

# NCTQ Standards for Rating the Nation's Education Schools

## Grounded Clinical Practice

**Standard 1: Classroom Management.** *The program ensures that teacher candidates learn and practice specific techniques for managing the classroom.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary and secondary programs.**

### Indicators that the program meets the standard:

Typical formative and summative student teacher evaluation instruments used by the student teacher's supervisor have the following characteristics:

- 1.1 They specifically address the student teacher's ability to establish a positive learning environment and standards of classroom behavior.
- 1.2 They specifically address the student teacher's appropriate use of low profile desists for managing minimally disruptive behavior.
- 1.3 They specifically address the student teacher's appropriate use of disciplinary action to handle significant student misbehavior.
- 1.4 They require comments by the supervisor to support each rating.
- 1.5 They allow the cooperating teacher to document his/her evaluation of the candidate's classroom management techniques in one of the following ways :
  - Using the same evaluation instrument used by the student teacher's supervisor.
  - Using an evaluation instrument that is substantially similar to that used by the student teacher's supervisor.
  - Recording his or her evaluation on the student teacher's supervisor's evaluation instrument.

## **Grounded Clinical Practice**

**Standard 2: Practice Planning Instruction.** *The program requires teacher candidates to design and adjust instruction to enhance the academic performance of all students.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary and secondary programs.**

### **Indicators that the program meets the standard:**

Project or portfolio assignments associated with either student teaching or an exit requirement demonstrate that the program expects the teacher candidate to meet the following challenges of instructional design:

- 2.1 Identifying technology applications that will boost instruction
- 2.2 Anchoring instruction in the state's K-12 learning standards
- 2.3 Addressing the needs of English language learners
- 2.4 Accommodating students with special needs
- 2.5 Extending instruction for students who have demonstrated proficiency in relevant standards
- 2.6 In addition, none of the program's instructional planning assignments encourage candidates to use pseudo-scientific methods of instruction.

## **Grounded Clinical Practice**

**Standard 3: Assessment.** *The program requires that teacher candidates gain a thorough overview of student assessment that includes practice analyzing student performance data to drive instruction.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary and secondary programs.**

### **Indicators that the program meets the standard:**

- 3.1 The instructional role of standardized tests, particularly the program state's standardized tests, is addressed.
- 3.2 Teacher candidates are required to prepare formative and summative classroom assessments.
- 3.3 Individually and in teams, teacher candidates are taught how to interpret and apply data from both standardized and classroom assessments in order to inform instruction.

A program will receive a "strong design" designation if these three indicators are addressed in a single course. The course must address the use and misuse of assessment data, the issue of bias, the meaning of validity and reliability in the context of testing. It must also include field work which includes assessment assignments closely aligned with instruction.

## **Grounded Clinical Practice**

**Standard 4: All Children Can Learn.** *The program ensures that teacher candidates experience high-performing schools that successfully serve students living in poverty.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary, secondary and special education programs.**

### **Indicator that the program meets the standard:**

- 4.1 Every teacher candidate experiences (through activities ranging from structured observations to student teaching) traditional or public charter schools, or individual classrooms that are successfully serving high needs populations, with success defined as exceeding expectations on state assessments and in graduation rates.

## Grounded Clinical Practice

**Standard 5: Student Teaching.** *The program ensures that the student teaching experience includes the essential components for success: a full-time placement of sufficient length that is aligned with the school calendar, adequately supervised, and attendant to the qualifications of the cooperating teacher.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary, secondary and special education programs.**

### Indicators that the program meets the standard:

- 5.1 All student teachers spend at least 10 weeks in no more than two placements, with at least one placement preparing them for teaching in the classrooms of the state.
- 5.2 The student teaching experience aligns with the calendar of the placement school, with fall term student teachers starting no later than the opening day of classes at placement schools.
- 5.3 The student teacher is observed at least five times at regular intervals during the semester.
- 5.4 The program does not allow teacher candidates to take any course other than a companion seminar during student teaching.
- 5.5 The program communicates clearly to the school district that cooperating teachers must:
  - be proven capable mentors OR receive mentorship training, and
  - be proven effective instructors (as measured by student performance).
- 5.6 The program plays an active role in selecting cooperating teachers.
- 5.7 The program communicates clear consequences for failing student teaching, including making alternative degrees available should program exit be necessary.

A program whose screening of cooperating teachers includes review of documentation or demonstrations of effective instruction will earn a "strong design" designation.

## **Elementary and Special Education**

**Standards 6: Early Reading.** *The program consistently prepares candidates in the essential components of effective reading instruction.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary and special education programs.**

### **Indicators that the program meets the standard:**

- 6.1 Coursework lectures and practice adequately cover the five essential components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension strategies.
- 6.2 Textbooks used in reading courses support effective reading instruction.
- 6.3 All relevant required courses address at least one of the five essential components.

