# PLAN FOR THE EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES


# COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This document represents a plan for conducting a continuous and systematic evaluation of programs and services in the College of Education. The evaluation plan sets forth a series of broad guidelines that direct information collection and dissemination efforts. All evaluation activities are directly relevant to the overall mission of the College of Education and the preparation of leaders in the 21st Century. The college mission is presented below:

> The mission…is to educate competent, ethical, and caring professionals who are committed to improving the human condition through enhancing teaching and learning, physical and mental health, and leadership. Through research, scholarship, and partnerships with schools and human service organizations, the college is committed to developing effective approaches to address problems and issues in professional fields. Within the context of our mission, the college seeks to promote diversity among students and faculty, and within the curriculum.

The evaluation plan is directly related to this mission statement and the ten dimensions that undergird the College of Education Conceptual Model. Since this mission statement and the dimensions define the desired characteristics of candidates who graduate from the college, they form the basis for this plan and define the information collection opportunities that have been identified. These dimensions are presented below.

**Leadership:** Graduates should possess the personal and professional qualities that enable them to work constructively within schools and agencies in creating the leaning communities that foster the growth and development of all learners.

**General Knowledge:** Graduates us the knowledge and skills acquired in the university's general education core, relate studies in the general education core to professional practice, and continually improve upon this knowledge-base and these skills in their own professional development.

**Content Knowledge:** Graduates understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) they teach and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of the subject matter meaningful for students.

**Professional Practice:** Graduates should be able to plan learning opportunities based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community and curriculum goals. They should understand and a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills and use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. Graduates should be able to use technology to enhance the learning of students. They should understand and be able to use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of learners.

**Diversity:** Graduates should understand how students differ in their approach to learning, be able to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners and be committed to serving a rapidly changing, expanding and increasingly diverse society.

**Collaboration:** Graduates should recognize the importance of collaboration in professional practice and possess knowledge of verbal, nonverbal and media communication techniques, along with human relation skills, necessary to foster collaboration and supportive interaction in the classroom, and build relationships with school colleagues, parents, and individuals/agencies in the community so that student learning and well-being are enhanced.

**Reflective Practice:** Graduates should be reflective practitioners who continually seek to raise questions, critically analyze the effects of their own practice on others (students, parents and other professionals in the learning community), and develop creative solutions to educational dilemmas and concerns.

**Lifelong Learning:** Graduates should actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally (on a formal and informal basis) through interactions with professional colleagues, the professional literature and other learning resources. Graduates should demonstrate a commitment to their own continuing professional development and the development of the profession.

**Caring:** Graduates should have an appreciation for the talents of all learners, a belief that all students can learn, and a commitment to using individual strengths to help students develop self-confidence and competence. In addition, graduates should demonstrate a commitment to active, ethical involvement in the community and profession.

**Critical Thinking:** Graduates from the College of Education should be critical thinkers, who are committed to self-assessment and critical reflection as an important element in creative problem solving, and professional decision-making.

This evaluation plan is based on several assumptions about evaluation, evaluative information, and the process of organizational change. These assumptions are summarized below.

The plan is based on the assumption that evaluation is an ongoing, critical component of the program development process and that both formative and summative evaluative information should be available. Evaluation is essential for the improvement of existing programs and in making decisions about whether programs should be continued. Evaluation is viewed as an ongoing process in this plan, rather than as a static activity. Each year, a cycle of evaluation activities should occur that provides this continuous flow of information back to the decision-makers. While regularity is important, the plan is also based on the assumption that evaluation needs change. This plan is, therefore, subject to change and/or modification on a regular basis.

The evaluation plan is also based on the assumption that evaluative information must be useful to the various stakeholder groups. This requires that multiple data sources be targeted and that a variety of information collection techniques should be used. Rather than relying on a single type of assessment process, the plan incorporates multiple data sources and a variety of assessment approaches. The plan is organized around the collection of data related to three primary target groups; candidates, recent graduates, and other education professionals. A number of different information collection strategies are recommended.

