NCATE 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.

**Standard 2.1: How does the unit use its assessment system to improve candidate performance, program quality and unit operations?**

The Williams Teacher Education Program (WTEP) office serves as the hub for collecting and analyzing data used to assess how well both students and the unit perform. The WTEP’s assessment program includes a mix of nationally-normed standardized tools and proprietary in-house evaluations. These assessments are used to ensure that the Conceptual Frameworks are being effectively attained and utilized by teacher candidates.

The WTEP uses the Praxis series of standardized tests tools to ensure that its candidates meet institutional and state requirements for minimum admission standards, content knowledge, and pedagogical preparedness. The Praxis I series must be passed before potential candidates are eligible for admission into the program. The appropriate Praxis II series must be passed before candidates are eligible for standard teacher licensure in Arkansas. The nationally-normed data gathered from these tests allows the WTEP to identify areas of strength and weakness in the program, both in the pre-professional education courses and in content areas.

The WTEP also has a system of in-house assessments to monitor candidates at all stages of their preparation. After meeting initial prerequisites for admission into the program, candidates undergo a formal interview process, in which at least three faculty members evaluate candidates on their professional appearance and demeanor, use of language, thoughtfulness of purpose and understanding of the Conceptual Frameworks. These evaluations not only provide a standard for candidate readiness but also allow the WTEP faculty to determine how they might better prepare students for the program. Assessments of candidate dispositions are also gathered as candidates apply to and proceed through the program. These assessments allow WTEP faculty to address potential areas of remediation as soon as possible and, when compiled, allow WTEP faculty to study data to identify areas of strength and weakness in candidate preparation.

Other in-house assessments focus on gathering extensive feedback during the internship semester. The candidates’ cooperating teachers provide both quantitative and qualitative online evaluations of the candidates’ internship performances. The intern evaluations that are completed by the cooperating teachers assess the interns’ performances using the PATHWISE teaching model and the Williams Teacher Education Program Conceptual Frameworks. These assessments include the Student Intern Evaluation, Early Childhood Evaluation/Middle Level Evaluation, and Cooperating Teacher Recommendations. Candidates also complete their own Self-Rating Evaluations and Student Teaching Reflections, as well as evaluations of their cooperating teachers and WTEP supervisors. These evaluations allow the WTEP to make ongoing adjustments during the internship semester to make the internship experience a positive one for all parties involved, and they allow the WTEP to assess how to tweak the internship program for better effectiveness in the long term.

Data gathered through all of these assessment tools is disseminated and discussed at WTEP meetings, which are held regularly at least two times during each academic semester.