

**Teacher Education Quality Assurance****Accreditation of Teacher Education Institutions and Programs****Policy Brief 2****Some Key Questions on Accreditation of Teacher Education Institutions and Programs**

1. Should teacher training institutions be accredited, and if so, by whom: a professional association, government ministry or private agency?
2. Should non-accredited institutions be permitted to offer training?
3. How often should an institution go through a re-accreditation process?
4. Who pays for the costs of an accreditation system?
5. Is broad institutional accreditation sufficient, or should individual programs be separately accredited? (e.g. primary education; foreign language; science; ICT)
6. How might professional teaching standards be tied to the accreditation process?
7. What sanctions, if any, should be in place for an institution which fails the accreditation process?

**Executive Summary**

- Accreditation is primarily part of a process to build accountability. An institution is recognized by the profession as meeting national and/or professional standards for the content and operation of its teacher education program.
- Accreditation cannot “guarantee” the quality of training received at a particular institution, but it can set standards which can lead to higher quality teacher graduates. It can serve as an accountability measure to provide greater assurance that teachers graduating from an institution have received an appropriate education to be successful in the classroom.
- Accreditation is usually made of an institution for its ability to deliver teacher education programs, but accreditation can also be awarded to individual programs within an institution.
- Accreditation can serve several important quality functions: to maintain rigorous standards; to establish common professional standards for the preparation of teachers; to link national standards for teacher preparation with national standards for student learning; and to mobilize adequate resources.
- Accreditation should lead to compliance with regulations, adherence to professional norms, and be results-driven to create a positive student learning environment in classrooms and strong student learning achievement and life skills.
- Accrediting agencies are often one of the following types: inspectorates that are part of the ministry of education (e.g. the Netherlands); quasi-governmental bodies (e.g. India); non-governmental organizations supported by dues paid by their members and fees charged for accreditation services (e.g. USA).
- Costs to prepare the accreditation data, dues to the accrediting agency, and fees to pay for the visiting team are generally paid by the institution and vary greatly from one country to another.
- The accreditation process consists of many steps including: submission and assessment of a report; campus visit; review of findings; and decisions on accreditation (full, provisional, denial or revocation).

## **Introduction**

Very often, the question of the *quality* of teacher education is raised. Education professionals, as well as members of the public, express concern over a perceived lack of accountability among teacher education institutions for the actual teaching ability of their graduates. In some countries, initial teacher education is directly organized and supervised by the ministry of education. As other countries have raised the level of teacher training to the post-secondary level, a variety of institutions may offer teacher education programs. Some programs are managed by departments or schools of education within large universities. Other programs are provided by specialized teacher education institutions, some of which may be private. The growing complexity and independence of teacher education institutions in many countries has led to the need to evaluate their quality of instruction in light of the skills expected of graduates. So the accreditation of teacher education institutions or programs within an institution, are important elements of developing a quality assurance system.

This policy brief seeks to address some of the issues aligning institutions and teacher education programs with accountability and quality assurance requirements. This is an essential practice in developing quality teaching practice in primary and secondary schools. The questions posed and answered are based on those raised in policy discussions with various education colleagues. The purpose of the brief is to provide a concise knowledge resource on policy and implementation considerations, and alternative practices, regionally and internationally.

### **1. What is accreditation?**

Accreditation is primarily part of the process of building accountability by which an institution is recognized by the profession as meeting national and/or professional standards for the content and operation of its teacher education program as well as for the performance level of its graduates. Accreditation is usually made of an institution to deliver teacher education programs, but it can also be individual programs within an institution. Accreditation of teacher education institutions and programs is one of the phases in the continuum for achieving better outcomes of teaching.

### **2. What is the focus of accreditation?**

There is a trend to develop accreditation norms and standards for teacher education because of demands for better quality and accountability from government, the public and the teaching profession itself. While research is increasingly used to determine best practices in teaching, the setting of teaching standards is still heavily influenced by political, philosophical or ideological concerns or the interests of various interest groups, such as teachers' unions.

Teacher education is a vital factor in the quality of subsequent classroom performance of teachers. Research comparing the performance of certified and uncertified teachers shows that those with sound initial training and licensing tend to produce higher student achievement than unlicensed teachers with good subject-matter training but little preparation in pedagogy.<sup>1</sup> These credentialing procedures are sometimes said to detract from professional teaching efforts and signal both a possible disbelief in a teaching knowledge base and lack of respect for schools of education on the part of legislators and/or other relevant authorities<sup>2</sup>.

Not surprisingly, there remains considerable international debate over how teacher education should be organized, supervised and evaluated in order to produce competent teachers. Although initial teacher

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<sup>1</sup> Darling-Hammond *et.al.* (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Schwartz (1996).

training is directly managed by ministries of education in many well-established and developing countries, there is a tendency to diversify the provision of initial teacher education. In certain larger developing countries as well as OECD nations with federal governance, initial teacher training is often provided by a school, faculty or a department within a public or private college or university. In other systems, separate teacher training institutions are used.

### **3. Why is accreditation an important element of quality assurance?**

Accreditation serves several important quality functions:

- assures the public that institutions have met rigorous standards;
- establishes common professional standards for the preparation of teachers and other school personnel;
- encourages excellence in curriculum, student performances, faculty and resources in college and university faculties of education;
- links national standards for teacher preparation with national standards for student learning;
- helps to mobilize adequate resources to prepare quality personnel to improve student learning; and
- brings previously unaccredited institutions into the profession's emerging quality-assurance system<sup>3</sup>.

There needs to be an alignment of teacher education programs with the tasks needed to create a positive student learning environment and strong learning results in the school classroom. Having sound performance standards can help provide needed guidance to institutions for the expected levels of excellence, as well as a means to increase professional accountability. Accreditation is a means to facilitate this and is therefore an important element of quality assurance.

