Standard 2. 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.

1. How does the unit use its assessment system to improve the performance of candidates and the unit and its programs? [maximum of three pages]

The Unit’s assessment system, GEARS (Gaining, Evaluating, Assessing, and Reporting System) continually monitors the candidate’s KNOWLEDGE, ACTION, and LEADERSHIP performance, program effectiveness, and unit success. The system was built on three questions. 1) Do candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary in becoming effective educators? 2) Are programs producing quality candidates? 3) Does the Unit assure quality programs? Three electronic tools are used to collect and manage data: Tk20 (School of Education programs, physical education, educational leadership), TeacherReady® Data Center (alternative initial certification program), and an Excel database (EdD program).

The Unit has a systematic process where candidates, faculty, administrators, and stakeholders evaluate progress to manage and improve operations and programs. Each semester candidates and program advisors monitor individual progress using the SASS Degree Audit, transition points, and program requirements. Candidate data is aggregated for each program and examined by department chairs/directors, faculty, and Program Review Committees (PRC). The PRCs submit recommendations to the chair/directors who present the program information to the Professional Educational Council (PEC) (i.e., internal and external stakeholders). The Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) meets monthly to review data and recommendations made by stakeholders and to offer a final analysis to the Dean. At each level, the recommending body makes one of three suggestions: 1) No problems identified, continue to monitor; 2) More data needed, develop a plan to gather more data; or 3) A problem is identified, develop an action plan.

Each PEU program has a Transition Point document used to monitor candidate progress and program effectiveness. Transition points identify multiple junctures where key assessments measure candidate proficiencies to determine progress in the program and identify the need for support/remediation.

Candidate KNOWLEDGE proficiencies are measured using Key Assessments (see transition point documents). Key Assessments include GPA’s, external exams, disposition assessments, course-based/field experience assignments, and post-graduation follow-up surveys. A main component of the Key Assessments is the course-based/field experience [ACTION] Key Assignments which were developed by aligning Unit Outcomes (Conceptual Framework and dispositions), institutional domains (Student Learning Outcomes), state competencies (Uniform Core Curriculum), and professional standards to assignments that demonstrate a candidate’s knowledge, skill, and/or disposition [LEADERSHIP].

The PEU is committed to using fair, accurate, and consistent assessment procedures. A key component of this is a coordinated system of communication within programs, across the unit, and with candidates. Assessment procedures are regularly discussed in program-level meetings and the CIT. The CIT serves as the common link between programs within the Unit. Additionally, Unit and program rules for candidate admission, retention, and completion
are published and shared with candidates via website, advising, orientations, and interactions with faculty.

To address fairness, accuracy, consistency, and bias within course-based/field experience Key Assignments, the Unit adopted a Lead Instructor model. The Lead Instructor guides the instructional process and develops the Key Assignment and a standard rubric, both of which undergo validity reviews by PRCs. The Lead Instructor also serves as a mentor to other faculty who teach the assigned course (including adjuncts) by explaining the components of the Key Assignment and the use of the standard rubric. Adjunct instructors attend semester meetings in which the Key Assignment system and Lead Instructor program are explained. Supervising teachers and Faculty Associates are trained in assessment procedures using Elluminate sessions. Data are collected on candidate performance across different sections and instructors of the same course. Reports are provided to program chairs/directors allowing for analysis of consistency and fairness within Key Assignments across multiple sections and instructors.

Assessment data are collected for candidate performance, program quality, and Unit operations as specified in the transition point and GEARS documentation. Multiple assessments from both internal and external sources are used to make informed decisions about the candidates, programs, and unit. At the candidate level, data collected from admissions through the first year of practice are analyzed each semester by the program advisors. Individual candidate performance on course-based/field experience Key Assignments are analyzed by program advisors according to schedules outlined in the transition point documents. At the program level, aggregated candidate data are analyzed per semester and additional program level data (e.g., aggregated means on course evaluations, aggregated student support data, enrollment trends, etc.) are analyzed by the program chairs/directors who then share these summaries with faculty, stakeholders, and the PEU head. Furthermore, variables such as alternate route and distance learning programs are examined to ensure quality instruction is provided to all candidates. Data from these studies are regularly reviewed and reported publicly for improving candidate performance, program quality, and unit operations.