Finally, the plan is based on the assumption that when properly presented, evaluative data represent a powerful force for bringing about organizational change. Evaluative information is only effective, however, to the extent to which it is relevant, timely and understandable to those in the college. The critical part of this process is the careful feedback of information to faculty and staff. The careful and timely analysis and presentation of evaluation results are considered essential.

## OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The evaluation activities represented in this plan are organized around the collection of information from candidates, alumni, and other professional groups within the community. Candidate evaluation includes that collection of perceptual information through candidate written surveys and focus groups. Standardized examinations are also used to look at candidate performance. Alumni of both undergraduate and graduate programs represent a very important source of evaluative information. In this plan, alumni perceptions of programs and services are assessed primarily through the use of mail surveys. There are many other stakeholder groups that have unique perspectives on College of Education programs and services. This plan identifies employers, advisory councils, and other community members as important sources of information. Information is collected from these stakeholder groups through the use of focus group discussions, mail surveys, and committee deliberations.

## CANDIDATE EVALUATIONS

Candidate perceptions of college programs and services are very important to the success of the College of Education. These are assessed through a number of different formats, such as the Student Assessment of Instruction, Informational Focus Groups, and the Enrolled Student Survey. Likewise, the aggregate results of standardized testing of students provides a wealth of information about program strengths and weaknesses. Standardized testing information is collected from administration of the CBASE, PRAXIS I, and PRAXIS II examinations. Candidate portfolio assessments also provide information on the extent to which candidates are able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills that undergird the college conceptual model.

### Student Assessment of Instruction

**Purpose:** The Student Assessment of Instruction form is used to collect information about the quality of courses and instruction at East Tennessee State University. All faculty members in the College of Education are evaluated by candidates in the spring and fall semesters. Candidates are asked to rate the course content, the teaching ability of the instructor, and the course in general. These ratings are scored by the Office of Computer Services. This office also generates reports for each instructor, for departments, and the entire college. The ratings have both a formative and summative purpose. The ratings are formative since the results of the teaching evaluations are used to identify areas where improvement is needed at the level of the individual instructor, course or department. The evaluations are, therefore, linked to the Faculty Activity Planning process. Instructors are encouraged to talk with chairs about these evaluations so that adjustments can be made in classroom practices and faculty development plans formulated. Trends in student evaluations over time are particularly useful.

Candidate evaluation data are also used in making decisions about the instructional effectiveness of individual instructors (summative evaluation) and are included as evidence when making decisions about merit pay, promotion or tenure.

When aggregated, student assessments of instruction present useful information about quality of instruction within departments.

**Data Collection Procedure:** The guidelines for administering the Student Assessment of Instruction and a copy of the instrument are found in Appendix A. The instrument includes 21 core questions and spaces for 19 additional questions that may be added by a department or college. The questionnaires are sent out to the classes that have been identified. The completed evaluation forms are sent to the Office of Computer Services for scoring.

**Timing:** During the ninth week of the fall and spring semesters, faculty are asked to identify two classes in which they would like to be evaluated. The process is coordinated by the departments. The appropriate number of forms for the identified courses are prepared. The actual evaluations occur during the $12^{th}$ and $13^{th}$ weeks of the semester. Forms are distributed in classes, collected and sent back to the Office of Computer Services for scoring. Candidates' copy of the instrument and guidelines for administration are found in Appendix A.

**Dissemination:** In the semester following the evaluation, the Office of Computer Services sends computerized summaries of the evaluations back to the department chairs. Two copies are sent; one that is given to the faculty member and one for the department. The actual written comments are given to the faculty member after they are reviewed by the chair.

## Informal Focus Groups With Candidates

**Purpose:** The college sponsors informal focus groups with candidates to gain candidate perceptions of the college environment, their programs, and other college-related issues. These sessions are not only useful in gaining evaluation information about college programs and services, but they also serve as a very important vehicle for improving communication between students and faculty. Initial focus groups have provided a forum for students and faculty members to talk about the new program changes in the college and have helped students have input into the design of new programs. In some cases, these group meetings have been used to share information with students.

