Compliance Audit Report
2011-2012
University of North Texas
Initial Teacher Certification Program

According to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.10(c), “An entity approved by the SBEC under this chapter...shall be reviewed at least once every five years under procedures approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff; however, a review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the TEA staff.” Per TAC §228.11(c), “All educator preparation programs are subject to the same standards of accountability, as required under Chapter 229 of this title.” The Texas Education Agency administers Texas Administrative Code required by the Texas legislature for the regulation of all educator preparation programs in the state. Please see the complete Texas Administrative Code at www.tea.state.tx.us for details.

Contact Information: Dr. Elizabeth Dixon-Krauss
County/District Number: 061501

Texas Education Agency Education Preparation Manager, Sandra Jo Nix, and Certification Specialist, Marilyn Cook, conducted a compliance audit of University of North Texas (UNT), 1155 Union Circle, #311337, Denton, Texas on April 24-26, 2012, as required by Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §229.6(a). The focus of the compliance audit was the Generalist EC-6 certification area. The following are findings and recommendations for program improvement.

Data Analysis:

Information concerning compliance with TAC governing educator preparation programs was collected by various qualitative means. A self-report was submitted to TEA on November 14, 2011. An onsite review of documents, student records, online course materials, and curriculum correlations charts provided evidence regarding compliance. In addition, TEA sent electronic questionnaires to University of North Texas stakeholders. Forty out of 61 advisory committee members; 19 out of 60 educator candidates, 18 out of 21 field supervisors, 27 out of 50 principals, and 86 out of 172 cooperating teachers/mentors responded to the questionnaires. Qualitative methods of content analysis, crossreferencing, and triangulation of the data were used to evaluate the evidence. Evidence of compliance was verified by using a rubric correlated to Texas Administrative Code.
Opening and Closing Session:

The opening session on April 24, 2012, was attended by 45 individuals including Dr. Jerry R. Thomas, Dean, Dr. Elizabeth Dixon-Krauss, Associate Dean for Teacher Education, and Dr. Gwenn Pasco, Assistant Dean and Dr. Michael F. Sayler, Senior Associate Dean. The closing session was held on April 26, 2012 and was attended by 12 individuals.

COMPONENT I: COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.20

FINDINGS:

Program support was indicated by the governing body of University of North Texas Denton per TAC §228.20(c) as evidenced by the participation and cooperation of Dr. Elizabeth Dixon-Krauss, Dr. Gwenn Pasco and members of the University of North Texas staff in various stages and aspects of the compliance audit.

The advisory committee called the Teacher Education Council consists of 61 members. Seven members of the advisory committee are from local school districts, two members are from the education service center and 52 members represent institutions of higher education. There is no representation from business or community. University of North Texas meets TAC §228.20(b) requirements for advisory committee composition.

The Teacher Education Council (TEC) is chaired by the Associate Dean of Teacher Education and is comprised of representatives from each teacher education program and the community, the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and UNT teacher education staff and administrators.

The mission of the UNT Teacher Education Council is to serve as a coordinating unit for teacher education programs. Assessment functions of the Teacher Education Council include:

- Assure that UNT programs are designed to meet appropriate institutional, state, and national standards and evaluated through the unit assessment system.
- Provide a forum for consideration of data for improvement of the operation of the unit.
- Monitor curriculum changes that impact programs of the unit and approve proposed addition or deletion of programs.

The Teacher Education Council has the following sub-committees and boards:

- Executive Committee
  - Comprised of the College of Education Dean, Associate Deans, Assistant Deans and Department Chairpersons.
- Clinical Experience Advisory Board
  - Comprised of the Associate Dean of Teacher Education, the Director of Clinical Experience, faculty members, members of the professional community, the Tk20 Unit administrator and the Post Baccalaureate Program Specialist.
- Assessment Committee
Advisory committee meetings for this academic year were held on October 14, 2011, and February 10, 2012. Thirty-five members attended this meeting. An agenda, minutes, and attendee records were available as evidence of compliance. The agenda and minutes reflect that the following were discussed: clinical practice, Code of Ethics, TK20 data system, NTAC, Admissions, Review, and Retention Committee, and the TEA monitoring visit. The second advisory committee meeting for the academic year was held on February 10, 2012. Minutes and agendas reflected discussion of the TDI (Teaching Dispositions Inventory), clinical practice, Texas Education Agency update, TK-20 yearly evaluation, Assessment Committee update, and revisions to the College of Education website. Minutes and agendas for the 2009-2010 academic year were also provided to verify continuous advisory committee involvement. Ninety-four point seven percent (94.7%) of the advisory committee members verified in their electronic questionnaire that they met a minimum of two times per academic year. The program meets the requirements for conducting a minimum of two advisory committee meetings per academic year as required by TAC §288.20(b).

Each member of the advisory committee was provided information on their Mission and Functions, Membership, and Leadership through a handout that was provided to TEA at the time of the compliance audit. Sixty-one point one percent (61.1%) of the advisory committee members reported that they do assist in the design; seventy percent (70%) indicated that they participated in policy decisions; and sixty-six point seven percent (66.7%) reported that they participated in the evaluation of the educator preparation program [228.20(b)]. Seventy-nine point three percent (79.3%) of the advisory committee indicated that review and discussion of field experiences were included as an agenda topic [TAC 228.35(d)].

The University of North Texas also has a clinical practice advisory committee consisting of 15 members with 11 members from the University and 4 members from school districts. The University also has an Assessment Committee.

Based on the evidence presented, University of North Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.20 – Governance of Educator Preparation Programs.

COMPONENT II: ADMISSION CRITERIA - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §227.10

FINDINGS:

According to University of North Texas’ website, to enter their teacher certification program, the candidate must meet the following criteria:

- Be a junior (60 credit hours earned);
- Have minimum THEA scores of 240 reading, 230 math, and 220 writing;
- Have a 2.75 overall GPA or a 2.75 GPA in the completed core;
• Complete a Teacher Education admission questionnaire;
• Be actively enrolled at UNT and have a degree plan completed or in process in the Student Advising Office;
• Submit an application either by mail or electronically [TAC §227.10(6)];
• Complete the Teacher Screening Interview;
• Meet with an advisor in the college of education

University of North Texas has policies in place that allows the program to consider a candidate’s work, business or career experience equivalent to the academic achievement represented by the GPA requirement [TAC 227.10(a)((3)(B)]. This policy along with policies on transfer students, withdrawal, probationary and standard certification was found in the University of North Texas Catalogue 2012 and on their website.

Out-of-country applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate competence in the English language by submission of an official minimum score of 79 on the computer-based IBT or 550 on the paper-based test or 213 on the computer based test on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) [TAC §230.11(b)(5)(C)]. The scores must be less than 2 years old. In addition, if the candidate has completed a degree at a non-English speaking university, the applicant must have his/her transcripts from an out-of-country non-English speaking university evaluated by an approved evaluation service [TAC §227.10(e)]. The transcript review is completed by UNT Admissions Office.

In a review of thirty candidates’ records, it was found that all required admission criteria was documented as required by TAC rule.

The self-report noted that no candidates were admitted with a grade point average of less than 2.5 overall or in the last 60 hours [TAC §227.10(a)(3)(B)].

The self-report submitted by University of North Texas stated that general information about their program and admission criteria could be found on their website, in their University catalogue. In addition, the University participates in career fairs, school and community college visits and makes brochures available for interested parties [TAC §227.10(a)(7)].

Based on the evidence presented, University of North Texas is in compliance with TAC §227 - Admission Criteria.

**COMPONENT III: CURRICULUM - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.30**

**FINDINGS:**

University of North Texas is approved to offer teacher certification in 41 certification fields, four supplemental fields, and eight professional classes. For the purpose of this compliance audit, the Bilingual Generalist EC-6 certification was selected for in-depth curriculum review.

