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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SUMMARY

BOE members indicated that it would be helpful to have a one-page summary of the BOE Update. This Update includes the following information:

The Update discusses the use of state licensing exams in those states that require exams. State licensing exams are now used in evaluating Precondition 7 (institutions in states that have set required summary pass rates must meet those pass rates to meet the precondition) and Standard 1 (institutions in states that require content exams must have an 80 percent pass rate on those content exams to meet Standard 1). BOE members are encouraged to seek more information on the NCATE website (http://www.ncate.org/newsbrfs/use_of_test_scores0603.pdf and http://www.ncate.org/faqs/faq_80.htm).

The Update reminds BOE members of the current phase of the NCATE transition plan, for use in evaluating Standards 1 and 2. The Update also informs BOE members how to handle programs within NCATE’s scope that are already accredited by another accrediting agency, such as the National Association of Schools of Music. These programs should present the official notices of accreditation from the other specialized accrediting agencies and present data demonstrating that the programs meet NCATE Unit Standard 1.

In addition, BOE members are informed of two policy items that emerged from the March 2003 Unit Accreditation Board meeting. One relates to a clarification of “scholarship,” emphasizing that scholarship includes both traditional and non-traditional approaches but must be documented and peer reviewed. The second item explains the transition to a seven-year accreditation cycle. BOE members are also reminded of several points related to making travel arrangements for visits.

This BOE Update provides guidance on BOE reports in the format of advice for maintaining a 30-day timeline and examples of well written area for improvement statements. The Update also reports on the Unit Accreditation Board’s evaluations of fall 2002 BOE reports, which were positive overall. Overall ratings improved from the previous semester in almost every area. However, reports could continue to improve in terms of citing areas for improvement (or explaining why one was not cited) in places where the report’s narrative suggests an area for improvement.

BOE members are informed about new resources online, including a summary of NCATE standards at the acceptable level, evaluation forms, two new training modules, and a style guide for BOE reports. BOE members are also informed how to request that letters about their service be sent to their employers and are given tips on contacting fellow team members. Finally, this BOE Update provides information on staff changes at NCATE and NEA.
STANDARDS UPDATE

Use of State Licensing Exams

As many of you know, NCATE’s performance-based accreditation system now incorporates state licensing exam scores into the accreditation process more consistently than ever before. The joint forces of maintaining recognition as an accrediting agency from the Department of Education and our own desire to move toward performance-based accreditation led NCATE to re-examine the use of testing in the accreditation process. As a result of that review, our policies toward testing have changed in three areas. First, Precondition 7 has been expanded. Not only does this precondition require that states approve all programs being offered by an institution, but it now goes on to require that institutions meet state-required pass rates for institutions in states that have set required pass rates. The new precondition went into effect in spring 2003. Second, we have re-written the rubrics for the first two elements in Standard 1 of the NCATE Unit Standards. The rubrics now include a line indicating that 80 percent of the candidates in the unit must pass the state licensing exams in the content area. Effective fall 2003, the 80 percent pass rate is a necessary but not sufficient condition for meeting Standard 1. And third, also effective in fall 2003, 80 percent of the candidates in a given program must pass the licensing exam in states where such exams exist as a condition for national recognition of a program. For more details on testing in the accreditation process, see “The Use of Testing in NCATE Accreditation” (http://www.ncate.org/newsbrfs/use_of_test_scores0603.pdf) and Q&A (http://www.ncate.org/faqs/faq_80.htm).

The NCATE Transition Plan: Where We Are

NCATE designed its transition plan to give institutions the opportunity to build performance-based assessment systems. As you know, the plan applies only to Standards 1 and 2, and requires institutions to meet certain benchmarks each year. BOE members are asked to ensure that units are meeting expectations outlined in the transition plan for visits scheduled in fall 2003 and spring 2004. These expectations also apply to institutions that had their visits delayed from an earlier semester. These expectations are listed below:

A. Units are expected to have the following performance data available at the time of the visit:
1. state licensing exam scores (where applicable)
2. program review reports (where applicable)
3. graduate/employer surveys
4. assessments of clinical practice.

