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Information

Professional Services Committee

Commission Exam Program Planning

Executive Summary: This item provides background information related to the process followed to validate examinations used for California teaching certification. It also discusses the need to periodically re-validate examinations and lists the examinations that have recently been validated.

Recommended Action: This is an information item, and no action is recommended.

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Strategic Plan Goal: 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators.
- ◆ Assess and monitor the efficacy of the Accreditation System, Examination System, and State and Federal Funded Programs.

Commission Exam Program Planning

Introduction

Legal Responsibilities Regarding Validity Studies

One of the legal responsibilities of the Commission, established by the Education Code Section 44225 (j), is to develop appropriate examinations that satisfy various credential requirements. The development of each examination includes a validation process of the examination to guarantee that the examination is an appropriate instrument for assessing the specific requirement. Additionally, as part of the development, each examination must be periodically re-validated either to guarantee that it remains an appropriate assessment instrument or to provide evidence that the instrument needs modification or replacement.

Background

Examination Development, including Validity Studies

To ensure that examinations are valid, legally defensible, and aligned with relative state standards (e.g., student academic standards, teacher preparation standards, etc.), the Commission staff works with contractors and panels of experts to conduct several studies. Initially, a job analysis is conducted to determine the tasks, knowledge, and abilities (TKAs) relative to the job area that will be assessed on the examination. A survey containing draft TKAs is developed through consultation with experts and a review of current relative literature and the survey is sent to educators statewide. The results of the study are compiled and reviewed by the contractor, staff, and panels of experts and used to develop a list of draft test specifications. The test specifications indicate the content that may be assessed on the examination. The draft test specifications are sent out to educators in a statewide validity study survey to determine whether the specifications are appropriate, clear, and complete. The results of this validity study are reviewed by staff and the panel of experts to determine whether each test specification should remain on the list, be revised, or be eliminated, and whether new specifications need to be added. The draft test specifications are also reviewed by staff and experts, when appropriate, to ensure their alignment with relative state standards. The final recommended test specifications are presented to the Commission for their consideration for adoption.

After test specifications are adopted, the contractor develops draft test items that are reviewed by California content experts for appropriateness and accuracy, reviewed by California educators for issues of bias, and then field tested to ensure that only items that perform well are included on scorable test forms.

Following the first administration of each examination, staff works with the contractor and panels of California educators to develop a recommended passing standard for the exam. In this process, the panels review the test items and rate the “just acceptable” level of performance on the examination for first-time educators. The results of these rankings are compiled and a recommended passing score is presented to the Commission for their consideration.

To maintain their effectiveness, legal defensibility, and consistency with current state standards, examinations must be periodically re-validated. The re-validation process is similar to the initial validation process noted above. A panel of California educators reviews the current test specifications to determine whether they have remained consistent with respective state standards and current California practices. Preliminary revisions to the specifications are drafted, as needed. The draft is distributed statewide to appropriate California educators for their appraisal. The panel and staff review the results of the validity study survey and make final revisions to the draft test specifications, as needed. Any revisions to the test specifications are presented to the Commission for their consideration. The results of these periodic re-validations support the retention, modification, or replacement of the examination.

Prior and Future Validity Studies

The Commission has completed a number of examination validity studies since 2000 and is anticipating performing several more in the approaching years. These are detailed in the following chart.

Validity Study	Date Completed
California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET): Initial Validation	
• Multiple Subjects Content Specifications	2001
• Subject Matter Requirements for Phase I (English, Math, Social Science, Sciences)	2002
• Subject Matter Requirements for Phase II (Art, Music, PE, Languages other than English, Preliminary Educational Technology)	2003
• Subject Matter Requirements for Phase III (Agriculture, American Sign Language, Business, Home Economics, Health Science, Industrial Technology Education)	2004
California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST): Re-Validation	2001
Teaching Performance Expectations (TPE) for Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA)	2001

Validity Study	Anticipated Completion Date
Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA): Re-Validation	Late 2005
Possible replacement for the Bilingual, Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Examination: Initial Validation	2006

Staff Direction

Staff seeks the Commission's direction on how to plan for and implement examination validity studies for the 2005-2006 fiscal year.