The information contained in this document is current as of April 2002. The reader is encouraged to consult the NCATE website, www.ncate.org, for the latest information concerning policies, procedures, and standards revisions.

Additional copies of the *Handbook for Accreditation Visits* may be ordered at a charge of $30 per copy including shipping and handling from

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Part I: Introduction

This handbook is designed to help institutions and Board of Examiners (BOE) members plan and conduct an accreditation visit under the NCATE Unit Standards.

NCATE’s performance-based accreditation system involves a voluntary peer review of the professional education unit, which is defined as the school, college, department, or other administrative body within the institution that is primarily responsible for the preparation of teachers and other professional school personnel. The review is based on the NCATE Unit Standards, a set of research-based national standards developed by all sectors of the teaching profession. In NCATE’s performance-based system, accreditation is based on evidence that demonstrates that teacher candidates know the subject matter and can teach it effectively so that students learn. In the NCATE system, units must prove that candidates can connect theory to practice and be effective in an actual P–12 classroom.

NCATE accreditation requires reviews of the individual programs within a unit and an on-site review of the unit as a whole. An NCATE Board of Examiners (BOE) team conducts the on-site reviews. Using NCATE unit standards, the BOE team evaluates the unit’s capacity to effectively deliver its programs and the quality of the unit’s candidates and graduates, as measured by their ability to apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to help all students learn.

A professional education unit that is accredited by NCATE is expected to be dynamic—that is, involved in ongoing planning, evaluation, and improvement. To retain accreditation, a unit should be engaged in continuous assessment and development. The unit should ensure that faculty and programs reflect new knowledge, practices, and technologies. NCATE expects continuous development in response to the evolving world of education and educational reform.

Professional education units that are serious about continuing their professional accreditation are future oriented. They have a vision that guides their work. They are involved in a process in which faculty and administrators, in collaboration with practitioners, are thinking and talking about the preparation of teachers and other educators. They plan and work toward improving
their programs and operations. They collect and analyze data about their effectiveness and make changes to improve their programs. They are engaged in ongoing self-study in which they assess the needs of schools and candidates, identify potential problems and points of vulnerability, and develop strategies for becoming more effective. They plan, implement, and evaluate assessment systems designed to help them prepare quality school personnel.

Changes may well be in process when an institution is scheduled for an accreditation review. At the time of the visit, it is not unusual for candidates to be entering new or revised programs while others are completing programs that are being phased out. New programs may have been added and others eliminated since the last visit by an NCATE team. These are changes that may have resulted from the unit’s ongoing self-study for improving the preparation of school personnel.

Therefore, the accreditation visit is about assessing processes for continuous improvement along with assessing circumstances at the time of the visit. This handbook provides institutions and BOE members with information on what types of evidence are helpful in making these assessments. It also clarifies terminology and provides information on the logistics of visits: what happens when, and who is responsible. It is NCATE’s hope that this handbook will be helpful both as an overview of the accreditation process and as a reference tool for use throughout the accreditation cycle.

**First-Time Visit**

Any baccalaureate or graduate degree-granting institution offering programs for the preparation of classroom teachers and/or other professional school personnel is eligible for an accreditation review by NCATE. The institution must be regionally accredited, its education programs must be approved by the appropriate state education agency, and other preconditions (described below) must be met before NCATE conducts an on-site review. NCATE also requires that there be graduates from at least one of the education programs before the on-site review occurs.

To establish eligibility for the first accreditation review, an institution must submit (1) the “Intent to Seek NCATE Accreditation” form two years or more before the on-site visit; (2) documentation for preconditions, and
documentation for program reviews where required, by February 1 or September 15, approximately three semesters before the visit; and (3) AACTE/NCATE annual reports. All preconditions must be met and candidacy must be approved by the Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) before the on-site review is conducted. Materials about NCATE and preparing for on-site reviews are available at NCATE’s website, www.ncate.org.

**Notifying NCATE of Interest**

At least two years before hosting an on-site visit, an institution should indicate its interest in seeking accreditation in a letter to the president of NCATE. The letter should indicate the semester and year in which the institution plans to host the on-site review. In response, NCATE will send a letter with links to the following materials:

- *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education;*
- *Handbook for Accreditation Visits;*
- “Intent to Seek NCATE Accreditation” form;
- Timeline for semester and year of visit;
- List of NCATE partnership states; and
- Other accreditation information.

**Intent Form for First Accreditation**

Two years before hosting the on-site visit, the institution must submit the “Intent to Seek NCATE Accreditation” form, which is available on NCATE’s website. This form requests basic information about the institution and information on programs and degrees, including off-campus programs, distance learning, and alternate route programs. It is important that the institution list all programs that prepare individuals for work in P–12 schools, no matter where they are offered or how they are delivered. Both the chief executive officer of the institution and the head of the professional education unit must sign the “Intent to Seek NCATE Accreditation” form.

By submitting the Intent form, the institution declares its intention to pursue NCATE accreditation within a two to three year time frame. Upon receipt of the Intent form, NCATE classifies the institution as a precandidate for accreditation. Precandidates must pay an annual fee to NCATE. Precandidates
receive newsletters, e-mail communications, announcements of NCATE’s institutional orientations, and updated materials that are regularly sent to all NCATE-affiliated institutions.

**Candidacy**

A precandidate **must** meet each of NCATE’s nine preconditions before it becomes an official candidate for accreditation. The UAB officially accepts candidates at its semi-annual meetings in March/April and October. The on-site visit cannot take place before the institution has been accepted as a candidate by the UAB.

The designation of candidacy authorizes the education unit to advise its constituents that it has met its preconditions and is actively seeking NCATE accreditation. On-site visits normally occur one to two years after formal candidacy has been granted. Postponements beyond that period must be requested in writing and cannot extend beyond a five-year period. After five years, the process of establishing candidacy must be reinstated by the institution.

**Process for Establishing Candidacy**

An institution **must** submit its preconditions documentation to NCATE by February 1 or September 15 approximately three semesters before the semester in which it plans to host an on-site review. Documentation for Precondition #4, the conceptual framework, is reviewed by members of the Annual Report and Preconditions Audit (ARPA) Committee at the next scheduled meeting, and other documentation is reviewed by NCATE staff. After reviewing the preconditions documentation, the committee and staff may find that (1) all of the preconditions have been met or (2) not all of the preconditions have been met. In the first case, staff will recommend candidacy to the UAB; in the second case, the institution will be asked to submit additional or revised documentation.

After an institution’s preconditions documents have been reviewed, NCATE sends the institution a preconditions report indicating whether preconditions have been met. The preconditions report also includes the status of the program reports submitted by the institution. Precondition #8 is considered met after all required program reports have been submitted. If some preconditions
are not met, the letter accompanying the report will request additional information.

** Preconditions **

The following nine preconditions must be met to advance a precandidate to candidacy status, which is required before an on-site visit can take place. The institution must respond to each precondition with the documentation listed below.

Precondition #1. The institution recognizes and identifies a professional education unit that has responsibility and authority for the preparation of teachers and other professional education personnel.

1.1 A letter from the institution’s chief executive officer that designates the unit as having primary authority and responsibility for teacher education programs.

1.2 A chart or narrative that lists all professional education programs offered by the institution (including any nontraditional/alternative programs). The chart or narrative report should depict (a) the degree or award levels for each program; (b) the administrative location for each program—for example, School of Education, Department of Music; and (c) the structure or structures through which the unit implements its oversight of all programs. If the unit’s offerings include off-campus programs, a separate chart or narrative as described above should be prepared for each location at which off-campus programs are geographically located.

1.3 An organizational chart of the institution that depicts the professional education unit and indicates the unit’s relationship to other administrative units within the college or university.

Precondition #2. A dean, director, or chair is officially designated as head of the unit and is assigned the authority and responsibility for its overall administration and operation.

2.1 The job description for the head of the professional education unit.

Precondition #3. Written policies and procedures guide the operations of the unit.

3.1 The cover page and table of contents for the documents that contain codified policies and procedures for the unit’s operations, including policies and procedures pertaining to its candidates. [If policies and procedures are located on the Internet, photocopies of appropriate web page(s) that indicate links to applicable policies and procedures may be submitted as documentation for this precondition.]

Precondition #4. The unit has a well developed conceptual framework that establishes the shared vision for a unit’s efforts in preparing educators to work in P–12 schools and provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability.

4.1 The vision and mission of the institution and unit.

4.2 The unit’s philosophy, purposes, and outcomes.

4.3 Knowledge bases, including theories, research, the wisdom of practice, and education policies, that inform the unit’s conceptual framework.

4.4 Candidate proficiencies aligned with the expectations in professional, state, and institutional standards.

4.5 A description of the system by which candidate performance is regularly assessed.
Precondition #5. The unit regularly monitors and evaluates its operations, the quality of its offerings, the performance of candidates, and the effectiveness of its graduates.

5.1 A description of the unit’s system for evaluating its operations, the quality of its offerings, the performance of candidates, and the effectiveness of its graduates.

Precondition #6. The unit has published criteria for admission to and exit from all initial teacher preparation and advanced programs and can provide summary reports of candidate performance at exit.

6.1 A photocopy of published documentation (e.g., from a catalog, student teaching handbook, application form, or web page) listing the basic requirements for entry to, retention in, and completion of professional education programs offered by the institution, including any nontraditional/alternative and off-campus programs.

6.2 A brief summary of candidate performance on assessments conducted for admission into programs and exit from them. This summary should include (a) the portion of Title II documentation related to candidate admission and completion that was prepared for the state and (b) compilation of results on the unit’s own assessments.

Precondition #7. In states with a program approval process, the unit’s programs are approved by the appropriate state agency or agencies.

7.1 The most recent state approval letters, including or appended by a list of approved programs. If any program is not approved, the unit must provide a statement that it is not currently accepting new applicants into the non-approved program(s). For programs that are approved with qualifications or are pending approval, the unit must describe how it will bring the program(s) into compliance.

Precondition #8. If the institution is located in a non-partner state or in a partner state that requires the submission of program reports for national review through NCATE, the unit has submitted program reports for each program for which NCATE has approved program standards.

8.1 A list of program reports that have been submitted to NCATE. For additional information, see the handbook section, “Responding to Program Standards.”

Precondition #9. The institution is accredited, without probation or an equivalent status, by the appropriate institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

9.1 Current accreditation letter and/or report that indicates institutional accreditation status.

For further information regarding Precondition #4, institutions should see the NCATE unit standards document, which provides a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework. Documentation #4.5 is a description or summary of the unit’s system for assessing whether candidates meet the proficiencies outlined in #4.4, not a detailed statement of the unit’s entire assessment system. The description should include, at a minimum, an indication of when candidates in the unit or in a given program are assessed; the type of assessment(s) used; how the unit ensures the assessments are or will be accurate and consistent; and the consequences for candidates performing at different levels on the assessments.
**Format for Preconditions Submissions**

Preconditions may be submitted to NCATE in either electronic or paper format. The guidelines below should assist an institution in preparing its preconditions submission.

**General Guidelines for All Submissions.** The suggestions below should be followed for both electronic and hard copy submissions.

- Number all pages consecutively, including appendices, attachments, etc.
- Use a consistent font size throughout the entire document.
- Include a table of contents indicating where documentation for each precondition can be found.
- Label each supporting document to match the documentation outlined in the preconditions table (e.g., 1.2, 4.3, or 7.1).
- Submit relevant pages of source documents rather than the full document; do not submit entire catalogs or other extraneous documents.
- Indicate on source documents (1) the name of the source document (e.g., *Faculty Handbook*) and (2) the date of the source document.
- Ensure that documentation for each precondition, especially Precondition #4, can stand on its own without the documentation for other preconditions.
- Include a list of the program reports that are being submitted for Precondition #8. The program reports, if submitted, must be submitted as separate documents. If the institution is located in a state that does not require the submission of program review documents, the response to Precondition #8 should indicate the terms of the state partnership agreement regarding program report submission.
- The institution should have one copy of the preconditions submission in the exhibit room during the on-site visit.

**Guidelines for E-mail Submissions.** The preconditions may be submitted as an e-mail message with attachments, using the following guidelines:

- Precondition #4, the conceptual framework, should be attached as one file, and the other preconditions should be attached as a separate file or files. If the file sizes are large, it might be necessary to send each attachment as a separate e-mail message.
- Prepare the attachments in a format that can be read in Microsoft Word when received at the NCATE office.
Scanned letters are acceptable for the documentation requiring copies of letters.

E-mail the submission to ncate@ncate.org, and use “[Name of Institution] Preconditions” as the subject heading.

Guidelines for Web-based Submissions. NCATE can also open the preconditions submission on the institution’s own website. This option can accommodate file sizes that are large due to charts, tables, and/or the use of color. Please follow the guidelines below when submitting preconditions as web-based documents:

- Notify NCATE of the URL for the preconditions submission.
- Ensure ease of navigation.
- Embed links to additional information in the text, as needed.
- Ensure that all links in the document are operational.
- Ensure that links to web documents are to specific pages in a document, not to the beginning of a document in which the reader must scroll through to find the documentation that supports the preconditions response.
- Scanned letters are acceptable for the documentation requiring copies of letters.
- See the handbook section on web-based exhibit rooms for confidentiality and other considerations.

Guidelines for Paper Submissions.

- Submit one copy of the entire preconditions response in a three-ring binder and seven additional copies (stapled or bound) of the response to Precondition #4.
- Separate each of the nine preconditions with a divider page or tab labeled with the precondition number.

Timeline for First-Time Visits

The timeline below provides general guidance on the submission of documents by the unit and NCATE. Specific dates for the visit are established after the Intent form has been submitted to NCATE and are finalized after the institution has met its preconditions. Specific timelines for the submission of documents are based on the semester of the visit. These timelines are available on the NCATE website.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Dates</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two years before the semester of the visit</td>
<td>The institution submits to NCATE the “Intent to Seek NCATE Accreditation” form with required signatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three semesters before the visit (by February 1 or September 15)</td>
<td>The institution submits its responses to preconditions either electronically or by mailing the required copies of its printed response. At the same time, the institution submits its program reports (if required) which respond to NCATE-approved program standards as required for Precondition #8. Program reports must be submitted unless the institution is located in a partnership state in which the submission of program reviews is optional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By July 15 for February 1 submissions and February 1 for September 15 submissions</td>
<td>NCATE sends the first responses to program reviews to the institution. These are usually sent to institutions via e-mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year before the visit</td>
<td>The institution submits to NCATE the “Date Preference Form” with the preferred dates for the on-site visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By September 15 or April 15</td>
<td>The institution submits to NCATE rejoinders to the program reports as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1 for rejoinders submitted in April and January 15 for rejoinders submitted in September</td>
<td>NCATE sends responses to program review rejoinders to the institution. These are usually sent to institutions via e-mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six months before the visit</td>
<td>The institution publishes a “Call for Comment” inviting third-party testimony related to the upcoming NCATE visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the semester before the visit</td>
<td>NCATE sends a final preconditions report to the institution. <em>(If preconditions are not met, a visit cannot take place.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4 months before the visit</td>
<td>NCATE sends to the institution the names and addresses of the assigned BOE team members who will conduct the on-site review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 months before the visit</td>
<td>NCATE sends copies of any third-party testimony received to the institution for comment and to the BOE team chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Action Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 days before the visit</td>
<td>The institution submits two copies of its institutional report and catalogs to NCATE. The institution must also send one copy of the report and catalog(s) to each BOE team member, the state consultant, and any other state representatives on the team. (The reports and catalogs may be sent electronically.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–60 days before the visit</td>
<td>The BOE team chair conducts a previsit to the institution. (Note: the team chair must receive the institutional report before the previsit takes place.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled visit</td>
<td>NCATE BOE team of five to eight persons conducts the on-site review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 30 days after the visit</td>
<td>The BOE team chair submits a draft copy of the BOE report to the NCATE office for edit and review and to the institution for correction of any factual errors in the report. Once feedback has been received, the BOE chair sends a final version of the report to NCATE. NCATE sends two copies of the report to the unit head and copies to the state agency, as appropriate. This process should be completed within 30 days of the BOE visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 30 days after receipt of</td>
<td>The institution submits to NCATE six copies of a rejoinder to the findings in the BOE report. (If the institution does not choose to rejoin any of the findings in the BOE report, it must still submit a letter acknowledging receipt of the report.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the BOE report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March/April (for fall visits) or</td>
<td>The institution’s accreditation status is determined by NCATE’s Unit Accreditation Board (UAB).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October (for spring visits) after</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the visit</td>
<td>2–3 weeks after the UAB meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 weeks after the UAB meeting</td>
<td>NCATE mails action letters and reports of the accreditation decision to the president of the institution, the unit head, and the state agency if the institution is located in a partnership state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One month after the UAB meeting</td>
<td>Unless a decision is being appealed, NCATE mails information on the accreditation decision to the U.S. Department of Education and releases information to the public via the NCATE website. Information is also sent to the applicable NEA and AFT state affiliate organizations, the chief state school officer, and the state affiliate of the National School Boards Association.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If the UAB decides, based on the BOE team’s findings and recommendations, that accreditation is merited, a five-year continuing accreditation cycle begins. However, if the UAB determines on the basis of BOE findings to grant the unit accreditation with provisions, additional documentation to address unmet standards may be requested, or a focused on-site visit may be required within a specified time frame. Nevertheless, the five-year cycle for the next visit is maintained.

**Continuing Visit**

After an institution is accredited, it moves into a five-year continuing accreditation cycle and remains in that cycle unless the unit is placed on probation or accreditation is revoked. Preconditions must continue to be met by the unit. However, only program reports that were required for Precondition #8 must be submitted every five years. Units are required to submit annual reports, to which NCATE responds in a third-year report to the unit. Program reports are due 12–15 months before the visit if the institution is in a state that requires national program review or the institution chooses to submit one or more of its programs for national recognition.

The next on-site visit is scheduled in the same semester five years after the previous visit. ¹ Materials to prepare for on-site reviews are available at NCATE’s website, www.ncate.org. The website will highlight any changes in policies or procedures that have been adopted since this handbook was published.

**Continuous Assessment and Improvement**

The professional education unit is expected to engage regularly in self-evaluation to improve its operations and its programs. In this process, the unit should systematically assess how well it continues to meet NCATE standards.

The unit’s self-study activities should be systematically implemented and not conducted only to prepare for an NCATE visit. Regular evaluation activities should encourage faculty to reflect critically on their own practice and support ongoing reflection and dialogue about the conceptual framework that guides the preparation of teachers and other school professionals. The unit should assess its strengths and challenges in carrying out its responsibilities and improving the quality of its programs. Between on-site reviews by NCATE, the unit

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¹. Delays of visits may be granted for good cause for one to two semesters only if the partner state approves the delay. In most cases, when delays are granted at the request of an institution, the NCATE review following the delayed review will be scheduled five years from the semester of the originally scheduled review unless the state agency requests a different timeline to accommodate its own schedule. In other words, if the institution is granted a one-year delay, its next visit will be four years later to maintain the five-year cycle.
should address the areas for improvement cited by the BOE team at the previous review.

**Intent Form for Continuing Accreditation**

Approximately two years before the continuing accreditation review, NCATE sends the institution materials or links to materials needed to prepare for a visit. These materials include:

- *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education*;
- *Handbook for Accreditation Visit*;
- “Intent to Continue NCATE Accreditation” form
- Timeline for the semester and year of the visit;
- List of NCATE partnership states; and
- Other accreditation information.

NCATE e-mails to institutions the third-year review of annual reports and a report on the status of national program reviews, which indicates the program reports that must be submitted a year before the visit.

To confirm the institution’s intent to seek continuation of its accreditation, the institution must complete the “Intent to Continue NCATE Accreditation” form. This form, which must be signed by both the chief executive officer of the institution and the head of the education unit, includes preprinted information generated from NCATE’s database that should be reviewed and updated by the unit. The form includes basic contact information as well as information on programs (including off-campus programs, distance learning programs, and alternate route programs) and characteristics of the unit and its offerings. The Intent form should be submitted to NCATE at least three semesters before the visit.

**Timeline for Continuing Accreditation**

The timeline below provides general guidance on the dates on which documents should be submitted by the unit and NCATE. Specific dates for the visit are established after the Intent form has been submitted to NCATE. A timeline with specific dates is included in the accreditation package sent to institutions two years before the visit. Specific timelines are also located on the NCATE website.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two years before the semester of the visit</td>
<td>NCATE sends the institution a package of materials to prepare for the continuing accreditation visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three semesters before the semester of the visit</td>
<td>The institution returns to NCATE the updated “Intent to Continue NCATE Accreditation” form with required signatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year before the visit</td>
<td>The institution submits to NCATE the “Date Preference Form” with the preferred dates for the on-site visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year before the visit (February 1 or September 15)</td>
<td>If required, the institution submits to NCATE program reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By July 15 for February 1 submissions and by February 1 for September 15 submissions</td>
<td>SPAs send responses (SPA reports) to NCATE for transmittal to institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By September 15 or April 15</td>
<td>The institution submits to NCATE rejoinders to the SPA reports as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1 for rejoinders submitted in April and January 15 for rejoinders submitted in September</td>
<td>NCATE receives SPA responses to program review rejoinders and e-mails them to the NCATE coordinator and unit head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six months before the visit</td>
<td>The institution publishes a “Call for Comment” inviting third-party testimony related to the upcoming NCATE visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4 months before the visit</td>
<td>NCATE sends to the institution the names and addresses of the assigned BOE team members who will conduct the on-site review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 months before the visit</td>
<td>NCATE sends copies of any third-party testimony received to the institution for comment and to the BOE team chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 days prior to the visit</td>
<td>The institution submits two copies of its institutional report and catalogs to NCATE. The institution must also send one copy of the report and catalog(s) to each BOE team member, the state consultant, and any other state representatives on the team. (The reports and catalogs may be sent electronically.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–60 days prior to the visit</td>
<td>The team chair conducts a previsit to the institution. (Note: the team chair must receive the institutional report before the previsit takes place.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled visit</td>
<td>NCATE BOE team of three to eight persons conducts the on-site review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 30 days after the visit</td>
<td>The BOE team chair submits a draft copy of the BOE report to the NCATE office for edit and review and to the institution for correction of any factual errors in the report. Once feedback has been received, the BOE chair sends a final version of the report to NCATE. NCATE sends two copies of the report to the unit head and copies to the state agency, as appropriate. This process should be completed within 30 days of the BOE visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 30 days after receipt of the BOE report</td>
<td>The institution submits to NCATE six copies of a rejoinder to the findings in the BOE report. (If the institution does not choose to rejoin any of the findings in the BOE report, it must still submit a letter acknowledging receipt of the report.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March/April (for fall visits) or October (for spring visits) after the visit</td>
<td>The institution’s continuing accreditation status is determined by NCATE’s Unit Accreditation Board (UAB).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 weeks after the UAB meeting</td>
<td>NCATE mails action letters and reports of the accreditation decision to the president of the institution, the unit head, and the state agency if the institution is located in a partnership state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One month after the UAB meeting</td>
<td>Unless a decision is being appealed, NCATE mails information on the accreditation decision to the U.S. Department of Education and releases information to the public via the NCATE website. Information is also sent to the applicable NEA and AFT state affiliate organizations, the chief state school officer, and the state affiliate of the National School Boards Association.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If the UAB decides—based on the BOE team’s findings and recommendations—that continuing accreditation is merited, a new five-year accreditation cycle begins. However, if the UAB determines on the basis of BOE findings to grant the unit continuing accreditation with *conditions*, additional documentation to address unmet standards may be requested, or a focused on-site visit may be required within a specified time frame. Nevertheless, the five-year cycle for the next visit is maintained. If the UAB grants the unit continuing accreditation with *probation*, an on-site visit must be scheduled within a specified time frame. Following the probation visit, an institution’s accreditation may be either continued for another five-year period or revoked. The next visit following removal of probation is scheduled five years after the probation visit.
Part II: Institutional Preparation

Careful preparation is critical to a successful NCATE visit. A non-accredited institution often takes three years or more to prepare for a visit. An accredited institution engaged in continuous assessment and improvement is probably ready for a visit at any time, especially if it regularly and systematically collects and compiles candidate performance data. However, the unit must still document and describe how the NCATE standards are being met. This section describes the steps for preparing for an NCATE review.

Setting the Stage

The NCATE review includes all programs for the preparation of professionals, both teachers and other school personnel, to work in P–12 school settings. These programs may be administratively located in a unit other than education such as the College of Arts and Sciences or School of Music. Sometimes programs are located at a branch campus or other off-campus site. The unit also may have alternate route or distance learning programs.

The Professional Education Unit

The NCATE accreditation process focuses on the professional education unit, which is defined as the administrative body at a college or university that has primary responsibility for the preparation of school personnel. Most institutions identify the unit as the school, college, or department of education. Some identify the unit as a coordinating council or other university- or college-wide governance entity or structure. Other institutions identify the institution itself as the unit.

The unit is expected to coordinate all professional education programs for the initial and continuing preparation of school personnel, even though some programs may be located in other administrative units. In many institutions, some programs are offered primarily in units other than education (for example, in the College of Arts and Sciences or the School of Music, Library Sciences, Agriculture, or Family Sciences). NCATE expects the education unit to coordinate these professional education programs and holds the unit accountable for the quality of these programs as well as those offered within the unit itself.
NCATE applies its standards to the professional education unit as a whole and not to individual programs. However, much of the data presented for unit standards is based on program data about candidates, graduates, and clinical practice. The unit is the administrative entity that designs, manages, evaluates, revises, and, from time to time, closes programs. NCATE determines whether the unit effectively carries out these responsibilities. Those preparing the institutional report for the NCATE visit should focus on the unit and refer to programs to illustrate how the unit carries out its activities.

The professional education unit must include in its accreditation review all programs in the institution for the initial and advanced preparation of teachers and other professional education personnel to work in preschool through 12th-grade settings. All programs for education personnel that are offered off-campus, as alternate routes, or via distance learning must be declared on the “Intent to Seek NCATE Accreditation” or “Intent to Continue NCATE Accreditation” form and will be reviewed by the visiting team either on-site or through other means. The unit is held responsible for ensuring that all programs—no matter where they are administratively housed or geographically located—are of the quality expected for professional accreditation. This includes programs which, in whole or in part, are delivered by video, computer, or other means of distance delivery.

Some institutions may already be accredited at one preparation level but have begun to offer programs at another level since their last NCATE review. Most commonly, an institution that only offered initial teacher preparation programs at the time of its last NCATE review has added advanced level programs. In this case, the institution must undergo a first accreditation review of the new level in conjunction with a continuing accreditation review of the level that is already accredited.

Although accreditation decisions are based on conditions that exist at the institution at the time of the BOE’s on-site review, this factor should not inhibit a unit from implementing new programs or structures in the time period of the review. It is expected that some new programs, policies, and practices may be in an early phase of implementation at the time of the visit. For example, a unit may have installed a new governance system with few results available to demonstrate its efficacy. Or a unit may have adopted new models to inform program planning and the evaluation of candidates, but no results of these
evaluations have been compiled by the time of the visit. BOE teams will take into account such innovations even if they have not acquired a track record.

**Initial Teacher Preparation and Advanced Preparation**

In making its accreditation decisions, NCATE distinguishes between initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation programs offered at an institution. Initial teacher preparation is defined by NCATE as “programs at baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate levels that prepare candidates for the first license to teach.” They include four-year baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, and master’s programs leading to licensure. Some initial teacher preparation programs are five-year programs combining undergraduate and graduate level work. Others are fifth-year programs for candidates with a baccalaureate in an academic area; fifth-year programs often include year-long internships.

Advanced programs are offered at the post-baccalaureate level to (1) licensed teachers continuing their education and (2) candidates preparing to work in schools in roles other than teaching (e.g., school psychology, reading specialist, administrator, counseling, and school library media specialist). Advanced programs often lead to master’s, specialist, or doctoral degrees, but some are non-degree licensure programs. Advanced degrees for the preparation of teacher educator and other higher education professionals are not within the scope of NCATE accreditation.

Initial teacher preparation programs and advanced programs for teachers and other professional school personnel may receive two different accreditation decisions following an on-site review. For instance, the initial teacher preparation level could be accredited while the advanced preparation programs are denied accreditation or *vice versa*.

Some institutions may be accredited only at one preparation level because they offer programs at only one level. When they decide to prepare educators at the other level, the new level **must** be included in the next on-site review of the professional education unit. The institution may request an on-site review of a new level in the years between the institution’s scheduled five-year visits; however, the two levels will be reviewed together on the institution’s five-year cycle in visits thereafter. The accreditation decision for the new level will be one of
those that apply to a first-time visit by NCATE (i.e., accreditation, provisional accreditation, or denial of accreditation).

Institutional Structures

Institutions are organized in a variety of ways to carry out their missions and meet the needs of the populations they serve. They may offer programs at sites other than the home campus, or they may offer programs to candidates all over the state, country, or world through distance learning. They may serve non-traditional candidates and candidates with bachelor’s degrees in an academic area in alternate route programs. The institution’s structure helps determine the scope of the NCATE review as described on the following pages. Institutions must disclose their institutional structures on the “Intent to Seek NCATE Accreditation” or “Intent to Continue NCATE Accreditation” form.

Branch Campuses

An institution with dependent branch campuses within the same state may choose to seek accreditation as (1) a single multi-campus professional education unit or (2) separate education units if the appropriate state agency recognized the units as autonomous for program approval. In all instances the declaration of intent to apply as a single or as multiple education units must be made when the institution submits the Intent form two years before the on-site review.

If an institution and branch campuses are evaluated as a single professional education unit, the accreditation decision and any cited areas for improvement or unmet standards will apply to the entire unit, even if cited deficiencies are specific to a particular campus. If an institution and branch campuses are evaluated as separate units, separate accreditation decisions will be made for each campus. If a multiple-campus institution seeks separate accreditation for one of its campuses, it has no obligation to seek or retain accreditation for other campuses.

Off-Campus Programs

Institutions may offer programs at sites other than the main campus or branch campus. Off-campus programs may be offered in the same state, in other
states, or in countries other than the United States.

The NCATE staff, in consultation with the institution and appropriate state agencies, will determine the off-campus programs to be included in a unit’s accreditation review, using the following guidelines:

- Off-campus programs in the same state must be included in the unit’s review.

- Off-campus programs offered at sites outside of the state or in another country may be included in the unit’s review if (1) the programs are limited in number and size, (2) the programs are located in close proximity to the parent campus, or (3) the program completers are eligible for state licensure in the state of the parent institution.

**Alternate Route Programs**

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 route 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.

**Distance Learning Programs**

Distance learning programs offered by the unit must also meet NCATE standards at the same level of quality as programs offered through traditional means. If a campus offers distance learning programs in professional education, the BOE team will interview—in person or electronically—program administrator(s), candidates, and faculty. The BOE team also expects to see

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5. NCATE defines alternate route programs as post-baccalaureate 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.
assessment data, completion rates, and other performance data for distance learning programs in the institution’s exhibits.