B. Units are expected to have an assessment system in place. Units should be in the second year of implementation. The assessment system should address:
1. transition points
2. major assessments
3. timeline for the development and implementation of assessments
4. the design for data collection, analysis, summary and use
5. aspects of the system that address unit operations.
6. description of the use of information technology to maintain system.

BOE members must now indicate in their reports whether 80 percent of the candidates at the initial and at the advanced levels have passed licensing exams in states that offer these exams. If 80 percent of the candidates have not passed the exams, then the BOE team must find Standard 1 not met. For further information, see p. 4 of “The Use of Testing in NCATE Accreditation” (http://www.ncate.org/newsbrfs/use_of_test_scores0603.pdf).
C. Units should have developed internal performance assessments
1. the assessments should be based on professional/state/institutional standards
2. instruments and criteria/rubrics for scoring should be developed
3. instruments and criteria/rubrics should be in use
4. testing for accuracy, consistency and fairness should be in place
5. data collection should be initiated; some analysis should have begun

Specialized Accreditors

NCATE recognizes the accreditation of other specialized accrediting agencies. For programs accredited by another agency, NCATE requires units to present (1) the official notices of accreditation from the other specialized accrediting agencies and (2) data demonstrating that the programs meet NCATE Unit Standard 1. The unit head is still expected to manage and/or coordinate these programs as they are still considered part of the unit. To lessen the reporting load, however, the unit will not be required to include these programs in its reporting and evidence gathering on NCATE Unit Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Candidates and faculty members from these programs may be interviewed by the BOE team. These programs may follow the unit’s conceptual framework(s) or have their own. Please note that these are NCATE’s minimum requirements. Institutions, at their discretion, may exceed these and require programs to provide additional information for internal and external use.

Programs in physical therapy, nursing, and social work should be excluded from the NCATE review.

UAB UPDATE

Discussion of “Scholarship”

The Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) requested that BOE members be reminded of the NCATE definition of scholarship. Please note that scholarship includes the traditional means such as books and articles in refereed journals, as well as non-traditional approaches that might include action research projects and the application of research in classroom settings. NCATE’s understanding of scholarship is drawn from Ernest Boyer’s Scholarship Reconsidered (1990, Carnegie Foundation). Scholarship according to Boyer can be conceptualized in four forms – scholarship of discovery, which is traditional research; scholarship of integration, which “seeks to interpret, draw together and bring new insight to bear on original research (Boyer, p.19)”; scholarship of application, which explores the dynamic between theory and action; and scholarship of teaching, which involves sharing and creating knowledge. Examples of scholarship beyond traditional publications include interdisciplinary research, textbooks and nonacademic writings, presentations at professional meetings, and other projects related to areas of expertise that are evaluated with the same rigor and accountability as traditional research. Regardless of the form, scholarship must always be assessed. According to Boyer, “faculty must demonstrate to the satisfaction of their peers that high performance standards have been met” (Boyer, p. 28). Consequently NCATE requires that scholarship be documented and peer reviewed. BOE members are asked to note this expanded definition of scholarship and act accordingly in the application of Standard 5.

Seven-Year Cycle

The Executive Board accepted a motion by the UAB to extend the accreditation cycle for continuing institutions from five to seven years in non-partner states and in states that agree to a seven-year cycle. This action becomes effective after institutions have been reviewed under the current standards. This action is retroactive to institutions that pilot-tested
the current standards in the 2000-01 academic year and to continuing institutions that have already been reviewed under the current standards. Institutions accredited for the first time will remain on a five-year cycle before moving to a seven year cycle after their second on-site visit. States that choose not to move to a seven-year cycle will revise their state/NCATE protocols to indicate the continuation of the five year cycle. Institutions that have already been reviewed under the current standards will receive a letter from NCATE identifying the length of the accreditation cycle in their states and the semester and year of their next on-site visit. A listing of states that have moved to a seven-year cycle and those that have retained the five-year cycle will be posted on the NCATE website in October.

