

Policy Guidelines for South Carolina Educator Preparation Units



South Carolina
Department of Education
Meeting Challenges, Celebrating Achievements

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PREFACE

Intent of the Guidelines

The accreditation process allows the state of South Carolina to ensure that all institutions with educator preparation programs meet State Board of Education–approved performance-based standards. The process applies to all professional education units operating in South Carolina, and the shift to performance-based educator-preparation standards represents a major change in the way that educator preparation is conducted. Performance-based preparation programs will enable South Carolina to improve the state’s educator preparation programs and, ultimately, the level of student achievement in our schools.

The intent of this document is to provide guidance to South Carolina colleges and universities in meeting the requirements of State Board Regulation 43-90, titled “Program Approved Standards for South Carolina Educator Preparation Institutions”:

The South Carolina State Board of Education requires that all teacher education programs meet the performance-based standards as established by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). For State Board of Education approval, public institutions must seek and receive NCATE accreditation. Private institutions may seek NCATE accreditation or meet NCATE standards for State Board of Education approval. The State Department of Education will develop guidelines to assist teacher education programs to meet the NCATE performance-based standards. Statutory authority to determine accreditation decisions for and impose sanctions against teacher education programs is granted to the State Board of Education.

All educator preparation units should use the two NCATE documents *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education* (revised edition, 2002) and *Handbook for Accreditation Visits* (available online in PDF format at http://www.ncate.org/institutions/hbk_contents.asp?ch=15) as their primary guides for meeting the requirements of this State Board regulation. These NCATE documents set forth the policies, procedures, and standards for the accreditation of educator preparation units in South Carolina. The present document, *Policy Guidelines for South Carolina Educator Preparation Units*, outlines additional South Carolina requirements and clarifications. This document was approved by the State Board of Education on September 13, 2006. All requirements for educator preparation units become effective July 1, 2007.

Legal Requirements

As cited above, Regulation 43-90 gives the State Board of Education (SBE) statutory authority regarding the accreditation of educator preparation units in South Carolina. In addition to meeting the NCATE unit standards and the applicable program standards, educator preparation programs must adhere to all applicable South Carolina statutes and SBE regulations, policies, and guidelines including those related to the PADEPP (Program for Assisting, Developing, and

Evaluating Principal Performance) and the ADEPT (Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching) systems, the Education and Economic Development Act, and Title II, Section 207 of the 1998 Higher Education Act, as well as the educator preparation program requirements described in part 1 of this document.

While this document provides educator preparation units with up-to-date policy information, all individuals responsible for preparing future teachers must also be knowledgeable of the approved state and national standards, and accreditation teams will be expected to verify that educator preparation units are meeting all such standards. The applicable statutes, regulations, policies, and guidelines can be found on the Division of Educator Quality and Leadership's Web site at <http://www.scteacheers.org/Educate/index.cfm>.

I. EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Program Admission Requirements

All educator preparation programs at the initial and advanced levels must ensure that candidates meet minimum admission requirements.

Initial Educator Preparation Programs at the Undergraduate Level

In order to be admitted to initial educator preparation programs at the undergraduate level, the candidate must

- (a) demonstrate basic academic proficiency by passing the Praxis I (passing scores on the Praxis I exams are set by the State Department of Education) or by making the required score on the SAT or the ACT (required scores on the SAT or ACT are set by the General Assembly),
- (b) provide a statement of disclosure concerning all prior convictions including felonies and misdemeanors, and
- (c) successfully complete a minimum of 45 semester hours of college/university course work with a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.50 on a 4-point scale or, at the recommendation of the unit head, a cumulative GPA of 2.25 on a 4-point scale.

Initial Educator Preparation Programs at the Graduate Level

All initial educator preparation programs at the graduate level must have admission requirements equivalent to those of the other graduate programs operating at the particular institution. These requirements should ensure that graduate candidates have the potential to successfully complete the program for which they are enrolled. Additional admission requirements are that the candidate

- (a) demonstrate academic proficiency as defined by the institution and
- (b) provide a statement of disclosure concerning all prior convictions including felonies and misdemeanors.

Advanced Educator Preparation Programs

All educator preparation programs and other school personnel preparation programs at the advanced level must have admission requirements equivalent to those of other graduate programs offered at the particular institution. These requirements should ensure that graduate candidates have the potential to successfully complete the program in which they are enrolled. In addition, institutions must be require candidates to provide a statement of disclosure concerning all prior convictions including felonies and misdemeanors.

B. Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

All teacher preparation programs and other school personnel preparation programs must provide field experiences (also known as the *practicum*) that provide candidates with a variety of progressive experiences in multiple and diverse settings. All candidates must complete a *minimum* of 100 hours of field experiences prior to clinical practice (student teaching) at the initial undergraduate level. At the initial graduate level, all candidates must complete a *minimum* of 75 hours of field experiences prior to clinical practice.

Requirements for the clinical practice experience at the initial level must include the following:

- (A) The clinical practice experience must provide for the candidate's intensive and continuous involvement in a public school setting within South Carolina.
- (B) In the initial preparation program, the clinical practice teaching experience must be an equivalent of a minimum of twelve weeks or sixty full days; the candidate must teach independently a minimum of ten full days in one placement/setting.
- (C) During the sixty days, candidates must adhere to the daily schedule of the cooperating teachers (e.g., bus duty, faculty meetings, parent conferences, extracurricular activities, in-service activities, rehearsals). Assignments of candidates are not to include activities or duties for which a cooperating teacher receives an additional stipend.
- (D) Candidates in traditional sixty-day clinical practice experiences may receive monetary compensation for their work if their teacher education programs have been given permission by the Professional Review Committee (PRC).
- (E) Each candidate must be supervised by one or more institutional clinical faculty members who have preparation both in the supervision of education and in the teaching major. A single institutional faculty member may fulfill both roles if he or she is appropriately qualified. All institutional clinical faculty supervisors must be trained in the ADEPT system. Appropriate ADEPT training also is required for faculty affiliated with programs that prepare candidates as other professional school (i.e., "special area") personnel.
- (F) Each candidate must be supervised by one or more school-based clinical faculty. All school-based clinical faculty must be trained in the ADEPT system. Appropriate ADEPT training also is required for school-based clinical faculty who are affiliated with programs that prepare candidates as other professional school (i.e., "special area") personnel.
- (G) Candidates must receive formative evaluations and assistance from both their institutional clinical faculty supervisors and their school-based clinical faculty in terms of the ADEPT performance standards. The formative evaluations must

provide the candidate with written and oral feedback and assistance in terms of all ADEPT standards and evaluation processes, and must include a minimum of four classroom observations (i.e., at least two formative observations by the faculty supervisor and two formative observations by the cooperating teacher). Formative evaluations based on the appropriate ADEPT standards and evaluation guidelines also are required for candidates who are preparing to work as other professional school (i.e., “special area”) personnel.