Beyond the professional recognition, the accreditation process should also help an institution reflect on its core goals, functions, values and relationships, and become a better learning organization. Every organization is a product of how its members think, interact and explore new ideas. Improving standards and requirements in themselves will not change an institution unless consideration is given to how people within the institution think and interact together. Can staff hold productive conversations about teaching, or do they advocate their views so strongly that others cannot be heard? Do they blame others for problems, or do they look at problems from the perspective of the system as a whole, where no-one is individually to blame because all actions are interrelated? Are they open to talking about differences and similarities in the views of others? Are they genuinely interested in creating a center of excellence to prepare and support high performing and motivated teachers? So the learning is very much about people connection and vision (Senge, 2000).

### **4. Is there a trend to universally apply professional standards and accreditation requirements for teaching?**

The application of accreditation standards to teacher education institutions is not universal. In many countries, a large numbers of teachers are still trained in *unaccredited* institutions and some school districts hire unlicensed teachers to fill staffing gaps. Countries also vary in terms of priorities and criteria for accreditation of teacher training. These reflect national culture, politics and traditions. Ultimately, however, setting standards and accreditation criteria for teacher education is a political choice, reflecting the model of teacher accountability that prevails in a country. Teacher accountability tends to be driven by one or more of the following factors:

- compliance with regulations, usually set by governments,
- adherence to professional norms, established by professions and

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<sup>3</sup> Earle, R. (2000).

- results-driven, or measures of student achievement. In a results-driven environment the public expects not only that teachers be trained and licensed but that they be able to motivate students to learn.

Globally, accreditation of teacher education institutions is more common in highly decentralized countries, where the provision of teacher education and training is managed by many different institutions. In such countries, accreditation systems can be an effective tool for policy makers to monitor and improve the quality of education provided to future teachers.

**Table 1: Examples of Accreditation Interventions**

Country	Intervention Trends	Comments
<b>South Asia</b>		
<b>India</b>	India, the accreditation of teacher education institutions and programs in India is managed by two institutions, the <u>National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)</u> and the <u>National Council on Teacher Education (NCTE)</u> . The former is in charge of accreditation of tertiary education in general, but works with the latter in the field of accrediting teacher education institutions.	
<b>Other country examples</b>		
<b>OECD countries</b>	In the OECD countries, there are several approaches to the accreditation of teacher training institutions, reflecting either policies and standards set by central governmental authorities or standards set by academic and professional bodies. Increasingly, independent professional associations are involved in evaluating and accrediting teacher training institutions.	In many countries, particularly OECD members, there is often more than one accrediting body for various professions, including education.
<b>Colombia and Chile</b>	In Latin America, only Colombia and Chile have non-governmental accreditation bodies.	
<b>Argentina, Bolivia and Peru</b>	Accreditation systems are under development or pending, where self-evaluation is being promoted	
<b>Nicaragua</b>	The ministry of education is expected to monitor the quality of teacher education <sup>4</sup> .	
<b>Estonia and USA</b>	Comparative research on the accreditation process being set up in Estonia focused on the attitudes of Estonian and American teacher educators toward accreditation. The results revealed significant differences in views of standards for teacher education. For example, the Estonian teacher educators appeared to under-estimate, in comparison with their American colleagues, the importance of practice teaching in schools but insisted on the need for a highly qualified faculty. The two countries were also at variance over the question of sensitivity to cultural diversity, which is an important criterion for accreditation in the USA but not in Estonia <sup>1</sup> .	The process of accreditation of higher education in Estonia began in 1994, when a committee was set up by the Ministry of Education and accreditation guidelines were published. In 1996, faculties such as economics and law were the first to present their self-evaluation reports.

<sup>4</sup> Duthilleul (2005).

5. Which organizations accredit teacher education institutions and programs?

Depending on the country, accrediting agencies are often one of the following types:

- inspectorates that are part of the ministry of education (e.g. the Netherlands)
- quasi-governmental bodies (e.g. India)
- non-governmental organizations supported by dues paid by their members and fees charged for accreditation services (e.g. USA)

In many countries, particularly OECD members, there is often more than one accrediting body for various professions, including education. Policy-makers need to consider the existence of governmental or non-governmental organizations with the capacity to serve as accreditation agencies.

**Table 2: Examples of Accrediting Organizations**

Country	Intervention	Comments
<b>South Asia</b>		
<b>India</b>	National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Council on Teacher Education (NCTE).	The former is in charge of accreditation of tertiary education in general, but works with the latter in the field of accrediting teacher education institutions.
<b>Other Country Examples</b>		
<b>England</b>	Centrally-regulated state control of accreditation prevails in England as well as in many developing countries. In England, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) is responsible for accrediting and funding teacher training institutions. The latter, which formerly operated within the purview of the university system, now include a variety of alternative service providers and come under direct central government supervision and conditional funding grants.	This approach tends to de-professionalize teaching by removing effective control of teacher education from the teaching profession. In England, there is no self-regulating professional body that represents teachers.
<b>Canada, Province of Manitoba</b>	University- or institutionally-controlled initial teacher training prevails in the Canadian Province of Manitoba. The Provincial Minister of Education prescribes minimum standards for the certification of teachers. However, a professional certificate is given to any graduate from Manitoba University and who holds a Bachelor of Education degree. It is the University which independently determines the duration and contents of the degree program without necessarily obtaining prior approval from the Provincial Government.	
<b>Canada, Province of British Columbia</b>	British Columbia has a system of professional governance of teacher education (including the accreditation function). The British Columbia College of Teachers is an independent regulatory body with oversight on matters pertaining to teacher training and supervision. This teacher professional association has the authority to approve all teacher preparation programs in the province.	
<b>OECD</b>	Increasingly, independent professional associations are involved in evaluating and accrediting teacher training	In many countries, particularly OECD members, there is often more

	institutions.	than one accrediting body for various professions, including education.
USA	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Teacher Education Accreditation Council, (TEAC) are the two largest accrediting bodies.	The organizations are seeking to work together, rather than compete.