BOE VISITS

Travel Reminder

When you send your team members information on airports, flight times, etc., team chairs (except for those of you on Indiana visits) should also include a reminder of the Vacation Travel phone number and code. Although NCATE sends this information individually to all team members, it is sometimes difficult for team members to locate at the time they learn about travel arrangements from their team chairs. At the same time, it is not necessary to use Vacation Travel (or the code) if you take advantage of discounted fares from the Internet. All BOE members, except those going to Indiana, are encouraged to use the Internet whenever possible for your travel arrangements, and submit your receipt to NCATE’s finance department for prompt reimbursement.

BOE members traveling to Indiana will receive separate instructions on making travel arrangements through the Indiana Professional Standards Board.

BOE REPORTS

Managing the 30-Day Timeline

In October, the UAB will consider ways to make BOE reports under the current standards more manageable. More information on this will be available in time for spring 2004 visits. In the meantime, we offer some suggestions to help BOE teams have reports completed within 30 days.

At the first team meeting, it might be helpful for each BOE team to work out a calendar for having a final report completed within the 30-day timeline. The calendar should contain the following sub-tasks that need to be accomplished:

1) The team chair leaves the visit with a disk that includes each team member’s contribution. He or she also e-mails the report to himself/herself and carries a paper copy of the full report. Other team members should also leave the visit with a copy of the report.

2) The team chair compiles the sections into one report and adds the section on sources of evidence.

3) The team chair sends the draft BOE report to NCATE, team members, state consultant, and (if it was a joint visit) state team members for feedback.

4a) NCATE staff read the report and return feedback to team chair, and

4b) All team members read the full report, checking for consistency between the sections they wrote and the sections written by other team members. All team members respond to the chair with feedback, or indicate that they have no comments.

5) Sometimes the team chair contacts a team member a second time, if questions raised by NCATE staff or by another team member require clarification from the team member who wrote to a particular standard.

6) The team chair incorporates feedback that has been received and e-mails the draft to the institution for factual corrections.
7) The institution sends factual corrections to the team chair within five days. (If this does not occur, the team chair follows up with the institution to obtain the factual corrections.)

8) The team chair e-mails the final report to NCATE, copying team members and state team members.

**Some tips for managing the 30-day timeline:**

**All team members:**
- Aim to submit the final report sooner than 30 days after the visit, to allow time for last-minute contingencies.
- Respond to all e-mail messages from team members and team chairs before and after the visit—even if it is by means of an “out of office” message or a short note to indicate when you will be able to respond.

**Team chairs:**
- Send the draft report to the institution after suggestions from team members and from NCATE are incorporated. This enables the institution to see a version that is as close to the final version as possible, and it also prevents delays on the institution’s side from affecting the completion of the draft report.
- Contact NCATE (pamela@ncate.org) if unexpected delays occur that will postpone completion of the report beyond 30 days after the visit. This enables us to communicate with institutions and state partners in a knowledgeable and reassuring manner.
- Note that NCATE staff feedback on draft reports is limited during the last two weeks in October, due to the UAB meeting. We will do our best to keep up with reports in as timely a manner as possible.

The last fall visits end on November 19…think how great it will be to have all reports finalized before institutions close for winter break! Thank you, as always, for your never-ending efforts to produce high-quality reports in a timely way.

**UAB Evaluations of BOE Reports**

Teams are to be congratulated for improving their ratings in nearly every single area. This fact can be taken as evidence of BOE members’ increasing understanding of NCATE standards and continued dedication to writing high-quality reports. Teams also met the goal established in the spring 2003 BOE Update, achieving at least a 4.0 on the first item, “the report was adequately edited.”

We anticipate that evaluations of spring 2003 reports (which will be sent to BOE members by December) may reveal even greater progress; however, we also recognize that scores may fluctuate as the UAB refines their use of the evaluation instrument. In the meantime, teams are finding it helpful to use the evaluation form as a checklist when preparing the draft report, to help ensure that items aren’t forgotten.

