Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Academic Year 2011-2012 Assessment Report

Departmental Overview

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction offers a focused, field-based teacher preparation program and a full range of graduate programs. Collaboration, diversity, and curricular integration are themes that guide the design and instruction of each of our programs.

Our Bachelor of Arts program for Elementary Education majors and Secondary licensure students reflect our commitment to the development of teachers who meet exemplary standards in academics and service. It is our goal to prepare students for the realities of the teaching profession. Initial licensure is also an option in the Master’s degree program at both Elementary and Secondary levels.

We offer a variety of programs aimed at endorsement or certification in specialty areas, including Business & Information Technology Education, Special Education, Library Media, and Literacy Studies. We have a number of opportunities for Post-Baccalaureate study.

Our Masters and Doctoral programs both emphasize the development of master teachers and curriculum leaders within schools and districts. The Master’s program may be combined with initial licensure for post baccalaureate students seeking to become K-12 teachers. The Doctoral program, in particular, prepares curriculum specialists and university faculty.

The faculty in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction are themselves licensed, experienced K-12 classroom teachers. They provide a wide range of service to the schools of Montana and are active researchers in their specialty fields.

Mission Statement

Faculty in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction are professional educators skilled in preparing teachers and other school personnel to foster the academic, cognitive, social, and ethical development of children and youth in Montana and throughout the nation. As members of a learning community, we seek to ensure that all educators understand how to support students from a variety of socio-economic, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds. In particular it is imperative that our graduates are knowledgeable about teaching Native American students.

Department Objectives

- Provide quality, up to date, and evidence-based programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
• Prepare professionals who understand how contextual elements such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and socio-economic status (SES) interact with the learning process and who are able to use this knowledge to make effective instructional decisions for all students.
• Prepare professionals with the knowledge to analyze and develop research that is relevant to PK-12 education.
• Work collaboratively with university and K-12 community partners to develop and refine programs to be as efficient as possible while maintaining high standards of rigor and quality.
• Work collaboratively with PK-16 partners to decrease the achievement gap and increase retention rates in both high school and university settings.

**Student Learning Goals and Measurement Tools**

Our programs operate within a conceptual framework ([http://coehs.umt.edu/deanoffice/accred/ncate/conceptualframework/CF%20FINAL%2010-11.pdf](http://coehs.umt.edu/deanoffice/accred/ncate/conceptualframework/CF%20FINAL%2010-11.pdf)) that highlights three central premises: integration of ideas, cooperative endeavors, and respect for diversity. Associated with each of the central premises are nine performance outcomes by which students are formally assessed during three different in-program clinical experiences, and in post-graduation follow-up surveys and employer surveys.

**Integration of Ideas**

**Performance Outcome #1:** Demonstrates knowledge of the disciplines and subject matter related to curriculum.

**Performance Outcome #2:** Designs interdisciplinary and discrete subject area instruction to achieve curriculum goals.

**Performance Outcome #3:** Uses appropriate technologies and resources to enhance instruction and student performance.

**Performance Outcome #4:** Engages students in learning activities that promote critical and creative thinking.

**Cooperative Endeavors**

**Performance Outcome #5:** Implements instructional and behavioral management strategies to promote a safe and positive learning environment.

**Performance Outcome #6:** Communicates clearly, accurately, and professionally with students and their families, colleagues, and community members.
Respect for Diversity

**Performance Outcome #7:** Selects and designs appropriate and authentic means of assessing student learning and progress.

**Performance Outcome #8:** Designs and organizes learning environments to accommodate learners.

**Performance Outcome #9:** Reflects on professional responsibilities and demonstrates commitment to fairness and the ability of all to learn.

**Results and Modifications**

Recently, we developed the Educator Preparation Assessment System (E-PAS) to improve our data collection, data review, and program transformation process. There are data from many educator preparation programs across UM housed in E-PAS, but data specific to our programs are easily accessible. E-PAS can be found here:

http://coehs.umt.edu/deanoffice/accred/ncate/assessmentsystem/default.php

Reported next are the results and proposed changes specific to our elementary education program. Results from our assessments indicate that a variety of stakeholders (cooperating teachers, university supervisor, employers, and faculty) consistently score our student’s favorably relative to our nine performance outcomes.