**NCATE Standards**

NCATE standards are the basis for the assessment performed by the BOE. Based on recommendations from the BOE, standards will be declared *met* or *not met* by NCATE’s UAB. Both the institutional report and the BOE report require the institution and the BOE team to address each of the six NCATE Unit Standards individually.

Each of the NCATE Unit Standards contains three components: (1) the standard itself; (2) rubrics that describe “unacceptable,” “acceptable,” and “target” levels for each element of the standard; and (3) a descriptive explanation of the standard.

The unit’s conceptual framework is not assessed as an individual standard. Instead, the unit is expected to describe its conceptual framework in the introductory section of its institutional report. The BOE team will present an overview of how the conceptual framework is infused throughout the unit in the introductory section of the BOE report. The BOE will use the *Evidence for the Conceptual Framework(s)* found in the NCATE Unit Standards to guide its writing of this section of the report.

**Transition Plan**

During visits, NCATE expects the unit to make available performance assessment data that are currently collected. These data include assessments conducted internally by the unit and external data such as state licensing tests, program review reports, and graduate and employer surveys. The UAB has identified the following levels at which the first two standards must be addressed at the time of a unit’s on-site visit.6

A plan of the unit’s assessment system is required in the first year that the standards are in effect. Greater implementation of the assessment system is required in each subsequent year. The following specific requirements will apply to units whose visits are in the semesters identified below. These yearly requirements apply to units undergoing their first or continuing accreditation visits.

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6. NCATE expects units to provide evidence that Standards 3–6 are fully addressed at the time of the visit.
All units should follow a similar schedule for the development and implementation of their assessment systems, regardless of the date of their next on-site visit by a BOE team.

Institutions with Visits in Fall 2001 and Spring 2002

At a minimum, units with visits during fall 2001 and spring 2002 should have a well developed plan for an assessment system that includes timelines and details about the system components. Members of the professional community should have developed the plan collaboratively. The plan should provide a detailed description of the unit’s design for collecting, analyzing, summarizing, and using candidate assessment information. It should include evaluation measures of outcomes that will provide evidence of candidate proficiencies in professional, state, and institutional standards. The unit should clearly communicate these standards and assessments to candidates.

According to the transition plan, units with visits in fall 2001 and spring 2002 should have a plan for an assessment system that does the following:

1. Identifies transition points at the unit and/or program level.

   Transition points are key points in a program when the unit assesses candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions and determines if candidates are ready to proceed to the next stage. The NCATE standards require transition points (a) upon entry, (b) prior to entering clinical practice, (c) prior to exiting clinical practice, and (d) upon program completion. While the four transition points stated above must be in place for all programs, institutions may have, at their discretion, additional transition points in their programs.

   The unit should anticipate a course of action if assessments indicate that candidates are not yet ready to proceed to the next stages of their programs. Possible actions might include remediation, re-taking assessments, denial of advancement, and academic probation.

2. Identifies the major assessments to be used at the stated transition points.

   Major assessments can include tests, portfolios, essays, student teaching/internship evaluations, P–12 student work samples with reflections, etc. The assessments should be linked to the learning outcomes in the conceptual framework and should reflect institutional, state, and national
standards. The assessments must address candidate content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, professional knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, dispositions, and candidates’ positive impact on P–12 student learning.

At this stage in the development of the assessment system, the unit must decide what assessments will be used and when. NCATE does not dictate the types of assessments to be used; however, NCATE expects evaluations of student teaching/internship and state licensing assessments, where applicable, to be two of the components of the assessment system. NCATE supports the use of multiple assessments in evaluating candidates. The types of assessments may change over time based on considerations of fairness, accuracy, and consistency.

While a unit review of all assessments in all courses may be in order to address unit and program coherence and the modeling of best practices by faculty, only major assessments should be identified as part of the assessment system. The instruments for these assessments may not yet be developed, but the unit must indicate a timeline for their development (see Item 3 below).

The unit should specify which elements of the standards each assessment is designed or being designed to evaluate. The same assessments must be administered to all candidates in a given cohort in a given program/unit. This means that all candidates in a program who reach the designated transition points should be required to complete the same assessments. When including course-based assessment(s) as part of the assessment system, the unit should ensure that candidates in different sections of the same course are administered the same assessment(s). Inevitably, assessments will differ across programs. The unit must coordinate the effort and ensure that each program is operating in the context of an overall assessment system.

Assessments must be fair, accurate, and consistent. To ensure this, the unit may need to provide time and resources for the review of curricula to ensure that candidates have the opportunity to learn the material assessed. In addition, the unit must provide time and resources for piloting assessments, developing benchmarks, rating assessments, and analyzing the
extent to which the assessments were successful in measuring targeted candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

3. Identifies a timeline for the development and implementation of the major assessments.

The timeline should include major steps in the development and implementation of assessments. These steps may include gathering information, developing drafts, piloting drafts, benchmarking, ensuring that the assessments meet their intended goals, and refining the assessment instruments. Steps may also include revising graduate surveys, rethinking faculty evaluations, and developing better focused employer surveys. The timeline should indicate what is to be done, by when, and what committee/person will be responsible for completing the tasks. It can be written in increments such as weeks, months, quarters, semesters, etc.

4. Identifies the design for the collection, analysis, summarization, and use of data.

Once the system is in place, data from the system, particularly candidate assessment data, must be compiled at regular intervals. It is anticipated that these intervals will correspond with the transition points discussed above. Decisions should be made about candidate progress at each interval. The plan for the unit’s assessment system should identify how the data will be generated and when the data will be collected. Will portfolios be submitted and evaluated by a committee? What is the content for the portfolios? Will candidates have to sit for an exam that is then graded by two faculty members? Will they be required to complete a student teaching/internship assignment evaluated by peer review?

Further, once the assessments are evaluated, the institution must summarize and analyze the data. The purpose of summarizing and analyzing is to enable the unit to look across the cohort to examine strengths and problems; to identify trends in comprehension of knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and to pinpoint where additional support and academic work are needed. Summarizing and analyzing graduate and employer surveys can further help the unit identify programmatic strengths and problems. Similarly, summarizing and analyzing faculty evaluations can inform the unit of professional development needs. Summarization and analysis shift the focus from individuals to programs. Programmatic analysis, in turn,
should lead to program change and improvement. For more information on summarizing data, see “Sampling and Summarizing Candidate Performance Information,” a paper by Emerson Elliott available in the “Resources” section of NCATE’s website.

The transition plan indicates that units should have a design for systematic collection, analysis, summarization, and use of data. The unit should describe in its plan for an assessment system what that system is expected to look like when it is operational. When will data be collected? How will it be collected? Who will do the evaluating? Who will summarize and analyze it? When will this take place? How will it be done? When will it be shared, with whom will it be shared, and what mechanisms will be in place to ensure that the data are used to improve the programs?

5. Identifies aspects of the system that address unit operations.

While the direct assessment of candidates is important, other mechanisms can and should also be used to gauge the quality of the unit and its programs. The NCATE standards require that the unit collect data from applicants, candidates, recent graduates, faculty, and other members of the professional community. The collection, analysis, and use of these data must be built into the unit assessment system. The evaluations and surveys used to gather information are instruments that should be revised, when necessary, to reflect the unit’s mission and philosophy. These instruments should also reflect the extent to which the unit is meeting the learning expectations stated in the conceptual framework.

Other aspects of unit operations that could also be evaluated as part of the unit assessment system include the effectiveness of advisement, record keeping, the admissions system, student teaching placement, governance structures, etc.

In addition, provisions should be made to study the extent to which the requirements at the various transition points are adequate predictors of candidate success. The types of questions that might be posed by these studies include: are candidates who barely met admissions requirements scoring as well on the assessments as those who exceeded the requirements? Do candidates with high scores on the assessments have higher scores on employer surveys than those who had weaker scores?
6. **Identifies how information technology will be used in the maintenance of the assessment system.**

Tracking candidate progress and unit operations will likely require the use of computers and computer programs. The unit must have the capacity to retrieve and manipulate data. The unit should describe the role of information technology in the assessment system. The type and complexity of data management systems will depend, in part, on the size of the unit. Small units may be able to store assessment system data in Excel spreadsheets, while larger units may require more sophisticated software.

Units may be at different points in the development of assessment systems; at a minimum, all of the items listed above should be described in one document that includes all programs.

During fall 2001 and spring 2002, BOE members will base their assessment of Standard 2 on the extent to which institutions have addressed the transition plan, which is explained in the items above. If an institution exceeds these minimum requirements in the development of its system, then that institution should include the additional information in the document. This document could be the unit’s response to Standard 2 in the institutional report, or it could be a separate document that the unit makes available to the team via the web or at the time of the visit.

In addition to the plan of the assessment system, the unit should have available any performance assessment data that are currently being collected. These data might include assessments conducted internally by the unit and external data such as results of state licensing tests.

**Institutions with Visits in Fall 2002 and Spring 2003**

At a minimum, units with visits scheduled during fall 2002 and spring 2003 should be implementing the first steps of their assessment system. The unit should have completed plans for an assessment system that meets the six criteria described above. The unit should have developed collaboratively with the professional community some internal performance assessments based on professional, state, and institutional standards. Rubrics/criteria for scoring and tests for accuracy, consistency, and fairness should be in development, and some data collection efforts should have been initiated.
In addition to implementing the first steps of its assessment system, the unit should have available any performance assessment data that are currently being collected. These data might include assessments conducted internally by the unit and external data such as results of state licensing tests.

**Institutions with Visits in Fall 2003 and Spring 2004**

At a minimum, units with visits scheduled during fall 2003 and spring 2004 should be in the second year of implementing their assessment system based on the six criteria described above. The unit should be using internal performance assessments based on professional, state, and institutional standards to identify the competence of all candidates. A system for testing the accuracy, consistency, and fairness of the assessments should have been developed, and data management and analysis should have begun.

In addition to implementing second-year activities outlined in its assessment system, the unit should have available any performance assessment data that are currently being collected. These data might include assessments conducted internally by the unit and external data such as results of state licensing tests.

**Institutions with Visits in Fall 2004 and Spring 2005**

Units with visits scheduled during fall 2004 and spring 2005 are expected to have assessment systems based on the six criteria above that are being implemented, evaluated, and refined. Performance assessments should be undergoing testing for accuracy, consistency, and fairness. Data on candidate performance from external and internal measurements should have been compiled and should be used to improve programs.

**Annual Reports**

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and NCATE jointly collect data from their members each year. AACTE collects and processes the data portion of the report (Parts A and B), while NCATE collects the narrative responses to standards and weaknesses or areas for improvement (Part C). Annual report forms should be completed and submitted electronically; Part C of the report can be accessed electronically from NCATE’s website.
Form A requests basic institutional and unit information. Once this information is submitted, in subsequent years, it is pre-printed on the form. Institutions are asked to check the information for accuracy. Form B requests data on enrollment, number of graduates by program area, candidate and faculty characteristics, and resources of the unit. Form C of the annual report gives units the opportunity to write a narrative response summarizing major changes that have occurred over the past year and progress made on correcting previously cited weaknesses or areas for improvement. It also asks units to report evaluations that may have been conducted and plans for future changes in the unit. Finally, Form C asks for updated contact information and data related to Title II reporting. Because the annual report data play a role in the NCATE accreditation process, it is important that institutions follow directions carefully in preparing their reports. Institutions should retain a copy of each report submitted and ensure that information reported is accurate, current, and consistent with data contained in the institutional report.

The AACTE/NCATE annual reports and the institutional report are the primary documents for the BOE team at the continuing accreditation visit. Annual reports provide a history of activities and changes between visits and can trace the progress toward correcting the weaknesses or areas for improvement cited in the previous on-site review. From an institution’s perspective, detailed and descriptive annual reports are also an invaluable tool for the completion of the unit’s institutional report.

**Submission of Annual Reports**

Annual report forms are normally sent to institutions in June/July and must be completed by October 1. Submission of the annual report is required of all NCATE-accredited institutions. Precandidates and candidates are only required to complete Forms A and B; after they are accredited, they must respond to Form C as well. Completing Part C of the report is optional for the year of a continuing accreditation review. Failure to submit reports can result in revocation of accreditation.

**Special Reviews of Annual Reports**

NCATE has adopted a new policy for screening annual reports—on an annual basis—to identify concerns that might require further examination by the
Annual Report and Preconditions Audit (ARPA) Committee. The following characteristics will trigger a special review of annual reports:

- a 25 percent decrease in the overall unit budget from the previous reporting year;
- a 25 percent decrease in full-time faculty from the previous reporting year;
- a 10 percent decrease in aggregate pass rates on state licensing exams;
- a change in the state-approved status of the professional education unit, as identified by the state licensing agency;
- a change in institutional accreditation status.

Any annual reports identified by these triggers will be submitted to the ARPA Committee for further examination at its spring meeting. After reviewing the identified reports, the ARPA committee will make recommendations to the UAB regarding subsequent actions. The ARPA committee will recommend that the institution submit additional information, that a focused visit take place, or that the investigation be closed. Institutions are automatically asked to submit a report to the ARPA committee when an adverse change occurs in the state-approved status of the professional education unit or in the institutional accreditation status.

Institutions that have experienced a 25 percent decrease in faculty size or budget should use Part C of the annual report to explain the circumstances under which these changes have occurred and the institutional response. Reporting on significant changes and institutional responses in annual reports will decrease the possibility that the institution will be asked to submit a special report to the ARPA Committee.

**Evidence**

A key to efficient preparation for a visit is the routine maintenance of documentation that describes the activities of the unit. Once a unit has received accreditation from NCATE, it should devise a system to ensure that routine documentation items (e.g., candidate assessment data, candidate records, faculty vitae, program approval information, faculty publications, revisions of publications and forms, contracts with school sites) are collected, organized, and accessible. Many institutions retain the exhibits set up for the accreditation visit as a permanent record base from which old information is
systematically removed and to which new information is added. Increasingly, units are compiling their documentation electronically on a website and/or CD-ROM. Suggested documentation for the visit is outlined beginning on page 60.

**Ongoing Changes in the Unit**

Continuing evaluation and improvement of the unit and its programs is a key principle of the NCATE accreditation system. BOE teams view systematic evaluation and change as evidence of the growth and vitality of the unit. NCATE especially encourages innovations that respond to standards, new research, and educational reform. Many units are strengthening traditional routes to teaching as well as developing high-quality alternate route programs. Units should not suspend change because an NCATE visit is imminent. In fact, the standards require serious self-study that should lead to ongoing change in how the unit prepares professional school personnel.

Consequently, it is expected that some candidates will be entering new programs while others are completing programs that are being phased out. Although BOE teams will be looking at a unit at a point in time, the unit’s institutional report should also describe new operations and programs. Teams will examine established programs as well as programs admitting their first candidates and programs in the planning stage as they make recommendations on unit standards being met.

**Ethical Guidelines for NCATE-Affiliated Institutions**

All NCATE-accredited institutions, precandidates, and candidates for NCATE accreditation must adhere to the following guidelines.

1. Each institution has the responsibility to facilitate a thorough and objective appraisal of its professional education unit by NCATE.

2. All information submitted for accreditation purposes—including preconditions documents, national program reviews, institutional reports, and rejoinders—must accurately reflect the programs and practices of the institution. Evidence of plagiarism and/or false reporting of data
may result in revocation of the accreditation or candidacy of an institution.

3. Institutions must ensure the adequacy and accuracy of the information they make available to the public. All information released by an NCATE-accredited institution regarding availability and quality of its programs must be accurate and not misleading to prospective candidates or the public. In particular, information released by the institution pertaining to the educational effectiveness of candidates (e.g., standardized test results, job placement rates, and licensing examination results) must be accurate, current, and available upon request.

4. A professional education unit that is accredited with conditions, provisionally accredited, or accredited with probation must disclose this status whenever it refers to NCATE accreditation. In addition, institutions are required to notify candidates currently enrolled in professional education programs of the meaning and possible outcomes of accreditation with conditions, provisional accreditation, or probation. Candidates must be informed of the semester and year in which the UAB will take action on the conditions, provisions, or probation status, including the possibility and consequences of revocation of accreditation that could occur as a result of the UAB’s action at that point. Candidates should also be informed that accreditation with conditions or probation does not affect the current accredited status of the professional education unit.

5. Institutions are allowed to veto BOE team members only if it can be demonstrated, in writing, that a potential conflict of interest exists. The veto cannot be used to reject BOE team members based on philosophy or background.

6. Any perceived inadequacies of NCATE procedures or processes should be reported by the institution at the time of their occurrence rather than withheld until after the UAB has taken action.

7. Institutional personnel should refrain from publicly criticizing those individuals participating in the accreditation process as BOE or UAB members.
Early Planning for the Visit

Institutions that continually use performance data for program improvement often find that planning for the visit happens on an ongoing basis. Nonetheless, certain logistics need to be addressed in the months preceding the visit. If you have questions as you prepare for the visit, contact the NCATE office via e-mail (ncate@ncate.org) or telephone (202 466-7496).

Institutional Contact Information

NCATE recognizes three individuals as having formal responsibility for accreditation: the president or chief executive officer of the institution; the designated head of the unit; and the NCATE coordinator. The NCATE coordinator is the individual designated by the unit to administer the accreditation efforts on campus. In some institutions, the head of the unit and the NCATE coordinator are the same.

One of the first steps in planning for the visit is to make sure that NCATE has the correct name, phone number, and e-mail address for the unit head and NCATE coordinator. Non-accredited institutions should report this information on the “Intent” form. Accredited institutions can check the information in NCATE’s database and ensure that it is correct on the Intent form or annual report form.

The NCATE coordinator and the unit head are the contact persons for NCATE staff, the BOE chair, and all other individuals involved in the accreditation review. Therefore, it is important that any changes in designation or contact information be communicated immediately to NCATE staff. As NCATE moves increasingly toward electronic communication, it is important that e-mail addresses be supplied and updated for all contact people. Changes and additions to the contact information can be communicated to NCATE via e-mail at ncate@ncate.org.

Involvement of the Professional Community

NCATE expects units to involve members of the professional community7 in the design, evaluation, and delivery of professional education programs. Members of this broader professional community should be involved in the

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7. NCATE defines the professional community as full- and part-time faculty (including clinical faculty) in the professional education unit, faculty in other units of the college/university, P–12 practitioners, candidates, and others involved in professional education.
preparation for an accreditation visit. They often serve on committees within the unit that have responsibilities related to the standards. They sometimes join education faculty at NCATE orientations, Holmes Group meetings, and meetings of AACTE, ATE, and other professional associations. They are involved in teaching courses and supervising student teachers and other interns.

During the on-site visit, BOE teams interview cooperating teachers, principals, superintendents, personnel directors in local school districts, and faculty and administrators from Arts and Sciences and other units on campus with responsibility for preparing teachers and other professionals to work in schools. It is important that members of the professional community be involved on a regular basis between NCATE visits.

**Institutional Orientations and Other Professional Development Activities**

Individuals involved in preparing for the accreditation review are strongly encouraged to attend at least one institutional orientation during the preparation period. In addition to providing specific advice and information on the accreditation process, institutional orientations are designed to be professional development opportunities for participating faculty and feature nationally renowned leaders in the field of teacher education. Orientations for continuing accreditation, jointly sponsored by NCATE and AACTE, are held at least twice annually, usually in January and September. NCATE sponsors an orientation for institutions seeking accreditation for the first time; this session is usually held in August. The dates of orientations and directions for registering are available on NCATE’s website.

To stay current with new developments at NCATE and in the accreditation process, faculty should check NCATE’s website. It provides access to presentations by keynote speakers and Microsoft PowerPoint presentations by staff from institutional orientations and other conferences. The “Resources” section of the website also includes papers, samples of institutional reports, and links to electronic exhibits.

AACTE sponsors sessions on accreditation at its annual meeting and organizes workshops throughout the year on developing issues related to teacher education that may be valuable to institutional representatives as they assess and
improve programs. Many of NCATE’s constituent members (e.g., the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Council for the Social Studies, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children) host sessions on NCATE, professional standards, and the program review process at their annual meetings. Faculty are encouraged to attend these sessions as well, particularly if they are preparing program reports.

**State Partnership Protocols**

Before beginning preparation for the accreditation review, the unit should ascertain if it is located in a state that has a partnership with NCATE. At this writing, 46 states including the District of Columbia have partnerships with NCATE. Partnerships are being explored with the remaining five states and Puerto Rico. To determine whether a particular state is a partner state, select the link “State Partners” on the home page of NCATE’s website.

In partnership states, many elements of the NCATE accreditation process have been combined with the state program approval process in a formal arrangement between the state and NCATE. These agreements are described in the State/NCATE protocols that can be downloaded from NCATE’s website. The terms of state partnerships are periodically renewed and revised; therefore, the agreement between NCATE and the state may have changed since the last accreditation review.

The terms of the state partnership determine whether a unit is required to submit program reports as part of its accreditation review. In some states, institutions are not required to submit their programs for review of the national specialized professional associations (SPAs), although they always have the option of doing so. In other partnership states, NCATE’s program review process replaces the state’s review of some or all programs.

In many partnership states, NCATE conducts joint on-site visits with the state agency responsible for program approval. The nature of the joint visit differs from state to state and is dependent on the framework selected by the state. The State/NCATE protocol for the joint visit, which is available on the website, describes the nature of the joint visit, the size of the team, and other details related to the visit. A unit in a partnership state should study the
protocol to determine when state requirements substitute for NCATE requirements and other details related to the planning and conduct of a joint visit.

In some cases, the state agency appoints a state team that reviews education programs using state standards. Where possible, the NCATE and state teams interact and share interviews and findings, but the two teams operate and make decisions independently. A few states have tripartite agreements with NCATE that include the state agency and the Board of Regents or the state agency responsible for higher education. These details are outlined in the State/NCATE protocols.

Regardless of the type of partnership, all institutions in partnership states should negotiate visiting dates with the appropriate state agency before submitting the Date Preference Form to NCATE. NCATE will accept the visit dates on which the institution and state agency have agreed. The dates should be submitted to NCATE at least one year before the visit. For institutions seeking their first accreditation, dates are considered finalized after the institution has attained candidacy status.

An institution should arrange a previsit about two months before the visit with the chair of the BOE team, the chair or co-chair of the state team, and the state consultants from the appropriate state agencies. The previsit provides the opportunity for the involved parties to determine how the state and NCATE teams will work together. At the previsit, the BOE and state team chairs should also clarify roles that may be undertaken (e.g., helping to collect evidence, writing the report) by the different parties participating in the visit, including NEA and AFT consultants and observers. Scheduling of interviews, off-site visits, and other details can be clarified at this time.

**Budget for the Visit**

Institutions are required to pay the actual travel, hotel, meal, and report production costs of the members of the BOE who visit their campus every five years. They must also pay the actual expenses incurred by the team chair during the previsit. The institution is ultimately responsible for these costs, whether the expenses are incurred directly, direct-billed to the institution, reimbursed directly by the institution, or processed by NCATE and then billed back to the institution. The general guideline for budget purposes in advance
of the visit is to assume that $1,000 per team member will be incurred in total direct costs. The number of team members to be assigned is usually three to eight persons and is determined by the NCATE Accreditation Department based on factors including the number and size of the institution’s programs and the state protocol in place.

NCATE generally processes the bills for the airfare or other transportation costs of the team members. Team members also submit travel vouchers for their out-of-pocket expenses to the NCATE office following the visit rather than to the institution; NCATE’s smaller Finance Department is able to process these bills more quickly than most institutions. Allowable out-of-pocket expenses for team members include mileage to and from the home airport or to and from the visit, parking and tolls at the home airport, meals at times or locations not provided by the institution, and ground transportation from the airport to the institution. If the institution is directly paying these expenses usually processed by NCATE, please notify the NCATE Finance Department to reduce the follow-up after the visit.

In the past, NCATE sent the institution an invoice for the projected costs it would process, approximately 4–8 weeks before the visit; after the visit, NCATE reconciled the actual costs against the advance paid and refunded or billed the difference. However, the issue of “estimated” or “advance” expenses has become an increasing problem for institutions’ internal controls policies regarding travel expenses. Rather than working through exceptions to the process following receipt of the invoices for the “advance,” NCATE now bills each institution in full for the actual expenses as soon as the Finance Department has accounted for each airfare and received all the reimbursement vouchers from the team members. A one-page summary report of the expenses is provided with the invoice; further documentation is provided to the institution on request. If particular terminology on the invoice is helpful to an institution (for example, referring to an “Accreditation Review Fee” instead of calling it “Accreditation Visit Expenses”) please contact the NCATE Finance Department so that we can coordinate with you.

In addition to the travel expenses NCATE processes, the institution is directly responsible for paying the expenses and for making the arrangements at its site. This includes individual hotel sleeping rooms, any and all meals that can be pre-arranged, ground transport, and hotel or campus workrooms for both the NCATE team and the state team, if applicable. This strategy gives the
institution as much cost control as possible, i.e., if the institution sends a graduate student to the airport to meet team members, the need for rental cars will be reduced. It also minimizes the out-of-pocket or credit card load to our Examiners, who are volunteers, many of them classroom teachers. If it is not possible for the institution to set up direct-billing arrangements with the hotel, please contact the NCATE Finance Department for guidance and assistance. Other direct expenses related to the on-site review include the Sunday evening function, and refreshments, computer rentals if necessary, and supplies provided for the team members in their workroom. Indirect or overhead expenses of the visit include release time for a coordinator of the review, secretarial support, and costs of gathering data.

Some expenses are incurred prior to the on-site review. The costs of typing, copying, and shipping of preconditions materials and program reviews should be planned for 18–24 months prior to the visit. Some institutions, especially large ones, give release time for a coordinator of the review and may assign a secretary and/or graduate assistant to the project as well. Other related costs might be faculty attendance at one of NCATE’s institutional orientations or AACTE’s professional development workshops.

**Selection of a Visit Date**

The continuing accreditation visit is generally scheduled for the same semester five years after the preceding NCATE review. Although institutions are expected to maintain the five-year scheduled visit, delays of up to two semesters are granted by NCATE for good cause. In addition, there are times when NCATE or the state may request the delay of a visit. In most cases, when delays are granted at the request of an institution, the NCATE review following the delayed review will be scheduled five years from the semester of the originally scheduled review.

NCATE asks the unit to submit its preferred visit dates at least one year prior to the scheduled on-site review. If the institution is in a partnership state, the unit must have the date approved by the state agency before submitting it to NCATE. The dates may be submitted on NCATE’s “Date Preference Form” or in a letter or e-mail from the unit head or her/his designee.
The unit should check its school calendar to ensure that candidates and faculty will be on campus during the visit and that participating schools (field sites or professional development schools) are also in session. The dates of professional meetings (e.g., AACTE or AERA) that may be attended by faculty should be checked for conflict as well. Also, the unit should not schedule a visit on major religious holidays.

NCATE visits officially begin on Saturday and adjourn between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Wednesday, except under special circumstances that require a longer or shorter visit or a different starting day. The template for the BOE visit allows for some flexibility in the starting and ending times for the visit. Although most BOE teams will begin their review of exhibits on Saturday afternoon, teams visiting large institutions may need to begin their review of the exhibit room on Saturday morning. In some cases, team members may have to arrive on Friday evening and stay over Wednesday night to accommodate travel between their homes and the institutions. Some team chairs arrange to stay overnight on Wednesday to complete the compilation and editing of the BOE report.

Careful planning for the on-site visit usually ensures that the visit operates smoothly and reflects well on the institution and unit. Logistical details should be arranged in consultation with the BOE team chair.

**Electronic Submissions**

During the early planning for the visit, the unit leadership should decide whether the unit will (1) submit documents electronically and/or (2) place exhibits on the unit’s website. Although NCATE does not require the submission of documents electronically or web-based exhibit rooms, many institutions use the NCATE visit as an opportunity to develop a website that serves the needs of both the unit and the BOE team. A growing number of institutions find it more efficient to submit the “Intent” form, preconditions, program reports, program rejoinders, and institutional report electronically. Electronic submissions save printing and shipping costs. NCATE already requires institutions to respond to their annual reports electronically. Check the “Resources” section of NCATE’s website for guidance on submitting reports electronically.

Making these decisions early is important because it is likely to require a technology specialist. Sometimes faculty who are assisting with preparations for the
accreditation visit have this expertise, but more often undergraduate students, graduate students, or web specialists provide the support needed to develop web-based exhibits. Web-based exhibits are discussed in detail later in the handbook under “Finalizing Preparations for the Visit.”

**Responding to Program Standards**

Program reviews—whether they are conducted by the state, NCATE, or another national accrediting association—are a critical part of the data considered by BOE teams. Institutions must submit program documentation, including candidate performance data, that responds to professional standards for NCATE and/or state review. BOE teams rely on the results of these reviews as evidence of candidate proficiency in specific program and content areas.

**State Partnerships and the Program Review Process**

Depending on its state’s relationship to NCATE, an institution undergoing NCATE accreditation must submit its programs for review by the national specialized professional associations (SPAs) that have NCATE-approved program standards, and/or to the state agency responsible for program approval. As of this writing, 46 states including the District of Columbia have partnerships with NCATE. In these states, institutions are required to have programs reviewed by one of the two entities, depending on the nature of the partnership. In states with which NCATE does not have a partnership, institutions must undergo both the state and the NCATE program review. A chart on NCATE’s website denotes NCATE’s relationship with each state.

In most states in which the partnership defers the program review process to the state, the institution has the option to submit its programs to NCATE for review as well (see the section on National Recognition).

Institutions submitting program reports to NCATE must do so three semesters before a first accreditation visit, or two semesters before a continuing accreditation visit, according to the process and timelines described below.

**NCATE’s Program Standards**

Unless the terms of a state partnership dictate otherwise, the accreditation process requires preparation of program reviews for all professional education
programs for which NCATE has approved program standards. As of 2002, NCATE had program standards in the following 18 areas:

- Computer education
- Early childhood education
- Elementary education
- English/language arts education
- Health education
- Instructional technology specialists
- Reading specialists and supervisors
- School administrators
- School library media specialists
- School psychologists
- Science education
- Social studies education
- Special education
- Teaching English to speakers of other languages
- Technology education
- Mathematics education
- Middle level education
- Physical education

NCATE program standards can be viewed and downloaded from NCATE’s website. Each set of standards is preceded by specific instructions as to the type of program covered by the standards, whether separate reports must be completed for different grade or award levels of a program, and other program-specific instructions. In general, each program report consists of a cover sheet for providing basic information about the program and the report preparation, an overview of the program, and evidence addressing each program standard.

**NCATE Program Review Process and Timelines**

The NCATE program review process is centrally managed by NCATE staff, who receive the reports from institutions, disseminate reports to the SPAs, and receive responses from the SPAs according to a fixed annual calendar (see below).

