

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING

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**All Individuals and Groups Interested in the Activities
of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing**

Subject: *Accreditation Framework: Minor Modifications of the Common Standards*

Introduction

The *Accreditation Framework* was prepared by the Accreditation Advisory Council and the Professional Services Division of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to fulfill the requirements of Senate Bill 148 by Senator Marian Bergeson (Chapter 1455, Statutes of 1988). On May 7, 1993, the Commission adopted the *Accreditation Framework* for subsequent implementation under Senate Bill 655 (Bergeson, Chapter 426, Statutes of 1993), which became effective on January 1, 1994.

The *Accreditation Framework*, described a new structure for professional accreditation of educator preparation programs in California. In the *Framework*, a small group of professionals was assigned to make accreditation decisions. The Committee on Accreditation was given the responsibility to bring its extensive expertise to bear on the professional judgments regarding quality issues and concerns in the field of educator preparation. The Committee makes its accreditation decisions consistent with the Commission's accreditation standards. Effective, September 1, 1997, the Committee fully assumed its responsibilities for accreditation decisions.

Under the *Accreditation Framework*, the Commission has the authority to modify the *Framework* in order to refine or clarify its contents as needed. The Commission also has sole authority to determine standards of educator preparation for California. However, the Commission is not allowed to make significant modifications until a comprehensive evaluation of the *Framework* and its implementation is completed. Steps are proceeding to conduct that evaluation. In the meantime, the Commission is still empowered to refine or clarify the *Framework*. The proposed and adopted modifications to the Common Standards come under that classification, since the Common Standards are part of the *Accreditation Framework*.

Background Information: Why Modify the Common Standards?

As the Committee on Accreditation began to work with the Common Standards, and began to receive accreditation team reports from the visits pilot testing the eight Common Standards, it became clear that some of the language of the Standards was confusing and/or misleading to team members and institutional personnel. Furthermore, the application of these standards during the accreditation visits revealed that the language of the Standards did not always align with the intent of the Accreditation Advisory Council (the writers of the *Accreditation Framework*). These issues also emerged during the initial training of the members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (accreditation team members).

The particular instances where confusion or misinterpretation of language has occurred include the following issues:

- A misreading of Common Standard One on the role of the Dean or Director of Education in creating and maintaining an educational vision. It appears that some team members have assumed that the Dean/Director is solely responsible for meeting the intent of Standard One, thus leaving out the critical role of faculty and other administrators on the campus.
- Misunderstanding of the admissions criteria as described in Standard Five. Here the problem appears to be either a lack of clarity over determination of personal characteristics of candidates or a lack of clarity over the selection of the comparison population to be used in making admission decisions or the identification of the actual admission criteria.
- A misunderstanding of the term "Field Supervisor" in Standard Eight. Here the problem is one of differentiating the role of the university-employed field supervisor and the district-employed or receiving supervisor.

Because of the examples indicated above, the Committee on Accreditation determined that action should be initiated to modify the standards and clarify the misunderstandings. At its June 1997, meeting, the Committee on Accreditation moved to prepare an agenda item for the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to make the desired changes. The COA adopted a plan for obtaining feedback and a timeline for the adoption of the modifications. Although the wording of two of the Common Standards was changed considerably, the purpose of the changes still was only to clarify the original intent of the standards and to eliminate confusion in interpretation which arose during the pilot visits. The proposed modifications to the Common Standards were presented to the Commission and were adopted at the June 1998 meeting. These modified Common Standards will now begin appearing in Commission Standards Handbooks. Institutions will be expected to begin using these modified standards for all accreditation visits after June 30, 1999. (Their use is optional during the 1998-99 accreditation visit cycle.)

Common Standards Modifications

The following tables present the old language for each of the Common Standards and the modified standard. Each table is followed by the rationale for the modifications.

