



## BOARD OF EXAMINERS UPDATE

*Spring 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.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*\*\*\*Click on the text to jump to a particular section*

## **STANDARDS UPDATE**

NCATE Transition Plan: Drawing to a Close .....	3
Accuracy, Fairness, Consistency, and Freedom from Bias.....	3
Standard 5 and the Conceptual Framework.....	4
Faculty Diversity .....	4
Contemporary Professional Experiences.....	4

## **UAB UPDATE**

Policy on Consortia.....	5
Policy on Outside Accreditors .....	5
UAB Evaluations of BOE Reports .....	5
UAB Evaluation Chart.....	6

## **BOE REPORTS**

Citing Areas for Improvement Related to Individual Programs' Test Scores .....	7
Citing Areas for Improvement When Programs are Not Nationally Recognized or State Approved.....	7
How Much Evidence Is Enough?.....	7
Sources of Evidence .....	8

## **BOE VISITS**

Postponement of the NCATE Review .....	8
Acceptance of BOE Assignments (Electronic Forms).....	8
Communicate, Communicate, Communicate .....	8
Adding Areas for Improvement After the Visit .....	9
Thank You .....	9

<b>STAFF UPDATE .....</b>	<b>10</b>
---------------------------	-----------

# STANDARDS UPDATE

## **NCATE Transition Plan: Drawing to a Close**

NCATE designed its transition plan to give institutions the opportunity to build performance-based assessment systems that would meet the elements in Standard 2. This academic year is the final year in which the transition plan applies. After this year, the expectation is that the standards will be met fully by all institutions.

As you know, the transition 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 2004 and spring 2005. 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 performance data from the following sources:**

1. state licensing exams (where applicable)
2. program review reports or state reviews of programs
3. graduate/employer surveys
4. assessments of clinical practice
5. other key assessments as identified in unit assessment systems

### **B. Units are expected to have an assessment system in place and operating. The assessment system should address:**

1. transition points
2. major assessments
3. the design for data collection, analysis, summary and use
4. measures that address unit operations
5. description of the use of information technology to maintain the system

### **C. Units are expected to have developed and implemented internal performance assessments**

1. the assessment instruments should be based on professional/state/institutional standards
2. assessment instruments and criteria/rubrics should be developed
3. assessment instruments and criteria/rubrics should be in use
4. data collection should be in process; some analysis should have begun
5. testing for accuracy, consistency and fairness should be occurring

Inevitably the question "How much evidence is enough?" will arise. For fall 2004 and spring 2005 visits, institutions should at a minimum have one year's worth of data for key assessments. Even if the instruments are revised, as we expect they will be, institutions should still have collected and summarized data. In instances in which the institutions do not have candidates who have progressed through the programs (e.g., no candidates have reached the key assessment at the fourth decision point in a redesigned program), then units can present acceptable data from older assessments to demonstrate that particular elements of Standard 1 are being met at the acceptable level.

Given the ongoing work on aligning licensing exams with standards, for visits in fall 2004 and spring 2005 BOE members should review licensing exam information for the previous year or trend data from the previous three years.

### **Accuracy, Fairness, Consistency, and Freedom from Bias**

Within the next few weeks, a paper clarifying these terms will be posted on NCATE's website. If questions about these terms arise before the paper is posted, please contact NCATE staff.

## **Standard 5 and the Conceptual Framework**

Some BOE members have asked about the relationship between the conceptual framework and the elements in Standard 5 on faculty evaluations, scholarship, and professional development. According to the rubric for the element on faculty evaluations, evaluations are not required to be aligned with the conceptual framework. The evaluations should focus on faculty teaching performance and should be used to monitor and improve faculty teaching, scholarship, and service. Please note that adjunct faculty members should also be evaluated in some form. According to the rubric for the element on scholarship, scholarship is also not required to be aligned with the conceptual framework. Scholarship should focus on faculty members' fields of specialization. According to the rubric on unit facilitation of professional development, units should provide opportunities for faculty to engage in professional development activities that are related to performance assessment, diversity, technology, and emerging practice, as well as other concepts and ideas that may be in a unit's conceptual framework.