Performance data for our elementary majors across three different clinical experiences, dating back to 2007 can be found here:

http://coehs.umt.edu/deanoffice/accred/ncate/standard1/rptFieldExperienceForMajorELED.pdf

Please note: Missing data for the most recent years is due to the matriculation of students who not yet completed those experiences.

Results from our follow-up survey for elementary education majors can be found here:


Please note: Within this survey, students assess our program as a whole. More specifically, they also assess themselves regarding their performance on our nine performance outcomes after they have been professional educators. This allows us to examine *change over time* and to have better confidence in the areas we have decided to target for improvement (to be addressed in the next section).
Results from the professionals who employ our students can be found here:


Please note: Also, this survey of employers also assesses the performance of our graduate relative to our nine performance outcomes and gives us critical insights through a more objective lens that allows us to make programmatic improvement.

**Future Plans for Continued Assessment**

C&I has invested resources to improve our program based on these data. Specifically, it became clear during our last accreditation review that skills in classroom management are weakness of our students. Since we have long-offered a course that combined exceptionalities and classroom management, we made the decision to offer an additional, clinically-based classroom management course. It is too earlier to make a clear determination of the impact, but we are confident that more instructional time—in addition to hands-on practice—will prove to be effective.

Additionally, based on our ongoing data collection, we have submitted a proposal to reconstruct our elementary education program. This proposal will allow us to permanently address our areas of weakness in classroom management and assessment of student learning. The data collection and review process has set us on the course to have a leading-edge program that stands to be a model for the country. Next, other assessment related improvements are addressed.

**Other Assessment-related Improvements**

A focus on the quality of the data collected has resulted in the use of rubrics across multiple sections for courses in Technology, Classroom Management, and Ethics. Overall, data for these courses have been compiled for about 75% of the candidates. In the next year, that number will is projected to increase to 100%. This improvement will continue to help link candidate outcomes to coursework, monitor individual candidate progress, and provide more meaningful and consistent data for programmatic decision-making.

A series of teacher effectiveness pilot projects have been launched over the past two years. The major focus of each of these pilots was to have teacher candidates, while in various clinical settings, conduct a basic study to determine the effectiveness of their teaching. While we conducted pilots in some secondary licensure programs, our main thrust thus far has been in our elementary mathematics methods course. This has been a successful pilot project with the most interesting finding being a correlation between the amount of time a candidate has spent in the classroom and the effect on student performance.

Next, a series of studies is planned that will allow further refinement of the assessment system and make better decisions about which assessments should be replaced or retained. Examples
include studies that examine the relationship between the Classroom Management Key Assessment and scores on the evaluation from the three clinical experiences (Are there significant differences in candidate scores on classroom management before and after they take a course on classroom management?). Another study that will be conducted is an investigation of Technology Key Assessment and how that assessment relates to clinical evaluations specific to instructional and behavior management (Do candidates who have high scores on using technology in the classroom do better at managing instructional and behavioral environments?). These applied research projects—conducted by program faculty—will help determine validity and reliability and generate continuous improvement.

Finally, in concert with major changes in the licensure programs, C&I is increasing the focus on and integration of assessments across courses. In addition, a capstone experience completed during student teaching will be implemented. This capstone project (with a working title of “Candidate Impact Documentary”) will have foci on research, assessment, technology, classroom management and teacher effectiveness. It will have some component of a Teacher Work Sample and the Teacher Performance Assessment. The element that makes this capstone outstanding is the additional experience of developing a video production that will serve as the final product for the candidate’s respective program. A key feature of this capstone will be to highlight teaching effectiveness. It will also serve as a step toward candidates’ developing teaching skills in virtual environments (prototypes will be available during the team visit). Most importantly, it will provide program faculty with a product that can be used to determine the impact of our programs with a final evaluation of candidates’ teaching knowledge, skills, and dispositions.