Common Standard 1

OLD COMMON STANDARD	MODIFIED COMMON STANDARD
<p>Common Standard 1 Educational Leadership</p>	<p>Common Standard 1 Governance and Leadership</p>
<p>The education unit has effective leadership that articulates a vision for the preparation of professional educators, fosters cohesiveness in unit management; delegates responsibility and authority appropriately; resolves each credential program’s administrative needs as promptly as feasible; consults with credential program faculty; and represents their interests in the institution, the education profession, and the school community.</p>	<p>The institution (faculty, dean/director and institutional administration) articulates and supports a vision for the preparation of professional educators. All professional preparation programs are organized, governed, and coordinated with the active involvement of credential program faculty. Institutional leadership fosters cohesiveness in management; delegates responsibility and authority appropriately; resolves each professional preparation program’s administrative needs as promptly as feasible; and represents the interests of each program in the institution, the education profession, and the school community.</p>

Rationale for Modifications Made to Common Standard 1

For Common Standard One, accreditation team members have sometimes assumed that the Dean or Director of Education is solely responsible for meeting the requirements of Standard One, thus leaving out the critical role of faculty and other administrators on the campus. The modifications broaden the concept of leadership to include the governance structure in place in the institution. The term “unit” has also led to some confusion in interpretation. It is a term that is used in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) process to define the school, college or department of education. In order to make provision for programs which function outside of the school, college or department of education, and in order to not be confused with the NCATE definition, a more generic term now used for the California Common Standards. This change is consistent with the preconditions regarding institutional authority and responsibility and authority for credential programs that were recently adopted by the Commission.

Common Standard 5

OLD COMMON STANDARD	MODIFIED COMMON STANDARD
<u>Common Standard 5</u> Admission	<u>Common Standard 5</u> Admission
In each credential preparation program, qualified candidates are admitted on the basis of well-defined admission criteria and procedures that utilize multiple measures and encourage the admission of students from under-represented groups through alternative criteria and procedures. The institution determines that each admitted candidate has appropriate personal characteristics, including sensitivity to California's diverse population, effective communication skills and other basic skills, and prior experiences that suggest a strong potential for professional effectiveness. Each candidate admitted to basic teaching credential programs (including emphasis credentials) has attained an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) that is above the median GPA for a comparable population of students at the institution. Each candidate admitted to advanced credential programs meets institutional standards for graduate study.	In each professional preparation program, candidates are admitted on the basis of well-defined admission criteria and procedures (including all Commission-adopted admission requirements) that utilize multiple measures. The admission of students from a diverse population is encouraged. The institution determines that candidates meet high academic standards, as evidenced by appropriate measures of academic achievement, and demonstrate strong potential for professional success in schools, as evidenced by appropriate measures of personal characteristics and prior experience.

Rationale for Modifications Made to Common Standard 5

The old admission standard was very long and led to a certain lack of clarity over determination of personal characteristics and a lack of clarity over the academic criteria to be used in making admission decisions. The modified standard uses language that is broader and more general in nature and is focused on the institution and its procedures, rather than on individual candidates. It is more typical of language used for standards. It focuses on the use of high academic standards for admission and the expectation that the institution will assess the potential of candidates to exhibit professional success in the schools.

There are some problems with old language of Common Standard 5 that are eliminated by the change. If the standard had not been modified, all of the program specific admission requirements previously adopted by the Commission would have become invalid. Following are only three examples of the effect the old language of the standard would have had upon admission requirements for credential programs:

1. Relating to Multiple and Single Subject Credential programs, the old language of the Common Standard appeared to be in violation of the California State University Chancellor's Executive Order by saying "Each candidate" when the order specifies that a certain percentage of candidates can be admitted who are below the median grade point average. If the standard continued to be worded in the old way, there could be no provision for exceptions, for any reason.

2. Common Standard 5 did not include the necessary admission requirements for CLAD/BCLAD emphasis programs relative to competence and experience in language acquisition.
3. The Professional Administrative Services Credential program standards call for a different type of admission criteria based upon the completion of a university program for the preliminary level program and employment as an administrator. This admission requirement would have been eliminated under the old language.

In discussion possible changes to this standard, the COA struggled with two goals which, seemingly, were in conflict with each other. On one hand, the standard was very long, in need of re-organization, in need of clarification, and included some language directed to "each candidate" rather than to the institution. On the other hand, concern was expressed that unless the admission requirements were a part of the standard, they could be considered as "optional" by institutions and could not be enforced. A solution was presented which seemed to answer the concerns expressed on both sides of the question.

1. The revised standard should be adopted as proposed. This action accomplished a shorter, clearer standard that is clearly expressed in general "standard" type language and is addressed to the institution. The revised standard also elevates the determination of "potential for professional success in the schools" to a higher level than the old language.
2. The existing Commission-adopted admission requirements for each credential preparation area should now be listed right after the standard and before the "Questions to Consider." These criteria will be used to guide program development and implementation and for initial and continuing accreditation. Further, in the future, when the Commission adopts new program standards for any credential preparation area, the specific admission requirements for that credential program will also be adopted. This will allow for the clear statement of program-specific admission criteria, including measures of academic achievement and professional potential. It will also allow for the listing of idiosyncratic admission requirements appropriate for each credential area.

