

Required Preliminary Administrative Service Credential Program Culminating Activities in California NCATE Accredited Universities

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*The purpose of this effort is to share information about the variety of culminating activities used in the acquisition of the California Preliminary Administrative Services Credential. Knowledge of these varying culminating activities and related practices has not previously been readily available. The culminating activities among California's NCATE accredited university educational administration programs are intended to verify that candidates are well-prepared at a level expected of a beginning school administrator. Given the devastating criticism of educational administration preparation programs, such as contained in Arthur Levine's report, *Educating School Leaders* (2005), universities need to make sure their culminating activities verify the professional competence of candidates recommended for administrative certification.*

***Editor' Note:** We, the editors, realize that programmatic practices are under constant review and revision. If any of the following information is incorrect or incomplete, please contact the author so he may update his information. We do believe that it is imperative for the professors of educational administration to share programmatic best practices and we see this journal as an opportunity to do that.*

This report examines the culminating activities required by twenty-one NCATE approved public and private university educational administration programs in the State of California. The purpose of this effort was to share information about the variety of culminating activities used in the acquisition of the California Preliminary Administrative Services Credential. Program coordinators were asked to describe the culminating activities they conduct; program documents on file at the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing were read; and finally, coordinators were asked to verify specific program information used in this report. No effort was made to comparatively evaluate these culminating activities, or to completely describe the fieldwork, portfolios, written and oral examinations each of these universities require. Instead, this is an effort to describe sufficiently the range of culminating activities to stimulate reflective discussion.

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Fieldwork

Students in these university educational administration credential programs are mainly teachers, counselors, or quasi-administrators already working in schools on a daily basis. Effective July 1, 2013, a California Preliminary Administrative Services Credential requires five years of full-time experience.

All educational administration program fieldwork occurs at two levels of instruction (such as elementary and secondary), and is supervised by both a university faculty member and an on-the-job practicing administrator. Likewise, all university fieldwork requires students to engage in administrative work pertaining to each California Professional Standard for Educational Leaders (CPSEL).

Required fieldwork within university educational administration programs vary in length. 25% of the CSU, Dominguez Hills program involves fieldwork in an action-based leadership project. California State University, Long Beach requires three weeks of full-time administrative fieldwork. The University of San Diego requires 40 days of full-time administrative fieldwork, plus a day shadowing an administrator at a school with a grade level that is different from the one in which the candidate works. San Francisco State University schedules fieldwork at the beginning and end of their program.

San Diego State University fieldwork occurs over one academic year. Candidates shadow principals in two different settings for three consecutive full days in each of two semesters (total of six full-time days). The shadowing occurs at two different instructional levels and in at least one setting that has a different cultural plurality than that of the candidate. A primary focus of the fieldwork is to identify a population of students that will be the focus of efforts throughout the fieldwork experience. Candidates acquire data about the achievement of the targeted population, and examine detailed achievement test data and at least one other data source such as discipline, student engagement, attendance, or course grade data. They contrast the performance of the targeted population with other populations at the school; describe the important questions that these data do not answer; suggest possible strategies for collecting additional information that could help answer these questions; and complete a review of the literature regarding the targeted population, plus investigate two similar schools that are demonstrating high results with the targeted population. Then the candidates, working with the site supervisor and an advisory committee including teachers and parents, lead the development of a plan for improvement that includes strategies such as instructional interventions, student engagement strategies, professional development, and clinical supervision or peer coaching. In designing the improvement plan, consideration is given to fiscal resources and compliance with the collective bargaining agreements. The plan is implemented and monitored throughout the academic year and is evaluated based on designated metrics, such as student test scores, student attendance, or other factors pertinent to the plan. Other fieldwork is associated with specific courses and includes such things as clinical supervision and developing a community relations plan.

The University of LaVerne requires one unit of fieldwork each semester throughout their program. At Fresno State, fieldwork is assigned as coursework. At Loyola Marymount University, candidates complete three one unit projects which serve as both formative and summative assessments for fieldwork and coursework. Students add to their portfolio a critical analysis of their fieldwork and coursework each semester. During their first semester (Unit 1), students present to their peers and course instructors. During their second semester

(Unit 2), students present to their peers, course instructors, and a panel of fieldwork supervisors. And during their third semester (Unit 3), students present to a panel of volunteer community experts in education, recruited and organized by the assistant program director.

