

UC Davis School of Education Response to National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) 2013 Ranking of the UC Davis School of Education's Teacher Education Program

August 12, 2013

Based upon your ratings of the UC Davis elementary and secondary Teacher Education Programs and accompanying scoring comments, we submit corrections, responses and questions in two areas:

1. Factual errors regarding the UC Davis Program.
2. Some Standards apparently used by NCTQ in its Teacher Education Program Review (2013) appear to have been changed/ revised by NCTQ – without notice to the teacher education programs - from the 2011 Standards and Indicators originally announced by NCTQ, and used by us when we submitted our materials. Therefore, it appears that our teacher education program was responding to the 2011 set of standards while NCTQ later altered the set with which it evaluated us.

These two areas are addressed more fully below.

Factual Errors in Assigned Ratings

Standard: Lesson Planning - This NCTQ comment was included in the Lesson Planning scoring as a deficiency in the UC Davis Program:

“However, the institution does not require that candidates demonstrate that they can meet the challenges of instructional design in identifying technology applications that will boost instruction.”

This statement is factually incorrect. We submitted to NCTQ a course syllabus for Edu 180: Computers in Education. One of the assignments for that course is as follows:

Your work during winter quarter will focus on developing the skills to complete these projects: During this segment you will work on the skills needed to complete the PACT Teaching Event, presentation of your Edu 206 projects, and develop an instructional project that showcases your use of technology in the classroom. . . **The technology project is a lesson enhanced or enabled by the use of some form of technology** (emphasis added).

Standard: Common Core High School Content - The NCTQ rating commentary for this element was that candidates have sufficient content knowledge in 3 of 4 Programs, English, mathematics, science but not for social science.

This is factually incorrect. The State of California uses the same methodology for the development of its discipline-based required tests for teacher education candidates

(CSET tests). These required tests assess the range of content areas that a credential authorizes its holder to teach. The Social Science licensing test is developed using the same framework as the English, mathematics and science CSET tests that were rated as acceptable. In the methodology section of the 2013 NCTQ Report, included is this example of a licensure test that meets this standard for content preparation:

*The state requires a single-subject licensing test with a rigorous cut-score for each **single-subject** certification with a matching teaching assignment. (p. 11)*

This statement from the 2013 NCTQ Report describes the CSET examination for all secondary disciplines including social sciences. Therefore the rationale for the NCTQ rating is unclear and not supported by examples included in the report.

Standard: Common Core Elementary Content - The NCTQ indicator for this Standard states that “graduate programs should make sure that their elementary candidates know the subjects they will teach, either by reviewing their transcripts or by requiring that they pass rigorous assessments.” UC Davis was rated as not meeting the elementary content standard because “ its review of applicants requires no preparation in Literature and Composition, History and Geography, Science”.

This statement is factually incorrect. California requires passing a rigorous subject matter assessment prior to entering student teaching. This assessment (CSET) includes, among other content areas, reading, language, and literature; history and social science; science and mathematics.

Standard: Student Teaching - A rating of 2 stars was assigned with the following justification: “it only partly meets this standard because it does not *clearly* communicate to school districts the desired characteristics of cooperating teachers.”

This Scoring Comment is factually incorrect. Submitted with the UC Davis materials was a document entitled “UC Davis Procedures for Developing/Securing Student Teacher Placements” which is given to superintendents, principals, and teachers. This document includes the information below about qualifications needed in order for a teacher to be considered to host/serve as a cooperating teacher for a UC Davis student teacher:

California Credentialing Standard 8 directs teacher preparation programs to include in the student teaching placement process those K-12 host teachers who “have knowledge of the academic content standards for students, and are oriented/experienced in the *supervisory* role.”

California Credentialing Standard 15 includes guidelines for the minimum qualifications for classroom teachers in whose classroom student teachers are placed. These qualifications include, but are not limited to, a minimum of the appropriate credential (including EL authorization) and three or more years of teaching experience in California. In addition, UC Davis’ School of Education guidelines for student teacher placement includes a history of effective practice as evidenced by the principal’s recommendation, the University supervisor’s input as well as previous successful experience working with student teachers.

NCTQ's rationale for judging these selection criteria as not "clear" escapes us since the requirements quoted above very clearly state the qualifications that need to be met to serve as a cooperating teacher.

