

Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of Findings of the Stage V Provisional Site Visit

University of California Merced Professional Services Division June 2021

Overview of this Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the accreditation visit conducted at **University of California Merced**. The report of the team presents the findings based upon a thorough review of all available and relevant institutional and program documentation as well as all supporting evidence including interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, a recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** is made for the institution.

Common Standards and Program Standard Decisions For All Commission Approved Programs Offered by the Institution

Common Standards	Status
1) Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Met
2) Candidate Recruitment and Support	Met
3) Course of Study, Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Met
4) Continuous Improvement	Met with Concerns
5) Program Impact	Met

Program Standards

Programs	Total Program Standards	Met	Met with Concerns	Not Met
Multiple Subject/Single Subject Preliminary with Intern	6	4	2	0

The site visit was completed in accordance with the procedures approved by the Committee on Accreditation regarding the activities of the site visit:

- Preparation for the Accreditation Visit
- Preparation of the Institutional Documentation and Evidence
- Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team
- Intensive Evaluation of Program Data
- Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

**California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Committee on Accreditation
Stage V Provisional Site Visit Report**

Institution: University of California Merced

Dates of Visit: May 16-19, 2021

Accreditation Team Recommendation: Accreditation with Stipulations

Rationale:

The unanimous recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** is based on a thorough review of all institutional and programmatic information and materials available prior to and during the accreditation site visit including interviews with administrators, faculty, candidates, graduates, and local school personnel. The team obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit's operation. The decision pertaining to the accreditation recommendation of **Accreditation with Stipulations** for the institution was based upon the following:

Preconditions

All preconditions have been determined to be aligned.

Program Standards

All program standards for the Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject credential program were Met, except Standard 3: Clinical Practice and Standard 4: Monitoring, Supporting and Assessing Candidate Progress towards Meeting Credential Requirements, which were both Met with Concerns.

Common Standards

All Common Standards were Met, except Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement, which was Met with Concerns.

Overall Recommendation

Based on the fact that the team found four of the six Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject credential program standards **Met**; two program standards, Program Standard 3: Clinical Practice and Program Standard 4: Monitoring, Supporting and Assessing Candidate Progress towards Meeting Credential Requirements, **Met with Concerns**; five of six Common Standards **Met**; and Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement **Met with Concerns**, the team recommends **Accreditation with Stipulations**.

The team recommends the following stipulations: That within one year, the institution submit a report detailing how the following issues have been addressed in the program:

1. The institution presents evidence of the implementation of the comprehensive continuous improvement process utilizing the systems and tools developed inclusive of candidate performance data and input from key stakeholders.
2. The institution presents evidence of the implementation of a process to monitor candidate progress and determine support needs regarding specific performance expectations.
3. The institution presents evidence that cooperating teachers receive 10 hours of initial training, particularly around program expectations.

In addition, staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- University of California Merced be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.
- University of California Merced be assigned to a cohort on the schedule of accreditation activities, subject to the continuation of the present schedule of accreditation activities by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to offer the following credential programs and to recommend candidates for the appropriate and related credentials upon satisfactorily completing all requirements.

Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject Program with Intern

Accreditation Team

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Common Standards:

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Staff to the Visit:

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Documents Reviewed

Common Standards Submission
Program Review Submission
Common Standards Addendum
Course Syllabi and Course of Study
Candidate Advisement Materials
Accreditation Website
Faculty Vitae
Assessment Materials
Candidate Files

Candidate Handbooks
Survey Results
Performance Expectation Materials
Precondition Responses
Examination Results
Individual Development Plan
Exit Survey
Clinical Practice Calendar

Interviews Conducted

Stakeholders	TOTAL
Candidates	23
Completers	8
Employers	6
Institutional Administration	2
Program Coordinators	2
Faculty	10
TPA Coordinator	1
University Mentors	8
Field Supervisors – Program	2
Field Supervisors – District	6
Credential Analysts and Staff	1
Advisory Board Members	6
Program Partners	4
TOTAL	79

Note: In some cases, individuals were interviewed more than once due to multiple roles. Thus, the number of interviews conducted exceeds the actual number of individuals interviewed.

