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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Guidance for Implementing Test Score Requirements

At this point all BOE reports should include information on institutional pass rates as part of the response for the first elements of Standard 1. In spring 2004, BOE teams should review scores for the last annual reporting period to determine whether 80 percent of the candidates at the initial level and 80 percent of the candidates at the advanced level have passed the content-area exams, in states that require such exams for licensure. The information reviewed should include official documents from the state or from the organization that administered the exams. It is entirely acceptable for institutions to provide updated information of this sort, if the previously reported Title II data are outdated. For additional information on the application of test results in Standard I, all BOE members should visit the NCATE website at: http://www.ncate.org/newsbrfs/use_of_test_scores0603.pdf.

If the state does not require licensure tests, the team should state that fact in its response to the first element of Standard 1.

According to the UAB, in academic year 2004-2005, when the standards are expected to be fully implemented and state licensure exams are better aligned with standards, the BOE teams will be instructed to examine both current and trend data of state licensing test score results over the period since the institution’s last NCATE visit or, for new institutions, since the unit achieved candidacy or two years, whichever is longer. The trend data should show a pattern of program completers passing the state licensure tests. If an institution does not have an aggregate pass rate of 80 percent in the previous year or aggregated over the period since the last visit, then the element of the standard on content knowledge will not be met at the acceptable level and the team should recommend that Standard 1 is not met. In addition to test data, the unit must present evidence as discussed above to demonstrate that the standard is being met.

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 or state reviews of programs
   3. Graduate/employer surveys

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 the system

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

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework continues to be an important aspect of the NCATE standards. In the conceptual framework section of the BOE report, teams should continue writing to the evidences listed in the template. However, when teams find problems with an institution’s conceptual framework that rise to the level of an area for improvement, the area for improvement should clearly identify which of the five structural elements of conceptual frameworks that is at issue.

The five structural elements include the:
1. Vision/mission
2. The unit’s philosophy, purposes, goals
3. The knowledge bases;
4. Candidate proficiencies aligned with expectation in professional, state, and institutional standards, and;
5. The system by which candidate performance is assessed.

For example, sometimes teams find that no links exist between assessments and the conceptual framework. Because the key assessments identified in the unit assessment system should be linked to the candidate proficiencies in the conceptual framework, this lack of linkage should be reported as an area for improvement.

The area for improvement should read, “The assessments are not linked to the learning proficiencies outlined in the conceptual framework.” Similarly, if the team finds that teaching methods and content are uniformly different from the philosophy, purposes and goals outlined in the conceptual framework, then an area for improvement should be written that states, “The teaching by the professional education unit does not reflect the philosophy stated in the conceptual framework.” The UAB does not find areas for improvement that only use the generic term “conceptual framework” helpful.

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

Some BOE teams have struggled to differentiate the “Pedagogical Content Knowledge” element of Standard 1 from the general pedagogy found in “Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge for Teacher Candidates.” A quick refresher:

- (General) pedagogical knowledge includes the general concepts, theories, and research about effective teaching, regardless of content area. Classroom management skills, developmentally appropriate lesson plans, and effective use of multiple teaching strategies are all included in the general “Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge for Teacher Candidates.”
- Pedagogical content knowledge describes the interaction of the subject matter and effective teaching strategies to help students learn the subject matter. Pedagogical content knowledge requires candidates to draw on both content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge to teach students specific content.

**Unit Standards Revision**

The UAB directed the NCATE staff to begin data collection activities in preparation for the periodic review of the unit standards. The data collection activities will include:
1. Traditional calls for comment
2. Questionnaires sent to unit heads, faculty, and BOE members
3. Solicited comments from other constituents
4. Focus groups with BOE and institutional representatives
5. Analyzing data from the study on NCATE effectiveness

If you have comments and/or suggestions regarding clarification of the rubrics, additions or changes for the glossary, or any comments on the effectiveness of the standards, please send your observations to Antoinette Mitchell at: antoinette@ncate.org.
UAB UPDATE

BOE Members Missing in Action (or Not Responding)

The UAB determined that NCATE will ask a constituent group to replace a BOE member if he or she fails to fill out an availability form two semesters in a row without good cause (e.g., illness or a sabbatical outside the U.S.). Please, if you are unable to fill out your availability form, let Marva know.

