

NCATE Style Guide for BOE Reports

Capitalize or lower case

Capitalize the following:

- Names of units: the School of Education, or the Professional Education School
- Names of departments/colleges/programs/committees: the Department of Administration and Curriculum; the College of Education, Technology and Consumer Affairs; Graduate Division of Education; Transition to Teaching Program; Community Advisory Board
- Degrees: M.A., M.A.T., B.A., Master of Arts, Bachelor of Arts
- Disciplines such as English, and French, but not math, science, social studies, and history.
- Courses: the History of Science, Methods for Teaching Social Studies
- Categories of race/ethnicity: African American, White, Latino, etc.
- Element of a scoring rubric: Developing, Basic, Proficient, Excellent (“In spring 2006, 98 percent of candidates scored at or above Proficient, which the unit administrators think is excellent.”)
- The word “Standard” when referring to a specific NCATE standard such as Standard 5, but not when discussing the NCATE standards in general
- Internet

Use lower-case letters for the following:

- When referring to the unit, the college, the division, the school administration program, the assessment plan, the committee, or the state, rather than the proper name.
- Position titles: dean, president, associate professor, department secretary
- Disciplines such as math, science, social studies, and history, but not English, and French.
- NCATE terms: such as “the unit assessment system” or the “conceptual framework.”

- Seasons: spring 2006 or fall 2007. (The year should include all four digits, and no comma is needed between the season and the year.)
- Degrees: in general such as “bachelor’s degree.” (In “bachelor’s degree” and “master’s degree,” the apostrophe is before the “s.”)

Number or Numeral

- Spell out numbers: at the beginning of a sentence “Nineteen candidates passed the exam, two failed.”
- Use the numeral: if the number is 10 or greater. “This semester 12 candidates will take the exam, only nine took it last semester.”
- Use numerals when referring to scores: “The average score was 3.4 on a Likert scale of 1 to 5.”
- NCATE standards are designated using Arabic (1-6), not Roman, numerals. “Standard 2”

Percent or %

- Use percent or percentage in the body of a sentence.
- Use the sign (%) if it is enclosed in parentheses or in a table.

Plural or Singular

- Plural: Consider the word “data” plural. While newer dictionaries say that it can be used in the singular, the plural form is more commonly accepted.
- Plural or singular: Ensure that there is consistency in how the word “faculty” is used, as singular or plural. Most BOE reports consider “faculty” plural. Another possibility is to use “faculty members” when appropriate.

Hyphens

- Do not hyphenate: coursework, preservice, postbaccalaureate, postsecondary, ongoing, database, website, online, email, undergird. (Some of these may be different than the advice provided by spell-check.)
- Use two words: phrases containing “well” (“well written,” “well prepared,” etc.) should be written as two words.

Commas, period, quotation marks...

- No comma is needed between the season and the year or month and year (spring 2007, May 2007).
- Commas and periods should be placed inside, rather than outside, quotation marks.
- Be consistent in the use of commas when listing more than three or more items. Either use the series comma when listing three or more items (for example, the comma before “and” in “knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions”) or do not use it.
- A hyphen separates two words (“part-time”), whereas a dash separates two phrases. A dash can be created by typing two hyphens. No space is needed before or after a hyphen or a dash.

Specific to NCATE

- Refer to the professional education unit as “the unit” or by name (The College of Education, COE, etc).
- Do not refer to the professional education unit by the institution’s name.
- Use the term “candidates” when referring to individuals enrolled in the education programs at the college or university
- Use “students” when referring to children in P-12 schools.
- BOE reports are written in the present tense, except when referencing events and actions that occurred in the past and are not likely to reoccur. (“The university was founded in 1901.”)

Ensure that formatting is consistent

- Bullets are aligned and the same style is used throughout the report
- Headings are consistent with standard elements
- Define all acronyms the first time they are used
- Don’t use widows/orphans, etc.
- Remember to include page numbers