The PEU employs a proactive system of identifying potential problems and resolving issues as quickly as possible. The Unit's student support and remediation initiatives, such as Response-to-Intervention (RtI), continually monitor students, faculty, and data to ensure that candidates maintain adequate progress. Formal candidate complaints are addressed through the UWF COPS Grievance Process in compliance with the UWF Student Grievance policy. Within the past year, one grievance submission required the multi-step process. The Unit remains proactive and student-friendly.

GEARS calls for a review of program data as outlined on the transition charts to identify trends, evaluate the effectiveness of courses/field experiences, and determine program and Unit operational strengths and areas of needed improvement. Decisions are made using multiple data points and a thorough analysis of the findings as indicated on the PEU Data Flow Procedures. For example, the CIT was charged with conducting a review of the PEU assessment system to identify areas of strength and needed improvements. Through this review, the team discovered that communication procedures needed to be improved. It was recommended that PRCs be formed for all programs. PRCs began meeting regularly during the 2010/2011 academic year. PRCs meet to review program level data and make recommendations for program changes to chairs/directors who forward this information to faculty groups and stakeholders according to the PEU Data Flow Procedures.
Another example addressed a need to improve the process and technology for data collection and management for course-based/field experience Key Assignments in initial and advanced teacher preparation/certification programs. The previous assessment system, SLO Database System, tracked student progress on course SLO’s. However, course SLO’s were not consistently linked to Program SLO’s and data were manually entered. As a result, the former system was not being used consistently and did not provide adequate data reports for making program/unit improvements. Faculty participated in a series of retreats to revise the assessment system to improve linkages between Key Assignments and standards. A standardized rubric format was developed and piloted by faculty in the School of Education (SoE). Revisions were made based on feedback and a finalized format was implemented.

A third example was the development of the RtI process by the SoE. The RtI process is used to identify trends based on candidate and program data. Candidate-specific data are used to document deficiencies in knowledge, skills, and dispositions in order to provide support and create successful pathways for candidates. Aggregated program data are reviewed each semester by the RtI Committee and shared with the Director of the SoE and PRC. These data can be used to identify trends that may indicate a need for program revision.

While data are used routinely to evaluate candidates KNOWLEDGE, ACTION, and LEADERSHIP performance, program effectiveness, and unit operations, candidates and faculty also use data to evaluate their performance. Candidates use the University’s SASS Audit and the progress bar in Tk20 to review progress made in courses and their respective programs. Faculty use course data in Tk20 and eLearning, student satisfaction evaluations, and annual evaluations to examine his or her progress. Faculty Advancement Plans are used to chart goals for teaching, scholarship, and service requirements.

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Standard 2 Continuous Improvement

1. Standard on which the unit is moving to the Target Level [maximum of five pages]
   a. Describe work undertaken to move to the Target Level

   Changes in leadership and organizational structures contributed to the challenges faced by PEU members concerning the Unit’s assessment system. As demonstrated in the Unit Assessment Timeline, after an unsuccessful attempt using the Piechura-Couture Assessment Model, the Unit developed its own SLO Database System. This homegrown system required faculty to enter data each semester after grades were posted. In addition to leadership changes and faculty resistance, the timing of data entries was problematic. Faculty members were busy closing out the semester and often forgot to post data to the SLO Database System.

   During the 2007 – 2008 Academic Year, it became apparent that the SLO Database System was ineffective. While some data were collected, there was no formal review system by which to make programmatic decisions. An Assessment System Redesign Plan was developed by a representative group of PEU faculty and program administrators. The plan was simple: develop a review process and identify a method of collecting data. The team requested feedback concerning the plan from PEU administrators, PEU faculty members, UWF administrators, P-12 stakeholders,
candidates, and other non-school members of the professional community. An investigation into plausible assessment options began. The results of the investigation concluded with most PEU programs selecting Tk20 Comprehensive Assessment System as their means of collecting and managing data. The exceptions were the TeacherReady® and EdD programs. Faculty in the TeacherReady® program developed TeacherReady® Data Center and the EdD program selected an Excel database. Missing from the plan was a cohesive review process.

