

## **Bias-Free Assessment with Consistency, Fairness, Accuracy**

The University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM), Teacher Education Program (TEP) unit uses various strategies to ensure fairness, accuracy, consistency, and elimination of bias throughout its assessment system. The TEP unit at UTM ensures that unit and program assessments are linked to the unit's conceptual framework and aligned with NCATE, state, and program standards.

Initial undergraduate and graduate candidates are informed of all requirements in the education program when they attend registration and orientation sessions, when they meet with their advisors, when they enroll in their program's introductory course, and when they visit the [Education Student Services](#) website. Additionally, they are also made aware of unit and program requirements in the application process for admission as a part of the interview process.

[Field experience assessments](#) are distributed to all candidates as part of their course introductions and are also available online. Advanced candidates are informed of the requirements upon meeting with their program advisor and in their orientation course. Information about the conceptual framework, dispositions expected of candidates, transition points, key assessments, and other requirements are included in [program handbooks](#) and on the Education Student Services website.

[Cooperating teachers and supervisors](#) are trained to increase rating consistency and reliability. Retaining university supervisors also increases the reliability of the data across semesters. Rubrics are used in assessing candidates' competencies throughout unit evaluations and are shared with the candidates before the rubrics are used. Therefore, candidates know in advance on what they will be assessed, what the expectations are of them, and what level of proficiency is associated with each scoring decision. Rubrics that are used to assess candidates on field experience competencies are discussed by the course instructor at the beginning of each semester with the candidates as well as given to the cooperating teachers and university supervisors with accompanying explanations. Rubrics that are used for program specific assessments are discussed with the candidates each semester by the program faculty members. Unit faculty members review the rubrics used for the assessment of field experience competencies in unit meetings such as the Professional Education Council (biannually) and the Teacher Education Effectiveness Committee (annually) and NCATE retreats. Rubrics are revised and clarified where needed.

Wherever possible, many of the same questions are asked on the [“Exit Survey,”](#) [“Graduate Follow-Up Surveys,”](#) and [“Employer Satisfaction Surveys”](#) to enhance the reliability of findings. In order to show candidate progress during their [clinical practice semester](#), candidates are assessed four times—twice in both clinical practice placements. Conferences are held by the university supervisor with candidates at the midpoint and again at the end of the semester with suggestions provided for recommendations for improvement and discussions of final grades.