- (H) Candidates must receive at least one summative evaluation in terms of the ADEPT performance standards. Both the institutional clinical faculty and the school-based clinical faculty must participate in the summative evaluation process. The summative evaluation process must be aligned with the ADEPT formal evaluation guidelines, must include all evaluation procedures (including a minimum of two classroom observations—i.e., at least one summative observation by the faculty supervisor and one summative observation by the cooperating teacher), and must ensure that the candidate receives written and oral feedback in terms of all ADEPT standards. Summative evaluations based on the appropriate ADEPT standards and evaluation guidelines also are required for candidates who are preparing to work as other professional school (i.e., “special area”) personnel.
- (I) Prior to the candidate’s clinical practice, appropriate background checks by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including fingerprint submissions to the State Department of Education (SDE), must be completed and cleared.

Requirements for clinical practice experiences for other school personnel must be consistent with the requirements of applicable specialized professional associations (SPAs) or the requirements of other accrediting bodies.

Teacher education units may develop experimental and innovative field experiences and clinical practice with the recommendation of the SDE and the PRC and the approval of the SBE. After experimental and innovative programs have been successful in meeting their stated goals for three years, they may be continued as an approved component of the teacher education program and will be reviewed as part of the state’s annual reporting and program review process. Institutions may duplicate the experimental and innovative programs of another institution with the approval of the SBE.

C. Standards of Conduct

All candidates must be provided specific written information regarding the standards of conduct (based on S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-25-160, 59-25-530, and 20-7-945) required of South Carolina educators for initial certification.

D. Eligibility for Initial Certification

Educator preparation units are responsible for recommending program completers for South Carolina certification. (The recommendation form is accessible online at <http://www.scteachers.org/cert/certpdf/recom.pdf>.) The recommendation from the unit indicates that the candidate has successfully completed all requirements of an approved program. Secondary candidates must complete a major of at least 30 semester hours in the area for which they are seeking certification. Middle-level candidates at the undergraduate level must complete two areas of concentration with at least 15 semester hours in each area. Middle-level certification is content specific, and completers of approved middle-level programs are certified in two content areas.

E. Monitoring and Accountability

In July 2004, the SBE adopted a seven-year accreditation cycle for institutions that have met the NCATE performance standards and are seeking continuing accreditation. Institutions that have never been reviewed or were reviewed prior to South Carolina's adoption of the NCATE standards are expected to host a visit based on a five-year schedule. Once a unit receives continuing accreditation, it moves to a seven-year cycle.

The following reports are the mechanisms used by the SDE's Division of Educator Quality and Leadership, the PRC, and the SBE to monitor the educator preparation unit for program accountability within an accrediting cycle.

Annual Reports

Submission of an annual report is a requirement for all educator preparation units that are accredited by the SBE. The SDE relies on annual reports to monitor the ability of units to continue to provide preparation programs of high quality. The annual report plays a critical role in the state accreditation process. It is important that units follow directions in preparing their reports, retain a copy of each report submitted, and ensure that information submitted in the report is accurate, current, and consistent with data contained in the annual report submitted for accreditation review. If an accredited educator preparation unit fails to submit an annual report, an off-cycle site visit may occur, or the unit's accreditation may be revoked.

The annual report has three components: the AACTE/NCATE report, the assessment system report, and the diversity plan report.

AACTE/NCATE Report

All educator preparation units are required to submit an AACTE/NCATE report electronically to the SDE by March 1 of each year. After the SDE has screened these reports, they are sent to the PRC, whose findings are submitted to the SBE.

The following four forms must be included in the annual AACTE/NCATE report. The SDE's Division of Educator Quality and Leadership e-mails copies of these forms to nonmember institutions each year when AACTE makes its forms available to member institutions:

Form A. The educator preparation unit must provide basic institutional and unit information, including the type of institution, the names of the chief executive officer and the unit head, and the levels of degrees offered. Most of this information is preprinted on Form A and needs only to be checked for accuracy.

Form B. The unit must provide data on enrollment; the number of graduates by program area; and information regarding student characteristics, the faculty, and the resources of the unit.

Form C. The unit must provide a narrative response *summarizing the unit accreditation changes* that have occurred. The unit must report the progress that has been made in addressing any unit standards that were not met from the last on-site review team visit; also areas for improvement identified by the SBE must be addressed as well. The official list of those areas for improvement that must be addressed will be attached to the report form and must be addressed as well. Form C also requests information about any external evaluation activities, such as focused accreditation visits, that may have been conducted and any plans for future changes in the unit.

Form D. The unit must provide a narrative response *summarizing other changes* that have occurred and evaluations that have been conducted over the past year. The unit must report the progress that has been made in addressing program standards not met and areas for improvement identified by the SBE. The official list of the areas for improvement that must be addressed will be attached to the report form.

The data on Forms A, B, C, and D will allow the SDE to monitor the quality of professional education programs on an annual basis. In the third year after an on-site review, the SDE will review the data for evidence that program approval remains justified. If the data suggest compelling reasons that state standards are no longer being met, a three-person team may be sent to the unit to collect appropriate data and prepare a report. Following that visit, the SDE in conjunction with the PRC will review the team's findings and make a recommendation to the SBE regarding continued program approval.

Assessment System Report

An annual assessment system report is to be submitted to the SDE by July 1 each year, along with any changes made to the assessment plan currently on file with the SDE. The report should contain detailed information about the unit assessment system and an explanation of the ways that assessments are being used to improve educator candidate learning outcomes and unit operations.

NCATE standards require that an educator preparation unit develop and implement an assessment system, which NCATE defines as “a comprehensive and integrated set of evaluation measures that provides information for use in monitoring candidate performance and managing and improving unit operations and programs for the preparation of professional educators” (*Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education*, p. 52). The guidelines for developing such a system are set forth both in NCATE’s *Handbook for Accreditation Visits* and in *Professional Standards*.

At a minimum, the following components must be a part of all unit assessment systems:

- (A) A comprehensive evaluation of the conceptual framework; unit standards; program standards; state teacher standards (i.e., ADEPT); and statutes, regulations, policies, and guidelines for initial and advanced educator preparation programs. Advanced educator preparation programs must also include a comprehensive evaluation system that addresses ADEPT, PADEPP, NBPTS (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards), or other appropriate professional standards. Preparation programs for other school personnel must have an assessment system that addresses state standards and state evaluations, NBPTS, or other appropriate professional standards.
- (B) Criteria for institutional decisions about candidate qualifications and performance at program admission, at appropriate transition points (including entry and exit points, field experiences, and clinical practice), and at program completion.
- (C) A procedure to use results from candidate assessments to evaluate and make improvements in the unit applicable to its programs and courses, its faculty’s delivery of course material, and the field experiences and clinical practice it offers.
- (D) A procedure to use results from assessments of unit operations (e.g., faculty evaluations, graduate surveys, employer surveys) to evaluate and make improvements in the unit.
- (E) Performance assessments that are used to determine candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as to recommend a candidate for state certification. All performance assessments are to have been tested for accuracy, consistency, and fairness.

Diversity Plan Report

An annual diversity plan report is to be submitted to the SDE by July 1 each year. The report must include any changes made to the diversity plan currently on file with the SDE as well as the outcomes from the plan’s implementation. In addition to faculty and candidate diversity, these outcomes should include improvements in candidates’ abilities to teach all students in diverse settings.