University of North Texas has 13 instructors who assisted in course creation, presentation and facilitation. Their credentials were presented for review and it was verified that all the instructors have advanced degrees and ten out of thirteen have teaching credentials and public school experience.
In reviewing the University of North Texas curriculum syllabi and alignment charts, it was noted that the educator standards for the Generalist EC-6 were not the curricular basis for instruction as required by TAC §228.30(a). In reviewing the alignment charts for the Generalist EC-6 and the degree plans, it was noted that the candidate was given the choice of Art 1300, Music 2040 or Theatre 2340 in order to fulfill the requirements for the certification. However, according to the standards for the Generalist EC-6 certification, instruction in all of these areas must be provided to candidates. It must be noted that interdisciplinary activities are required in several methodology courses which require the incorporation of art, music, and theatre, however, direct instruction in these areas is not provided.

In further review of the curriculum, it was verified that the curriculum did not address the art, music, and theatre Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as required by TAC §228.30(a). Course syllabi and alignment charts for Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12 and the seventeen mandated topics were reviewed as well. The seventeen (17) subject matter topics were verified in the coursework as prescribed by TAC 228.30(b). Reading instruction is provided through EDRE 4860, 4850, 4450, and 4870. The seventeen topics were verified by locating the specific topics in the content of the coursework syllabi and in the alignment chart.

Assessments and assignments for the coursework are summarized in each course syllabi. While the assessments vary from course to course, types of assessments listed were quizzes, exams, essays, child observation records, lesson plan and activity development, and portfolio development. Many assessments involve the use of rubrics. The purpose of assessing student outcomes at UNT is not simply to collect data. The purpose is to use data to make informed decisions about needed changes to programs and the curriculum. To this end, the College of Education has developed matrices which align the UNT Conceptual Framework to Texas State Standards and National Specialized Professional Association (SPA) standards.

Matrices are used to link course assignments with specific learning objectives and standards. The matrices illustrate the assessments used for program monitoring, and how data at the course level can be mapped to program, general education, and university outcomes.

Student teachers were asked to respond to a series of questions prepared by TEA and sent to them electronically in order to verify aspects of the curriculum, the program’s delivery, and its effectiveness. Sixteen curriculum items were identified as scoring 90% or above in areas they felt well prepared. These included child and adolescent development (100%), theories of how people learn (100%), Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) structure and organization, TEKS content, how to develop a lesson (100%), using a variety of classroom assessments (97.4%), models and methodologies in classroom management (94.7%), Laws and Standards regarding special needs students (100%), standards and strategies for limited English proficient students (100%) and instructional technology in the classroom (100%). Candidates indicated that they would like more emphasis placed on the teacher’s responsibilities for administering the STAAR examination (21.4%), processes for curriculum development (15.8%), conducting parent conferences (15.8%), differentiating or changing instruction to meet individual student needs (15.8%), reading across the curriculum (15.8%), and methods for motivating students (15.8%). Seventy-three percent of the candidates indicated that they would recommend the University of North Texas’ teacher preparation program to others.

In responding to their questionnaire, the cooperating teachers expressed that they felt that the candidates were well prepared in using instructional technology in the classroom (92.8%), Texas Educator’s Code of Ethics (97.6%), child and adolescent development (97.6%), theories of how people learn (90.4%), TEKS (96.4%), and developing lessons (91.6%). They also
indicated that the candidates would benefit from more emphasis on reading strategies across the curriculum for all grade levels (13.4%), motivating students (13.3%), teachers’ responsibilities for administering the STAAR test (26.6%), process of curriculum development (19.5%), using formative assessments to diagnose student learning needs (24.4%), standards and teaching strategies for gifted and talented students (28.4%), standards and teaching standards for students with limited English proficiency (21%), and conducting parent conferences (25.3%).

