

Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

3.2.b Continuous Improvement [10,000 characters]

- Summarize activities and changes based on data that have led to continuous improvement of candidate performance and program quality.
- Discuss plans for sustaining and enhancing performance through continuous improvement as articulated in this standard.

Unit-wide improvements

In fall 2012, the PEU began using Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the responsibilities of all parties participating in field experiences (ex. 3.4.a.6 MOU form) including the PEU, school districts, and students. (ex. 3.4.a: Example MOUs). In the fall of 2011, the conceptual framework was revised around the theme “*Learning to Teach – Teaching to Learn*” to illustrate our expectations for candidate performance and help initiate dialogue about the dispositions and skills we seek to develop between the parties involved in applicable MOUs. The frameworks operationalize the proficiencies and provide a common language through which teacher candidates, faculty, cooperating teachers, students and other stakeholders can effectively communicate. Operationalizing the proficiencies also helps candidates understand the developing nature of these expectations (Overview see I.5.c.8 NW Conceptual Framework).

In summer 2011, the Tk20 data management system was purchased and a subcommittee of the Council on Teacher Education (COTE), the Assessment System and unit Evaluation Team (ASET), was formed as to analyze data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and program and unit operations in order to evaluate performance (ex. 3.4.f.5 Graduate and 3.4.f.15 Undergraduate Assessment Flowchart by Transition Point). ASET holds at total of six meetings each year to systematically review and analyze data to address concerns from the assessment coordinator and make recommendations to COTE (ex. 3.4.f.2 ASET Review Cycle Calendar). The Educational Candidate Disposition Inventory (adapted with permission from Niagara University), is used to collect reflection and disposition information which is reviewed for programmatic implications (ex. 3.4.f.3 Educational and ex. 3.4.f.7 Mini Ed. Candidate Disposition Inventory). Assessments are completed by cooperating teachers, students and university supervisors at both the undergraduate and graduate levels during student field experiences.

The Tk20 system supports online data gathering and scoring, and the use of video for assessment. These tools are currently employed in courses including: Health Methods in Secondary School (22-480) (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a.20 Program Narrative Health Education); Reading (62-456) and Language Arts (62-407) practicums; and Content (62-420) practicum courses (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a.19 Program Narrative Elementary Education). Additionally, both graduate reading practicum courses require videoed assessment of candidates tutoring individuals and one video of the candidate teaching a whole class or small group.

The Teacher Work Sample (TWS) has been revised for use with the new assessment/tracking tool, and now demonstrates better student planning and reflection abilities. The TWS was adapted from The Renaissance Group and Idaho State University in 2003, was revised in 2008,

and updated to its current form again in 2012. The elements are aligned to the conceptual framework, “*Learning to Teach – Teaching to Learn*” and up-to-date uses of technology are interspersed throughout the elements; students are also now required to think and express themselves reflectively during each element (ex. 3.4.f.13 TWS Guidelines).

Field experience

Northwest relies upon the qualifications delineated by DESE for clinical and university faculty that supervise teacher candidates (ex. 3.4.c.4 DESE Criteria for Clinical Faculty). In addition, expectations for cooperating teachers are discussed in the Student Teaching Handbook (ex. 3.4.e.13 Student Teaching Handbook).

Practicum 1 (early level field experience) for middle and secondary candidates and Observation and Activity for elementary candidates serve as the introductory field experience; candidates are expected to be actively involved in classroom activities. To meet the new DESE recommendations of a total of 75 hours of field experiences prior to students teaching, contact hours in Practicum I and II will be increasing to 30 and 45 hours respectively beginning fall, 2013. (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a.20 and 1.4.a.22 Program Narratives Health and PE Education).

A pilot program has been established with the North Nodaway district for fall, 2013, during which they will host one section of secondary Practicum 1. A North Nodaway faculty member will teach the seminar and facilitate activities as an adjunct instructor. The goal of this integrated approach is to increase the number of hours candidates interact with students in classroom settings and to embed instruction in authentic settings.

