

Standard 2

Assessment System

The assessment system for initial programs addresses the conceptual framework. Alignment charts document the connections between the outcomes of the conceptual framework and performance assessments. Unit assessments have been planned around the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice (SEPs), which are based on the INTASC standards, and reevaluated by faculty as significant changes occur in licensure and in policy at the state and national levels. Assessment of dispositions occurs consistently in the assessment system. The *Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching* is used as a foundational assessment across the assessment system for initial programs. State and institutional standards are key reference points for candidate assessments. All initial programs have comprehensive matrices that have been reviewed by the Minnesota Board of Teaching (BOT) that demonstrate both the opportunity to learn as well as assessments of all program standards. (See Exhibit 1.3.c for alignment chart.)

The assessment system for advanced programs addresses the conceptual framework. Alignment charts document the connections between the outcomes of the conceptual framework and performance assessments. Advanced teacher licensure programs have planned performance assessments aligned closely to the Content standards for each field established by the BOT. Administrative licensure performance assessments align closely to the Minnesota Board of School Administrators (BOSA) competencies. Minnesota has its own administrative standards which reflect the National Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) but expand in areas such as curriculum and instruction. Programs for professional development of teachers are aligned with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). The School Psychologist doctorate is aligned with the ten Domains of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Assessment of dispositions occurs across the assessment system. (See Exhibit 1.3.c for alignment charts.)

Admission to initial programs requires candidates to be admitted to the university and major (which allows students to register for upper division courses) prior to admission to Professional Education. While the GPA and credit totals are slightly different for the three initial licensure programs, all other requirements are consistent. (See Exhibit 2.3.b for admission criteria and data.)

Candidate performance during field experiences is evaluated using four levels of the *Teacher Credential* rubric with each increasing in expectations and complexity (Exhibit 3.3.f). Dispositions are assessed through Level I, *Showing Professionalism*, and in a compressed form on other levels. Program standards are assessed using core assessments and the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations (MTLE) for content and pedagogy. In addition to the Level 4 *Teacher Credential* rubric, student teaching candidates are assessed with Teacher Performance Assessment and complete an exit survey. Once in the field surveys of Employers and Graduates assess their effectiveness and perceptions of their preparation (Exhibit 1.3.i and 1.3.j). (See Exhibit 2.3.a for transition point charts.)

While individual advanced programs have transition actions particular to their programs, they have common transition points, including admission to the Graduate Studies and program, admission to practicum and/or internships, completion of practicum or internship and program completion. Programs have developed core assessments with which to assess candidates at transition points in their plan of study. Some use graduate competency rubrics to assess artifacts and student actions documenting progress over time, while others use 360 assessments, portfolios, practicums, and internships to monitor candidate progress (see Exhibits 1.3.c, 1.3.e). All graduate programs have a research focused capstone experience. (See Exhibit 2.3.b for admissions data and 2.3.a for transition point charts.)

Faculty members in all three initial licensure programs examine the performance of all individual candidates each semester to determine whether they should move to the next transition point. In

Special Education where a cohort model is used, this review occurs automatically for all candidates in the cohort. In Secondary and Elementary programs candidates complete an application each semester to move to the next level or block.

Similarly, candidates in advanced programs are reviewed at specific transition points in their program. Faculty communicate with each other about candidates' progress each term as well as formally reviewing candidates' performance through the application to practicum or internship and completion of the practicum or internship.

In addition to the formal review process that occurs each term, the unit uses a process for faculty to communicate concerns about professional dispositions, academic and technical standards, or performance in field experiences that affect the ability of candidates to succeed. This web-based system is part of the Student Information Management System (SIMS). For details see [Professional Communications](#). Once a communication is initiated, the candidate is notified and meets with a coordinator for advising. While most communications are advisory, more serious issues result in an assistance plan or non-continuance in the program. A summary of professional communications is at [Reports](#).