The table on the following page provides information on the UAB’s March 2003 evaluation of fall 2002 BOE reports, as compared with their evaluation of the previous semester’s reports.
| 1. The report was adequately edited.       | 3.96   | 4.26   |
| 2. The introduction and conceptual framework sections were sufficiently informative. | *      | 4.12   |
| 3. The report incorporated evidence that adequately addressed each element of the standards, including elements related to advanced programs. | 3.88   | 3.95   |
| 4. The report included a clear presentation and synthesis of evidence. | 3.72   | 3.76   |
| 5. The report presented the evidence in enough detail to “make the case” for its findings in the narrative. | 3.51   | 3.73   |
| 6. The report included recommendations that were derived logically from the narrative and areas for improvement. | 3.64   | 3.82   |
| 7. The report drew on multiple sources of evidence. | 4.03   | 4.30   |
| 8. The report stated when sufficient evidence was not available for review. | 3.79   | 3.56   |
| 9. The areas for improvement that were cited were clearly stated. | 3.35   | 3.78   |
| 10. The report was internally consistent—i.e., it did not include contradictory information. | 3.63   | 3.86   |
| 11. The report placed comments, concerns, and areas for improvement related to the conceptual framework under the appropriate standards. | 3.84   | 3.97   |
| 12. The report made distinctions between initial and advanced programs. | 4.00   | 4.39   |
| 13. The report addressed the areas for improvement that were cited. | 3.75   | 4.11   |

continued on next page
14. The report explained why areas for improvement were not cited when the evidence discussed could presumably lead a team to cite areas for improvement.  

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<td>The report explained why areas for improvement were not cited when the evidence discussed could presumably lead a team to cite areas for improvement.</td>
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15. The report adequately addressed previously cited weaknesses/areas for improvement.

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<td>15.</td>
<td>The report adequately addressed previously cited weaknesses/areas for improvement.</td>
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16. The report did not include prescriptive statements and/or opinions not related to the standards.

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<td>16.</td>
<td>The report did not include prescriptive statements and/or opinions not related to the standards.</td>
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Scale: 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

* = Not assessed for spring 2002 reports

A goal for fall 2003 reports (which will be evaluated in March 2004 and reported on in the fall 2004 BOE Update) relates to item #14, “The report explained why areas for improvement were not cited when the evidence discussed could presumably lead a team to cite areas for improvement.” Although this area is sometimes challenging, it is especially important because it can lead to the UAB adding areas for improvement, or even deciding that a standard is not met when the BOE team indicated that it was met.

One exercise could occur on Wednesday morning of the visit. It might be useful for each team member to read another team member’s sections of the report with a highlighter in hand, highlighting any statements in the narrative that could sound negative to someone who has not been to the campus. Each highlighted sentence should either be cited as an area for improvement or be followed immediately by an explanation of mitigating circumstances that prevented the team from citing an area for improvement. For example,

Highlighted sentence: The building where education classes occur is cramped, with insufficient classroom and office space.

Next sentence: However, construction on a new building was underway during the visit, and faculty members are pleased that the new building will alleviate crowding at the same time it enables the use of state-of-the-art technology.

Without the sentence explaining that the solution is underway, the unit might not think to rejoin the original sentence, since it wasn’t cited as an area for improvement and the unit and the team both know it is no longer a problem. However, if the BOE report did not include the sentence explaining the solution, UAB members would not know that the problem has been solved; they would know only that the BOE team reported crowded conditions and the unit did not rejoin this statement. They will be puzzled as to why the BOE team did not cite an area for improvement—and the unit will be distraught when the UAB adds an area for improvement that they have no opportunity to rejoin.

If the BOE team is in doubt about whether to cite an area for improvement, please cite it. It is much better to give the unit a chance to write a rejoinder and have the UAB remove the area for improvement, rather than have the area for improvement added by the UAB.

Anecdotally, UAB members mentioned several areas that they felt would benefit from greater attention in BOE reports:

- Standard 1, elements on P-12 student learning
- How faculty teaching load in initial and advanced programs compares with faculty teaching load in other units on campus
- Unit’s system for maintaining a record of formal candidate complaints
AFI Examples

Sometimes, BOE members struggle with the wording of an area for improvement and wish they could see how other BOE teams articulated a similar concern in the past. For that reason, we have included some well written area for improvement statements for each standard.

Standard 1:
- The M.Ed. program has not identified candidate dispositions and the means by which dispositions will be assessed.
- The unit has not collected evidence that candidates have a positive impact on P-12 student learning.

