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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STANDARDS UPDATE

Schedule for Revision of the Standards

The Standards Committee of the Unit Accreditation Board is continuing its work on revising the unit standards. UAB members will review a draft of the revised standards at their March 2006 meeting. Revisions will be minor changes aimed at clarifying the standards and eliminating redundancy.

The calendar for completing the standards revision is:

January 2006 Hearing of proposed changes at the AACTE annual meeting.

February 2006 Hearing of proposed changes at the ATE annual meeting.

March 2006 Standards Committee completes revisions and presents proposed draft of the revised standards to the UAB for review and approval.

April-Sept. 2006 Call for comment on the draft of revised standards

October 2006 Standards Committee considers comments of the revised standards draft.

Spring 2007 UAB and Executive Board adopt revised standards.

Fall 2008 Revised standards become effective for all institutions.

The 2002 edition of the standards will be used for visits through spring 2008. Institutions will have the option to use the revised standards in visits in fall 2007 and spring 2008.

Using National Recognition Reports in Standard 1

Beginning with visits this spring (2006), BOE teams should indicate in their reports whether programs are nationally recognized if the institutions are located in states that require NCATE program review. In addition, BOE teams must cite a separate area for improvement (AFI) for each program that is not nationally recognized. Programs that are recognized with conditions are considered recognized; an AFI should not be cited for these programs. If a program receives national recognition after the BOE visit, but before the next Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) meeting, the UAB will remove the AFI cited by the team. All programs nationally recognized and nationally recognized with conditions are now listed on the NCATE website at: http://www.ncate.org/institutions/recogPgmSPA.asp?ch=117

Data in the program reports submitted for national review are now a primary source of assessment data for Standard 1. Based on these reports, program reviewers write National Recognition Reports (NRRs), which indicate the recognition decision and include a summary of how well a program meets the content, professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and student learning elements of Standard 1. The NRR is a must read for BOE members working on Standard 1. In addition to indicating whether the program is meeting several elements of the standard, the NRR includes a section in which program reviewers can make recommendations to BOE teams for follow-up during the on-site visit. Concerns about faculty qualifications or diversity or technology may appear in this section. Remember, the Standard 1 section of the BOE Report template poses questions related to NRRs that must be addressed when the unit is located in a state that requires NCATE program review. Since data reviewed for national recognition will be a year old by the time of the visit, teams should review any additional data that the unit has collected (Standard 1) and ensure that units are maintaining their assessment systems (Standard 2).
The documents that institutions submit for program review, the program reports, may also contain assessment data for elements of Standard 1 other than those mentioned above. In these instances, institutions may guide teams to these reports.

Unit Operations in Standard 2

The assessment system expected in Standard 2 requires attention not only to the assessments of candidates’ performance, but also to the evaluation of the unit’s performance. Units should periodically and systematically examine their own operations and make any changes that are suggested by the evaluations. The unit operations include components of the unit such as the governance system, the admissions process, advising, recruitment, retention, program administration, assessment technology, faculty evaluations, and other processes that keep the unit running. Evaluations completed for the state, the provost, or the Board of Trustees often address some aspect of the unit’s operations. The BOE team’s discussion and reporting of how the unit is meeting Standard 2 should describe all or a sample of the evaluations the unit itself has conducted of its operations over the past few years and changes made as a result of the findings.

UAB UPDATE

Reviewing Distance Learning Programs

The Unit Accreditation Board adopted the following definitions on distance learning to guide Board of Examiners (BOE) teams’ reviews of distance learning in traditional institutions:

Distance learning: A formal educational process in which the major portion of the instruction occurs when the learner and the instructor are not in the same place at the same time through virtually any media including printed materials, videotapes, audio recordings, facsimiles, telephone communications, Internet communications through email, and web-based delivery systems.

Distance learning program. A program in which over half of the required courses in the program occur when the learner and the instructor are not in the same place at the same time. (See definition on distance learning.) These programs include those offered by the professional educational unit through a contract with an outside vendor or in a consortium arrangement with other higher education institutions, local education agencies, or other entities.

Beginning in fall 2007, professional education units will be asked to disaggregate candidate assessment data by campus programs, off-campus programs, and distance learning programs for the national program review process and unit accreditation to help determine similarities and differences in the quality of candidates that complete these programs.

