

**ACTIONS**  
**Unit Accreditation Board Meeting**  
**October 16-20, 2001**

**ACCREDITATION ACTIONS**

The Unit Accreditation Board reviewed 64 institutions at this meeting: 52 accredited institutions and 12 new institutions. All of the new institutions were accredited and 89% of the accredited institutions had their accreditation continued without qualification. One institution was accredited with conditions and five were accredited with probation.

Nineteen pilot institutions, which are included in the summary above, were reviewed under the new NCATE standards at this meeting. The three new institutions were accredited and 13 of the accredited institutions had their accreditation continued. One of the pilots was accredited with conditions and one was accredited with probation. The decision for one of the pilot institutions was deferred until the March UAB to allow for the submission of additional information. Beginning with visits this fall, the new NCATE standards apply to all institutions.

**STANDARDS**

**A. Revision of the Standards Rubrics**

The UAB accepted the final revisions to the standards rubrics, which will be applied to accreditation reviews beginning in spring 2002. The following changes have been adopted:

***Standard 1:*** Minor editing was made to the rubrics. The following footnote has been added to the second sentence of the standard to clarify the types of assessments that might be used to generate candidate data:

*The unit assesses candidate performance through a comprehensive set of assessments that includes state licensing examinations where they exist. Knowledge and skills are assessed through measures such as examinations, portfolios, papers, presentations and case studies. Assessments of knowledge, dispositions and teaching performance occur during field experiences and clinical practice and include candidate analysis of P-12 student learning. The unit supplements information about candidate performance with information about graduates derived from follow-up studies, employer evaluations, and job placement rates. If a program does not meet the state cut-off score, the unit must provide other convincing evidence that the unit meets the standard.*

***Standard 2:*** The following sentence has been added to the acceptable level of the first rubric to require units to keep a record of candidate complaints and their resolution:

*The unit maintains a record of formal candidate complaints and documentation of their resolution.*

**Standard 3:** The following two sentences have been added to the acceptable level of the first rubric to address a variety of requirements for recognition by the U.S. Department of Education:

*The unit's recruiting and admission practices are clearly and consistently described in publications and catalogs, Academic calendars, catalogs, publications, grading policies, and advertising are accurate and current.*

The revised standards can be accessed on the website by early November and will be reprinted and distributed to institutions, state partners, and other NCATE constituents by the end of the year.

**B. Revision of the Conceptual Framework Description on pp. 12- 13 of the Standards Book**

1. Amend the description of the structural elements for the conceptual framework on page 12 of the current standards book as follows:

The conceptual framework(s) provide the following structural elements:

- the vision and mission of the institution and unit;
  - the unit's philosophy, purposes, and outcomes;
  - knowledge bases, including theories, research, the wisdom of practice, and education policies;
  - candidate proficiencies aligned with the expectations in professional, state, and institutional standards;
  - the system by which candidate performance is regularly addressed.
2. The subtitle on page 13 has been changed from "Indicators for Conceptual Framework(s)" to "Evidence of the Conceptual Framework throughout the Standards." The preceding paragraph will read: "Board of Examiners teams will look for evidence of the conceptual framework as described below and describe their findings, first in the introductory section, and then throughout the team report that is written during the on-site visit."
  3. The following qualifying note will introduce the sections describing Professional Commitments and Dispositions, Commitment to Diversity, and Commitment to Technology: "what the unit is prepared to do in regard to candidate learning and its effect on student learning, including attention to diversity and the use of technology."

The changes will be reflected in the reprinting of the standards book and Preconditions #4.

## C. Revision of the Glossary in the Standards Book

The following definitions were revised from those in the current standards book or added to the current definitions.

1. ***Institutional Standards.*** Candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified by the institution to reflect its mission and the unit’s conceptual framework. *(revised)*
2. ***State Standards.*** The standards adopted by state agencies responsible for the approval of programs that prepare teachers and other school personnel, which may include candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. *(revised)*
3. ***Professional Standards.*** Candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions set by the specialized professional associations (SPA program standards) and adopted by NCATE for use in its accreditation review. Professional standards also refer to standards set by other recognized national organizations/accrediting agencies that evaluate professional education programs (e.g., the National Association of Schools of Music). *(new)*
4. ***State Program Approval.*** Process by which a state governmental agency reviews a professional education program to determine if it meets the state’s standards for the preparation of school personnel. *(new)*
5. ***Proficiencies.*** Required knowledge, skills, or dispositions identified in the professional, state, or institutional standards. *(new)*
6. ***Alternate Route to State Licensure Programs.*** Postbaccalaureate programs designed for individuals who did not prepare as educators during their undergraduate studies. These programs, which usually lead to a unit’s recommendation for a state license, accommodate the schedules of adults and recognize their earlier academic preparation and life experiences. In some instances, candidates may be employed as educators while enrolled. Examples include MAT programs, programs that operate in professional development schools, and Troops to Teachers programs. They are sometimes called non-traditional programs. *(new)*
7. ***Program.*** A planned sequence of courses and experiences for preparing P-12 teachers and other professional school personnel. These courses and experiences usually lead to a recommendation for a state license to work in schools. *(revised)*

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### A. “Weaknesses” Changed to “Areas for Improvement”

The Unit Accreditation Board has changed the term “weaknesses” to “areas for improvement” in all actions beginning with spring 2001 visits. This change will be reflected in BOE reports and UAB actions.

