

Common Standard Descriptors: Proposal to Delay the Use of the Descriptors in Accreditation Activities

October 2009

Overview of this Report

This agenda item presents additional information regarding the Common Standards Descriptors that were adopted by the COA at the June 2009 meeting. After further review, it has been identified that the adopted Common Standard Descriptors may require institutions to meet a standard that differs from the language of the adopted Common Standards.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the COA take action to delay the use of the Common Standards Descriptors until at least the 2010-2011 year. Prior to the use of the Descriptors staff recommends that additional review and analysis of the Descriptors be completed.

Background

During the 2008-09 year, the COA worked to develop Common Standard Descriptors. The purpose of the descriptors was to provide a tool that institutions and members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR) could use to more fully understand how to meet the Commission's adopted Common Standards and what it looks like when an institution is meeting the adopted Common Standards. At its June 2009 meeting the COA took action to adopt the Common Standard Descriptors (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2009-06/2009-06-item-18.pdf>).

In preparation to use the Common Standard Descriptors at a BIR training, it was pointed out that in a number of areas the descriptors appear to go beyond what is required by the adopted standard or to redefine the standard. The descriptors, in many cases, introduce more prescriptive practices that must be followed for a standard to be deemed met than the Common Standards language requires; in other cases, they add new requirements not called for in the adopted standards. Therefore, staff made the decision not to use the descriptors in the BIR trainings held in Summer 2009.

The Common Standard Descriptors appear on pages 2-9 of this agenda item. Language in the Descriptors that appears to modify the language of the Common Standard is presented as shaded language. Comments about the language in the descriptors are provided in *italics*. Staff requests the COA discuss the descriptors and provide guidance on their use or take action to delay the use of the descriptors until at least the 2010-2011 year.

Next Steps

If the COA takes action to delay the use of the adopted descriptors, staff will work with members of the BIR, institutions offering educator preparation, and the COA to review all descriptors to ensure that the descriptor does not modify what the institutions are required to do to meet the Common Standards. A revised Descriptor document will be brought to the COA for consideration and possible action at a future COA meeting.

Common Standard Descriptors

Standard 1: Educational Leadership	
Not Met	Met
The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision for educator preparation that is responsive to California's adopted standards and curriculum frameworks.	
The institution has either not created or not articulated a written vision for educator preparation. The institution's vision is not research-based. The institution's vision is not responsive to the adopted standards or curriculum frameworks.	The institution has described the process used in creating their vision for educator preparation. The vision is research-based and is clearly aligned with the adopted standards and curriculum frameworks. The institution describes the process for re-examining the vision in order to keep it current with the field. <i>[This is not required by the adopted standard.]</i>
The vision provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance and experiences, scholarship, service, collaboration, and unit accountability.	
The institution's vision does not provide direction for one or more of the aspects of the program(s) or the procedures of the education unit.	The institution's vision clearly provides direction for all aspects of all program(s) including courses, field experiences, and assessment.
The faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders are actively involved in the organization, coordination, and governance of all professional preparation programs.	
The institution does not actively involve faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders in the organization, coordination, or governance of all programs.	The institution clearly and with detail and evidence, describes how it actively involves the faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders in the organization, coordination, and governance of all programs.
Unit leadership has the authority and institutional support needed to create effective strategies to achieve the needs of all programs and represents the interests of each program within the institution.	
The leadership of the unit does not have the authority or support within the larger institution to put effective strategies into place. The leadership of the unit does not consider the needs of each program within the institution.	The leadership of the unit has the authority and institutional support to put effective strategies in place. The unit has clearly described who is involved and the process and timelines it uses to meet the needs of each program. The leadership of the unit ensures that the needs of each program are considered <i>[in what? in institutional decision-making? in unit resource allocation?]</i>
The education unit implements and monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.	
The unit has not implemented a process that ensures that individuals recommended for a credential have completed all credential requirements. The unit does not have a monitoring process to confirm that all individuals recommended for a credential have met all requirements.	The unit has described and implemented a process that ensures that all candidates recommended for a credential have met all credential requirements. The unit has a monitoring process in place to confirm that all individuals recommended for a credential have met all requirements.