**Data Collection Procedure:** Meetings are accessible to candidates in all programs and are available for candidates who attend either in the daytime or at night. Sessions are held for candidates in both undergraduate and graduate programs. Each focus group meeting has a facilitator and someone to take notes. The questions addressed in the focus group are predetermined and are presented by the focus group facilitator. When possible and when permission is given from all respondents, the session is recorded. The questions change from semester to semester as issues emerge. The sessions are facilitated by a representative from the Dean's Office.

**Timing:** The scheduling of these group meetings is flexible, although they occur close to the middle of the fall (October) and spring (March) semester.

**Dissemination:** The results of the focus group sessions are reported back to the Dean of the College of Education and the Council of Chairs. The format of the report is either written or oral.

## Enrolled Student Survey

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Enrolled Student Survey is to gain an understanding of how enrolled students feel about the quality of their experiences at ETSU. The survey is administered by the Office of Outcomes Assessment to a sample of students from across the campus, including candidates from the College of Education. College of Education candidates are asked to rate the quality of their academic, social, and cultural experiences at the university. They also evaluate the quality of college programs and services, the quality of interactions with faculty, the quality of experiences within the major and the overall impact of the college experience on their personal life. Results from the survey provide a wealth of evaluative information.

**Data Collection Procedure:** The survey consists of 77 close-ended questions and two open-ended questions about the quality of student life at ETSU. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix B. A 25% sample of all classes, stratified by level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), is drawn. The survey is administered in the selected classes to all students in the class. The results are tabulated and reports are written by staff from the Office of Outcomes Assessment or provided directly to the Associate Dean of the COE. Since the data are used as a performance funding measure for the state, the sample must represent at least 15% of the total university enrollment. This sampling process results in a substantial number of College of Education candidates who are surveyed.

**Timing:** The survey is administered to undergraduate students in the spring of odd numbered years (1999, 2001, etc.) by the Office of Outcomes Assessment. The sample is drawn during February and the data collection occurs in March.

**Dissemination:** The Office of Outcomes Assessment prepares written reports that are presented to the Tennessee Board of Regents for performance funding purposes. The responses of candidates from the College of Education are presented in written report format, to the Dean of the college. These results are then brought back to the Administrative Team. Department chairs distribute the information to the faculty. Staff from the Office of Outcomes Assessment also present the findings to college faculty.

**College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE)**

**Purpose:** The College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE) is administered to all students at ETSU who are graduating from an undergraduate program. The CBASE is administered by those in the Office of Outcomes Assessment. The exam is completed after finishing the general education portion of the curriculum and prior to graduation. This examination measures student performance on the following general education dimensions: English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Results of the CBASE are provided for the college by the Office of Outcomes Assessment. They provide a picture of how College of Education students compare to students from other colleges and other universities, in terms of their general education.

**Data Collection Procedure:** Each semester the Office of Outcomes Assessment sends out a letter informing eligible undergraduate students that they should take the CBASE examination along with a schedule of testing times. Students decide when to take the test. Staff from the ETSU Testing Center oversee the administration of the examination at a centralized testing site.

**Timing:** The CBASE is administered once during the fall and spring semesters at a time and place that is determined by the Office of Outcomes Assessment.

**Dissemination:** The Office of Outcomes Assessment prepares written reports. The responses of candidates from the College of Education are presented, in written report format, to the Dean of the college. These results are then brought back to the Council of Chairs, who distribute the information to faculty.

## Standardized Testing of Candidates—PRAXIS I: Academic Skills Assessment

**Purpose:** Each year standardized testing information is obtained for students who are seeking entrance into and licensure in various programs.  These test results represent a very important source of evaluative information about students and the relative strengths and weaknesses of programs.  The PRAXIS I: Academic Skills Assessment, specifically the PPST or the CBT, is required of students seeking admission into the College of Education.  These tests measure aptitude in reading, writing and mathematics.  For the PPST the minimum required scores for entrance into the college are 174 in reading, 173 in writing, and 173 in mathematics.  For the CBT the minimum scores are 321 in reading, 319 in writing, and 318 in mathematics.  Students receiving a score of 1020 on the SAT or 22 on the enhanced ACT are not required to take either the PPST or CBT prior to admission into Teacher Education.