NCATE’s official notification of UAB actions includes (1) an action report that identifies the decision and term of accreditation and (2) an accompanying letter to the president/chancellor that is copied to the unit head and state partner. The action report is available to anyone who requests it 30 days after an institution has been notified of the UAB action. The contents of the action report and accompanying letter have been revised as a result of changing weaknesses to areas for improvement. The areas for improvement will not be listed in the accreditation action report if all standards have been met; they will be listed in the accompanying letter. They will be listed in the action report for the unmet standards if the decision is provisional accreditation or accreditation with conditions; areas for improvement for met standards will be listed in the accompanying letter. All areas for improvement will be listed in the action report for accreditation with probation, denial, or revocation.

Although areas for improvement for met standards will not be public, units will be required to continue to provide evidence in annual reports that areas for improvement are being addressed if the accreditation decision was one of the following: accreditation, provisional accreditation, and accreditation with conditions. In addition, the list of areas for improvement from the previous visit will be provided to the BOE and UAB at the time of the next on-site visit. BOE teams will be asked to report on previous weaknesses or previous areas for improvement in the BOE report.

## **B. Deferral of UAB Decision if BOE Recommendation Is Changed from Met to Unmet**

The Unit Accreditation Board rescinded the UAB’s option to defer accreditation when the BOE team had recommended that all standards are met and the UAB changes the recommendation to “not met.” Deferral was an option for the pilot visits under the new NCATE standards in 2000-2001. The options in the future will be provisional accreditation, accreditation with conditions, and accreditation with probation. This policy will become effective at the March 2002 UAB meeting.

## **C. Length and Format of Institutional Reports (IRs)**

1. The guidelines for institutional reports will be revised in NCATE’s accreditation handbooks to encourage all institutions to respond to each standard, element by element. In addition, the length of institutional reports for continuing accreditation visits has been increased from 50 to 100 pages, including appendices. For information on preparing electronic IRs, institutions should visit NCATE’s website at [http://www.ncate.org/accred/guidelines\\_electronic\\_exhibits.htm](http://www.ncate.org/accred/guidelines_electronic_exhibits.htm).

#### **D. “Initial Visit” Replaced with “First Visit”**

The term “first visit” will replace “initial visit” in NCATE’s documents and presentations to indicate that an institution is seeking accreditation for the first time. This action will eliminate the use of “initial” in two important components of the NCATE system: “initial teacher preparation” and “initial visits.”

#### **E. Clarification of Adverse Decisions**

The UAB requested that the following statement be shared with state agencies responsible for teacher education and licensure:

At the October 2001 meeting of the Unit Accreditation Board, members had considerable discussion about the use of NCATE decisions, especially by state agencies. It became apparent that confusion exists in the field about the definition of “adverse decisions.” Some individuals and agencies think that provisional accreditation, accreditation with conditions, and accreditation with probation are adverse decisions. However, NCATE considers only denial or revocation of accreditation as adverse. Accreditation with conditions, provisional accreditation, and accreditation with probation are NOT considered adverse decisions by NCATE. In these three cases, professional education units **ARE ACCREDITED.**

**What does the U. S. Department of Education require of accrediting agencies?**  
“Adverse accrediting action” includes, as a minimum, those actions initiated by an accrediting agency that result in an institution or program losing its accreditation.

Therefore, NCATE has identified two decisions as adverse: (1) denial of accreditation, which could result after the first visit to an institution, and (2) revocation of accreditation.

#### **F. Policy on Alternate Routes in the NCATE Review**

The following policy was adopted by the Unit Accreditation Board and ratified by the Executive Board to make it clear to institutions that alternate route programs must be included in the NCATE review if the institution recommends graduates for licensure.

Alternate route programs administered by the unit and leading to the unit’s recommendation for a state license must meet NCATE standards. If a campus is preparing education candidates through one or more alternate routes, the program(s) must be included in the NCATE review. Alternate route programs must respond to state and professional standards through a review by either the state or specialized professional associations as described in the state/NCATE protocol, which is

available on NCATE's website. Alternate programs will be reviewed in the same manner as other programs. The BOE team will interview program administrators, P-12 partners, candidates in the program, and faculty. The BOE team will also expect to see assessment data, completion rates, and other performance data for candidates in alternate route programs as part of the unit's exhibits. The BOE team may cite areas for improvement related to specific programs, including alternate route programs.