UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
SACS

University of
South Carolina

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Comprehensive Standard 3.5.3

The institution defines and publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. (Undergraduate program requirements)

Judgment: Compliant

Response:

Columbia Campus

The University of South Carolina defines and publishes annually requirements for its undergraduate programs, including general education components, in the University bulletins for USC Columbia, USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter, USC Union. These bulletins are publically available on the web and maintained centrally by the Office of the University Registrar. For each undergraduate program offered at USC, the bulletins provide general education requirements, major requirements, and program learning outcomes.

A summary of general education requirements which are common across all USC Columbia undergraduate programs are published in each undergraduate bulletin. Consistent with the University mission of providing all students with the highest-quality education, including the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success and responsible citizenship, the University maintains a general education program which embodies the goal of allowing students to become well-rounded, well-educated citizens. The University's general education requirements, a foundation to all degrees offered at the institution, are also designed to supplement the in-depth study in the major fields.

Components, goals, and learning outcomes for the University's general education requirements are overseen and guided by the General Education Committee which is comprised of faculty from across all colleges and schools with undergraduate programs as well as representatives from the regional campuses and from the Division of Student Affairs & Academic Support. In efforts to continually improve the foundational education of USC students, the General Education Committee regularly reviews the goals and outcomes of the Universities general education requirements. After an in-depth review process which began in 2005, the General Education Committee proposed learning outcomes for a new general education program called the Carolina Core. These learning outcomes of the General Education Revisions were approved by Faculty Senate April 1, 2009 and then amended April 28, 2009.

The Carolina Core learning goals will be incorporated as fully as possible into coursework throughout the undergraduate experience. Assessment of the Carolina Core learning outcomes will be ongoing, embedded in normal faculty governance. The implementation of the Carolina Core will occur in the fall of 2012.

According to the USC Faculty Manual, the faculties of the University, subject to the review of the president and the board, have legislative powers in all matters pertaining to curricula and instruction. Governance over curriculum includes both approval and review processes.

The design of academic programs typically begins in a department or unit of a campus, college or school. After consultation with a campus, college, or school Academic Program Liaison and receipt of unit-level approval, program actions must be approved by the campus, college or school academic affairs officials, and a university curriculum committee as needed, prior to review by the appropriate faculty governance body (ACAF 2.00). All undergraduate programs are reviewed by the Faculty Senate Committee on Courses and Curricula prior to review by the Faculty Senate.

Though distance education courses and programs follow a similar design and approval process, such programs and courses follow specific approval policies and procedures to ensure the credibility of such educational offerings. Courses designed for distance education delivery follow polices which ensure that contact hours and instructional time commitments are equivalent to that of traditional instruction (ACAF 2.03 and ACAF 2.03 Procedures Appendix 5). Programs designed for distance education delivery follow policies which ensure that academic programs maintain the same level of quality in both the portions of the program delivered traditionally and those employing distance technology (ACAF 2.00, Sections I.B.2 and I.C.4, and ACAF 2.00 Procedures Appendices 6 and Appendices 7). These policies, along with a list of courses approved for distance education delivery are published on the Website of the Office of the Provost.

All approved programs and courses are described in the University's undergraduate academic bulletins which are maintained by the Office of the University Registrar and published online annually. Revisions to programs and courses which occur within an academic year are clearly noted in the web-based bulletins.

Additional academic program information is provided to the public on academic department webpages, by the Office of Admissions, and through academic advising. These units are responsible for maintaining clear, complete, consistent information about degree requirements.

As stated in Standard 3.3.1.1, all academic programs engage in a program review process, and each academic unit at the University uses a variety of measures to determine the extent to which these outcomes are achieved. Results of such systematic assessment direct and guide decision making and improvement across the University (See Standard 3.3.1.1).

In addition to USC's institutional review process, several undergraduate programs at USC participate in external review processes (letter attached), hosted by a number of professional accrediting associations.

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Regional Campuses

USC Lancaster

USC Lancaster defines and publishes requirements for all Associate Degrees electronically under Academic Programs in the USC Lancaster Academic Bulletin. General Education Goals for USC Lancaster's academic programs are closely aligned with University-wide General Education Goals, which were developed by the faculty at USC to produce well rounded, well educated citizens.

USC Lancaster instituted an Assessment Committee comprised of USC Lancaster Faculty and staff and appointed an Assessment Coordinator in 2008 to review its associate degrees and to establish goals and learning outcomes. USC Lancaster's Assessment Coordinator and the USCL Assessment Committee have continued to reassess learning outcomes to ensure their effectiveness. The established goals and learning outcomes are listed along with the degree curriculum.