California State University, Stanislaus requires four guided fieldwork projects of 45 clock hours each which are matched with four of their five courses. California Polytechnic State University requires fieldwork which lasts three terms and involves at least 90 clock hours of administrative work. California State University, East Bay requires fieldwork that lasts for three quarters. San Jose State University requires four semesters of fieldwork, while California State University, Fullerton candidates participate in field-based experiences that span a period of five terms, beginning at the start of candidate programs. Additionally, most universities give course assignments which often require fieldwork. For example, in the Human Resource Administration course at California State University, Fullerton, candidates learn how to supervise teachers and practice the skills of instructional supervision by pre-conferencing, observing, and post-conferencing with a teacher.

Programs differ in the extent to which candidates enrolled in fieldwork meet to examine, explore and address school related issues that they see, in relation to the research they have learned in their coursework. The California State University, East Bay fieldwork features such “critical friends” groups; whereas, the Azusa Pacific University faculty administers “The Strengths-Finder Inventory” produced by The Gallup Organization (2013) to determine the top five strengths of an individual, and a “Leadership Competency Analysis Survey” that measures twenty-five dispositions for leadership. Candidates aggregate their scores from peers, supervisors, and self to determine their ranking compared to overall program scores.

The amount and structure of fieldwork required reflect fundamental assumptions about the purpose of a university educational administration program. Should a university train candidates to administer schools as they presently exist? Or, should an educational administration program lead change, as university medical schools prepare new physicians with the latest strategies to improve patient care? California State University, Bakersfield does both, requiring two 110-clock hour fieldwork courses. Students spend the first 110 clock hours in a wide range of mentored administrative roles; the second fieldwork course requires students to identify a real problem a school administration is having, and help them research and then work on that problem, giving candidates a minimum of 110 clock hours of experience leading curriculum change as instructional leaders. For example, last summer, a fieldwork student researched and designed a Common Core State Standards implementation plan for a local district, and is now leading them in that process.

Portfolios

All twenty NCATE approved California university educational administration programs require a portfolio wherein students collect artifacts throughout their coursework and fieldwork, demonstrating their competence on the CPSELs. For example, CSU-Fullerton requires a portfolio that provides “evidence that can be used in determination of candidate competence.” California Lutheran University asks students, among other queries, what it is about each portfolio item that describes them as a professional. San Francisco State University requires three artifacts for each of the six CPSEL standards, each preceded by a reflection which describes the student’s administrative role and function, the role and function

of other participants involved, the duration of the project/activity, the outcome or impact on stakeholders and/or the school, and lessons learned. Each artifact must come from graded coursework or fieldwork. The programs at California State University, Long Beach and California State University, Bakersfield also ask candidates to reflect on each artifact, explaining how it demonstrates their administrative competence in relation to the CPSELs. Additionally, beginning summer 2013, University of San Diego students will include an analysis and reflection from their international experience through the World Educational Leadership Link (the WELL project).

The required portfolio at California State University, Northridge must include seven course exemplars and reflections on each; two shadow experiences (elementary and secondary) with reflections that connect to the six (CPSEL) standards; three activities per standard and an artifact that supports each standard; and a narrative of a research project developed in the “Research in Education” course and implemented in fieldwork.

While all of the required portfolios suggest that the candidate include their resume, some recommend including the candidate’s teacher evaluations, letters of commendation and awards, course summaries, short answers to typical interview questions, and a personal educational vision. The University of San Diego asks students to describe their personal educational “platform,” which includes the student’s philosophy of education and leadership; vision for learners, teachers, the organization, and professional growth; and method for vision attainment.

While common rubrics (Still Developing, Competent, and Superlative; or Low Level of Competency, Average, Above Average, and Exceptional) are used, following are three more informative rubrics used by the University of LaVerne:

1. *Use of Writing Conventions:*

(1) Many grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors; the formatting is confusing; not presented in typed format.

(2) Some grammar, punctuation and spelling errors; formatting present but not strong; material presented in a typed format.

(3) Few grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors; formatting clear and understandable; material presented in a typed format.

(4) Very few difficulties with grammar, punctuation, and spelling; formatting adds to clarity and meaning; material presented in typed format.

2. *Overall Portfolio Impact:*

(1) The portfolio does not demonstrate the student’s skills, abilities and knowledge to potential employers.

(2) The portfolio does little to demonstrate the student’s skills, knowledge and abilities to potential employers.

(3) The portfolio helps to demonstrate the student’s skills, abilities and knowledge to potential employers.

(4) The portfolio demonstrates well the student’s skills, abilities and knowledge to potential employers.