Policy on Outside Accreditors

The UAB adopted a policy to streamline and clarify what is required when a program within the unit is already accredited by another specialized accrediting organization. During the previsit, team chairs should discuss this policy with the unit. In particular, NCATE recognizes the following specialized accrediting organizations:

- American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)
- American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AACS)
- American Library Association (ALA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)
- National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD)
- National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), and
- National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST).

For programs accredited by one of these organizations, NCATE requires, at a minimum, units to present (1) the official notice of accreditation from the other specialized accrediting organization; (2) data demonstrating that candidates in these programs meet professional and state standards as expected in NCATE’s Unit Standard 1; and (3) evidence of sufficiently extensive and intensive clinical practice (i.e., student teaching or internship). The unit head is still expected to manage and/or coordinate these programs as they are still considered part of the unit. To reduce the reporting load for these accredited programs, NCATE will not require the unit to include these programs in its reporting and evidence gathered for NCATE Unit Standards 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Candidates and faculty members from these nationally accredited programs may be included in BOE interviews during the on-site visit. These programs are expected to be able to articulate their conceptual framework(s). Programs in nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and social work are not included in the NCATE review.

BOE VISITS

Seeking High-Quality Examples

As NCATE’s eyes and ears, BOE members are in the best position to spot high-quality examples that might be useful for other institutions. NCATE is particularly seeking examples of high-quality institutional reports and electronic exhibit rooms. When you encounter these on your travels, please mention these in the e-mail when you send your draft BOE report to NCATE.

Responses to Institutions’ Rejoiners

Many thanks to the team chairs who have taken time to write responses to institutions’ rejoinders. The UAB has indicated that these are very helpful in contributing to effective, reliable, and consistent accreditation decisions. Kudos!

Focused Visit Guidelines

This semester will include the first “focused visit” in response to a conditional or provisional accreditation decision. Several more of these visits are scheduled to occur over the coming years, and the UAB has adopted guidelines for the conduct of these visits. They are available on the NCATE website at http://www.ncate.org/accred/focused/m_focused.htm.
Travel Reminder
When you send your team members information on airports, flight times, etc., team chairs (except for those of you on most 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. Team members should contact the team chair, rather than NCATE staff, with individual travel questions. Marva does not need to be copied on messages about team travel plans.

BOE REPORTS
Should Areas for Improvement Be Cited in Standard 1 or Standard 2?
Many BOE teams have asked whether a particular concern should be an area for improvement under Standard 1 or Standard 2. A quick rule of thumb is that if the team is feeling concerned about candidates’ abilities, an area for improvement should be cited in Standard 1. If qualitative and/or disaggregated data leave the team feeling confident about candidates’ abilities but concerned about the unit’s data collection and analysis, an area for improvement should be cited in Standard 2. If an absence of usable data leaves the team unable to judge candidates’ abilities, areas for improvement should be cited in both Standard 1 and Standard 2.

The same area for improvement might lead to a different rejoinder, depending on the standard in which it is cited. If the rejoinder should describe the candidates’ abilities, cite the area for improvement in Standard 1. If the rejoinder should describe data collection and analysis efforts, cite the area for improvement in Standard 2.

Tables
The UAB has indicated tables are a helpful way to summarize data. Examples of useful tables being included by teams are:

- Listing of programs, degree levels, and locations (Introduction)
- Candidate performance data (Standard 1)
- Survey results (Standard 1)
- Summary of transition points (Standard 2)
- Data indicating that candidates have proficiencies in working with diverse P-12 students (Standard 4)
- Candidate, faculty, and P-12 school diversity data (Standard 4)
- Faculty scholarship (Standard 5)
- Faculty performance on evaluation measures (Standard 5)
- Comparison of unit budget with the budgets of other units on campus (Standard 6)

This list is not meant to be exhaustive, nor do all of these tables apply to every institution. However, when data for these tables are available, they are helpful to include in BOE reports. The following suggestions can increase the effectiveness of tables:

- Tables should be numbered consecutively throughout the report. If information pertains to more than one section of the BOE report, include the table once and then refer to the table number.
- If the unit provides data in a large table, consider dividing the information into smaller tables under the appropriate elements of the BOE report. For example, the unit might present a table of survey results addressing graduates’ content knowledge, teaching skills, and skills working with diverse students. The BOE report should report this information in the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge sections of Standard 1 and in the first element of Standard 4, respectively.
- Double-check that numbers add up to 100 percent when appropriate.