The diversity plan must include a curriculum that prepares candidates to work with students from diverse backgrounds and must address all of the following groups:

- (a) students in low-performing schools,
- (b) students who live in poverty,
- (c) students with disabilities,
- (d) students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds,
- (e) male and female students,
- (f) candidates from diverse backgrounds, and
- (g) faculty from diverse backgrounds.

Title II Annual Report

The United States Department of Education requires all educator preparation units to submit annual Title II data. The information is necessary for accurate data collection and analysis of current trends in educator preparation within South Carolina. The information is also helpful for on-site review teams in evaluating educator preparation programs.

Title II legislation also requires states to develop criteria for identifying institutions that are “low performing” or “at risk.” In South Carolina, the designation of an institution as “low performing” or as “at risk” of being judged “low performing” is based on a combination of four factors that are considered for a two-year period:

- (a) the accreditation status of the institution’s educator preparation unit,
- (b) ADEPT formal evaluation results (annual contract year),
- (c) Praxis II subject/specialty area exam results, and
- (d) Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam results.

The following standards apply for the “low performing” and “at risk” classifications:

- (a) accreditation status:
 - approval with conditions = “at risk”
 - probation = “low performing”
- (b) ADEPT formal evaluation results:
 - from 90 percent to less than 95 percent pass = “at risk”
 - less than 90 percent pass = “low performing”
- (c) Praxis II subject/specialty area exam results:
 - from 75 percent to less than 80 percent pass = “at risk”
 - less than 75 percent pass = “low performing”
- (d) Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching exam results:
 - from 75 percent to less than 80 percent pass = “at risk”
 - less than 75 percent pass = “low performing”

If an institution is “at risk” or “low performing” in any of these areas, as defined by the standards above, that institution will be designated as *overall “at risk.”*

If an institution is “at risk” or “low performing” in two or more of the areas, as defined by the standards above, the institution will be designated as *overall “low performing.”*

Institutions with fewer than ten program completers per year will be judged on the basis of a three-year composite profile of their program completers.

Any institution designated *overall “at risk”* or *overall “low performing”* will have an opportunity to present data the following year to demonstrate that it no longer meets the “at risk” or “low performing” criteria.

Further information regarding the Title II reporting requirements is available online at <http://www.title2.org/data.htm>.

REQUIRED REPORTS			
TYPE OF INSTITUTION	TYPE OF REPORT	DUE DATE	SUBMITTED TO
AACTE members	AACTE/NCATE	March 1 annually	AACTE and SDE
Non-AACTE members	AACTE/NCATE	March 1 annually	SDE
All institutions	Title II	April 7 annually	SDE
All institutions	Assessment plan	July 1 annually (if significant changes have been made to the assessment plan)	SDE
All institutions	Diversity plan	July 1 annually (if significant changes have been made to the diversity plan)	SDE

F. South Carolina Standards for Educator Preparation Programs

ADEPT Performance Standards

All initial educator preparation programs must develop and implement a process that integrates the ADEPT performance standards throughout candidates’ course work, field experiences, and clinical practice and that provides evidence that all candidates meet the ADEPT teacher competencies. This standard applies to candidates preparing to work as classroom-based teachers as well as to other professional school (i.e., “special area”) personnel. ADEPT performance standards and guidelines for classroom-based teachers and for special-area personnel are online at <http://www.sctechners.org/Adept/index.cfm>.

PreK–12 Academic Standards

All educator preparation candidates must know, understand, and demonstrate the use of national and state student academic achievement standards for all subject areas in which they will be certified to teach. Educator preparation units must provide assessment data to indicate that candidates know, understand, and can apply the appropriate South Carolina preK–12 academic standards. (Copies of all current South Carolina preK–12 academic standards are available on the SDE's Web site at <http://www.myscschools.com/offices/cso/>.)

Education and Economic Development Act

All educator preparation units must provide assessment evidence to indicate that all candidates enrolled in educator preparation, school guidance counseling, and education administration programs possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to integrate the following into the preK–12 curriculum:

- (a) career guidance,
- (b) the use of the cluster of study curriculum frameworks,
- (c) the use of individual graduation plans,
- (d) the instruction of students with diverse learning styles,
- (e) the elements of the Career Guidance Model (published in the 1999 SDE document *South Carolina Comprehensive Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program Model*, which is available in PDF format on the SDE Web site at http://www.myscschools.com/offices/ssys/youth_services/guidance//SCPM.pdf),
- (f) contextual teaching,
- (g) cooperative learning, and
- (h) character education.

Institutions must also prepare and assess all candidates in the use of applied methodologies in preK–12 academic courses.

Additional information on the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) and the career cluster objectives is available online at <http://ed.sc.gov/topics/careerandtech/>.

Commitment to Diversity

The SDE expects all graduates of South Carolina educator preparation institutions to possess a strong knowledge of cultural diversity issues that are centered in a global, multicultural perspective. South Carolina graduates must be able to teach all students regardless of exceptionalities, backgrounds, or socioeconomic status, in a variety of settings including rural locations and low-performing schools. The SDE is committed to producing a population of educators that are prepared to teach the diverse students being served in South Carolina. It is the expectation that all educator preparation units will recruit teacher candidates and faculty from culturally diverse backgrounds and will develop and administer curricula and experiences to achieve this standard.

Professional Development Courses

All institutions offering professional development courses must align those courses and related activities with the National Staff Development Council's standards for staff development, which were revised in 2003 and are published online at <http://www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm>.

All institutions must align their graduate degree programs for classroom teachers with the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which are published online at <http://www.nbpts.org/about/coreprops.cfm>.

All institutions must align their degree programs as well as their courses with standards developed by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) as a strategy for significantly enhancing the capacity of preservice as well as in-service teachers to incorporate technology into their teaching and their students' learning. The ISTE/NCATE standards for educational technology programs are available online at <http://cnets.iste.org/ncate/>.

National Board Certification

All institutions conducting advanced-level programs for classroom teachers must include the NBPTS core propositions in course work designed to deepen the candidate's understanding of high, rigorous teaching standards of practice and the behaviors of accomplished teachers. All graduates of advanced programs are expected to self-assess and reflect upon their practice through the lens of high standards related to their teaching experience. (Information about National Board certification is available online at <http://www.nbpts.org>.)

PADEPP Performance Standards

All education administration programs must include a process that integrates the state standards for principal performance as defined in the Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP). All education administration candidates must demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the standards and the performance criteria and the translation of these into everyday practice. Candidates must also demonstrate the ability to design a personal professional development plan on the basis of the state performance standards and the school strategic plan. (PADEPP standards and guidelines are published online at <http://www.myschools.com/offices/pd/ADEPP.htm>.)

South Carolina Safe School Climate Act

The Safe School Climate Act is designed to prevent harassment, intimidation, and bullying by mandating that before January 1, 2007, each of the state's schools districts adopt a policy prohibiting those behaviors (2006 S.C. Acts 59, to be codified at S.C. Code Ann. § 59-63-110 *et seq.*).

All educator preparation units must provide assessment evidence to indicate that candidates in all certification programs as well as graduate students in counseling and education administration programs possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to identify and prevent bullying, harassment, and intimidation in schools.