Common Standard 2: Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation*

Not Met	Met
<p>The education unit implements an assessment and evaluation system for ongoing program and unit evaluation and improvement.</p>	
<p>The institution does not have an assessment and evaluation system that reflects professional, state, and institutional standards. The institution has not involved its professional community in the development of its system. The institution’s assessment system is limited in its capacity to monitor candidate performance, institution operations, and programs. Decisions about candidate performance are based on few assessments. Assessments are limited to admission into programs, some transition points, and/or program completion. The institution has not examined possible sources of bias in its assessments, nor made an effort to establish fairness, accuracy, and consistency of its assessment procedures and institution operations.</p>	<p>The institution has an assessment and evaluation system that reflects professional, state, and institutional standards. The institution regularly involves its professional community in the evaluation of its system. The institution’s system includes comprehensive and integrated assessment procedures to monitor candidate performance, manage and improve the institution’s operations and programs. Decisions about candidate performance are based on multiple assessments including admission into programs, appropriate transition points, and program completion. <i>[Isn’t this a Standard 9 issue? or a program-by-program issue?]</i> The institution has taken effective steps to eliminate bias in assessments and is working to ensure fairness, accuracy, and consistency in assessment procedures and institution operations. <i>[This specifies practices well beyond the language of the adopted standard.]</i></p>
<p>The system collects, analyzes and utilizes data on candidate and program completer performance and unit operations.</p>	
<p>The institution does not use multiple assessments to collect data on applicant qualifications, candidate proficiencies, program completers, institution operations, and program quality. The institution does not regularly or comprehensively aggregate, summarize, or analyze assessment and evaluation information about the institution’s operations, its programs, or its candidates. The institution cannot disaggregate candidate assessment data when candidates are in alternate route, off-campus, and distance learning programs. The institution does not maintain a record of formal candidate complaints or document the resolution of complaints. The institution does not use information technologies to maintain its assessment system.</p>	<p>The institution maintains an assessment system that provides regular and comprehensive information on applicant qualifications, candidate proficiencies, competence of graduates, institution operations, and program quality. Using multiple assessments from internal and external sources, the institution collects data from applicants, candidates, recent graduates, faculty, and other members of the professional community. These data are regularly and systematically collected, aggregated, summarized, and analyzed to improve candidate performance, program quality, and institution operations. The institution disaggregates candidate assessment data for candidates in multiple pathways and delivery models. The institution maintains records of formal candidate complaints and documentation of their resolution. The institution maintains its assessment system through the use of information technologies appropriate to the size of the institution and institution. <i>[This, too, goes well beyond the language of the adopted standard and would require non-NCATE institutions to meet NCATE requirements for disaggregation of data.]</i></p>

Common Standard 2: Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation*

Not Met	Met
<p>Assessment in all programs includes ongoing and comprehensive data collection related to candidate qualifications, proficiencies, and competence, as well as program effectiveness, and are used for improvement purposes.</p>	
<p>The institution makes limited or no use of data collected, including candidate or program completer performance information, to evaluate the efficacy of its courses, programs, and clinical experiences. The institution fails to make changes in its courses, programs, or clinical experiences when evaluations indicate that modifications would strengthen candidate preparation to meet professional, state, and institutional standards. Faculty does not have access to candidate assessment data and/or data systems. Candidates and faculty are not regularly provided formative feedback based on the institution's performance assessments.</p>	<p>The institution regularly and systematically uses ongoing and comprehensive data, including candidate and program completer performance information, to evaluate the efficacy of its courses, programs, and clinical experiences. The institution analyzes program evaluation and performance assessment data to initiate changes [<i>does this mean "improvement purposes", as the standard requires?</i>] in programs and institution operations. Faculty has access to candidate assessment data and/or data systems. Candidate assessment data are regularly shared with and by faculty to help them reflect on and improve their programs.</p>

**Adapted from the NCATE Unit Standard 2 Rubric*

Standard 3: Resources

Not Met	Met
<p>The institution provides the unit with the necessary budget, qualified personnel, adequate facilities and other resources to prepare candidates effectively to meet the state-adopted standards for educator preparation.</p>	
<p>The institution does not provide the unit with adequate budget, personnel, facilities or other resources to support its programs.</p>	<p>The institution provides the unit with adequate [<i>adequate is different from necessary</i>] budget, [<i>qualified</i>] personnel, facilities and other resources to support its programs.</p>
<p>Sufficient resources are consistently allocated for effective operation of each credential or certificate program for coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum and professional development, instruction, field-based supervision and/or clinical experiences, and assessment management.</p>	
<p>The lack of sufficient resources in one or more of the following areas coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum and professional development, instruction, field-based supervision and/or clinical experiences, and assessment management impacts effective operation.</p>	<p>The unit allocates sufficient resources in the areas of coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum and professional development, instruction, field-based supervision and/or clinical experiences, and assessment management [<i>the standard requires sufficient resources for "effective" operation</i>].</p>
<p>Sufficient information resources and related personnel are available to meet program and candidate needs.</p>	
<p>The unit does not have sufficient information resources and related personnel to meet the program or candidate needs.</p>	<p>The unit has sufficient information resources and related personnel to meet the program and candidate needs.</p>