Background Information

The presence of the University of California Merced; Extension Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) at the University of California Merced (UC Merced) during a teacher shortage combined with ongoing retention problems in the San Joaquin Valley has opened the door to opportunities for potential teacher candidates. UC Merced purposefully recruits candidates from the San Joaquin Valley, a culturally, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse part of California. Developing a teacher preparation program outside the traditional setting of a department or school of education required close collaboration between the Extension and the Academic Senate. This unique academic setting provided an opportunity for TPP collaboration with regional P-12 education community leaders and to serve aspiring teachers who might not always be served in a UC program, or even in a local CSU. The TPP intentionally serves intern candidates and candidates who have struggled to be served in programs that are full-time or start in the fall.

Education Unit

The Teacher Preparation Program debuted in 2018 to provide culturally responsive instruction to help educate the newest group of TK-12 teachers in the San Joaquin Valley. UC Merced does not have a School of Education or a Department of Education. The Curriculum Advisory Board (CAB) consists of campus faculty with P-12 backgrounds as well as representation from regional P-12 leadership. The CAB reviews all course and program proposals to maintain UC academic quality, to ensure representation of the P-12 community in UC Merced's local context, and to represent the interests of the campus community. The CAB is made up of four faculty members representing the schools of Natural Sciences, Engineering, and Social Sciences, Humanities & Arts. In addition, the Director of Cal Teach, (a University of California initiative around STEM education), and an administrative leader from the Merced County Office of Education make up the final members of the 6-member CAB. Under the leadership of Chancellor Dorothy Leland, the first graduate of UC Merced Extension's Teacher Preparation Program was recognized during the 2019 commencement.

Table 1: Program Review Status

Program Name	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2018-19)	Number of Program Completers (2018-19)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2019-20)	Number of Program Completers (2019-20)	Number of Candidates Enrolled (2020-21)
Multiple Subject/Single Subject and Intern	16	1	25	18	55

The Visit

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this site visit was conducted virtually. The team and institutional stakeholders were interviewed via technology.

Focused Site Visit in Stage IV of Initial Institutional Approval

During Stage IV of the initial institutional approval (IIA) process, the institution hosts a Provisional Site Visit (PSV). The team is composed of program leaders for that type of program as well as experienced Board of Institutional Review members. The team makes decisions on all Common Standards and applicable program standards as well as an accreditation recommendation and any stipulations, if appropriate. The institution and its Commission-approved programs, in this case Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject and Intern, at the University of California Merced have only operated for three years during its provisional period as approved by the Commission.

PRECONDITION FINDINGS

After review of all relevant preconditions for this institution, all have been determined to be met.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject with Intern

Program Design

The Multiple Subject Credential program (MS) and Single Subject Credential program (SS) are part of the Teaching Preparation Program (TPP) at UC Merced. These programs also include an intern pathway. The SS program offers secondary subject area credentials in English language arts, history-social science, mathematics, and science. The MS and SS programs, including the intern pathway, are led by the Director of Education Programs for Extension and the Associate Director of Teacher Preparation, and are supported by the Director of University Extension. Both programs are typically completed over the course of three full-time semesters, including summer, or five-six part-time semesters. The SS program is 35 units, while the MS program is 41 units. The MS and SS programs are in-person, traditional teacher education programs that include fieldwork and coursework. The TPP currently serves 55 candidates, drawing most of their enrollment from the local community.

The Director of Education Programs takes the responsibility for many aspects of the program, including recruiting and hiring instructors and university mentors, teaching courses, and making programmatic decisions. The director also liaises with local schools and districts to develop partnerships. The associate director shares many of these responsibilities and takes the primary role in day-to-day programmatic operations and candidate support. The credential analyst assists in ensuring that candidates meet requirements for the intern credential. Interviews with faculty, including university mentors, indicate that there is a strong system of communication among faculty, and program leadership. Candidates and completers repeatedly reported feeling supported by the program, including by program leadership. University mentors and instructors

state that they participate in monthly meetings to discuss candidate progress and program curricula. Interviews with cooperating teachers confirm that the program is in regular communication with the field. Many university mentors, instructors, and cooperating teachers serve dual roles in the program, also facilitating cross-program and program-field collaboration.