**Data Collection Procedure:** The PPST and CBT are administered through the ETSU Testing Center or candidates can elect to take them at other selected test administration sites.  Score reports are returned to ETSU.

**Timing:** Candidates arrange to take the PPST or CBT prior to applying for admission into programs.

**Dissemination:** Reports are provided to the institution from Educational Testing Service.  The data are compiled in the Dean's Office and a written summary is provided to the Administrative Team.

## Standardized Testing of Candidates—PRAXIS II: Core Battery and Subject Tests

**Purpose:** The PRAXIS II: Core Battery is required for licensure in the state of Tennessee. These tests provides information about the professional knowledge of ETSU candidates.  The PRAXIS II: Subject Tests are also required for state licensure in most areas of endorsement. These tests are administered to candidates to measure their understanding of a specific discipline.

**Data Collection Procedure:** The PRAXIS II Examinations are administered through the ETSU Center or candidates can elect to take them at other selected test administration sites.  Score reports are returned to ETSU.

**Timing:** Candidates take these examinations prior to applying for a license.  Beginning in the Fall, 2001, candidates will be required to have passed the tests prior to student teaching.

**Dissemination:** Reports of ETSU College of Education candidate performance on the PRAXIS II: Core Battery and Subject Tests are provided to departments for analysis.  These assessments have provided valuable information on how well students are performing in particular areas,through analysis of subtest scores.

## Candidate Portfolio Assessment

**Purpose:** Candidates admitted to the College, beginning with the Fall, 1995 semester, were required to develop a portfolio that highlights accomplishments made during their enrollment. This portfolio is developed around the ten core dimensions underlying the College of Education conceptual model.  In some programs, Interdisciplinary Studies, for instance, the College's conceptual framework has been merged with INTASC standards. The purpose of the portfolio is to provide authentic evidence that a candidate has demonstrated the knowledge and skills associated with the ten dimensions.

**Data Collection Procedure:** The development of the portfolio begins in EDFN 2100 and continues until the candidate graduates from the program. At various points in the program, checks or assessments of the portfolio occur. At each checkpoint, candidates are asked to include several required entries in the portfolio and a number of selected entries that demonstrate that they have mastered the knowledge and skills associated with the ten dimensions.

**Timing:** The portfolio assessment process assures that candidate progress is checked periodically throughout a program of study using a variety of assessment formats.

**Dissemination:** At the end of each semester the results of the portfolio assessments are summarized and reported to the program faculty.

## EVALUATIONS OF RECENT GRADUATES

Alumni also represent a very important stakeholder group whose perceptions of college programs and services are essential to the success of the college. Information is primarily collected from this group through the use of mail surveys.

### Tennessee Teacher Education Follow-Up Survey

**Purpose:** TheTennessee Teacher Education Follow-Up Survey is statewide survey of graduates from Tennessee's teacher education institutions. The survey has been administered annually since 1992 and East Tennessee State University has participated in each of the cycles. The survey process is coordinated at the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) at the University of Memphis. An advisory has been established at the University of Memphis to review the purposes and procedures of the survey. Members of this advisory committee include representatives from several teacher education institutions, the State Board of Education, the Tennessee Department of Education, the Tennessee Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (TACTE), and the Tennessee Education Association.

This advisory committee initially developed the guidelines for the survey, data collection process and reporting procedures. With each subsequent cycle of the survey the committee has solicited input on the structure of the process from survey participants and other stakeholder groups. Each year, all teacher education institutions are invited to participate in the survey. The primary goal of the survey is to provide follow-up data on beginning teachers who graduate and seek licensure from our programs.

**Data Collection Procedure:** The instrument used statewide is a closed-ended questionnaire containing items pertaining to respondent demographic characteristics, employment setting and areas of endorsement. Respondents are also asked to rate their level of preparation in general education, subject matter, professional teaching knowledge, teacher education program teaching skills. At ETSU, a separate open-ended response form has been included with the closed-ended questionnaire since 1994. A copy of the instrument used in this study is provided in Appendix D.

