4.4

Program length

Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs.

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 uses accepted practices in higher education to establish completion requirements that determine program length. Institutional degree requirements are intended to ensure that educational programs are of sufficient length to include appropriate course work and of sufficient duration to provide for mastery of the subject matter.

LENGTH OF ASU DEGREE PROGRAMS

Undergraduate baccalaureate degree programs at ASU require at least 120 semester credit hours, master's degree programs require at least 30 semester credit hours, and the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree requires 99 semester credit hours (ASU OP 10.09, Degree Requirements). ASU is in the process of phasing out its single associate's degree, which requires 67 semester credit hours.

The ASU Program Inventory is organized by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes and provides an overview of the number of semester credit hours required for each ASU program. This summary table was developed from the Degree Program Inventory that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) produces for each institution of higher education in Texas. The attached version of the Program Inventory has been amended to include programs that began teach-out in fall 2011 as well as new programs added in spring 2012.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING PROGRAM LENGTH

Program-length requirements are part of the degree requirements published for each program in the ASU undergraduate and graduate catalogs and on the ASU website. The program length requirements specified in ASU OP 10.09, Degree Requirements align with criteria of the THECB and the Commission on Colleges (see Core Requirement 2.7.1, Program length). ASU faculty and administration 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 below.

Undergraduate Degree Programs

The degree requirements for all bachelor's degree programs at ASU must include completion of a minimum of 120 semester credit hours; a minimum of 42 advanced (junior- and senior-level) semester credit hours; and a minimum of 30 semester credit hours in residence, 24 of which must be at the advanced level. In addition, each bachelor's program must meet University Core Curriculum requirements (ASU OP 10.09, Degree Requirements; Core Requirement 2.7.3, General education). See, for example, degree requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training published in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012 (p. 85).

THECB criteria stipulate that the institution cannot require a student "to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the [baccalaureate] degree by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools...unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree" (TEC §61.0515). In accordance with this legislation, ASU has received approval from the THECB for those baccalaureate programs that require more than 120 semester credit hours. For example, programs that include teacher certification require a minimum of 128 semester credit hours. Such exceptions are noted in published degree requirements. See, for example, degree requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Media Major with Secondary Teacher Certification published in the ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012 (p. 196).

ASU currently is teaching out its Associate of Applied Science in Nursing degree program. The program requires 67 semester credit hours for completion, which is in accordance with the Commission's standard of two-years of fulltime study (ASU Undergraduate Catalog 2011–2012, p. 229 bottom of the page).

Master's Degree Programs

Master's degree programs at ASU require completion of a minimum of 30 to 48 semester credit hours of graduate work, depending upon the degree being sought. See, for example, the general degree requirements for the Master of Arts in Communication published in the ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012 (p. 77). Programs that include practica or clinicals, such as those in nursing (CIP of 51) or psychology (CIP of 42), require more hours (see appropriate CIP in the ASU Program Inventory).

Doctoral Degree Program

ASU offers one doctoral-level, professional program, the Doctor of Physical Therapy. The program satisfies requirements of the THECB, which specifies that any new doctoral 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)). The THECB does not provide minimum-length requirements for doctoral programs. In ASU OP 10.09, Degree Requirements, however, the institution specifies that the Doctor of Physical Therapy program must include a minimum of 99 hours, and this program length satisfies standards of the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education. Requirements for the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program are published in the ASU Graduate Catalog 2011–2012 (pp. 121–123).

Distance Education Degree Programs

The program-length requirements specified in ASU OP 10.09 apply to ASU's distance education programs, which are subject to the same curriculum review process as on-campus programs (ASU OP 04.11, Distance Education and Attachments A, B, C, and D). See, for example, degree requirements published on the ASU website for the Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.