### **Faculty Diversity**

The element of Standard 4 on faculty diversity encourages units to report the diversity of the institution, the unit itself, and the field-based faculty (particularly P-12 supervisors of student teaching and internships) separately. However, the intent of this section of the standard is that candidates are working with adults from diverse ethnic, racial, language, and gender groups. Thus, a team not only should look at the data on how diverse faculty are, but how often and in what ways candidates interact with those diverse faculty. Little diversity may exist in one segment of the faculty (e.g., unit faculty), but is much richer in another segment (e.g., student teaching supervisors). The BOE team's discussion of findings should clearly present the data and nature of the interactions as it determines whether the element is adequately addressed and an area for improvement needs to be cited.

## **Contemporary Professional Experiences**

The first element in Standard 5 requires that clinical faculty members from higher education have "contemporary professional experiences" in school settings at the levels that they supervise. The term "contemporary professional experiences" means that the professional education faculty members who supervise student teachers and/or interns must have had an active role in a school setting within the last five years. The intent of the requirement is to ensure that the university or college supervisors have first-hand knowledge of the culture and climate of schools so that they are aware of the situations, both positive and negative, that candidates they supervise face as the candidates complete clinical practice. Examples of contemporary professional experiences include structured observation, working in schools as a teacher or other school personnel, action research, research projects that are school-based, and participating in professional development school activities. Note that the standard indicates that the contemporary professional experiences should be at the level (elementary or secondary) that is being supervised and does not require that the university/college supervisors have experiences in the field of study that is being supervised.

# UAB UPDATE

## **Policy on Consortia**

At its fall meeting, the UAB clarified its policy regarding programs that are operated by consortia. The current policy is posted on NCATE's website.

Programs in which the institution is preparing teachers or other school personnel with one or more other institutions must be included in the accreditation review of each of the involved institutions. BOE teams should expect to see the performance data on candidates in those consortia programs. The performance data may be only for the candidates in the program who will be receiving their degree or licensure recommendation from the institution being visited. Information about the consortia, the program, candidates, transition points, and assessments can be compiled and updated for use in the accreditation visits of each of the institutions in the consortia.

## **Policy on Outside Accreditors**

At its fall meeting, the UAB clarified its policy regarding programs that are accredited by outside accreditors. The current policy is posted on NCATE's website.

Programs that are accredited by one of the accrediting bodies listed in NCATE's policy are expected to provide the official notice of accreditation from the other specialized accrediting organization and data demonstrating that candidates in these programs meet NCATE's Unit Standard 1. The UAB approved a process for determining which accrediting bodies are included in the policy.

## **UAB Evaluations of BOE Reports**

UAB evaluations of BOE reports remain positive overall. The UAB recognizes the hard work conducted by BOE members and the challenges faced in crafting BOE reports in the required time frame. The following table provides evaluation information for BOE reports reviewed by the UAB during its fall 2004 meeting (reports were written in spring 2004). Information on individual team reports will be sent in February.

*(See following page for the Evaluation Chart)*

The spring 2004 reports were the last group written using the previous BOE template, so it is anticipated that ratings will increase for the next group of reports, particularly regarding the "clear presentation and synthesis of evidence" and presentin "evidence in enough detail to 'make the case' for [the team's] findings." The UAB appears to be increasing its expectations that BOE teams will state clearly when sufficient evidence is not available for review and that areas for improvement will be clearly stated.

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

**UAB Evaluations of Spring 2004 BOE Reports [evaluated in fall 2004]  
Scale = 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)]**

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

# BOE REPORTS

## Citing Areas for Improvement Related to Individual Programs' Test Scores

Questions have arisen about what should occur when a unit's pass rate on content-based licensure exams is at least 80 percent overall but not for every program (i.e., one or more programs has a pass rate below 80 percent on its respective content exam). As with other test score requirements, the BOE team should review the most recent testing information or information from the past three years. (If the unit has fewer than 10 program completers in a given area in one year, then three years of data should be reviewed.) If the data reveal a pass rate lower than 80 percent in a particular program, Standard 1 can still be met, but an area for improvement should be cited for that program. For example, the statement might read, "Fewer than 80 percent of candidates in English and science pass their respective state licensure exams."