The principals’ questionnaire reflected that the strength of the program is the quality of its candidates. The principals’ questionnaire also reflected the following:

Collaboration between program and school: Satisfactory – 33.3% Very Good – 37% Excellent – 25.9%

Concerns about training and preparation of candidates: yes – 16.7% no – 83.3%

Areas of candidate preparation:

- Classroom management: yes – 95.8% no – 4.2%
- Academic and behavioral needs of students with disabilities: yes – 83.3% no – 16.7%
- Communicating expectations for achievement and behavior: yes – 91.3% no – 8.7%
- Appropriate use of multi-media and technology to support and extend learning:
  yes – 90.9% no – 9.1%
- Addressing academic and behavioral needs of limited English proficient students:
  yes – 82.6% no – 17.4%
- Developing and interpreting formal and informal assessments:
  yes – 65.2% no – 34.8%

Based on evidence presented, University of North Texas is not in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.30 – Educator Preparation Curriculum.

COMPONENT IV: PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ONGOING SUPPORT - Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.35

FINDINGS:

Currently, the University of North Texas’ initial teacher preparation program is delivered in hybrid format. According to the self-report, the total program for elementary and middle school certification is 936 clock hours; secondary certification is 646 clock hours, and all level certification consists of 646 clock hours. All except six clock hours of test preparation is completed prior to student teaching. Candidate hours were verified by review of the candidates’ degree plans [TAC §228.35(a)(3)].

The thirty clock hours of field-based experiences prior to student teaching is required by TAC §228.35 (a)(3)(A). However, University of North Texas uses a professional development school format and requires from 55 to 300 clock hours of field-based experience depending upon the certification being sought. An observation log is kept by the candidate of their interactions in
the lab school run by the University or in other professional development school sites. For in-school observations, the candidate must record the date, activity, and length of time of the observation and the logs with the observed teacher’s signature.

Student teaching [TAC §228.35(d)(2)(B)] consists of fourteen weeks. Student teaching is completed during the student’s senior year as a full-day assignment in a school for an entire fall or spring term/semester in a Professional Development School (PDS) setting. Evidence was presented in the form of documentation in the individual candidates’ records and in the electronic records which recorded the campus where the candidate was placed and the field supervisor assigned to that candidate. Because University of North Texas uses the professional development school model, student teaching occurs only in an actual school setting rather than a distance learning lab or virtual school setting as prohibited by TAC §228.35(d)(2)(C)(ii). Candidates were provided handbooks for student teaching which included: UNT conceptual framework, objectives of the student teaching experience, student teaching policies, student teaching components, student teacher, mentor and field supervisor responsibilities, termination of student teaching assignment, and appeal procedure. In addition, in the appendix, there is additional information and forms for recommendation for observation of classroom, elementary, middle and high school pacing guide, Code of Ethics, student teacher growth plan and UNT contacts.

According to TAC §228.35(e), University of North Texas is responsible for providing cooperating teachers training that is scientifically–based or verify that training has been provided by a school district or education service center. The University of North Texas presented a handbook and has an online module for cooperating teachers. However, the program failed to keep records of the cooperating teachers who completed the training.

TAC §228.35(f) states that supervision of each candidate shall be conducted with the structured guidance and regular ongoing support of an experienced educator who has been trained as a field supervisor. There are 31 field supervisors who all have Texas certification and with five years of school experience. Most are retired educators. Their participation was verified by an electronic database which matched them with the candidates that they are to supervise. Training was provided for the field supervisors on August 2011. There was an agenda reflecting that the field supervisor expectations and responsibilities were covered. In addition, attendance records for the January 12th meeting were provided as evidence of compliance. Training is generally conducted twice per academic year, once in the fall and once in the spring semesters. In addition, field supervisors receive extensive training in the use of the North Texas Appraisal of Classroom Teaching instrument. The University seeks inter-rater reliability in the use of the observation instrument. Generally, eight to eleven student teachers are assigned to one field supervisor.