Program reports submitted for the spring semester review cycle must be submitted to NCATE by February 1. Program reports submitted for the fall
review cycle are due by September 15. Institutions preparing for a first accredit-
ation visit submit program reports three semesters before the semester of the
intended on-site review, while institutions preparing for a continuing accredi-
tation visit submit reports two semesters before the visit. According to this
timeline, for example, an institution preparing for its first accreditation visit
in fall 2005 would submit its program reports by February 1, 2004. An
institution preparing for a continuing visit in fall 2005 would submit reports

Reports that are received after the February 1 or September 15 deadlines will
be held in the NCATE office for submission in the next review cycle.

Reviewers trained by the SPAs evaluate programs against standards that have
been adopted by NCATE’s Specialty Areas Studies Board (SASB). Results of the
reviews are communicated in SPA reports that indicate standards that have been
met, areas for improvement, and whether the program is nationally recognized.

Institutions that do not receive national recognition as a result of the SPA re-
view may prepare a rejoinder addressing the concerns and/or providing addi-
tional information, as directed by the SPA report. Rejoinders may be
submitted to NCATE by September 15 or April 15. The rejoinder schedule al-
 lows institutions a minimum of two months to prepare a response. According
to the timeline, institutions preparing for a continuing accreditation review
have the opportunity for one rejoinder, while institutions preparing for a first
accreditation visit are allotted enough time for the submission and review of
two rejoinders, if necessary. Although exceptions occur, NCATE expects the
review process to be completed by the time of the on-site visit; extending the
rejoinder process beyond that time is not encouraged.

The SPA reports are used by BOE teams as evidence of the quality of candi-
dates in programs offered by the unit for Standard 1 on Candidate Knowledge,
Skills, and Dispositions and other unit standards. NCATE does not require
that all programs receive national recognition before an accreditation visit, but
does require that all applicable programs undergo review as part of the accredi-
tation process. It is possible for an institution to have a successful accreditation
visit even if several programs have not been recognized. However, an institu-
tion that does not submit all required reports according to schedule, does not
prepare rejoinders, and/or has not received recognition for most or major pro-
gram by the time of its visit may have difficulty providing sufficient evidence
that it meets Standard 1. All program reports, rejoinders, and SPA reports
should be available in the exhibit room during the on-site visit.
February Review Cycle
February 1
Program reports from institutions are due at the NCATE office.
July 15
SPA reports are due at the NCATE office.
September 15
Institutional rejoinders to the SPA reports are due at the NCATE office.
January 15
SPA reports on the rejoinders are due at the NCATE office.

September Review Cycle
September 15
Program reports from institutions are due at the NCATE office.
February 1
SPA reports are due at the NCATE office.
April 15
Institutional rejoinders to SPA reports are due at the NCATE office.
September 1
SPA reports on the rejoinders are due at the NCATE office.

Preparation of Program Reports

In most cases, program faculty are required to prepare a full program report that provides data on candidate performance that show candidates have developed the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of professionals in their field. However, for programs that were approved by a SPA at the previous NCATE review, the institution may only need to submit an interim report if the applicable standards have not undergone revision since the last review. The interim report requires the institution to describe changes, evaluations, and improvements that have occurred in the program since the last review and also requires the institution to address any areas for improvement, concerns, and/or unmet standards from the previous review. (In some cases, the SPA will have additional requirements for institutions preparing an interim report.)

Approximately two years before an institution’s continuing accreditation visit, NCATE staff will send a report to institutions that lists all programs and recognition status (as applicable) as they are recorded in NCATE’s database and provides information to the institution on what program reports are due to NCATE in the following year, including the edition of program standards to be addressed in those reports and whether or not an interim report may be submitted in lieu of a full report.
Program Report Submissions during the Transition Period

NCATE SPA reviewers adhere to the transition plan to performance-based accreditation, described in a previous section of the handbook. Reviewers recognize that a program may not have a fully implemented performance assessment system in place at the time it is submitting a program report. For example, faculty may have begun to introduce performance-based activities and assessments into some courses or components of a program but may not yet have assessment data to fully document the proficiencies of its candidates as specified by the standards. In this case, it is acceptable for the institution to include descriptions of planned assessments as evidence for meeting standards. However, in all cases, program reports should also provide what data are available to document candidate proficiencies based on current methods of assessment. Some SPAs may also require submission of a description of the program or unit’s planned performance assessment system with the program report.

SPA reviewers accept “planned assessments” as part of evidence for meeting standards based on the timeframes outlined in the NCATE transition plan. For example, according to the transition plan, an institution with a fall 2003 visit is expected to be in the second year of implementing a performance-based assessment system at the time of the visit. The program reports it submits in September 2002, therefore, should reflect that the program is, at a minimum, in the first year of that implementation schedule.

All SPA standards are revised on a five-year cycle, and SPAs have been directed to develop performance-based program standards as part of their next revision process. As of 2002, approximately half of the SPAs have performance-based standards. However, SPAs that have not yet gone through the revision process have edited their current standards to reflect that performance data—as well as “input evidence”; e.g., courses, experiences, assignments—will be accepted as evidence of meeting standards.

Program Reviews by the State

Institutions located in states in which the program review process is conducted by the state should contact their state agency for information on timelines and process for review. Institutions may also refer to the state protocols on NCATE’s website for information on how the NCATE accreditation process is conducted in their state.
In State/NCATE partnerships in which the state conducts the program review process, the state’s own program standards are to be aligned with national program standards as a condition of the partnership. Furthermore, SPAs have recognized state standards and the state review process in some states as equal to a national review. In these states, programs are accepted by SPAs as nationally recognized based on the state’s review. (Contact NCATE program review staff for specific information on state national recognition authority.)

**Accreditation by Other National Specialized and Professional Associations**

NCATE accepts the decisions of applicable programmatic accrediting agencies that are recognized by either the U. S. Department of Education (USDE) or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as evidence of program content quality. These agencies include the following accrediting bodies:

- American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB),
- American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AACS),
- American Library Association (ALA),
- American Psychological Association (APA),
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA),
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP),
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD),
- National Association of Schools of Dance (NASC),
- National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), and
- National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST).

Institutions preparing for NCATE review do not have to submit program reports for areas that are currently accredited by a recognized programmatic agency. The letter or report that conveys current accreditation status should be available to the BOE team in the unit’s exhibit room. The accreditation by another national agency indicates that the program meets national content standards. Although a program report is not required, these programs are expected to contribute to the unit’s meeting of the six NCATE unit standards.
National Recognition

Programs that are “recognized” by the SPAs, through either the NCATE or a state review process, are considered to be “nationally recognized” programs. This designation signifies that the program meets current national standards for program quality in that field. Nationally recognized programs are listed in SPA publications and/or websites. By the end of 2002, NCATE’s website will also list all nationally recognized programs. Programs that receive national recognition may note that status in advertisements or publications.

Institutions located in states in which the state conducts the program review process have the option of submitting program report(s) to NCATE in order to achieve national recognition, in addition to submitting programs for state review. Before pursuing this option, however, the institution should check with the state or NCATE to determine whether its state review may confer national recognition, as described above.

The dates of national recognition are correlated to the unit’s accreditation cycle. For example, an institution with a fall 2005 accreditation visit might receive national recognition for its elementary education program(s) in spring 2005. NCATE will consider that program to be nationally recognized from fall 2005 through its next five-year program review cycle, which should be complete in fall 2010.

Preparing the Institutional Report

The professional education unit is required to write and submit an institutional report (IR) that describes the unit’s conceptual framework and evidence that demonstrates that the six standards are met. In continuing accreditation visits, the IR also serves as primary documentation of the unit’s growth and development since the last accreditation visit.

The unit is required to submit two copies of its IR and two copies of its undergraduate and graduate catalogs to NCATE. One copy of the IR and catalog(s) must be sent to each member of the BOE team, each member of the state BOE team on a joint visit, the state consultant, and the NEA or AFT representative. The IR must be sent 60 days prior to the on-site visit.

It can be transmitted to NCATE, BOE members, state consultants, and state NEA and AFT representatives via regular or overnight mail. Alternatively, the
IR may be submitted electronically to NCATE and visiting team members. An electronic report may include links to relevant exhibits, but the narrative, including appendices, should not exceed 100 pages. If the report is being submitted via an e-mail attachment, the unit should send it to NCATE’s Assistant for Information Management at ncate@ncate.org. If the IR is available on the institution’s website, the unit should send the link to the URL to NCATE and team members via an e-mail message. If a paper copy of the IR is being submitted, it must be bound.

All IRs should include a cover sheet that identifies:

- the name and address of the unit and institution,
- the dates of the scheduled BOE visit,
- the unit’s website address, and
- the NCATE contact person and his/her e-mail address.

The institutional report, including any appendices and attachments, cannot exceed 100 pages in length and should be single-spaced with 12-point type and with double spaces between paragraphs. NCATE may return an IR to an institution if it exceeds the page length or does not include the information described below. An incomplete IR could prevent a visit from occurring on schedule.

The IR should include a table of contents and three sections: Overview of the Institution, Conceptual Framework, and Evidence for Meeting Each Standard. Each section is described below. Samples IRs from different types of institutions can be accessed in the “Resources” section of NCATE’s website. A growing number of institutions also have their IRs available on their institutional websites.

**Overview of the Institution**

This section sets the context of the visit. It should clearly state the mission of the institution and the unit. It should also describe the characteristics of the unit and identify and describe any branch campuses included in the review, other off-campus sites, alternate route programs, and distance learning programs. The overview should include any other information to help the BOE team understand the unit (e.g., residential or commuter, religious affiliation, and characteristics of the student body).
This section should also list all programs offered by the unit that prepare individuals to work in P–12 schools. It should include the following information for each program in tabular form:

- the program name, award level (type of degree or licensure), program level [initial teacher preparation (ITP) or advanced preparation (ADV)], number of candidates currently enrolled;
- the state agency and/or NCATE–affiliated specialty organization or other accrediting body reviewing each program; and
- the status of the program reviews.

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<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Award Level</th>
<th>Program Level (ITP or ADV)</th>
<th>Number of Candidates</th>
<th>Agency or Association Reviewing Program (State, SPA, or Other)</th>
<th>Status of National and State Program Reviews</th>
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**Conceptual Framework**

This section provides an overview of the unit’s conceptual framework(s). The overview should include a brief description of the framework(s) and its development. For continuing visits, changes in the conceptual framework since the last visit should be related to revised or refined unit, professional, and/or state standards and assessments. The discussion of the framework(s) should concisely summarize the six structural elements of the conceptual framework and each of the six expectations listed as Evidence for Conceptual Framework(s) in the NCATE Unit Standards document: (1) shared vision, (2) coherence, (3) professional commitments and dispositions, (4) commitment to diversity,
(5) commitment to technology, and (6) candidate proficiencies aligned with professional and state standards.

**Evidence for Meeting Each Standard**

In this section the unit should discuss the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each of the six standards. The unit should address each element of each standard as delineated in the rubrics for each standard. Significant differences among programs, particularly between initial teacher preparation and advanced programs, should be described as the response is written for each element. This section of the IR should have the sub-sections listed below:

**Standard 1—Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions**
- Element 1: Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates
- Element 2: Content Knowledge for Other Professional School Personnel
- Element 3: Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates
- Element 4: Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills for Teacher Candidates
- Element 5: Professional Knowledge and Skills for Other School Personnel
- Element 6: Dispositions for All Candidates
- Element 7: Student Learning for Teacher Candidates
- Element 8: Student Learning for Other Professional School Personnel

**Standard 2—Program Assessment and Unit Capacity**
- Element 1: Assessment System
- Element 2: Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation
- Element 3: Use of Data for Program Improvement

**Standard 3—Field Experiences and Clinical Practice**
- Element 1: Collaboration between Unit and School Partners
- Element 2: Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice
- Element 3: Candidates’ Development and Demonstration of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions to Help All Students Learn

**Standard 4—Diversity**
- Element 1: Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Curriculum and Experiences
- Element 2: Experiences Working with Diverse Faculty
- Element 3: Experiences Working with Diverse Candidates
- Element 4: Experiences Working with Diverse Students in P–12 Schools

**Standard 5—Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development**
- Element 1: Qualified Faculty
- Element 2: Modeling Best Professional Practices in Teaching
- Element 3: Modeling Best Professional Practices in Scholarship
- Element 4: Modeling Best Professional Practices in Service
- Element 5: Collaboration
- Element 6: Unit Evaluation of Professional Education Faculty Performance
- Element 7: Unit Facilitation of Professional Development

**Standard 6—Unit Governance and Resources**
- Element 1: Unit Leadership and Authority
- Element 2: Unit Budget
- Element 3: Personnel
- Element 4: Unit Facilities
- Element 5: Unit Resources including Technology
To assist units in addressing Standards 1 and 2 in the first years of implementing the current NCATE Unit Standards, NCATE has developed a transition plan for institutions that will have their on-site visits under the new standards between fall 2000 and spring 2005. (The transition plan does not apply to Standards 3–6.) All units should follow the schedule outlined in the NCATE transition plan described earlier in the handbook for the development and implementation of their assessment systems (Standards 1 and 2), regardless of the date of their next on-site visit by a BOE team.

**Other Information**

In addition to the IR, team members find it helpful to have access to other documents that describe the unit and its programs. BOE members will examine the institution and/or unit website prior to the visit. The unit should ensure that all information posted on its website is current and accurate. In addition, if information from handbooks, catalogs, brochures, and other published documents is not available on the website, the BOE team chair and institution’s NCATE coordinator should determine jointly other information the unit should send to BOE team members. Other information that teams find helpful to review before the visit are the student teaching handbook and documents on the conceptual framework.

**Hosting the Previsit**

The unit should arrange for the BOE team chair, state team chair/co-chair (if applicable), and state consultant in partner states to conduct a previsit to the institution. The previsit should be scheduled about 60 days before the on-site visit. The previsit is usually no longer than one day in length. The previsit should include the unit head, the unit’s coordinator of the visit, the state consultant, the BOE team chair, and the state team chair or co-chair if the visit is being conducted jointly with the state agency.

The BOE team chair should receive the institutional report and college catalogs before the previsit. The following items should be discussed during this meeting:

- the nature of the accreditation visit and NCATE’s expectations;
- roles of the BOE team, state consultant, state team (if a joint visit), state NEA and AFT representatives, and key institutional representatives;
- organization and contents of the exhibit room;
- interviews, class observations, school visits, and off-campus visits to be scheduled;
- template for the conduct of the visit, including the organization of the Sunday evening function with institutional representatives and the exit conference;
- supplementary materials to be sent to the team before the visit;
- logistical arrangements for travel, hotel requirements, meals and refreshments, and the team workroom on campus; and
- technology expectations and requirements on the part of the institution and BOE members.

The BOE team chair should also meet with the president/chancellor and/or the provost or vice president during the previsit to provide an overview of the upcoming visit, answer questions about NCATE and the review process, and determine what he/she would like to learn from the visit. This meeting gives the chief executive officer the opportunity to provide input at an early stage of the review process.

**Finalizing Preparations for the Visit**

There are many details to finalize during the six months before the on-site visit. Hotel rooms should be reserved for the BOE team members, state team members if a joint or concurrent visit, and state representatives. These arrangements may need to be made even earlier if the visit is scheduled during a major event on campus such as homecoming or a sports event. The team chair usually wants to stay at the hotel during the previsit to check the facilities.

Before the previsit, the unit leadership should identify the individuals and groups who should be interviewed by the BOE team. During the previsit, the team chair(s) adds to this list to ensure that the team collects the data needed to make decisions. During the previsit, the team chair(s) should review the organization and location of the exhibit room. If the exhibit room is web-based, it should be near completion by the previsit.
Logistical Arrangements

Logistical arrangements for the on-site review by a BOE team should begin months before the scheduled visit to ensure that the visit runs smoothly. Usually the NCATE coordinator is responsible for this planning. The following checklist should guide the NCATE coordinator in making the necessary arrangements:

- Schedule a previsit for the BOE team chair, state consultant, and/or state team chair or co-chair. Begin making these arrangements soon after you receive the name of the chair from the NCATE office.

- Make hotel/motel reservations for all team members and state representatives. The following suggestions should determine the selection of a hotel:
  - The hotel should be located near the campus in order to minimize travel time.
  - A private single room should be reserved for each BOE team member and state representative.
  - A meeting room in the hotel where team members may work upon their arrival and throughout the visit should be reserved. This room should accommodate work space for the team that will include computers and printers. If the state will have its own team working concurrently with the BOE team, two separate workrooms will be required.
  - The team chair should be consulted regarding how he/she would like the hotel meeting room arranged and the types of supplies that are needed.
  - Because meals are often used as work sessions, there should be a restaurant in or near the hotel. Except for Sunday night, institutional representatives should not eat meals with team members.
  - Direct billing to the college/university for the hotel should be arranged if at all possible. If it is not possible to arrange for direct billing of hotel expenses, please contact NCATE’s Director of Finance.
• Plan transportation for team members upon arrival and departure and between the hotel and institution. The arrangements should be made in consultation with the BOE team chair.
  ◦ Provide all team members and state representatives with directions to the hotel and campus. Indicate what airport should be used.
  ◦ Let team members know the best type of ground transportation from the airport to the hotel, approximate cost of ground transportation, and approximate travel time from the airport to the hotel.
  ◦ Arrange transportation between the hotel and the institution for the duration of the visit. Sometimes team chairs request the provision of a van or station wagon for the team to use during the visit.

• Make the following provisions on campus:
  ◦ Set up a workroom for the BOE team. This workroom might double as the exhibit room (see below), but it should not be used for individual or group interviews. The workroom should provide as much privacy as possible. Check with the BOE chair to determine how he/she would like the room arranged. Also check with the BOE chair as to supplies that should be available in the campus workroom, as well as what technology is required or desired by the team (i.e., PCs and/or Internet access).
  ◦ Set up an exhibit room with materials that the BOE team should review while on campus. All of the items in the exhibit room should be clearly marked and there should be a directory of exhibits listed alphabetically and/or by standard. If any or most of the exhibits are accessed electronically, PCs as well as instructions for access to electronic documentation should also be provided.

• Provide the following technology for use by the team members throughout the visit. Check with the team chair for additional information about technology needs. In consultation with the team chair, the following technology provisions should be made:
  ◦ Multiple computer workstations with access to website in exhibit room.
  ◦ Multiple computer workstations with access to website in hotel.
Printing capacity in workroom and at hotel.

CD of website and list of additions since creation of disk.

Name and telephone number of technology support person.

Orientation to website as part of introduction to the unit.

E-mail address for NCATE team while on site.

Arrangements for video-conferencing of interviews at off-campus and branch campus sites.

- Arrange support services for the BOE team during the visit. This support might include the following:
  - Support staff assistance if requested by the team chair.
  - Access to photocopying facilities.
  - Convenience of access to a public telephone, restroom facilities, and kitchen or vending machines.
  - Arrangements for off-campus visits.
  - Arrangements for observation of professional education classes.
  - Access to candidate and faculty records on campus.
  - Access to samples of candidate products (e.g., papers, theses, portfolios, and dissertations).

- Arrange for interviews and off-campus visits as outlined in the template for the visit and agreed upon with the team chair and state consultant during the previsit.
- Prepare nametags for BOE members so that they can be clearly identified by institutional representatives. Also consider asking faculty to wear nametags during the visit, particularly in group interview settings.
- Check with the team chair about arrangements for noon meals. Institutional representatives should not plan to eat meals with the team other than on Sunday night.
- Provide clear directions and/or escorts to scheduled interviews. (In some cases, provision of transportation to distant sites on campus may be required.)
• Plan the Sunday evening function (i.e., who should attend and the agenda) with the team chair. If the function is not in the hotel, arrange for team travel to the function.

Announcing the Visit and Third-Party Testimony

All institutions are required to solicit third-party comment on the quality of their programs as part of the accreditation review process.

Both the institution and NCATE are required to announce the upcoming campus visit approximately six months prior to the scheduled review date. NCATE receives written testimony up to three months before the visit. The institution is given the opportunity to respond to any written comments received prior to the on-site review. Third-party testimony and the institutional response, if any, become part of the data that the BOE team considers in deciding whether standards are met.

Institutions should adhere to the following timeline for solicitation of and response to third-party testimony:

*Six months (one semester) before the review.* The institution publishes an announcement of the upcoming accreditation review in at least one edition of a daily circulation newspaper, in which it invites the public to submit written comment to the Board of Examiners, c/o NCATE. The publication(s) chosen should reach the audience that is considered to be the service area of the institution.

*Two to three months before the review.* NCATE forwards copies of any written testimony received to the institution for comment, as well as to the BOE team chair for appropriate follow-up during the on-site visit. If the institution chooses to prepare a written response to third-party testimony, it should provide a copy to both NCATE and the BOE team chair. The institution and BOE chair are also notified if no third-party testimony has been received.

Appointment of the BOE Team

Unless special circumstances dictate differently, a three- to eight-person BOE team conducts the accreditation review. The size of the team depends on a
combination of factors, including the number of candidates and the complexity of the unit and the university. In states with joint NCATE/State visits that include state BOE representatives, a team of three to six BOE members will be assigned. In states in which state BOE members do not join the NCATE team, a team of five to eight members will be assigned. The following guidelines help determine the exact size of teams:

- Three to five persons are assigned to accredited institutions with initial teacher preparation programs only; these programs can be offered at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate level.

- Four to six persons are assigned to small and medium-sized accredited institutions with both initial teacher preparation programs and advanced master’s programs.

- Five to seven persons are assigned to accredited institutions with initial teacher preparation programs and advanced preparation programs at the specialist and doctoral level, and to institutions seeking accreditation for the first time.

- The largest team of six to eight persons will be assigned to large comprehensive institutions with numerous programs and large numbers of candidates and faculty.

Additional team members may be assigned under the following two circumstances:

- The institution has off-campus programs that fall within NCATE’s scope of review but are not located within easy driving distance of the campus. The need to visit off-campus sites is determined by the team chair in consultation with appropriate institutional representatives and NCATE.

- If the visit combines a continuing accreditation review at one level with the first review of the other level, additional team members may be added at the request of the team chair in consultation with institutional representatives.

NCATE staff has responsibility for assigning BOE teams. In most cases a three-member team includes representatives from (a) the organization of

8. For purposes of these guidelines, a large institution is defined as having an enrollment of 500 or more in its professional education programs.
teacher education institutions (*i.e.*, AACTE), (b) a teachers’ organization (*i.e.*, NEA or AFT), and (c) an organization that represents NCATE’s professional content or policymaker constituencies. Every effort is made to include at least one team member from an institution that is similar in type to the institution being visited. Teams will also represent gender and ethnic diversity; exceptions may occur when BOE members withdraw close to the time of the visit.

NCATE sends the name of the team chair to the institution approximately four to five months before the scheduled visit. The institution should receive the names and addresses of other team members two to four months before the visit. A team member will be removed from the team at the institution’s request only if the unit can document that potential conflict of interest exists.

**Assignment of the State Consultant and NEA/AFT Representatives**

If the institution is located in a partnership state, NCATE invites the state education agency responsible for program approval to appoint a state consultant for the on-site visit. NCATE also invites the state affiliates of the National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to appoint a representative to join BOE teams in their state.

In most cases, state consultants and representatives are actively involved in the data-collecting process. They usually participate in the BOE team meetings to provide clarification of state conditions and policies; they also report the data that they have collected in interviews and reviews of documents. These state representatives generally are not asked to assist with the writing of the BOE report, but they may be asked to work with the assigned writers and edit the team’s work.

The state NEA and AFT representatives are not voting members of the team. In most states, the state consultants do not vote; however, state consultants are full members of the team, even chairing the state team, in a few states. The State/NCATE protocols describe the composition of state teams and the role of the state consultant.

The unit should send the state consultants and representatives the same materials mailed to the BOE team members. In most cases, the unit should make
hotel reservations for them, but the state agency and the teachers associations are responsible for travel and maintenance expenses of their representatives.

**Communications with the BOE Team and State Representatives**

Communications with the team chair, team members, and state representatives are conducted primarily through e-mail. The unit may contact the BOE team chair as soon as it receives the chair’s name to arrange the previsit and plan logistical arrangements for the on-site review. NCATE sends the e-mail addresses, mail addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers of team members to the unit head and NCATE coordinator soon after all team members have accepted the invitation to serve on the team. If the visit is being conducted jointly with the state team, the list will include the state team members as well. The team list will also include the names and addresses of the state consultant and NEA and/or AFT representative.

The institutional report, college catalog, and other information requested by the team chair should be sent to team members two months before the visit. If the institutional report is an electronic document, the unit should e-mail the report as an attachment or as a link to the on-line report with directions for access (include password if needed). Similar information should be sent to team members if the institution has placed its exhibits on-line. During the previsit, the team chair may ask unit representatives to contact team members with travel, hotel, and other logistical information.

**Arranging Interviews**

Most of a BOE team’s time on Monday and Tuesday of the visit is spent interviewing individuals and groups. The types of people and groups with whom the BOE team should meet are outlined in the template for the visit. However, the individuals to be interviewed may vary from institution to institution depending on the weaknesses or areas for improvement cited in the previous visit, results of program reviews by SPAs or states, new initiatives undertaken, and/or concerns identified by third-party testimony. In a continuing accreditation visit, interviews focus on activities since the previous NCATE visit that show that the unit continues to meet NCATE standards.
The BOE team chair, state consultant, state chair/co-chair, and institutional representatives should develop a preliminary schedule of interviews during the previsit. Unit representatives should identify key individuals who should be interviewed so that appropriate interviews may be scheduled. The team will need to conduct some interviews to validate information in the institutional report. Other interviewees are selected to provide additional data related to the NCATE standards.

More group interviews and fewer individual interviews are being scheduled by team chairs now than in the past. Two open meetings should be scheduled to provide opportunities for candidates and faculty to talk to BOE team members. The unit should ensure that information regarding the time and location of these interviews is posted and disseminated to applicable parties.

During the visit, team members will be talking with individuals not on the schedule. Team members will interview candidates and faculty in the hallways, lounges, or cafeteria. They may schedule follow-up interviews with individuals from group discussions, and they may need to conduct follow-up interviews with some individuals to clarify issues or concerns raised during the team’s deliberations. Therefore, faculty and administrators in the unit should plan to be flexible in their scheduling for the two days that the team will be conducting interviews. Unless the institution is small, BOE team members will not have the opportunity to interview all faculty members and administrators in the professional education unit and other units that support professional education.

Organizing the Exhibit Room

The exhibit room has traditionally referred to the centralized location in which the unit organizes and displays documents and other evidence that demonstrate the unit meets standards. Today many units are displaying some or all of their exhibits on the institution’s website, which is accessible to team members before they arrive on campus.

Whether electronic or paper, evidence should include unit and program assessments of candidate proficiencies and the effectiveness of the unit. Evidence includes, but is not limited to, end-of-course assessments, internship assessments, candidate portfolios, candidate projects, results of state licensing exams,
follow-up studies, and program evaluations. The unit should also include as exhibits details about its assessment system and assessment instruments being developed and implemented as part of that system.

The unit should clearly label and key to the standards all evidence on-line and in the exhibit room. BOE teams find it very helpful to have evidence labeled or color-coded by standard. The unit should compile a list of all evidence in the exhibit room to distribute to the team. If evidence is located somewhere other than the exhibit room, the list should indicate where to find it. The unit should clearly mark evidence that demonstrates the correction of previously cited weaknesses or areas for improvement to facilitate the work of the BOE team. Electronic exhibits should be designed to facilitate team members’ moving easily through exhibits without scrolling through large documents. For additional information on setting up an electronic exhibit room, read “Guidelines for Electronic Exhibit Rooms” and view the electronic exhibit rooms of selected institutions in the “Resources” section of NCATE’s website.

The unit should compile, aggregate, and summarize candidate performance data for review by team members. Much of the candidate data will be compiled for national and state reviews of programs. Assessments, scoring rubrics/criteria, and samples of candidate work should be available to the team during the on-site visit. The unit should select samples of candidate work (e.g., portfolios) that demonstrate proficiencies at different levels (e.g., unacceptable, acceptable, and accomplished). Generally, such samples will be sufficient to augment the summarized data, but the BOE chair may request additional materials prior to and during the on-site review. The papers “Aggregating Data” and “Aligning Data with Assessments,” which are available in the “Resources” section of NCATE’s website, provide additional suggestions and examples of presenting performance data for the NCATE review.

The types of evidence related to NCATE’s performance-based standards that the unit might make available in its exhibit room include the following. Please note that this list is not meant to be exhaustive, nor is the unit required to include each of these items in its exhibit room. The list provides examples of the types of evidence that the unit can present to demonstrate that it meets NCATE standards. Ultimately, the unit must decide what evidence the team should evaluate to determine whether the standards are met.
Conceptual Framework
1. Conceptual framework(s) documents.
2. Table showing alignment of state, professional, and institutional standards.

Standard 1
1. List of knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected upon completion of programs.
2. Samples of scoring rubrics/criteria used by faculty to judge candidate work.
3. State licensure test scores aggregated by program area and reported over several years (Title II data reported to the state for the last year must be available to the team).
4. Aggregated data on performance of candidates on assessments of a cohort of candidates.
5. Summaries of assessments of candidates, including those used (a) at entry, (b) prior to the student teaching/internship, (c) at completion of the student teaching/internship, and (d) at program completion.
6. Samples of candidate work (e.g., portfolios).
7. Data on performance of graduates in classrooms and schools in the first years of practice.
8. Follow-up studies of graduates.
10. Program reports prepared for national review, rejoinders, and SPA Reports.
11. Program reports and findings of other national accreditation associations related to the preparation of education professionals (e.g., ASHA, NASM, APA, CACREP).
12. Most recent report prepared for a state approval visit and the state’s findings. If the visit is being conducted jointly with the state, the teams will share findings during the visit.
13. Expected dispositions, assessments used to determine dispositions, and summary of candidate performance.

Standard 2
1. Assessment system plan or descriptions of assessment system.
2. Samples of assessments used to ensure that candidates are ready to progress through the program and enter the profession.
3. Findings of unit evaluations of operations and/or programs.
4. File of student complaints and the unit’s response.
5. Unit or institutional policies for handling student complaints.
6. Minutes of meetings on the development and refinement of the assessment system.
7. Description of information technology used to manage performance data.
8. Description of process for evaluating the credibility of critical assessments used to determine if candidates continue in programs.

Standard 3
1. Descriptions of the field experiences and field placements that demonstrate diversity of setting.
2. Candidate work samples.
3. Faculty evaluations of candidates.
4. Summary results of candidate assessments upon entering and exiting field experiences. (Cross-referenced with Standard 1)
5. Internship/student teaching assessment instruments.
7. Criteria for the selection of clinical faculty (both higher education and school faculty).
8. Assessments and scoring rubrics/criteria used in field experiences and clinical practice.

Standard 4
1. Curriculum components that address diversity issues.
2. List of proficiencies related to diversity expected of candidates.
3. Assessments of proficiencies related to diversity.
4. Summary of candidate performance results. (Cross-referenced with Standard 1)
5. Unit policies, practices, and procedures that facilitate experiences with diverse candidates.
6. Unit policies, practices, and procedures that facilitate experiences with diverse faculty, including faculty in other units and P–12 school faculty.
7. Unit policies, practices, and procedures that facilitate diverse field experiences.

