



BOARD OF EXAMINERS UPDATE

Fall 2005

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

How Much Data Should You Expect: NCATE after the Transition Plan?

The fall 2005 semester marks the end of the transition plan. All institutions reviewed in fall 2005 and beyond are expected to meet Standards 1 and 2 without the benefit of a transition plan. For Standard 2 this means that institutions have fully implemented assessment systems that meet each of the three elements of the standard at the acceptable level, at a minimum. All assessment instruments and scoring guides should be developed and in use; data from the assessments and other measures of program quality should be collected, summarized, and analyzed as part of an on-going process; and evidence should indicate that the data are being used to make course, program, and/or unit improvements.

For Standard 1, the end of the transition plan means that institutions are expected to have data demonstrating that candidates have attained all of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions listed in the Standard. From fall 2005 through spring 2007, for unit review, institutions are expected to have at a minimum, two semesters of data for the key assessments listed in their assessment systems. Originally, NCATE planned to expect three years of data at this point, but because of major changes in the program review process, NCATE adjusted these plans. Currently, institutions must have at least one semester of data for program review and two semesters of data for unit review.

As a necessary but not sufficient condition of meeting Standard 1, institutions must present data indicating that 80 percent of their program completers pass the state licensing exam in the content area, if the state has such an exam. As has always been the case, institutions can present data from the past year or data aggregated over the past three years.

Guidelines for Determining the Status of Standard 4 (Diversity)

The purpose of Standard 4 is to ensure that programs for educators are preparing candidates to effectively work with or support P-12 students

from different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, language, religious, gender, sexual orientation, and exceptionality groups. The standard is based on the premise that all students can learn although the way they learn may differ because of their prior experiences and cultural background. The first element of the standard focuses on the courses and experiences required of candidates to ensure they develop proficiencies to help students from these different groups learn.

To assist teams in understanding how the unit prepares candidates to work with diverse students, the unit should be able to identify the proficiencies related to diversity that they expect candidates across the unit or in specific programs to develop. Team members should expect to see assessments that help the unit/program know if the candidates are actually acquiring those proficiencies. Finally, data on candidate performance on those assessments should be available to the team. The evidence (i.e., proficiencies, assessments, and candidate performance results) should indicate that the element on design, implementation, and evaluation is being met at the acceptable level of the rubric. If some parts of the rubric level are not being adequately addressed, they should be cited as areas for improvement. *This element must be met at the acceptable level for the standard to be met.*

The last three elements of the rubric focus on candidates having experiences with adults (i.e., higher education and school faculty), peers, and P-12 students from diverse populations as they prepare for their future work in schools. A description of the diversity of each of these three groups—faculty, candidates, and P-12 students—provides the context for understanding the opportunities for working with persons from diverse groups. These descriptions should be presented as numbers and percentages in the BOE report. Most institutions also report the numbers and percentages in their IRs. The data are also available in the AACTE/NCATE annual reports that team members are sent before the visit. At the same time, the BOE team should describe the nature of the experiences candidates are having with faculty, other candidates, and P-12 students.

The numbers alone are not enough to determine the interactions in which candidates are engaged.

The Unit Accreditation Board has said that the first element of the diversity standard is critical to meeting Standard 4. Institutions with limited faculty, candidate, and student diversity should have developed other mechanisms for ensuring that their candidates have these experiences and should be able to provide candidate performance data to make the case that they are prepared to work with students from diverse populations. If the unit is not providing candidates with experiences in any of the last three areas, meeting the standard would be difficult.

UAB UPDATE

UAB Evaluation of BOE Reports

BOE members are to be congratulated for improved ratings on 14 of the 16 items evaluated by the UAB. Scores for five items increased from below 3.0 to above 3.0, four of which address the use of evidence in the reports. Although two elements received lower scores, they continue to be over 3.0. The UAB recognizes the hard work of BOE members and the challenges faced in crafting reports in the required time frame. The chart on the following page compares evaluations of the spring 2004 and fall 2004 reports.

Although their ratings improved for fall 2004, two items continue to receive scores below 3.0: “the areas for improvement that were cited were clearly stated,” and “the report explained why areas for improvement were not cited when the evidence discussed could presumably lead a team to cite areas for improvement.” Teams are reminded to make sure that the narrative and the areas for improvement lead the reader to a consistent conclusion. Check first that each area for improvement is supported by text in the narrative; then check that each unresolved concern in the narrative is cited as an area for improvement.