G. Experimental or Innovative Programs

The intent of the program approval process is to allow institutions to employ varied and innovative educator preparation techniques while being held accountable for producing skilled and knowledgeable teachers and other school personnel. Institutions seeking approval of innovative or experimental programs leading to certification must file written notification with the SDE's Office of Educator Preparation, Support, and Assessment (OEPSA) indicating the specific area of certification or experimentation for which approval is sought.

With a recommendation from the SDE and the PRC, the SBE may approve an experimental or innovative program for a maximum of three years. An on-site evaluation team may be appointed by the OEPSA to review the programs and report its findings to the PRC for recommendations to the SBE.

After experimental and innovative programs have been successful in meeting their stated goals for three years, they may be continued as an approved component of the educator preparation program and will be reviewed as part of the state's annual reporting and program review process and the on-site visit.

II. EDUCATOR PREPARATION UNIT ACTIONS

A. Overview

Every five or seven years, as applicable, an accredited educator preparation program must be reviewed. The two-part review process involves the institution's submitting a program report for each of the subject areas in which it offers a teacher-certification program as well as a review of the unit itself, which is the body with the responsibility for managing or coordinating all programs offered for the preparation of teachers and other school personnel. All accredited units must respond to the same set of performance-based standards: the NCATE standards and applicable preconditions, which have been adopted as the state of South Carolina's standards, and the South Carolina standards described in part 1, section F, above.

B. NCATE Preconditions

All new institutions are required to meet all preconditions prior to applying for accreditation. All currently accredited institutions must maintain the preconditions at all times. If an institution fails to meet a precondition, a site visit to the institution may be required. If an institution does not maintain an 80 percent pass rate on all tests required for certification, the institution may be placed on probation.

As set forth by NCATE (<http://www.ncate.org/institutions/preconditions.asp?ch=42#list>), the preconditions are the following:

Precondition #1. The institution recognizes and identifies a professional education unit that has responsibility and authority for the preparation of teachers and other professional education personnel.

Precondition #2. A dean, director, or chair is officially designated as head of the unit and is assigned the authority and responsibility for its overall administration and operation.

Precondition #3. Written policies and procedures guide the operations of the unit.

Precondition #4. The unit has a well developed conceptual framework that establishes the shared vision for a unit's efforts in preparing educators to work in P-12 schools and provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability.

Precondition #5. The unit regularly monitors and evaluates its operations, the quality of its offerings, the performance of candidates, and the effectiveness of its graduates.

Precondition #6. The unit has published criteria for admission to and exit from all initial teacher preparation and advanced programs and can provide summary reports of candidate performance at exit.

Precondition #7. The unit's programs are approved by the appropriate state agency or agencies, and, in states with educator licensing examinations and required pass rates, the unit's summary pass rate meets or exceeds the required state pass rate.

Precondition #8. If the institution is located in a non-partner state or in a partner state that requires the submission of program reports for national review through NCATE, the unit has committed [*sic*] to submitting program reports for each program for which NCATE has approved program standards one year prior to the visit.

Precondition #9. The institution is accredited, without probation or an equivalent status, by the appropriate institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

C. Unit Review Process

Review Team Members

The unit review process for all public institutions of higher education in South Carolina is carried out by a tripartite team composed of representatives from NCATE, the state of South Carolina, and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE). All NCATE- and state-appointed team members are preK–12 and university educators and other qualified educators who have received training in using the NCATE standards and the state standards to assess education units. Consultants selected by the CHE also serve as voting members of the team. In addition, the SDE and the CHE provide liaisons to assist in all aspects of the team visit.

The unit review process for all NCATE-accredited private colleges and universities in South Carolina is carried out by a trained team of NCATE- and state-appointed educators only. The process for those private institutions not seeking NCATE accreditation is carried out by a trained team of exclusively state-appointed members. The SDE provides liaisons to assist in all aspects of the team visit.

The expenses of state team members participating on an on-site accreditation review are reimbursed by the SDE. Subsistence expenses based on per-meal limits up to a maximum per diem will be reimbursed. Lodging expenses will be billed directly to the SDE, and mileage will be paid at the applicable state rate. Team members also should bring additional resources to cover tips, meals exceeding the per diem allowance, and other incidentals.

NCATE-Accredited Institutions

The current NCATE unit accreditation standards are published in the document *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education*.

Once an institution is granted NCATE accreditation, that institution is visited by a review team on a seven-year cycle. These educator preparation units must send copies of the institutional report (IR) to the team members at least sixty days prior to the actual on-site team visit. This report must outline how the unit is addressing the six standards and the conceptual framework outlined in NCATE's *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education*. The team visits the campus for approximately five days and collects evidence that the unit meets NCATE and state standards.

Prior to the team's leaving the campus, the team submits to the institution a written preliminary summary of the basic findings of its on-site visit, reporting the team's recommendations on whether the standards were met or were not met and specifying any areas that are in need of improvement. The team also conducts an exit conference with representatives from the institution to present a summary of these recommendations. Within thirty days following the visit, the review team prepares a detailed written report on the visit and forwards it to the institution, which is asked to clarify and/or correct any problems regarding factual information. Having received the institution's feedback, the team chair makes appropriate corrections and submits the finalized accreditation report to NCATE, the SDE, and the institution.

The institution has thirty days to develop a rejoinder, if it so chooses, in which it furnishes any information it feels the visiting team may have overlooked. In such case, the team report and the institution's rejoinder are reviewed by NCATE's Unit Accreditation Board (UAB), which makes a decision that may or may not be the same decision reached by the visiting team. The UAB's accreditation decision is then sent to the SDE, which informs the PRC of that decision. The PRC in turn makes a recommendation to the SBE regarding the decision. The SBE itself has the final authority to determine the accreditation status of an institution and to grant program approval.

State-Accredited Institutions

The same review process applies to state-accredited institutions, except that all review team members are state-appointed. The state team's report and the institution's rejoinder are submitted to the PRC, which makes a recommendation to the SBE.

D. Program Review Process

The accreditation process requires the submission of reports for the cyclical review of all existing programs as well as reports for new programs, existing programs that have undergone substantive changes, and recently approved programs that have graduates and corresponding data. Program reports are due in the OEPSA twice a year on two specific dates: February 1 and September 15. The SPA, the national accrediting agency, or the state review team determines if the SBE-approved performance-based standards are met, met with weakness, or not met.

PROGRAM REVIEWS			
PROGRAMS	TYPE OF INSTITUTION	REVIEWER	WHEN IMPLEMENTED
New programs	All institutions	State review team	Before program begins
Recently approved programs with graduates and data	Non-NCATE institutions	State review team	One semester after the graduation of the first ten program completers or after the next cyclical visit, whichever occurs first
Recently approved programs with graduates and data	NCATE institutions	SPA or national accrediting agency	One semester after the graduation of the first ten program completers or after the next cyclical visit, whichever occurs first
Programs with substantive changes	All institutions	State review team	Before changes are implemented
Existing programs	Non-NCATE	State review team	Six months to one year prior to the cyclical on-site accreditation visit
Existing programs	NCATE	SPA or national accrediting agency	Six months to one year prior to the cyclical on-site accreditation visit
Existing programs where no SPA or national accrediting agency exists or middle-level education program	NCATE	State review team	Six months to one year prior to the cyclical on-site accreditation visit

Institutions seeking NCATE accreditation must submit a program report to the appropriate SPA or national accrediting agency when a recently approved program has graduates and corresponding data and when an existing program requires a cyclical review. If the program has areas that need improvement, the institution may write a revised program report addressing the areas cited and explaining what has been done to

bring about improvement in each area. Once the accrediting agency sends formal feedback to an institution, the institution must forward a copy of all the feedback pertaining to the applicable program within fifteen days to the OEPSA.