**Standard 5**
1. Faculty qualifications and assignments.
2. Summaries of faculty vitae.
3. Samples and summaries of faculty publications and other scholarly activities.
4. Samples of faculty evaluation forms.
5. Summaries of faculty evaluations.
6. Minutes that show collaboration with the professional community.
7. Summary of professional development activities in which faculty have participated.

**Standard 6**
1. Unit budget, with provisions for technology.
2. Lists of facilities, including computer labs and curriculum resource centers.
3. Summaries of faculty workload.
4. Faculty development expenditures.
5. Policies on governance and operations of the unit.
6. Descriptions of the unit governance structure, including organization charts.
7. Minutes of meetings of unit governance committees.
8. Unit catalogs and other printed documents describing admission practices, academic calendars, and grading policies.
9. Recruiting and admission policies.
10. Samples of institution or program advertising.

**General**
1. Institutional report, BOE report, and institutional rejoinder from the previous NCATE review (for continuing visits).
2. All AACTE/NCATE annual reports submitted since the last NCATE review (for continuing visits) or since establishment of precandidacy (for first-time visits).
3. Report from NCATE indicating that all preconditions were met (for first-time visits).
4. Unit catalogs and other printed documents describing general education, specialty/content studies, and professional studies.
5. Demographic characteristics of the institution and its catchment area.
6. A copy of the notice that was placed soliciting third-party testimony.

Team members have found it very helpful to have a list of all the exhibits and an indication of where to find them in the exhibit room or in other locations. The organization of the exhibit room should be discussed with the team chair.

**Developing Web-Based Exhibits**

There are several benefits to creating web-based exhibit rooms. First, electronic exhibit rooms allow BOE members to review documents and other exhibits before arriving on site. This gives BOE members more time to learn about an institution and increases the BOE’s familiarity with the unit’s organization. While BOE members are not required to read the entire website, they are expected to spend a few hours reviewing the site and any exhibits that you make available.

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In addition to supporting BOE work before coming to campus, web-based exhibit rooms also facilitate the work of the BOE once they arrive on campus. A well organized website enables the BOE to access information expeditiously. This will enable BOE members to spend more time reviewing the quality of the exhibits presented and less time determining what exhibits exist.

Many institutions find web-based exhibits beneficial for internal communication and organization. In addition to taking the mystery out of the accreditation process, electronic exhibit rooms support and facilitate the continuous updating of information that is important to your unit. Web-based exhibit rooms also serve as a common and accessible repository for that information. In many instances, faculty or designated staff collect and report candidate assessment data, update resumes and course syllabi, and review and examine program offerings via the web. Further, because of the shared and public nature of the website, some institutions find that it increases accountability and allows faculty to see the results of their work. Some institutions plan to use edited versions of their exhibit rooms as recruitment tools for candidates and faculty members. To access the electronic exhibits of selected institutions, go to the “Resources” section of NCATE’s website.

**Organizing a Web-Based Exhibit Room**

First, it is necessary to develop a plan for the design and development of the electronic exhibit room. Institutions often name a committee or subcommittee of the NCATE committee to develop this plan. They then develop a map of the site, outlining the design and creating a master document list. The plan also specifies a system for collecting and indexing the documents, including who is responsible for collection and due dates. In addition, the plan should identify a “labeling strategy” which includes categories and names of button labels and links. Institutions find it best to use NCATE terminology as much as possible. Your plan should also begin to identify the format for documents. Most institutions find HTML useful, because it can be viewed across computing platforms, requires only browser software to view the pages, and supports additional file types and formats. Please note that NCATE suggests the development of a plan to facilitate the building of a web-based exhibit room; such plans are neither required nor evaluated.

Second, it is important to have a web page designated for the NCATE visit. This page should orient the BOE members to the exhibits that are on-line. It is important that BOE members have a central location where they can learn
which exhibits are available on-line and how the exhibits have been organized. It is completely acceptable to include links on this page to all on-line exhibits, regardless of where they are housed. Some institutions prefer an outline with text-based hyperlinks; others choose to use icons. Clarity is much more important than form.

Third, it is vital that exhibits be organized around the standards and the elements of the standards. The conceptual framework is often presented as a separate document. The institutional report is often presented as an HTML document with a table of contents and links to relevant documents and other evidence. All exhibits should be organizationally connected to a standard and an element. This is important because it will help the BOE team understand which exhibits are presented to address which standards and elements. It is the institution’s responsibility to make connections between evidence and standards. The BOE judges the quality of the evidence presented.

In some instances, one exhibit may address more than one element or be related to more than one standard. Creating links to the exhibit in more than one place is the best way to address this situation. It is also important to ensure that links take the user to the intended documents. Double check links to ensure that they are accurate, especially if you move or rename files.

Fourth, BOE members must be able to navigate between exhibits. Consequently, it is important that all exhibits have links back to the BOE homepage. In addition, the BOE should be provided with a site map (in hard copy or readily visible on the web page) that will provide direction as they move between exhibits. Many BOE members have reported that an index of the site in hard copy is also helpful, in that it orients them to the site and helps them keep track of which exhibits they have reviewed.

**The Look of the Exhibit Room**

Design the site to facilitate finding and accessing information related to the NCATE standards. Although “bells and whistles” can be nice, they are not necessary and sometimes interfere with easy access of information. Try not to use backgrounds that are too busy or that move, as this causes eyestrain for people trying to read the exhibits. Further, be certain that the background and text contrast enough for the print to be easily read. A background that is too light or too dark makes reading difficult.
**Need for a Webmaster**

It is important to remember that web-based exhibit rooms are elective and not required as part of the accreditation process. NCATE encourages institutions to use the resources that they have available to prepare for a visit. At the same time, it is necessary to have content knowledge and a certain degree of technical expertise to design and maintain an electronic exhibit room. Some institutions use graduate students in computer technology colleges and departments on campus, some tap into university or college technology offices, and others find faculty and staff with web skills or hire full- or part-time help to gain access to the needed technical expertise. Faculty, deans, and NCATE coordinators often work together to provide the content knowledge necessary to design and maintain the site.

**Legal Issues**

Some institutions have run into legal questions when creating an electronic website. Some faculty members may not want their resumes or course syllabi on-line for reasons of privacy and intellectual property rights. Further, displaying candidate and P–12 student work on the web, should you choose to do so, could also breach privacy rights if anonymity is not protected. Though accrediting agencies are generally not restricted by privacy issues, the web is public domain. In addition, site licenses and permission to use certain logos may also be required. NCATE encourages you to be cognizant of these issues as you develop your electronic exhibit rooms. Some documents may need to be password-protected or available only in hard copy for review during the on-site visit.

Accredited institutions are encouraged to use the NCATE logo on their websites. The NCATE logo can be downloaded from the “Resources” section of the NCATE website.

**Creation of Back-up Disks**

Once the site has been created, the data entered, and the links tested, it is important to copy the site to two or more CD-ROMs. This is a back-up measure in the event that connections to the Internet are interrupted during the visit. Connections have indeed been interrupted during visits, and the back-up disks have proven to be invaluable. Some institutions have provided each team member a CD to facilitate their work before and during the visit.
Number of Computer Stations On-Site

The extent to which exhibits are on-line dictates whether more than one computer station with Internet access needs to be available to the team. On visits in which the majority of exhibits are on-line, several computer stations with Internet access are in order. BOE team members will want to work simultaneously and will thus need access to the exhibits. The number of stations needed may also depend on how many team members bring their own laptops. On visits in which the majority of exhibits are not on-line, usually one or two stations are sufficient. It is important that the institution discuss such availability with the BOE chair during the previsit.

Informing the Team about the Web Address

The BOE team chair and members should receive the web address with the institutional report. If the institutional report is being submitted electronically, send the team and NCATE information regarding where the report and exhibits can be accessed. Most institutions create a link to the report in an e-mail to the team members and NCATE. Send this information to team members and NCATE approximately 60 days before your visit.

In identifying the web address, check to ensure that the connections work both inside and outside of your intranet. Further, specify if the address is case sensitive. If BOE members must enter the site through a general college or university website or through the website of the school or department of education, specify this in your communication with the team.

If the site requires the use of a password or user ID, please inform the team in communications with them. Again, specify if the password or user ID is case sensitive. Explain the process by which BOE members can access the site and check to ensure that following directions will lead the BOE member to the site. Before sending initial communications to BOE members, some institutions find it helpful to test their initial communication with someone outside of their institution to check the clarity of their instructions and the integrity of their links.

Technical Assistance Needed

BOE team members should have basic computer skills. They should have basic keyboarding skills and be able to access the Internet. In addition, they should be able to navigate your website, if the site is logically organized. Some BOE
members may not be familiar with all plug-ins, so you may need to provide
detailed instructions if plug-ins are necessary to access information on your
site. In addition, BOE members find it helpful to have a brief orientation to
the structure of the unit’s website at the start of the visit.

Both before and during the on-site visit, and while the team is in the hotel,
designate a person with technical expertise to be available to help the team
should difficulties arise. Provide the name and contact information for this
person to the team during initial contact and once the visit starts. The same
person need not provide all of the technical support. What is key is that each
team member knows whom to contact if difficulties arise. This ensures that
BOE members are able to access needed information and that they do not
waste time attempting to address technical difficulties.

**Availability of Web-Based Exhibits**

Ideally, the web-based exhibit room should be up and running at least 60 days
before the visit. This gives the BOE adequate time to review the site before ar-
riving on campus. Should the site not be ready 60 days before the visit, inform
the team when the site is ready and the team will view as much as possible be-
fore arriving on campus.

Many institutions continue building the website until the week before the
visit. If this is the case, then inform the team of major changes and recent ad-
ditions during their orientation to your institution once they arrive.

**Internet Access at the Team’s Hotel**

It is certainly beneficial if the team has access to documents that are on-line
at the hotel site. Generally, one Internet workstation is sufficient, but at least
one institution has allowed team members to borrow laptops, each with access
to the Internet. The electronic exhibit room can also be made available on
CD-ROM, assuring access to the exhibits without requiring Internet access.
The institution should discuss computer access in general and Internet
access in particular with the team chair during the previsit.
Hosting the On-Site Review

During the on-site visit, teams look for evidence that the unit and its programs are current and dynamic and that they meet the standards and maintain a level of quality worthy of professional accreditation. Teams conducting continuing visits also determine whether the weaknesses or areas for improvement cited at the previous NCATE review have been addressed or are being addressed.

The BOE team will be primarily interested in determining the quality of the unit’s candidates and graduates, as measured by their ability to help all students learn. To that end, the BOE team will spend a substantial amount of its time during the visit examining and assessing the data generated by the unit’s assessment system and the quality of that system. As the visit progresses, BOE team members will make initial judgments about the level at which the unit meets each element of the standards. These initial findings will identify areas in which the judgments of team members differ, alert the BOE team of additional data-gathering activities needed on campus and in schools, and focus the BOE team’s discussions as it deliberates on its findings.

Team members also are required to observe a sample of professional education classes and visit schools. The team decides which classes to visit. The NCATE coordinator should prepare faculty to expect visitors if their class is scheduled for Monday or Tuesday of the visit. If there are special circumstances that would preclude these observations, the team chair should be so informed.

Review of Branch Campuses and Off-Campus Programs

The following questions guide a BOE team in its review of off-campus programs:

- What is the institution’s commitment to the off-campus programs?
- Why does the institution offer off-campus programs?
- To what degree do the regular campus faculty deliver the programs?
- What are the qualifications of adjunct faculty?
- Is the curriculum an extension of what is offered on-campus, or is it different?
- What are the differences in the delivery of on- and off-campus programs, and are those differences appropriate?
- Are admissions requirements the same or different to off-campus programs, and are those differences appropriate?
- How many candidates are enrolled in each off-campus program?
- How are off-campus programs financed and administered?

Units should make arrangements for BOE team members to interview candidates, faculty, and administrators in off-campus programs. If candidates can complete their full education program at an off-campus site, the off-campus programs have extensive offerings, or a large number of candidates participate in the off-campus programs, team members will probably choose to visit the sites. In other cases, interviews and tours might be arranged electronically (e.g., video conferences or e-mail communications). If sites that are to be visited are not geographically close to the main campus, additional team members may be added to the team. Decisions about whether to visit one or more off-campus sites is determined by the BOE team chair in consultation with the unit representatives, state consultant, and NCATE.

**Review of Distance Learning Programs**

The following questions guide a BOE team in its review of distance learning programs:

- To what extent are the design and delivery of distance learning programs consistent with the mission of the institution and the unit, supported by a conceptual framework and knowledge base, guided by a long-range plan, and supported by adequate resources?
- Are evaluations of the distance learning programs systematic, ongoing, and used for program improvement? Are evaluation instruments tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of the candidates? How?
- What are the qualifications of faculty members who teach via distance delivery? Are they qualified for their assignments and competent in the methods of delivery?
- To what extent are the balance of part-time and full-time faculty, requirements for scholarship and service, and evaluation processes the same for faculty members who teach via distance learning as for other faculty members?
- What types of technical support are in place for both faculty and candidates, so that technological breakdowns do not interfere with delivery? To what extent are these support systems sufficient and reliable?
• How are distance learning programs, including programs that are acquired through contract with an outside vendor or delivered in a consortium arrangement, controlled, coordinated, and evaluated by the unit?

• Do distance learning programs in professional education ensure that field experiences and clinical practice are well sequenced, supervised by trained personnel and monitored by unit faculty, and integrated into the program? Explain.

• Are distance learning candidates provided the same level of advisement and personal access to faculty, monitoring of progress, and assessment as are provided for traditional candidates? In particular, do assessment measures assure that candidates acquire the competencies and objectives established for individual courses?

**Hospitality**

The only social event that should be scheduled for the BOE team and state representatives is the Sunday evening function, during which appropriate representatives from the institution and unit have the opportunity to meet the team. An exception may be made in a state where state requirements for a joint review dictate a different kind of event. Teams usually schedule working dinners at the hotel or a nearby restaurant on Monday and Tuesday evenings.

**Template for the Visit**

During the on-site review, BOE team members interview selected faculty, administrators, candidates, cooperating teachers, principals, alumni, and other members of the professional community. Key evidence is reviewed and field sites are visited. Team members also observe selected classes that are in session during the visit.

In the conduct of the on-site review, BOE team members use the following template to guide their activities. The selection of interviewees depends, in great part, on who can validate information in the institutional report and annual reports, as well as any claims made in third-party testimony received.

The unit should identify key individuals who they think should be interviewed by the BOE team; the team will identify other individuals and groups to be interviewed. The team chair has the option to modify the template based on the
availability of interviewees and the necessity to accommodate a joint State/NCATE review. Both the institutional representatives and team chair should refer to the template in making arrangements for interviews, class observations, and field-site visits.

### Visit Template

#### Saturday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>BOE Arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional Orientation to Exhibit Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of Evidence in the Exhibit Room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Sunday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning/Afternoon</td>
<td>Orientation Meeting for the BOE Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of Evidence in the Exhibit Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Optional)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Presentation by the Unit</strong>, which could be an oral or multimedia presentation, a poster session in which team members move from program to program to learn about the unit, or presentations of candidate work by candidates. (This presentation could be scheduled on Saturday or before the Sunday evening function.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the first team meeting, the chair will:

1. Provide an orientation for team members that includes:
   
   a. a review of the current standards and emphasis on performance data;
   
   b. a reminder to team members and state representatives about the confidentiality of their work;

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10. At large, comprehensive institutions, the review of evidence may begin Saturday morning instead of Saturday afternoon.
c. a review of issues and recommendations from the most recent “BOE Update” and other correspondence received from NCATE;

d. an orientation to the state process if the visit is being conducted jointly or concurrently with a state team (this session is usually facilitated by the state consultant);

e. a discussion of the format, content, and writing style of the BOE report; and

f. the plan for systematic collection and recording of data.

2. Review preliminary data and make plans for the conduct of the visit, including:

a. making writing and interview assignments;

b. discussing third-party testimony received, as well as any institutional response, to determine needed follow-up;

c. recording each member’s ratings on the “Pre-Planning Instrument” (based on the IR, exhibits, and SPA reports) for the conceptual framework and for each standard and preparation level (i.e., initial teacher preparation and advanced);

d. reviewing the trend data from Form B of the AACTE/NCATE Annual Report to determine needed follow-up;

e. identifying areas of concern related to standards that need to be validated or investigated; and

f. determining the activities scheduled for Monday.
**Evening**

**Sunday Evening Function**

A reception or dinner should be planned for Sunday evening. Attendance is limited to the BOE team, state team members, state representatives, unit head, institution’s NCATE coordinator, and two or three key individuals selected by the unit head (e.g., the president/chancellor and/or the provost or vice president for academic affairs, and department heads). This function should be held in a private room at the hotel or a nearby restaurant. It should be no longer than 60 to 90 minutes. After introductions, the following activities should occur:

- *(Optional)* Institutional presentation of no longer than 30 minutes.
- An overview of the visit by the team chair.
- Additional scheduling or information planning as needed.
- Explanation of the purpose of the exit conference, as well as identification of its time, location, and participants.

**8:00–10:00 p.m. BOE Team Work Session**

The team:

1. reviews plans for carrying out assignments on Monday;

2. identifies documents and/or other forms of evidence not yet located that should be requested from the unit head or coordinator; and

3. for continuing accreditation visits, continues discussions about previously cited weaknesses or areas for improvement and any concerns.
Monday

8:00–9:00 a.m. Team Chair Interview/Meeting with the Head of the Professional Education Unit

8:30–12:00 noon Interviews and Site Visits to P–12 Schools

Scheduled interviews might include:

- academic administrators such as the provost/vice president for academic affairs, deans of academic support areas (e.g., arts and sciences), and graduate dean;
- heads of departments that provide services to professional education (e.g., English, biology);
- department chairs or heads of program areas (e.g., elementary education, curriculum and instruction, special education);
- curriculum committee;
- graduate studies committee;
- faculty council or teacher education committee; and
- faculty committees that have worked on aspects of curriculum development.

12:00–1:30 p.m. Lunch and BOE Team Meeting

1:30–5:00 p.m. Interviews/Site Visits to P–12 Schools/Observations

Interviews might include:

- the major university policy committee (e.g., academic council or academic senate);
- recent graduates who work in the geographic area;
- graduate students and undergraduates in professional education;
• cooperating teachers and administrators;
• student teachers and other interns in the school sites visited;
• the director of clinical/laboratory experiences;
• selected faculty and administrators; and
• others identified by the team.

The team chair checks with team members periodically about the status of their data collection activities to determine what information cannot be found. The chair asks the institution's NCATE coordinator and/or unit head for documentation that cannot be located by the team.

5:00–7:00 p.m. Dinner and Team Meeting
7:00–8:30 p.m. Observations of Evening Classes (optional)
8:30–10:00 p.m. Team Meeting at the Hotel

The team reviews the day's activities and discusses:

a. remaining areas of concern related to standards;

b. activities for Tuesday; and

c. documents and/or other forms of evidence not yet located that should be requested from the unit head or coordinator.

Tuesday

8:30–9:00 a.m. Team Chair Meets with the Head of the Professional Education Unit
9:00–12:00 noon Interviews, Visits to Field Sites, and Observations of Classes
Interviews as Needed with:

- Selected faculty and administrators;
- Head of the professional education unit;
- Dean of Arts and Sciences; and
- NCATE coordinator.

Open Meetings with:

- Faculty; and
- Candidates.

(The faculty meeting should not include administrators. The meeting for candidates should not include faculty or administrators. The time, place and purpose of both meetings should be posted and disseminated.)

12:00–1:30 p.m.  Lunch and Team Meeting

1:30–5:00 p.m.  Interviews and Follow-up Activities

Interviews might include:

- the chief executive officer (i.e., president or chancellor);
- the chief academic officer at the institution;
- the person in charge of admission to the unit;
- counselors and advisors to education candidates;
- leaders of student organizations in education; and
- affirmative action officer.

The team chair checks with team members periodically to determine what information cannot be found. The chair asks the institution’s NCATE coordinator and/or unit head for evidence that cannot be located by the team.
5:00–9:00 p.m.  Dinner and Team Work Session

BOE members: (1) determine characteristics, including strengths and areas of concern, that should be described in the narrative of the report; (2) identify areas for improvement; and (3) determine—by consensus, if possible—the BOE team’s recommendation on whether each standard is met or not met. (If consensus cannot be reached, the team should vote, with the majority prevailing.) Team members take notes during the team’s discussions for inclusion in the BOE report.

9:00–?? p.m.  Writing of BOE Draft Report

Individual members complete assigned section(s) of the BOE report.

Wednesday

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.  Completion of the First Draft of the BOE Report

Individual team members share their initial writing for their assigned standards categories. (Teams are encouraged to have these written responses copied for all team members to review at the 9:30 am work session.)

BOE Team Work Session

At this work session the following activities occur:

a. Each board member presents the written portion of his/her assignment to the full team for approval.

b. Each board member revises his/her section of the report to reflect the comments of the team and submits it to the chair before departing for home.
c. The chair reminds board members that their work of the past four days must remain confidential by referring to the confidentiality statement read on Sunday.

Scheduled between 12 & 3 p.m.

Exit Conference

The BOE team chair meets with the unit head and NCATE coordinator to present a summary of the team’s findings and to describe the next steps of the accreditation process, including the unit head’s review of the draft report for factual errors and submission of the rejoinder. The president and chief academic officer are welcome to attend.

By 3 p.m.

Departure of BOE Team Members

WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE BOE VISIT

After the visit is completed, the BOE team chair edits the team’s worksheets, compiles a draft of the report, and sends copies of the draft to each team member and to the NCATE office. Recommendations from team members and NCATE staff are incorporated into the final draft report.

Once the draft report is finalized, the chair sends one copy of the final draft to the unit head, who should review it for factual errors only and communicate any recommended changes to the BOE chair within five days of receipt of the report. At the chair’s discretion, corrections thus identified will be incorporated into the final BOE report.

Within 30 days of the visit, one copy of the final report is submitted to NCATE by the BOE team chair. NCATE will duplicate the report according to a standard format and send two copies to the unit head and copies to the state agency, as appropriate.
WITHIN 30 DAYS OF RECEIPT OF BOE REPORT

The unit head must acknowledge receipt of the report and has the opportunity to rejoin it. The rejoinder must be received by NCATE 30 days after the receipt of the BOE report. The UAB will determine the accreditation status of the unit at the next meeting after receipt of the institutional rejoinder (usually in the semester following the BOE visit).

The Exit Conference

The BOE team is scheduled to leave campus between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Wednesday. At some point during that time period (at a time scheduled as far in advance as possible), the BOE team chair meets with the unit head and the NCATE coordinator to summarize the team's findings. The president/chancellor and vice president/provost may attend this exit conference as well. The state team chair or co-chair and state consultant usually join the BOE team chair at the exit conference.

In the exit conference, the team chair should reiterate the purpose of accreditation and the expectation that the unit and its programs remain current, continuously assess themselves, and improve over time. The chair provides a general overview of the findings, including its recommendations to the UAB regarding whether or not standards are met, and the areas for improvement that will be cited. The summary of team findings at the exit conference must be consistent with the written report received by the institution.

The team chair should let the unit head know when he/she should expect to receive a copy of the final draft of the BOE report to check for factual errors. The team chair should also remind institutional representatives of the importance of submitting a rejoinder to the areas for improvement cited in the team's report.

The exit conference is usually brief, not lasting more than 15 minutes. It is not appropriate for the institutional representatives to ask questions of the team.
representatives or argue against the team’s findings. Taping of exit conferences is discouraged.

**After the Visit**

Although the BOE team has left campus, the unit has additional steps to finish before the final accreditation decision is rendered by the UAB. The final BOE report should be received approximately 30 days following the visit. However, receipt of the final report can be delayed beyond 30 days when holiday periods intervene. Unit representatives should read the BOE team’s report carefully and prepare a rejoinder, responding to areas for improvement and other concerns raised in the BOE report. The UAB meets in October and March/April to make accreditation decisions. If the UAB decision is other than accreditation, the institution may appeal the decision, requiring the preparation of an appeals document. Each of these steps is described below.

**The BOE Report**

The BOE team chair is charged with writing, editing, and finalizing the BOE report, which comprises the BOE’s official report of its findings. The report documents the BOE team’s recommendations for each standard, cites new areas for improvement, and/or cites or removes previous weaknesses or areas for improvement. In addition, the report provides a rationale for each of the BOE team’s findings.

The BOE report should include a cover sheet that identifies the name and address of the unit and institution, the dates of the visit, and the names of the BOE team members and state representatives. The report should also include a table of contents that divides the report into five sections: introduction, conceptual framework, findings and areas for improvement, a list of the evidence that was reviewed, and corrections to the institutional report. Each section is described below.

**Introduction**

This section provides an overview of the institution, including type (i.e., state, religious affiliation), mission, population served, approximate enrollment, and, for continuing visits, any noteworthy changes since the last visit. It should also indicate whether branch campuses, off-campus programs, alternate route
programs, or distance learning programs exist at this institution and how the team reviewed them. This section provides the context for the visit and describes characteristics of the unit and institution that make the unit unique.

**Conceptual Framework(s)**

This section includes a brief summary of the institution’s conceptual framework(s) and the extent to which it is reflected in the unit and its programs. The BOE team reports on each of the six characteristics identified in the Evidence for Conceptual Framework(s) found in the NCATE unit standards.

**Findings for Each Standard**

This section reports the overall team findings for each standard. This section should have six subsections that are further divided by each of the standards elements identified in the rubrics:

- Standard 1—Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions
- Standard 2—Program Assessment and Unit Capacity
- Standard 3—Field Experiences and Clinical Practice
- Standard 4—Diversity
- Standard 5—Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development
- Standard 6—Unit Governance and Resources

Each subsection should include the BOE recommendation as to whether the standard is met or not met and sufficient rationale to defend the recommendation. Each subsection presents a description and analysis of the evidence as it relates to each of the Elements of the Standard, which are found in the standards rubrics. The BOE team should also draw on data, documentation, samples, and group and individual interviews to provide rationale for its recommendations. Each subsection should present a holistic discussion of the standard using the Elements and evidence presented to support the overall recommendations of the team. The narrative should provide information about how the standard is being met and should include a discussion of areas for improvement as well as any positive aspects of the unit that may have been noted. The narrative should clearly articulate the strengths and areas for improvement.

The BOE team also writes specific statements that clearly identify areas for improvement that are directly related to the standards. The unit may report on
changes related to the areas for improvement in Part C of its annual report. The BOE team that visits the institution in five years will look for evidence that the previous areas for improvement have been addressed.

**Sources of Evidence**

This section includes a list of all individuals interviewed and all evidence reviewed by the BOE team during the on-site visit, including third-party testimony.

**Corrections to the Institutional Report**

This section describes any corrections to the institution’s report that are important for the UAB to know as they read the IR.

Toward the end of the 30-day period, the team chair sends a final draft of the report to the unit head for review and correction of factual errors. Any corrections suggested by the unit head must be communicated in writing within five days to the BOE chair (e-mail and fax are acceptable). Corrections are incorporated into the final report *at the discretion of the chair*. The team chair then sends one copy of the final BOE report to the NCATE office within 30 days after the on-site visit. NCATE staff makes copies of the report and sends two copies, via certified mail, to the unit head and the state partner if there is one.

The BOE report is the property of the institution. It can be released and quoted only at the institution’s discretion. NCATE will not release the report or any parts of the report without permission from the institution.

**Institutional Rejoinder to the BOE Report**

The head of the unit, in consultation with the chief executive officer of the institution, is required to acknowledge receipt of the BOE report and is given the opportunity to comment on it. The institution’s response may simply be a letter that indicates acceptance of the BOE’s findings, or the response may dispute some or all of the findings. The unit may submit supplemental materials pertinent to the facts and conclusions found in the report.

The institutional rejoinder to the BOE report is a vital part of the evidence that the UAB considers as it makes its determination about accreditation. An
audit committee of the UAB reads the IR, the BOE report, the institutional rejoinder, and the BOE team chair’s response to the rejoinder as it prepares its recommendation to the full UAB. The UAB may affirm, revise, or remove BOE citations of areas for improvement based on evidence provided in the rejoinder. The UAB may not accept a team’s recommendation regarding met or not met standards if the data reported by the team or in the rejoinder supports a different decision in the balance of accreditation cases before the Board. Such changes bring consistency to the decisions made by the UAB.

The purpose of the rejoinder is to respond to areas for improvement as well as perceptions of erroneous statements in the narrative section of the BOE report. The rejoinder may also cite any procedural concerns with the visit. If the unit is contesting the judgments of the BOE team, the rejoinder must indicate the grounds for such a stance and provide documentation to support it. This information should be summarized, cited, and included in an appendix as appropriate.

The areas for improvement cited in a BOE report have an impact on the final decision made by the UAB. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the unit respond to all areas for improvement cited in the BOE report with which it does not concur.

The following conditions must be adhered to as the unit prepares the institutional rejoinder:

- All evidence must describe what existed at the time of the on-site review and must have been available to the BOE team. Changes made by the unit after the visit cannot be considered by the UAB in its deliberations.
- All evidence must relate directly to the NCATE standards and procedures that applied at the time of the on-site review.

When the unit does not respond to the areas for improvement cited in the BOE report, the UAB will assume that the unit concurs with the BOE conclusions.

The institutional rejoinder should include:

- a letter from the unit head acknowledging receipt of the BOE report;
- responses to any areas for improvement that the unit believes are erroneously cited;
- perceptions of procedural concerns, if any, regarding the on-site review or accreditation process that might have prejudiced the BOE judgments; and
- appendices that contain information to support any request for reconsideration of the BOE judgments. Data may include information that was not available to the BOE team, as long as it represents conditions that existed at the time of the visit. (If appendices are extensive, only one copy should be submitted.)

The institutional rejoinder must be submitted to NCATE within 30 days of the receipt of the BOE report. When BOE reports are sent to an institution during semester breaks, additional time to prepare the rejoinder will be allowed. The NCATE staff must approve additional time beyond the date indicated in NCATE’s transmittal letter. Upon receipt at NCATE, a copy of the rejoinder will be sent to the BOE team chair. The chair will have the opportunity to comment on the rejoinder.

**Accreditation Action by the UAB**

NCATE’s UAB is responsible for determining the accreditation status of professional education units. This board makes accreditation decisions at meetings held twice a year. The dates of the meetings of NCATE’s boards are published on the association’s website. In most cases, accreditation decisions are rendered at the UAB meeting in the semester that follows the BOE review.

The UAB conducts its review of accreditation cases through the use of audit committees. Each committee is composed of three to five board members who conduct an in-depth review of the documentation for assigned institutions and prepare a recommendation for accreditation. The assigned BOE reports and rejoinders are sent to the applicable audit committee members for review prior to the UAB meeting. The IR, catalogs, and any extensive appendices to rejoinders are also available to the audit committee at the UAB meeting site.

