The BOARD OF EXAMINERS UPDATE is designed to share the actions of the Unit Accreditation Board and refinements of NCATE’s review process. It is disseminated at the start of on-site visits in the fall and spring. Issues and changes reported here should be reviewed by team members during their first team meeting.
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UAB UPDATE

New Accreditation Decisions

At its October 2009 meeting the Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) agreed to no longer use the terms conditions, provisions, and probation. Beginning in spring 2010, the UAB will have the option of granting or continuing accreditation for a defined length of time, deferring the decision until the next meeting, or denying or revoking accreditation. This change is designed to be less punitive in nature and to be more supportive of continuous improvement. Decisions to deny and revoke accreditation will continue to be NCATE’s only adverse decisions that will be eligible for appeal.

Beginning with its April 2010 meeting, the UAB will make one the following seven accreditation decisions for each institution being reviewed:

- **Accreditation for five years.** All standards are met, no serious problems exist across standards, and the state retains a five-year cycle.
- **Accreditation for seven years.** All standards are met and no serious problems exist across standards.
- **Accreditation for two years with a focused visit.** When at least one standard is not met and problems are centered in the unmet standard, a focused visit in two years will be required. If the standard continues to be unmet after the focused visit, accreditation will be revoked.
- **Accreditation for two years with a full visit.** When one or more standards are not met and serious problems exist across standards, a full visit will be requested. If the standard(s) continues to be unmet after the full visit, accreditation will be revoked.
- **Defer decision.** When at least one standard is not met, the problems are centered in the unmet standard, and documentation submitted before the next UAB meeting could show that the standard is met, the institution will be required to submit documentation to the next Unit Accreditation Board meeting. The UAB will make this decision if the Board of Examiners (BOE) team recommended that all standards were met and the UAB did not accept the team’s recommendation. If the standard continues to be unmet at the next UAB meeting, the unit will be accredited for two years with a focused visit.
- **Deny accreditation.** When one or more standards are not met and the preponderance of evidence indicates problems across multiple standards by an institution seeking accreditation for the first time.
- **Revoke accreditation.** When one or more standards are not met and the preponderance of evidence indicates problems across multiple standards by an institution seeking to continue accreditation.

REDESIGN UPDATE

Web Seminars for Pilot and Regular Visits

This fall Donna Gollnick presented several web seminars for BOE teams and institutions piloting visits under the new accreditation system. If you have not been able to join one of these seminars, you may view the archived presentations. They are posted on the NCATE website by clicking on “Achieved Web Conferences” on the left side of the home page. Although we are still in the pilot phase and some aspects of the system will change, the seminars can help BOE members understand the new process and be better prepared when all institutions are reviewed under the Continuous Improvement or Transformative Initiative systems. In addition, seminars on the implementation of the Redesign will be held on April 15 and 27, 2010.
Web seminars covering regular, non-pilot, visits planned for the spring are:

BOE Members – June 22 & 29
Fall 2010 Visits – March 9
Fall 2011 Visits – March 11 & March 16

Registration for these seminars will be available at the end of January. To register click on “NCATE Professional Development Web Conference Series” on the right side of the NCATE home page.

**BOE VISIT**

**Logistical Details of the Visit**

BOE chairs should provide the logistical details of the visit to team members so they can plan their travel for the onsite visit. The information team members will need is:

- The name of the airport most convenient to campus. Ask the unit head or NCATE coordinator for the best airport to use. Also ask about the travel time between the airport and campus.
- Arrangements for travel to campus. Team members should know the local transportation arrangements made by the unit, or the best way to get to campus on their own.
- The name, location, and contact information of the hotel where the team will be staying.
- The time and location of the first team meeting.
- The travel code. The code for the semester of the visit is included in the email by from Marva Atwater after chairs and members accept a visit.

If team members have question about travel to the institution, they should contact the team chair directly.

**Programs Included in the NCATE Review**

Units and BOE teams are sometimes unsure about which programs should be included in NCATE review. A number of sources are available to team members. Two tables in the overview section of the institutional report (IR) should list the following information for all of the programs offered for (1) initial teacher preparation and (2) advanced preparation of teachers and other school professionals:

- the program name, type of degree or license earned, program level, initial teacher preparation (ITP) or advanced preparation (ADV), number of candidates currently enrolled; etc.
- the state agency and/or NCATE–affiliated specialty organization or other accrediting body reviewing each program; and
- the status of the program reviews.