Program administrators began exploring their data collection systems during the 2008-2009 academic year. Workshops were held to learn the systems (Tk20, TeacherReady® Data Center, and EdD Excel Database), identify standards, develop Key Assignments, develop rubrics, analyze rubrics, and review the data. Standards and indicators were aligned to Key Assignments [KNOWLEDGE and ACTION]. By 2009-2010, the Unit had more data than expected and a weak comprehensive review system. There were many assessment components but no assessment system. The Unit was data rich, information poor, and experienced several more leadership changes. In Spring 2010, the Unit requested a one-year deferral for the NCATE onsite visit. It was approved. A similar deferral request was made for FLDOE. It was denied.

The FLDOE Program Review was held Fall 2010. Preliminary findings concerning the assessment system came as no surprise as new leadership had identified problems with the rubric design and assessment of student teachers. Corrective actions were underway before the FLDOE review.

The FLDOE Program Review Team’s preliminary findings: “The overall issue for assessment is that there needs to be a clearer picture of how candidates’ progress is monitored (e.g., who reviews transition point data, etc.) and how assessment data provide assured acquisition and mastery of all Florida Educator Accomplished Practices/Professional Education Competencies (FEAP/PEC). Each program has identified student learning outcome (SLO) based key assessments and has developed detailed rubrics for each of those assessments. Many of the key assessment activities are robust and cover a number of different FEAPs/PECs as well as other core competencies (e.g., Florida Subject Area Competencies, Reading Endorsement Competencies, and ESOL Performance Standards). The Unit has also established a policy that candidates must achieve a minimum passing grade of 70% on all of these key assessments as a means of demonstrating acceptable progress and eventual mastery of these standards. However, the standards/competencies and associated indicators evaluated in each of these key assessments are assigned/correlated at the rubric level, not at the criterion level. This creates the potential for candidates to satisfy the 70% passing criteria on a key assessment without actually demonstrating mastery of all individual standards and their associated indicators embedded within that key assessment.”

After the review, the FLDOE team reported: “… Similarly, continued refinement of the assessment system used to track candidates’ acquisition of FEAP/PEC associated knowledge and skills is being continually improved with the expanded use of Tk20 and ongoing faculty review and refinement of rubrics for key assessments. The team acknowledges that unit corrective actions are already underway, but there is not yet sufficient evidence for the team to conclude that these actions have fully
resolved the two areas of concern cited above” (FLDOE Site Visit Team Report, March 2011, p.22).

b. Discuss plans for continuing to improve

Under the new leadership, one of the first items of business was a review of the charge and operations of the Unit Assessment Committee. During the leadership transition period, the Unit Assessment Committee had not functioned properly. Dean Northrup restructured and renamed the committee to the Continuous Improvement Team (CIT). The CIT is led by the Dean/PEU Head and includes the following committee members: the Assistant Dean of Educator Preparation/NCATE Coordinator, NCATE Standard 2 Chair, PEC Chair, and PEU program Chairs/Directors. The CIT oversees the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources of the PEU ensuring that candidates continue to meet professional, state, institutional, and unit standards.

The CIT identified three goals for the 2010/2011 academic year: 1) develop a comprehensive assessment system for the PEU; 2) address clinical experience evaluations in the PEU; and 3) revise Key Assignment rubrics.

1. GEARS – Gaining, Evaluating, Assessing, and Recording System

Gaining, Evaluating, Assessing, and Reporting System (GEARS) is a comprehensive and integrated assessment and evaluation process that continually monitors candidate KNOWLEDGE, ACTION, and LEADERSHIP proficiencies, program effectiveness, and unit success. The system was designed by the CIT during the 2010/2011 academic year and built on three questions.

- Do candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary in becoming effective educators?
- Are programs producing quality candidates?
- Does the Unit assure quality programs?