Standard 3: Resources	
Not Met	Met
A process that is inclusive of all programs is in place to determine resource needs.	
The unit does not consider all educator preparation programs when allocating resources.	The unit includes all educator preparation programs in the process to allocate resources.

Standard 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel*	
Not Met	Met
Qualified persons are employed and assigned to teach all courses, to provide professional development, and to supervise field-based and/or clinical experiences in each credential and certificate program.	
The professional education faculty do not have the expertise and contemporary professional experiences that qualify them for their assignments. Not all school faculty are licensed in the fields that they teach. Not all higher education clinical faculty have had contemporary professional experiences in school settings.	Professional education faculty have earned doctorates or exceptional expertise that qualifies them for their assignments. School faculty are licensed in the fields that they teach or supervise but may not hold the doctorate. Clinical faculty from higher education have contemporary professional experiences in school settings at the levels that they supervise. <i>[What do the descriptors mean by the distinction between “professional educational faculty” and “school faculty?”]</i>
Instructional personnel and faculty have current knowledge in the content they teach, understand the context of public schooling, and model best professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.	
Professional education faculty have limited understanding of their fields. Faculty teaching provides candidates little engagement with content and does not help them develop the proficiencies outlined in professional, state, and institutional standards. Professional education faculty use a limited number of instructional strategies; these strategies do not reflect current research on teaching and learning.	Professional education faculty have a thorough understanding of the content they teach. Professional education faculty helps candidates develop the proficiencies outlined in professional, state, and institutional standards and guides candidates in the application of research, theories, and current developments in their fields. Professional education faculty value candidates’ learning, assess candidate performance and use that information to inform instruction. Their teaching encourages candidates’ development of reflection, critical thinking, problem solving, and professional dispositions. Professional education faculty use a variety of instructional strategies that reflect an understanding of different learning styles. <i>[Is this intended to define “modeling best professional practices. . . ?” Where is “understanding the context of public schooling” reflected?]</i>
They are reflective of a diverse society and knowledgeable about diverse abilities, cultural, language, ethnic and gender diversity.	
Professional education and unit faculty have limited knowledge and experiences related to preparing candidates to work with diversity. The unit has not demonstrated continuous effort to recruit and maintain faculty diversity.	Professional education faculty have knowledge and experiences related to preparing candidates to work with diverse student populations, including English language learners and students with exceptionalities. Affirmation of the value of diversity is shown through continuous effort to increase faculty diversity. <i>[The standard only</i>

Standard 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel*

Not Met	Met
	<i>requires that faculty “be reflective of” a diverse society.]</i>
They have a thorough grasp of the academic standards, frameworks, and accountability systems that drive the curriculum of public schools.	
Professional educator faculty and instructional personnel have little to no experience with academic content standards, curriculum frameworks and accountability systems of the public schools.	Professional educator faculty and instructional personnel understand the academic content standards, curriculum frameworks and accountability systems and their uses in the public schools. <i>[Isn’t this a lower standard than having a “thorough grasp” of academic content standards . . . ?]</i>
They collaborate regularly and systematically with colleagues in P-12 settings/college/ university units and members of the broader, professional community to improve teaching, candidate learning, and educator preparation.	
Faculty and instructional personnel do not work with P-12 colleagues and members of the larger education community regularly or systematically. When collaboration does take place, it may not focus on improving teaching, candidate learning and educator preparation.	Faculty and instructional personnel work with P-12 colleagues and members of the larger education community. The work takes place regularly and systematically. There is evidence that collaboration supports and improves teaching, candidate learning and educator preparation.
The institution provides support for faculty development.	
Professional development is not related to faculty evaluations or new information in the field. The unit does not encourage faculty to engage in professional development activities.	Based upon needs identified in faculty evaluations and/or new developments in the field, the unit provides opportunities for faculty to acquire new knowledge and skills, especially as they relate to the conceptual framework, performance assessment, diversity and technology.
The unit regularly evaluates the performance of course instructors and field supervisors, recognizes excellence, and retains only those who are consistently effective.	
The unit does not evaluate professional education faculty systematically and regularly. Evaluations that are conducted are not used to improve practice or make decisions about continued work within the program.	The unit conducts systematic and comprehensive evaluations of faculty teaching performance to enhance the competence and intellectual vitality of the professional education faculty. Evaluations of professional education faculty are used to improve the faculty’s teaching, scholarship and service. <i>[Does this assume that “faculty” includes course instructors and field supervisors? Does this also make a distinction between “faculty” and “professional education faculty”?]</i>

**Portions adapted from the NCATE Unit Standard 4 and 5 Rubrics*

Common Standard 5: Admissions

Not Met	Met
<p>In each professional preparation program, applicants are admitted on the basis of well-defined admission criteria and procedures, including all Commission-adopted requirements.</p>	
<p>The unit has no articulated admission process and does not ensure that all admitted applicants have met all Commission-adopted requirements.</p>	<p>The unit has an articulated admission process that evaluates all applicants and admits only those who meet the admission criteria, including Commission-adopted requirements. <i>[What happened to “well-defined” criteria? “Articulated” and “well-defined” are not synonymous.]</i></p>
<p>Multiple measures are used in an admission process that encourages and supports applicants from diverse populations.</p>	
<p>The unit has not demonstrated efforts to increase or maintain a pool of candidates, both male and female, from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic/racial groups.</p>	<p>The unit values diversity and makes efforts to increase or maintain a pool of candidates, both male and female, from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic/racial groups. <i>[What evidence—beyond making efforts to increase the diversity of the candidate pool—would a team look for to verify that a unit “values diversity?”]</i></p>
<p>The unit determines that admitted candidates have appropriate pre-professional experiences and personal characteristics, including sensitivity to California's diverse population, effective communication skills, basic academic skills, and prior experiences that suggest a strong potential for professional effectiveness.</p>	
<p>The unit does not have a process to ensure that all candidates admitted to all credential programs have the personal qualities and pre-professional experiences, including sensitivity to California’s student population, that suggest a strong potential for success.</p>	<p>The unit has a process whereby each individual granted admission to a credential program has the personal qualities and pre-professional experiences, including sensitivity to California’s student population, that suggest a strong potential for success. <i>[This is confusing. Under the terms of the standard language, the admission process requires that “. . . each individual granted admission. . . .” The standard language defines the required experiences and personal characteristics more specifically than the descriptor.]</i></p>

Standard 6: Advice and Assistance

Not Met	Met
<p>Qualified members of the unit are assigned and available to advise applicants and candidates about their academic, professional and personal development, and to assist each candidate's professional placement.</p>	
<p>People assigned to advise may not have up-to-date program information. Candidates may get conflicting information from a variety of sources.</p>	<p>The unit clearly articulates those who are assigned to advise applicants and ensures that they are qualified, accessible, and have correct up-to-date information. <i>[What does this mean? Again, the standard language is more specific and detailed than the descriptor.]</i></p>

Standard 6: Advice and Assistance

Not Met	Met
Appropriate information is accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of all program requirements.	
Information is unavailable, or out of date.	Current, accurate information is accessible and provided to candidates. <i>[Information about what?]</i>
The institution and/or unit provide support and assistance to candidates and only retains candidates who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession.	
There are no documented procedures for determining whether candidates are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession. There are no procedures and processes to provide support and assistance to candidates.	There are clearly documented procedures to provide support and assistance to candidates. Procedures are in place in order to retain candidates who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession. <i>[Which leaves the descriptor silent on what happens for candidates who are not suited for entry. The only procedures the team looks for under this descriptor are those designed to retain suitable candidates.]</i>
Evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.	
There is no evidence that information on candidate progress and performance is used to guide advisement and assistance for candidates.	There is a clear link that evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance for candidates.

Common Standard 7: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

Not Met	Met
The unit and its school partners design, implement, and regularly evaluate a planned sequence of field and clinical experiences in order for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support all students effectively so that they meet state adopted academic standards.	
The unit's school partners do not participate in the design, delivery, or evaluation of a planned sequence of field experiences or clinical practice. Field experiences do not support candidates in developing and demonstrating the knowledge and skills necessary to support student learning. The unit makes decisions about the nature and assignment of field experiences and clinical practice independently of the schools or other agencies hosting them.	The unit, its school partners, and other members of the professional community design, deliver, and evaluate a planned sequence of field experiences and clinical practice to help candidates develop their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. The school and unit collaboratively share expertise to support candidates' learning in field experiences and clinical practice. <i>[The standard calls for candidates to "develop and demonstrate" knowledge and skills. No mention is made in the standard about professional dispositions. In addition, the standard refers to supporting "all students effectively so that they meet state adopted academic standards." The descriptors are silent on this issue.]</i>
For each credential and certificate program, the unit collaborates with its school partners regarding the criteria for selection of school sites, effective clinical personnel and site-based supervising personnel.	
Decisions about the specific placement of candidates in field experiences and clinical practices are solely the responsibility of the schools or districts.	The unit and its school partners jointly determine the criteria for placement of student teachers, interns, and other school personnel to provide appropriate learning experiences. The unit and its school partners collaborate on the criteria for selecting school sites, effective

Common Standard 7: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

Not Met	Met
	clinical personnel, and site-based supervising personnel. <i>[The standard is silent on the issue of specific placement of student teachers, interns, and “other school personnel”—a NCATE term, not a CTC term.]</i>
Fieldwork and clinical experiences provide candidates opportunities to understand and address issues of diversity that affect school climate, teaching and learning and develop strategies for improving student learning.	
Not all candidates participate in field experiences or clinical practices with students with disabilities or with students from ethnic/racial, gender, language, and socioeconomic groups. Candidates do not receive feedback on their ability to meet the needs of all students.	Field experiences or clinical practice provide experiences with male and female P–12 students from different socioeconomic groups and at least two ethnic/racial groups. Candidates work with English language learners and students with disabilities during some of their field experiences and/or clinical practice. Candidates develop and practice their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions for working with all students. Feedback from peers and supervisors helps candidates reflect on their ability to help all students learn. <i>[The standard requires that clinical experiences “provide candidates opportunities to understand and address issues of diversity that affect school climate, teaching and learning and develop strategies for improving student learning.” The descriptors introduce specific references to English language learners and students with disabilities, call for candidates to “practice their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions.” Feedback from peers and supervisors is assumed under the standard.]</i>

Standard 8: District-Employed Supervisors

Not Met	Met
District-employed supervisors are certified and experienced in either teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.	
The institution does not ensure that all site based, district employed supervisors have the appropriate credentials and experience in the activities authorized by the candidate’s prospective credential.	The institution ensures that all site based, district employed supervisors have the appropriate credentials and experience in the activities authorized by the candidate’s prospective credential.
A process for selecting supervisors who are knowledgeable and supportive of the academic content standards for students is based on identified criteria.	
The institution does not have clear processes for selecting supervisors. When supervisors are selected, the selection is not based on clearly identified criteria that ensures they are knowledgeable and/or supportive of the academic content standards.	The institution has clear processes for selecting supervisors, based on clearly identified criteria. Supervisors are knowledgeable and supportive of the academic content standards.

Standard 8: District-Employed Supervisors	
Not Met	Met
Supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.	
The institution does not ensure that supervisors are oriented to their role and provided training. Supervisors are not evaluated or recognized in a systematic manner.	The institution ensures that supervisors are oriented to their role and provided training <i>[in what?]</i> . Supervisors are evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner.

Standard 9: Candidate Assessment*	
Not Met	Met
Candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate the professional knowledge and skills necessary to educate and support effectively all students in meeting the state adopted academic standards.	
Candidates have inadequate knowledge of content that they plan to teach and are unable to give examples of important principles and concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Candidates do not demonstrate a professional disposition to ensure that all students learn. Candidates have not mastered professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.	Candidates know the content they plan to teach and can explain important principles and concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Candidates demonstrate a professional disposition to ensure that all students learn. Candidates apply the professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards to facilitate learning. <i>[Learning or what? The descriptors make no mention of supporting “effectively all students in meeting state adopted academic standards.” “Applying professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards” is not a literal equivalent for the language of the standard.]</i>
Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards.	
The institution does not ensure that candidates are assessed. The results of assessments do not indicate that candidates meet professional, state and institutional standards.	The institution ensures that candidates are assessed and the assessments focus on professional, state, and institutional standards. Results of assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state and institutional standards. <i>[The standard requires that assessments indicate that candidates meet “Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards.” The descriptors focus assessment more broadly while making no mention of “Commission-adopted competency requirements, as specified in the program standards.”]</i>

**Portions adapted from the NCATE Unit Standard 1 Rubric*