## Citing Areas for Improvement When Programs Are Not Nationally Recognized or State Approved

As noted in the fall 2004 *BOE Update*, BOE members are also asked to cite areas for improvement when (a) units have not yet received final decisions on their programs (i.e., the programs are being reviewed a second time or they are waiting for an initial response); (b) units have received an adverse decision (i.e., a program is not recognized); or (c) the unit has not received state approval for one or more of its programs. The status of the program review process should be indicated in the findings section for Standard 1. By the time the Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) considers the BOE report and the institution's rejoinder, programs should have completed the review process. The UAB will remove areas for improvement if the program became nationally recognized after the BOE team visited the campus. An appropriate area for improvement would read "The social studies and mathematics programs have not received national recognition."

## How Much Evidence Is Enough?

A BOE chair suggested that teams would like guidance on how much evidence is enough and how to determine when areas for improvement should change a standard from met to not met. Of course, the team's professional judgment is paramount; however, the following points may be helpful to consider:

- If the team is in doubt about whether to cite an area for improvement, it is much better to cite it in the BOE report (and enable the unit to address it in a rejoinder) than have the area for improvement added by the Unit Accreditation Board.
- Specificity is helpful in areas for improvement. When applicable, areas for improvement should be specific about which programs (e.g., elementary or educational leadership) or levels (initial or advanced) are being referenced. Specific area for improvement statements help guide the unit both toward writing a strong rejoinder and toward making appropriate changes before the next visit.
- If the unit provides no performance assessment data for an element of Standard 1 or for the first element of Standard 4, an area for improvement should be cited. (For example, "The unit does not collect data on dispositions for advanced candidates.") If the unit provides limited performance assessment data for one of these elements but the quantity or quality of that data and of other types of data presented is insufficient to guide the team in its judgment, an area for improvement should be cited. (For example, "The unit has limited evidence that candidates in secondary education programs effectively assess student learning.")
- If the unit provides limited performance assessment data and the team is convinced of candidates' abilities through interviews, survey results, and other non-performance measures, it may be appropriate to cite an area for improvement in Standard 2

rather than Standards 1 or 4. (For example, "Candidate performance data from the Faraway Campus site are not included in the unit's assessment system.") The evidence that convinces the team that Standards 1 and 4 are met should be stated explicitly in the report.

If the team is in doubt about whether a standard is met or not met, it is much better to recommend "not met" in the BOE report, and enable the unit to address the standard strongly in a rejoinder, than have the standard declared "not met" by the Unit Accreditation Board after the BOE team recommended that it was met. Areas for improvement carry different levels of seriousness; therefore, it is impossible to say that a certain number of areas for improvement would change a standard from "met" to "not met." If the team is having this conversation, however, it is likely that the point above ("if the team is in doubt") may apply. The report should either recommend that the standard is not met or should be clear to the UAB about why the team feels it should be met.

### **Sources of Evidence**

The Sources of Evidence is usually the least controversial section of the BOE report; most often, the unit and the team are in full agreement about what evidence was available and examined. However, in several recent appeals hearings, this agreement has not been in place, and BOE members, institutional representatives, and Appeals Board members have spent time puzzling over whether a particular document was reviewed. Therefore, before the final BOE report is submitted to NCATE, it is helpful to check one last time to make sure all documents reviewed (as well as interviews conducted) are included in the Sources of Evidence section of the report.

## **BOE VISITS**

### **Postponement of the NCATE Review**

The UAB revised the NCATE policy on granting delays of visits to institutions. Staff must confer with state education agencies before granting delays to institutions. The UAB also established a set of criteria to guide staff in making decisions about delays. The revised policy entitled Postponement of the On-site Review is on the NCATE website under Policies. When an institution delays its visit, it is expected to meet the standards and other requirements that apply to the semester in which the visit will occur.

