

The Mastery Approach Overview

The Distinctive Identity Implementation Committee is charged with helping the university implement those portions of the strategic plan that relate to SFASU’s distinctive identity. The masteries approach was recommended in the strategic plan as a means of advancing an identity for SFASU that is rooted in our academic mission and focused on student achievement. The masteries approach asks that programs adopt a standard language to describe student success in programs across campus. The approach does not require departments to change their programs, but it does ask that they more clearly link course requirements to the shared goals of an education at Stephen F. Austin. We believe that by clarifying our commitment to these educational goals will make the value of a degree from SFA more clear to students, parents, and employers.

Broad-based education: SFA distinguishes itself by offering a total university experience that can not be obtained at a community college or technical school. An individual who has a university education should be well versed in the fundamentals of areas beyond those of an individual major. Therefore, students should take courses that cover such fundamentals in all areas of education: humanities, math and sciences, communication, social and behavioral science, visual and performing arts. Further, students should be exposed to ideas and opportunities in settings other than the classroom and be engaged in university activities including campus organizations that foster personal and professional growth.

Masteries of Communication, Career Preparation, Critical Thinking, and Civic Engagement: Each of these mastery areas represents skills and abilities found in a person with a university education. Beyond the broad, fundamental concepts taught through the core, students should further develop these skills in a manner needed for success in their chosen major. As part of this development, departments teach students the specific skills in each of the mastery areas that are pertinent to success in that field. Following their instruction in the application of these domain-specific skills, students can be required to demonstrate these skills in order to show mastery.

	Communication	Career Preparation	Civic Engagement	Creative Problem Solving	Broad-based Education
Foundations <i>Students develop and demonstrate basic skills common to all university graduates.</i> University requirements	ENG 131/ENG 132 Visual/performing arts COM 111* Foreign language*	Career goals statement	PSC 141 PSC 142 HIS 133 HIS 134	Required Math Required Science SFA 101 critical thinking component*	University and college core curricula Linked courses
Application and Growth <i>Students apply foundation skills and develop specific skills in their general field of study.</i> Departmental requirements	Departmental requirements.	Departmental requirements	Departmental requirements	Departmental requirements	Extra-curricular activities or organizations
Mastery <i>Students demonstrate the professional skills in their field.</i> Program requirements	Departmental requirements Capstone**	Departmental requirements Capstone**	Departmental requirements Internships** Service learning**	Departmental requirements Capstone**	Advanced electives University lectures

*not part of the core requirements for all majors

**not required in all departments