Both the MS and SS programs are organized across three full-time semesters, with candidates able to start in winter or spring. All candidates take Foundations of Education and Learning, Cognition, and Instruction in their first semester. Interns are required to take these two courses and a methods course prior to beginning their internship. Taught by the program director, the two foundational courses ground candidates in creating their own philosophy of teaching from theories presented on culturally responsive pedagogy and social justice. Candidates concurrently take coursework and participate in fieldwork throughout the year, with field placements at the start of their program. Through interviews candidates confirmed that they have input into where they are placed based on geographic desirability. Fieldwork is split into two placements, one that is 200 hours and another that is 400 hours, in grade levels and content areas the candidates plan to pursue. A clinical practice handbook denotes how the time is to be spent across a placement, culminating in 4 weeks of solo teaching in the second semester. Candidates are supervised throughout their fieldwork by both a district-employed supervisor and a university mentor. Interviews with candidates, interns, and program completers demonstrate that candidates feel well-supported in their fieldwork by university mentors and district-employed supervisors. They also find the coursework to be generally applicable to their fieldwork.

As a new program, the TPP has implemented and is in the process of implementing many program-level practices to ensure they are meeting program standards and the TPEs. The program recently hired a director of education programs and an associate director to work with Extension and the main campus. Each semester, the programs hold a formal orientation for candidates, cooperating teachers, and university mentors, designed to communicate program expectations and any new program information. Additionally, the program is advised by a curriculum advisory board (CAB), composed of university faculty. The program has convened a teacher practitioner advisory board made up of multiple partner stakeholders.

Interviews with the program director confirmed that decisions about program design, coursework, and fieldwork are informed by feedback from stakeholders across the program. During their interviews, completers and candidates stated the TPP solicits formal input from candidates via end-of-semester course evaluations, exit interviews, and program completer surveys. As the program is still new, these feedback loops are still in development. Faculty stated that they have opportunities to provide feedback at monthly meetings, with the cooperating teachers, and are in regular communication with the director and associate director. While many informal opportunities for feedback are provided to all stakeholders, it was not clear how feedback is used systematically to inform program decisions and improvement.

Course of Study (Curriculum and Field Experience)

A review of program documents and syllabi, confirmed by interviews with program faculty, program completers, and current students, indicates that courses in the TPP are developmentally sequenced to align with fieldwork experiences. All candidates begin the TPP taking Foundations of Education; Learning, Cognition, and Instruction; and a methods course in the first semester. These courses lay foundations in culturally responsive teaching and project-based learning.

Multiple Subject candidates complete courses in integrated science and math methods, integrated humanities and literacy methods, inclusive instruction, project-based learning, and teaching practicum. Single Subject candidates complete courses in inclusive instruction, project-based learning, reading instruction, subject-specific methods, and teaching practicum.

In the first semester, all full-time candidates participate in clinical practice that requires 200 hours of observation, small group, individual, and whole class instruction. Intern candidates complete well over these hours as teacher of record at their school of employment. In the second semester (not summer), candidates complete the remaining 400 hours, including a four-week solo teaching experience. As outlined in program documents and confirmed in interviews with cooperating teachers, candidates, and program completers, there is a gradual release of responsibility for candidates to continually assume more classroom duties in their fieldwork placements. This model typically begins with observation and progresses to include responsibility for small group or individual instruction, co-teaching and planning, and whole group instruction. The second placement culminates in a 4-week solo teaching experience, in which candidates complete the CalTPA. Interviews with cooperating teachers reveal that candidates are generally well prepared to assume increasing responsibility in their fieldwork placements.

Candidates receive support from, and are evaluated by, their university mentors. Program documents and interviews with cooperating teachers, mentors, and candidates confirm that candidates are well supported by the program in their fieldwork placements. Formal evaluation instruments, aligned to the TPEs, are used for these observations and evaluations. In addition, the candidates self-assess through TPE reflections.

A review of program documents indicates, and interviews with faculty, candidates, and program completers confirm, that course assignments and fieldwork are closely connected. Course assignments require candidates to connect their fieldwork and coursework through analyzing and describing their fieldwork experiences and designing and analyzing lesson and unit plans to use in their fieldwork. Throughout the year, candidates take a practicum course to help them process their fieldwork experiences and develop materials for student teaching. All candidates take a course in diverse students and inclusive instruction. Instruction for multilingual learners and exceptional learners are addressed in this course. These courses are

held separately for multiple subject and single subject candidates to meet the needs of the candidates in these teaching assignments. A review of syllabi and interviews with faculty, program completers, and candidates confirm that other courses also address the needs of English learners and exceptional learners in assignments and topics. Program completers report feeling prepared to teach exceptional learners, learners from diverse backgrounds, and English learners.