On behalf of the UAB, many thanks for your work on these reports!

UAB 2004 Evaluations of BOE Reports

Scale = 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)

** Spring 2004 reports were evaluated October 2004, Fall 2004 reports were evaluated March 2005*

Items	Spring 2004*	Fall 2004*
1. The report was adequately edited.	3.03	3.13
2. The introduction and conceptual framework sections were sufficiently informative.	3.19	3.39
3. The report incorporated evidence that adequately addressed each element of the standards, including elements related to advanced programs.	2.94	3.21
4. The report included a clear presentation and synthesis of evidence.	2.95	3.13
5. The report presented the evidence in enough detail to “make the case” for its findings in the narrative.	2.90	3.09
6. The report included recommendations that were derived logically from the narrative and areas for improvement.	3.00	3.07
7. The report drew on multiple sources of evidence.	3.27	3.32
8. The report stated when sufficient evidence was not available for review.	2.81	3.14
9. The areas for improvement that were cited were clearly stated.	2.83	2.88
10. The report was internally consistent—i.e., it did not include contradictory information.	2.97	3.01
11. The report placed comments, concerns, and areas for improvement related to the conceptual framework under the appropriate standards.	3.20	3.12
12. The report made distinctions between initial and advanced programs.	3.27	3.37
13. The report addressed the areas for improvement that were cited.	3.16	3.10
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.	2.62	2.74
15. The report adequately addressed previously cited weaknesses/areas for improvement.	3.04	3.24
16. The report did not include prescriptive statements and/or opinions not related to the standards.	3.32	3.37

BOE VISITS

NCATE's Scope

NCATE's scope includes all programs offered by institutions that prepare professionals for work in P-12 schools. Increasingly, units are offering distance learning programs and alternative certification programs along with the more traditional educator preparation programs. Distance learning and alternative certification programs are within NCATE's scope and therefore should be reviewed by Board of Examiners teams. These programs are expected to meet the NCATE standards in the same manner as other programs.

NCATE defines distance learning programs as programs that offer more than half of their courses through arrangements where the learner and the instructor are not in the same place at the same time. The UAB has developed a set of questions to aid BOE members in the review of distance learning programs. BOE members should download these questions from the NCATE website <http://www.ncate.org/documents/boeMaterials/distlearning.pdf> and use them when evaluating units that offer distance learning programs.

NCATE defines alternative certification programs as programs that are administered by the unit and that lead to the unit's recommendation for state license. In some cases, alternative certification programs are mandated by the state and the unit does not make a recommendation for licensure. Only in these cases should alternative certification programs not be included in the NCATE review. Team chairs should check with Donna Gollnick or Antoinette Mitchell if there are questions about the review of these programs.

Endorsements

Some institutions offer endorsements or add-ons that enable teachers to work in certain fields in addition to their main areas of preparation. Most endorsements require specific courses determined by the state, do not constitute a full program, and should not be included in the NCATE review. However, when an endorsement is the only route to re-

ceiving a license in a specific field, then the endorsement should be included in the review. Licensing in some fields is offered only as endorsements at many institutions and NCATE has program standards for endorsements in ESL and computer education. Those programs must be included in the review. States differ in what they consider endorsements and how they should be addressed in the NCATE review. If you are not sure whether to include an endorsement in the on-site review, contact Donna Gollnick or Antoinette Mitchell in the NCATE office.

Reviewing Online Exhibits

NCATE has received complaints from a few institutions about BOE members who were unable and/or unwilling to review documents online. These members were uncomfortable reading online and either printed or asked the unit to print most of the documents in the electronic exhibit room. This is unacceptable behavior. NCATE encourages institutions to use electronic exhibits and has prepared guidance to help institutions create user-friendly NCATE sites. BOE members must be willing and able to review documents online. To print a few key online exhibits is understandable, but to print most or all of the online exhibits is counter-productive. Because the number of institutions placing some or all of their exhibits online is increasing, the ability and willingness to navigate websites and review documents electronically are becoming essential traits for BOE members.