Following are the existing Commission-adopted program admission requirements. When the Common Standards are displayed, all of the Commission-adopted requirements will be listed.

Commission-Adopted Credential Program Admission Requirements

Multiple and Single Subject Credential Programs - As a group, candidates admitted into the program each year have attained the median or higher in an appropriate comparison population on one or more indicators of academic achievement selected by the institution. Each individual has personal qualities and preprofessional experiences that suggest a strong potential for professional success and effectiveness as a teacher.

- For *BCLAD* Emphasis Programs, *BCLAD* candidates must be assessed for language eligibility for entry into the program.
- For Middle Level Emphasis Programs, candidates must have academic preparation in two or more subjects at a level equivalent to a supplementary authorization that may be joined in a core curriculum.

All Internship Programs - Each *internship* candidate has had prior experiences and personal qualifications to enable candidates to perform at the level of responsibility required of an

intern. Because interns perform the duties of fully certificated holders of the credential prior to the completion of a preparation program, it is important that they have had prior experiences which would adequately prepare them for the actual responsibilities of the position. When applicant's qualifications are evaluated, the program's admission criteria shall consider relevant experience and background to account for the increased responsibilities of interns.

General Advanced Credential Program Admission Requirements - As a group, candidates admitted into the program each year have attained a level of academic qualifications, using one or more indicators, equivalent to or higher than candidates admitted to other post-baccalaureate programs offered by the institution. Each individual has personal qualities and prior experiences that suggest a strong potential for professional success and effectiveness in the specialist or service area.

Library Media Teacher Credential Program Admission Requirements - Candidates admitted into the program have met requirements that are comparable to those of other advanced programs at the institution and have demonstrated professional qualities and experiences that indicate a strong potential for professional success and effectiveness as a library media teacher.

Health Services/School Nurse Credential Programs Admission Requirements - As a group, candidates admitted into the program each year have attained a level of academic qualifications, using one or more indicators, equivalent or higher than candidates admitted to other post-baccalaureate programs offered by the institution. Each admitted candidate holds valid licensure as a registered nurse in California and the appropriate academic degree as determined by the institution. Each individual has personal attributes and professional skills that suggest a strong potential for professional success and effectiveness as a school nurse.

Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Programs - As a group, candidates admitted into the program each year have attained a level of academic qualifications, using one or more indicators, equivalent to or higher than candidates admitted to other post-baccalaureate programs offered by the institution. Each individual has a record of professional accomplishment demonstrating leadership potential, and exhibits consistent adherence to moral and ethical standards of behavior.

Professional Administrative Services Credential Programs - Candidates are admitted into the program in a timely way, once it has been determined that they have successfully completed academic programs for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential that have been approved by the Committee on Accreditation, or have completed the equivalent at an out-of-state institution, and are employed by a local educational agency in an administrative position.

Common Standard 8

OLD COMMON STANDARD	MODIFIED COMMON STANDARD
<p><u>Common Standard 8</u> Field Supervisors</p>	<p><u>Common Standard 8</u> District Field Supervisors</p>
<p>Each field experience supervisor is carefully selected, trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, and certified and experienced in either teaching the subject(s) of the class or performing the services authorized by the credential. Supervisors and supervisory activities are appropriately evaluated, recognized and rewarded by the institution.</p>	<p>Each district-employed field experience supervisor is carefully selected, trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, and certified and experienced in either teaching the subject(s) of the class or performing the services authorized by the credential. District supervisors and supervisory activities are appropriately evaluated, recognized and rewarded by the institution.</p>

Rationale for Modifications Made to Common Standard 8

The only addition made for this standard was to use the word "district-employed" in one place and "district" in another, to ensure that it is clear that this standard does not refer to a supervisor employed by the university. University field supervisors are described under the faculty qualifications standard.

If there are questions about the modifications of the Common Standards described in this Coded Correspondence, they may be directed to Dr. Larry Birch, Administrator of Accreditation, Professional Services Division at the Commission (916) 327-2967.

Sincerely,

Sam W. Swofford, Ed.D.
Executive Director