**6. What are some of the main approaches to manage the accreditation process?**

The authority for managing the accreditation process is necessarily variable and depends largely on three factors:

- Political - political choices about the desirability of having direct, governmental control of teacher training or delegating teacher training to other bodies;
- Institutional - the presence or absence of competent, independent professional organizations representing the teaching profession;
- Professional - the existence of reputable universities that have established leadership in the area of teacher education.

In order to understand how the process of accrediting teacher education institutions is defined, it is helpful to look at the governance process. This reflects both political decisions and pressure from the teaching profession and the public. The following are important concepts for policy development.

**1. Political Governance**

This approach is widespread. In many countries, teacher education is directly managed by ministries of education or their equivalent. In countries with a variety of providers of teacher education (both public and private), sometimes the choice is made to link teacher education closely with national educational goals and the accreditation function is given to central political authorities. Political management of accreditation is also an option when professional organizations representing the teaching profession are absent or weak. See example from England.

**2. Institutional Governance**

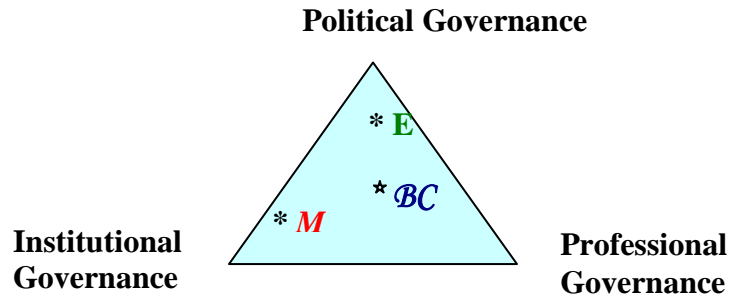
This approach tends to prevail in countries with well-established university systems. In these countries, the upgrading of teacher education to the level of tertiary education has made it attractive to attach teacher education to universities. When teacher education programs are managed within a university structure, they can benefit from different forms of institutional support, including the expertise of a wide range of subject-matter specialists from different parts of the university. The research orientation of many universities can also be an advantage in assigning them primary responsibility of accrediting and supervising teacher education programs. See example for Canada, Province of Manitoba.

**3. Professional Governance**

In this approach, professional organizations play a leading role in the accreditation process. In countries where there are strong and independent professional organizations representing teachers, such organizations will play a major role in accrediting teacher education programs and institutions. See example from Canada, Province of British Columbia.

Figure 1 illustrates the main characteristics of the governance of initial teacher training systems, including the accreditation function. In England, the function of accreditation is handled through *mainly* political processes. In British Columbia, these processes are strongly influenced and guided by the teaching profession itself. Finally, in the Province of Manitoba, universities and their teacher training schools are the prime players in accreditation of teacher training programs and related teacher management issues.

**Figure 1: The governance of initial teacher training in England (E), Manitoba (M) and British Columbia (BC)**

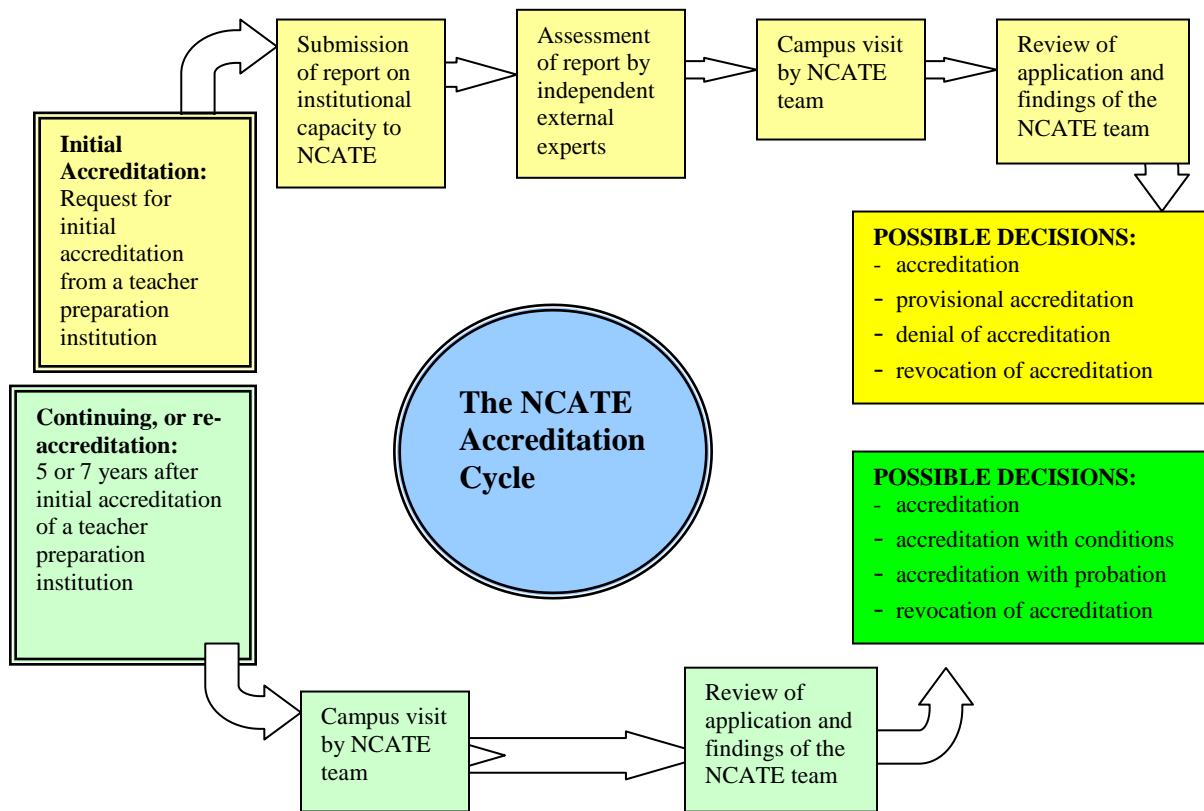


Source: Young, Hall and Clarke (2007)

7. What is the process to achieve accreditation?

Accreditation tends to follow a cyclical model much like the following example from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the USA. Because American education is under the jurisdiction of the states and because teacher education follows a blend of political and institutional governance, *NCATE accreditation is voluntary*. To seek NCATE accreditation, an institution must meet certain preconditions, including being recognized by the state in which it operates.