To support BOE members in this area, 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 "bookmark" 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*.

The Convergence of Unit Review and Program Review

Program standards written by the specialized professional organizations are a significant part of the NCATE accreditation system. Twenty-three sets of program standards exist. These include standards for the preparation of math, science, English, and social studies educators, as well as standards for school administrators, counselors, psychologists, and other school specialists. Institutions with programs covered by the program standards must demonstrate, through the program review process, that their candidates have the content area knowledge and other types of professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills delineated in the program standards. The program review process, which is based on assessment data, is conducted by either NCATE or the state, depending upon the state partnership agreement. When NCATE conducts the review, the process is electronic and occurs before the on-site review. States conduct the reviews differently; in many instances, states conduct program reviews during the BOE visit.

The NCATE program review process underwent dramatic revision during the 2004–2005 academic year. Institutions are now asked to submit 6–8 major comprehensive assessments which are aligned with the program standards in the given program areas. Two of the assessments must address content knowledge; two of the assessments must address professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills; and one of the assessments must address student learning. The other one to three assessments are determined at the discretion of the institution or the specialized professional association. (This information is provided on the templates for institutional submissions.) Institutions are also asked to submit the data from the 6–8 assessments indicating that candidates

have mastered the proficiencies in the standards.

Experts in the specialty areas fields use this information to review the quality of programs. Reviewers evaluate quality of the assessments, particularly the alignment between the submitted assessments and the program standards. They then review the data to determine if candidates have mastered the proficiencies and write reports communicating their findings. The findings are reported in categories: content knowledge, professional knowledge and skills, and student learning. These categories are aligned with elements in NCATE Unit Standard 1.

This new alignment makes the linkages between the program review process and the unit review process more explicit. Most institutions will use the same 6–8 key assessments used in the program review process as the key assessments identified in their unit assessment system. Most institutions will present the reports from the program review process and/or data from the 6–8 key assessments as evidence for meeting the above-mentioned elements of Standard 1.

The program review process generates program level data. These data can be summarized across programs to create unit level data for Standard 1. In some instances, units will have uniform assessment types across programs and sometimes similar scoring guides. This approach makes summarizing data very straight forward. In some instances, however, units will not have uniform assessment types across programs. For example, some programs may use case studies to evaluate student learning, some may use teacher work sample methodology to evaluate student learning, and some may use another method. In this instance, the assessments are different and there are no similar scoring guides. In order to report unit level data in this instance, the unit must summarize the student learning data for each program. This second approach is like an executive summary. Both approaches are acceptable. Most likely, units will provide a mixture of the two.

The program review reports include a section written to BOE members that identifies areas that may require further investigation. Most significantly, the reports indicate whether the programs should be granted national recognition. BOE mem-

bers, particularly members writing to Standard 1, are asked to read each of the program reports. If programs in an institution have been granted national recognition, then this is a strong indicator that candidates have attained the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions for several of the elements of Standard 1. For the spring 2005 semester, if an institution has programs that have been recognized with conditions, then the BOE should investigate the conditions, and review other evidence that the unit may have presented. Areas for improvement may be in order if the program report and other evidence do not suggest that the elements of Standard 1 are being adequately addressed. Similarly, if the institution has programs that have been denied recognition or have not received a decision, then the BOE should review other data that the institution may provide. Because of a number of problems in meeting timelines for the NCATE review of programs in the spring and summer, the BOE should not cite an area for improvement simply because a program was not nationally recognized at the time of fall visits. Areas for improvement may be in order if the program report and other evidence do not suggest that the elements of Standard 1 are being adequately addressed. The BOE must weigh the size of the unit, the size of the programs, and other data presented to address Standard 1 and make a holistic judgment about whether the Standard is met.

New BOE Members

NCATE sponsored a training session for new BOE members in Reno, Nevada in July 2005. Reno presented many highlights, including the pink octopus that watched over the general sessions (you had to be there.). Fifty participants successfully completed the training and many of them have been assigned to teams this fall. If you are an experienced BOE member and are fortunate enough to meet one of the new members on a team, please share your expertise and welcome them into the NCATE family. The University of Nevada, Reno hosted the on-site simulation and did a fantastic job. Thank you, Vern Loft and everyone at UNR. BOE Chairs Charles Love, Tina Marshall-Bradley, Frank Meyers, and Melba Spooner also did a fantastic job as cadre leaders. Thank you.