Mid-level field experiences for the Elementary Education program may consist of Reading/Language Arts (60 contact hours), Content (60 contact hours), and/or Early Childhood (70 contact hours), or Special Education (30 contact hours) (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a.19 Program Narrative Elementary Education). Middle School candidates complete two practicum experiences, the first of which is 61-362 for 30 hours and the second is 62-511 for 90 hours. (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a.21 Program Narrative Middle School). Health and Physical Education candidates have field experiences totaling 35 hours during three courses. (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a.20 and 1.4.1.22 Program Narrative Health and PE Education). As part of the secondary reinvention, a “week out” experience was added for Secondary and K-12 candidates. Currently, candidates complete 35 hours, but will be logging 45 hours beginning fall, 2013 during their “week out.”

Student Teaching

Students submit four choices for student teaching experiences and notes concerning their placements are kept by the assistant to the Director of Field Experiences. Within the student teaching semester, 2 professional development days are held on campus (ex. 3.4.b.11 and 3.4.b.12 Undergrad Cand. Placements).

Currently, most candidates in elementary education, cross categorical special education, early childhood, middle school and secondary education serve two 8-week placements in their selected areas of certification. Beginning in fall 2014, all candidates will meet the DESE expectation of a 12-week minimum student teacher placement in their primary certification area, while the remaining 4–6 weeks may be served in another area of certification. The Student Teacher

Handbook will be revised to support these changes and Northwest will continue to expand communication opportunities with cooperating school districts.

A co-teaching model was initiated by the PEU in fall 2012, in collaboration with the Park Hill, Independence, and Platte City partner districts. Training to effectively employ co-teaching strategies was offered to clinical and university faculty as well as individually to school partner districts (ex. 3.4.e.1 Co-Teaching Handbook). Northwest expects to expand this model to include other districts in the future.

The Graduate Internship in Secondary Teaching (GIST) is a Northwest option designed for candidates who already possess college degrees in a certifiable field but currently lack necessary certifications to become secondary teachers (ex. 3.4.e.7 Graduate Internship in Secondary Teaching overview). This option is restricted to students who are candidates for the M.S.Ed. Teaching degree, and who meet the same state and institutional requirements for secondary teacher certification as undergraduate students—although they are able to substitute graduate-level courses for undergraduate courses wherever possible. GIST candidates averaged 31 early level field experiences hours, and one semester (16 weeks) of student teaching during the 2012-2013 academic year. If GIST students enroll in the graduate level 61-690 internship, they can complete a half-day for a full semester or a full day for 10 weeks.

Advanced Programs

Since the M.S. Ed., Reading degree can lead to K-12 certification as a reading specialist, another practicum has been added to meet DESE requirements. Candidates now tutor 30 hours during each practicum for grades K-6 (Practicum I) and 7-12 (Practicum II) (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a Program Narratives).

The M.S. Ed., Teaching English Language Learners Program has been developed since the last accreditation visit and, based on feedback from DESE and staff in districts in the Kansas City area, has strengthened field experiences for candidates. A “Letter of Understanding” is sent to all candidates participating in the ELL field experience for them to disseminate to their potential field placement sites (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a.7 Program Narrative ELL/Certification Program).

For the M.S. Ed. in Guidance and Counseling, two assignments were added to 68-629 Practicum in Elementary Counseling, and 68-630 Practicum in Secondary Counseling. Based on new MoSPE standards and collaboration/advisement with the Missouri Counselor Educator Advisory Board and the Missouri School Counselor Association, these courses include the collection of results-based evaluation assignments that assess a specific student intervention, and the implementation of an Internal Improvement Review project aimed at highlighting the level of Comprehensive Guidance Program Implementation within the district of placement (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a.1 Program Narrative Guidance and Counseling).

Professors in the M.S.Ed. and Ed.S. programs in Educational Leadership made the decision to embed 15 hours of field experience in each course taught based on recommendations made in current research. This increase in practicum hours also meets the increased DESE field experience requirement of 300 hours (Standard 1 ex. 1.4.a Advanced Program Narratives).