Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the performance of candidates, the unit, and its programs.

2.1 Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

How does the unit use its assessment system to improve candidate performance, program quality and unit operations? [10,000 characters]

The Assessment System and Unit Evaluation Team (ASET) is a group of university faculty, student support staff and institutional research personnel, and P-12 administrators from the professional community. A subcommittee of the Council on Teacher Education (COTE), ASET regularly evaluates the capacity and effectiveness of the assessment system as it analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and program and unit operations to evaluate and improve the performance of candidates, programs, and the professional education unit (PEU).

Co-chaired by the assessment coordinator and a PEU faculty member, ASET meets according to a review-cycle calendar (Ex 2.4.d.1) of six meetings each year to review systematically all facets of the assessment system and to analyze data to make recommendations to COTE. ASET regularly examines the validity and utility of the data produced through assessments completed at the candidate, program, and unit levels.

Decisions about candidate performance are based on a variety of assessments collected at multiple transition points, made clear through the initial (Ex 2.4.a.2) and advanced (Ex 2.4.a.3) Assessment Flowcharts by Transition Points. These charts provide overviews of the data collected from the time candidates are admitted to the university through two years after they graduate. Multiple assessments inform decisions about the following:

- admission to the prof. ed. program;
- progress toward completion of coursework (content and pedagogical knowledge), development of professional behaviors (including using assessment and technology to improve student learning) and dispositions, and embracement of diversity in field experiences;
- readiness for student teaching and graduation; and
- changes needed at the program and unit levels to ensure assessments match the needs of graduates one and two years after graduation.

Data are collected from high schools, candidates, external tests/reviewers, university faculty, and P-12 faculty and administrators who we serve and with whom we collaborate.

To ensure openness and fairness, university policies allow candidates to lodge formal complaints, including grade appeals (Ex 2.4.e.1). The PEU also has policies for candidates seeking probationary entrance to the professional education program (Ex. 2.4.e.2) and for faculty concerns about candidates (Ex 2.4.c.2).

The Assessment Life-Cycle Charts (Ex 2.4.d.2) summarize both the assessment collection and review schedule and the assessment uses for program improvement. Lists of data-driven and
data-informed improvements (Ex 2.4.g.1) provide highlights of changes initiated by PEU teams, program coordinators and other faculty after reviewing data, talking with the P-12 community, and/or staying abreast of changes in external requirements.

Successful candidates complete each transition point (Ex 2.4.a.2 and 2.4.a.3). Retention data provided by the Northwest Career Services office shows that 93% of our initial program graduates and 100% of our advanced program completers from the 2011-2012 academic years are teaching or seeking further education (Ex 2.4.b.4 and 2.4.b.10).

Tk20 is the data management system of the PEU (not the entire university) providing a variety of functions. The artifact section serves as a digital storage area for students to keep drafts of any assignment. Candidates complete applications for student teaching, and candidates, supervisors, and faculty complete many surveys. Tk20 allows assignments to be sent online, uploaded by students and rated by faculty based on state and national standards. Candidates, faculty, and advisors also complete observation forms assessing dispositions. The portfolio feature allows instructors to bundle assignments and give them a single score. Tk20 creates reports on candidates, programs and PEU. To evaluate regularly its capacity and effectiveness, each semester a Tk20 survey is sent to faculty members, university supervisors, clinical faculty and student teachers. The assessment coordinator and ASET review this information to determine how Tk20 may be modified to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

Tk20 allows us to use a variety of assessment instruments to assess performance at multiple levels.

**Improve Candidate-level performance:**
Improving candidate-level performance involves both the changes faculty make to address candidate performance and the opportunities candidates take to self-assess, ask for and receive help, and make modifications for their own improvement.

The following are ways we monitor/support candidate performance via Tk20:

- Each candidate’s development is tracked using multiple assignments, scored via consistent rubrics anchored by the state and national standards. When rubrics are updated to new standards or requirements, the change is consistent throughout the program;
- Dispositions observation (Ex. 2.4.c.3) forms provide a means of tracking each candidate’s development of professional dispositions and related behaviors, providing feedback to guide this development, and when necessary, to guide the candidate out of professional education;
- During student teaching candidates receive guidance and feedback from various levels. Each university supervisor, cooperating teacher, and (if secondary ed.) content supervisor completes the following assessments—the Educational Candidate Disposition Inventory that measures candidate professionalism, a formative assessment, and a summative assessment—which candidates may view any time to inform their behavior;
- Artifact sections allow candidates to save/backup their work in progress, request and get feedback to improve their work, and review copies of submitted assignments;
- Surveys (Ex 2.4.a.9, 2.4.a.10, 2.4.a.11 and 2.4.a.12) require candidates to reflect upon their experiences and provide feedback to help improve programs. All student teachers
must complete surveys on how well they think their content methods courses prepared
them for teaching, and how helpful the cooperating teachers, university supervisors,
content supervisors and Tk20 were during student teaching.

In summary, the assessment system improves candidate performance by facilitating
communication between candidates and instructors. Tk20 also provides a means for data to be
placed into a report form and shared with appropriate audiences to assist in any decision making
process regarding any candidate. PEU members then act upon this information to improve
candidate performance.

**Improve Program-level Quality:**
Each program coordinator has chosen to store and score on Tk20 1 to 3 program-specific key
assessment(s) which are linked to state standards in each program, so faculty may assess each
candidate’s progress towards those standards.

The following are additional unit-level assessments that are also aggregated by program to
inform program-level improvement decisions.

- There are unit-level key assessments—five for undergraduate and seven for advanced
  programs—which allow programs to be ranked among each other so that well-performing
  programs may advise those that are not. Using the same rubrics across all sections of the
  same course, and using cross-discipline scoring of student work, with the TWS for
  example, enhances the reliability of these measures.
- Program coordinators view disposition assessment results to inform program changes and
to determine which candidates in their programs need more guidance.
- Student teachers provide survey feedback on how well they feel their content methods
course prepared them for student teaching and how helpful their content supervisor was
during that experience.

The results from the above are combined in a program report given to each prog. cord.
annually. ASET reviews the aforementioned results and the assessment instruments’ quality
to establish fairness, accuracy and consistency in order to ensure quality.

**Improve Professional Education Unit-Level Operations:**
All of the unit-level assessments in the initial (Ex 2.4.a.2) and advanced (Ex 2.4.a.3) Assessment
Flowcharts by Transition Points, collected each trimester, are aggregated according to state
standards. ASET analyzes the results to determine how well the unit is developing candidates
who are able to teach, administer, or counsel at the expected levels required by the state of
Missouri. The assessment coordinator shares these results with faculty during professional
development days each trimester and when needed, advises COTE, which may vote to make
changes at the program and/or unit levels.

The university earned renewal of AQUIP accreditation (Ex 2.4.c.4) by the Higher Learning
Commission (HLC), a commission of the North Central Association. That review process
included a review of the assessment systems on campus, including the PEU assessment system.

The assessment system of the Northwest Missouri State University PEU is comprehensive,
using multiple measures that reflect the PEU’s conceptual framework and state and professional
standards; **consistent**, using **standards-based rubrics** and a **regular review-cycle** (Ex 2.4.d.1) to analyze data and the validity and utility of assessment instruments, working to avoid bias; and **useful**, providing relevant information on which candidate-, program-, and unit-level decisions are made. The professional community is an indispensable part of the assessment system through their representation on ASET and their feedback via Tk20 during practicum and student teaching. Also, program completers provide feedback on how prepared they feel during their first and second years of teaching using the Beginning Teachers Assessment by Principal survey.