Initial contact by the field supervisor is made within the first three weeks of the assignment as required by TAC §228.35(f) in a face to face meeting with the candidate. Evidence of first contact was verified in a review of the candidates’ records and in review of the TK20 records. A total of three formal observations [TAC §228.35(f)(4)] must be conducted during the student teaching assignment and must be at least 45 minutes in duration [TAC §228.35(f)]. Documentation of four formal observations and one final evaluation was found in the candidates’ records and in the TK20 system which tracks observations. TAC §228.35(f) also states that the first observation must be conducted within the first six weeks of internship/clinical teaching. Evidence was available in the TK20 system and in the candidates’ records that the observations were conducted on the schedule prescribed by TAC.
The formal observation rubric was developed by the University of North Texas called NTACT (North Texas Appraisal of Classroom Teaching). The evaluation system was designed and validated in the DFW Metroplex, and is used to assess student teachers’ performance in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade classrooms. The observation instrument assesses general pedagogy and content pedagogy in science, math, social studies, language arts, physical education and special education areas. The observation rubric requires the beginning date of student teaching, the candidates’ TEA ID, the date of the observation, the beginning time, and the ending time of the observation, field supervisor comments and recommendations. There is a place for the field supervisor to type in a box to verify that there was an interactive conference following the observation [TAC §228.35(f)]. All of this data, copies and reports on observations and the one final evaluation, is captured and saved in the TK20 system. Student teacher feedback acknowledgment is available in the TK20 system. The candidate responds to a series of questions concerning the observation.

It is the responsibility of University of North Texas to provide a copy of the written feedback to the candidate’s campus administrator as required by TAC §228.35(f). The candidates’ observations are placed on the TK20 and each principal is provided an access to the TK20 system. According to the program, 20% of the principals log in to TK20 to run reports to view the evaluation of any candidate on their campus. Sixty percent of the principals responding to their questionnaire indicated that they did receive feedback on student teachers’ observations.

Additional informal observations and coaching were provided by the program as specified in TAC §228.35(f). When it is evident that a student teacher does not follow through with prescribed verbal and written suggestions for improvement, a formal Growth Plan is initiated by the university supervisor/cadre coordinator and mentor teacher and presented to the student teacher during a three-way conference. This contract is signed by the student teacher, the mentor teacher, and the university supervisor/cadre coordinator with copies submitted to the Director of Clinical Practice and the Admissions, Review, and Retention (ARR) Committee by mid semester (week 8) at the latest. Within one-week following the Growth Plan conference, the student teacher, mentor teacher, and university supervisor/cadre coordinator will confer to assess progress. If inadequate progress in teaching effectiveness and/or unprofessional conduct continues, a formal Probation Contract will be administered, with a clear time limit for compliance. A copy will be submitted to the school principal, the Director of Clinical Practice, and to the appropriate ARR Committee. Students also have all the rights, responsibilities, and avenues for appeal that are enumerated by the University of North Texas Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Based on evidence presented, University of North Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code Section §228.35 – Program Delivery and On-Going Support.

COMPONENT V: PROGRAM EVALUATION – Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §228.40

FINDINGS:

University of North Texas has a candidate benchmarking process as prescribed by TAC §228.40(a). Evidence presented to support candidate assessment was submitted in the self-report. The benchmark points are admission, entry into education courses, entry into clinical practice in an early field-based experience, exit from clinical practice or completion of student teaching, program completion, and after program completion.
Readiness for TEExES testing [TAC §228.40(b)] is determined by the candidates’ meeting four criteria. They must be actively pursuing certification at UNT; admitted to the teacher education program, enrolled at UNT for the current semester; and be recommended by the program for testing. TEExES testing should be completed during the candidate’s early-field experience semester or the long semester or summer session immediately prior to student teaching.

Evaluation of the program’s design and delivery of the curriculum should be continuous per TAC §228.40(c). Information such as performance data, scientifically-based research practices, and the results of internal and external assessments should be included in the evaluation process. The University submitted an overall Plan for Evaluation in their self-report which detailed the indicator, program’s measurement tool/procedures, the timeline for data collection, and the personnel responsible. In addition, the University has an Assessment Manual which outlines the transition points, monitoring candidate progress, key assessments and alignment with standards, assessment of unit operations, yearly data review cycle, data collection, analysis and use. Data used to evaluate Unit operations may include assessments of candidate performance, descriptive data, and surveys. The evaluations and surveys used to gather information are revised, when necessary, to reflect the unit’s mission and philosophy, and to be sure they reflect the extent to which the unit is meeting the learning expectations stated in the conceptual framework. Also, effectiveness of advisement, record keeping, the admissions system, student teaching placement, and governance structures are assessed and modified as needed to improve unit operation. The following are reviewed to determine the satisfaction with the operation of the unit:

- Follow-up data from candidates (Alumni Surveys, Principal Surveys)
- Follow-up data from departments
- Performance of candidates in clinical experiences (NTACT)
- Candidate evaluation of instruction, courses, and clinical experience supervision (SETE, Mentor Teacher and University Supervisor Evaluations, Post-Baccalaureate Survey)
- Program and student teacher admission data
- Formal candidate complaints (ARR)
- Due process policies (ARR)
- Annual Evaluation of faculty and administration
- External university and program reviews (Board of Regents, NCATE, professional organizations, etc)
- Internal program reviews by departments, schools, colleges, and University

According to TAC §228.40(d), the program will retain documents that evidence a candidate’s eligibility for admission to the program and evidence of completion of all program requirements for a period of five years after program completion. University of North Texas provided evidence of compliance by demonstrating their secure electronic record keeping system. In addition, hard copies of records are kept in a safe and secure environment. Records are retained for a period of five years.

Based on evidence presented, University of North Texas is in compliance with Texas Administrative Code §228.40 – Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement.
COMPONENT VI: Professional Conduct (TAC) §228.50

TAC §228.50(a) states that during the period of preparation, the educator preparation entity shall ensure that the individuals preparing candidates and the candidates themselves demonstrate adherence to Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators’ Code of Ethics). Candidates were provided instruction in the Texas Code of Ethics through their coursework.

Twice each academic year, the UNT Teacher Education Council discusses changes to the Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics (if applicable). Field Experience Supervisors review the Student Teaching Handbook during the Supervisor Training meetings. The Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics is located in the Student Teacher Handbook. Updates are provided as they are received from TEA.

Senate Bill 174/Texas Administrative Code §229

Current Accreditation Status
University of North Texas currently has a status of “Accredited”.

Standard I: Results of Certification Exams

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Program Recommendations:
The following are recommendations based on the findings of the Texas Education Agency. If the program is NOT in compliance with any identified component, consult the Texas Administrative
Code and correct the issue IMMEDIATELY. A Compliance Status Report will be required every sixty days until the compliance issues are totally corrected.

Program recommendations are suggestions for general program improvement and no follow up is required.

**PROGRAM COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**TAC §228.30 Program Curriculum**
- Provide instruction addressing the education standards and TEKS for art, music, and theatre in the Generalist EC-6 curriculum. This should be implemented as soon as possible.

**TAC §228.35 Program Delivery and Ongoing Support**
- Maintain documentation of training for mentor/cooperating teachers. This should begin September 1, 2012.

**GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Component I. Recommendations:**
- Split the advisory committee into two separate committees with one being composed primarily of school district, education service center, business and community, with fewer members from higher education in order to facilitate more discussion among members and to provide more input from the stakeholders from outside of the University.
- Provide advisory committee annually
- Seek ways to conduct advisory committee meetings involving the stakeholders such as through online meetings, conference calls, Skype, etc.

**Component IV Recommendations:**
- Have students sign a FERPA agreement allowing the program to share information with the cooperating teacher/mentor and district administration;
- Update the Code of Ethics in the clinical teaching handbook and the internship teaching handbook and in any coursework material;
- Award campus cooperating teachers/mentors with CPE credit for working with teacher candidate both in PDS1 and PDS2;
- Deliver the results of the formal observations to the campus principal or his/her designee. Do not require that the principal seek the observation results from the University.

**General Recommendations:**
- Follow Texas Administrative Code in order to keep up with changes to rules that pertain to the operation of the teacher education program and certification of educators;
- Participate in stakeholder meetings on Texas Administrative Code for rule revision
- Ensure that you are using the revised 2010 Code of Ethics