**Figure 2: The NCATE Accreditation Process or Cycle**



Institutions wishing to apply for initial accreditation must prepare an in-depth “preconditions” report covering a variety of areas ranging from governance to curriculum. One of those preconditions requires the institution to submit program review documentation for specific programs for which there are NCATE-approved standards. As part of the NCATE review process, the role of its affiliated professional organizations, such as the Association for Educational Communication and Technology, is to study the program review documentation. This documentation is, in effect, a description of the programs that prepare personnel in specialized fields, such as educational technology, and includes performances required of candidates as well as evidence of achievement of those performances. The professional member organizations then have their respective Program Review Coordinators distribute copies of the preconditions report to three program reviewers who independently evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the program. These reviewers also determine whether the program is in compliance with the standards. These individuals work alone, unaware of others reviewing the same program. This process ensures confidentiality and anonymity. After the three reviews have been returned, the Review Coordinator cross-checks the reviewer evaluations for consistency and consensus. After the Coordinator ascertains compliance, a report of finding is sent to NCATE, which can then decide to schedule an on-site campus visit of the applicant institution.

NCATE schedules an accreditation visit to the institution, which then prepares a report describing how it meets each of six standards. Three to eight members of the NCATE Board of Examiners visit the institution to interview faculty, students, staff graduate and employers and to gather additional data to evaluate the programs. The team reviews all the evidence and writes a report on its findings. The institution that requested NCATE accreditation may write a follow-up report in response. All material is sent to NCATE’s Unit Accreditation Board, which reviews the data and makes the final accreditation decision. For more detailed information about the NCATE accreditation procedures and norms see Annex 1.

In India, the accreditation of teacher education institutions and programs is managed by two institutions, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Council on Teacher Education (NCTE). The former is in charge of accreditation of tertiary education in general, but works with the latter in the field of accrediting teacher education institutions. The cyclical accreditation procedures of NAAC and NCATE in the USA are very similar. See Annex 2 for details.

#### **8. What is the difference between institutional accreditation and program accreditation?**

The NCATE model is one institutional accreditation model used in the USA that is generally considered useful and comprehensive. However, about half of USA teacher preparation institutions have not sought NCATE accreditation since it is best suited to large institutions with complex programs and large numbers of teaching candidates. Some institutions find its fees to be costly as well. Some critics fault NCATE for concentrating on evaluating unit capacity and not the actual performance of graduates in its accreditation process. Data suggest that USA institutions of teacher education face difficulties in implementing follow-up studies and the provision of first-year teacher assistance in ascertaining program quality. Recruiting high quality candidates that represent a culturally diverse population and implementing faculty evaluation systems are other challenges cited<sup>5</sup>.

There is value in having more than one source of accreditation, since teacher education institutions can be very heterogeneous in terms of size, scope of programs and enrolments and governance depending on the country. Dissatisfaction with NCATE led to the creation in 1997 of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, or TEAC (see Annex 3 for details of this accreditation program). Recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and by the U.S. Department of Education, TEAC is also a member of

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<sup>5</sup> Krull *et al.* (1998)



several professional organizations. TEAC's primary work is accrediting undergraduate and graduate professional education programs in order to assure the public about the quality of college and university programs. Institutions that wish to pursue accreditation for their programs hold regular membership in TEAC. This membership represents education programs within a broad range of higher education institutions, from small liberal arts colleges to large research universities and includes professional organizations. Currently, 125 college and university programs are certified by or are affiliates of TEAC. Dues and member fees support TEAC's work. Funding is also provided by several American foundations. The TEAC method of accrediting teacher education is through the *audit of evidence of student achievement*. A further difference between the TEAC approach and that of NCATE is that it accredits an *education program*, rather than a college, school, department or other administrative unit of an applicant institution.

**9. With increased rhetoric on the focus on results, have accreditation procedures also been changing to focus on the outcomes of teacher education?**

In practice, the accreditation process tends to focus on institutional capacities, or *inputs* into teacher education. However, in light of accountability issues, newer procedures have been developed to audit the practices of an institution's teacher education programs and to verify the quality of their *outputs* in terms of the skills acquired by graduates. This does often require follow-up studies. Newer accreditation procedures seek to achieve accrediting decisions more rapidly by using less costly and burdensome procedures, which have been dissuasive to many institutions that have considered accreditation.

**10. Are "alternative" and "fast-track" teacher education programs accredited?**

Alternative teacher recruitment and training programs are utilized primarily when there are teacher shortages which cannot be met in time through the regular system either due to length of training, cost or difficulty to meet qualification requirements. Some programs bring young secondary or tertiary education graduates, untrained serving teachers and/or retired teachers into teaching. Other programs recruit experienced professionals into teaching as a second career. Fast-track initial teacher training is increasingly designed along with mechanisms to provide further training which then can lead to full certification after a certain period of classroom service and in-service education. Since they are usually stop-gap measures, these programs are often unaccredited since they are not intended to be the normal system. Regardless, it would be useful for institutions to try to incorporate where possible some of the basic standards required for regular teachers in these programs.