New Programs

Any NCATE- and/or state-accredited educator preparation unit must request approval of new programs or program changes through the OEPSA prior to implementation. The unit must submit a proposal detailing how it plans to meet all applicable program standards for a new program or for program modifications. The unit must also provide evidence that it has the capacity to offer a new program or to make modifications. A new or revised program may not be implemented until it has been approved by the SBE. If a new program is denied approval, the institution may submit a revised application the subsequent semester, as many semesters as desired.

All institutions that are beginning new educator preparation programs must complete and submit the SDE program proposal form, which is available online in PDF format at <http://www.scteachers.org/educate/edpdf/PBS-Guidelines.pdf>. The proposal form calls for information related to program goals and capacity (e.g., personnel, facilities, equipment) necessary to conduct a program of high quality.

Since new programs will be evaluated on the basis of standards that are applicable to all educator preparation programs and are consistent with approved SBE policies, procedures, and regulations, the institution should address the performance-based standards for each program being considered. (The document containing all of South Carolina's current teacher education program standards is published online at <http://www.scteachers.org/educate/edpdf/revisedprogramstandards.pdf>.)

Each accreditation agency requires the institution to include evidence that plans are in place to meet that standard. For example, rubrics for course assignments or interviews need to be designed and submitted. Other evidence indicators that could be submitted include all relevant syllabi, portfolio components, and grading scales. Review teams must be provided with specific, convincing information that the unit has taken the proper steps to meet the standards.

Each application for a new program is reviewed by a three-member review team composed of peers who have expertise in the content area being reviewed and are trained in the review process. The review teams validate their findings by presenting them to another review team, who ensures that the findings are consistent and clear. As the final step in the process, the findings are presented to SDE staff members who will cross-check them for completeness and clarity. The recommendation of the review team is then submitted to the PRC.

Recently Approved Programs

Educator preparation units are required to submit program reports to the appropriate SPA (if the unit is NCATE accredited) or to the SDE the semester immediately following the graduation of their first ten completers in a recently approved program or at the time of the cyclical review, whichever comes first. Reports reviewed by state-review teams must be based on the SBE standards and must use the same forms and procedures as those required by the SPAs. Teams at on-site visits use the results of the program reviews as evidence of the quality of the individual programs offered by the unit (NCATE Standard 1).

Existing Programs

The accreditation process requires the submission of program reports for all existing educator preparation programs for which the SBE has approved standards. These reports must be submitted at least six months to one year prior to the on-site accreditation visit to either an NCATE-SPA team of reviewers or a state-only team. Program reviews may be submitted to a SPA only after the program has graduates and data are available. Reports reviewed by state review teams must be based on the SBE standards and must use the same forms and procedures as those required by the SPAs. Teams at on-site visits use the results of the program reviews as evidence of the quality of the individual programs offered by the unit (NCATE Standard 1).

Revised Program Report Process for New and Existing Programs

Educator preparation programs under review by an NCATE-approved SPA (discipline specific) or by the SDE's OEPSA must complete the process and obtain approval by the end of the semester two years after an institution's on-site accreditation visit. The failure of any program to obtain approval through the revised program report process within the given time period will result in termination of the program by the SBE. Once a program is terminated by the SBE, no new candidates can be admitted into it, and the existing candidates have one year to complete the program. If existing students do not complete the program within one year after the termination of the program, they must transfer to another program or they will be denied certification by the SDE's Office of Educator Certification.

Sanctions for Noncompliance for New and Substantially Changed Programs

All programs must earn the approval of either the SPA, the SDE, or another accrediting body. Existing programs not approved at the time of the on-site visit will be terminated at the end of the semester two years after the on-site visit, unless approval is granted prior to that time. When any educator preparation program is terminated, the institution must notify all current and potential candidates of the noncompliance status of its program no later than one year prior to the possible termination of that program. Candidates who are

formally admitted to the program during the semester the termination occurs will have two years to complete the program for certification purposes.

A unit failing to submit program reports for recently approved programs within one semester following the graduation of its first ten completers or its next cyclical visit (whichever occurs first) will have its future completers deemed ineligible for certification unless approval is granted prior to two years after the on-site visit. When any educator preparation program is terminated, the institution must notify all current and potential candidates of the noncompliance status of its program.

Programs under review by NCATE-approved SPAs, accrediting bodies, or the SDE must complete the process and obtain approval within two years following the end of the semester of the institution's on-site accreditation visit. The failure of any program to obtain approval through the revised program report process within the given time period will result in termination of the program by the SBE. In such a circumstance, the institution must notify all current and potential candidates of the noncompliance status of its program. All program-status decisions made by the SBE are final.

Any existing program with substantial changes that were made in the middle of the review cycle and that constitute a substantial shift in the purpose and outcome of the program or the certificate area will be subject to an off-cycle program review. Failure by an institution to request a program review will result in its candidates' being ineligible for certification.

Withdrawal of Programs

Notification from an educator preparation unit that a program is being withdrawn must be made in writing to the OEPSA. Such a notification is shared with the PRC and the SBE as information.

The notification from the institution should include the date when a program will officially cease to exist and thus when the SDE should no longer consider the unit's graduates for certification. After the effective date of program closure, the educator preparation unit may not recommend candidates from that program for certification. Institutions will be ineligible to submit a request for the reestablishment of a withdrawn program for a period of one year after the date of the original termination.

III. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ACTIONS

A. Professional Review Committee

The PRC is responsible for recommending to the SBE the accreditation status of educator preparation programs and units in South Carolina. The Committee recommends accreditation decisions at meetings held at least twice a year. (The dates for the PRC meetings are published on the Division of Educator Quality and Leadership's Web site at <http://www.scteachers.org/educate/calendar.cfm>.) In most cases, accreditation recommendations are rendered at the PRC meeting in the semester that follows the on-site team review.

The PRC consists of fourteen members appointed by the SBE upon the recommendation of the State Superintendent of Education. PRC members elect a chair and a vice chair annually. All members serve staggered terms of three years.

The following individuals are included among the appointed members of the PRC:

- one appointed representative of the Teacher Recruitment, Training, and Certification Committee of the SBE;
- two appointed representatives of the SDE;
- one district-level school administrator;
- one building-level school administrator;
- one classroom teacher;
- one National Board–certified teacher;
- three representatives of state-supported institutions of higher education;
- three representatives of private institutions of higher education; and
- one representative of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

The composition of the total committee includes specialists in elementary education, middle-level education, secondary education, and educational administration at both the public school and college levels. Members of the PRC should have the same training or experience in program and unit review procedures that is required for members of state teams.

The primary duty of the PRC, based on the report of the visiting state team and the rejoinder of the institution, is to ensure that appropriate standards are met and that identified areas for improvement are documented and addressed in recommendations to the SBE.