USC Lancaster currently awards five associate degrees, all of which meet established academic standards and are approved by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. Since 1974, USC Lancaster has partnered with York Technical College in a cooperative nursing program that awards an Associate in Science in Technical Nursing Degree. Nursing faculty at both institutions govern curricular, program, and admissions requirements. The degree is fully approved by the Board of Nursing for South Carolina and accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission. The Associate in Science in Business Degree is additionally accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs.

USC Lancaster faculty and administration recently conducted a review of all Associate Degree programs, establishing new program requirements. The changes made reflect the continued intent to produce well rounded, well education graduates.

In Fall 2008, the Assessment Committee began a systematic review of the curriculum requirements for four of USCL's five associate degree programs. (The A.D.N. degree program was considered separately and at a later time.) The Committee employed the best practice of reviewing the baccalaureate degree programs at USC Columbia into which USCL students were most likely to transfer upon completion of their associate degrees.

The Assessment Committee made recommendations for curriculum changes to bring USCL's associate degrees more in line with the corresponding baccalaureate degrees. These recommendations were forwarded to the USC Lancaster Curriculum Committee, which reviewed, amended, and sent the revised recommendations forward for consideration by the USCL Faculty Organization.

The USCL Faculty Organization debated and approved the curriculum changes at a specially-called meeting in January 2009, after which the proposals were reviewed and approved by campus administration. The revisions were then submitted to the USC Regional Campuses Faculty Senate, where they were approved in February 2009. The new curricula were then sent to the USC Office of System Affairs and the Provost's Office, where, after review and approval they were sent to the President and the Board of Trustees. Final approval to the changes was given by the Board on April 13, 2009, and became effective for all students entering USCL in the fall 2009 semester and thereafter.

Changes to the Associate's Degree in Nursing program, as a collaborative program with York Technical College, requires approval by both institutions,

The University of South Carolina Lancaster engages in degree program assessment through the Assessment Plan Composer tool. The University of South Carolina Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance does offer some assistance to USC Lancaster during this process.

USC Salkehatchie

As a regional campus of the University of South Carolina, USC Salkehatchie does not award four-year degrees. Students at Salkehatchie either transfer to other institutions after two years or receive Associate's degrees.

The requirements for Associate in Arts (AA) and Associate in Sciences (AS) degrees, including the program goals, are clearly defined and publicized on the Academics section of the Salkehatchie web site. That these requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices is shown by the similarity with requirements at other USC campuses, as indicated in the tables below.

Associate in Arts Program

Required Courses	Credit Hours			
	USC Salk	USC Sumter	USC Union	USC Lancaster
Reading and Writing	6	6	6	6
Numerical and Analytical Reasoning	3	3	3	6-8
Natural Sciences	3	7-8	3	4
Social and Behavioral Sciences	6	9	3	6
Humanities and Fine Arts	9	9-10	12	18

Electives	<u>33</u>	<u>24-26</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>18-20</u>
TOTAL	60	60	60	60

Associate in Sciences Program

Required Courses	Credit Hours			
	USC Salk	USC Sumter	USC Union	USC Lancaster
Reading and Writing	6	6	6	6
Numerical and Analytical Reasoning	6	6	6	6-11
Natural Sciences	8	10-12	7	8
Social and Behavioral Sciences	6	6	6	6
Humanities and Fine Arts	3	6-7	3	9-12
Electives	<u>31</u>	23-26	<u>32</u>	<u>17-25</u>
TOTAL	60	60	60	60

Specific competencies and modes of assessment are described in Standard 3.5.1, Standard 3.3.1.1, and on the Academics section of the Salkehatchie web site.

USC Sumter

As a regional campus of the University of South Carolina, USC Sumter does not award four-year degrees. Students at Sumter either transfer to other institutions after two years or receive Associate's degrees.

The requirements for Associate in Arts (AA) and Associate in Sciences (AS) degrees are clearly defined and publicized in the USC Sumter Academic Bulletin, and the coursework is determined by the USC Sumter Faculty. That these requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices is shown by the similarity with requirements at other USC regional campuses, as indicated in their Academic Bulletins; USC Lancaster (AA) and (AS) Programs, USC Union (AA) and (AS) Programs, and USC Salkehatchie (AA) and (AS) Programs.

The general education components, 11 goals and 33 associated leaning outcomes can be found on the USC Sumter website. Assessment and use of these goals and associated learning outcomes are published annually in the USC Sumter Academic Assessment Plan.