## Annex 1

### The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in USA

#### *Background: a history of lax standards in teacher education*

The experience of the United States with developing accreditation of teacher education programs illustrates many of the challenges that have arisen in defining teaching standards and in accrediting teacher training institutions world-wide. Standards came late to the American teaching profession. By the early 1990s, however, widespread public concern over the quality of public education and advances in research into how children learn, led to the development of teaching standards. Teaching standards reflect social, cultural and economic priorities. Until very recently, American standards for teaching were usually set quite low. When “normal” schools began in the 1800s, teachers knew little more than their students. At the time, American society did not require a highly educated work force. Instead, it required large numbers of people with basic skills and the public schools satisfied this need. In the early to mid-1900s, most policy makers viewed teaching as a routine activity that could be picked up “on the job” with some supervision. Lax preparation and entry standards were the rule. By the 1950s, teaching had come to be viewed as a job one could “fall back on” if nothing else worked out. In the absence of a strong voice from the profession, which did not assert itself until the late 1980s, state departments of education<sup>6</sup> took on the task of defining standards for teacher preparation and for entry into the profession. Each state set its own licensing requirements, specifying the type and number of courses required for licensing. Moreover, many individuals have received licenses based on “seat time” in teacher or administrator preparation programs rather than as a result of independent appraisals of their readiness to teach or manage. There has been little coordination or articulation between the states and institutions. Not surprisingly, increasing dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching has come from both educational administrators and the public, which increasingly demand accountability for results<sup>7</sup>. State departments of education now generally require that graduates of teacher training programs take a licensing examination in order to be hired as teachers.

#### *The emergence of a professional accreditor of teacher education*

Dissatisfaction with the system has led to the emergence of pressure to move towards a model of professional governance of the teacher education system through more rigorous accreditation procedures administered by professional bodies. Founded in 1954, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the largest and oldest accreditor of teacher education in the United States. As of 2005, NCATE had accredited 602 out of the more than 1200 schools and colleges of education in the United States<sup>8</sup>. Made up of 32 organizations in the field of education<sup>9</sup> NCATE holds the education colleges that it accredits to a common set of standards for primary and secondary education as a whole, and to separate standards for each of 20 specialties, including mathematics, English and special education. Because of rapid advances in knowledge and research on learning, NCATE revises its accreditation standards every five years. The standards Committee of NCATE’s Unit Accreditation Board is in charge of revising unit standards. The revision process is guided by an in-depth study of research on teaching and

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<sup>6</sup> As in many other federal countries, American *states* and not the central government are responsible for managing public education.

<sup>7</sup> Wise and Leibbrand (2000).

<sup>8</sup> Dottin *et al.* 2005)

<sup>9</sup> NCATE is composed of 32 member organizations, including two national teachers’ unions, four child-centered organizations like the National Association for Gifted Children and ten subject-specific organizations like the National Science Teachers Association, to mention but a few.

learning; research on effective teacher preparation programs and research on regional accreditation, including a comparison of standards and procedures used by regional and specialized accrediting bodies.

NCATE is recognized by the Federal Department of Education as a national professional accrediting agency for schools, colleges and department of education that prepare teachers, administrators and other professional school personnel. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation, a private organization that oversees accrediting agencies, also recognizes NCATE.

The NCATE standards are the basis for the assessment of the unit<sup>10</sup> conducted by the Board of Examiners team. The standards are divided into two sections, candidate performance (Standards 1 and 2) and unit capacity (Standards 3–6). Each of the six NCATE standards contains three components: (1) the language of the standard itself; (2) rubrics that delineate the elements of each standard and describe three proficiency levels at which each element is being addressed; and (3) a descriptive explanation of the standard. The standards apply to both initial teacher preparation and advanced levels. One of the most significant aspects of the NCATE standards is the *conceptual framework*. The conceptual framework is the underlying structure of the unit that sets forth a vision of the unit and provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for the direction of programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, faculty scholarship and service, and unit accountability.

The candidate performance standards focus on learning outcomes. They require units to use evidence to demonstrate that teacher candidates are gaining the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, or *dispositions*<sup>11</sup> necessary to have a positive impact on pre-kindergarten to grade 12 student learning. The standards elevate the role of assessment in program improvement and promote increased accountability for teacher candidate learning. They require systemic assessment, which encourages more attention to program design, increased faculty collaboration, and greater alignment within and between programs. Finally, the candidate performance standards necessitate that teacher education programs engage in self-assessment and continuous improvement.

The unit capacity standards address the components of teacher education programs that support candidate learning. They promote increased university and school partnership in the design and implementation of clinical experiences. They require the provision of curricular content and experiences that promote diversity within the teaching profession and encourage an understanding of issues related to diversity in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 school settings. In addition, the unit capacity standards emphasize the need for well-qualified faculty who model best practices in teaching. Further, they address governance and resource expectations. Together, the candidate performance and unit capacity standards present a strong statement about the organization and management of effective education programs for teachers and other school personnel.

### **NCATE Unit Standards**

The following descriptions highlight the three distinct aspects of a teacher education that NCATE evaluates in its accreditation process.

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<sup>10</sup> A “unit” is defined as a program, department, school or other teacher education component of a college or university.

<sup>11</sup> The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment.

## ***Conceptual Framework***

The conceptual framework establishes the shared vision for a unit's efforts in preparing educators to work effectively in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 schools. It provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability.

The conceptual framework is designed to be knowledge-based, articulated, shared, coherent, consistent with the unit and/or institutional mission, and continuously evaluated.

## ***Candidate performance***

### **Standard 1: *Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions***

Candidates<sup>12</sup> preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students<sup>13</sup> learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional<sup>14</sup> standards.

### **Standard 2: *Assessment System and Unit Evaluation***

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

## ***Unit Capacity***

### **Standard 3: *Field Experiences and Clinical Practice***

The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

### **Standard 4: *Diversity***

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 schools.

### **Standard 5: *Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development***

Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance. They also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

### **Standard 6: *Unit Governance and Resources***

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<sup>12</sup> *Candidates* include persons preparing to teach, teachers who are continuing their professional development, and persons preparing for other professional roles in schools such as principals, school psychologists, and school library media specialists.

