

UNCP GRADUATE CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The UNCP Teacher Education Program assessment system is an integrated, comprehensive plan designed to monitor the professional development of advanced candidates as well as to evaluate the graduate programs. The graduate candidate assessment system is aligned with the teacher education conceptual framework and is structured by the **UNCP Teacher Education Program Standards for the Master's Degree Teaching License**.

A. Instructional Expertise

The candidate demonstrates instructional expertise by applying the theoretical, philosophical, and research bases for educational practice in P-12 settings to improve student learning.

B. Knowledge of Learners

The candidate incorporates knowledge of the nature of the learner, learning processes, variations in learning abilities and learning styles, and strategies for evaluating learning into the planning, delivery, and evaluation of instruction.

C. Research

The candidate uses research to examine and improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement.

D. Content Knowledge

The candidate demonstrates advanced depth and breadth of knowledge and skills in the academic discipline and in education.

E. Professional Development and Leadership

The candidate engages in continued professional development and provides leadership at the classroom, school, and community levels, and within the profession.

The system for assessing candidate professional development is designed to (a) guide decisions about program admission, (b) monitor candidate progression through the program, (c) determine to what degree candidates have acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions set forth in the UNCP Teacher Education Program Standards for the Master's Degree Teaching License, (d) identify those candidates who may need planned intervention during their program of study, and (e) identify areas in the education program that need to be improved as reflected in various assessments of candidates. Multiple assessments, both formative and summative, are used at multiple points during the candidate's progression from program entry to program completion and beyond. Data are regularly and systematically collected, compiled, summarized, analyzed, and reported for the purpose of improving candidate performance. The results of candidate assessment tie into the evaluation of the program and its operations.

The Graduate Candidate Assessment System is designed to answer the following questions about candidate professional development:

- Do candidates command content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge and skills as described in professional, state, and institutional standards?
- Are candidates able to use these multiple-knowledge bases and skills to help diverse students learn?
- Are candidates familiar with and do they model the dispositions delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards?

Unit-Wide Assessments

An overview of the unit-wide data collection points and the relevant candidate assessments is provided in the chart below. Each of the assessments is annotated briefly in the section that follows.

Unit Decision Points & Assessments for All Candidates in M.A. and M.A.Ed. Teacher Licensure Programs				
Entry	Completion of Professional Studies Core Courses	Midpoint (when candidate has completed 15-21 SH)	Field-Based Experience or Internship	Exit
Required GPA	Required GPA	Required GPA	Required GPA	Required GPA
Transcript evaluation	Action Research Project	Candidate Portfolio		Candidate Portfolio
Existing initial licensure in aligned field	Leadership Project Proposal	Candidate Interview		Professional Disposition Self-Assessment
Standardized Test (MAT, GRE)				
Letters of Recommendation				
Professional Disposition Self-Assessment				

Graduate Admissions Requirements (Full or Provisional Admission)

All applicants for full or provisional admission to an M.A.Ed. or M.A. licensure program must submit official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended. Applicants must have a satisfactory undergraduate academic record and must meet at least one of the following minimum GPA requirements: an overall GPA of at least a 2.5 on all undergraduate work, or an overall GPA of at least a 3.0 in the undergraduate major, or a GPA of at least a 3.0 on all undergraduate work taken in the senior year. Applicants must submit an official report of satisfactory scores on the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) or the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). In addition, applicants must submit three letters of professional recommendation and a copy of any current licenses held. Additional information about graduate admission policies is included in the School of Graduate Studies section of the *UNCP Catalog*.

Professional Dispositions Self-Assessment

The *Graduate Candidate Dispositions Self-Assessment and Goal Setting* survey is designed to provide an opportunity for candidates to reflect on dispositions and attitudes considered important to successful teaching. The instrument is intended to help candidates identify areas for continuing professional growth and define steps he/she might take to promote that growth. Data from this self-assessment is used by Program Directors as they consider ways in which their programs can assist candidates to develop and/or strengthen positive professional dispositions.

Candidates take the *Graduate Candidate Dispositions Self-Assessment and Goal Setting* survey twice, both at time of admission (entry) to a graduate program and near the time of program completion (exit). Along with the letter of admission, the Office of Graduate Studies includes instructions that guide candidates through the process of going online to take the *Graduate Candidate Dispositions Self-Assessment and Goal Setting* survey. The appropriate graduate Program Director receives a copy of the entry survey and keeps a copy on file for each candidate while he/she is enrolled in the program. In the last semester of their program of study, candidates complete the same survey online and reflect in writing on the changes in the survey results from time of entry into the program to time of exit. Candidates include copies of the entry survey, the exit survey, and the written reflection as an addendum to their graduate portfolios. A copy of the *Graduate Candidate Dispositions Self-Assessment and Goal Setting* survey is presented in [Appendix A](#) of this handbook.