Generally, the audit committee will accept the BOE’s recommendations regarding whether standards are met or not met. However, based on the IR, the BOE report, the rejoinder, and the team chair’s response to the rejoinder, the audit committee has the option not to accept the BOE’s recommendation.
Each audit committee meets with another audit committee to form a joint audit committee. The joint audit committee reviews the recommendations of both committees and reaches consensus. The chair of the audit committee presents the recommendation to the full UAB as a motion. If the motion fails, the accreditation case is remanded to another audit committee.

NCATE reports all accreditation decisions to the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation decisions (including the designation of “accredited with conditions,” “provisionally accredited,” and “accredited with probation”) are also indicated in published lists of accredited institutions and on NCATE’s website. The listings indicate the semester and year of the on-site visit. An institution is also required to notify its candidates of a conditional, provisional, or probationary accreditation decision.

NCATE communicates the action of the UAB to the institution via a letter and an action report from NCATE’s president to the chief executive officer and the unit head of the institution. The appropriate state agency receives a copy of this correspondence if the institution is located in a partnership state. The action report relays one of the decisions outlined below. If the decision is conditional or provisional, the action report also identifies areas for improvement related to unmet standards. If the decision is denial or revocation, all areas for improvement are listed on the action report.

Accreditation Decisions

The UAB renders separate accreditation decisions for the initial teacher preparation and advanced program levels of the unit. The UAB may render different decision for institutions undergoing their first accreditation visit and a continuing accreditation visit. The following accreditation decisions are effective for all institutions with visits scheduled in fall 2001 and beyond. One of the following decisions will be rendered by the UAB.

Accreditation. This accreditation decision indicates that the unit meets each of the six NCATE standards for unit accreditation. Areas for improvement may be cited, indicating problems warranting the institution’s attention. In its subsequent annual reports, the unit may describe progress made in addressing the areas for improvement cited in the letter accompanying NCATE’s action report. The next on-site visit is scheduled for five years following the semester of the accreditation visit.
Accreditation with Conditions (for institutions that were previously accredited). This accreditation decision indicates that the unit has not met one or more of the NCATE standards. When the UAB renders this decision, the unit maintains its accredited status but must satisfy conditions by meeting the previously unmet standard(s).

If accreditation with conditions is granted, the UAB will require (1) submission of documentation that addresses the unmet standard(s) within six months of the accreditation decision or (2) a focused visit on the unmet standard(s) within two years of the semester that the accreditation with conditions was granted. When a decision is made by the UAB to require submission of documentation, the institution may choose to waive that option in favor of a focused visit within two years of the semester that the accreditation with conditions was granted.

If documentation is submitted under the terms specified in the above paragraph, the UAB will decide to (1) continue accreditation or (2) require a focused visit within one year of the semester in which the documentation was submitted. If a focused visit occurs, within one or two years under the terms specified above, the UAB will decide to (1) continue accreditation or (2) revoke accreditation.

If continuing accreditation is granted, the next on-site visit is scheduled for five years following the semester in which the continuing accreditation visit occurred. This scheduling maintains the unit’s original five-year accreditation cycle.

Provisional Accreditation (for institutions seeking their first accreditation). This accreditation decision indicates that the unit has not met one or more of the standards. When the UAB renders this decision, the unit has accredited status but must satisfy provisions by meeting previously unmet standard(s).

If provisional accreditation is granted, the UAB will require (1) submission of documentation that addresses the unmet standard(s) within six months of the accreditation decision or (2) a focused visit on the unmet standard(s) within two years of the semester that the provisional accreditation was granted. When a decision is made by the UAB to require submission of documentation, the
institution may choose to waive that option in favor of a focused visit within two years of the semester that the provisional accreditation was granted.

If documentation is submitted under the terms specified in the above paragraph, the UAB will decide to (1) grant accreditation or (2) require a focused visit within one year of the semester in which the documentation was submitted. If a focused visit occurs, within one or two years under the terms specified above, the UAB will decide to (1) grant accreditation or (2) revoke accreditation.

If accreditation is granted, the next on-site visit is scheduled for five years following the semester in which the first accreditation visit occurred. This scheduling establishes and maintains the unit’s five-year accreditation cycle.

**Accreditation with Probation (for institutions that were previously accredited).** This accreditation decision indicates that the unit does not meet one or more of the NCATE standards and has problems that limit its capacity to offer quality programs that adequately prepare candidates.

If accreditation with probation is granted, the unit must schedule an on-site visit within two years of the semester in which the probationary decision was rendered. As part of this visit, the unit must address all NCATE standards in effect at the time of the probationary review.

Following the on-site review, the UAB will decide to (1) continue accreditation or (2) revoke accreditation. If accreditation is continued, the next on-site visit is scheduled for five years after the semester of the probationary visit.

**Denial or Revocation of Accreditation.** This accreditation decision indicates that the unit does not meet one or more of the NCATE standards and has problems that limit its capacity to offer quality programs that adequately prepare candidates.

Accreditation can also be revoked by action of the UAB under the following circumstances: (1) following an on-site visit by a BOE team initiated by the Complaint Review Committee acting on behalf of the Executive Board; (2) following an on-site visit by a BOE team initiated by the UAB at the recommendation of its Annual Report and Preconditions Audit Committee; (3) following a motion from the President of NCATE to revoke accreditation on
grounds that an accredited unit (a) no longer meets preconditions to accreditation, including but not limited to loss of state approval and/or institutional accreditation; (b) refuses to pay the fees that it has been assessed; (c) misrepresents its accreditation status to the public; (d) has falsely reported data and/or plagiarized information submitted for accreditation purposes; or (e) fails to submit annual reports or other documents required for accreditation.

**Appeals of Accreditation Decisions**

Any institution, state, or association that is the object of an adverse decision, as made by one of NCATE’s governance boards, may appeal that decision. An adverse decision as defined by NCATE’s boards includes: the denial of an application for, or the revocation of, a state partnership; the denial or revocation of constituent membership; the denial of application for, or the revocation of, program standards; and the denial or revocation of institutional accreditation.

An institution may also appeal, in writing, a probationary accreditation decision or a decision to grant provisional accreditation or accreditation with conditions.

An adverse decision and decisions to accredit with probation, with provisions, or with conditions may be appealed only on the grounds that:

1. NCATE standards were disregarded,
2. stated procedures were not followed,
3. (for institutions) evidence favorable to the institution and provided to the Board of Examiners was not considered, or
4. (for institutions) evidence favorable to the institution and provided to the UAB was not considered.

If a college or university believes that one or more of these four conditions was a factor in the denial, revocation, or probation of its accreditation, or a factor in the decision to grant provisional or conditional accreditation, the only available means of redress is through the appeals process.

Although an institution may appeal an adverse, provisional, conditional, or probation decision in which there was a lack of a full number of team members due to last-minute emergencies, that factor alone is not sufficient to uphold an appeal. The institution must convincingly demonstrate that this fact

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11. This appeals policy was revised in October 2000.
made a difference in the accreditation decision. The institution would have to show two things: (1) actual prejudice to it; and (2) that the prejudice changed the accreditation decision. The fact that the institution did not recommend canceling the visit would be evidence that it, at least before the visit, believed that the assembled team would be sufficient to conduct a fair and complete visit.

An appeal is heard by a Review Panel, consisting of five members selected from the Appeals Board. Responsibility for acting on the findings and recommendations of the Review Panel rests with the governance board whose decision is being appealed. The findings of the Review Panel are communicated to the institution in a written report that conveys the basis of the action taken by the Panel. The findings and recommendations of the Review Panel are received by the Executive Board at its first meeting following the hearing. In the case of accreditation decisions remanded to the UAB by a Review Panel, subsequent action will be based on the grounds for appeal that were upheld by the Review Panel and can include, but are not limited to, (1) assigning another BOE team to revisit an institution or (2) reviewing the case again and rendering a second accreditation decision, which may be the same as or different from the original decision. The status of the appellant at the time of the visit remains unchanged until the appeals process has been exhausted.

**Process of Appeal**

The following provisions govern the appellate process:

1. Within 15 days of receiving notice of an appealable decision, an institution, state, or association electing to appeal that decision must present the president of NCATE written notification of its intention to appeal.
2. No later than 30 days from the date that it submits its notification, the institution, state, or association must submit a brief to the president of NCATE that sets forth the specifics of its appeal and includes full documentation.
3. The president of NCATE will appoint a Review Panel, drawn from the Appeals Board, to hear the appeal. One of the appointees will be designated as chair of the Review Panel.
4. No later than 30 days after submission of the appellant’s brief, the Review Panel is convened to hear and act on the appeal. Prior to the hearing itself, the Panel is trained by NCATE staff on the process and
procedures for hearing an appeal, including the decisions that must be made by the Panel.

5. The Panel prepares a written report that conveys the basis of its findings and action taken on the appeal and submits that report to the institution within two days of action taken by the Panel. If the appeal is not upheld by the Review Panel, the decision of the UAB becomes final at this point and is subject to disclosure and notification procedures as described in NCATE’s Policies on Dissemination of Information.

6. If the decision is to deny or revoke accreditation, the appellant shall have the right to appear before the Review Panel to present a 30 minute oral argument on its brief. The appellant shall also have the right to representation by counsel during the appeal but may not call witnesses or introduce new evidence on its own behalf.

7. If the decision appealed is provisional, conditional, or probationary accreditation, the appellant’s right to appeal is limited to the submission of written documentation and the opportunity to make a teleconference presentation to the Review Panel during the half-hour period that precedes the panel’s deliberations on its appeal. The chair of the BOE team and the chair of the appropriate UAB audit committee also participate in the teleconference that precedes the panel’s deliberations.

8. In the case of an accreditation decision review, all evidence presented in the appellant’s brief and considered by the Review Panel must be confined to conditions existing at the time of the BOE team visit as cited in the action report from NCATE.

**Costs of Review**

If the appeal leads to an affirmation of NCATE’s original decision, the appellant will be liable for a set fee (currently $2,000.00) to cover the expenses of the Review Panel. If the panel finds in favor of the institution, the fee will not be assessed.
Part III: Conducting The On-Site Visit: Guidelines For Board of Examiners Teams

The accreditation review is designed to determine whether the unit is producing highly qualified and competent teachers and other professional school personnel. To this end, NCATE expects the unit to be involved in continuous self-assessment and improvement. In fact, the unit may be in the process of planning and implementing changes during the accreditation review period. In conducting its review, the Board of Examiners (BOE) team therefore must consider not only what exists on campus at the time of the visit but also the unit’s responsiveness to changing needs, as well as its commitment and ability to keep pace with current research and reforms in the field of teacher preparation.

In order to gain or maintain accreditation, a unit must demonstrate that it meets NCATE standards. While each standard focuses on a separate aspect of the unit, many standards encompass common expectations critical to the delivery of quality programs. Concepts and themes that are integrated across standards include conceptual frameworks, performance assessment, technology, diversity, and collaboration within the professional community. In the accreditation review, these concepts may help teams think about the unit and standards more holistically. For example, performance assessment, which is the focus of the second standard, is also an important element of standards on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions; field experiences and clinical practice; diversity; and faculty qualifications, performance, and development. Linkages across standards provide an integrated perspective of the unit.

The conduct of the continuing accreditation visit is similar to a first-time (or probation) visit in many ways. The institutional reports for continuing visits and first-time visits are not longer than 100 pages; they each include an in-depth description of how the unit is meeting each of the six standards. The visits are the same length (i.e., Saturday through Wednesday). The interviews that are conducted are the same, and the evidence that the unit is meeting the standards is often very similar. In addition, BOE teams make recommendations as to whether the unit meets each standard in first-time and continuing visits.

Even with these similarities, differences exist in the conduct of continuing and first-time visits. The investigation undertaken by BOE teams differs from that used in a first-time visit. The size of the team for continuing visits is generally
three to eight members; for first-time visits, the team size is five to eight members. Also, in a continuing visit, the BOE team reviews how the unit has responded to any previously cited weaknesses or areas for improvement. Institutions undergoing their first visit will not have any previously cited areas for improvement to which they must respond.

In the continuing visit, the unit’s annual reports, as well as the third-year review of annual reports prepared by NCATE, serve as important resource documents for determining (a) changes that have occurred within the unit and institution and (b) progress made toward correcting weaknesses or areas for improvement since the previous visit. BOE teams should ask about changes noted in annual reports and determine why they were implemented, how they are evaluated, and how evaluations are used to improve the system. Information in the exhibit room serves to document and validate the unit’s activities.

Increasingly, institutions are creating web-based institutional reports with links to supporting documents. Consequently, BOE members must be computer literate and familiar with the Internet in order to conduct reviews.

The evidence presented to the BOE team while on-site and the interviews conducted during the visit provide the primary evidence for the BOE report. The institutional report summarizes evidence that demonstrates that the unit is meeting the standards. Additional evidence, such as samples of candidate work, rubrics used to assess candidate work, trend data of state test results by program, faculty evaluations, unit evaluations, technology plans, etc., is organized by standard in the exhibit room, or increasingly is available on-line. BOE members must plan to spend time reviewing evidence on-site before beginning interviews on Monday. Most BOE teams spend some of Saturday and a large portion of Sunday reviewing evidence.

The information gleaned from a comprehensive review of the evidence not only helps BOE team members contribute effectively to team discussions, it also allows them to ask questions in interviews that build on the data or validate them. In addition, the extent to which BOE members have conducted a comprehensive review of the evidence assures the institution that the team has done its work and is prepared to perform a careful and thorough review of the unit.
BOE team members are expected to review the institutional report, and are encouraged to review evidence that is available on-line prior to the visit. As they review the unit’s documents, BOE members are encouraged to use the planning instrument that is provided to make notations and preliminary judgments about where the unit falls on the rubric that accompanies the standards. BOE members should continue to take notes and revise their judgments as they gather more evidence over the course of the visit.

We expect that changes in procedures will occur as a result of the experiences of teams over time and actions taken by the Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) to improve the process. The changes will be shared with BOE members through the *BOE Update* that accompanies the materials for each visit and through other NCATE publications.

**Board of Examiners**

Members of on-site visiting teams who review institutions on behalf of NCATE are drawn from NCATE’s BOE. The board is composed of representatives from four groups: teacher educators, teachers, state and local policymakers, and specialized organizations, as shown below.
Qualifications for the BOE

Member organizations nominate board members on the basis of demonstrated expertise in professional education, teaching, research, and/or evaluation. Individuals nominated to the BOE should have:

- demonstrated expertise in the field of professional education, teaching, research, and/or evaluation.
- skill in use of evaluation techniques, such as the interpretation of quantified data, use of rating scales and questionnaires, interviewing and observation techniques, and analysis of written information.
- good writing skills: the ability to convey clearly and concisely observations and judgments in writing.
- the ability to make unbiased professional judgments about education units based on the application of national standards.
- good interpersonal skills: the ability to interact with team members and institutional personnel in a courteous and collegial manner and the ability to work toward consensus in team deliberations.
- word processing skills and e-mail access.

As BOE visits are intensive and often involve long hours, nominees should have the stamina to participate fully. The nominating agency must assure that the nominee is aware of the time commitments required for service on the BOE. The nominee should assure that his/her employer is willing to grant the appropriate time (e.g., release, contractual, professional) to accept BOE assignments.

BOE members are initially appointed to three-year terms. They undergo intensive training in the application of NCATE standards and in the conduct of an accreditation review. The performance of team members and the chair is evaluated by the institution and by other team members following each on-site review. In addition, the UAB evaluates the quality of BOE team reports. This information is included in the record of each member of the BOE. At the expiration of a member’s term, NCATE reviews the performance evaluations and makes a recommendation to the constituent organization for either reappointing the member to another three-year term or replacing the member. Members may be reappointed for a second three-year term and reappointed for additional terms after participation in another training session.
Becoming a Member of the BOE

BOE members must be nominated by one of NCATE’s constituent members (e.g., AACTE, NEA, AFT, CCSSO, NAEYC, CEC, or NCTM). To determine whether you belong to one or more of NCATE’s constituent members, visit “About NCATE” on NCATE’s website. Contact the association directly for information on becoming nominated to the BOE. Many have application forms that must be completed for consideration. Potential BOE members should not send letters of recommendation or résumés directly to the NCATE office; all nominations must be submitted by a constituent member organization.

Following nomination by a constituent member, a BOE nominee is invited by NCATE to a training session, which is normally held in either late July or early November. The training is primarily small-group work that simulates the work of BOE teams, but it does include some large-group lectures. Trainees are expected to prepare for the training by completing NCATE’s on-line modules that introduce NCATE’s standards and procedures. They must also attend the training session, which includes a simulation of an on-site visit. NCATE covers all costs of training.

Trainees are evaluated at the end of training by their peers and by trainers who are experienced BOE members. If it is determined, upon review of peer or trainer evaluations, that an individual is unsuitable for BOE work, NCATE contacts the constituent organization and notifies the individual. In these cases, NCATE will train a replacement from the constituent group at the next training session.

Performance Expectations

Following each on-site visit, the performance of BOE members is evaluated by institutions and other national and state BOE members and state consultants who served on the same visiting team. The UAB’s BOE Committee reviews data at its semi-annual meetings about the overall performance of BOE members. These data help determine (1) if changes need to be made in training and (2) whether a member should be removed from the BOE.

Most BOE members begin developing their knowledge and skills during their first BOE training, but they become competent as they participate with
experienced members during their first visits. The performance rubric in the Appendix indicates that BOE members are expected to:

- work effectively as a team,
- use multiple evaluation tools effectively,
- have in-depth knowledge of the NCATE standards,
- conduct on-site visits appropriately, and
- be professional in all aspects of their NCATE work.

To complete training successfully, individuals must be at least at the developmental level. To continue to serve on the BOE, members must be at the competent level or above.

BOE members who are recommended as potential team chairs by their peers and institutions are invited to chair visiting teams. They have a record of high performance, leadership skills, and interest in being a chair. New team chairs participate in a one-day chair retreat with experienced chairs before they chair their first visit. Successful BOE team chairs:

- Have a thorough understanding of the NCATE process and standards;
- Make the on-site visit a learning experience for less experienced team members;
- Conscientiously follow NCATE guidelines and timelines;
- Ask questions when uncertain and keep in touch with NCATE when problems arise;
- Are quietly authoritative—exercise leadership without being overbearing or inflexible and are willing to hear all sides yet able to keep discussions focused; and
- Are organized, good managers, and able to coordinate activities.

BOE members who consistently turn down assignments or drop off teams once an assignment has been accepted may be dropped from the Board. Continued assignment is predicated upon satisfactory performance.

**Code of Conduct**

The accreditation process is by nature, sensitive; objectivity and credibility are essential. The purpose of NCATE’s Code of Conduct is to prevent conflict of interest and unethical behavior by NCATE representatives.

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12. This document was influenced by the “Principles, Protocols and Etiquette for the NASM Accrediting Commission” of the National Association of Schools of Music, September 1998.
NCATE board members and program reviewers shall conduct themselves at all times while representing NCATE as thoughtful, competent, well prepared, and impartial professionals. To assure institutions and the public that NCATE reviews are impartial and objective, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to promote equity and high ethical standards in the accreditation system, board members and program reviewers shall follow the Code of Conduct. Violation of any part of the Code will result in the board member’s removal from the board. Board members should exclude themselves from NCATE activities for any other reasons not listed in the Code that may represent an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Bias

Board members and program reviewers shall:

1. not advance either personal agendas or the agendas of organizations with which they may be affiliated in the conduct of accreditation reviews by attempting to apply personal or partisan interpretations of standards;
2. examine the facts as they exist and not be influenced by past reputation, media accounts, etc., about institutions or programs being reviewed;
3. exclude themselves from participating in NCATE activities if, to their knowledge, there is some predisposing factor that could prejudice them with respect to the accreditation of institutions, partnerships with states, or approval of a professional organization’s guidelines; and
4. exclude themselves from NCATE activities if “they are philosophically opposed to or are on record as having made generic criticism about a specific type of institution or program allowable under the standards.” (“Principles, Protocols and Etiquette for the NASM Accrediting Commission.” Reston, Virginia: National Association of Schools of Music, September 1998, p.7.)

Gifts/Gratuities

1. BOE members shall not request or accept any gifts of substance from the institution being reviewed or anyone affiliated with the institution. (Gifts of substance would include briefcases, tickets to athletic or entertainment events...)

13. “Board members” as referred to in the Code includes members of the Board of Examiners, Unit Accreditation Board, Specialty Areas Studies Board, State Partnership Board, Executive Board, Appeals Board, and committees thereof, unless otherwise specified.
• If the giving of small tokens is important to an institution’s culture, BOE members may accept these tokens from the institution. (Tokens might include, for example, coffee mugs, key chains, tee shirts...)
• If unsure, the BOE member should err on the side of declining gifts of any kind.

2. BOE members shall not expect elaborate hospitality during previsits or visits.
• Institutions are not expected to arrange dinner for teams, except for the Sunday night function with institutional representatives. It is appropriate for institutions to provide snacks and non-alcoholic beverages for teams as they conduct their work on campus and at their hotel. Where options for meals are limited, the BOE team chair shall make arrangements in advance with the institution for team meals.

3. BOE members shall use restraint in any expenditures charged to the campus being visited and shall abide by the guidelines set forth in NCATE’s Travel Reimbursement Policy.

Conflict of Interest

1. Board members and program reviewers shall not participate in any decision-making capacity if they have a close, active association with an institution, state, or professional organization that is being considered for official action.

• A “decision-making capacity” includes serving on a BOE team or serving on Audit Committees of the Unit Accreditation Board, State Partnership Board, Specialty Area Studies Board or Executive Board considering the accreditation of a professional education unit, the acceptance or renewal of a state partnership, the acceptance of specialty area standards, or a relationship with another entity.

• A “close active association” includes:
  o serving on or have served within the last five years on a statewide decision-making board or committee related to professional educator preparation;
● having been a member of the faculty or staff or a student at the institution within the past ten years ("student" includes persons having been enrolled in a significant course of study or degree program or being a graduate of the institution);
● participating (on an individual basis) in a common consortium or special research relationship;
● having jointly authored research or literature with a faculty member at that institution;
● having an immediate family member attending or employed by the institution, professional organization, or state;
● being employed or having been employed by the state in a function related to educator preparation within the last five years;
● having former graduate advisees or advisors employed by the institution. When supervision of dissertations is involved, personal prejudice is especially difficult to avoid and bias is often assumed;
● having applied for a position at the institution, professional organization, or state;
● having been a consultant at the institution within 10 years; and
● having served as a commencement speaker, received an honorary degree from the institution, or otherwise profited or appeared to profit from service to the institution, professional organization, or state.

2. BOE members are not eligible to participate on a team at a given institution if they previously served on an evaluation team for accreditation or state program approval review.

3. Board members shall leave board meetings when the institution, state, or professional organization that employs them is being discussed and when a vote is taken.

4. NCATE board members shall not serve concurrently on other national teacher education accrediting agencies’ boards or committees. Persons serving on boards or committees of other national teacher education accrediting agencies shall be ineligible to serve on NCATE boards or committees.
5. Board members shall not serve concurrently on the BOE and an NCATE policy board.
6. Appeals Board members shall not serve on any NCATE board or in any other capacity be connected with NCATE during their tenure on the Appeals Board.
7. Program reviewers for specialty organizations shall not review programs from institutions located in their state. Reviewers who are also members of the BOE shall declare themselves ineligible to serve on a BOE team to an institution whose programs they have reviewed.

**Consulting**

When considering or accepting a consulting or similar arrangement with an institution, board members and program reviewers shall:

1. be clear that they are not serving as NCATE’s agent but are providing their own professional expertise for consulting purposes.
2. inform the institution that their advice and recommendations do not guarantee accreditation outcomes.
3. restrict consulting fees to reimbursement of expenses and/or other reasonable and commonly accepted limits.
4. not solicit consultation arrangements with institutions preparing for accreditation visits.
5. not advertise their status as board members for the purpose of building a consulting clientele.
6. not accept a consulting arrangement at an institution for which the member served on the BOE team or on the UAB for at least two years following the accreditation decision.
7. refrain from voicing an opinion about the institution to other board members.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an integral part of the accreditation process. The boards must have access to much sensitive information in order to conduct reviews of professional education units, curriculum guidelines, and state program approval systems. Board members and on-site review teams must protect the
confidentiality of this information. Confidentiality has no expiration date—it lasts forever. Unless indicated otherwise,

1. board members and program reviewers shall treat as confidential all elements of the NCATE accreditation process and information gathered as part of the process—documents, interviews, discussions, interpretations, and analyses—related to the review of professional education units, specialty organization standards, national program reviews, and state partnership applications.

2. board members shall not discuss in public places the particulars of an on-site accreditation visit or the specifics of any case.

3. BOE members shall not discuss details about an institution related to an accreditation visit with anyone other than BOE team members before, during, or after the visit. Policy board members shall refrain from discussing the specifics of individual cases and decisions regarding programs and states with individuals who are not NCATE board members.

**Principles for Conducting Reviews**

BOE teams are critical to a viable accreditation system. If team members are professional in their work and apply standards consistently across institutions, the system maintains its professional credibility and integrity. NCATE ensures such a system by investing substantially in training, retraining, and communicating with BOE members. Key principles undergirding the effective work of visiting teams include understanding the importance of institutional missions, multiple data sources, collective perspectives toward reaching consensus, continuous institutional improvement and change, and the quality of evidence presented by institutions.

**Recognizing Institutional Missions**

There are many ways to meet the NCATE standards; the way they are met often depends on the mission of the institution and unit. Thus, team members must guard against applying independent measures of quality that may be based on their experiences in a research, religious, historically black, private, state, or land-grant setting. Familiarity with one’s own approach to addressing standards sometimes limits the ability to accept other approaches as valid. Effective team members are able to set aside their own educational preferences in order to make objective judgments about whether the standards are met. Team members must develop an understanding of the institution’s culture, mission, goals, and vision to apply the NCATE standards objectively.


**Depending on Multiple Data Sources**

Teams depend on multiple data sources in determining whether standards are met. They should never depend on a single source as the determining factor that is reported in their findings. They seek information in interviews, documents, websites, and observations. If a concern is identified in one of these sources, team members systematically seek other data—both written and oral—to refute or confirm a finding. The BOE report indicates all persons interviewed, documents reviewed, and classes observed during the on-site visit.

Teams should identify multiple types of assessments used by the unit to demonstrate candidate knowledge and abilities. Different types of assessments that may be presented include SPA reports; surveys of graduates, candidates, school partners, employers, etc.; state test results; evaluations of field and clinical experiences; and candidate portfolios. The footnote on assessment data to be presented for Standard 1 identifies multiple data sources to be reviewed by teams in determining whether candidates exhibit the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of education professionals.

**Valuing the Collective Perspective in Reaching Consensus**

Both the first-time and continuing review processes value the professional judgment of team members. Individual judgments are based on data from the institutional report, catalogs, interviews, visits to schools, and reviews of documents. The data are shared and debated among team members during their team meetings. The process is designed to allow team members to report their observations, reflect on them after hearing the perspectives of others, and reach consensus on the observations and areas for improvement to be included in the team report by Wednesday morning of the visit. The perceptions that team members bring to the first meeting are frequently altered after collecting additional data and listening to other team members. Although team members are assigned to prepare the written text for specific standards, all collect data for numerous standards, discuss each standard, and collectively determine the findings of the team.

**Supporting Continuous Institutional Improvement and Change**

Team members should understand that institutions and programs are regularly changing. At the time of the visit an institution may be in the midst of changing from quarter to semester hours or revising a program to meet new state standards. Newly admitted candidates may be entering a program that is
different from the one that other candidates are finishing. It makes little sense to review a program or structure that will no longer exist the semester after the visit; providing feedback to the institution on its new programs or procedures is more helpful. At the same time, data on candidate performance in both the new and existing (soon to be defunct) programs need to be reviewed by the team.

While assuring that the NCATE standards are met at a level to gain or maintain professional accreditation, teams should interact with institutional representatives in a way that is supportive of continuous self-renewal. Teams should set a tone of professional collegiality that encourages self-assessment and feedback. During the visit, team members should ask for information that cannot be located. The team chair should communicate concerns to the unit head on a daily basis to allow institutional representatives the opportunity to provide additional data. Team members should be accessible and professional.

**Judging the Quality of Evidence**

The role of the BOE team is to determine whether the unit is producing quality candidates who will have a positive impact on student learning in P–12 schools. The BOE team must (1) understand the unit’s assessment system and (2) verify that candidates are learning the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to become successful teachers. To do so, the team must judge the quality of the unit’s assessment system and the data it generates. In judging the quality of the assessment system, the team should refer to the transition plan. The plan indicates the minimum levels at which institutions are expected to meet Standards 1 and 2, which include the development and implementation of a unit assessment system.

The team must be concerned about the quality of the assessments used by institutions in determining candidate performance. If assessments themselves are not credible, the results provide questionable evidence for meeting the standards. Thus, teams should ask general questions about the quality of the individual assessments that comprise the assessment system. These questions might include:

- Does the assessment address one or more of the elements of the standard (e.g., content knowledge, pedagogical skills, dispositions, or P–12 student learning) as identified by the institution?
- Is this assessment consistent across the program or unit?
• Are the data adequately summarized and sampled?
• Do the data suggest that most candidates are able to complete the assessment successfully?

Teams should frame discussions about the quality of assessments around the following indicators:¹⁴

1. **Content quality.** Is the content of the assessment related to the learning expectations stated in the unit’s conceptual framework? Is the assessment consistent with current understandings of the subject matter?
2. **Cognitive complexity.** Does the assessment require the candidate to pursue complex thinking and problem solving?
3. **Fairness.** Is the assessment biased in any way? Does it give all candidates an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do?
4. **Instructional sensitivity.** Does the assessment allow for instruction that improves learning?
5. **Transfer.** Does the assessment allow generalization about candidate achievement?

The answers to these questions should aid the team as it deliberates on its findings. Certainly professional judgment is a key ingredient in the NCATE process. These questions make internal processes that support professional judgment more explicit and, as a result, increase the consistency within and among BOE teams.

**Team Assignments**

NCATE sends the “Date Availability and Conflict of Interest Form” to BOE members requesting the dates they are available to serve on a team and asking them to identify any institutions (named on a provided list) with which they have conflicts of interest. The forms are sent electronically in February for fall visits and June for spring visits. They should be returned to NCATE within two weeks. Based on the information provided, NCATE makes team assignments and sends an e-mail message inviting BOE members to serve on a team. The e-mail message is a form that includes the name of the institution, the type of visit, and the date of the visit, as well as space for the BOE member to

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¹⁴ Adapted from the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST at www.cse.ucla.edu).
confirm his/her participation in the visit. The BOE member must submit the form confirming his/her participation to NCATE within one week of receiving the invitation to serve. If the form is not submitted, another BOE member may be asked to fill the position.

