



BOARD OF EXAMINERS UPDATE

Fall 2007

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

Disaggregated Data: Campus Programs, Off-Campus Programs, and Distance Learning Programs

Beginning this semester, institutions are expected to disaggregate candidate assessment data by campus programs, off-campus programs, and distance learning programs for the national program review process and for unit accreditation. The UAB adopted this policy several semesters ago (fall 2005) to help determine similarities and differences in the quality of candidates that complete these programs. If institutions cannot disaggregate assessment data by programs, BOE members should note this in the findings section of the BOE Report. Because this expectation is not in the current standards, BOE members should not cite an area for improvement. This expectation has been included in the rubric on *Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation* in Standard 2 of the revised Unit Standards which will go into effect in fall 2008. This rubric also requires that data be disaggregated for alternate route programs.

Streamlining NCATE Accreditation: What a BOE Member Should Know

Some of you will be on a BOE team this fall or next spring to an institution that has agreed to pilot test a more streamlined system. All institutions will follow this new process beginning in fall 2008 as the second cycle of visits under NCATE's performance-based standards is initiated.

The streamlined system will include

- a more formative program review process
- a shorter institutional report (IR) that will be web-based with prompts
- limited and clearly specified exhibits
- the use of assessments and data already included in national or state program reviews to reduce duplication of effort
- revised template for the on-site visit
- a briefer and more succinct Board of Examiners (BOE) report.

The new institutional report (IR) includes prompts to which institutions respond for each standard element. The

IR form follows the same pattern as the current BOE report template used by teams as they write their reports, but with a fewer number of prompts. Required tables are included for selected elements. By fall 2008, institutions will be able to write IRs in a web-based form similar to the online form now used for program reports.

Institutions will no longer be required to discuss in Standard 1 the assessments and data for programs that have been nationally reviewed by NCATE. They will report the data only for programs not nationally reviewed such as master's programs for licensed teachers and programs for which there are no professional standards. Institutions in states that conduct their own program reviews will not have to report data on programs that have been favorably reviewed by the state, if the state conducts the reviews using aligned assessments and assessment data. NCATE will be working with states to determine whether their program review processes depends on data similar to the national process for program review.

NCATE has developed a list of suggested exhibits that has been vetted by BOE members and institutions. This list is designed to provide institutions and BOE members with guidance about the documents teams need to make informed recommendations. Because the list includes suggested exhibits, institutions still have the flexibility, but not the requirement, to provide other evidence to demonstrate that they are meeting the standards. Institutions and BOE teams will provide additional feedback on the appropriateness of the documents on this list before, during, and after the visit. This feedback will lead to the development of a list that will guide all visits for the next several years.

BOE members will be strongly encouraged to review electronic exhibits prior to arriving on campus, shifting the focus of the visit to a more collaborative review of the unit. The length of visits and size of team will remain the same for the pilot visits in spring 2008. However, institutions and BOE members are working with NCATE staff to revise the visit template to provide more time for team evaluation and discussion of the units' strengths and challenges as they relate to the NCATE unit standards. Institutional representatives

from the pilot institutions are meeting periodically via NCATE's web seminars to plan the visits.

The streamlined accreditation process includes a tighter leaner BOE report. The new BOE report is designed to be no longer than 20 pages in length. The report outline mirrors the current BOE report in that it will include an introduction, summary of the conceptual framework, and a discussion of the elements for each of the six standards. Areas for improvement (AFIs) will continue to be cited when they exist, as well as rationales for why AFIs are cited. The similarity with the current report stops there. For each standard, teams will indicate whether the exhibits and interviews validate the descriptions of how standards are met in the IR. Teams will indicate the level (i.e., unacceptable, acceptable, or target) at which they think the elements of each standard are met and write a 1-3 paragraph summary of why they made that decision. BOE teams will also write a one paragraph summary of the unit's strengths in addressing each standard. The shorter BOE reports are expected to lead to (1) more time for the teams to learn about and understand an institution; (2) a clearer description of the levels at which an institution meets the standards; (3) more succinct summaries of why the team arrived at its recommendations and; (4) less work for team chairs as they finalize the reports.