Standard 2:
- The unit’s assessment system does not clearly address candidate outcomes identified in the conceptual framework.
- Data collected by the unit are not systematically analyzed, interpreted, and shared with program faculty, candidates, and other stakeholders for program improvement.
- The unit has not implemented procedures to ensure fairness, accuracy, and consistency in the assessment of candidate performance.

Standard 3:
- Not all candidates have the opportunity during their field experiences and internships to apply the technology skills acquired through university coursework to their teaching and other professional roles.
- Clinical faculty are not systematically prepared for their roles as mentors and supervisors.
- Field and clinical experiences in school counseling and school psychology are not explicitly aligned with state standards.

Standard 4:
- The unit does not adequately evaluate the curriculum and experiences through which candidates learn to teach all students.
- The unit does not assess candidate proficiencies for working with diverse P-12 students.
- Candidates have limited opportunities to interact with other candidates (or faculty members, or P-12 students) from diverse backgrounds.

Standard 5:
- The unit has no systematic and comprehensive process for evaluating the teaching performance of adjunct faculty members.
- Faculty involvement in scholarly activities is limited.

Standard 6:
- The unit does not have well articulated and shared policies and procedures that ensure coherent unit-wide planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional education programs.
- The unit lacks the authority and structure to approve and manage all of its advanced programs.
- High faculty teaching loads hamper faculty attention to scholarship and advisement.
MATERIALS FOR BOE MEMBERS

Summary of NCATE Standards

A summary of NCATE standards at the acceptable level, including the current stage in the transition plan, is available on the BOE section of the website.

Evaluation Forms Online

Thanks to BOE team members who helped us pilot-test the process of submitting evaluation forms online. Beginning in fall 2003, all BOE team members should submit evaluation forms online. This system will enable NCATE to provide you with the results of your evaluations by team members and by the institution. Soon, you will receive an e-mail message indicating how to access the evaluation forms online. Your feedback is important to us, so we are aiming for a 100 percent response rate from BOE members. In fall 2003, please do not send paper evaluation forms to NCATE.

Letters to Employers of BOE Members

Have you recently changed employers, or would your employer like an updated copy of the letter that was sent to him or her when you began your term of service on the BOE? If so, please send an e-mail to lettertoemployer@ncate.org, indicating the name and address of the person who should receive the letter.

New Online Training Modules

By the end of September, the online training modules for BOE members will feature two improvements:

- An updated “Evidence” module (Module 3) to help BOE members work with the type of evidence now expected of institutions;
- A new introductory module to help institutional representatives who are not on the BOE benefit from the training available to BOE members. BOE members at colleges and universities might inform others at your institution that this resource is available; also, team chairs might inform institutions at the previsit.

The only unfortunate byproduct of this change is that BOE members who were registered previously need to re-register by creating a username and password. (It can be the same username and password as before or a different one.)

Contacting Fellow Team Members

The BOE team list, printed on yellow paper, provides work and home telephone numbers as well as e-mail addresses for team members. If you are having trouble contacting a team member by e-mail, it is often more effective to contact that person by telephone than to call the NCATE office and ask staff to contact the hard-to-reach team member. At the same time, if you will be away from your e-mail for more than a couple of days, it is very helpful to have an “out-of-office” message inform people when you expect to be able to reply.

Style Guide

Thanks to the spring 2003 team chairs who helped to pilot-test NCATE’s new style guide for BOE reports. The style guide is now available on the BOE section of the website. Hopefully, the style guide will make it easier to provide all institutions with high-quality BOE reports that are edited in a consistent way—and it will also help teams to resolve quickly those discussions on whether to capitalize “dean.” (Hint: it’s lowercase except when it immediately precedes someone’s last name.)
STAFF UPDATE

NCATE is pleased to welcome Lindsye Mitchell as the assistant to the senior vice president. Lindsye began her work at NCATE in May, and many of you have already spoken with her in arranging your fall 2003 visits. NCATE is also pleased to welcome Jennifer Harbel as the assistant for state relations. In May, NCATE bid a fond farewell to Alison Gillespie, who has moved to Boston. Finally, we would like to congratulate NEA staff member June VanderVeen on her retirement. June has been a long-time friend of NCATE, and some of you know her from her many years of attending BOE training sessions.