**Previsit by the Team Chair**

One of the responsibilities of team chairs is to conduct a previsit to the institution to plan the on-site visit. In partnership states, the previsit should include the state team co-chair and the consultant who represents the state agency responsible for program approval. The team chair should initiate the planning of the previsit, which normally occurs 30–60 days before the review. However, the institution is responsible for making all necessary arrangements, including contacting the state team chair and state consultant. The previsit is usually no longer than one day in length.

The team chair should have a copy of the institutional report before the previsit but should not review drafts of the institutional report or in any other ways serve in a consultative role to the institution. During the previsit, the team chair should meet with the president and/or provost to provide an overview of the visit, describe the review process, answer questions, and ascertain his/her expectations for the visit. This meeting provides the opportunity to make institutional administrators aware of the information that will be gathered and discussed during the visit, at the exit conference, and in the team’s report.

Logistics for the visit and team accommodations should be finalized during the previsit. The organization of the exhibit room, set-up of interviews, and arrangements for visits to field sites should be discussed. It is appropriate to ask the unit to provide refreshments for team members during their working sessions. The list that follows indicates areas that should be covered during the previsit.
Agenda Items for the Previsit

Roles of Individuals Involved in the Visit

- BOE team members
- State consultant (i.e., representative of the State Department of Education or State Professional Standards Board)
- State team members if a joint or concurrent state/NCATE visit
- National Education Association (NEA) and/or American Federation of Teachers (AFT) state affiliate representatives
- Head of the professional education unit and the institution's NCATE coordinator
- Chief executive officer and academic officer of the institution
- Other key institutional representatives
- Key faculty, administrators, and other individuals identified by the institution

Interviews

- Candidates (both in organized group settings and in informal settings such as hallways, student lounges, student union, etc.)
- Field supervisors of student teaching and internships
- Principals, school personnel directors, teachers, and other practitioners from area schools (both ingroup settings and on visits to field sites)
- Faculty and administrators from the policy groups as outlined in the template for the visit
- Recent graduates

Observations of Classes and Field Site Visits

Exhibit Room

- Location and organization of visits
- Critical contents of exhibits
- Team access on Saturday and Sunday

Sunday Evening Function

- Who should attend
- Institution's presentation, which is sometimes scheduled at this time
- Location of dinner, if applicable

Hotel/Motel Arrangements

- Location in relationship to campus
- Private rooms for team members and state representatives
- Meeting room (with appropriate lighting) for team work sessions on Saturday through Wednesday
- Computers, printers, clerical supplies, copying facilities, and other equipment for use by the team
- Payment of hotel expenses (direct billing to the institution or other means)

Technology Arrangements

- Multiple computer workstations with access to website in exhibit room
- Multiple computer workstations with access to website in hotel
- Printing capacity in workroom and at hotel
- Disk of website and list of additions since creation of disk
- Name and telephone number of technology support person
- Orientation to website as part of introduction to the unit
- E-mail address for NCATE team while on site
- Arrangements for video-conferencing of interviews at off-campus and branch campus sites, if applicable
Pre-Planning for the Visit

One of the resources available to BOE members is the BOE Update, which is published at the beginning of each semester. It reports developments and changes in the NCATE system that may affect the application of standards and procedures during a visit. Major issues in this newsletter, which is available on the “Board of Examiners” section of NCATE’s website, should be reviewed at the first team meeting during an on-site visit. Team members should carefully review both the BOE Update and any e-mail updates prior to a visit.

Team members are expected to conduct a careful examination of the institutional report and other information sent to them before the visit, keeping notes on the planning instrument. They should also spend some time reviewing the unit’s website, particularly if exhibits are at that location. The exhibit room at the institution is usually available to team members on Saturday and Sunday so that they can become familiar with the evidence before beginning interviews.

NCATE Materials for All Team Members

Most materials needed to conduct the review are posted on NCATE’s website. National and state BOE team members, state consultants, and representatives from state NEA and AFT affiliates should visit the “Board of Examiners” link on NCATE’s home page (www.ncate.org) to retrieve the appropriate materials. Most of the documents are in a Microsoft Word format that can be downloaded to a disk or hard drive to be completed before, during, and after the

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Travel Arrangements</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Nearest airport and ground transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Arrangements to contact team members about travel and hotel logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Travel between hotel and campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Arrangements for observation of classes on campus and in P–12 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Travel to field sites or technological contact with field sites (e.g., video conferencing)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Meals and Refreshments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Recommendations for local restaurants for evening meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Arrangements for Monday and Tuesday lunches on campus</td>
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visit. Team members are responsible for reviewing, downloading, and/or printing the materials needed to complete the on-site visit.

Documents available on the website that should be completed as part of the visit include:

- Planning instrument
- BOE report template
- Evaluation forms
- Expense voucher

The following documents, which are on the website, are resources that should be used by team members as they conduct the visit and write the team report:

- BOE report sample
- Code of conduct
- Distance learning questions
- Off-campus program questions
- NCATE/state protocols
- Participation of state authorities

These materials are available only on the website. If a disk or paper copy is required, team members must make a copy from the website. NCATE does not mail hard copies of these materials. Team members should contact the NCATE office for assistance if they experience difficulties accessing or downloading any of the materials.

Two to four months before the visit, NCATE makes available to team members the following information related to the institution being visited:

- Travel voucher, name of NCATE travel agency, and authorization code for visit;
- List of team members and institutional contacts;
- UAB action at the previous visit;
- Annual reports submitted by the institution;
- Trend data from quantitative data submitted annually (e.g., number of candidates and budget information); and
- Third-year report.

Some of the documents available to team members before the visit are described below. If team members have a question about or recommendations regarding any of the materials, they should contact NCATE staff.
Planning Instrument

BOE team members and chairs should complete the planning instrument as they read the institutional report and review exhibits prior to the on-site visit. Using the evidence for conceptual frameworks and the rubrics for the standards, the instrument allows team members to note questions to be pursued and evidence to check during the on-site visit. It also allows them to keep notes that can be transferred to the written BOE report. It is designed to focus team discussions on the standards and determine additional data needed during the BOE team’s work session on Sunday of the on-site visit. It should also help the team plan what information needs to be sought Monday on campus.

The instrument must be completed before the first team meeting on Saturday or Sunday of the visit. Team members are expected to record on an overhead transparency or newsprint their previsit ratings for each area of evidence for the conceptual framework and each element of the standards listed on the rubric. The rating scales for the conceptual framework and standards differ as shown in the examples below from the planning instrument.

For the review of the conceptual framework, team members are asked to rate how adequately each area of evidence is being addressed based on the information [i.e., institutional report (IR) and exhibits] available prior to the on-site visit, using the following scale:

3 = Very thoroughly  2 = Adequately  1 = In limited ways  0 = Not at all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Page in IR</th>
<th>Questions to pursue on-site</th>
<th>Evidence to check on-site</th>
<th>Previsit Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared vision. The unit’s conceptual framework(s) describes the vision and purpose of a unit’s efforts in preparing educators to work in P–12 schools. It is well articulated, knowledge-based, and consistent with the institution’s mission.</td>
<td></td>
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i.e., institutional report (IR) and exhibits] available prior to the on-site visit, using the following scale:
For the review of the standards elements, team members are asked to rate how adequately each is being addressed, using the following scale:

3 = Target  2 = Acceptable  1 = Unacceptable  0 = Data are not available for making an initial judgment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard I Elements</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content for Knowledge for Teacher Candidates (Initial and Continuing Preparation of Teachers)</td>
<td>Teacher candidates have inadequate knowledge of subject matter that they plan to teach as shown by their inability to give examples of important principles or concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.</td>
<td>Teacher candidates know the subject matter that they plan to teach as shown by their ability to explain important principles and concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.</td>
<td>Teacher candidates have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter that they plan to teach as described in professional, state, and institutional standards. They demonstrate their knowledge through inquiry, critical analysis, and synthesis of the subject.</td>
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**Evaluation Forms**

BOE members are asked to evaluate the other national and state members on the team immediately after a visit. They are also asked to evaluate the performance of the team chair and NCATE procedures. The evaluation forms should be returned to NCATE with the expense voucher.

*Evaluation of BOE colleagues on the team.* This evaluation provides data to NCATE about the performance of team members. It is used to identify potential new chairs and alerts the staff to BOE members who may not be performing at the level expected. Team members are also asked to evaluate the performance of the chair on one side of this form. (Team chairs are not expected to evaluate themselves; thus, they will not have this part of the form.)
Evaluation of the NCATE procedures. The items on this evaluation change periodically to solicit feedback on new procedures that have been implemented. Ratings of the quality of institutional reports and institutions’ preparation and readiness for visits are valuable in identifying practices that have worked. The feedback on this form may lead to adjustments in BOE training and the evaluation process for both team members and institutions.

Partnership States and Protocols

To determine whether the institution being visited is located in a state that has a partnership with NCATE, visit the “State Partners” section of NCATE’s website. If the state is a partner, a protocol can be accessed from the website. The protocol outlines the expectations of both NCATE and the state agency responsible for state approval. It indicates whether the state requires its institutions to submit program reports for review by the specialized professional associations and identifies the standards used by the state to evaluate programs. The size and composition of state teams are described, as well as the nature of the joint visit (i.e., a single joint team, two concurrent teams, or another structure). Team members should review the protocol to determine how the visit will be conducted.

Travel Voucher

The travel voucher is used to report out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the visit. BOE members may use NCATE’s travel agent to charge airfare or use their own travel agency and seek reimbursement on the travel voucher. For most visits, institutions arrange for hotel expenses to be directly billed to the institution so that team members do not have to cover those costs. Expenses normally reported on the travel voucher include meals, airport parking, and mileage or taxicabs used in traveling to an airport. Additional information about submitting a travel voucher can be found in the “After the Visit” section later in this handbook.

List of Team Members

The team member list includes the addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for both team members and the contacts at the institution—usually the unit head and coordinator of the visit. It also includes (if the visit is to be a joint visit with the State) the names and addresses of the state team members, the state consultant, and representatives from the NEA and AFT state affiliates. Sometimes the list is incomplete because not all team members have yet
accepted the assignment. An updated list is forwarded to team members and the institution after additions have been made. If information on the team list is incorrect, the NCATE office should be contacted immediately.

**Previous UAB Accreditation Action Report**

If the institution being visited is currently accredited by NCATE, the team will have access to the report of the UAB action for the previous visit. If the visit was in spring 2001 or before, the report indicates weaknesses (now called areas for improvement) cited by standard. In its annual reports, the unit should have reported progress made toward eliminating these weaknesses. For visits in fall 2001 and afterwards, the action reports for institutions accredited without provisions, conditions, or probation will include the accreditation action only; any cited areas for improvement will be attached to the report or included on the institution’s annual report form. For institutions accredited with provisions or conditions, the action report will list areas for improvement for the unmet standard(s); for institutions accredited with probation, the action report will list all areas for improvement.

**Annual Reports**

Annually, the unit submits descriptive and quantitative information in its annual report to AACTE and NCATE, as described in detail in the institutional section of this handbook. In the NCATE part of the report (submitted only by institutions that are already accredited), the unit describes changes made in the past year related to the NCATE standards; action taken to address the cited areas for improvement may also be reported. For accredited institutions, team members will have access to all annual reports submitted since the last visit; for institutions seeking their first accreditation, team members will have access to all annual reports submitted since the institution became a precandidate.

**Trend Data**

Trend data are compiled from the AACTE/NCATE annual reports submitted by the institution. The data include numbers on candidate enrollment and completion, candidate diversity, faculty size and demographics, faculty diversity, and budgets over four to five years. The data are presented so that teams can see any significant changes from year to year.
The Third-Year Review of Annual Reports

At the midpoint of an institution’s accreditation cycle, NCATE’s Annual Report and Preconditions Audit Committee (ARPA) reviews the institution’s annual reports and provides feedback on the progress made in addressing areas cited for improvement. The committee also checks annual report data for significant changes that may affect the unit’s capacity to continue to meet standards. The third-year review does not indicate that areas for improvement have been adequately addressed. In the case of most areas for improvement cited in BOE reports, the narrative response provided in annual reports cannot provide by itself sufficient evidence that an area for improvement has been fully addressed. On the other hand, it is likely—indeed, expected—that an area for improvement indicated as “not addressed” in the third-year review will have been addressed after the institution’s receipt of the third-year report, two years before its visit.

(Note: in most cases, the previous NCATE visit will have been conducted under a different iteration of standards than the standards being used in the current visit. The table on pages 152–153 correlates current and previous standards. The most recent annual reports for an institution list previous weaknesses or areas for improvement under the current standards.)

NCATE Materials for Team Chairs

Team chairs are sent two additional documents to assist them in managing the visit. The Intent form provides background information on the unit (e.g., the existence of off-campus programs) that will be helpful in planning the visit. The overhead transparencies are used during team meetings for recording team members’ ratings on two NCATE instruments. Three additional documents are available on NCATE’s website for use by the team chair:

- **BOE Report Preparation Guidelines.** This document outlines the steps and timelines that must be followed in finalizing and submitting the BOE report.
- **Assistant Chair Checklist.** The team chair may appoint an assistant chair who completes this checklist as the team conducts the visit.
- **Chair Evaluation of Peers.** This evaluation form is the same one
that other team members complete, but it does not include a section for the team chair to evaluate himself or herself.

**Intent Form**

The team chair’s package from NCATE includes the Intent form that the unit submitted approximately two years prior to the visit. The form is signed by both the chief executive officer of the institution and the unit head. It contains descriptive data about the institution, including whether programs for the preparation of education professionals are offered in off-campus sites, including outside the United States. It also indicates distance learning programs and alternate route programs. The team chair should review this document to determine if any special conditions at the institution might require a larger team, longer visit, or other accommodations. In these cases, the chair should contact the NCATE office to discuss possible options.

**Transparencies**

During the team’s first meeting, each team member’s ratings of the standards are recorded on the transparencies included in the team chair’s package from NCATE. Differences in ratings among team members are discussed, leading to the identification of incomplete, missing, or conflicting data that should be focused upon during interviews and review of written documentation. A second set of transparencies is used at the Tuesday team meeting to record team members’ ratings on the instrument “Assessing the Adequacy of Standards.”

**Institutional Materials for the On-Site Review**

The institution is responsible for sending the following information to national and state BOE members, state consultants, and other state representatives approximately 60 days before the visit:

- **Institutional Report.** The format of the institutional report is described on pages 45–49 of this handbook. If the report is available on the institution’s website, the institution should send the link via e-mail so team members can access the report electronically. Electronic reports usually have links to supporting documentation on the website that otherwise could not be reviewed until the team arrives on campus.
- **College catalogs.** If print copies of the catalogs are not available, the institution should send team members the link for accessing them on-line at the institution’s website.

During the previsit, the team chair may ask the institutional representatives to send supplementary materials to the team. These documents may include a student teaching handbook and more detailed descriptions of the conceptual framework. Team members should also check the institution’s website, which often includes detailed information on programs and statistics about the institution and unit. Sometimes websites include course syllabi and faculty information as well. The website address is indicated on the list of team members from NCATE. Institutional websites can also be accessed directly by visiting the “Institutions/Programs” section on NCATE’s website.

**Previsit Communications**

Team members, including the state members and representatives, should receive communications from the team chair and institution beginning a couple of months before the visit. Some team chairs arrange a conference call with team members prior to the visit to ensure that team members are prepared for the visit and to do some initial planning. Most send e-mails to team members with necessary details about the visit, assignments, and logistical arrangements. Others ask the institution to contact team members with information about airports, transportation, and hotels. If team members have not heard from the team chair about travel arrangements, they should contact the chair directly for guidance. The NCATE staff does not have information about travel or hotels.

In most cases, writing assignments for specific standards are made before the visit. However, all team members should attend to each of the standards prior to the visit and be ready to identify necessary follow-up to validate strengths and check areas of concern. Most team chairs write the introduction to the report and assist with writing one or more of the standards and the conceptual framework, but the actual assignments are made at the discretion of the team chair.
The On-Site Visit

The template beginning on page 70 guides the conduct of the visit. The team chair should meet with the unit head or NCATE coordinator at a set time on Monday and Tuesday to request information that cannot be located by the team; on the template, this meeting is scheduled for early Monday and Tuesday mornings and again each afternoon.

Visit Schedule

All team members are expected to arrive on Saturday for the visit. Team chairs may ask team members to arrive by noon on Saturday to begin their work, especially at large comprehensive institutions. Arrival by noon on Saturday may require team members to travel on Friday night. At very small institutions, team members may begin the visit with an informal dinner on Saturday night.

The exit conference is scheduled between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, depending on the amount of time the team needs to complete its report on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning. All team members are expected to work with the team until noon on Wednesday unless notified of a different time by the team chair. When the institution is located far from an airport, team members should not plan a flight until late afternoon or evening. In some cases, one or more team members may have to stay over on Wednesday night in a hotel near the airport. Some team chairs choose to finalize the BOE report on Wednesday, leaving the area on Thursday. If team members cannot arrange to work until noon on Wednesday, they should not accept the assignment.

Institutional Presentation

The template includes the option for a 30-minute presentation by the institution at the Sunday evening meeting with the team. Most institutions use this opportunity to describe their vision, major improvements since the last visit, and exemplary practices. Sometimes the presentations are speeches, but often they are multimedia productions. These presentations traditionally have been part of a dinner with selected institutional representatives, but other options are possible.
To highlight its programs, an institution and the team chair may decide a poster session on Saturday or earlier on Sunday is more appropriate. In these sessions team members can move around to talk with faculty and see operations and programs in action. These sessions might include candidates, faculty, and/or other members of the professional community. Teams find these presentations much more informative than the Sunday night presentation and valuable in planning the team’s work on Monday and Tuesday.

Although the template suggests Sunday evening for this presentation, the team chair and institution could schedule it for Saturday, Sunday afternoon, or Monday morning. These arrangements should be made at the previsit.

**Roles of State Team Members, Consultants, and Representatives**

In states with an NCATE partnership, state BOE members may join the national team to conduct the visit as a single team. All members of these joint teams participate as equals in the conduct of the visit, including collection of data, reaching a consensus or voting on standards being met, and writing the team report. State BOE members on these teams should have participated in a state training session similar to the BOE training provided by NCATE. In some states, the state team members are asked by the state to write a supplementary report focusing on needs of the state. At the previsit, the BOE team chair, state co-chair, and state consultant should determine data collection and writing responsibilities for state team members to ensure they are not unduly burdened with writing two reports.

In other partnership states, the state team may be conducting a state visit concurrently with the BOE visit. The state team is charged with applying state standards and writing its own report. Although the state team meets separately from the BOE team to discuss findings and make decisions about standards being met, the two teams should share information and findings. At the previsit, the BOE chair and state chair should decide how to share data during the visit to prevent the development of reports with conflicting information. The team chairs may plan to meet at scheduled times during the visit; they may plan for the two teams to meet for this purpose. The two teams may share interviews and exhibits, but these details should be worked out during the previsit.
Many state partnership agreements require that joint State/NCATE teams collect specific information and/or make program recommendations for the state. The team chair should arrange time during an early team meeting for an orientation to the state’s requirements by the state consultants or their designees. The orientation should provide the opportunity to identify the procedures and clarify the state’s expectations. The time and contents of this session should be discussed at the previsit.

Although state consultants and state NEA and AFT representatives can help the BOE team collect data and understand state nuances, they should not be asked to write sections of the team report. State consultants and NEA and AFT representatives may read the report for clarity and provide editing assistance. NEA has developed a resource packet for state affiliate representatives that provides background on NCATE, accreditation, and the visit. Team chairs should recommend that NEA and AFT state representatives on the team review these materials prior to the visit. Copies are available from NEA or NCATE on request.

**Application of the Standards**

During training, BOE members have the opportunity to practice applying the NCATE standards at an institution that has recently hosted a visit. The training exercises allow team members to explore the standards, raise questions, and clarify their meaning with experienced team chairs and staff. Clarifications of standards based on experiences and feedback of teams and the UAB are shared with BOE members through the BOE Update and NCATE’s website.

The shift to standards based on performance assessments occurred with the adoption of new standards in 2000. The focus on assessment is apparent in all of the standards but most explicit in the standards on the assessment system and on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The standard on field experiences and clinical practice stresses the importance of authentic settings and assessments in determining acceptable candidate performance. The diversity standard expects units to show evidence that candidates have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to help all students learn. The standard on faculty expects education faculty to model good practice, including the use of candidate assessments in evaluating their own effectiveness. Although the governance and resources standard is more input-oriented than the others, it does call for
adequate support of an assessment system that ensures candidates meet standards expected of education professionals. This section of the handbook explores four areas that are challenging to BOE members as they use performance assessment data.

**Assessment Data and the Assessment System**

The relationship between Standard 1 and Standard 2 is symbiotic. Standard 1 requires data that demonstrate candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Standard 2 requires a detailed description of the system that produces the data required in Standard 1 and other data collected by the unit.

NCATE’s transition plan gives institutions until spring 2005 to fully implement an assessment system. If the system required by Standard 2 is not yet in place, BOE teams cannot realistically expect a full set of data derived from that system to be available as evidence for meeting Standard 1. However, institutions should have some performance data available for the team, regardless of the visit date. This information should include state test scores, where applicable; studies (often surveys) of graduates and employers regarding candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and assessments of clinical experiences and internships. Institutions can supplement this data with other assessments. Together these data should make the case that most candidates are successfully completing the programs.

Institutions must have an assessment system to meet Standard 2. At the time of the visit, the unit must be implementing its assessment system at the level described in NCATE’s transition plan beginning on page 21.

The following tables show the relationship between Standard 1 and Standard 2. It is the assessment system in Standard 2 that drives the assessments that are used to generate the data for Standard 1. When institutions produce plans that include the elements in Standard 2, and when the data mentioned above indicate that candidates have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected for their profession by Standard 1, the unit will have met the two standards.
Assessment Plan

During the first academic year (2001–2002) in which the current standards apply, institutions are not required to have a fully developed assessment system for Standard 2. Instead, they may provide a well developed plan for an assessment system as acceptable evidence for Standard 2. For all visits after spring 2002, the institution must have an assessment system that is being implemented. However, the expected level of implementation increases annually between fall 2002 and fall 2004. By fall 2004, institutions will be expected to have a fully implemented assessment system that is using credible assessments to generate data on candidate proficiencies. For specific details on NCATE’s expectations each year between fall 2001 and spring 2005, see the transition plan on page 21.

The assessment system plan must address the candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions in Standard 1 and all of the elements in Standard 2. The plan must include: major transition points; assessment measures; timelines; the design for data collection, analysis, summary, and use; information on unit operations; and some indication of how technology will be used in the maintenance of the system. The paper “Assessment Systems: An Explanation of the NCATE Transition Plan” in the “Resources” section of the NCATE website provides assistance in this area.
Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

Field experiences and clinical practice should be designed to help candidates further develop their knowledge, skills, and dispositions for working with all students in P–12 settings. Partnerships with schools are much more than a contract with a school district. School partners must be engaged in designing, delivering, and evaluating the experiences. Partners should jointly place candidates in appropriate settings. As in the past, candidates are expected to work with students from diverse backgrounds in their field experiences and/or clinical practice.

The most critical piece of this standard in the current NCATE system is how the experiences help candidates become the teachers and other professionals expected by state, professional, and institutional standards. Many assessments of candidate performance are conducted during field experiences and clinical practice. Those assessments should be credible, reliable, and related to standards. The related rubric also expects the school partners to agree on criteria for clinical faculty, both the university and school faculty. BOE teams should look for evidence that the experiences are helping candidates meet state, professional, and institutional standards.

Diversity

The standard on diversity is related to the standard on candidate performance in that it expects candidates to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Teachers and other school personnel need to know how to work effectively with students who have different backgrounds, experiences, and traditions than the candidates themselves. They must be prepared to work in schools with P–12 students in communities in which they have not previously lived, perhaps in different states and regions of the country. Students with whom they may later work are likely to be from diverse racial and ethnic groups, have first languages other than English, and speak unfamiliar dialects. They may be exceptional students with special needs. They may practice religions with which candidates have limited knowledge and experience but that have a great influence on student behavior and beliefs. They may be homeless students or live in low-income families in which resources are scarce and their health and safety are often in jeopardy.

How to help students from such different backgrounds and life experiences learn is the challenge for educators. It requires a sound foundation in the

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15. Clinical practice refers to student teaching experiences and internships that provide candidates with an intensive and extensive culminating activity. Candidates are immersed in the learning community and are provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing.
preparation program and continuous professional development and learning throughout one's career. The NCATE standards expect units to provide the basic foundation. They should (1) identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that new and experienced educators should exhibit by the time they complete a program and (2) use assessments to determine that candidates have acquired and are able to apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The courses and experiences offered by the unit should contribute to candidates’ ability to help all students learn.

Although the standard on diversity includes two sentences, the first is the most critical in meeting the standard. If the unit cannot provide evidence that it is preparing candidates to teach students from diverse backgrounds, the BOE team should recommend that the standard is not met. Among the experiences that a unit should provide in helping candidates develop proficiencies related to diversity is the opportunity to work directly with persons from diverse backgrounds. This includes interactions with diverse higher education and school faculty, other candidates, and P–12 students in field experiences and clinical practice. In the BOE report, teams should describe the diversity that exists on a campus and in candidates’ school experiences. If diversity among faculty and candidates is limited, the team can consider other experiences supported by the unit to ensure that candidates interact with diverse populations. These experiences might include on-line connections to teachers and students in more diverse settings, visiting scholars, lecture series, or January interim sessions in diverse communities. To meet the intent of the standard, these experiences should be ongoing and regular activities that contribute to the development of appropriate proficiencies for all candidates.

One of the questions asked by BOE teams is “Should an area for improvement be listed if the unit appears to be making “good faith effort” at recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty or student body in education, but with no or limited results?” The UAB expects the team to describe the good faith efforts in the findings section for this standard and to list the lack of diversity as an area for improvement. However, the lack of diversity on the faculty and among candidates alone is not enough to recommend that the standard is not met. If other experiences are being provided to compensate for the limited diversity and evidence shows that candidates are developing appropriate proficiencies related to diversity, the BOE team should recommend that the standard is met with one or more areas for improvement.
Program Reviews

For obvious reasons, BOE teams are not expected to conduct their own in-depth reviews of programs offered by the institution. Instead, teams rely on the program evidence presented by (a) state reports, including licensure results; (b) specialized professional association (SPA) reports conducted through the NCATE process; and (c) the accreditation reports of other programmatic national accreditation agencies. The sources and combinations of reports written by program reviewers outlined above will differ from institution to institution and state to state. Each type of program review is briefly described below.

Program reports are valuable to BOE teams in a number of ways. Evidence that programs are of high quality, have achieved recognition or approval status, and produce successful graduates are strong indicators that the unit will fare well under Standard 1. Information provided by program reports may also provide evidence related to other areas covered by NCATE standards, particularly technology, diversity, the conceptual framework, and field experiences. For example, a BOE team may find that reviews of a number of programs in the unit include commendations of the integration of technology in coursework. Conversely, several reviews of different programs might indicate that candidates do not have opportunities to explore the application of technology in the classroom. Such evidence should lead a team to look more deeply into the issues that surface as common problems in the program reports.

Serious concerns indicated by Specialized Professional Association (SPA) reports or state reports should trigger investigation by the BOE. The team should determine what steps have been taken by the unit to address the identified concerns or its plans to address them. When the unit has not properly addressed the concerns raised by the SPA or state, the team should determine the effect on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and cite areas for improvement. In other words, the team should cite areas for improvement that clearly link the stated concerns to candidate proficiencies. The section on the BOE report provides additional information on reporting team findings for program reviews.

Teams may find that, for various reasons, the program review process is still in progress at the time of the visit. When an institution has not received the final SPA report indicating whether the program has been nationally recognized,
the BOE team must review the earlier SPA reports and the institution’s rejoinder to determine if there are any serious concerns with the program that have not been sufficiently addressed by the rejoinder. Candidate assessment data and interviews with faculty and school personnel should also provide data on whether candidates are developing the proficiencies expected in their professional fields.

**SPA Reviews**

A growing number of states require national reviews by SPAs. In this process, reviewers from the SPAs determine whether programs meet national standards and communicate that information in SPA reports. Program reports prepared by the institution, SPA reports, and rejoinders should be available to team members in the exhibit room.

Some institutions opt for a national program review *in addition* to the state review. In these cases, the BOE teams will examine both state and national reviews to determine program quality. Institutions located in states that do not have partnerships with NCATE are required to submit their programs to NCATE for review by SPAs.

**State Program Reviews**

In approximately half of the partnership states, program reviews are conducted by the state using either state standards or the national SPA standards. Some states conduct program reviews through a process similar to an NCATE program review in which program reports are submitted several months before the on-site visit. Other states review programs in an on-site visit several months prior to the visit or during the on-site visit with a state team operating concurrently with the BOE team.

If the state agency conducted its review of a program prior to the on-site visit, the state report should be available to the BOE team at the time of the visit. If the state is reviewing programs during the on-site visit, the state team should share its findings with the BOE team.
Accreditation Decisions of Other National Accrediting Agencies

For several programs, NCATE accepts the accreditation decisions that have been conferred by accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and/or the Council of Higher Education Accreditation. This confirmation should be afforded the same weight as SPA reports and/or program review documents from state agencies. If accreditation has been granted with qualifications or has been denied or revoked, the unit should provide other evidence of the quality of that program and information on steps being taken to bring the program into compliance.

Most of these agencies do not have specific standards for the preparation of education professionals, but they do review the overall content of a field. Therefore, BOE teams should look for evidence that the pedagogical and professional components of these programs prepare candidates to meet state and institutional standards. Evidence on candidate performance (e.g., licensure tests results and internship assessments) should be available for these programs during the on-site visit. These programs are expected to contribute to the unit's meeting of the six NCATE unit standards.

Institutions commonly have programs accredited by the following agencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accrediting Agency</th>
<th>Related Education Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)</td>
<td>Speech-language-hearing specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)</td>
<td>School Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Schools of Music</td>
<td>Music Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Schools of Art and Design</td>
<td>Art and Design Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Library Association</td>
<td>Library and Information Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Psychological Association</td>
<td>School Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business</td>
<td>Business education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences</td>
<td>Family and consumer sciences education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Schools of Dance</td>
<td>Dance Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Association of Schools of Theater</td>
<td>Theater Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programs Included in the NCATE Review

The professional education unit must include in its accreditation review all initial teacher preparation and advanced programs offered by the institution for the purpose of preparing teachers and other professional education personnel to work in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade settings. This includes all programs that have an established sequence of courses designed to prepare individuals for professional work in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade settings, regardless of where the programs may be administratively located.

The NCATE scope includes all programs designed to lead to a degree, licensure or certification, endorsement, and/or other credential to teach or work in P–12 schools. The scope also includes all programs that may not lead to a state licensure or certification but nonetheless prepare individuals for professional work in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade settings (for example, early childhood education programs in states that do not require a license for this field). In addition, the scope includes all tracks, areas of specialization, or concentrations within programs that prepare individuals for professional work in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade settings. Some programs may be administratively located outside of the school, college, or department of education (e.g., school counseling may be located in the School of Counseling and Social Work, or music education may be located in the Music Department). All programs included in the NCATE scope are expected to contribute to the unit’s meeting of the six NCATE standards.