Assessment of Candidates

Candidates receive information about program expectations and requirements at the beginning of the program and throughout the year, primarily through a handbook. Current and former candidates reported receiving updates and feedback on their progress from faculty and supervisors. Candidates are primarily assessed through fieldwork observation guides and CalTPA.

In the first semester, candidates are assessed on formative TPA experiences and receive feedback on their work. Fieldwork is assessed six times each semester by the university mentors through an evaluation instrument aligned to the TPEs. Candidates receive feedback on their performance through conversations and formal observation notes.

Candidates are also assessed through the CalTPA, which they complete in the second semester. Candidates are provided with formative TPA experiences throughout the first semester on which they receive feedback that they can use when completing the spring TPA. The program has officially been using the redesigned CalTPA since its inception in the 2018-19 school year. COVID has impacted candidates' ability to complete the TPA so data available at the time of the site visit was limited.

The TPP has plans in place to systematically collect and review program data from course work and surveys for program level assessment. Interviews and documents confirm that assessment instruments and data collection systems have been established, and the program now needs to collect and analyze data. The data then needs to be used for program improvement. Interviews with program faculty and university mentors confirm informal systems for tracking student progress that are in the process of being formalized. Interviews with cooperating teachers indicate there is need for greater communication between the TPP and the field around progress monitoring and support of candidates. Program completers and candidates report feeling well supported through a rigorous program.

Findings on Standards

After review of the institutional report, supporting documentation, the completion of interviews with candidates, graduates, faculty, employers, and supervising practitioners, the team determined that all program standards are **met** for the Preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject credential programs except for the following:

Standard 3: Clinical Practice – Met with Concerns

Interviews with cooperating teachers and a review of program documents indicate that the program does not yet consistently provide district-employed supervisors a minimum of 10 hours of training in effective supervision approaches such as adult learning theory, and current content-specific pedagogy and instructional practices. Interviews with cooperating teachers reveal that there is a greater need for the program to ensure that district-employed supervisors remain current in the knowledge and skills for candidate supervision and program expectations.

Standard 4: Monitoring, Supporting, and Assessing Candidate Progress towards Meeting Credential Requirements - Met with concerns

Some systems are in place for program faculty, program supervisors, and district-employed supervisors to monitor and support candidates during their progress towards mastering the TPEs. However, there is limited evidence that the program monitoring points to specific places where candidates need additional assistance and support.

INSTITUTION SUMMARY

The Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) at UC Merced is unique in the fact that it is a program implemented through the University Extension. The Dean of Extension/Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management reports to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost. The University Extension in collaboration with the offices in Enrollment Management provides support for program coordination, advisement, instructional personnel, credential processing, and fieldwork and clinical practices for the TPP. UC Merced tenure-line faculty serve on the Curriculum Advisory Board. Their current role relative to the TPP is to approve course curriculum and advise as to the assessment of course level student learning outcomes. This organizational structure ensures the resources and support services are provided by the unit to operate effective educator preparation programs.

While UC Merced has just completed their third year running a strong teacher preparation program, they have run into a few unanticipated challenges. In 2019, after one year of implementation, the program manager left the program unexpectedly. The institution was able to fill the position with the current program manager who had previous experience with a teacher preparation program but who still needed to learn the intricacies of UC Merced's program. Just as she was beginning to fully understand the program, COVID hit, and the program had to be altered as a result. Instructors' delivery models changed, intern and teacher candidates' teaching environments changed, and TPAs and other assessments were deferred for many candidates into their induction programs. All this meant that this new program was going through tremendous changes just like other seasoned programs but without the stabilizing force of past experiences. Through interviews with employers and supervisors, it is very evident that, despite these challenges, their candidates were well prepared. But through these continual changes and shifts, some procedures fell to the wayside, and UC Merced was in the process of reinstituting these when their site visit began.