3. *What student learned about self as a person and as a professional:*

- (1) Unclear awareness of personal growth and no intent on continuous improvement.
- (2) Demonstrates awareness of personal growth as a student or educator with an understanding of a need for continuous improvement.
- (3) Demonstrates awareness of personal growth as a student and an educator with a commitment to continuous improvement.
- (4) Demonstrates a clear awareness of personal growth as a student and an educator with a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

The following is a sample of three rubrics used by California State University-Long Beach:

1. *Selection of Artifacts:* Artifacts selected are ((1) not clearly related, (2) related, (3) clearly related) to the relevant standard and demonstrate ((1) limited to no degree of competence, (2) some competence, (3) a high level of competence) in the standard.

2. *Oral Presentation of Artifacts:*

- (1) The candidate is hesitant in some/all responses and/or appears unable to locate key artifacts to support his/her statements.
- (2) The candidate is able to completely answer the questions while locating artifacts to accentuate responses that communicate the credential competencies have been met; the response is complete, however not entirely fluid in delivery.
- (3) The candidate is able to fluidly and completely answer the questions posed during the Exit Assessment while using artifacts skillfully to accentuate responses that clearly communicate the credential competencies have been met.

3. *Standards Based Activities:* Project/activities show (extensive depth and breadth, some depth and breadth, little depth and breadth) to provide broad experiences to master standards. When advising candidates beginning their educational administration programs, California State University-Bakersfield introduces the CPSEL framework and suggests the following rubric for evaluating a portfolio holistically:

- (1) The portfolio merely includes factual material.
- (2) The portfolio includes some evidence that the student is a “reflective” professional.
- (3) The portfolio includes evidence that the student has integrated the knowledge base in educational administration within their professional work.
- (4) The portfolio provides evidence that the educator has social purposes larger than his/her own.
- (5) The portfolio includes evidence that the student understands that education is a moral calling.

Written Examinations

Sonoma State University requires candidates to write a “What Could Be” paper and a “Personal Theory of Leadership” paper. In the Personal Theory of Leadership paper, the candidate is asked to pull together all of their learning in the program and discuss how this learning will shape their eventual practice as a school leader. The “What Could Be” paper analyzes their district site, reviews an earlier “What Is” assessment, collects information from the site supervisor, and then summarizes this information into a major paper commenting on

what their school should be working toward and the path they would take to get there. Similarly, at Fresno State, candidates write a paper on the current and desired state of their school site, and write a timed response to a practical administrative situation.

California State University, Stanislaus provides students with “30 Essential Questions” at the beginning of the program during orientation sessions. At the end of the program, students are given several weeks to respond to two of three questions in writing, selected from the 30 Essential Questions. Here are three of the 30 Essential Questions, along with a rubric for the third question:

1. First, identify the membership of a legally constituted Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team. Second, briefly describe the responsibilities of the IEP Team in providing a free and appropriate public education for students with exceptional needs.

2. School officials have the legal authority to regulate the expression of students’ speech on campus. Provide relevant examples that illustrate when and how this authority can be exercised.

3. Identify and describe a mechanism or structure to raise student achievement at a school.

Far Below Standard: No key mechanisms or structures to raise student achievement are identified or described. Grammatical and syntactic errors are noted throughout the narrative.

Below Standard: One or more key mechanisms or structures to raise student achievement are identified, but are not accurately described. Occasional grammatical and syntactic errors are noted.

Meets Standard: One key mechanism or structure is identified and accurately described in relation to student achievement. Appropriate grammar and syntax are used.

Above Standard: Two key mechanisms or structures are identified and a clear, concise, and accurate description of each key mechanism or structure in relation to student achievement is provided. Specific examples are provided to illustrate each mechanism or structure. Appropriate grammar and syntax are used.

Exemplary: Three or more key mechanisms or structures are identified and a clear, concise, and accurate description of each key mechanism or structure in relation to student achievement is provided. Specific examples are provided to illustrate each mechanism or structure. Appropriate grammar and syntax are used.

(Key Mechanisms: Schmoker; Marzano; Data-driven instruction; Targeted intervention and remediation; Professional development (targeted & ongoing); Appropriate allocation of funding; Single Plan for Student Achievement; School Academic Intervention Team)

California State University, Northridge administers a comprehensive examination on general administration (including human resources), supervision of curriculum, elementary and secondary education (including special education), school finance, and school law. The first three listed subject areas are assessed by an essay question which includes a scenario situation which candidates must address by applying the knowledge and skills expected of school

administrators. Students must respond by being specific about action steps and an action plan that will facilitate student learning in situations that require leadership and knowledge of instruction.