<sup>13</sup> "All students" includes students of both sexes with exceptionalities and of different ethnic, racial, language, religious, socioeconomic, and regional/ geographic origins.

<sup>14</sup> Institutional standards are reflected in the unit's conceptual framework and include candidate proficiencies.

The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

In studying the performance of candidates and units against standards, NCATE evaluators refer to the unit's conceptual framework. NCATE uses the following six qualities in evaluating a unit's conceptual framework.

**Shared Vision:** The unit's conceptual framework describes the vision and purpose of a unit's efforts in preparing educators to work in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 schools. It is well articulated, knowledge-based, and consistent with the institution's mission.

**Coherence:** The unit's conceptual framework provides a system for ensuring coherence among curriculum, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, and assessment across a candidate's program.

**Professional Commitments<sup>15</sup> and Dispositions:** The unit's conceptual framework clearly articulates its professional commitments to knowledge, teaching competence, and student learning. It has outlined the dispositions that the faculty value in teachers and other professional school personnel.

**Commitment to Diversity:** The unit's conceptual framework reflects the unit's commitment to preparing candidates to support learning for *all* students and provides a conceptual understanding of how knowledge, dispositions, and skills related to diversity are integrated across the curriculum, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, assessments, and evaluations.

**Commitment to Technology:** The unit's conceptual framework reflects the unit's commitment to preparing candidates who are able to use educational technology to help all students learn; it also provides a conceptual understanding of how knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to educational and information technology are integrated throughout the curriculum, instruction, field experiences, clinical practice, assessments, and evaluations.

**Candidate Proficiencies Aligned with Professional and State Standards:** The unit's conceptual framework provides the context for developing and assessing candidate proficiencies based on professional, state, and institutional standards.

### **Accreditation Decisions**

NCATE's Unit Accreditation Board (UAB) renders separate accreditation decisions for the initial teacher preparation and advanced program levels of the unit. In addition, the UAB renders different decisions for institutions undergoing their first accreditation visit and a continuing accreditation visit. The following accreditation decisions apply to all institutions.

**After an institution's first accreditation visit, the UAB will render one of the following accreditation decisions:**

**Accreditation.** This accreditation decision indicates that the unit meets each of the six NCATE standards for unit accreditation. Areas for improvement may be cited, indicating problems warranting the institution's attention. In its subsequent annual reports, the unit may describe progress made in addressing

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<sup>15</sup>Commitments refer to what the unit is prepared to do in regard to candidate learning and its effect on student learning.

the areas for improvement cited in NCATE's action letter in preparation for its next visit. The next on-site visit is scheduled for seven years following the semester of the accreditation visit unless the state in which the institution is located has retained a five-year cycle.

**Provisional Accreditation.** This accreditation decision indicates that the unit has not met one or more of the standards. When the UAB renders this decision, the unit has accredited status, but must satisfy provisions by meeting previously unmet standard(s) within an established time period.

If provisional accreditation is granted, the UAB will require (1) submission of documentation that addresses the unmet standard(s) prior to the next UAB meeting or (2) a focused visit on the unmet standard(s) within two years of the semester of the accreditation decision. When a decision is made by the UAB to require submission of documentation, the institution may choose to waive that option in favor of the focused visit within two years.

If documentation is submitted under the terms specified in the above paragraph, the UAB may (1) grant accreditation or (2) require a focused visit within one year of the semester in which the documentation was reviewed by the UAB. After a focused visit, the UAB will (1) grant accreditation or (2) revoke accreditation.

If accreditation is granted, the next on-site visit is scheduled for seven years following the semester in which the accreditation visit occurred unless the state in which the institution is located has retained a five-year cycle. This scheduling establishes and maintains the unit's seven-year accreditation cycle.

**Denial of Accreditation.** This accreditation decision indicates that the unit does not meet one or more of the NCATE standards, and has pervasive problems that limit its capacity to offer quality programs that adequately prepare candidates.

**Revocation of Accreditation.** Following a focused visit that occurred as a result of a provisional accreditation decision, this accreditation decision indicates that the unit has not sufficiently addressed the unmet standard(s)<sup>16</sup>.

### **Samples of NCATE standards for evaluating teaching and school administration candidates and training units of colleges and universities**

The following two standards are presented with the levels of competency or quality used in NCATE evaluations for accreditation.

#### **Standard 1: *Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions***

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

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<sup>16</sup> Similarly, substantiated complaints about the provisionally accredited unit's capacity or the discovery of fraud in the unit's application process can lead to revocation of accreditation

## **Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates (Initial and Continuing Preparation of Teachers)**

### **UNACCEPTABLE**

Teacher candidates have an inadequate knowledge of subject matter that they plan to teach and are unable to give examples of important principles or concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Fewer than eighty percent of the unit's program completers pass the academic content examinations in states that require such examinations for licensure.

### **ACCEPTABLE**

Teacher candidates know the subject matter that they plan to teach and can explain principles and concepts delineated in professional, state and institutional standards. Eighty percent or more of the unit's program completers pass the academic content examinations in states that require such examinations for licensure.

### **TARGET**

Teacher candidates have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter that they plan to teach as described in professional, state, and institutional standards. They demonstrate their knowledge through inquiry, critical analysis, and synthesis of the subject. All program completers pass the academic content examinations in states that require such examinations for licensure.

## **Content Knowledge for Other Professional School Personnel**

### **UNACCEPTABLE**

Candidates for other professional school roles have an inadequate understanding of their field and cannot give examples of important principles or concepts delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Fewer than eighty percent of the unit's program completers pass the academic content examinations in states that require such examinations for licensure.

### **ACCEPTABLE**

Candidates for other professional school roles know their fields and can explain principles and concepts delineated in professional, state and institutional standards. Eighty percent or more of the unit's program completers pass the academic content examinations in states that require such examinations for licensure.