**Timing:** The annual survey begins in March of each year when the institution is contacted by the University of Memphis and the data collection process is set in motion. The survey is sent to all graduates of the teacher education programs who had graduated and been licensed between July 1 and June 30 of the previous year. These students respond during the months of April and May. Student responses are sent to the University of Memphis for scoring and an annual report is returned to the university from the University of Memphis. The data are collected by the institution following a protocol prepared at the University of Memphis. All students who sought licensure at ETSU are included in the survey. The following groups responded to the surveys in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999:

| Target Group For: | Those Who Sought Licensure Between: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 Survey | July 1, 1993 | and | June 30, 1994 |
| 1996 Survey | July 1, 1994 | and | June 30, 1995 |
| 1997 Survey | July 1, 1995 | and | June 30, 1996 |
| 1998 Survey | July 1, 1996 | and | June 30, 1997 |
| 1999 Survey | July 1, 1997 | and | June 30, 1998 |

The next five years will see the survey administered as follows:

| Target Group For: | Those Who Sought Licensure Between: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 Survey | July 1, 1998 | and | June 30, 1999 |
| 2001 Survey | July 1, 1999 | and | June 30, 2000 |
| 2002 Survey | July 1, 2000 | and | June 30, 2001 |
| 2003 Survey | July 1, 2001 | and | June 30, 2002 |
| 2004 Survey | July 1, 2002 | and | June 30, 2003 |

In each of the years, the initial mailing has been followed up by a second mailing to nonrespondents who are identified by a code that is placed on the return envelope.

**Dissemination:** Yearly reports are provided from the University of Memphis for each of the survey years. The yearly data are also compiled by the Associate Dean, College of Education. Departments used the data to examine long-term trends in order to guide program improvement efforts.

In addition to the yearly report from the University of Memphis, a longitudinal databases is also kept in the College of Education and reports of a longitudinal nature are generated from the Dean's Office. The results of this survey are provided to college faculty through the departmental chairs. These data are particularly useful in looking at changes in students' perceptions of the teacher education program over time.

**<u>College of Education Alumni Surveys: Graduate Programs</u>**

**Purpose:** The <u>College of Education Alumni Survey</u> is a survey of all graduates of gradaute programs offered by the College of Education. It is used to assess satisfaction with the program's content and processes as well as to evaluate satisfaction with university services.

**Data Collection Procedure:** The primary goal of the survey is to provide data from program graduates on the quality of programs and services. The instrument used is primarily a closed-ended questionnaire containing items pertaining to respondent demographic characteristics, academic characteristics, and employment settings. A copy of the instrument is provided in Appendix E. Respondents are also asked to rate the level of quality of the graduate program, their level of knowledge and skill in particular areas, their level of satisfaction with facilities/services, and the contribution of the program to their educational/professional development. Several questions also allow alumni to make narrative comments about the program.

**Timing:** The survey is administered in odd numbered years to the gradautes of the previous two years.

**Dissemination:** The results of the survey are provided to department chairs, who in turn share them with departmental faculty and program advisory groups.

**ETSU Alumni Survey**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Alumni Survey is to gain an understanding of how graduates of ETSU feel about the quality of their experiences at the university. The survey is administered by the Office of Outcomes Assessment to every student who graduated from an undergraduate program at ETSU two years prior to the year in which the assessment is conducted. College of Education alumni are asked to rate the quality of their academic, social, and cultural experiences at the university. They also evaluate the quality of college programs and services, the quality of interactions with faculty, the quality of experiences within the major and the overall impact of the college experience on their personal and professional life. Results from the survey provide a wealth of evaluative information about programs and services.

**Data Collection Procedure: The** survey consists of 85 close-ended questions and two open-ended questions about the quality of student life at ETSU. A copy of the survey instrument survey instrument is provided in Appendix F. The survey is mailed out in the spring of even numbered years. The following schedule guides the data collection efforts:

| Target Group For: | | Those Who Graduated During: |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | Alumni Survey | Summer, 1997; Fall, 1997; Spring, 1998 |
| 2002 | Alumni Survey | Summer, 1999; Fall, 1999; Spring, 2000 |
| 2004 | Alumni Survey | Summer, 2001; Fall, 2001; Spring, 2002 |

A postcard reminder is sent to those who have not responded after two weeks. The results are tabulated and reports are written by staff from the Office of Outcomes Assessment. Since the data are used as a performance funding measure for the state, the sample must represent at least 40% of the total university number of graduates. All College of Education candidates who graduated during the target time periods are surveyed.