We will also be analyzing how instruction in using screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments is aligned with coursework content, but individual institutions will not be rated in this analysis.

## **Elementary and Special Education**

**Standard 7: Elementary Mathematics.** *The institution provides adequate preparation and practice in the specific mathematics content and methods needed by teachers.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary and special education programs.**

### **Indicators that the program meets the standard:**

- 7.1 Programs require at least an 8-semester credit hour sequence of mathematics coursework that covers essential topics in numbers and operations, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. (Highly selective institutions need only require teacher candidates to take 6-semester credit hours of elementary mathematics coursework.)
- 7.2 Textbooks used in these courses support instruction on essential topics of elementary mathematics.
- 7.3 The program requires a 3-semester credit hour elementary mathematics methods course that includes field work or a concurrent practicum that holds teacher candidates individually accountable for mastering instructional skills.

A program will earn a "strong design" designation if adequate elementary mathematics content is combined with elementary mathematics methods instruction in a coordinated set or sequence of courses.

## Elementary and Special Education

**Standard 8: Elementary Content.** *The institution prepares teacher candidates with content understanding necessary to teach to the Common Core standards as well as the full elementary curriculum, and have expertise in a single subject.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary and special education programs.**

### Indicators that the program meets the standard:

In order to be effective, elementary school teachers have always needed to have solid, wide-ranging knowledge on many subjects. With the advent of the Common Core Standards, which have already been adopted in 41 states and which are considerably more demanding than most state standards, the bar on elementary teachers' content preparation has only been raised higher. Traditional state "English Language Arts" standards, which in a number of states were agnostic about content knowledge, will soon give way to far more rigorous standards which will demand that students (and hence their teachers) have background knowledge across all subject areas, including topics in history, social science, and science.

Given the content deficiencies with which many high school graduates, including teacher candidates, enter college, preparing teachers for these demands will be challenging. It is with this backdrop that we approached the articulation of this standard and its indicators, which we recognize places a substantial, though justifiable, burden of coursework.

Institutions could reduce this burden if their states demanded that all elementary teacher candidates take rigorous content licensing exams *with cut-scores broken out by subject* upon admission to the preparation program. But since no state at the present time does this, institutions need to ensure that elementary teacher candidates have the preparation that readies them to teach their students through coursework and test-out options available through Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and SAT II exams.

#### 8.1 **At the undergraduate level,** the institution:

- Requires candidates take at least one course in each topic from each of the subject areas listed below.
  - All coursework except children's literature should only be taught in liberal arts departments.
  - Course content must be broad enough to give candidates the knowledge base to teach the elementary curriculum.
- Exempts candidates from specific course requirements on the basis of standardized assessments commonly recognized as demonstrating content mastery at the level provided by post-secondary or rigorous secondary instruction (e.g., AP, CLEP, SAT II).

**Subject A: Literature and composition**

Topic (1): World literature

Topic (2): American literature

Topic (3): Writing, grammar and composition

Topic (4): Children's literature

**Subject B: History and geography**

Topic (1): Early American history

Topic (2): Modern American history/Government

Topic (3): World history--modern

Topic (4): World history--ancient

**Subject C: Science**

Topic (1): Biology with lab

Topic (2): Chemistry with lab

Topic (3): Physics with lab

**Subject D: Fine arts**

Topic (1): Music history

Topic (2): Art history

**Elementary mathematics (see Standard 7)**

Three courses (or two courses in highly selective institutions) designed for the teacher and imparting content in numbers and operations, algebra, geometry, and data analysis.

- 8.2 **For graduate teacher candidates**, the burden posed by a stringent credit count does not relieve the program of its responsibility to ensure that elementary teacher candidates meet requirements for content knowledge preparation. If candidates have significant weaknesses in content knowledge, the program works with the candidate to remedy them.
- When applications to the program, catalogs or other public documents do not describe such a process, the presumption will be made that no content preparation requirements are imposed on graduate teacher candidates.
- 8.3 **Additionally, for undergraduate programs**, the teacher candidate completes an 18-semester credit hour concentration in a subject relevant to the elementary curriculum. (For purposes of concentration credit hour calculations, general education coursework may be counted regardless of whether an institution would allow it to count towards a major.)

## **Elementary**

**Standard 9: English Language Learners.** *The program prepares elementary teacher candidates to teach reading to English language learners.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary programs.**

**Indicator that the program meets the standard:**

- 9.1 Reading courses deliver the instructional strategies necessary for teaching English language learners and require candidates to practice such strategies.