The PRC considers all information pertinent to an institution's initial application for accreditation, continuing accreditation, and/or program approval and prepares recommendations for the SBE.

At the PRC meeting, the chair of the SDE on-site team presents a report on the comprehensive and specific findings made during the on-site visit, including details of

areas identified for improvement. Each institution having units reviewed by the PRC presents at this meeting a report on the institution's response to the evaluation.

PRC members may ask questions during and after the preparation of reports for purposes of explanation or clarification. Minor changes that can be evaluated without a return visit are considered. SDE materials and supportive documents are made available for reference. After due consideration of all documents and information, the PRC makes written recommendations to the SBE, and a copy of this report is mailed to the institution. Recommendations are based upon the extent to which the educator preparation program under evaluation has complied with established standards.

The PRC also considers all information pertinent to institutions that are candidates for accreditation, to programs that are new or substantively changed, to state-reviewed programs that have been recently approved and have graduates and data, and to those programs for which the state is responsible for their cyclical review. The PRC makes its recommendations to the SBE.

To avoid conflict of interest, PRC members do not participate on state-accreditation review teams during the time of their service on the PRC and do not participate in the deliberations or vote on the Committee's recommendation for institutions where they are currently employed or from which they have recently graduated. PRC members do not serve as in-state accreditation consultants during their service on the Committee.

The SBE may replace any PRC member who misses two consecutive meetings.

B. Accreditation Decisions

Continuing-Accreditation Visits: Units Currently Accredited

Upon the recommendation of the PRC, the SBE renders separate accreditation decisions for the initial and advanced educator preparation programs in each currently accredited professional education unit. Those decisions will be one of the following:

- **Accreditation**

The decision of *accreditation* indicates that the unit meets each of the six standards for unit accreditation. Areas for improvement may be cited, indicating concerns warranting the institution's attention. In its subsequent annual reports, the unit may describe the progress it is making in addressing the areas for improvement cited in the NCATE or SDE program-accreditation letter in preparation for the next visit. The next on-site visit occurs seven years following the semester of the continuing-accreditation visit.

- **Accreditation with Conditions**

The *accreditation with conditions* decision indicates that the unit has not met one or more of the standards. When NCATE's UAB and/or the SBE renders this decision, the unit maintains its accredited status but must satisfy conditions by meeting the previously unmet standard(s) within an established time period. If accreditation with conditions is granted, the UAB or the SBE will require the submission of documentation that addresses the unmet standard(s) within six months of the accreditation decision or a focused visit on the unmet standard(s) within two years of the accreditation decision. (Beginning in fall 2006, the focused visit must occur within eighteen months of the semester of the accreditation decision.)

When the SBE renders a conditional accreditation decision, the SBE will have two options: it may choose to request documentation to address the unmet standards, or it may choose to send a team to conduct a focused visit. The institution may choose the focused visit in lieu of submitting documentation. If documentation is submitted under the terms specified in the above paragraph, the SBE may continue accreditation or require a focused visit within one year of the semester in which the documentation is reviewed by the UAB and/or the SBE. After a focused visit, the SBE will either continue accreditation or revoke accreditation. If accreditation is continued, the next on-site visit will occur seven years following the semester in which the continuing-accreditation visit occurred (not the focused visit). This scheduling maintains the unit's original accreditation cycle.

- **Accreditation with Probation**

The *accreditation with probation* decision indicates that the unit does not meet one or more of the unit standards and has pervasive problems limiting its capacity to offer quality programs that adequately prepare candidates. If accreditation with probation is granted, the unit must schedule an on-site visit within two years of the semester in which the probationary decision was rendered. (Beginning in fall 2006, the focused visit must occur within eighteen months of the semester of the accreditation decision.) The unit must address all standards in effect at the time of the probationary review.

A unit placed on probation by the SBE is approved for a period of time not to exceed two years following the SBE action and is subject to reevaluation of all unit standards by a visiting team appointed by the OEPSA. Programs will be limited to one such approval during an accreditation period.

During the time of probation, the unit will be ineligible to admit new candidates for purposes of certification. Students who have not been admitted to the educator preparation unit may not take courses or fulfill other program requirements that lead to program completion. Following the on-site review, the SBE will either continue accreditation or revoke accreditation. If accreditation is continued, the next on-site visit will occur seven years following the semester in which the continuing-accreditation visit occurred (not the probationary visit). This scheduling maintains the unit's original accreditation cycle.

- **Revocation of Accreditation**

A unit's failure to strengthen areas identified for improvement within the specified period or to meet annual assessment criteria for continuation or approval will result in accreditation revocation.

The *revocation of accreditation* decision indicates that the unit does not meet one or more of the unit standards and has pervasive problems limiting its capacity to offer quality programs that adequately prepare candidates. This decision also indicates that the identified areas for improvement are of sufficient importance and consequence to impair the ability and competence of prospective teachers and that the program lacks the effectiveness to meet the established standards for professional education.

Revocation of accreditation will have been preceded by an on-site visit that was conducted as a result of a UAB and/or SBE decision to accredit with probation or to accredit with conditions. Revocation will be recommended for a period of not less than one year, beginning the semester following the revocation decision by the SBE, during which time completion of program requirements is not valid for meeting certification requirements, and the program is not eligible to admit new candidates. Program requirements completed prior to the date of revocation are valid for meeting certification requirements. At the end of the probation period, institutions may apply for initial accreditation if all preconditions are met.

First Visits: Units Not Yet Accredited

Any baccalaureate or graduate degree-granting institution wishing to establish an educator preparation unit and offer programs for the preparation of classroom teachers and/or other school personnel in South Carolina must be reviewed on the basis of the performance-based standards adopted by the state.

To establish its eligibility for the first accreditation review, an institution must submit *all* of the following (public institutions must submit to both the SDE and the CHE):

- (a) a letter seeking to establish a professional education unit two years prior to the establishment of the program,
- (b) documentation that all preconditions have been met,
- (c) program reviews (by February 1 or September 15—i.e., approximately two semesters before the on-site visit), and
- (d) applicable components of the AACTE/NCATE annual reports.

All preconditions must be met, and the accreditation candidacy of institutions seeking state accreditation must be approved by the PRC; the candidacy of institutions seeking NCATE accreditation must be approved by NCATE's UAB and subsequently the PRC. Public institutions must be accredited by NCATE within five years of their implementing a new educator preparation unit. The Commission on Higher Education may impose additional requirements for public institutions seeking accreditation for new educator preparation units.

The SBE will render one of the following decisions for a unit undergoing its first accreditation visit:

- **Accreditation**

The decision of *accreditation* indicates that the unit meets each of the NCATE standards for unit accreditation. In the NCATE or SDE program-approval letter, areas for improvement may be identified as problems that warrant the institution's attention. In subsequent annual reports, the unit must describe its progress in addressing the areas for improvement in preparation for its next on-site visit, which will occur five years following the semester of the accreditation visit.