COMMON STANDARDS FINDINGS

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
Each Commission-approved institution has the infrastructure in place to operate effective educator preparation programs. Within this overall infrastructure:	<i>No response required</i>
The institution and education unit create and articulate a research-based vision of teaching and learning that fosters coherence among and is clearly represented in all educator preparation programs. This vision is consistent with preparing educators for California public schools and the effective implementation of California’s adopted standards and curricular frameworks.	Consistently
The institution actively involves faculty, instructional personnel, and relevant stakeholders in the organization, coordination, and decision making for all educator preparation programs.	Inconsistently
The education unit ensures that faculty and instructional personnel regularly and systematically collaborate with colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community to improve educator preparation.	Consistently
The institution provides the unit with sufficient resources for the effective operation of each educator preparation program, including, but not limited to, coordination, admission, advisement, curriculum, professional development/instruction, field-based supervision, and clinical experiences.	Consistently
The Unit Leadership has the authority and institutional support required to address the needs of all educator preparation programs and considers the interests of each program within the institution.	Consistently
Recruitment and faculty development efforts support hiring and retention of faculty who represent and support diversity and excellence.	Consistently
The institution employs, assigns, and retains only qualified persons to teach courses, provide professional development, and supervise field-based and clinical experiences. Qualifications of faculty and other instructional personnel must include, but are not limited to: a) current knowledge of the content; b) knowledge of the current context of public schooling including the California adopted P-12 content standards, frameworks, and accountability systems; c) knowledge of diversity in society, including diverse abilities, culture, language, ethnicity, and gender orientation; and d) demonstration of effective professional practices in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service.	Consistently

Common Standard 1: Institutional Infrastructure to Support Educator Preparation	Team Finding
The education unit monitors a credential recommendation process that ensures that candidates recommended for a credential have met all requirements.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 1: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

The Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) is a program implemented through the University Extension at the University of California Merced (UC Merced). The Dean of Extension and Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management reports to both the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. The Dean of Extension and Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management oversees the offices of Admissions, Registrar, Financial Aid, Students First Center, Summer Session, and the Extension. University Extension in collaboration with the offices in Enrollment Management provides support for program coordination, advisement, instructional personnel, credential processing, and fieldwork and clinical practices for the TPP. UC Merced tenure-line faculty serve on the Curriculum Advisory Board. Their current role relative to the TPP is to approve course curriculum and advise as to the assessment of course level student learning outcomes. University Extension employs a credential analyst and program coordinator who works closely with the Associate Director of the TPP, the registrar, and credential candidates monitoring their progress in meeting all the requirements for credential recommendation. The credential recommendation process is monitored by the Director of Educational Programs and the Associate Director of the TPP. This organizational structure ensures the resources and support services are provided by the unit to operate effective educator preparation programs.

The stated mission of the TPP is to develop culturally responsive educators who equitably facilitate cross-disciplinary, integrative learning to catalyze student potential and empowerment. Evidence submitted by the program for the Common Standards indicated a consistent focus on this mission through the course curriculum, learning outcomes, and fieldwork experiences. Interviews with TPP leadership, program instructors, university mentors, program completers, and current credential candidates consistently corroborated this evidence.

Real and mutually beneficial partnerships among the TPP leadership and instructional personnel and colleagues in P-12 settings, college and university units and members of the broader educational community were evident in both a review of submitted documentation and in interviews with program leadership, program instructors, university mentors, employers and partnering P-12 project directors as well as district and county office of education

administrators. These partnerships have been beneficial in shaping coursework and clinical experiences. However systematic stakeholder involvement in program decision-making was not clear in the documentation reviewed or in interviews with stakeholders including employers and partners. The unit provided evidence of plans to engage stakeholders in decision-making including a plan to convene a Teacher Practitioner Advisory Board and to implement the Annual Assessment Timeline to include stakeholders to be implemented beginning in Fall 2021. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this element of the standard was not consistently demonstrated, however the team saw sufficient evidence that the plans provided during the visit are on-track for implementation in Fall 2021.

Common Standard 2: Candidate Recruitment and Support	Team Finding
Candidates are recruited and supported in all educator preparation programs to ensure their success.	<i>No response required</i>
The education unit accepts applicants for its educator preparation programs based on clear criteria that include multiple measures of candidate qualifications.	Consistently
The education unit purposefully recruits and admits candidates to diversify the educator pool in California and provides the support, advice, and assistance to promote their successful entry and retention in the profession.	Consistently
Appropriate information and personnel are clearly identified and accessible to guide each candidate’s attainment of program requirements.	Consistently
Evidence regarding progress in meeting competency and performance expectations is consistently used to guide advisement and candidate support efforts. A clearly defined process is in place to identify and support candidates who need additional assistance to meet competencies.	Inconsistently

Finding on Common Standard 2: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Following a thorough review of documents and after conducting interviews the accreditation team determined that the Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) has a well-defined candidate recruitment and admissions process in place. The TPP utilizes a variety of strategies and protocols that include recruitment from the UC Merced Cal Teach program, word-of-mouth in local districts and among UC Merced alumni, information sessions and outreach processes.