**Timing:** The mail survey is administered to undergraduate students in the spring of even numbered years (2000,2002) by the Office of Outcomes Assessment. The sample is drawn during February and the data collection occurs in March.

**Dissemination:** The Office of Outcomes Assessment prepares written reports that are presented to the Tennessee Board of Regents for performance funding purposes. The responses of candidates from the College of Education are presented, in written report format, to the Dean of the college. These results are then brought back to the Council of Chairs, who distribute the information to the faculty. Staff from the Office of Outcomes Assessment also present the findings to college faculty.

## EVALUATIONS OF OTHER PROFESSIONALS

### Employer Surveys

**Purpose:** Every two years an Employer Survey is conducted to obtain written responses of employers to questions about the quality of graduates from the College of Education and their level of preparation. Information gleaned from these employer surveys have also been helpful in identifying areas where improvement is needed.

**Data Collection Procedure**: A mail survey is sent out to superintendents from area school systems. A copy of the most recent survey instrument is provided in Appendix G.

**Timing:** The survey is sent out during the month of November of odd numbered years (1999, 2001, 2003, etc.)

**Dissemination:** The Associate Dean, College of Education prepares a written report that is presented to the Dean. These results are then presented to the Administrative Team who distribute the information to faculty.

### Advisory Committees

**Purpose:** A number of advisory committees and councils provide a tremendous amount of evaluative information on college programs and services. Each committee has a different function and area of focus and these are identified in the relevant documents describing each. Each is, however, charged with providing information about such things as current needs in the field of practice, community perceptions of our programs, student concerns and needs, or university-wide concerns about college programs and services. The Teacher Education Council has broad-based representation higher from the education faculty (both College of Education and other colleges), school faculty, administrators, and students and is charged with evaluating programs and arid services related to teacher education. This body also approves curriculum changes in the college. This council meets of a monthly basis during the academic year. The Dean's Student Advisory Council is made up of currently enrolled students and provides information related to programs and services from the student perspective. The College of Education Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives from a broad range of community leaders, local business leaders, legislative officials, and school leaders. This committee meets biannually and provides valuable information about the community perceptions of the College of Education. The department chairs, along with the Assistant and Associate Deans, the Director of Student Teaching, Director of the Center for Early Childhood Education, Director of Educational Technology and Professional Advisor, comprise the Administrative Team. This group also provides evaluative information about college-wide concerns and interests. Finally, most programs within the College of Education have a program specific advisory committee made up of faculty, students, practitioners, and community representatives that provides valuable feedback to departments that is program specific. This information is used by departments to regularly enhance programs and course offerings. These program specific advisory committees are seen as valuable resources that help keep programs responsive to the needs of the profession.

**Data Collection Procedure:** Information collection occurs during the normal course of committee operations. Minutes are kept by each of the committees. These minutes represent the evaluative record from the committee.

**Timing:** Each committee establishes its own schedule for meeting.

**Dissemination:** Each of the committees makes reports to either the Department Chair or Dean of the college, depending on the nature of the advisory council.

The College of Education has made significant strides in designing an evaluation plan that will provide timely data from candidates, alumni, other educational professionals. The key to the success of any evaluation effort is the extent to which the information is communicated by to stakeholders, who can then act on the information. It is, therefore, critical that the flow of evaluative information to the Dean of the College of Education be timely. The Administrative Team should likewise be provided evaluative information in a timely manner. When at all possible, evaluation reports should be presented to college faculty at regular college-wide faculty meetings or at departmental meetings. Relevant information should also be communicated to advisory councils or committees. It is only with this type of data-based evaluative information that decision-makers can make the "best" decisions to guide the college. The systematic evaluation of programs and services is essential if the college is to effectively prepare educational leaders in the 21st century.