Most institutions must indicate on their intent forms any off-campus, alternate route, and distance learning programs that are offered for the preparation of education professionals. The team chair can then ensure that team members review these programs to assess whether they meet standards. Most of the arrangements for visiting or reviewing these programs are made during the previsit. On occasion, however, the team discovers one or more of these programs during the visit. Even at that late date, the team is expected to apply the standards to these programs and describe both strengths and concerns in the BOE report narrative. Areas for improvement may be cited for one or more of these special programs in a way similar to citing concerns related to a specific program field as described in the previous section.
Off-Campus Programs

All campuses and sites that offer programs for the preparation of P–12 school personnel should have been disclosed on the intent form submitted to NCATE approximately two years before the on-site visit. These programs must be included in the NCATE review.

BOE teams must ensure that off-campus programs meet standards. Significant or numerous areas for improvement at one site can jeopardize the accreditation of the unit.

Decisions on the review of off-campus sites are usually made at the previsit, although the team chair and/or the NCATE coordinator may need to consult with NCATE staff to finalize plans. An on-site visit to the off-campus location is not always required, particularly for programs with few candidates or programs located far from the main campus. The team chair may make other arrangements for visiting the site and interviewing faculty and candidates. The team might conduct phone interviews, survey candidates via e-mail, or interview faculty and candidates via teleconferencing or two-way video. Off-campus candidates and faculty could arrange to be on the main campus during the BOE visit. If the off-campus program serves a large number of candidates or prepares educators for a number of fields, one or more of the team members should visit the site. At the request of the team chair, additional team members may be assigned to assist the team in collecting data. State team members on joint NCATE/State teams sometimes are asked to visit off-campus sites prior to the visit. On occasion, one or more team members visit off-campus sites on the Thursday or Friday before the team meets on Saturday of the visit.

BOE teams must consider the off-campus programs as they collect evidence and write the BOE report. They should look for evidence that candidates in off-campus programs perform as well on state licensure exams as candidates on campus. The team may need to request specific data on off-campus programs, particularly as related to candidate performance. Differences between off-campus and on-campus programs should be described in the narrative for each standard. Questions to assist the team in the review of off-campus programs are located on page 67–68.
Alternate Route Programs

All alternate route programs offered at an institution at the post-baccalaureate level and requiring the professional education unit’s recommendation for licensure must be included in the NCATE review. They include fifth-year programs for candidates with a bachelor’s degree in an academic field; candidates may or may not be eligible for a master’s degree at the end of the program. They include internship programs in which candidates are a traditional student teacher or the teacher of record. They also include non-traditional programs for the preparation of other school personnel. BOE teams should look for evidence of candidate performance throughout and at the end of the program. Differences between alternate route programs and traditional programs, including candidate performance, should be described in the BOE report.

Distance Learning Programs

In general, the principles that guide the review of off-campus programs apply to the review of distance learning programs as well. Guidelines for the review of distance learning programs begin on page 68. Distance learning programs are expected to meet NCATE standards at the same level as programs offered through traditional means.

Some institutions offer extensive professional education coursework via distance learning, but not full programs. BOE teams should ensure that the technology required to support large-scale distance learning offerings is sufficient. It is also important to ensure that programs offered in full or in part through distance learning are coherent and that candidates have access to resources and are provided with adequate advising and supervision. Teams should interview candidates in distance learning programs and faculty who use this delivery system. Team chairs sometimes use e-mail to solicit feedback from candidates in these programs. Assessment data that are disaggregated for candidates in distance learning programs should indicate if differences exist in the performance of candidates in these programs versus traditional programs.

Review of Third-Party Testimony

Six months before their accreditation visit takes place, institutions are required to publish a notice soliciting third-party comment on the quality of their professional education programs. The notice directs letters to be addressed to the
BOE team in care of the NCATE office. Approximately two to three months before the BOE review, NCATE staff sends copies of letters of third-party comment to the team chair and the NCATE coordinator at the institution. The institution may then choose to prepare a written response to any of the letters received as a result of the solicitation for comment. Third-party comment is often not received for an institution.

Letters of comment and the response from the institution become part of the data to be examined by the BOE team and should be listed as sources of evidence in the BOE report. On occasion, letters may prompt the team to schedule an interview, request documentation, and/or visit an off-campus or school site that might not have been part of the team’s original schedule. Although concerns that may be raised by third-party testimony should be discussed with the unit head, any follow-up of claims made by third-party letters is conducted at the discretion of the BOE chair and should depend on relevance to the standards.

**Interviewing**

The BOE team spends most of Monday and Tuesday of the visit conducting interviews with individuals and groups. Interviews help team members (1) verify information in the institutional report and exhibit room, and (2) clarify areas of concern related to the standards. Many of the questions are specific to the unit and revolve around the knowledge that the BOE has gained while on site. Other questions help the BOE team understand the perceptions of key stakeholders regarding the extent to which the unit is meeting professional, state, and institutional standards.

The interview schedule is developed jointly during the previsit by the team chair(s), state consultant, and institutional representatives. The template for the visit beginning on page 70 suggests timeframes for interviews, but these may need to be modified to ensure that key persons can be interviewed. If someone is not available for an interview, the BOE chair should make arrangements to meet with an acceptable substitute.

In addition to prearranged meetings with groups and individuals, the BOE team may need to schedule additional interviews as follow-up to third-party testimony received, to gather more data on areas of concern, to resolve
conflicting information, or simply to ensure that adequate input is received from all parties. The template for the BOE visit also includes one-hour open interviews with faculty and candidates on Tuesday morning. During the previsit, the team chair should remind institutional representatives to disseminate broadly the time and location of the open interviews and the fact that the sessions are open only to respective members of each group. The names of faculty and candidates who attend these sessions must be included in the “Sources of Evidence” section of the BOE report.

**Individual Interviews**

During the on-site visit, BOE team members interview a number of individuals who can describe the ways in which the unit meets standards. The questions asked should clarify and expand on information read in the institutional report, on the website, and in exhibit room documents. They should be related to the standards. Key individuals who should be interviewed include:

- The chief executive officer (*i.e.*, president or chancellor),
- The chief academic officer at the institution (*i.e.*, provost or vice president),
- The head of the professional education unit (*e.g.*, dean, director, or chair),
- The director of clinical/laboratory experiences,
- An affirmative action officer or equivalent,
- The person in charge of admission to the unit,
- Counselors and advisors to education candidates,
- The director of field experiences,
- Selected faculty and administrators in education and other units at the institution,
- Deans of other units involved in preparing candidates,
- The NCATE coordinator at the institution,
- Selected internship supervisors, and
- Selected principals of schools where candidates complete field experiences.

If the unit does not have persons working in one or more of the roles listed above, then the BOE chair should schedule interviews with persons in the unit whose responsibilities most closely match those of the listed positions. Individual interviews are normally scheduled for 30 minutes.
Team members are expected to interview school personnel who are involved with the unit as employers of graduates, student teacher or internship supervisors, members of a professional development school (PDS) team, participants in joint research sites, recipients of in-service by the unit, advisory board members, and graduates. These interviews often are conducted in participating schools. Some of these interviews occur when team members visit schools in which interns are assigned and/or collaborative efforts exist with the unit. Teachers, principals, and other professional school personnel also come to campus to meet with the team. The team chair may arrange to conduct telephone or interactive video interviews with administrators, cooperating teachers, and interns in schools that are located so far from campus that travel to the site is not reasonable.

**Group Interviews**

In addition to individual interviews, the team conducts group interviews with candidates, university faculty, internship supervisors, university and school administrators, and other members of the professional education community. Arrangements for these interviews should be made during the previsit. Types of questions that the BOE may ask during the group interviews are outlined below.

**A. Group Interview with Initial Teacher Preparation Candidates:**

1. What kinds of teachers do your professors strive to produce?
2. What links do you see between your courses? Between courses and field experiences?
3. What types of knowledge and skills have you learned to help you teach students from diverse backgrounds?
4. What technological skills have you learned that will help you have a positive effect on student learning? In what ways do your professors integrate technology into their courses?
5. What information and techniques are you learning that will help you in today’s classrooms?
6. What are the different phases in your program? How do you move from one phase to the next?
7. What assessments do you complete as you move through your program? How are the assessments used in your program?
B. **Group Interview with Faculty:**

1. What kinds of teachers do you strive to produce? What are their characteristics?
2. What aspects of your unit were developed as a result of collaborative work with faculty members from other programs and departments on campus? With clinical faculty based in P–12 schools? [Prompt: development of conceptual framework(s), assessment system, and clinical experiences]
3. How do you know that your candidates are able to work effectively with students from diverse backgrounds?
4. What factors (internal and external) have the most impact on your teaching? [Prompt: conferences, conceptual framework, assessment system, etc.] How is technology integrated into your courses?
5. How do the your assessments link to the unit’s conceptual framework?
6. How do you identify candidates who are not meeting program requirements? What strategies do you use in working with these candidates?

C. **Group Interview with School-Based Faculty**

1. To what extent are candidates adequately prepared by this program to be effective teachers? What are the strengths and challenges?
2. As mentor teachers, what types of assessment do you use to determine candidate learning? To what extent did you collaborate with university faculty to design and implement these assessments?
3. What criteria do you use to evaluate candidate abilities to work with diverse students?
4. What type of teachers do you strive to produce? What characteristics describe these teachers?
5. To what extent do you help to plan and evaluate the field experiences component of the program? Can you provide an example of when the unit was responsive to suggestions for improvement?
D. Group Interview with Members of a Teacher Education Advisory Committee:

1. How do you know when candidates are ready to be recommended for licensure?
2. How is the unit fostering collaborative efforts within the professional community? What have been the opportunities for collaborative effort? [Prompts: development of conceptual frameworks, development of assessment system and instruments, development of field experiences and clinical internships]
3. How has the faculty benefited from professional development activities provided by the unit? What training is provided for clinical faculty?
4. What do your evaluations tell you about the availability and use of resources for the preparation of teachers, especially in reference to technology? What other types of information have you learned from your evaluations?
5. What are the best indicators you currently have that demonstrate candidate growth and development in content and pedagogical knowledge?
6. How are internship supervisors selected and evaluated?

E. Group Interview with P–12 Administrators:

1. What role do you play in the planning of field-based experiences of candidates? In selecting mentor teachers or other internship supervisors?
2. What are the learning expectations for candidates completing field experiences in your schools?
3. How are candidate proficiencies assessed during the field experiences? during clinical practice?
4. What are the strengths of most candidates from XYZ University? In what areas would the candidates benefit from more instruction? In what ways is the unit responsive to suggestions for improvement?
5. Who participates in evaluations of the clinical practices? What have been the major findings?
F. Group Interview with Initial Teacher Education Program Graduates:

1. In what areas of teaching were you best prepared by your teacher education program? [Prompts: Developing units and writing lesson plans, content knowledge, assessment, collaborating with peers, classroom management, etc.]
2. In what areas of teaching would you like to have had more instruction? [Prompts: Developing units and writing lesson plans, assessment, collaborating with peers, classroom management, etc.]
3. In what ways did you benefit from the field experiences?
4. In what ways did your teacher education program prepare you to work effectively with students from diverse backgrounds?
5. What aspects, if any, of the faculty’s teaching do you attempt to copy in your own teaching?

G. Group Interview with Advanced Teacher Preparation Program Candidates:

1. In what ways are you or will you be a better teacher as a result of your master’s program?
2. How has your program helped you to be more effective with diverse learners?
3. How are you using technology in your classroom? In what ways do your professors integrate technology into their courses?
4. What are the different phases in your program? How do you move from one phase to the next? What type of field-based projects does your program require?
5. How are the assessments used in your program?

H. Group Interview with Graduates from Non-Teaching Programs:

1. In what ways has your program prepared you to handle your job effectively?
2. In which aspects of your job, if any, would you have liked to have had more instruction?
3. In what ways did your program prepare you to work effectively with students, parents, and communities from diverse backgrounds?
4. How, if in any ways, were you influenced by the faculty, particularly their teaching and assessment techniques?

The institution is responsible for inviting participants to the group interviews, but team members may want to arrange follow-up interviews with some of the individual participants in the group interviews to collect additional information. Teams should never limit their interviews to the persons scheduled for individual or group interviews. They should also talk to candidates in the halls, P–12 school settings, and student lounges. When they are visiting P–12 schools, they will have the opportunity to talk with practitioners who have not been included in other interviews. These interviews will confirm findings and sometimes raise important questions for further investigation. Teams usually interview the following groups:

- Candidates in initial teacher preparation programs,
- Teachers in master's programs,
- Candidates preparing for other school personnel roles,
- Candidates who are leaders in student professional education associations,
- Education faculty,
- Internship supervisors,
- Principals and personnel directors from area schools,
- Members of policy and advisory committees, and
- Members of unit committees (e.g., assessment committee).

The number of persons in a group interview should not exceed eight to ten in order to allow everyone the opportunity to participate. Group interviews usually are scheduled for 45 to 60 minutes. The participants should be of similar status within the institution (i.e., candidates in initial teacher education programs, candidates in graduate programs preparing for new roles in schools, faculty members, department and/or program heads, P–12 administrators, and graduates) to reduce power struggles among participants.

**Visiting Field Sites**

The template suggests that team members visit two to four schools during the on-site visit to talk with interns, internship supervisors, principals, and others in the school about the quality of the unit’s programs, interns, graduates, and relationships with P–12 schools. At the previsit, the BOE team chair and institutional representatives must decide how to conduct an adequate review of
field sites. Institutional representatives should provide a list of area schools in which interns are placed as well as the number of interns placed in each school, the diversity of the student body, and the distance from campus. During the previsit or soon after, the team chair should select two to four schools to be visited by the team.

For many if not most institutions, it will be impossible for a BOE team member to visit all schools that provide field experiences for candidates. To the extent possible, the team’s visits to field sites should provide a sampling of experiences across different grade levels and classroom populations. The choice of field site visits should also include internship placements for advanced level candidates when applicable. If the institution has professional development schools or other sites where innovations in university-school collaboration exist, team members should visit one or more of them. If the institution places some interns in PDSs and others in more traditional partner schools, the team should plan to visit both types of sites.

Exit Conference

An exit conference is designed for the BOE team chair, state co-chair, and state consultant to report the team’s findings to the unit head and the NCATE coordinator. The institution’s president and provost may attend the exit conference as well. Exit conferences with institutional representatives other than those who have been most directly involved with preparing for the visit are strongly discouraged. Although the BOE team chair usually represents the team at this meeting, other team members may join the chair at the exit conference.

The BOE team chair reports the team’s findings, indicating the team’s recommendations. The chair summarizes of areas for improvement (if any) that the team plans to cite in the written BOE report. The chair’s summary should be supported in the final written report. The chair should inform the institutional representatives that the team will review their report again after the visit and it is possible that another area for improvement that is suggested in the findings section of the report may be added to the list of areas for improvement in the final written report. The chair should also stress that the BOE team makes recommendations regarding standards being met and areas for improvement. The UAB may accept their recommendations or change them; the final decision
about accreditation and areas for improvement is the responsibility of the UAB, not the BOE team.

Before the exit conference concludes, the team chair should remind the unit head that he/she will have an opportunity to check the final draft of the BOE report for factual errors. The unit head should be encouraged to submit a rejoinder that responds to the areas for improvement and concerns raised in the BOE report. The full exit conference is usually less than 15 minutes long and does not allow institutional representatives to debate the team's findings.

The BOE Report

The BOE report represents the formal, written findings of the team’s review. It is the means by which the team informs the institution and the UAB of its decisions and the rationales behind them. The university president, unit head, faculty, members of the state boards or committees, and members of the UAB read the BOE report. Sometimes an institution places the BOE report on its website. Occasionally, the report is the focus of a newspaper article praising or criticizing the institution.

The institution prepares its rejoinder or written response based on the BOE report. A well written, detailed, informative BOE report is critical to the accreditation process. The BOE report and the unit’s rejoinder are the primary sources of evidence upon which the UAB bases its accreditation decision. Next to the professional behavior of the team members during the site visit, the written report is the institution’s most lasting impression of NCATE. A poorly written report reflects negatively on the team and NCATE.

Team chairs should assign the writing of each standard to a primary and secondary writer. These individuals should work together to prepare a well-written response by editing each other’s work as necessary. During the team work-session on Wednesday morning, team members must share their writing with each other. Some team members will have better writing skills than others; therefore, members should operate as a team that edits and rewrites each other’s sections to ensure consistency in writing style and detail throughout the report. The submission of a quality report should be one of the team’s goals. Team members should critique each other’s rationales and statements of areas
for improvement to ensure clarity and to eliminate redundancy and contradictions.

By the end of the on-site visit, the team should have completed the first draft of the report. Team members should take a copy of the full report with them to use as a reference while the report is finalized over the few weeks following the visit. The team chair should leave the visit with the first draft both on paper and on a computer disk. It is the team chair’s responsibility to compile drafts from individual team members and ultimately produce a final BOE report. While the report is the effort of several individuals, the final report must be a polished, coherent document that speaks with “one voice.” Therefore, team chairs are charged with editing the report so that it is a professional, unified document rather than merely a collection of different reports, written in different styles and formats.

**Timeline for Submission of the BOE Report**

The BOE report should be edited, reviewed by institutional representatives for factual errors, and finalized within 30 days of the on-site visit. Some chairs stay over on Wednesday night of the visit to complete the compilation and editing of the first draft of the report completed by the team that morning. Other chairs complete this work when they return home. It is important for teams to follow the timeline on the following page so institutions have time to prepare a rejoinder to the BOE report and BOE team chairs have time to respond to the rejoinder prior to the next UAB meeting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Who is responsible?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of the on-site visit</td>
<td>Completes the first draft of the report.</td>
<td>All team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two weeks after the visit</td>
<td>Sends second draft of the report for editing by the NCATE office and team members, including state team members and observers if the visit was conducted jointly with the state.</td>
<td>Team chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week after receiving the second draft of the report</td>
<td>Returns to the team chair edits and recommendations on the draft report.</td>
<td>Team members and NCATE staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few days after edits from the team and NCATE have been received</td>
<td>Makes edits as appropriate based on team and NCATE's comments and sends a copy of the revised draft to the unit head to review for factual errors.</td>
<td>Team chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No more than five days after receiving the draft report from the team chair</td>
<td>Submits factual corrections to the team chair.</td>
<td>Institutional representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four weeks after the visit</td>
<td>Makes corrections from the institution as appropriate, finalizes the report, and sends a copy to NCATE and team members.</td>
<td>Team chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 30 days after the unit receives the BOE report</td>
<td>Sends a rejoinder to NCATE.</td>
<td>Institutional representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the rejoinder is received at NCATE</td>
<td>Sends a copy of the rejoinder to the team chair.</td>
<td>NCATE staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 days after receiving the unit’s rejoinder</td>
<td>Responds to the unit’s rejoinder if the team chair chooses to do so.</td>
<td>Team chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or three months after the UAB meeting</td>
<td>Sends to the team chair the UAB’s action report and/or cover letter with areas for improvement.</td>
<td>NCATE staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When sending the draft BOE report to the unit for factual corrections, the team chair should be specific about the timeline for a response from the unit, which is generally five working days (unless there are extenuating circumstances). Chairs should not wait indefinitely for a response from the unit. If the chair has not received a response from the unit within the specified timeframe, he/she should contact the unit head to indicate that the report is being finalized.

If team chairs require additional time to finalize the BOE report, they must inform the NCATE office of the delay and provide an estimate of when the report will be completed. NCATE understands that extenuating circumstances may prevent a chair from meeting the timeline above, but staff members need to know how to respond when institutions call about not receiving their reports. In some cases, staff members may be able to assist the chair with completing the report.

Final reports may be submitted to NCATE as an e-mail attachment. If a hard copy is sent, it should be sent via UPS, Federal Express, overnight mail, or another form of secure, traceable delivery. BOE reports should not be sent via regular mail; they are often lost. To send a report via Federal Express, the chair may request the NCATE account number so that the expense will be billed directly to NCATE.

**Content of the BOE Report**

The BOE report contains six sections as described in the following table. The template for the BOE report, which can be downloaded from the website, includes each of these sections with prompts about the information that should be included. A sample BOE report is available on NCATE’s website as a model to teams as they prepare their own BOE reports.
I. Front Pages
Cover Page, with the names of BOE team members, state team members (if a joint visit with the state) and/or the state education agency consultant, and the NEA or AFT representative.
Table of Contents, with page numbers for sections of the report.
Summary of Findings for the Standards, with a table showing standards “Met” and “Not Met” at the initial teacher preparation and/or advanced preparation levels.

II. Introduction, with an overview of the institution, including type (i.e., state, religious affiliation), mission, description of the service area, and population served. It describes the professional education unit—enrollment, programs and degrees offered, off-campus programs offered—and, for continuing visits, any major changes in the unit since the previous visit.

III. Conceptual Framework, with a description and analysis of the unit’s conceptual framework and the extent to which it is integrated into the unit’s courses, experiences, and assessments. The team should write a general description of the conceptual framework as an introduction to this section and a separate response to each area of evidence (vision, coherence, etc.) listed in the NCATE standards.

IV. Findings for Each Standard, with subsections corresponding to each of the six standards. The team should report its findings for each standard at each level (initial teacher preparation/advanced preparation), presenting a description and analysis of the evidence as it relates to the “Elements of the Standard” found in the rubrics for each of the six standards. The narrative should clearly articulate the strengths and challenges demonstrated by the unit in regard to the standard. The team will indicate for each standard whether it is met and cite any areas for improvement that the unit might address after the visit. (In a continuing visit, weaknesses or areas for improvement from the previous visit will be reported as either corrected or continued.) The findings for each standard should include the following parts:
   A. Level (initial teacher preparation and/or advanced preparation).
   B. Findings (narrative description).
   C. Overall assessment of the standards (summary paragraph).
   D. Indication of the standard being met (Met or Not Met).
   E. Areas for Improvement

V. Sources of Evidence, with a list of all individuals interviewed, documents reviewed, and schools and classes observed by the BOE team during the on-site visit.

VI. Corrections to the Institutional Report, with a description of any substantive corrections to the institution’s report. (It is not necessary to cite insignificant typographical errors.)
Guidelines for Writing the BOE Report

To ensure a well written, informative, and consistent BOE report, team members should adhere to the following content and style guidelines in their writing. All team members are expected to familiarize themselves with these guidelines. While the chair is charged with ensuring the overall consistency and coherence of the report, individual team members are responsible for the content and quality of their writing. Chairs should copyedit final reports for typographical and grammatical errors before transmitting the report to NCATE.

Conceptual Framework

Using the “Evidence for the Conceptual Framework(s)” from NCATE’s standards, the team provides a description and analysis of the unit’s conceptual framework and the extent to which it is integrated into the unit’s curriculum, instruction, and assessments. The team’s findings for the conceptual framework should use the headings that correspond to the evidence for the conceptual framework. Any concerns about the conceptual framework should be discussed in this section. These concerns should foreshadow any areas for improvement related to the conceptual framework cited later in the report.

Findings for Each Standard

The team’s findings for each standard must include a rationale—the reasons, facts, evidence, quantitative data, and observations that support the team’s decision of whether the standard is met or not met—and the citation (if any) of areas for improvement. The findings address everything the team found, the positive and the negative, strengths and concerns or challenges, regardless of whether the standard is met or not met. When writing this narrative, teams should follow these guidelines:

- The findings should use the headings that correspond to the elements of the rubric in each standard. Each element must be addressed in its own section.
- The narrative should be as descriptive and provide as many details as possible to help the reader understand the team’s decision.
- Summaries of data such as test scores, pass rates, faculty publications, and candidate diversity should be presented in the report.
When indicating that the unit uses journals, portfolios, etc., for assessing candidates, the contents and purpose of these artifacts should be described. What knowledge, skills, or dispositions are they intended to demonstrate? To what standards are they correlated? How are they assessed? By whom? What were the summarized results?

The findings should include an “Overall Assessment of the Standard” that summarizes (in one paragraph) the team’s findings.

The findings must support any areas for improvement cited. When the narrative identifies concerns that are not of a critical enough nature to be formally cited as an area for improvement, the team must indicate the mitigating circumstances for not citing these concerns as areas for improvement (for example, “the issue was resolved through an agreement between the faculty union and the university,” etc.). At the same time, the rationale should not attempt to justify the unit’s inability to meet the standard by making excuses for the unit (for example, “the institution is located in a rural area where there is little diversity, which impacts the unit’s ability to recruit a diverse student body”; “it is a small institution with very limited resources that are more urgently needed in areas other than technology”).

When conducting a review of programs for initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation, findings may be substantially different for some standards at the different levels. For example, a standard may be met at the initial level and not met at the advanced level, or the standard may be unmet at both levels but the concerns and areas for improvement cited may be substantially different for each level. In these cases, the team:

- must be very clear in the rationale for why the standard is met at one level and not the other.
- has the option of writing separate rationales for the initial and advanced levels when the findings for the two levels are substantially different.

At times, teams are unable to locate evidence related to a particular element of a standard and will simply avoid addressing that element because very little detail can be provided. However, it is critical that the UAB know that the lack of
description about a particular standard or part of a standard is due to the lack of evidence available rather than an oversight on the part of the team. When the unit has not provided documentation and evidence in relation to a standard or part of a standard, it is very important that teams:

- communicate in the BOE report findings section that documentation was not available.
- cite areas for improvement related to the standard or element.

The BOE report is not a “consultant’s” report. The report must avoid giving advice or telling the unit how to correct problems and should avoid editorializing or preaching to the unit. Teams must avoid statements such as “the unit should...,” “the unit ought to...,” “the unit could be doing better in this area...,” and “If the unit does not do ABC, then XYZ will happen.”

In describing findings for the standards, it is not necessary to cite processes and procedures used by the team, nor should sources of evidence be cited in the rationale (for example, do not write “The team interviewed 30 candidates and five cooperating teachers and observed 12 classes and concludes that ...” or, “The institutional report, p. 24, indicates that the unit...”). The full listing of sources of evidence should be provided in the last section of the BOE report.

**SPA Program Reviews**

Standard 1 indicates that candidates should acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions outlined in state, institutional, and professional standards. Program reviews from the specialized professional organizations (SPA reports) and state program review reports represent important sources of evidence for candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

If the SPA or state report indicates that a program meets standards, the BOE team should consider this as strong evidence that elements of Standard 1 related to content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are met. BOE teams should note, however, that a positive SPA or state report does not preclude the citation of program-specific areas for improvement in other elements of Standard 1 or in Standards 2–6.

Serious concerns indicated by SPA or state reports should trigger follow-up and investigation by the BOE team. The team should consider whether the unit has addressed the concerns identified by the specialty organization or has
plans in place to address them. When the unit has not properly addressed the concern(s), the team should determine the effects of the concern(s) on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions and cite an area for improvement. In other words, the team should cite areas for improvement that clearly link the stated SPA or state concerns to candidate proficiencies.

Candidate proficiencies are critical in the NCATE standards, which emphasize candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Observations and areas for improvement cited in the BOE report must go beyond listing deficiencies written in the SPA or state reports or stating that the program did not meet the SPA standards. Areas for improvement should clearly state the deficiencies in candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions as outlined, based on the team’s follow-up of concerns cited in SPA or state reports. For example, rather than stating, “The elementary education and early childhood programs do not meet the professional association standards,” an area for improvement should indicate a specific concern that has been confirmed: “Candidates in the elementary education and early childhood programs do not have the pedagogical skills needed to work successfully with exceptional populations.”

It is possible that in investigating concerns cited in SPA and state reports, the team will find that the unit can demonstrate that candidates have acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions in question. Assessment data may indicate candidate proficiencies. Similarly, comments from cooperating teachers, employers, faculty, and candidates may indicate that candidates have the required proficiencies. In such cases, the narrative section of the BOE report should state this countervailing evidence and its sources.
Examples of Responses to Program Review Findings

**Insufficient response:** The unit uses the standards of the specialty organizations to develop its programs. All programs were submitted for specialty area review. Special education, technology education, and secondary math, science, and social studies all received approval by the relevant specialty organization. Elementary education was not recognized by the specialty organization. Reading education is in the rejoinder process.

**Area for Improvement:** Elementary education does not meet the standards of the professional organization.

**Better response:** The unit uses the standards of the specialty organizations to develop its programs. All programs were submitted for specialty area review. Special education, technology education, and secondary math, science, and social studies all received national recognition by the relevant specialty organization. Elementary education was not recognized by the specialty organization. Reading education has submitted a rejoinder to the specialty organization for review.

In elementary education, the specialty organization reported that there is insufficient attention to inclusion. The BOE team interviewed cooperating teachers and supervisors and candidates regarding candidates’ abilities and comfort levels with creating instruction for exceptional learners. Candidates reported that some strategies are offered in their coursework for dealing with the inclusion of exceptional learners. However, many elementary education candidates indicated that they had not had the opportunity in field experiences to work with exceptional learners. Those who did, did not feel confident in their abilities to create meaningful learning experiences for an exceptional learner. Cooperating teachers confirmed that the schools in which elementary education candidates are placed for field experiences and student teaching often do not include exceptional students in the classrooms where candidates practice. They indicated that candidates with exceptional learners in their classrooms sometimes appeared frustrated.

In reading education, the specialty organization indicated that there did not appear to be sufficient attention to adjusting instruction for diverse learners. The team found, however, that candidates and clinical supervisors were comfortable with candidates’ abilities in this area. Internal assessments of candidate clinical practice indicated that 80% of candidates are able to make necessary changes in teaching strategies to accommodate the needs of all students.

**Area for Improvement:** Candidates in elementary education are not able to adjust instruction for exceptional learners.

The first response does not provide any information about why elementary education did not receive specialty area recognition or the problem that led to a rejoinder for reading education. It did not indicate any follow-up on the part of the BOE team regarding the implications for candidate performance—whether candidates can or cannot, in fact, demonstrate the proficiencies that were found lacking by the program review. The area for improvement cited is general and not performance-oriented; it gives no indication of the relationship to candidate performance.
The second response indicates specifically why elementary education did not receive specialty organization recognition and the specific problem reading education was rejoining. It indicated that the BOE team followed up these reviews to determine whether candidates were able to demonstrate these proficiencies. In the case of elementary education, it provided feedback about problems with candidate performance that support the area for improvement cited. In the case of reading education, the team received feedback that indicated the problem cited by the specialty area did not appear to be impacting candidate performance.

**Areas for Improvement**

Areas for improvement that may be cited after each set of findings identify areas in which improvements need to be made to ensure that high quality programs are offered and that candidates are as well prepared as possible. Areas for improvement can and should be the impetus for positive change and can serve as leverage for the unit in gaining the necessary resources to improve programs and candidate performance.