- **Provisional Accreditation**

The *provisional* accreditation decision indicates that the unit has not met one or more of the standards. When the SBE renders this decision, the unit has accredited status but must meet the unmet standard(s) within a time period established by the SBE or by NCATE's UAB. If provisional accreditation is granted, the SBE will require either the submission of documentation that addresses the unmet standard(s) within six months of the accreditation decision or a focused visit on the unmet standard(s) within two years of the semester of the accreditation decision. (Beginning in fall 2006, the focused visit must occur within eighteen months of the semester of the accreditation decision.) When the SBE renders a provisional accreditation decision, the SBE will have two options: it may choose to request documentation to address the unmet standards, or it may choose to send a team to conduct the focused visit. The institution may choose the focused visit in lieu of submitting documentation.

If documentation is submitted under the terms specified in the above paragraph, the SBE may grant accreditation or require a focused visit within one year of the semester in which the documentation was reviewed by the SBE. After a focused visit, the SBE will either grant accreditation or revoke accreditation. If accreditation is granted, the next on-site visit is scheduled for five years following the semester in which the first accreditation visit occurred. This scheduling establishes and maintains the unit's accreditation cycle.

- **Denial of Accreditation**

The *denial of accreditation* decision indicates that the unit does not meet one or more of the unit standards and has pervasive problems limiting its capacity to offer quality programs that adequately prepare candidates. An educator preparation program denied accreditation by the SBE must wait a period of one year to reapply for accreditation. NCATE's accreditation policies and procedures are published on the Internet at http://www.ncate.org/accred/initial/initial_decisions.htm.

- **Revocation of Accreditation.**

The *revocation of accreditation* decision indicates that even after a focused visit that has occurred as a result of a provisional accreditation decision, the unit has still not sufficiently addressed the unmet standard(s). This decision indicates that identified areas for improvement are of sufficient importance and consequence to impair the ability and competence of prospective teachers and that the effectiveness of the program is unacceptable for meeting established standards for professional education. Revocation will be recommended for a period of not less than one year, beginning the semester following the action by the SBE, during which time program requirements are not valid for program completion, and the program is not eligible to admit new candidates. Program requirements completed prior to the date of revocation are valid for program completion.

C. Unfavorable Accreditation Decisions: Appeals

If the PRC makes an accreditation recommendation that is unfavorable to the unit, the institution may address the recommendation at the SBE meeting at the time that the recommendation is being considered.

An *adverse accreditation decision* is either *denial* of accreditation or *revocation* of accreditation. NCATE-accredited institutions that receive an adverse accreditation decision may appeal that decision. The NCATE appeal procedures are published online at http://www.ncate.org/accred/initial/initial_decisions.htm. State-accredited institutions that receive an adverse accreditation decision may appeal that decision as well. Appeals of these accreditation three additional decisions are limited to *written* appeal, however.

Appeals Policies and Procedures for State-Accredited Institutions

Private institutions may appeal an adverse accreditation decision and decisions for accreditation with provisions, accreditation with conditions, and accreditation with probation on one of the following grounds:

- (a) NCATE-state performance standards were disregarded by the review team;
- (b) stated procedures were not followed by the review team;
- (c) evidence favorable to the institution was provided to the review team but was not considered by the team, or
- (d) evidence favorable to the institution and provided to the PRC as a part of the rejoinder was not considered by the PRC.

Although a private institution may appeal an adverse accreditation decision and decisions for accreditation with provisions, accreditation with conditions, and accreditation with probation if the review team lacked the full number of its members due to last-minute emergencies, that factor alone is not sufficient to uphold an appeal. The institution must convincingly demonstrate that this circumstance itself made a difference in the

accreditation decision. In other words, the institution must show two things: that actual prejudice was done to it by the absence of certain team members and that such prejudice itself changed the accreditation decision. The fact that the institution itself did not recommend canceling the visit would be evidence that it believed—before the visit, at least—the assembled team would be sufficient to conduct a fair and complete visit.

An appeal is heard by a review panel consisting of the chair of the SBE’s PRC (or a designee if the chair has a conflict or is otherwise unable to participate), the chair of the Teacher Recruitment, Training, and Certification Committee of the SBE (or a designee if the chair is also a member of the PRC or is otherwise unable to participate), and the chair of the review team (or a designee if the chair is unable to participate). The findings of this review panel are communicated to the institution in a written report that explains the basis of the panel’s recommendations of the panel. This written report is also submitted to the Division of Educator Quality and Leadership to be presented to the SBE at its next scheduled meeting.

In the case of accreditation decisions overturned or modified on appeal by the SBE, subsequent action will be based on the grounds for appeal and can include such actions as assigning another accreditation review team to revisit an institution or reviewing the case again and rendering a second accreditation decision, which may be the same as or different from the original decision. The status of the appellant at the time of the visit remains unchanged until the appeals process has been exhausted.

The following provisions govern the appellate process for state-accredited colleges and universities in South Carolina:

- (A) Within thirty days of receiving notice of an appealable decision, the institution, electing to appeal that decision, must present written notification of its intention to appeal to the SDE’s Division of Educator Quality and Leadership, along with a brief that sets forth the specifics of its appeal and includes full documentation.
- (B) No later than thirty days after submission of the appellant’s brief, a review panel is convened to hear and act on the appeal. Prior to the hearing itself, the panel members are trained by SDE staff in the process and procedures for hearing an appeal, including the decisions that must be made by the review panel.
- (C) If the subject of the appeal is the decision to deny or revoke accreditation, the appellant will have the right to appear before the review panel to present an oral argument on its brief. The oral argument must not exceed thirty minutes in length. The appellant shall also have the right to representation by counsel during the appeal, but it may not call witnesses or introduce new evidence on its own behalf.
- (D) If the subject of the appeal is the decision to grant provisional, conditional, or probationary accreditation, the appellant’s right to appeal is limited to the submission of *written* documentation.
- (E) In the case of an accreditation decision review, all evidence presented in the appellant’s brief and considered by the review panel must be confined to conditions existing at the time of the review team’s on-site visit.

Following its deliberations, the review panel prepares a written report that conveys the basis of its findings and recommendations. Within two days after making its decision, the panel submits its report to the institution. The panel also submits its report to the Division of Educator Quality and Leadership for presentation to the SBE at the next scheduled meeting. If the appeal is denied by the SBE, the accreditation decision becomes final. If the accreditation decision is overturned or modified by the SBE, the institution will be so notified.

GLOSSARY

Definitions of terms in this glossary are in many instances taken verbatim from the glossary of NCATE's 2002 publication *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education*. In other instances, NCATE's definitions are used as the basis for definitions that apply specifically to South Carolina policies and practices.