Many institutions offer courses via distance learning. Fewer offer a full program (i.e., half of the required courses in the program) via distance learning. When a program meets NCATE’s definition for a distance learning program, the BOE team should look carefully at that program to ensure that it meets standards. The following questions, which were recently revised by the UAB and are available in the BOE section of NCATE’s website, should assist the team in collecting evidence about the quality of these programs:

1. **Standard 1**: What assessments are used to monitor candidate performance and determine that proficiencies in standards are being met by candidates in distance learning programs? What do the data suggest about the performance of candidates in distance learning programs as compared to candidates in traditional programs?

2. **Standard 2**: What evaluations of the distance learning programs provide systematic and ongoing data for use in program improvement? What changes have occurred as a result of these evaluations?

3. **Standard 3**: How do distance learning programs in professional education ensure that field experiences and clinical practice are well sequenced, supervised by trained personnel and monitored by unit faculty, and integrated into the program?

4. **Standard 4**: How does the unit ensure that
the curriculum provided through distance learning reflect diversity and prepares candidates to work with all students? How does the unit ensure that candidates interact with diverse faculty and peers? How does the unit ensure that candidates work with diverse student populations?

5. **Standard 5**: What are the qualifications of faculty members who teach via distance delivery that indicate they are proficient in the methods of delivery?

6. **Conceptual Framework and Standard 6**: To what extent are the design and delivery of distance learning programs consistent with the mission of the institution and the unit, supported by a conceptual framework and knowledge base, guided by a long-range plan, and supported by adequate resources?

7. **Standard 6**: How are distance learning programs, including programs that are acquired through contract with an outside vendor or delivered in a consortium arrangement, controlled, coordinated, and evaluated by the unit?

8. **Standard 6**: How are distance learning candidates provided advisement and personal access to faculty similar to that provided traditional candidates?

9. **Standard 6**: To what extent is the balance of part-time and full-time faculty, requirements for scholarship and service, and evaluation processes similar for faculty members who teach via distance learning and for other faculty members?

10. **Standard 6**: What technical system is in place to ensure consistent and reliable delivery of the program and provide necessary security for testing and assessments (e.g., monitoring that the person completing assignments is actually the person enrolled in the program)?

**NCATE Visits to Online Institutions**

At its October 2005 meeting, the Unit Accreditation Board adopted the following policies to provide guidance for the review of online institutions:

1. To meet Precondition 7.1, an online institution must be approved by the state agency or agencies responsible for program approval of teacher education in the state in which the central administration offices are located.

2. To meet Precondition 7.2, an online institution must report its summary pass rates in a table that indicates each state in which completers take licensure tests. The table must include the state pass rate for each state and the percent of the institution’s completers who passed the test.

3. Although candidates in an online institution may live in different states, NCATE requires state program approval only in the state in which the central administration offices are located. States in which completers are pursuing a license will decide whether to accept for a license a candidate’s completion of that program in a way similar to accepting completers of traditional programs from the same state. The online institution must make clear to candidates that they must meet the requirements of the state in which they are seeking a license and may be required to take additional courses or pass additional assessments.

4. BOE teams will conduct an on-site visit to the location of the central administration offices of the online institution. Visits to the sites of other administrative offices or clinical practice sites will be determined by the team chair, the institution, and NCATE staff.

5. Assessment data on candidates must be disaggregated for program and unit review by the states in which candidates are living at the time they take the assessment.

6. All programs eligible for national review by NCATE must submit program reports on the timeline required by NCATE through the SPAs.

During this spring semester, NCATE will conduct its first visit to an institution that offers all of its programs via distance learning.
Focused visits

Focused visits are occurring with increasing frequency in NCATE’s accreditation system. Almost 10 percent of the accreditation decisions made at the fall 2005 UAB meeting were based on focused visits. Here are a few facts that BOE members should remember when conducting focused visits:

• Focused visits are shorter in length than regular visits and usually last from Sunday to Tuesday.

• Focused visits concentrate only on the standard or standards that were not met. Areas for improvement cited for met standards should not be addressed during a focused visit.

• Focused visits include a review of the entire standard or standards that were not met.