### **TARGET**

Candidates for other professional school roles have a thorough understanding of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of their fields as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards and shown through inquiry, critical analysis, and synthesis. All program completers pass the academic content examinations in states that require such examinations for licensure.

**Student Learning for Teacher Candidates  
(Initial and Continuing Preparation of Teachers)**

**UNACCEPTABLE**

Teacher candidates cannot accurately assess student learning or develop learning experiences based on students' developmental levels or prior experience.

**ACCEPTABLE**

Teacher candidates focus on student learning as shown in their assessment of student learning, use of assessments in instruction and development of meaningful learning experiences for students based on their developmental levels and prior experience.

**TARGET**

Teacher candidates accurately assess and analyze student learning, make appropriate adjustments to instruction, monitor student learning and have a positive effect on learning for all students.

**Dispositions for All Candidates**

**UNACCEPTABLE**

Candidates are not familiar with professional dispositions delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. They do not model these dispositions in their work with students, families, and communities.

**ACCEPTABLE**

Candidates are familiar with the dispositions expected of professionals. Their work with students, families and communities reflects the dispositions delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards.

**TARGET**

Candidates work with students, families, and communities in ways that reflect the dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Candidates recognize when their own dispositions may need to be adjusted and are able to develop plans to do so.



## **Annex 2**

### **Accreditation of Teacher Education in India: The Experience of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Council on Teacher Education (NCTE)**

The accreditation of teacher education institutions and programs in India is managed by two institutions:

1. the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and
2. the National Council on Teacher Education (NCTE)

The former is in charge of accreditation of tertiary education in general but works with the latter in the field of accrediting teacher education institutions.

The following is an overview of the role and methods used by the two institutions. It is interesting to note the similarities between the cyclical accreditation procedures of NAAC and NCATE. As in the United States, tertiary education has expanded rapidly in India in the last 50 years. The emergence of private tertiary institutions offering teacher training of “dubious” quality has motivated the development of accreditation measures.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an autonomous body established by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. In the wake of rapid expansion of higher education in India, many concerns have arisen about quality. To address these issues, the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Plan of Action advocated the establishment of an independent national accreditation body. Consequently, the NAAC was established in 1994, with its headquarters at Bangalore.

#### **The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**

##### **Governance**

The NAAC functions through its General Council and Executive Committee where educational administrators, policy makers and senior academicians from a cross-section of the system of higher education are represented. The NAAC also has many advisory and consultative committees to guide its practices, in addition to the statutory bodies that steer its policies. The NAAC has a core staff and consultants to support its activities. It also receives assistance from a large number of external resource persons from across the country.

##### **Vision and Mission**

The activities and future plans of the NAAC are guided by its vision and mission that focus on making quality assurance an integral part of the functioning of higher education institutions.

The vision of the NAAC is:

To make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives.

The mission statements of the NAAC aim at translating the NAAC's vision into reality, defining the following key tasks of the organization:

- To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic program or projects.
- To stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality of teaching-learning and research in higher education institutions.
- To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education.
- To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training program.
- To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.

Guided by its vision and striving to achieve its mission, the NAAC primarily assesses the quality of institutions of higher education that volunteer for the process, through an internationally accepted methodology. To date, NAAC has accredited 140 universities and 3,492 colleges in India. NAAC accredits many types of higher education institutions, including those that provide teacher training. In this area, it works closely with the National Council for Teacher Education of India (NCTE). The units of assessment are the following:

- university departments of education or the centers of excellence in education with undergraduate and graduate programs;
- institutes of advanced studies in education;
- colleges of teacher education;
- other institutions or departments offering programs in teacher education.

NAAC has formulated a four-stage process for assessment and accreditation as given below:

**1. The First Step:** ‘Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment: In the first step of Assessment and Accreditation, “Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment” (IQEA) must be obtained by an applicant institution at the beginning, while it is still in the planning stage for assessment. A seven-page questionnaire is used to establish eligibility. The benefits of this step for an applicant institution are:

- To get recognized as eligible to apply for the second step comprehensive Assessment and Accreditation process;
- To get feedback from NAAC if it does not qualify in the first step, about specific improvements to be made for reaching the required quality level;
- To receive assistance and suitable mentoring from NAAC in the latter case, for enabling it to qualify for IEQA in due course of time.

**2. Preparation of the Self-Study Report** by the institution, its submission to NAAC and in-house analysis of the report by NAAC. A special manual is provided to guide the institution in preparing the Self-Study Report.

**3. Peer Team Visit** to the institution for validation of the Self-Study Report followed by presentation of a comprehensive assessment report to the institution. A typical visit lasts for two days, including a pre-visit meeting of the peers and ending with an exit meeting, which is an open house meeting of the institutional members, stakeholders and the peer team members.

**4. Grading, Certification and Accreditation** based on the evaluation report by the peer team. NAAC uses seven criteria as the basis of its assessment and accreditation:

1. curricular aspects,
2. teaching-learning and evaluation,
3. research, consultancy and extension,

4. infrastructure and learning resources,
5. student support and progression,
6. governance and leadership,
7. innovative practices

NAAC conducts re-accreditation five years after initial accreditation. In order to sustain and improve upon internal capacity, accredited institutions are encouraged to create an Internal Quality Assurance Cell. NAAC provides guidelines for the creation and operation of such an entity.

### **The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)**

The National Council for Teacher Education, or NCTE was set up in 1973 as an advisory body for the Central and State Governments on all matters pertaining to teacher education. In 1986, the National Policy on Education gave it the statutory role to ensure maintenance of standards in teacher education and prevent the proliferation of substandard teacher education institutions. Headquartered in New Delhi, NCTE has four Regional committees to implement its statutory responsibilities, including legal matters, research, policy planning, monitoring and in-service programs.