Tables should include the following:
- Definitions of any abbreviations
- Explanation of any headings that might not be clear
- The “N” (for example, how many candidates’ portfolios or faculty vitae as summarized)
- For survey data, the response rate
- Explanation of rating scale
- Percentages along with raw data when appropriate

Rationale Statements

All new, corrected, and continued areas for improvement should be accompanied by a rationale statement. These rationales are helpful both to the UAB and to the institution in determining how to address the area for improvement. Rationales are one or two sentences summarizing what the team saw and heard that led them to cite an area for improvement. Rationales are:

- Not long
- Not advice or solutions for fixing the problem
- Not predictions of what might happen if the problem is not fixed
- Not justification for why a particular element of the standard is important

It might be helpful for team members to look at each other’s rationale statements to make sure they are not prescribing, predicting, or justifying the standards. For example:

Area for improvement: The unit does not assess candidate dispositions in the advanced program.

Prescriptive rationale: To ensure that candidates acquire appropriate dispositions, the dispositions must be assessed, either using the Dispositions Assessment Instrument from the initial programs or using another instrument.

Predictive rationale: If the unit does not assess dispositions, faculty will not know whether candidates acquire the traits outlined in the conceptual framework.

Justifying-the-standards rationale: The conceptual framework describes knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of candidates, and candidates in the initial programs are assessed on these dispositions. However, the dispositions are equally essential for ensuring that advanced candidates are able to use their knowledge and skills effectively in their new roles as school counselors.

Effective rationale: Unit and P-12 faculty confirmed that no specific instrument exists for ensuring that advanced candidates acquire the dispositions outlined in the conceptual framework.

Use of Other Documents

A well-written institutional report contains much information that can be helpful in writing the BOE report. Nonetheless, BOE members should resist the temptation to cut and paste text directly from the institutional report into the BOE report. The UAB is interested in learning the BOE team’s interpretation of what they found in the unit, not rereading the institution’s interpretation. When writing styles change dramatically from one section of the report to another, when adjectives suddenly become glowing, or when the unit’s conceptual framework is suddenly “our” conceptual framework, it is apparent that the text originated in another document. Using tables from the institutional report is acceptable, though the source of the tables should be clearly identified (and see the item in this BOE Update on effective use of tables in general).

The 30-Day Timeline

Kudos to all BOE teams for the great efforts you made in fall 2003 to complete your reports within the 30-day timeline prescribed by NCATE’s handbook. Special kudos to the team that visited Barton College, which submitted a final BOE report just 14 days after the visit!

As we all keep pushing toward this goal, here is some advice to keep in mind:

- When you receive your team assignment, mark on your calendar not only the days you will be away but also the day (30 days after the visit) by which the report should be complete. Team chairs should also mark the steps that should occur during those 30 days (see the Handbook or the fall 2003 BOE Update for a complete list).

At the first team meeting, teams should discuss a plan for submitting the BOE report on time.

- If you will be unavailable or difficult to reach during those 30 days, communicate this to your team chair ahead of time and work out how you will contribute to the final team report.

- Expect the unexpected. Teams usually find that some aspect of the report preparation...
process takes longer than expected. Leave room for the unexpected when you plan your schedule.

- Expect that NCATE feedback will arrive approximately one week after we receive your draft report, slightly longer if your draft arrives during the UAB meeting (the week of March 29). Now that we have three report readers providing NCATE feedback (see the “Staff Update” section), reports that take longer than a week should be a rare exception. Staff will continue to let you know when we receive the draft report and when you should expect feedback.

Dispositions

Some units do not appear to be defining in their conceptual frameworks or actively assessing expected dispositions. In some cases, dispositions are “monitored,” meaning that the unit intervenes if a candidate displays an inappropriate behavior or attitude. In these cases, the unit may be reacting to and remediating negative dispositions rather than making explicit what positive dispositions are expected and formally assessing those. The BOE report should identify the unit’s dispositions and how the unit is assessing them.