Standard: Secondary Methods - The scoring comment stated: "Based on an evaluation of the certification pathway in Secondary English, the program only partly meets the standard. This evaluation indicates that while teacher candidates in core curriculum certification pathways must take a subject-specific methods course in their area of certification, there is no evidence that candidates must practice and master instructional strategies."

This scoring comment is factually incorrect. We described in our submissions that coursework and student teaching occur simultaneously, that candidates are in fact delivering whole class instruction based on instructional strategies presented in secondary methods courses including assessment, receive formative feedback every two weeks by university personnel and daily by the cooperating teacher, and summative feedback by both the university supervisor and cooperating teacher at the end of each academic quarter. Please read our documents thoroughly.

Standard: Struggling Readers - UC Davis' rating on this standard was zero stars. The scoring comment was: "The program fails to meet the standard because there is no required reading course that delivers instructional strategies necessary for teaching struggling readers and requires candidates to practice such strategies."

This scoring comment is factually incorrect. The materials submitted clearly demonstrate that support for struggling readers is addressed in the UC Davis Teacher Education Program and in the student teaching expectations. Throughout the syllabi for EDU 300, the elementary reading methods course syllabi, as each key area of reading is examined, there is continuous attention to the difficulties some children encounter and the scaffolds necessary to support students who struggle in meeting them. One example: the capstone assignment in the course involves an in-depth assessment of a student who has not yet reached grade level benchmarks. Candidates in the course administer assessments (in the student teaching placement) in word recognition, oral reading fluency, and comprehension to diagnose the needs of a striving student upon which they develop a research-based course of action to ameliorate the needs identified.

In our EDU 206B, our students identify a small group of learners who are not meeting grade level expectations in reading/literacy. The designation is based on classroom assessments, which are used to identify the focus of study. Students search the research literature to identify strategies for ameliorating the challenges these students face. Through ongoing assessment and analysis, students develop an in-depth understanding of the skills students lack in order to develop instructional plans that meet their needs. Students enact each plan, assess, and analyze prior to moving to the next strategy in

response to the assessment data findings.

Standard: Classroom Management. The scoring comment was: “The program fails to meet the standard because feedback provided to student teachers only addresses their ability to establish a positive learning environment and standards of behavior; it does not address how well they manage both minimally disruptive behavior and significant student misbehavior.”

For this Standard, the 2011 NCTQ list of indicators of meeting it are below:

Evaluation instruments typically used by the student teaching supervisor include these characteristics:

- 1.1 They address the student teacher’s ability to establish a positive learning environment and standard of classroom behavior.*
- 1.2 They address the student teacher’s appropriate use of low profile desists for managing minimally disruptive behavior.*
- 1.3 They address the student teacher’s appropriate use of disciplinary action to handle significant student misbehavior*
- 1.4 They require comments by supervisor to support each rating*
- 1.5 They allow a cooperating teacher to document his/her evaluation of the candidate’s classroom management techniques by using the same or similar instrument as the student teaching supervisor*

Of these five indicators two relate to opportunities for supervisors and cooperating teachers to comment on/document the candidate’s classroom management practices. Evaluation instruments were submitted by UC Davis that clearly indicates that such feedback is required. Of the remaining three indicators, one relates to positive learning environment and two to disruptive student behavior. The evaluation instrument submitted clearly includes candidate assessment on establishing a positive learning environment and standard of classroom behavior.

Even though the NCTQ comment for this standard indicates that there was evidence submitted that meets more than 50% of the indicators above, the “0” rating assigned indicates that none of the indicators were present in the materials reviewed. We challenge that rating.

Furthermore, it goes without saying that NCTQ (or any other group) cannot adequately judge every aspect of a Program’s practice from course syllabi and forms. The Program does indeed address issues of disruptive and significant student misbehavior.

Standard: English Language Learners: UC Davis’ rating on this standard was zero stars. The scoring comment was as follows:

The program fails to meet the standard because there is no required course that delivers instructional strategies addressing the specific early reading needs of English

language learners and requires candidates to practice such strategies.