The [variance procedure](#) provides an appeal process for candidates who do not meet requirements to move to a transition point or who have received a professional communication report. Members of the Professional Education Policy, Procedure, and Review Board review appeals and makes decisions. The variance process is available to initial and advanced candidates, although in practice most requests are initiated by initial licensure candidates.

The unit regularly examines reports of data for improvement of unit operations and programs. The following are developed: results of exit, Transition to Teaching, graduate completer and employer surveys; reports of field experience placements and corresponding state demographic school district data, licensure test pass rates, variance requests, professional concerns, Measures of Teacher Quality and Title II. Reports are posted on the web and/or shared with Leadership Council and faculty ([Reports](#)).

The unit uses multiple data sources and multiple evaluators at each transition point to ensure assessment procedures are free from bias. The unit has participated in studies to evaluate and improve the psychometric integrity of the several Tier One survey instruments used in the Common Metrics work as part of NExT. These include initial program assessments (Exit Survey, Transition to Teaching Survey, Employer Survey). A report on *Steps to Eliminate Bias, Establish Fairness, Accuracy and Consistency of Assessments* as well as reports on psychometric work is included in Exhibit 2.3.c.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation

The coordination of the assessment system and the major responsibilities of aggregating and summarizing data at the unit level have been performed by the Coordinator of Professional Education. Institutional Research also provides data on enrollment, ACT, GPA, and diversity. At the program and unit level, data are regularly gathered about scholarly activity; surveys of candidates at entry, exit and one year after graduation; surveys of cooperating teachers and PDS administrators. The Coordinator of Assessment and Research has had responsibility for organizing and distributing this information.

Assessment data are collected by individual faculty through coursework and supervision using electronic rubrics (Desire2Learn) or paper copy forms, depending on the context. The data is entered into SIMS and now will be entered into Pass-Port, our new data management system. Licensure test data is collected electronically through Pearson's Results Analyzer (password protected) and uploaded into SIMS. ETS delivered testing data on a CD for upload to the data system. Test pass rates are summarized twice a year and distributed to faculty.

Using the coding that the Registrar's office designates for off campus and online courses, the unit is able to disaggregate candidate assessment data stored in the Student Information Management

System (SIMS). Because SIMS is connected to the MnSCU Student Records System (ISRS), course coding is identified for all course-related assessment data.

Procedures, policies and practices for handling student complaints are handled in the Dean's office and individual departments as appropriate. The process follows university policy and can be seen at [Complaints](#).

For the past four years, the unit has collected and stored data in a web-based data system, SIMS. This system was designed by the University's Institutional Technology Department and is now being used primarily to collect and store data related to admissions, professional concerns, variance requests and student grievances. Departments also use databases like Access to manage candidates in their programs.

Use of Data for Program Improvement

Regular reports are provided for review in Leadership Council, department meetings, Secondary Education Coalition meetings and regularly scheduled unit assessment workdays. The NExT Curriculum Redesign committee collects and analyzes data related to candidate performance as well as unit operations to fulfill their charge of designing and implementing programmatic reforms essential to meeting milestones for NExT. Secondary Education Coalition sets its areas for focus each year based on candidate performance data. The COE Assessment Committee supports the data gathering process in departments as well as communicating the needs of their departments about unit operations like the need for a change in a data management system. Data from core assessments and unit surveys are also reviewed by the committee. Additionally, the Professional Education Advisory Council reviews data related to candidate performance, enrollment, and unit operations during its semi-annual meetings. (See Exhibit 6.3.a for minutes of all committees.) Finally, the entire unit is convened at least once a year to review and analyze data. Reports of data are disseminated and tasks are structured to encourage faculty to identify goals and related action plans for increasing desired outcomes (Exhibit 2.3.d for work day agendas and documents). An example of a unit-wide session occurred during spring semester of 2011. Faculty members received data on the demographics schools where candidates were placed for clinical and field experiences. Because schools may change significantly in their diversity compositions, faculty were asked to consider the implications for their candidates and design a plan to allow all candidates to have at least one field experience in a "highly diverse" setting (see Exhibit 4.3.i for PowerPoint and criteria).