The TPP has at its foundation a vision of social justice. This vision, based on theory and research, culturally responsive, and culturally sustaining curricula, informs the profile of candidates recruited to enter the program. Candidates have access to the program requirements through meetings with TPP leadership and through program handbooks and monitoring documents. Current candidates spoke of the power of informal personal attention given to support their progress throughout the program. The program leadership is easily accessible and develops strong relationships with students to meet their individual needs. Although the relational support is a major strength of the program, some of the stakeholders indicated they are unaware of a coherent formal support system to deal with students who have challenges or are struggling with meeting the requirements. This is an aspect of the newly developed continuous improvement system the unit will implement in September 2021. These support services are elaborated in multiple documents and in the program handbooks.

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
The unit designs and implements a planned sequence of coursework and clinical experiences for candidates to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills to educate and support P-12 students in meeting state-adopted content standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs offer a high-quality course of study focused on the knowledge and skills expected of beginning educators and grounded in current research on effective practice. Coursework is integrated closely with field experiences to provide candidates with a cohesive and comprehensive program that allows candidates to learn, practice, and demonstrate competencies required of the credential they seek.	Consistently
The unit and all programs collaborate with their partners regarding the criteria and selection of clinical personnel, site-based supervisors, and school sites, as appropriate to the program.	Consistently
Through site-based work and clinical experiences, programs offered by the unit provide candidates with opportunities to both experience issues of diversity that affect school climate and to effectively implement research-based strategies for improving teaching and student learning.	Consistently
Site-based supervisors must be certified and experienced in teaching the specified content or performing the services authorized by the credential.	Consistently
The process and criteria result in the selection of site-based supervisors who provide effective and knowledgeable support for candidates.	Consistently
Site-based supervisors are trained in supervision, oriented to the supervisory role, evaluated, and recognized in a systematic manner.	Inconsistently

Common Standard 3: Fieldwork and Clinical Practice	Team Finding
All programs effectively implement and evaluate fieldwork and clinical practice.	Consistently
For each program the unit offers, candidates have significant experience in school settings where the curriculum aligns with California’s adopted content standards and frameworks, and the school reflects the diversity of California’s student and the opportunity to work with the range of students identified in the program standards.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 3: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Clear and compelling evidence submitted in program standards documentation, obtained during the provisional site visit, as well as interviews indicate that the TPP program implements a high-quality course of study integrated with field experiences and clinical practice that prepares candidates to meet the needs of learners in the P-12 schools in California. The TPP was referenced as a program central to filling the needs of local districts for culturally responsive educators who represented the diversity of the communities served. The program instructors and university mentors are recognized leaders in their communities and the P-12 settings where they are often employed as educators, administrators, or project directors. The Director of Education Programs has a successful record of collaboration with P-12 settings in identifying placements for teacher candidates in clinical practice that meet the needs of the partners that result in full time employment opportunities for the candidates upon completion of the credentials.

Interviews with site-based supervisors indicated they were not evaluated and recognized in their performance. The unit provided evidence of a form to track the training of site- based supervisors according to the program standard requirements for the multiple subject and single subjects credential programs. However, site-based supervisors did not receive all the training that is required by Commission standards, but with such small numbers the program was able to help each supervisor individually, when needed, to ensure that their teaching candidates were able to get the proper support they needed. The institution knows that as they grow they will not be able to sustain this model of individualized training and has begun to implement a full program of systematic training for their supervisors to ensure they are not only oriented to their supervisory role but also evaluated and recognized in a systematic manner. The Associate Director for the TPP indicated in an interview awareness of this shortcoming and the unit provided evidence of a plan to implement all the required elements of site supervisor training. The team reviewed plans for this implementation in Fall of 2021 and the tracking form provided will be helpful in monitoring the implementation of the planned training.