This scoring comment is factually incorrect. UC Davis submitted multiple pieces of evidence that our Program meets Standard 9. One (of many) instructive example is the course: EDU 151 (Language Learners in K-12 Schools) in which the entire class is focused on this content. In addition, the required lesson plan template submitted includes these required areas: English Language Development Standards; scaffolds for English Learners; and academic language demands of the lesson. The Student Teaching Evaluation form includes rubric 7 (Teaching English Learners and applying appropriate instructional practice).

Revision of Standards Without Notification

In December 2011 NCTQ sent a request to UC Davis to submit Teacher Education Program written materials for your review of our Teacher Education Programs. Published on your website at the time of this request were the Standards (with indicators of each standard added later) that you stated you would use for the ratings. We used the 2011 Standards to identify the appropriate materials to submit.

We were dismayed to discover that a number of the standards and/or indicators used to rate our program for the June 2013 review included language **that was somewhat or significantly different from the 2011 NCTQ published Standards.** At no time were we informed that the Standards and/or Indicators had changed and that new materials were required. Several examples follow:

1) Standard: Selection Criteria

Standard	2011 wording	2013 wording
1) Selection Criteria: Indicator	Indicator “: . . utilizes for admission consideration both a GPA of 3.0 or above and scores on one of the standardized tests of academic proficiency used commonly in higher education for graduate admissions.”	“Require GPA of 3.0 or higher and requires that candidates pass a rigorous audition or provide a score on one of the standardized tests of proficiency commonly used in higher education for graduate admission, either of which would provide assurance that candidates have the requisite academic talent.” (emphasis added)

Adding the element of “rigorous audition” to the selection standards for the 2013 publication of your ratings changes the standard or indicator for meeting it.

Page 38 of your 2013 report points to this example of a rigorous admissions audition as part of the admissions process:

*Well-known alternative providers such as **Teach For America** and **TNTP** attract talented and diverse candidates by evaluating candidates with a variety of screens, including auditions. In contrast, auditions are used very little in the thousands of programs that were evaluated. In fact, no graduate program evaluated requires an audition.*

The Teach for America website provides this guidance about their application audition with this statement:

“Plan and practice your five-minute sample-teaching lesson”.
<http://teachforamerica.elearningserver.com/p/9673033609/DocumentViewRouter.ashx?Cust=96730&DocumentID=4535d20f-fc46-445f-9bda-3ae7ef84eb4a&Popped=True&&InitialPage=player.html>

UC Davis does not agree that a five-minute pre-planned lesson is a “rigorous audition”. In addition, your report presented no sound evidence of the relationship between a “5 minute preplanned sample teaching lesson” and success in a teacher education program or as a novice teacher. It may be that abbreviated teacher education programs, such as Teach for America, that place candidates in classrooms as the teacher of record after a handful of weeks of preparation need this kind of selection tool. The UC Davis Program uses a model in which candidates are mentored by experienced teachers and expert Teacher Educators in courses and field experiences during an entire academic year. A five -minute pre-planned lesson would tell us nothing more than we gain from the face-to-face interview that, at UC Davis in fact, does include asking applicants to teach or explain how he/she would teach a concept. The interview is described on the UC Davis website and in the materials presented and certainly meets your Standard for selection. Please re-read our materials carefully and thoroughly.

2) Common Core Secondary Content

Standard	2011 wording	2013 wording
1) High School Content	Standard 8: “High School Content: The Program ensures that high school candidates know their subject.”	Standard 8: “High School Content. The Program ensures that teacher candidates have the content preparation necessary to successfully teach the Common Core State Standards. ” (emphasis added)

In your 2013 Report you failed to acknowledge that this Standard changed from the 2011 original listing. In addition you failed to acknowledge that Teacher Education

Program materials were submitted to NCTQ in late 2011 or early 2012, which was prior to any implementation of Common Core Standards, at least in California classrooms. In fact, standardized testing in California is still based on the 1997 Standards and will not change for two more years. In this transition period, the schools that hire our graduates expect us to prepare our candidates not only for the current curricular content, but also for the Common Core Standards that only now are slowly phasing into the school curricula. Ignoring in your review and ratings the context of significant changes in State Standards for schools and the programs that prepare new teachers indicates a crucial lack of knowledge about (or regard for) the realities of teacher preparation in California.