The team can also identify programs on the unit’s website and in the institution’s catalogs. If the institution was required to submit programs for national review, those programs and the documents submitted for program review can be found in NCATE’s Accreditation Information Management System (AIMS). State consultants are also valuable resources in clarifying the programs that a unit offers.

NCATE requires the inclusion of all programs that prepare candidates to work in P-12 school settings. All programs for an initial license to teach or provide professional services in schools must be included. Programs offered at the graduate level for the continuing education of school professionals, including teachers, must be included. A resource for determining programs that must be included in the NCATE review can be found on NCATE’s website at http://ncate.org/documents/boeMaterials/ProgramsNCATEReview.doc.
Clarifying the programs to be included in the review before the onsite visit will contribute to a smooth visit. During the previsit, the team chair should review the programs, including distance learning programs, that will be included in the NCATE review with the unit representatives and state consultant. The unit may have already clarified the programs to be included with NCATE staff; written documentation of those discussions should be available to the team. NCATE staff may be contacted to assist participants in the previsit in determining the programs that must be included.

**Guidelines for P-12 School Visit**

Beginning in spring 2010, school visits will again be a required part of the BOE visit. The Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) believes that valuable information can be obtained from P-12 partners at the school site. They agreed that a primary purpose of the school visits is to confirm what has been written in the Institutional Report with interviews, exhibits, and first hand observations of candidates’ interactions within the school setting with the P-12 students and P-12 professionals.

At its April 2010 meeting, the UAB will develop guidelines for the conduct of visits to P-12 schools during the onsite visit. Under the proposed guidelines, teams will have more flexibility in how the school visits are carried out, and team members will be given more guidance on looking for specific evidence. Teams should continue to follow established procedures until the new guidelines are available.

**BOE REPORT**

**Writing a Quality BOE Report**

Because they are the only group to visit institutions, the Board of Examiners is often called the “eyes and ears” of NCATE. The team’s report is the main source of evidence the Unit Accreditation Board uses to make the accreditation decision. Although the primary readers of the BOE Report are institutional representatives and the Unit Accreditation Board members, institutional administrators outside of the unit may also read it, and some units will post the report on their websites. Therefore, the report should thoroughly cover each standard, and be clear enough so readers understand how the unit is meeting the standards.

With the streamlining of the BOE Report, requirements have changed somewhat. However, the BOE Report is still a stand alone document. Readers should be able to understand how the unit is addressing standards without reading other documents. Writers may refer to the IR in the BOE report, but basic information should be written in the findings of the report so that readers do not have to review other documents. For example, the report would include a brief description of the transition points and the team’s observations about their use through interviews and review of evidence. The writer may cite where the unit describes the process in the IR. If a table in the IR is referenced, please indicate which table and that it can be found in the IR.

In Standard 1 the BOE team should not repeat the SPA report or state reviewers; it may simply report the status of program reviews. However, the team should reference other sources of evidence about candidates’ knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, including the information gleaned from interviews, licensure exams, and surveys. If there are programs that were not reviewed by a SPA or the state, include the team’s analysis of these programs along with the SPA or state status to give readers a full picture of the unit.

It should be clear to all readers why the team cited areas for improvement and why they are
recommending that a standard is met or not met. If the findings note aspects with which the unit is struggling, an area for improvement should be cited. In some cases, the team should recommend that the standard is not met. Consistency among the findings, AFIs, and the recommendation helps not only the UAB in making a decision, it also helps the unit in developing an appropriate response to the team’s findings. They will better understand areas that need to be addressed in the rejoinder as well as areas that they need to improve.

**Strengths Cited for The Unit**

Since the Unit Accreditation Board designated the optional Strengths Section to highlight work related to the standards at the target level, most teams report that units are doing target level work for at least one element within a standard. Many of the strengths cited included a detailed description of how the unit addresses the specific element at the target level. Please note that strengths should not be cited for an element the unit is addressing at the acceptable level.

A review of the fall 2008 BOE reports indicated that 81 strengths were cited. More than half of the institutions visited had multiple strengths cited. Standard 3 had the highest number of strengths reported; Standard 4 had the lowest.

**Abbreviated Instructions for Writing Online BOE Reports in AIMS**

NCATE has developed a briefer set of directions for writing, submitting, and editing Online BOE Reports in AIMS. These directions combine instructions for both BOE chairs and team members. The document is intended to serve as a quick “how to” or reminder of the mechanics of AIMS. If you need further information about a particular step, it is suggested that you use the full document. The document “AIMS: Online BOE Report Instructions-Abbreviated” is located in the BOE Resources section in AIMS under BOE Report Preparation.