Change in the Interview Schedule

BOE team chairs are reminded not to schedule interviews beyond 12 pm on the Tuesday of visits. The UAB altered the visit template so that teams will have more time to write their reports. By ending formal interviewing by noon, teams can meet, gather any last-minute information, and begin writing the BOE Report by 3 or 4 pm.

BOE REPORTS

Template, Length of Reports, and Timeline for Finalizing the Report

A revised BOE Report Template is now available on the BOE section of NCATE's website. All but one of the tables have been stripped from the template and questions have been revised to remove the redundancy across standards. The UAB is also asking BOE teams to number the areas for improvement, beginning with the Standards (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, and 5.1)

Another major change in BOE reports is the length. The UAB has asked that they be no longer than 50 pages for institutions with programs at both the initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation levels; and no longer than 40 pages for institutions with only initial teacher preparation. The revised template can be accessed at http://www.ncate.org/documents/boeMaterials/report_template_initial.doc.

The tables in the template used in 2004-2005 have been emailed to institutions for inclusion in their institutional reports so that BOE team members will have access to those data. The institutions have been encouraged, but not required, to use these tables. Many of the institutions with visits this fall were finishing their IRs when the tables were sent to them.

NCATE's timeline for the completion of the final BOE report indicates 30 days after the on-site visit. However, team chairs are finding it very difficult to meet this timeline, which includes sending the draft report to national and state team members, state consultants, and NCATE staff for editing; review by the institution for factual errors; and

a final review of changes by states and team members before submitting the final report to NCATE. With the goal of setting a more realistic schedule, the UAB revised the timeline as follows:

35 calendar days after the visit

The team chair submits the BOE report to the institution to correct factual errors.

Within 7 days of receiving the BOE report

The institution submits any factual errors to the team chair.

Within 10 days of receiving factual errors

The team chair finalizes the BOE report and sends it via email to NCATE.

All team members should take an electronic copy of the draft BOE report with them when they leave the visit (or email it to themselves) to guarantee that at least one copy of the report is available to NCATE in an emergency.

BOE EVALUATIONS

An Update

You may have figured out that NCATE's electronic system for completing and submitting evaluations of team performance and accreditation procedures does not always work. A new web-based system is currently under development to support a paperless system, but it will not be fully implemented until fall of 2006. In the meantime, if you can not access and submit the forms via our website, please download the evaluation forms from the BOE section of the website www.ncate.org, complete them in *Microsoft Word*, and return them to us via email, fax, or regular mail. Your evaluations are very important to us in improving the accreditation process

STAFF UPDATE

Since the last BOE Update, there have been several staff changes at NCATE. We are pleased to welcome **Sarah Pickens**, Assistant to the Senior Vice President. Sarah recently moved to Washington, DC, and had previously been working part time at AACTE while attending the George Washington University's master's program in International Education. Sarah's responsibilities include the tracking of all documents related to visits in preparation for the Unit Accreditation Board and assisting in the BOE nomination and assignment process. Sarah is filling the position vacated by Lindsye Mitchell. We are also pleased to welcome **Patty Garvin**, Accreditation Associate. Patty has worked with the Partnerships for Excellence in Teacher Education Project (PETE) and the Standards-based Teacher Education Project (STEP) at AACTE. Her responsibilities include coordinating the review of draft BOE Reports, working with the UAB, and managing the preconditions and appeals processes. Team chairs should now send draft reports to patty@ncate.org. **Mary Anne Kirkland** will continue to read draft reports and provide feedback, as will **Sarah Pickens**, **Pamela Ehrenberg**, **Pam Magasich**, and **Linda Bradley**.

NCATE wishes **Wendy Wiggins**, former Director of Program Reviews, all the best as she moves back to Massachusetts. We are not letting her go entirely though. In addition to other NCATE projects, Wendy will join the group of BOE report readers.

The NCATE Program Review Team welcomes two new Accreditation Associates, **Jaye Bishop** and **Deidre Alves**. Previous to joining NCATE Jaye was Senior Manager of Institutional Review at the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS). Deidre is a former Spanish Teacher, Secondary Education for Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools.