

# **Proposed Clarification of Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance March 2011**

## **Overview of this Report**

This agenda item presents an update on the topic of “professional placement” contained within Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance that was discussed by the COA at its January 2011 meeting (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2011-01/2011-01-item-08.pdf>).

## **Staff Recommendation**

Depending on the Commission direction given at its March 2011 meeting, staff will prepare a recommendation, if appropriate, for COA consideration and action.

## **Background**

At the January 2011 COA meeting, the COA discussed the language of Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance and whether it would be advisable to consider a revision to the clause related to “professional placement” within the language of the standard in order to clarify the intended purpose of the clause. The COA agreed to discuss this topic further and to initiate changes to the Common Standard Glossary to clarify the language of the standard. However, the COA also indicated a desire to clarify the language of the standard itself in addition to making necessary changes to the Common Standards Glossary.

After the COA meeting, staff asked for direction from the Executive Director about the advisability of taking an agenda item to the Commission at its March 2011 meeting that requests modification of the language of Common Standard 6. As a result, staff presented the issue to the Commission on March 3, 2011. This agenda item includes the Commission agenda item, Agenda Item 3B. At the March COA meeting, staff will provide an update on the Commission discussion on this matter and seek further comment and direction from the COA.

## **Next Steps**

Depending on the direction from the Commission and comment from the COA, the Commission will draft an agenda item for consideration and action by both the COA and the Commission to amend or change Common Standard 6 and/or the Common Standards Glossary. In addition, staff will ensure that all accreditation team members understand the direction and action taken by COA and by the Commission.

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# 3B

## Information

### *Professional Services Committee*

### **Proposed Clarification of Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance**

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**Executive Summary:** This agenda item discusses a proposed revision of one phrase of Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance for the Commission's information and discussion.

**Recommended Action:** For information only

**Presenter:** Cheryl Hickey, Acting  
Administrator, Professional Services Division

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## **Proposed Clarification of Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance**

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### **Introduction**

This agenda item discusses the possibility of revising the language in Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance to better meet the needs of the field. This need has arisen based on feedback from stakeholders as well as the Committee on Accreditation (COA).

### **Background**

The Commission's Common Standards were last updated in 2008. The Common Standards include nine standards that all program sponsors must respond to in order to be approved to offer educator preparation programs. The Common Standards include the following:

- Standard 1: Educational Leadership
- Standard 2: Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation
- Standard 3: Resources
- Standard 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel
- Standard 5: Admission
- Standard 6: Advice and Assistance
- Standard 7: Field Experience and Clinical Practice
- Standard 8: District Employed Supervisors
- Standard 9: Assessment of Candidate Competence

The full text of the Common Standards may be found at <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/STDS-common.html>. In addition to the standards themselves, the COA developed definitions of key terms contained in the Common Standards and included the definitions in the Common Standards Glossary at the end of the Common Standards document.

Generally, issues that arise with respect to the specific wording of a given standard are addressed the next time that the particular standards in question are revised. This agenda item requests that the Commission consider refining one sentence within Common Standard 6 to clarify its intent, rather than to wait until the next revision process for the entire package of Common Standards.

Standard 6: Advice and Assistance reads as follows:

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. Appropriate information is accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of all program requirements. 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. Evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.

In recent months, stakeholders have indicated that there is some confusion in the field, among both program sponsors and members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR), about the phrase in the first sentence that reads, “...and to assist each candidate’s professional placement.”

In discussions with stakeholders, COA members, and members of the BIR a variety of understandings of the term “professional placement” have been shared:

- 1) The student teaching placement
- 2) The locations where field work takes place, including observing, tutoring, small group instruction, whole class instruction, clinical practice and student teaching
- 3) The employment a candidate would seek after completion of a preliminary preparation program.

The COA Common Standards Glossary currently contains the following definition of professional placement:

*A classroom, clinical or field experience that a candidate participates in during the preparation program. A school site is often a candidate’s assigned location for field experience.*

This definition of professional placement, together with the use of the verb “assist,” has been taken to suggest that placement in field experiences or clinical practice is less than a central focus of the educator preparation program; that a program must merely “assist” with field experiences. Common Standard 7 related to Field Experience and Clinical Practice and related program standards more accurately and directly describe the responsibilities of the program sponsor with respect to providing field experiences and carefully selecting the site(s) for student teaching or clinical practice.

Veteran members of the COA, BIR and Dr. Birch, former Director of the Professional Services Division, suggest that the term “professional placement” in Common Standard 6 is meant to refer to the type of position or employment that the individual is currently preparing for and that he or she will be eligible for once he or she has earned the appropriate credential. Thus, a more accurate definition of “professional placement,” would be as follows:

*The type of position or employment for which the candidate is preparing and for which he/she will be eligible upon earning the appropriate credential.*

This definition is consistent, then, with use of the verb “assist” in Common Standard 6.

Staff discussed the situation relative to Common Standard 6 and the term “professional placement” with the COA at its January 2011 meeting with the initial proposed solution of

improving the clarity of the Common Standards by revising the definition contained in the Common Standards Glossary. However, members of COA also noted that an appropriate solution would go beyond modification of the Common Standard Glossary to include modifying the standard along with the glossary to ensure a consistent understanding and intent. Members of the COA suggested that the Commission consider removing the term “professional placement” and replacing it with more specific and clear language to express the intended meaning.

Therefore, staff proposes for discussion the following possible option to revise Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance:

Remove the term “...and to assist each candidate’s professional placement” and rewrite the sentence as follows:

*Qualified members of the unit are assigned and available to advise applicants and candidates about their academic, professional and personal development, and to provide assistance in obtaining a professional position for which the candidate is qualified.*

### **Next Steps**

If the Commission agrees that the language of Common Standard 6 should be refined, staff will work with the COA to recommend the precise language to propose to the Commission at its next meeting. Because the proposed change would only clarify one phrase within one standard, staff does not believe that the proposed language would need to go for field review; however, staff would do so if the Commission gave such direction. If the Commission ultimately approves the proposed change, the both Common Standard 6 and the Common Standards Glossary would be revised as appropriate.