## **Elementary**

**Standard 10: Struggling Readers.** *The program prepares elementary teacher candidates to teach reading skills to students at risk of reading failure.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary programs.**

### **Indicator that the program meets the standard:**

- 10.1 Reading courses deliver the instructional strategies necessary for teaching struggling readers and require candidates to practice such strategies.

## Secondary

**Standard 11: Middle School Content.** *The program ensures that middle school teacher candidates know their subjects.*

**Standard applies to: Secondary programs.**

### Indicators that the program meets the standard:

Higher education institutions have traditionally articulated their vision of teacher preparedness in a subject area by defining a prescribed course of study completed via a major or minor. For middle school teachers charged with teaching many different subjects, a credit count system is particularly challenging, especially for teacher candidates entering graduate programs of study.

- 11.1 Using an outcomes-based approach, each pathway to middle school certification listed below requires in every subject a teacher will be qualified to teach either:
- a series of rigorous stand-alone tests , or
  - a rigorous test of multiple subject areas that provides cut-scores for each specific subject on the test.

Absent such licensing tests used to verify competency, we look for institutions to require courses of study as follows:

- 11.2 A middle school teacher candidate seeking certification in mathematics must have a major consisting of at least 30 semester credit hours, including at least 24 credit hours of general audience\* mathematics coursework.
- 11.3 A middle school teacher candidate seeking certification in English/language arts must have a major consisting of at least 30 semester credit hours, including at least 24 credit hours of general audience English coursework.
- 11.4 A middle school teacher candidate seeking certification in the sciences must have either:
- a major in a single teachable science discipline (biology, chemistry or physics) of at least 30 semester credit hours including at least 24 credit hours of general audience coursework; or
  - a major in general science that consists of at least 15 credit hours (the equivalent of one minor) in one teachable science discipline (biology, chemistry or physics).
- 11.5 A middle school teacher candidate seeking certification in the social sciences must have either:

- a major in a single teachable social science discipline (history, government/political science or economics) of at least 30 semester credit hours, including at least 24 credit hours of general audience coursework; or
- a major in general social science that consists of at least 15 credit hours (the equivalent of one minor) in history.

11.6 If certification in multiple subjects is offered, a middle school teacher candidate seeking certification in multiple subjects must have at least 15 semester credit hours (the equivalent of a minor) in a *single discipline* relevant to each of the subject areas. (For example, dual certification in mathematics and science must consist of the equivalent of a minor in mathematics and a minor in biology, *not* the equivalent of a minor in mathematics and a minor in general science.)

\* Courses which are intended for any student on campus, not just prospective teachers.

## Secondary

**Standard 12: High School Content.** *The program ensures that high school teacher candidates know their subject.*

**Standard applies to: Secondary programs.**

### Indicators that the program meets the standard:

Higher education institutions have traditionally articulated their vision of teacher preparedness in a subject area by defining a prescribed course of study through a major or minor. For high school teachers charged with teaching many different subjects subsumed under one certification, pursuing multiple majors is impractical. A credit count system is also particularly challenging to impose on teacher candidates entering graduate programs of study.

- 12.1 Using an outcomes-based approach, each pathway to high school certification listed below requires in every subject a teacher will be qualified to teach either:
- a series of rigorous standalone tests ; or
  - a rigorous test of multiple subject areas that provides cut-scores for each separate subject-specific test section.

Absent such licensing tests used to verify competency, we look for institutions to require courses of study as follows:

- 12.2 A high school teacher candidate seeking certification in mathematics must have a major consisting of at least 30 semester credit hours, including at least 24 credit hours of general audience\* mathematics coursework.
- 12.3 A high school teacher candidate seeking certification in English must have a major consisting of at least 30 semester credit hours, including at least 24 credit hours of general audience English coursework.
- 12.4 A high school teacher candidate seeking science certification in a state that requires single-subject certification must have a major in the single teachable science discipline for which certification will be awarded of at least 30 semester credit hours, including at least 24 credit hours of general audience coursework. A high school teacher candidate seeking science certification in a state that offers general science certification must have coursework preparation that consists of at least 15 credit hours (the equivalent of one minor) in at least two teachable science disciplines (biology, chemistry or physics).
- 12.5 A high school teacher candidate seeking social science certification in a state that requires single-subject certification must have a major in the single teachable social science discipline for which certification will be awarded of at least 30 semester credit

hours, including at least 24 credit hours of general audience coursework. A high school teacher candidate seeking social science certification in a state that offers social science certification must have a major in history, or coursework preparation that consists of at least 15 credit hours (the equivalent of one minor) in history *and in at least one* other teachable social science (government/political science, economics or psychology).