• Focused visits conducted in 2006, 2007, and spring 2008 and concentrating on Standard 1 should include a review of at least a year’s worth of data. If assessment instruments have changed, then the unit can present a combination of data from previous assessments and data from current assessments.

• Focused visits conducted in 2006, 2007, and spring 2008 and concentrating on Standard 2 should include a review of at least a year’s worth of data to ensure that the assessment system is being maintained. If assessment instruments have changed, then the unit can present a combination of data from previous assessments and data from current assessments.

• The BOE Report for a focused visit is very similar to the report for a regular visit. It includes an introduction, a summary of the conceptual framework, a narrative on each element of the unmet standard, a BOE recommendation, a list of exhibits reviewed, and a list of persons interviewed.

• Accreditation decisions for focused visits are continued accreditation or revocation of accreditation.

• Guidelines for focused visits are available on the NCATE website at: http://www.ncate.org/institutions/guidelinesFocusedVisit.asp?ch=44

Expectations for Unit-level Data

There has been some confusion about aggregated data, summarized data, and NCATE expectations for unit-level data. NCATE uses “aggregate” in the technical sense of combining like data. NCATE uses “summarize” to mean pulling together information and/or data that may be similar but also may be different. The expectation in Standard 2 is that the assessment system requires that data are aggregated at the program level and that the program level data are then summarized at the unit level. Analysis can take place at both levels.

Aggregated data at the program level are used to determine the extent to which candidates as a whole have gained the knowledge, skills, and dispositions outlined in NCATE unit and program standards. The types of assessments used across programs may be similar. Licensing exams, student teaching and internship assessments, planning assessments, and assessments of student learning are some of the types of assessments that are likely to be common across programs. Some of the content for these assessments may be common across programs, but, some of the content for these assessments may be program specific. It is possible to aggregate data within programs, because the assessments are the same. At the unit level, assessment items that are the same across programs could be aggregated. Most often, data across programs can only be summarized because the assessment items are different across programs. NCATE does not require assessments to be consistent across all programs or be scored on the same rubric. At the unit level, NCATE expects only a summary of the program-level data.
The unit is responsible for developing the assessment system, maintaining the system, and using the data to improve candidate performance, programs, and the unit. At the unit level, therefore, the expectation under Standard 2 is that the assessment system is capable of reporting program-level data for unit management purposes. The resulting summaries and analyses are then used to make decisions about needed changes within and across programs and to unit operations.

Quick Reference on Meeting Standards and Citing AFIs

As you know, Board of Examiners (BOE) teams consider all of the evidence presented by an institution to indicate that a standard is met. They look for evidence that the elements included in the rubrics for each standard are being addressed at the acceptable level or above. As a team considers the evidence presented for each element, they should make a holistic decision about whether each standard is met. In two instances, the Unit Accreditation Board has set minimum, or necessary, requirements for meeting a standard. These instances are:

**Standard 1**

- A necessary condition for Standard 1 to be met is the requirement that at least 80% of the candidates in initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation pass the state licensure test in the content field (e.g., the subjects to be taught or fields such as special education, early childhood education, school psychology, and school counseling).

**Standard 4**

- A necessary condition for Standard 4 to be met is the requirement that the first element on Design, Implementation, and Evaluation be addressed at the acceptable level.

Please remember that these requirements are necessary, but not sufficient for meeting the standards. In addition, an area for improvement (AFI) must be cited if a program is not nationally recognized but is located in a state that requires NCATE program review. Similarly, an area for improvement must be cited if a program is not approved or recognized by the state if the state is conducting the program review.

BOE REPORTS

**BOE Report Review Process**

The UAB recently extended the deadline for submitting the draft report to the institution for factual correction to 35 days after the visit. During that time the chair, team members, and NCATE staff read the report to check for consistency and quality. An institution may begin writing its rejoinder based on the draft it receives for factual corrections. Therefore, the team chair should send the BOE Report to the institution only after it has been thoroughly reviewed by the chair, team members, and NCATE staff as described below.

When team members leave campus the report should be in fairly good shape so major editing by the team chair is not required. Once the report is assembled by the chair, he or she sends it electronically to all team members, including state team members and consultants, and to NCATE (patty@ncate.org). All readers should check that the standards are addressed thoroughly and fairly; that the report does not include contradictions within a standard or among the standards; that it follows the NCATE style guide including length; and that there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Although team members may want to focus on the standards they wrote, looking at other standards as well will help ensure the quality and consistency of the report. For example, Standard 1 and Standard 2 writers might read each others’ sections to make sure the two parts work together to support the team’s overall assessment of the standards and recommendations of met or not met.