In addition, the Specialty Areas Studies Board (SASB) will consider ways of streamlining the national program review process at its October board meeting. Under consideration will be a common template for reporting grades as one of the content knowledge assessments. Another major proposal calls for the system to become more formative by allowing programs to submit revised reports through the semester of their visits. If a program is initially submitted for review one year before the on-site visit to the institution, two revised reports could be submitted before the UAB meeting, allowing a program several opportunities to present assessments and data for full recognition or conditional recognition.

Thirty-five institutions with visits in spring 2008 have volunteered to pilot the new process. Many of these institutions will also be reviewed with the recently revised Unit Standards, which will become effective for all institutions with visits in fall 2008. Sixteen BOE teams will test the briefer Board of Examiners report in their fall 2007 visits.

If you have been assigned to one of the teams piloting the BOE report this fall or the new system in the spring, you will be notified by NCATE or your team chair. For fall visits, the team chair will provide an orientation to the new BOE report in your first team meeting during the on-site visit. A description of the new report is available under "web seminars" in the BOE resources section of NCATE's website. Those of you on teams to pilot institutions in the spring will be able to participate in web seminars and on-line modules about the streamlined process later this year and early next year.

We want to know what you think. Click on <http://www.ncate.org/public/streamlining07.asp> for a look at NCATE's Streamlining Initiative. Send your reactions and recommendations to Donna M. Gollnick at donna@ncate.org and be a part of the Streamlining Initiative Team! Those of you who really want to redesign the documents will have that opportunity. You will receive information on accessing them and can use the Wiki technology to rewrite them for us.

UAB UPDATE

UAB Extends BOE Terms of Service

At its April 2007 meeting, the Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) increased the number of terms that regular BOE members can serve on the Board of Examiners from two three-year terms to three. All BOE members are expected to stay current with NCATE policies and practices by reviewing the online BOE training modules and the *BOE Updates* before each visit. BOE team chairs who have received high evaluations from institutions and BOE members may be reappointed to terms beyond three. All team chairs are expected to participate annually in NCATE's web seminars for team chairs.

BOE VISITS

2006 Rejoinder Analysis

The institutional rejoinder to the BOE Report is an important component in assisting the UAB with determining an accreditation decision. It allows institutions to respond to areas for improvement and any other

negative statement in the BOE Report. Another part of the rejoinder allows institutions to provide feedback to NCATE about any procedural issues that may have occurred during the accreditation process. NCATE values the input whether it is “glowing” or “growing” comments; the feedback helps staff and the UAB determine what works well or may need to be modified to improve the system.

Great News!

The 2006 Review Cycle Rejoinder Analysis provided some excellent feedback. One hundred fourteen institutions were reviewed in the spring and fall. Out of the 114, 39 percent provided glowing comments, 16 percent provided growing comments and 45 percent provided no comments about procedural issues.

Some of the glowing comments were:

- “Team members were well-organized and flexible.”
- “Professionally conducted interviews, very efficient, team chair provided thorough leadership.”
- “Team was dedicated and hardworking. Team provided a well written detailed comprehensive report.”
- “Team maintained a professional stance, committed, thorough, exemplary degree of expertise.”

Some of the growing comments were:

- “BOE team members did not review all documents presented.”
- “BOE members did not ask clear and precise questions for Standards 2 & 6.”
- “Students and faculty reported that some BOE members were criticizing the University’s philosophy and conceptual framework.”

Although NCATE appreciates the glowing comments, the growing comments are critical to improving the system. To ensure your team receives “glowing comments” in the rejoinders, please remember to use the BOE Resources such as:

- Planning Instrument
- BOE Report Template
- Guidance for conducting interviews and writing the BOE report in the *Handbook for Accreditation Visits*.

Team members are encouraged to review the online training modules for the standards they have been assigned before they start a visit. All of these resources are located on NCATE’s website. NCATE appreciates all your hard-work and dedication.

Completion of the Planning Instrument

Completion of the Planning Instrument is an important part of a BOE member’s preparation for a visit. The Planning Instrument is designed to ensure that BOE members read Institutional Reports thoroughly and think critically about units’ ability to meet the standards. Of course, reading the IR and completing the Planning Instrument will not tell BOE members the entire story, but these activities familiarize BOE members with the unit and its programs. Completing the Planning Instrument prepares BOE members to ask and answer important questions. Once completed, the Planning Instrument can be used throughout the visit to help organize work and ensure that teams address all elements of the Standards.

All BOE members are asked to complete the Planning Instrument prior to the visit. BOE Team Chairs are asked to review the Planning Instrument with the teams early in the visit to calibrate the team’s understanding of the unit and the work to be done.