Data related to satisfaction with our co-teaching model for student teaching is being used as part of an assessment profile to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach. This data is combined with evaluation outcomes assessed by faculty, mentor teacher and supervisors. Reports are shared with the PDS Governance Council and TOSAs to determine whether this is a method that warrants further expansion and resources. To date, all indicators suggest that this model is having a positive impact on candidates and the schools they serve. (See Exhibit 6.3.a for PDS Governance Council minutes.)

Faculty have access to individual candidate data related to licensure testing, grades, professional communications, variances and admission status through SIMS as well as Degree Audit Report System (DARS) through the Registrar's office. Candidate assessment data is shared with individuals during and/or after field experiences through one-on-one conferences with the faculty supervisor. The focus is on strengths and areas that need improvement as well as goal-setting.

Continuous Improvement

During fall 2012, the unit made a decision to move to an outside vendor for an assessment data management system. While SIMS performs functions related to advising effectively, its functionality was challenged by the volume of different kinds of assessment data used in the unit. The unit contracted with ILAT to use Pass-Port, which will allow for easier monitoring of individual candidate progress, field

experience placements, and full reporting functions for assessments. Faculty training sessions in the use of the new system were conducted in the spring of 2012. Outcomes from all available measures of candidate and program performance stored in Pass-Port will be reported to faculty and stakeholders in user-friendly form and used to inform program effectiveness throughout unit programs. This system will also be accessed on a regular basis by candidates to both input and review their educational data, assessments, scores and narrative feedback. Many features of the system will allow for fluid communication between candidates and program faculty on a regular basis. Faculty capacity to advise candidates will be enhanced by providing access to data that provides detailed, long-term tracking of progress on multiple indicators. (See Exhibit 2.3.d for Pass-Port manuals and project plan.)

Through NExT, the unit has also started to establish linkages with key organizations for purposes of data sharing. For example, the Value-Added Research Center has worked with the Minnesota Department of Education on behalf of the unit to establish a means of transferring information on program graduates' place of employment to the unit database. This data-sharing practice greatly enhances our capacity to conduct follow-up studies with graduates (Transition to Teaching and Employer Surveys) and their employers for purposes of program evaluation (see Exhibits 1.3.i; 1.3.j).

Because of new FERPA laws in December of 2011 in order to match candidate data to their performance in PDS districts we will need to develop new internal data analysis capacity to intersect with the external data. We will not be able to send raw candidate data to an outside entity, requiring internal processing of the candidate data.

The participation of the unit in NExT over the past three years has accelerated significantly the need to access, acquire and analyze data from multiple sources. As a result, faculty and administrators have spent considerable time and resources to identify and stabilize our data sources. Programs are collecting and using new sources of evidence to track the impact of the program changes they have made, particularly as they relate to efforts in the areas of recruiting, preparing, and supporting our candidates. Data-based, well-documented reports are becoming increasingly available to our internal and external stakeholders.

Plans

Due to the many changes mandated by state, foundation (Bush), and national entities as well as institutional changes, the unit is in the process of reconsidering assessment system alignment to expedite data collection and analysis for effective programmatic and unit changes. This calls for critical scrutiny of the data on candidates' performance to align infrastructures to support data-defined changes. In turn, this means that the unit will need a clearly defined implementation and execution plan that delineates times, roles and responsibilities.

With the many initiatives that are part of NExT, faculty conducting surveys and collecting other forms of data from faculty and students. While these projects are screened by the Institutional Review Board, there is a need for a unit clearing structure as well to maintain coherence of the assessment system. Faculty members in several departments are conducting surveys and collecting other forms of data related to the faculty and student use of and experiences with technology. These data will be analyzed for implications for changes.