### **Acceptance of BOE Assignments (Electronic Forms)**

When you return your electronic team acceptance form indicating your acceptance or non-acceptance of a particular BOE team assignment, please remember to enter "yes" or "no" in the space provided, even if you are also sending an email message regarding the visit to one of the staff members. Also use this time to update the dates on your availability form so that NCATE staff will not be contacting you for visit on a date on which you are no longer available.

### **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate**

Every semester, the following communication difficulties are reported to the NCATE office:

- "I didn't receive the draft report for feedback" (*from team members and especially state members*);
- "Some of the team members and state members did not get back to me with feedback on the draft report I sent them" (*from team chairs*);
- "I didn't receive the report for factual corrections" (*from institutions*); and
- "The institution didn't respond to my requests for factual corrections" (*from team chairs*).

Facilitating the various communication paths that occur related to the draft reports is the responsibility of team chairs, with the support and participation of team members. The following are sometimes helpful in ensuring smooth communication:

- Before the visit, team chairs can remind team members (including state partners) of the communication process that will occur after the visit, along with approximate dates. Team members can alert the team chair to anticipated travel or other conflicts with the expected communication process.
- At previsit and/or the exit conference, team chairs can alert the institution to the same process.
- When it is necessary to change the expected schedule for finalizing the report, team chairs should communicate this change to team members (including state partners), the institution, and NCATE. Similarly, team members, institutional representatives, and NCATE staff will communicate with the team chair about any anticipated delays in communication.
- It is sometimes helpful when team chairs ask specific things of team members rather than general requests such as "take a look at the draft." For instance, team chairs might ask, "Please look at the standard you wrote. Also, Lucy, please read the entire report for internal consistency; Ricky, please look to make sure we addressed the advanced program throughout; and Fred, please proofread for grammar, spelling, and attention to the NCATE Style Guide."
- It is also helpful when team chairs ask team members and institutions to respond by a specific date. Team members, if you are unable to respond by that date, please send a short note to the team chair indicating when you anticipate being able to respond.

We recognize that BOE work is just one commitment in over-packed and ever-changing schedules, and we appreciate all of your efforts in conducting the visits and preparing the reports. Hopefully, by taking just a few minutes to plan ahead for smooth communication, we can all save time that

would have been spent tracking each other down. If NCATE staff can help with your communication efforts, please don't hesitate to call on us.

## **Adding Areas for Improvement after the Visit**

NCATE now asks that BOE team chairs share the BOE report with all team members (including state BOE members and state consultants) after making suggested revisions and before submitting the final version to NCATE. This step should be included in the process for all reports but is especially important when the revisions suggested by NCATE staff and fellow team members lead to the addition or removal of an area for improvement. This additional review should not add more than four days to the report preparation process. The UAB will be reviewing a proposal to lengthen the timeline for completion of the BOE report beyond the traditional 30 days after the visit.

## **Thank You**

It has been a while since the *BOE Update* thanked BOE members for all of your hard work, particularly all of the "unsung details" that you engage in to keep the accreditation process running smoothly. Take a moment to pat yourself on the back and perhaps thank the family members who graciously do without you for a week every semester so that we can continue ensuring quality teacher preparation. Thank you!

## STAFF UPDATE

As of February 3, NCATE bids a fond farewell to Lindsye Mitchell, assistant to the senior vice president. Lindsye will become the event manager at the Multiple Sclerosis Association, coordinating fundraising walks, runs, and bike rides. The position will combine her organizational skills with her love for running—a perfect match! She will be missed.

Currently, staff members with whom BOE members might interact include: Donna Gollnick, senior vice president; Antoinette Mitchell, associate vice president for accreditation; Pamela Ehrenberg, accreditation associate; Mary Anne Kirkland, accreditation associate; and Marva Atwater, coordinator of site visits. Team chairs might also interact with two outside readers of BOE reports, Linda Bradley and Pam Magasich.