Limiting the Number of Exhibits

In order to limit the number of exhibits institutions prepare for on-site visits, NCATE has developed a list of suggested exhibits. It can be found at: http://www.ncate.org/institutions/hbk_page.asp?ch=42&hbkch=1&hpkpg=77#conceptualframework

This list has been vetted with institutions and BOE members and endorsed by the UAB. NCATE’s expectation is that if these documents are of sufficient quality, BOE members will not need to request additional documents while on the visit. NCATE hopes that this list will be a guide to institutions as they prepare for visits. This list will only be of value if institutions prepare quality documents and if BOE members do not make a habit of requesting additional documentation. NCATE staff is interested in how well the list works. Please feel free

to send an email to Antoinette Mitchell at Antoinette@ncate.org with your comments.

Reviewing Exhibits Online

There are still stories circulating among institutions about team members printing all electronic exhibits. Be conscientious about using the host institution's resources and do as much work as possible online. Print out only those documents, or pages, that you really need in hard copy. NCATE is encouraging units to use electronic exhibits as much as possible, so it can be frustrating for institutions when team members do not work online.

Here are some tips for reviewing online documents put together by UAB member Blake West:

- If reading the documents is a problem, consider enlarging the size of the font.
- If you need to see more than one document at a time, consider using the functions under "Window" to put the documents side-by-side on the screen.
- If you want to mark a certain place because critical information is there, consider using the "book-mark" feature or the highlight feature in Microsoft Word.
- If you want to finish with a document once you have reviewed it, take notes and paraphrase important information. Don't forget to identify the document.
- If you are looking for particular information, consider using the "find" function in Microsoft Word.

Previsit Logistics and Post-visit Recommendations

Previsit contact between the team chair and team members is the time to establish a collegial atmosphere for the entire visit. Chairs will contact team members soon after they receive their names. If the chair requests additional information from team members to plan the visit, responses should be given in a timely manner. Team members should direct questions to the chair, who should also respond quickly.

When you are ready to depart the institution on Wednesday, make sure both you and the chair have copies of your section of the report. The chair will compile

all the sections and send the full report to team members within a few weeks of the visit. The chair may ask the team for advice on fine-tuning the report or clarifying areas for improvement and rationales. Please review the entire report, not just your section, and reply to the chair within a week. You will receive the final version of the report after it has been reviewed by the unit for factual corrections.

BOE REPORTS

Standards 5 and 6: Citing AFIs for Heavy Faculty Loads

Standard 5, in part, looks at faculty productivity and service. Faculty are expected to engage scholarship as appropriate for the institution type. They provide service to, and collaborate with the institution, P-12 schools, and the community. The personnel element of Standard 6 looks at faculty workloads. At the Acceptable level, this element states that "Workload policies, including on-line course delivery, allow faculty members to be effectively engaged in teaching, scholarship, assessment, advisement, collaborative work in P-12 schools, and service."

Policies that may seem heavy and faculty complaints about being overloaded, might lead a team to consider an area for improvement (AFI) for heavy faculty loads which impede scholarship and other activities. Appropriate AFIs for Standard 6 would be: "Faculty workloads impact unit faculty's ability to maintain a scholarly record" or "Faculty with field supervision assignments have workloads that impact research and scholarship." If the team decides to cite an AFI in Standard 6 indicating that heavy faculty loads negatively impact faculty ability to engage in other professional activities, there should be evidence presented in Standard 5 to support this. Evidence could be vitae showing that only few faculty members are engaged in scholarship or that service and collaboration rarely extends beyond the institution. In other words, triangulate the data. If the team finds that faculty are engaged in the depth and breadth of professional activities that are expected at the institution in Standard 5, heavy workloads impeding scholarship, service, etc should not be cited as an AFI in Standard 6.

Making a Unit-Wide Recommendation When Only Some Programs Meet a Standard

Sometimes teams wonder what to do when programs at the same level vary in the extent to which a standard is met. For example, imagine that the advanced programs for other school personnel at XYZ School of Education meet the requirements of Standard 2 but the advanced programs for teachers lack an assessment system. Is Standard 2 met or not met at the advanced level?