Team members and NCATE send recommendations for revisions to the chair who then edits the report and sends it to the institution for factual corrections. Institutions are given seven days to
send corrections back to the chair. Within 10 days of receiving the corrections the chair sends the final version to NCATE (patty@ncate.org) where it is placed in the institution’s electronic folder. NCATE will notify the institution that it is available and of the deadline for submitting a rejoinder.

**Distributing the Writing of Standard 1**

Writing to Standard 1 is a major task, but the workload can be reduced by distributing the duties to more than one team member. Some chairs assign two people to the standard, one focuses on the elements for initial teacher preparation; the other, the elements for advanced teacher preparation programs and other school professionals. The writers should have experience with the NCATE standards and the review process as BOE members at the national or state level. A new BOE member is usually not assigned to this standard unless that person has a great deal of experience on state teams.

Program reviews add to the complexity of this standard. Rather than ask the Standard 1 writers to review all of the SPA reports, one team chair distributed the SPA's National Recognition Reports among the team members to read during the first and second days of the visit. Team members then reported on the findings at the next team meeting. This way all team members became familiar with the data in the program reports. The discussion provided the writers with assessment information for the Standard 1 elements, identified missing assessments and data (e.g., conceptual framework outcomes and dispositions), and provided information related to other standards (e.g., clinical practice and faculty qualifications). When the state reviews programs, the writers need to report licensure test data and other assessment data for each program. State findings on programs are incorporated into the report after the state team makes them available to the NCATE team.

**Reporting Data in the BOE Report**

Writers of the different sections of the BOE report should be discussing aggregated or summarized data from the institutional report (IR) and exhibits throughout the visit. The BOE team report should indicate if the quality of the unit assessments and data are questionable. BOE reports should also include survey response rates when surveys are used as evidence that the standards are being met. To determine whether standards are met, team members should try to triangulate data and other information related to the standards.

Institutions are asked to include a number of tables in their IRs to present summarized data across programs or the unit. Examples of the tables that should be included in the IR have been shared with institutions and can be found in the description of the IR on the NCATE website at: http://www.ncate.org/documents/ir/tables.doc.

BOE members should draw on these tables for information. However, BOE reports should not replicate these tables. Rather, the UAB would now prefer that BOE members discuss and analyze the data in these tables in narrative form in the BOE reports. The only table that should be copied from the IR into the BOE report is the Status of Program Reviews table, which lists each program that prepares P-12 educators at the undergraduate and graduate levels along with its state approval and national recognition status.

Candidate assessment data reported in Standard 1 are usually summative data, indicating that candidates are meeting standards at the expected level of performance by completion of their programs. Data demonstrating that candidates meet certain proficiency levels may be expected at earlier transition points of the program (e.g., prior to student teaching). Whether units are collecting, summarizing, and analyzing these data at the transition points to determine whether candidates are ready to progress through programs is a part of the maintenance of the assessment system and should be discussed in the second element of Standard 2.

Data collected as part of the unit’s assessment system may also inform standards in addition to Standard 1. For instance, data from student and other evaluations of faculty teaching might be reported in Standard 5. Evaluations of clinical practice might be reported in Standard 3, and data on candidates’ effectiveness at working with students with disabilities or English language learners in Standard 4.
Areas for Improvement Samples

The UAB has noted that areas for improvement are not always clearly stated. Staff has compiled a list of previously cited areas for improvement for each standard that BOE teams can use as a guide when writing areas for improvement. The list is entitled “Areas for Improvement Samples” and is located on the NCATE website at: http://www.ncate.org/documents/boeMaterials/AreasforImprovementSamples.pdf

BOE EVALUATIONS

Evaluations of BOE Members

The performance of BOE members is evaluated periodically throughout their tenure on the board. Evaluations begin during the week-long training session and continue at each on-site visit when teammates and institutional representatives evaluate their performance. These data are compiled and tracked to help the staff monitor performance and identify concerns about performance.