Action Research Project

Successful completion of an action research project is a course requirement for EDN 566 Applied Educational Research, a core course required for all graduate teacher licensure programs. Action research is a form of self-reflective systematic inquiry by practitioners on their own practice. The goals of action research are (a) the improvement of teaching, (b) a better understanding of teaching and learning, and (c) an improvement in the learning environment in which the teaching is carried out. In EDN 566, candidates design an action research project, select appropriate research methods, conduct action research in their schools, and present their findings. The action research project is evaluated using the *Action Research Project Scoring Rubric*, which is included in [Appendix B](#) of this handbook.

Leadership Project Proposal and Implementation

The leadership project proposal is a course requirement for EDN 565 Applied Philosophy of Education, a core course taken by most teacher licensure program candidates. The leadership project is especially appropriate for helping candidates to develop and demonstrate professional leadership abilities as expressed in Standard 5: Professional Development and Leadership. The leadership project must be designed so that candidates can demonstrate their ability to take on a leadership role with other educators and must relate to the improvement of student learning in direct or indirect ways. Candidates develop a leadership project proposal and get it approved by their Program Director as a requirement for EDN 565. The implementation phase takes place under the guidance of the respective Program Director as candidates progress through their programs of study. The leadership project proposal is evaluated using the *Leadership Project Proposal Evaluation Form*, which is presented in [Appendix C](#) of this handbook. The implementation of the leadership project is evaluated as part of the exit portfolio using the *Graduate Portfolio Evaluation at Program Completion for Candidates in Teacher Licensure Areas - Holistic Rubric*. (see the following section).

Candidate Portfolio

Successful completion of the graduate portfolio is a degree requirement for all graduate candidates in UNCP Teacher Education programs leading to teacher licensure. The graduate portfolio is structured around the five master's standards and is evaluated at both midpoint and at exit from the program.

At midpoint, after candidates have completed 15-21 semester hours of coursework in their graduate licensure program, the Program Director will contact them in order to (a) discuss the current status of their portfolio, (b) provide advice on how to prepare for their midpoint portfolio evaluation conference, and (c) schedule an appointment for the midpoint conference. At the midpoint conference, the Program Director completes the *Graduate Portfolio Evaluation at Midpoint for Candidates in Teacher Licensure Areas – Holistic Rubric*, which is presented in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook. If a rating of “follow-up required” is received on any element(s) of the rubric, a follow-up meeting is scheduled to re-evaluate the candidate’s progress on the portfolio. The Program Director will provide a copy of the Candidate Summary Sheet of the midpoint evaluation rubric to the candidate, will retain a copy for his/her records, and will forward a copy to the Director of Teacher Education.

At program completion, a panel comprised of graduate faculty, and whenever possible including public school representatives, will evaluate the portfolio the graduate portfolio using the *Graduate Portfolio Evaluation at Program Completion for Candidates in Teacher Licensure Areas – Holistic Rubric*, which is presented in [Appendix E](#) of this handbook. The candidate must receive a score of 2.0 or higher on each of the five standards AND at least a score of 2.0 or higher on the Overall Presentation component of the rubric in order to earn a passing score for the portfolio. Receiving a rating of 1 (Standard Not Met) on any single standard requires action (i.e., revision and re-evaluation). The candidate will have an opportunity to make revisions in the portfolio and resubmit it within the prescribed timeframe for a second evaluation. The Program Director will provide a copy of the Candidate Summary Sheet of the exit evaluation rubric to the candidate, will retain a copy for his/her records, and will forward a copy to the Director of Teacher Education.

Candidate Interview at Midpoint

During the midpoint portfolio evaluation conference (see the previous section), the Program Director will interview the candidate and complete the *Graduate Candidate Interview at Midpoint for M.A. Ed. and M.A. Programs Leading to Teacher Licensure Summary Form*, which is presented in [Appendix F](#) of this handbook. Areas for discussion at the interview include, but are not limited to (a) the online survey, *Graduate Candidate Dispositions Self-Assessment and Goal Setting*, taken at time of program entry; (b) the evaluation of the candidate’s Leadership Project Proposal; (c) the candidate’s planned sequence of courses in program; and (d) the extent to which the candidate’s expectations of the program are being met. If the Program Director determines that the candidate is not making satisfactory progress at the midpoint interview, a follow-up conference will be required. The Program Director will provide a copy of the form to the candidate and retain the original for his/her files. After the interview or after the follow-up conference (if required), a copy will be forwarded to the Director of Teacher Education.

Program-Specific Assessments

Faculty use a series of portfolio projects to measure the candidate’s progress through out the duration of the program. The candidate will also be required to take a series of comprehensive exams before exiting the program. More information about the portfolios and comprehensive exams can be found in the Online Mathematics Graduate Program handbook.