As described in the annual Academic Programs Assessment reports, objective criteria and reproducible methods are used to assess the extent of attainment of the competencies. Although the mean criterion for each of the five goals is regularly met, there is natural inter-class variability in the results, and professors of classes with marginal results are required to examine possible causes and seek improvement.

Individual faculty members utilize the various criteria to make assessments on their students. Reports on those individual faculty assessments are then given to respective division chairs,' the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness aggregates the findings, while each Division Chair meets and discusses the findings, and potential changes and uses of the assessments for their respective Divisions. Then once the data are aggregated, meetings occur with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, each Division chair and the Institutional Research Analyst representing the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness where further analysis and Division level coordinated use of the assessment results are compiled and disseminated to the Faculty as a whole.

USC Union

USC Union requirements for an Associate's Degree are published under Academic Programs in the USC Union Academic Bulletin. USC Union adheres to the General Education Requirements established by the faculty at USC Columbia and published in the USC Columbia Campus Academic Bulletin. The assessment of General Education Requirements is coordinated through the Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance through an annual Assessment Plan.

USC Union assessment of the General Education Requirements is based on a two-year cycle. At the end of a cycle, the appropriate department for the requirement meets to analyze the data submitted by the Institutional Effectiveness Officer and to make changes to the assessment program that are designed to lead to higher student achievement.

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Supporting Documentation:

Description	Source
Bulletins and Requirements	
USC Columbia Bulletin	http://bulletin.sc.edu/
Lancaster	http://bulletin.usclancaster.sc.edu/
Salkehatchie	http://bulletin.uscsalkehatchie.sc.edu/
Sumter	http://bulletin.uscsumter.edu/

Union	http://bulletin.uscunion.sc.edu/index.php?catoid=24
General Education Requirements	http://bulletin.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=1868
Salkehatchie	http://bulletin.uscsalkehatchie.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=2359
General Education Goals	http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/goals.htm
Lancaster	http://bulletin.usclancaster.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=2365
Sumter	http://www.uscsumter.edu/download/USCSumterAcademicGoalsExpectedLearningOutcomes.pdf
Carolina Core	
Approved Learning Outcomes	http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/carolinacore.shtml
Approval of Carolina Core	http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/proposedcurriculumrevision.pdf
Amended Carolina Core	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/FacSenMin040109.pdf#GenEd
Policies and Committees	
ACAF 2.00	http://www.sc.edu/policies/acaf200.pdf
Appendix 6	http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/ACAF200_Appx6.pdf
Appendix 7	http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/ACAF200_Appx7.pdf
ACAF 2.03	http://www.sc.edu/policies/acaf203.pdf
Appendix 5	http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/ACAF203_Appx5.pdf
Faculty Senate	http://www.sc.edu/faculty/
University Faculty	http://www.sc.edu/policies/facman/Faculty_Manual_Columbia.pdf
Meeting Minutes	http://www.sc.edu/faculty/senate/indexarchive.shtml
General Education Committee	http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/committee.shtml
Meeting Minutes	http://www.sc.edu/generaleducation/minutes.shtml
Offices and Accreditation Agencies	
Office of the Provost	http://www.sc.edu/provost/acadprog/index.shtml
Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance	http://ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/
Professional Accrediting Agencies	http://ipr.sc.edu/pdf/AccredAgencies.pdf
South Carolina Board of Nursing	http://www.llr.state.sc.us/POL/NURSING/
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission	http://www.nlnac.org/home.htm
Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs	http://www.acbsp.org/
Mission and Programs	
University Mission	http://president.sc.edu/PresidentMission.php
Academic Programs	
Lancaster	http://bulletin.usclancaster.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=2365
Salkehatchie	http://bulletin.uscsalkehatchie.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=2359
Sumter	http://bulletin.uscsumter.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=2346
Union	http://bulletin.uscunion.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=2336
Learning Outcomes - Lancaster	http://bulletin.usclancaster.sc.edu/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=2365
Associate Degrees - Lancaster	http://usclancaster.sc.edu/admissions/degrees.htm
Associate in Science in Business - Lancaster	http://usclancaster.sc.edu/academics/curric/twoyearbusiness.htm
Approved Distance Education Courses	http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/ApprovedDistanceEdCourses.pdf
Assessment and Review	
Program Assessment - Lancaster	http://ipr.sc.edu/dashboard/compliance/standards/assessment/index.htm#lanc
Assessment Plan – Union	http://uscunion.sc.edu/about/inst_repts.html
Other Standards	
Standard 3.3.1.1	CS_3.3.1.1.html
Standard 3.5.1	CS_3.5.1.html

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