Both BOE colleagues and institutions are asked to rate each team member’s performance during a visit on a five-point Likert scale (1 = not effective; 5 = very effective). In spring 2005, 333 BOE members conducted on-site visits to 67 institutions, and 51 institutions, or 76 percent, completed evaluations of the BOE members.

The following rating statements are comments that the institutions made about the team members:

- I think that we probably had the best team that NCATE could have put together! Each person was professional and committed to the process. We are fortunate to have had such an experienced and dedicated team.
- All the team members are good representatives for NCATE.
- We couldn’t have asked for a better team. Initially I was concerned about the team members’ ability to assess a small institution. I now understand how the BOE training enables and prepares team members to apply the six standards to colleges/institutions of ALL sizes.
- Overall excellent team, very professional.

Seventy-two percent of the 333 BOE members who were on visits in spring 2005 evaluated the performance of their teammates on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not effective; 5 = very effective). The range of rating was from 1 to 5 with 5 being the mode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>S05 n= 51</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demonstrated familiarity with the IR; came prepared</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrated knowledge about NCATE standards</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Made unbiased professional judgments</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Made efficient use of time and energy; maintained schedule</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Possessed good interviewing skills</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Behaved professionally in all situations</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Displayed interpersonal skills conducive to the process</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Possessed adequate computer skills</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Overall rating of the team member</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2
BOE Members’ Mean Rating of Other Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>S05 n=239</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demonstrated familiarity with IR; came well prepared</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrated knowledge about NCATE standards</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Made unbiased professional judgments during team deliberations</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Made efficient/reasonable use of time and energy; maintained schedule</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Possessed good interviewing skills</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Demonstrated skill in use of quantitative and qualitative data</td>
<td>4.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Made clear and substantive written contributions</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Possessed good interpersonal skills</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (BOE Members, not Chairs Form) Demonstrated professionalism (pre/post visit communications, actions, demeanor)</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (BOE Chair’s Form Only) Possessed adequate computer skills</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Is ready to serve as team chair</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following statements are comments that team members made about their colleagues on the team:

- I was very pleased with our BOE team. They understood the process, were knowledgeable about the standards, and were punctual when completing assignments. They also had respect for each other and worked cooperatively to achieve required goals.

- I couldn’t have asked for a better team to work with on my first BOE visit. They were all excellent.

- This team worked very well together, sharing knowledge and expertise unselfishly. Consensus was reached after much heartfelt discussion on each issue where opinions varied. Everyone on this team showed true commitment to the work of NCATE.

- The training and the NCATE-prepared resources for site visits help team members to function effectively. Members took the assignment seriously and worked hard.

- This was an extraordinarily good team composed of highly motivated and capable individuals.

- This was a collegial, friendly, and hard working team. We encountered no difficulty working together and everyone pulled their weight. Everyone seemed willing to help others. This was my “easiest” assignment yet given in that all worked together and the host school was very attentive and responsive to our questions.

BOE members are to be congratulated for their continuous outstanding performance. On behalf of the UAB, thank you for all the effort you put into the visits and reports.
STAFF UPDATE

NCATE is pleased to welcome two new staff members.

Amy March, Associate, State Relations, will be working with Shari Francis. She comes with extensive experience as an early childhood teacher and administrator. For several years she served as the Coordinator of an Even Start family literacy program in the South Bronx where immigrant families studied English, and learned the skills to help their children succeed in school. Most recently she served as a consultant providing technical assistance to Even Start programs in eastern New York State. Amy holds a certificate in Educational Supervision and Administration from Hunter College, an MS in Early Childhood Education from Bank Street College of Education, and a BS from The College of Wooster.

Alex Sorto is the new Project Manager for the Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN). He previously worked for Salesian Missions in Arlington, VA as a Project Officer. In this capacity he traveled to and managed an education development project in ten countries in the Caribbean, Central America and the Andean region. He has also worked as an International Elections Observer to Ecuador in Quito, a Senior Paralegal here in Washington D.C. and as a Research Assistant for the Environmental Protection Agency. Alex holds a B.A. from University of Maryland College Park where he majored in History (Latin American Studies). He was also a Latino High Honors Scholarship recipient. Alex has also done some post-graduate course work in Economics and Accounting at Montgomery College (MD).