\* Courses which are intended for any student on campus, not just prospective teachers.

## Secondary

**Standard 13. Secondary Methods.** *The program requires that high school teacher candidates practice teaching the content of their intended subject areas.*

**Standard applies to: Secondary programs.**

### **Indicators that the program meets the standard:**

- 13.1 The program requires teacher candidates to take a subject-specific methods course in the area of certification.
- 13.2 Methods courses focus on specific instructional strategies that will improve the delivery of content and include field work or a concurrent practicum that holds teacher candidates individually accountable for mastering instructional skills.

## Special Education

**Standard 14: Grade-level Subject Preparation.** *The program requires special education teacher candidates to know the subjects they are likely to teach.*

**Standard applies to: Special education programs.**

### Indicators that the program meets the standard:

- 14.1 Programs training special education teacher candidates for an elementary setting must require the same content preparation as specified in elementary content preparation indicators 8.1-8.2.
- 14.2 Programs training special education teachers for secondary settings require candidates to earn subject-area minors (equivalent to at least 15-semester credit hours) in at least two of the following disciplines: English; mathematics; history; biology; chemistry or physics.
- 14.3 Programs residing in a state which still confers an overly broad PK-12 or K-12 special education license need to require candidates to pursue sufficiently narrow content preparation that focuses either on elementary or secondary preparation (as described above).

## Special Education

**Standard 15: Instructional Design.** *The program ensures that special education teacher candidates practice the development of "specially designed" instruction to learn how to customize instruction that will address a range of student needs.*

**Standard applies to: Special education programs.**

### Indicators that the program meets the standard:

- 15.1 The program requires several courses with a strong focus on instruction in a particular content area (e.g., reading, mathematics, science, social studies) or in multiple content areas.
- 15.2 More than half of the grade for content-focused coursework is based on assignments that require teacher candidates to design instruction.
- 15.3 Course assignments requiring design of instruction should explicitly address “specially designed” instruction that can meet a range of students needs by:
  - development of a curriculum feature, such as developing a new task or lesson that explicitly teaches a new concept or a prerequisite concept;
  - minor modification of the curriculum (i.e., while keeping the essential curriculum architecture intact, changing a specific feature in order to, for example, add more positive examples of a concept);
  - major adaptations (i.e., the architectural structure of an existing curriculum is changed significantly; for example, the teaching of a rule relationship is changed entirely to include a revised rule, an explanation of the rule in the teacher's words, specific examples such as positive instances and negative instances of the rule, and specification of the materials that the teacher will use to present the rule); or
  - major enhancements to the curriculum (i.e., designing a template involving an entirely new curriculum architecture in order to adopt the content of an existing lesson to student needs).

## Entry into Program and Profession

**Standard 16: Selectivity.** *The program selects candidates of high academic caliber using a screen that enables comparison of their academic achievement to that of college-attending peers.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary, secondary and special education programs.**

### Indicators that the program meets the standard:

- 16.1 **At the undergraduate level**, the college or university is either sufficiently selective (as indicated by a mean combined SAT mathematics and verbal score of 1120 or above or a mean ACT composite score of 24 or above), or the education school utilizes a standardized test of academic proficiency that allows comparison of applicants to the general college-going population and selection of applicants in the top half of that population.
- 16.2 If the education school is housed in a college or university that is sufficiently selective as indicated by SAT or ACT test scores, but that college or university has an open transfer policy, the education school must utilize a standardized test of academic proficiency that allows comparison of applicants to the general college-going population.
- 16.3 The requirement for admission of a GPA of 3.0 or higher (either based on coursework in high school or from the first two years of college) will be considered as a mitigating factor in consideration of adequate cut-scores on standardized tests of academic proficiency.
- 16.4 **At the graduate level**, the education school utilizes for admission consideration of both an applicant's undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or above and the score on one of the standardized tests of academic proficiency used commonly in higher education for graduate admissions (e.g., the GRE).

## **Entry into Program and Profession**

**Standard 17: Outcomes.** *The institution collects data related to its graduates' performance in the classroom.*

**Standard applies to: Elementary, secondary and special education programs.**

### **Indicators that the institution meets the standard:**

- 17.1 The institution surveys its graduates regarding topics relevant to program evaluation.
- 17.2 The institution surveys its graduates' employers about their professional performance.
- 17.3 The institution secures data from teacher performance assessments (e.g., California's PACT) administered to candidates just prior to or at graduation.
- 17.4 Unless state data systems preclude access to meaningful data, the institution secures value-added performance data on its graduates' students, including any teacher evaluations which are based at least partially on such data.
- 17.5 All forms of data noted are collected on an established timetable that supports regular program evaluation.