The main objective of the NCTE is to achieve planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country, the regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system and for matters connected therewith. The mandate given to the NCTE is very broad and covers the whole gamut of teacher education programmes including research and training of persons for equipping them to teach at pre-primary, primary, secondary and senior secondary stages in schools, and non-formal education, part-time education, adult education and distance (correspondence) education courses

#### **Functions of the NCTE**

The following list highlights its main functions:

- a. To undertake and publish surveys and studies relating to various aspects of teacher;
- b. To make policy recommendations about teacher education to the Central and State Governments, Universities, and relevant institutions;
- c. To co-ordinate and monitor teacher education and its development in the country;
- d. To lay down guidelines in respect of minimum qualifications for a person to be employed as a teacher in schools or in recognized institutions;
- e. To lay down norms for any specified category of courses of training in teacher education, including the minimum eligibility criteria for admission thereof, and the method of selection of candidates, duration of the courses, course contents and mode of curriculum;
- f. To lay down guidelines for compliance by recognized institutions, for starting new courses or training and for providing physical and instructional facilities, staffing pattern and staff qualifications,
- g. To lay down standards in respect of examinations leading to teacher education qualifications, criteria for admission to such examinations and schemes of courses of training,
- h. To promote and conduct innovation and research in various areas of teacher education and disseminate the results thereof,
- i. To examine and review periodically the implementation of the norms, guidelines and standards laid down by the Council, and to suitably advise the recognized institutions,
- j. To evolve suitable performance appraisal systems, norms and mechanisms for enforcing accountability on recognized institutions,

### Annex 3

#### **The Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) in USA**

While the NCATE model is generally considered useful and comprehensive, about half of American teacher preparation institutions have not sought NCATE accreditation. It is best suited to large institutions with complex programs and large numbers of teaching candidates. Some institutions find its fees to be costly, as well. Some critics fault NCATE for concentrating on evaluating unit capacity and not the actual performance of graduates in its accreditation process. Data suggest that American institutions of teacher education face difficulties in implementing follow-up studies and the provision of first-year teacher assistance in ascertaining program quality. Recruiting high quality candidates that represent a culturally diverse population and implementing faculty evaluation systems are other challenges cited<sup>17</sup>.

There is value in having more than one source of accreditation, since teacher education institutions are often very heterogeneous in terms of size, scope of programs and enrolments and governance. Dissatisfaction with NCATE led to the creation in 1997 of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, or TEAC. Recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and by the U.S. Department of Education, TEAC is also a member of several professional organizations. TEAC's primary work is accrediting undergraduate and graduate professional education programs in order to assure the public about the quality of college and university programs. Institutions that wish to pursue accreditation for their programs hold regular membership in TEAC. This membership represents education programs within a broad range of higher education institutions, from small liberal arts colleges to large research universities and includes professional organizations. Currently, 125 college and university programmes are certified by or affiliates of TEAC. Dues and member fees support TEAC's work. Funding is also provided by several American foundations. The TEAC method of accrediting teacher education is through the *audit of evidence of student achievement*. A further difference between the TEAC approach and that of NCATE is that it accredits an *education program*, rather than a college, school, department or other administrative unit of an applicant institution.

TEAC's entire accreditation process is built around the program's statement that it prepares competent, caring, and qualified professional educators. TEAC requires the program to provide evidence to support its case, and the accreditation process examines and verifies the evidence. TEAC applicants prepare a *brief* that outlines their response to the following issues, referring to three quality principles, highlighted below:

#### **Quality Principle I: Evidence of student learning**

The core of TEAC accreditation is the quality of the evidence the program faculty members provide in support of their claims about their students' learning and understanding of the teacher education curriculum. Overall, TEAC requires evidence that the candidates can teach effectively and do what else is expected of them as professional educators.

Whatever the particular topics of the curriculum that faculty members claim their students master, TEAC requires that the program faculty members address the following general components of their program in ways that also indicate that the faculty has an accurate and balanced understanding of the academic disciplines that are connected to the program under accreditation review.

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<sup>17</sup> Krull *et al.* (1998)

### ***Subject matter knowledge***

Candidates for the degree must learn and understand the subject matters they hope to teach. TEAC requires evidence that the program's candidates acquire and understand these subject matters.

### ***Pedagogical knowledge***

The primary obligation of the teacher is representing the subject matter in ways that his or her students can readily learn and understand. TEAC requires evidence that the candidates for the program's degree learn how to convert their knowledge of a subject matter into compelling lessons that meet the needs of a wide range of students.

### ***Teaching skill***

Above all, teachers are expected to act on their knowledge in a caring and professional manner that would lead to appropriate levels of achievement for all their pupils. Caring is a particular kind of relationship between the teacher and the student that is defined by the teacher's unconditional acceptance of the student, the teacher's intention to address the student's educational needs, the teacher's competence to meet those needs, and the student's recognition that the teacher cares. Although it recognizes that the available measures of caring are not as well developed as the measures of student learning, TEAC requires evidence that the program's graduates are caring.

### **Quality Principle II: Valid assessment of student learning**

TEAC expects program faculty to provide (1) a rationale justifying its claims that the assessment techniques it uses are reasonable and credible, and (2) evidence documenting the reliability and validity of the assessments.

### ***Quality Principle III: Institutional learning***

TEAC expects that a faculty's decisions about its programs are based on evidence, and that the program has a quality control system that (1) yields reliable evidence about the program's practices and results and (2) influences policies and decision making.

Quality Principle III addresses the ongoing research and inquiry needed to meet the other two quality principles. TEAC's Quality Principle III presupposes a system of faculty inquiry, review, and quality control is in place: the faculty has a means to secure the evidence and informed opinion it needs to initiate or improve program quality.

Quality Principle III also encourages the program faculty to become skilled at creating knowledge for the improvement of teaching and learning and to modify the program and practices to reflect this new knowledge.

TEAC expects that the faculty will systematically and continuously improve the quality of its professional education programs and provide evidence about the following two issues in the faculty's ongoing processes of inquiry and program improvement.

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Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC): <http://www.teac.org/>