Teams should keep in mind that the unit has the opportunity to rejoin any areas for improvement cited. The UAB removes areas for improvement that have been successfully rejoined. On the other hand, the UAB may also cite areas for improvement indicated in the narrative of the report but not cited explicitly by the team. BOE teams are encouraged, when in doubt, to err on the side of citing the area for improvement. It is fairer to the unit to provide the opportunity to rejoin an area for improvement and have it removed by the UAB than to have a previously uncited area for improvement added by the UAB.

When both the initial teacher preparation and advanced preparation levels are under review and areas for improvement are substantially different for each level, or areas for improvement are found for one level and not the other, the team must be clear about the level to which the areas for improvement apply (unless a separate rationale has been written for each level). The following are examples of the correct way to write such statements:

- Assessment instruments do not reflect the knowledge and skills outlined in the conceptual framework for advanced level programs.
- *(Advanced level only)* The unit does not systematically select clinical sites to ensure that candidates have the opportunity to
work with students from diverse backgrounds.

- (Initial level only) Field experiences do not provide candidates with the opportunity to use technologies to support student learning.

When an area for improvement statement does not specify a particular level, it is assumed that the area for improvement applies to both levels.

Professional education units are encouraged to discuss in their annual reports progress made in addressing areas for improvement, and they will be evaluated on their progress during the next on-site visit. Therefore, the BOE should write statements of areas for improvement that clearly identify the problem related to the standard. In writing about an area for improvement, teams should remember that the statement should be:

- a concise, factual statement of a problem that has been discussed in the narrative section of the findings.
- one sentence in length. Do not begin the statement with “As noted in the rationale...” or “As indicated above...”
- a complete sentence, with a subject and verb.
- a statement of an area that should be improved. It is not a prescription or recommendation. As in the narrative, a statement that begins “The unit should...” or “The unit needs to...” is inappropriate.
- performance/outcome-oriented whenever possible, especially for Standard 1.
- followed by a one- or two-sentence rationale for citing it.

Standard 1 focuses on what candidates know and can do. Teams should be looking for outcomes (evidence that candidates are acquiring the appropriate knowledge, skills, and dispositions) and not just for inputs (what is provided in the unit’s curriculum and experiences). In interviews with candidates, faculty, cooperating teachers, administrators, and others, questions should focus not only on what the unit is providing in courses and experiences (inputs) but also on what candidates are gaining from the unit’s courses and experiences and how well they can demonstrate what they have learned (outcomes/performance). When it is not evident that the unit is providing the appropriate inputs into curriculum and experiences, the team should determine what impact this has had on candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Teams are
encouraged to relate areas for improvement to performance if at all possible, as shown below:

| Input Oriented: The unit does not integrate technology into courses and experiences. |
| Rationale: A review of course syllabi and interviews with candidates and faculty indicated that the use of educational technology is not addressed in most programs beyond the use of e-mail for communications. |

| Performance Oriented: Candidates are not able to use computer technology effectively as an instructional tool. |
| Rationale: Candidates do not feel well prepared in the use of computer technologies for instruction; cooperating teachers confirmed that candidates had difficulties in this area. Course syllabi did not appear to reflect an attention to the use of instructional technologies. |

Note that the examples of areas for improvement above are accompanied by a “rationale.” All area for improvement statements should be followed by a brief rationale summarizing information from the team’s findings that provides the reasons for citing the area for improvement. The rationale should reiterate information already in the narrative so that it is clear how the area for improvement stems naturally from the team’s findings.
### Examples of Areas for Improvement

The following table provides examples of inappropriate statements of areas for improvement followed by the preferable versions of the statements and an explanation of the problems with the original language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inappropriate</th>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Of the three elements that describe this standard, the unit is at the unacceptable level for all three. As indicated above, the process for developing an assessment system is underway but has not yet produced a plan with timelines for implementation or details about how data will be collected or analyzed. In addition, development of the assessment system has not included others in the professional community outside of the unit faculty, and there appears to be no provision for the input of the professional community. | 1. The unit lacks a plan for implementing its assessment system.  
2. The unit has not included members of the professional community in its development of an assessment system. | There are two areas for improvement indicated here, and they should be clearly separated. Also, the statement is too long. It is not necessary to indicate how many elements there are in a standard and at what level the unit meets the element, nor is it necessary to say “As indicated above.” |
| No clinical experience component for all advanced programs. | The Master of Arts program in Reading Arts does not include a clinical experience component. | The original statement is not a complete sentence and is vague in terms of which advanced programs are not providing clinical experiences. |
| Not all programs prepare teacher candidates to have a broad knowledge of instructional strategies that draws upon content and pedagogical knowledge delineated in professional standards. | Candidates in the Elementary Education Program cannot adequately create instructional strategies for inclusion of exceptional learners. | The original statement repeats the language of the element of the standard and is not specific about which program(s) are not adequately preparing candidates and in what knowledge/skill area they are not prepared. The original statement is also not performance oriented. |
Areas for Improvement in Continuing Accreditation Visits

In a continuing accreditation review, the team must address weaknesses or areas for improvement that were cited at the previous visit. Before the visit, the team will receive the Accreditation Action Report and/or letter issued by the UAB for the last BOE visit. These are the official documents that indicate the areas for improvement the unit should be addressing between visits. The team should refer to these documents when citing the previous weaknesses or areas for improvement that need to be addressed in the BOE report.

Findings related to a previous weakness or area for improvement should be discussed in the narrative for the standard to which it is related. For example, weaknesses cited under the 1995 Standard I.H, Quality of Field Experiences, would likely be related to Standard 3, Field Experiences and Clinical Practices, in the current NCATE Standards. Areas for improvement cited under the 1995 Standard I.A, Conceptual Framework, should be addressed in the new standard to which they are related. The unit’s annual reports since 2000 show the previous weakness under the appropriate new standard. In the section on areas for improvement for each standard, the team should indicate under the appropriate heading whether previous weaknesses or areas for improvement are “corrected” or “continued,” as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Area for Improvement:</strong> (Initial level only) Candidates in secondary education programs do not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the subjects they plan to teach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rationale:</strong> Candidate pass rates on subject-area exams are lower than statewide averages. Cooperating teachers indicate that many candidates do not appear to be as well grounded as they should be in the theories and principles of their subject area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corrected Area for Improvement:</strong> Candidates do not learn to integrate technology into instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rationale:</strong> The unit has integrated a component in instructional technology into all program strands, and candidates are expected to demonstrate, and are assessed for, ability to use instructional technologies. Clinical faculty note that candidates effectively integrate technology into instruction during their fieldwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continued Area for Improvement:</strong> None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Assessment System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Area for Improvement:</strong> None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corrected Area for Improvement:</strong> The unit has yet to establish performance criteria and develop coherence between the new conceptual framework and the courses, field experiences, and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rationale:</strong> The unit has defined expected outcomes and related performance criteria for candidates based on the revised conceptual framework. Candidates are assessed on these performance criteria in coursework and field experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table on pages 152–153 shows the relationship between the 1995 and current NCATE standards. In many instances, there may not be a one-to-one relationship between the old and current standards. If the team is not sure of the current standard under which a previously cited weakness falls, it should check the unit’s 2000 or later annual report. The current standards do not include a standard that corresponds to the 1995 Standard I.B, General Studies. However, the explanation for Standard 2 lists general education knowledge as one of multiple indicators of potential success that should be assessed.

**Writing Style**

The following stylistic conventions should be used consistently throughout the BOE report:

- In general, the present tense should be used in the report when describing how the unit meets standards and describing conditions and activities that existed at the time of the visit. Examples of areas for improvement written in the present tense include:
  - The unit lacks current computer and information technology to support candidate learning.
  - Candidates are unable to articulate and demonstrate the dispositions outlined in the unit’s conceptual framework.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1995 Standards</th>
<th>2002 Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.A. Conceptual Framework(s)</td>
<td>Conceptual Framework and 1–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.B. General Studies</td>
<td>2 (May be part of multiple assessments used for admission to initial preparation programs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.C. Content Studies</td>
<td>1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions; Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.D. Professional and Pedagogical Studies</td>
<td>1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions; Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.E. Integrative Studies</td>
<td>1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions; Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.F. Advanced Professional Studies</td>
<td>1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions; Field Experiences and Clinical Practice; Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.G. Quality of Instruction</td>
<td>4 Diversity; Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.H. Quality of Field Experience</td>
<td>1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions; Field Experiences and Clinical Practice; Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.I. Professional Community</td>
<td>2 Assessment System and Unit Evaluation; Field Experiences and Clinical Practice; Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.A. Qualifications</td>
<td>2 Assessment System and Unit Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.B. Composition</td>
<td>4 Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.C. Monitoring and Assessing Progress</td>
<td>1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions; Assessment System and Unit Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.D. Ensuring Competence</td>
<td>1 Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions; Assessment System and Unit Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.A. Qualifications</td>
<td>4 Diversity; Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.B. Composition</td>
<td>4 Diversity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Candidates” should be used to refer to individuals enrolled in professional education programs; “students” should be used to refer to children and youth in P–12 classrooms.

- The word “unit” is not capitalized. “Unit” may be used synonymously with the actual name of the professional education unit (e.g., College of Education).
- All pages should be numbered consecutively.

**Common Problems in BOE Reports**

The following areas have been identified by the UAB as areas that are commonly overlooked or not adequately addressed in BOE reports:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off campus/distance learning programs: These programs are not fully addressed; they may be mentioned in passing, with no details on what is offered, where, by whom, and for whom, and no indication that the team visited or examined these programs or what their findings were.</td>
<td>The introduction should indicate whether the unit offers off-campus programs and, if so, describe the offerings (entire program, some courses, etc.), the delivery method (through distance learning technologies?), and who is responsible for delivery. It should also indicate whether the BOE team reviewed these programs and how (site visit, via the web, etc.) Findings for off-campus programs should be addressed in the appropriate standards. Areas for improvement should be cited where off-campus programs do not fully meet the standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes/performance of candidates/graduates: These data are not adequately addressed, with no indication of how well candidates/graduates are actually performing, based on interviews/feedback from cooperating teachers, school administrators, candidates and graduates, licensing exams, and data from performance assessments. Entrance/exit criteria are listed without analysis of whether these criteria ensure quality candidates at entrance and competency at exit.</td>
<td>Standard 1 requires a discussion of candidate performance, based on data from assessments, surveys, and feedback from field supervisors. Teams should describe areas in which candidates are reported to do well or feel well prepared, as well as areas in which they may need improvement. Teams should also report data about candidate performance on state licensing exams. Standard 2 requires a discussion of entrance/exit requirements/assessments as part of the unit assessment system and whether these assessments ensure quality and competency of candidates/graduates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Preparation Level: This level is not adequately addressed, especially fields/clinical experiences for advanced candidates preparing for new roles as counselor, administrator, etc.</td>
<td>The BOE report format requires a met/not met recommendation for each standard at each level. Where findings for a standard at the advanced level are substantially different, the findings for that standard should be written up separately from the initial level. Particular attention should be paid to elements of Standard 1 that address “Other School Personnel.” Teams should also keep in mind that Standard 3 expects clinical experiences to be provided for advanced level candidates either preparing for new roles or continuing their preparation as teachers. The explanation for Standard 3 provides guidance to the team in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology: The report does not indicate if/how candidates learn to use technology for instructional purposes. The report might mention that candidates use e-mail or use computers to complete assignments but not describe opportunities candidates have to learn to apply computer and other technologies to the content/level they plan to teach.</td>
<td>The evidence for the conceptual framework expects “commitment to technology.” The description of the unit’s conceptual framework should include a discussion of how/whether the conceptual framework includes expectations and opportunities for candidates to develop proficiencies in using educational technology. Standard 1 expects that candidates learn to use technology as a pedagogical tool. Teams should describe courses and requirements that prepare candidates to use technology appropriate to the role for which they are preparing. Standard 3 expects that candidates have the opportunity to use technology as an instructional tool in their field/clinical experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity: The report provides little indication of whether diversity is integrated as part of the unit’s conceptual framework and what courses/experiences help candidates learn to work with diverse/exceptional populations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Recommendations

The evidence for the conceptual framework expects “commitment to diversity.” The description of the unit’s conceptual framework should include a discussion of how/whether the conceptual framework includes expectations and opportunities for candidates to learn about and work with diverse/exceptional populations. Standard 4 addresses specifically what opportunities the unit provides to help candidates learn about and work with diverse student populations, including students with exceptionalities. Teams should describe the knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to diversity that the unit expects of candidates. Then they can describe the courses and experiences provided to help candidates learn about diversity and exceptionality. Teams should report on what candidates and cooperating teachers, employers, etc. indicate about candidate preparedness to work with diverse/exceptional populations.

### Areas for Improvement:

- A possible area for improvement is suggested in the narrative but not cited in the section for areas for improvement. No indication is provided as to why the concern was not cited as an area for improvement; the impact of the concern on the unit/programs/candidates is not clear.
- An area for improvement is cited but is not supported by data/evidence in the narrative.
- The team finds a standard not met, but the report does not cite any areas for improvement related to that standard.

### Recommendation:

- If the team consensus is that a concern related to a standard does not warrant an area for improvement statement, the report should provide a rationale why. It should provide evidence that the concern does not have a negative impact on the unit/programs/candidates or that the unit has already taken steps to address the issue.
- All areas for improvement cited must be discussed and supported by evidence/data in the narrative (Findings) section for the standard.
- For any standard that is found not met, areas for improvement and rationale statements must be provided to support that decision.

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### After the Visit

As soon as the BOE team leaves campus after the exit conference, the institution may begin celebrating the completion of the NCATE review, but BOE members still have work to finish before they can call the visit complete. The most important task remaining is editing and finalizing the team report. In addition, evaluation forms should be completed and submitted to NCATE along
with the travel voucher for reimbursement of expenses. All of these activities should be completed by team members within 30 days of the visit. In addition, after the unit submits its rejoinder to the BOE report, the team chair has the opportunity to provide a written response to the institution’s rejoinder.

Team chairs may have other responsibilities following the visit, particularly if the UAB decision is other than accreditation and the unit decides to appeal the decision. Therefore, team chairs should retain their notes regarding the visit until they have received notification from NCATE that the unit was accredited. This information can now be accessed from NCATE’s website soon after a UAB meeting. If the institution that was visited is not on the list of UAB actions, the unit is appealing the decision. Team chairs or their designees must participate in an appeal. Notes from the visit and team meetings are often helpful references when the Review Panel asks questions during the appeals hearing.

**Evaluations**

NCATE engages in ongoing evaluation of its procedures and its BOE members. After each on-site visit, BOE team members evaluate each other and NCATE procedures. Institutions also evaluate the team chair, team members who visited their campus, and the NCATE procedures. Evaluation forms to be completed by BOE team members can be downloaded from the NCATE website under the BOE link to on-site visit materials. Institutions are sent an evaluation form with their final BOE report. Each evaluation form is described in detail in this section of the handbook.

**Team Members**

At the end of the visit, team members are asked to evaluate the performance of the team chair and their fellow team members, both national and state members. The institution also evaluates the BOE team members who visited its campus. These evaluations are used to monitor, on a continuous basis, the overall performance of the BOE, as well as to identify individuals who are not performing adequately. In addition they are used to identify BOE members with the skills necessary to serve as team chairs.

The team chair should provide direct feedback on the performance of team members during and at the end of the team visit.
A competent BOE member displays the following knowledge, skills, and dispositions:

- Comes to the visit prepared as shown by having read the institutional report, completed the planning instrument, reviewed and analyzed annual report data, and visited the institution’s website prior to the visit.
- Is able to participate fully and attentively in visits that usually require 12-hour days.
- Understands NCATE procedures and processes and applies them appropriately.
- Is a team player, listens to others, does not dominate team discussions, and contributes substantively to team deliberations through arguments based on data rather than emotions.
- Understands the NCATE standards, seeks multiple sources of data related to the standards, and asks questions related to the standards.
- Reviews and analyzes qualitative and quantitative data and accurately and clearly translates findings into substantive written contributions to the BOE report.
- Is not confrontational, accusatory, or demanding in interactions with institutional representatives.
- Applies the NCATE standards holistically, with attention to institutional context and without regard to personal opinions or biases.
- Understands, values, and is committed to NCATE accreditation and does not publicly question the value of accreditation or NCATE standards.
- Has basic computer skills, does own word processing, uses e-mail, and accesses information from the web as needed.

Team chairs are evaluated by team members in the following areas:

- Pre-visit communications, including contact with team members prior to the visit regarding logistics, assignments, and responsibilities.
- Team orientation at the first meeting.
- Group processing skills to facilitate individual and group work and decision-making.
- Management of writing assignments for the BOE report.
Leadership skills, including the ability to organize and handle details, identify responsibilities and assign tasks, etc.

Personal qualities, including tact, promptness, communication skills, fairness, lack of bias, dependability, and thoroughness.

Team members who wish to see copies of their evaluations may contact the NCATE office after they have served on several teams.

**BOE Report**

Three- to five-person audit committees of the UAB have responsibility for making accreditation decisions for a number of institutions based on a review of the BOE report, the institutional report, the institution's rejoinder, and the team chair's response to the rejoinder. In addition, the audit committees complete an evaluation of the BOE reports for the institutions assigned to them. Two to three months after the UAB meeting, NCATE sends team members a copy of (1) the UAB audit committee's evaluation of the BOE report and (2) the UAB's official Accreditation Action Report and/or letter for the institution. The rubric for the evaluation of BOE reports can be found on NCATE's website.

**NCATE Procedures**

BOE teams are asked to evaluate the procedures and reference materials that guide the on-site visit. Institutions also evaluate the NCATE accreditation procedures. Procedures and materials are modified or new ones introduced as a result of these evaluations.

**Reimbursement of Expenses**

The travel reimbursement voucher for the on-site visit is sent to BOE members prior to the visit in a package that includes the cover letter with the travel code, return envelope(s), and instructions to retrieve other materials from the NCATE website. The voucher form may also be downloaded from NCATE’s website. Team members must write the name of the institution that was visited, the city and state, and the dates of travel at the top of the voucher. All original receipts must be stapled to the back of the voucher. Travelers are asked to assist in the clarity of the reimbursement process by adding up costs and clearly marking the “grand total.”
The one exception to the visit reimbursement process is that for visits in the state of Indiana, vouchers are submitted directly to the state, rather than to NCATE, and travel is booked through channels established by the state of Indiana, rather than NCATE’s travel agency.

The following policies apply to NCATE’s payment of approved travel expenses, whether for NCATE staff travel or for volunteers serving on governance boards, the BOE, committees, or grant-funded project and meetings subject to further policies stated by grantors. These policies apply whether NCATE pays the expenses directly, is direct-billed, or reimburses the traveler. Policies related to travel change periodically, but the latest version of policies for travel reimbursements is available on the website.

NCATE appreciates the service of members of the BOE and is committed to reimbursing their expenses as quickly as possible to reduce the financial and logistical inconvenience to these vitally needed volunteers. Therefore, reimbursements are normally made by NCATE within one week of receipt at the NCATE office.

NCATE cannot bill the visited institution for its visit expenses until all expenses are paid and reconciled. This reconciliation must be done promptly to assist both institutions and NCATE in maintaining cost control, appropriate cash flow, and the closing of fiscal year books in time for externally determined audit cycles. Therefore, BOE members are asked to assist in completing this cycle by:

- **Submitting their vouchers and receipts on a timely basis, preferably within 10 days of the end of the visit.** Vouchers will be considered late, and will not be reimbursed, after February 1 for fall accreditation visits and June 15 for spring accreditation visits. One email reminder will be issued by NCATE.

- **Notifying the Finance Department if a voucher was sent but reimbursement was not received within two weeks, so that it can be assumed lost in the mail and replicated for payment.**

- **Notifying the Finance Department, by e-mail if possible, immediately after the visit if there are no expenses to reimburse.** This is especially helpful if the institution arranged or paid for the airfare directly, as
NCATE has no way of knowing this unless the BOE member provides it.

- Including the original air ticket and/or printed itinerary with the voucher, even if it was booked through NCATE’s travel agency. In some instances, institutions are required by their audit and travel policies to acquire a copy of the actual ticket before issuing reimbursement to NCATE.

**Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

Personal expenses incurred during an NCATE hotel stay are the traveler’s sole responsibility and must be paid at time of checkout from the hotel, even when the main charges are directly billed to NCATE or an institution during an accreditation visit. Examples include bar bills, newspapers, telephone calls unrelated to NCATE business other than reasonable “safe arrival” calls, movie charges, dry cleaning/laundry, and gift shop charges. Childcare, house-sitting, and pet boarding expenses during the traveler’s absence while on NCATE travel are the traveler’s sole responsibility.

**Substitute Teacher Pay**

Although most school districts cover the costs of substitute teachers to replace BOE members while they are on an on-site visit, some districts do not, requiring reimbursement of the substitute pay to release teachers and other school personnel. When necessary, NCATE reimburses the school or school district employers of NEA-appointed volunteers serving on a BOE team. NCATE is, in turn, reimbursed by funds provided by the National Education Association for the substitute teacher pay required by their members’ absences. NEA-appointed volunteers should obtain an Application for Substitute Teacher Pay form from NCATE.

**Transportation**

Full reimbursement is provided for coach airline fare or cost of other public transportation. The passenger receipt for the ticket, or a printout of Internet transaction details, must be included with the request for reimbursement if the traveler books the transportation. Travelers are encouraged to book transportation through the NCATE travel agency; NCATE notifies team members of the travel agency and authorization code when the BOE assignment is made. The travel agency then invoices NCATE directly for airfare costs.
NCATE requires that BOE members take advantage of reduced fares by booking 21 days in advance and staying over a Saturday night whenever possible. The following cost-saving strategies are strongly encouraged:

- If using NCATE’s travel agency, replying the same day to approve a proposed travel itinerary allows a quoted fare to be booked while it is still viable and avoids the missing of advance deadlines.

- If the traveler believes the itinerary can be booked less expensively through the Internet, a state agency, or some other channel, book the travel and notify the NCATE Finance Department for prompt reimbursement.

- For Washington, DC-area meetings, travelers are encouraged to use Baltimore Washington International or Dulles International Airport if the airfare is significantly less than at Ronald Reagan Washington National. To offset the distance and inconvenience, NCATE has contracted with a car service to pick up travelers and directly bill NCATE. For airfares where the difference in fare is more than $200 to use Reagan National, travelers are to call the NCATE staff member responsible for the meeting or event, or the NCATE Finance Department, for guidance, approval, and/or the contact information for the car service.

- Although flights may be available to leave immediately after a meeting or event, a flight two hours later may be significantly less expensive.

- NCATE would like to reasonably accommodate requests to use specific airlines to utilize frequent-flyer upgrades or earn mileage, or to avoid connecting flights or certain schedules. However, when such requests add significantly to either the cost of the fare or to the complexity of the transaction for the travel agency, travelers are to call the NCATE Finance Department for guidance or approval.

NCATE recognizes that circumstances and personal emergencies sometimes require the change of travel plans. However, the change of nonrefundable or advance-purchase airline tickets can significantly increase the expense of the fare. Therefore, NCATE is willing to pay up to one service fee for ticket changes per trip, up to a maximum of $100.00. Changes that result in fare increases more than $100.00 over the originally booked fare are the
responsibility of the traveler or institution/organization requesting the change, unless approved in advance by the Director of Finance and Administration. Such unauthorized changes will not be reimbursed and must be guaranteed with the traveler’s personal credit card to be booked by NCATE’s travel agency. The travel agency may also assess the traveler an extra service fee in addition to the airline fee. NCATE expects that the costs of travel changes will be paid by the organization that asks the traveler to make the change.

In the event that air transportation is unavailable or impractical, reimbursement will be made for train fare, or for automobile travel at the mileage rate indicated on the back of the travel voucher, plus tolls, parking, lodging, and meals. If air or other public transportation is available and practical but an individual elects to travel by private automobile, reimbursement will be provided to a maximum of coach class airfare between the point of origin and destination.

Costs of travel by taxi or other local transportation will be reimbursed if accompanied by appropriate documentation (receipt or note if the receipt should be lost). Unusual or excessive charges must be explained.

**Housing and Meals**

The institution being visited should arrange for the direct billing of hotel expenses to limit out-of-pocket charges for team members. Hotel bills must be signed to indicate the traveler’s approval of charges. On occasion, institutional or state policies prevent such arrangements and team members will be required to pay their hotel bills. If the traveler pays for lodging and meals, a paid hotel bill must be included with request for reimbursement.

Meals will be reimbursed at actual cost, not to exceed the daily amount indicated on the back of the travel voucher. Original receipts must be attached. Institutions sometimes arrange for team meals to reduce the cost to team members.

**Other Reimbursable Expenses**

Team chairs may charge NCATE for the cost of typing, copying, and mailing the report. If these expenses are not included with the travel voucher, the voucher should include a note that highlights the information that additional charges for these expenses will be submitted later. Such a note should give a
date of planned completion so that NCATE does not reconcile the financial report for the institution before all expenses are received.

**State Consultants and Representatives from NEA and AFT State Affiliates**

NCATE does not reimburse team state consultants or representatives from NEA or AFT state affiliates. Either the state agency responsible for program approval, or the NEA or AFT affiliate, will reimburse these state representatives. BOE members are encouraged to assist in keeping the reimbursement processes separate by refraining from combining meal and other charges.
# Appendix

**Rubric for the Performance of Board of Examiners Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Work</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Developmental</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These BOE members dominate team meetings by constantly talking. They are argumentative with peers. They do not collect data needed by the team. They do not contribute substantive information to the team's discussions. They have poor writing skills and are unable to write assigned sections of the report without assistance and a great amount of editing. These team members refuse to work on any standard other than the one that reflects their interest or expertise.</td>
<td>These BOE members participate effectively in team meetings by contributing substantive data related to standards and asking questions for clarification. They listen to others, allowing different views to be expressed by other team members. They write assigned sections of the BOE report, but the writing is sketchy on details and illustrations.</td>
<td>These BOE members are team players who listen to others, let others talk, do not dominate discussions, and consider data presented by others. They contribute substantively to the team's deliberations and are actively engaged in planning activities for the next day. They effectively write the assigned sections of the BOE report, make recommendations for improving the quality of the report, and revise sections of the report based on suggestions of team members.</td>
<td>These BOE members provide leadership to the team. They mentor new team members and assist peers as needed. They help the team focus on the standards throughout their deliberations and push themselves and others to seek more data as needed. Their writing skills are excellent. They question sections of the report that are not clear and edit the report carefully after the visit.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Developmental</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
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<tr>
<td>These BOE members are not attentive during interviews and sometimes ask inappropriate questions. They demonstrate little understanding of the evaluation process. They do not know how to interpret either qualitative or quantitative data in ways that are helpful to the team.</td>
<td>These BOE members are learning evaluation skills but have little experience. They ask good questions in interviews and probe for additional information when appropriate. They look for evidence to confirm findings. They recognize problems related to standards and seek both quantitative and qualitative data to support or refute strengths and concerns.</td>
<td>These BOE members are inquisitive, looking for answers, checking multiple data sources for confirmation, and asking questions for clarification. They effectively handle multiple tasks throughout the visit. They effectively review both qualitative and quantitative data. They accurately and effectively describe evidence in the BOE report.</td>
<td>These BOE members are critically reflective as data are reviewed, questions are asked, and the team considers evidence. They challenge data presented and seek confirming data throughout the visit. Their ability to synthesize and analyze large amounts of data and sometimes contradictory information is evident in team discussions and report writing.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Professionalism</th>
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<th>Developmental</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
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<tr>
<td>These BOE members publicly question the value of accreditation. They appear to have a preconceived perception of the quality of a unit or institution at the beginning of the visit.</td>
<td>These BOE members understand NCATE accreditation, state approval, and the differences. They support national accreditation and quality assurance. Biases are not evident in the BOE members' application of the NCATE standards. These team members are willing to learn and be convinced by data. They are able to make the commitment to serve on one or two teams each academic year.</td>
<td>These BOE members are committed to NCATE accreditation. They argue based on data rather than emotions. They recognize their own limitations and make accommodations to ensure that they can participate fully and attentively in visits that usually require 12-hour days.</td>
<td>These BOE members are strong supporters of NCATE and its role in ensuring quality assurance for the preparation of professional educators. They are spokespeople for NCATE in local, state, and/or national forums. They are willing to serve in a leadership position as chair of NCATE teams, requiring the additional commitment of time to conduct a previsit and finalize the BOE report.</td>
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## Rubric for the Performance of Board of Examiners Members

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NCATE standards</strong></td>
<td>These BOE members do not understand one or more of the standards. They argue that one or more standards are not appropriate for national accreditation. They often reach conclusions that are not congruent with those of other team members. These team members are often distracted by interesting data not related to standards.</td>
<td>These BOE members understand the standards at a level that allows for follow-up questions for additional information related to the standards, including those standards for which another team member has primary responsibility. They ask questions that reveal an understanding of the standards. They ask questions about concepts in the standards (e.g., conceptual framework) without using the jargon in the standards so that interviewees understand what information is being requested. Evidence related to standards is sought, and findings are reflected in the team's report. Knowledge of the standards is evident in the written section of the BOE report.</td>
<td>These BOE members understand the standards at a level that allows for follow-up questions for in-depth information to assist the team in its deliberations. They ask questions that reflect a deep understanding of the standards. They build on the specifics of the standards' rubrics to make holistic observations and conclusions.</td>
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| **Conducting the visit** | These BOE members have not read the institutional report before the visit. They focus on the indicators, unable to apply the standards holistically. They seek information that is not related to the standards. They often use the language of the standards in asking questions during interviews. They are confrontational in interviews. Biases are evident in questioning of interviewees. NCATE procedures for conducting visits are not followed. These team members do not consider all available evidence in making decisions about standards. | These BOE members have read the institutional report and completed the planning instrument or compiled notes prior to the visit. In interviews they ask clear questions related to the standards and follow up on the answers to learn more about how the unit addresses the standards. They listen carefully to answers, take notes, and share the information with colleagues in team meetings. They act professionally in all situations during the on-site visit. They are familiar with the NCATE template and procedures for conducting visits and apply them appropriately during the visit. | These BOE members have read the institutional report, completed the planning instrument or compiled notes, analyzed annual report data, and visited the institution's website prior to the visit. They ask interview questions related to standards, seek data needed by the team, listen carefully to person(s) being interviewed, and take notes during interviews. They are open to the unit and faculty responding to the standards differently than their own institution. They are not confrontational, accusatory, or demanding in interactions with institutional representatives. They seek out and consider multiple sources of data related to standards. They balance process and product as standards are applied. They know NCATE procedures and apply them appropriately. | These BOE members are very familiar with the institution and unit through reading the institutional report and website prior to the visit. They follow the NCATE procedures and move from one step to the next with little direction from the team chair. They identify patterns and make sense of unique situations within the unit. Interactions with unit administrators and faculty are collegial, with the goal of improving the preparation of candidates. They understand the difference between “proving” that a unit meets the standards and identifying evidence of continuous assessment and improvement. |