 and to the university president for review and approval. From there, proposals are presented to the Board of Regents for approval. In

accordance with 19 TAC §5.50(b), the Board of Regents must certify, among other things, that new programs “have a curriculum, faculty, resources, support services, and other components of a degree program that are comparable to those of high quality programs in the same or similar disciplines at other institutions” and are “designed to be consistent with the standards of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.”

### **TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD REVIEW**

Following approval by the Board of Regents, the ASU Office of the President prepares the proposal for submission to the THECB and finally to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. All degree programs approved by the THECB appear on the ASU Program Inventory.

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. The THECB reviews new doctoral degree programs to ensure they embody a carefully planned and systematic program of study. All new degree programs must meet demonstrated higher education needs in Texas and the nation.

The last four-year review cycle was completed in 2009, as documented in ASU's letter to the THECB December 16, 2008 and in the THECB Program Review agenda April 2009 and THECB Mission Approval letter May 1, 2009.

More information about the criteria for new degree programs and the process of reviewing and approving new programs and curricular changes is provided in Comprehensive Standard 3.4.1, Program approval.

### **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 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.