Terms in **boldface type** in the text of the definitions have glossary entries of their own.

accreditation. A process for assessing and enhancing academic and educational quality through peer review. **SBE** accreditation informs the public that an institution has a professional education **unit** that meets state, professional, and institutional standards.

accreditation with conditions. A decision rendered by the **SBE** following a five- or seven-year continuing-accreditation visit indicating that the **unit** is granted continuing accreditation but that it has significant weaknesses related to one or more standards. For the conditions to be removed, a focused accreditation visit must take place within two years after the conditional accreditation decision is rendered.

accreditation with probation. A decision rendered by the **SBE** following a five- or seven-year continuing-accreditation visit indicating that the **unit** is granted continuing accreditation but that it has significant weaknesses overall that place the unit's accreditation in jeopardy if they are left uncorrected. An accreditation visit that follows the protocol for an initial visit must take place within two years of the semester in which the probationary decision is rendered.

advanced educator preparation. Programs at postbaccalaureate levels for the continuing education of teachers who have previously completed initial preparation or for the preparation of other professional school personnel. Advanced preparation programs commonly award graduate credit and include master's, specialist, and doctoral degree programs as well as nondegree certification programs offered at the graduate level.

annual report. The report that is required of all **SBE**-approved institutions as a condition of **accreditation**. A compilation of these reports serves as primary documentation for teams as they prepare for on-site accreditation visits.

area(s) for improvement. A statement written in the review team's report indicating that a **unit** has not met expected levels of achievement in one or more elements of a standard. The team members may cite an area for improvement and still make the recommendation that the standard is met. Units must report on progress made toward correcting area(s) for improvement in their annual reports to the **SDE**.

assessment system. A comprehensive and integrated set of evaluation measures that provides information for use in monitoring candidate performance and managing and improving **unit** operations and programs for the preparation of professional educators.

candidates. Individuals admitted to, or enrolled in, programs for the initial or advanced preparation of teachers, teachers continuing their professional development, or other professional school personnel. Candidates are distinguished from students in preK–12 schools.

clinical faculty. School and higher education faculty responsible for instruction, supervision, and assessment of candidates during field experience and clinical practice.

clinical practice. Student teaching or internships that provide candidates with an intensive and extensive culminating activity. Candidates are immersed in the learning community and are provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing. p. 53 See **student teaching**.

conceptual framework. An underlying structure in a professional education **unit** that gives conceptual meanings through an articulated rationale to the unit’s operation and provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, faculty scholarship and service, and unit accountability.

continuing accreditation. The accreditation decision rendered by the **SBE** following a successful accreditation visit five years after an institution’s professional education **unit** has been accredited. Accreditation continues for as long as the unit continues to satisfy **SBE** standards and requirements.

cultural diversity. The context of one’s life experience as shaped by membership in groups based on ethnicity, race, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, geographical background, and **exceptionalities**.

denial of accreditation. The accreditation decision that a **unit** does not meet one or more of the **NCATE** standards and has pervasive problems limiting its capacity to offer programs that adequately prepare candidates.

dispositions. The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence an educator’s behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and that affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice—for example, the belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or the commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment.

diversity. Differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, geographical background, and **exceptionalities**.

exceptionalities. Physical, mental, or emotional conditions, including gifted and talented abilities that require individualized instruction and/or other educational support or services.

experimental or innovative programs. Special programs approved by the **SBE** that involve a waiver of current policies and procedures for educator preparation programs.

focus visit. An on-site visit to a unit that has been requested by the Unit Accreditation Board or the SBE and is conducted in response to an unmet standard or standards.

initial educator preparation programs. Programs at baccalaureate and postbaccalaureate levels that prepare candidates for the first license to teach.

multicultural perspective. An understanding of the social, political, economic, academic, and historical constructs of ethnicity, race, language, religion, socioeconomic status, gender, geographical background, and **exceptionalities**.

national accrediting agency. An organization recognized by the United States Department of Education and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as having the authority to accredit programs in a specified field related to education. Such an agency must have, in NCATE's words, "an established set of standards that identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions in a specific field that candidates must meet in order to complete a professional education program"
(http://www.ncate.org/boe/policies_page.asp?ch=38&hbkch=4&hpkpg=56).

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). An organization of teachers and other educators that has developed standards as well as a system for assessing the performance of experienced teachers seeking national certification.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). An organization made up of **policy makers**, teachers, teacher organizations, and representatives of specialty organizations who are dedicated to improving educator preparation through the application of a common set of standards.

NCATE unit standards. A common set of performance-based standards developed by NCATE that makes use of assessment information to describe the proficiencies of candidates or the actions of professional education units. These standards—which are used by teacher preparation institutions to make program improvements and satisfy state accountability requirements—are published in the 2002 NCATE document *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education*.

policy makers. Representatives of public and governmental agencies with public education responsibility at the national, state, or local level.

Professional Review Committee (PRC). The SBE-appointed committee that is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the reports of the **accreditation** review teams as well as the **rejoinders** submitted by the institutions and recommending to the SBE the appropriate accreditation decision for educator preparation units and appropriate approval decision for educator preparation programs in accredited institutions.

program. A planned sequence of courses and experiences for preparing preK–12 teachers and other professional school personnel.

program approval process. The procedure that the **SDE** applies in reviewing a professional education program to determine if it meets the state’s standards for the preparation of education professionals.

provisional accreditation. An accreditation decision rendered by the **SBE** following an initial visit indicating that the **unit** is provisionally accredited and has significant weaknesses related to one or more standards. A focused accreditation visit must take place to remove the provisional status within two years of the time the decision was rendered.

rejoinder. The written response that a **unit** is required to submit following receipt of the **accreditation** team’s report. The rejoinder may take the form of a letter that acknowledges receipt of the report or a document that substantively responds to the report or the conducting of the team visit.

revised program report. The written response that a **program** is required to submit following receipt of the **specialized professional association** or the **accrediting body’s** report. The revised program report may take the form of a letter that acknowledges receipt of the report or a document that substantively responds to the report or the accrediting bodies’ on-site review.

revocation of accreditation, continuing visit. Following a comprehensive on-site visit that occurs as a result of an **SBE** decision to accredit with probation or to accredit with conditions, this accreditation decision indicates that the **unit** does not meet one or more of the **NCATE** standards and has pervasive problems that limit its capacity to offer programs that adequately prepare candidates.

revocation of accreditation, first visit. Following a focused visit that occurs as a result of a provisional accreditation decision, this accreditation decision indicates that the **unit** has not sufficiently addressed the unmet standard(s).

specialized professional associations (SPAs). Those national organizations that represent teachers, professional education faculty, and other school personnel who teach a specific subject matter (e.g., mathematics, social studies), teach students at a specific departmental level (i.e., early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary), teach students with specific needs (e.g., bilingual education, special education), administer schools (e.g., principals, superintendents), or provide services to students (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists). Many of these associations are constituent members of **NCATE** and have standards for both students in schools and candidates preparing to work in schools.

State Board of Education (SBE). The state governing body that has the authority for the certification of teachers and other school personnel, certification renewal/revocation, and educator preparation program approval within South Carolina.

State Department of Education (SDE). The state agency responsible for implementing and overseeing the program approval process for educator preparation institutions.

student teaching. Preservice **clinical practice** for candidates who are preparing to teach in the public school system.

team report. The report prepared by the team that conducts the on-site **accreditation** review of a **unit**. The report describes how the unit meets the **NCATE unit standards** and cites any weaknesses in relation to the standards.

Title II data. Annual data on educator preparation institutions mandated by the federal government and the **SBE**.

unit. The institution, college, school, department, or other administrative body with the responsibility for managing or coordinating all programs offered for the initial and continuing preparation of teachers and other school personnel, regardless of where these programs are administratively housed. Also known as *professional education unit*, *educator preparation unit*, and *education unit*.

unit head. The individual officially designated to provide leadership for the unit (e.g., dean, director, chair), with the authority and responsibility for its overall administration and operation.