Advanced Programs for Teachers

NCATE expects all programs to contribute to the unit’s meeting all six standards (though see the item in this BOE Update about programs accredited by other organizations). These programs can include traditional undergraduate programs at the initial teacher preparation level, graduate programs at the initial teacher preparation level, advanced programs for teachers seeking new roles (school administration, school counseling, etc.), and advanced programs for teachers who wish to gain additional expertise to continue in their roles as teachers. Often this last category of programs leads to a master’s degree but not an additional license; therefore, some states do not include these programs in their state review. Nonetheless, NCATE expects these programs to be included in all sections of the BOE report.

To meet Standard 3 at the advanced level, NCATE expects candidates in advanced teaching programs to put into practice what they are learning in their courses, even though they are already teaching. Often these candidates complete field experiences and clinical practice in their own classrooms. (One caveat, however: if a candidate’s field experiences and clinical practice occur entirely within his or her own classroom, the unit may not be providing adequate opportunities for advanced candidates to interact with diverse P-12 students.)

Previous Weaknesses

Some BOE teams have inquired about how to address previously cited weaknesses that are no longer required under the current standards. In some cases, the institution has addressed the earlier concern, so the previous weakness can be listed as a “corrected” area for improvement even though it is no longer required. In other cases, the institution did not address the weakness, and this led to an area for improvement under the current standards. For example, the unit may have been cited in 1999 for lack of a diversity plan, which is no longer required; however, the team finds in 2004 that candidates have limited opportunities to interact with diverse faculty and/or peers. In this case, a “continued” area for improvement could be cited, with both the previous wording and the current wording provided.

The third possibility is that the unit did not address the weakness but no area for improvement under the current standards is appropriate. In this case, it would not be “corrected” or “continued.” Please label these as “Previously Cited Weaknesses No Longer Required by the Standards.”
Your username and password are the same to access all forms.

Thank you for your efforts to date in helping us transition to these forms. NCATE's director of information systems has worked hard to address the technical difficulties that many of you experienced with the fall semester forms, and we are confident that the forms will be easier to use this spring. Of course, if you experience questions or difficulty with any of the forms, NCATE staff are happy to help. To expedite getting assistance to you as quickly as possible, please address questions to the following individuals:

What if I need my password or user ID?: jim@ncate.org

What if I experience technical difficulties while trying to return my date availability and conflict of interest form?: marva@ncate.org. (Please let Marva know of the difficulty and also tell her the dates you are unavailable and the institutions with which you have conflicts.)

What if I experience technical difficulties while trying to return my team acceptance form?: marva@ncate.org. (Please let Marva know of the difficulty and also tell her the name of the institution, the date of the visit, and whether you are able to serve.)

What if I experience technical difficulties while trying to complete the evaluation forms?: jim@ncate.org

What if the technology is working fine but I have another question about the evaluation forms?: pamela@ncate.org

May I return the forms via fax, or just e-mail the information to you?: Please complete the web-based form if at all possible. If you experience technical difficulties, please follow the procedures listed above.

Thank you again for helping us to pioneer this new use of technology! Please remember that when you are communicating with the NCATE office about a particular visit, it is most helpful if you can refer to the full name of the institution. Referring to the acronym or the city in which it is located may cause a delay in obtaining a response.

**STAFF UPDATE**

We are pleased to welcome Linda Bradley, BOE chair and long-time member of the NCATE family, to the cadre of NCATE readers of draft BOE reports. Several teams benefited from Linda’s feedback during the second half of the fall semester, and we are pleased that she will be continuing in this role. Team chairs should continue sending draft reports to Pamela Ehrenberg (pamela@ncate.org), and the report will be read by either Pamela Ehrenberg, Pam Magasich, or Linda Bradley. (As a reminder, the draft report should come to NCATE at the same it goes to team members, including state team members, for feedback. After this feedback is incorporated, the report goes to the institution for factual corrections, and then the final report is submitted to NCATE.) Pamela, Pam, and Linda look forward to wonderful reports from all of you this spring!