GEARS was designed to ensure all elements of the assessment system are analyzed by leaders, shared with stakeholders, and implemented in a timely fashion. The Unit has a systematic process where candidates, faculty, administrators, and stakeholders evaluate progress to manage and improve operations and programs. The PEU Dataflow Procedures ensure all elements of the system are working properly for the candidate, program, and unit. Each semester candidates and program advisors monitor KNOWLEDGE and ACTION proficiencies using the SASS advising tool, transition points, and program requirements as individuals develop LEADERSHIP skills. Candidate data is aggregated for each program and examined by department chairs/directors, faculty, and Program Review Committees (PRC). The PRCs submit recommendations to the chair/directors who present the program information to the Professional Educational Council (PEC) (i.e., internal and external stakeholders). The Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) meets monthly to review data and recommendations made by stakeholders and to offer a final
analysis to the Dean. (See NCATE IR, Standard 2 Exhibit 1.)

2. Clinical Experience Evaluations

- Undergraduate Clinical Experience Evaluations [ACTION]
  In Fall 2008, in response to a declining budget, administrators sought ways to reduce expenses and experimented with a two-tier supervisory model for undergraduate student teachers. Under this model, two school-based personnel (Faculty Associate and Supervising Teacher) evaluated the student teacher. UWF faculty members evaluated the student teacher only in extreme conditions. Negative feedback from the district, faculty resistance, and a leadership change prompted an end to this model. Undergraduates are now observed using a traditional method of being evaluated by their Supervising Teacher, University Supervisor, and University Student Teaching Coordinator. (See Roles and Responsibilities, School of Education Handbook, pp. 62-72.)

- Graduate Clinical Experience Placements and Evaluation
  Upon a review of advanced programs, the CIT discovered problems with the placement and evaluation of the clinical experiences. While advanced programs require a culminating ACTION activity (Action Research, Principalship, or dissertation study), there were no formal documentations of the placements or evaluations of the candidate’s performance in the P-12 setting. It is assumed that most advanced candidates complete the clinical experience in their classroom or school. The CIT recommended the collection of placement data (candidate, instructor, supervisor, grade level/position, school, district, and type of placement) and an evaluation of the candidate by the supervisor in the P-12 setting. In Spring 2011, Educational Leadership MEd and EdS program advisors and chair/directors will pilot the collection of advanced clinical experience data (placement and evaluation). The collection process will be evaluated and revised. Clinical experience data (placement and evaluation) will be collected and analyzed for all advanced candidates beginning Fall 2011. Data will be analyzed using the PEU Data Flow Procedures and used to make program improvements.

3. Key Assignment Rubric Revisions
   Upon a review of standards (Unit, institutional, state, and professional), the CIT discovered an overuse of assessment alignments (FEAP 9 is assessed 12 times in the Elementary Education Bachelor’s Degree program) and poor rubric construction. These findings were supported by FLDOE preliminary findings, “…the standards/competencies and associated indicators evaluated in each of these key assessments are assigned/correlated at the rubric level, not at the criterion level. This creates the potential for candidates to satisfy the 70% passing criteria on a key assessment without actually demonstrating mastery of all individual standards and
their associated indicators embedded within that key assessment.” Thus, a plan for revision has been established.

- **Curriculum Assessment Alignment**
  As a pilot study, the CIT requested a realignment of Standards and indicators for the Reading Endorsement Competencies at the master’s level. Key Assignment rubrics were reviewed and realigned to assess at the standard level only for KNOWLEDGE and ACTION components. Further, criterion and rubric language were updated to reflect the language in the standards and respective indicators. The result was a rubric with fewer alignments but increased details in the rubric language and an emphasis on KNOWLEDGE and ACTION. These Key Assignment rubrics are being piloted during the 2010/2011 Academic year. Based on data from this study and recommendations from the CIT, other Key Assignment rubrics will be revised.

Summer 2011, a PEU Key Assessment Team (KAT), led by Dr. Stacie Whinnery will review the Key Assignment Curriculum and Assessment maps. Modifications will be made based on findings from the team. Syllabi, Key Assignment descriptions, and Key Assignment rubrics will be updated.

- **Rubric Construction**
  After Standards alignments are updated, KAT members (Dr. Kathy Heineken and Ms. Amani Grow) will update the Key Assignment rubric language to reflect the Key Assignment Standards and respective indicators.