Common Standard 4: Continuous Improvement	Team Finding
The education unit develops and implements a comprehensive continuous improvement process at both the unit level and within each of its programs that identifies program and unit effectiveness and makes appropriate modifications based on findings.	Inconsistently
The education unit and its programs regularly assess their effectiveness in relation to the course of study offered, fieldwork and clinical practice, and support services for candidates.	Inconsistently
Both the unit and its programs regularly and systematically collect, analyze, and use candidate and program completer data as well as data reflecting the effectiveness of unit operations to improve programs and their services.	Inconsistently
The continuous improvement process includes multiple sources of data including 1) the extent to which candidates are prepared to enter professional practice; and 2) feedback from key stakeholders such as employers and community partners about the quality of the preparation.	Inconsistently

Finding on Common Standard 4: Met with Concerns

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Through an extensive document review and interviews conducted during the virtual visit, there is evidence of the development of a comprehensive assessment process. While the program manager and program staff currently review assessment data and completer data informally, there currently is no formalized system to ensure the unit has an effective plan for continuous improvement. Leadership in the TPP recognized this as an issue and have started to create a system that will fulfill their needs. The goals of the newly designed system cover the use of data to inform program efforts and outcomes which will be shared among all stakeholders, from faculty and program directors to advisory board members and field supervisors, school personnel, and students. All stakeholders will be involved in evaluation, particularly in reviewing data summaries and offering input to inform modifications and improvement efforts. Interviews with employers and community partners provided evidence that program leadership has created an essential teacher preparation program to serve the Merced area and spoke to the high quality of student teachers and interns entering the field. However, there is currently a lack of data and engagement with stakeholders to offer feedback and make modifications. The unit does not have the processes in place but has a well-designed plan for immediate implementation.

Rationale for the Finding

Major faculty changes and the onset of the global pandemic created circumstances that interfered with the implementation of the assessment processes. Although some data have been collected and analyzed, a systematic continuous improvement process has not been

implemented. However, the educational unit has designed a robust comprehensive improvement process for implementation by September 2021. The components of this system were reviewed by the team and have potential for ensuring that the continuous improvement cycle informs unit operations to effectively improve programs and their services.

The site visit team was not able to confirm that advisory board meetings were happening in the first year prior to the change in leadership. Once COVID began, UC Merced and its partner districts were working very hard to continue educating their students, and advisory board meetings became less of a priority. However, the current program has invitations out for next year to several instructional personnel and relevant stakeholders to help them with the organization and decision making for their teacher preparation program.

Common Standard 5: Program Impact	Team Finding
The institution ensures that candidates preparing to serve as professional school personnel know and demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to educate and effectively support all students in meeting state adopted academic standards. Assessments indicate that candidates meet the Commission adopted competency requirements as specified in the program standards.	Consistently
The unit and its programs evaluate and demonstrate that they are having a positive impact on candidate learning and competence and on teaching and learning in schools that serve California’s students.	Consistently

Finding on Common Standard 5: Met

Summary of information applicable to the standard

Assessment plans for long term implementation are extensive with the intention of providing employers, districts, and the larger community evidence that UC Merced is well prepared to successfully enter the field.

Comments shared during interviews with faculty, university mentors, current candidates, and program completers, indicate that credential candidates are assessed against the Commission-adopted requirements and program standards. According to stakeholders, candidates were assessed and evaluated with multiple measures throughout the program. Stakeholders who participated in the interviews described how student teachers and interns were assessed through observations, reflective practices, course assignments, lesson plans, TPEs and individual conversations with university mentors, principals, supervisors, and faculty. Through these processes, candidates receive individualized support based on their regularly assessed needs. Faculty, university supervisors, and site-based supervisors meet regularly to discuss candidate competency, growth, and progress.

During interviews, employers differentiated UC Merced completers from other graduates coming from neighboring programs. They described UC Merced-trained teachers as highly reflective and dedicated to serving in the Merced communities. Employers credit the program for emphasizing culturally relevant pedagogical practices. They applauded the program leadership for their committed to recruiting and preparing a diverse teacher corps to serve in the communities they represent. They emphasized that the TPP graduates demonstrate dedication, are prepared to provide well-designed lessons, know project- based learning, are reflective, and have a strong foundation in culturally responsive pedagogy. Several mentor and cooperating teachers commented how much they learned from the TPP candidates.