NCATE staff offer the following guidance: the team should consider the number of programs and the number of candidates in the programs to determine whether to recommend met or not met. For example, if one or two programs out of seven seem not to be of sufficient quality, then the recommendation would be met (with an area for improvement), unless those programs enroll a significantly large proportion of the candidates at that level. In instances in which the programs that have serious problems are programs with the greatest enrollment, then usually the recommendation should be “not met.” NCATE relies on the professional judgment of teams to make these calls.

If the situation is not clear-cut—for instance, if the team finds other concerns related to the standard and is not certain how serious they are, or if enrollment data do not allow a clear determination of how many candidates are enrolled in various programs—teams are reminded of NCATE’s general guidance regarding questionable situations. When in doubt, it is preferable to recommend “not met” and give the unit a chance to write a rejoinder that might encourage the UAB to overturn the recommendation. A “met” recommendation might lead the unit to write a less strong rejoinder, which could lead the UAB to a final determination of “not met.” Teams recommending that the standard is not met in this situation should feel free to advise units of the importance of the rejoinder in the UAB’s decision-making.

Making the Right Impression

Just as BOE members set aside “at home standards” during the visit they may also have to set aside some “at home writing styles.” The NCATE Style Guide

for BOE Reports (http://www.ncate.org/documents/boeMaterials/boe_style_guide.pdf) is intended to help members use a consistent approach to such things as capitalization, punctuation, and NCATE-specific conventions throughout the report. A consistent style reinforces the “one voice” behind the report. It also saves time by allowing the team to focus on the content of the report rather than whether there should be a comma between September and 2007 (there shouldn’t be). During the editing process the chair can do a quick search for the word “student” and, after checking the context, replace it with “candidate.”

BOE reports have several audiences: the unit, team members, NCATE staff, and the UAB. They are given to university administrators, the state education authority and some are even posted on the institution’s website. Keep in mind that these readers will have different levels of familiarity with the institution, teacher education, and NCATE. Step back every so often to see how the report would sound to someone new to the process. A well-written, professional report will give the right impression of teacher education, the BOE team and NCATE.

STAFF UPDATE

New NCATE Staff:

Monica Minor, Accreditation Associate. Previous to joining NCATE Monica worked as an associate director for the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. Monica has an extensive background in education working as a unit coordinator in the Department of Human Growth and Development at Sojourner-Douglass College; assistant director of the Judith P. Hoyer Early Childhood Care and Education Center at the Baltimore City Public School System, and as an educational program specialist with the Maryland Department of Education/ Division of Special Education. Monica was also an elementary education teacher for two years in the Baltimore Public School System. She holds an Ed.D. in Urban Education Leadership from Morgan State University, an MA in Human Resource Development from Bowie State University, and a B.A. in Psychology from Norfolk State University.

Monica will be planning and conducting training, reviewing BOE reports, and working with the Annual Report and Preconditions Audit Committee. Her email address is monica@ncate.org.

Robin Marion, Accreditation Associate, Program Review. Robin graduated from Teacher's College, Columbia University where she received her MA in Social Studies Education. She received her BA in history and political science (double major) from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Robin's work experience includes being a lead teacher at High Road Academy in DC where she taught 9th grade. She also taught social studies at Baltimore Freedom Academy and Southwestern High School in Baltimore, MD. Her responsibilities include development and management of a system for maintaining, updating and checking the accuracy of program data, managing program report submissions, program reviewers and the status of reviews. Her email address is robin@ncate.org.

Samantha Ellis, Accreditation Assistant, Program Review. Samantha received her BA in Psychology (concentration in African American Studies) from Guilford College in Greensboro, NC. Samantha's work experience includes being a camp counselor at Julia Starks Baptist Camp in SC, a physician's assistant for Wilkin's Chiropractic Center, and a tutor for Certified Learning Centers in MD. She also worked as an office assistant and as a teacher's assistant at Guilford College in the Department of Education. Samantha has had a great deal of volunteer experience including: Gospel Heritage Foundation in Washington DC; Blacks Unifying Society, Center for Continuing Education and Gospel Choir; and the McLeansville Correctional Center, NC. Currently she handles tasks concerning the Program Review System (PRS) database, tech support for web conferences, and overseeing the program review processes for SPAs. Her email address is samantha@ncate.org.

Staff Who Are Moving On:

- **Deidre Alves'** last day was September 14. Deidre was a Program Associate for program review.
- **Barbara Olexer**, Boyce Williams' assistant for 14 years, retired on August 31.