Both credential and master's degree students at California State University, Bakersfield complete a take-home examination which requires an in-depth theoretical and practical understanding of the knowledge base in educational administration. The students address six broad questions, each sampling one of the six CPSELS. Here are six typical questions:

Based on (Promoting Learning) CPSEL #1: What leadership strategies can school leaders utilize to increase student achievement?

Based on (Instructional Program) CPSEL #2: As an elementary principal, how would you work to improve student achievement in mathematics?

Based on (Management) CPSEL #3: Salman Khan, who leads the Khan Academies, has said he doesn't understand where the money in public education goes, implying that much is wasted. In California, about \$8,300 is spent per student per year. That means that a class of 25 students generates \$207,500. Since, he says, teachers don't make even half of that, what is happening to the rest of that money? What should we tell Salman Khan? What evidence can be cited to support increased funding for public education?

Based on (School/Community) CPSEL #4: Utilize Comer's approach to school/community development, describing the knowledge and skills school leaders can use to engage the school and its many communities in meaningful dialogue and action to address political/social/economic challenges which affect student achievement?

Based on (Ethics) CPSEL #5: Describe the diverse student population that exists in Kern County: What cultural features, economic conditions, and political views affect student achievement? How can school leaders bring about more educational equity and opportunity for the students in this diverse region?

Based on (Political) CPSEL #6: What is the role of schooling in a democratic society?

Oral Examinations

At California State University, Stanislaus, an oral interview is conducted by teams of local practitioners (district and site-level) at the end of the students' first semester of enrollment. Questions are selected from the list of 30 Essential Questions, available on the program's web site. Comparing student performance at the first semester interview and on the final semester written examination facilitates program evaluation.

After completing all credential requirements, students at California State University, Long Beach participate in an "Exit Portfolio Assessment Summary Exhibition Night." Their portfolios must include a vision/mission statement, resume, disposition assessment forms completed by the field experience site supervisor and the university supervisor, and/or the student's current principal, and three artifacts per CPSEL, with a rationale for each artifact describing how it illustrates the student's competence in the CPSEL Standard. Then, on the Exit Portfolio Assessment Summary Exhibition Night, each candidate shares one experience for each standard. This oral presentation is evaluated by the program coordinator.

Throughout the program, Azusa Pacific University candidates develop a case study based on local school scenarios, needs, issues, and/or situations, which is presented before an evaluative panel during the final program course. At Sonoma State University, candidates summarize “the significant problem” they have addressed during the year, the outcomes of this action research project, and what they have learned in conjunction with each of the CPSELs.

The oral examinations at the University of San Diego, the University of the Pacific, and San Diego State University are presentations by the candidate of their portfolio, what they did during their fieldwork, and showcase their accomplishments related to the CPSEL standards. The oral examination at San Francisco State University is drawn from coursework and fieldwork, providing students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to integrate knowledge and practice while articulating mastery of the CPSEL competencies. At CSU-Dominguez Hills candidates make a multi-media presentation of their fieldwork to a panel of faculty and school district administrators. Fresno State University requires students to engage in a mock employment interview.

At California State University, Bakersfield, candidates complete their culminating activities with an oral examination, given by their culminating examination committee, composed of two educational administration university faculty and a practicing school administrator (often, their principal). The culminating examination committee asks the candidate to elaborate and/or clarify what they wrote in their written exam and assesses the candidate’s dispositions. The oral exam also provides verification that the candidate actually wrote the take-home written examination.

Conclusion

The culminating activities among California’s NCATE accredited university educational administration programs are intended to verify that candidates are well-prepared at a level expected of a beginning school administrator. Given the devastating criticism of educational administration preparation programs, such as contained in Arthur Levine’s report, *Educating School Leaders* (2005), universities need to make sure their culminating activities verify the professional competence of candidates recommended for administrative certification.

Appendix: Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Culminating Requirements

University	Fieldwork	Portfolio	Written Exam	Oral Exam/Presentation
Azusa Pacific U.	X	X		
Cal. Lutheran U.	X	X		X
Cal Poly, San Luis O.	X	X	X	
CSU, Bakersfield	X	X	X	X
CSU, Dominguez H.	X	X		X
CSU, East Bay	X	X		
CSU, Fresno	X	X	X	X
CSU, Fullerton	X	X		
CSU, Long Beach	X	X		X
CSU, Northridge	X	X	X	
CSU, San Bernardino	X	X		
CSU, Stanislaus	X	X	X	X
Loyola Mary. U.	X	X		X
Point Loma Nazarene	X	X		X
San Diego State U.	X	X		X
San Francisco S. U.	X	X		X
San Jose State U.	X	X		X
Sonoma State U.	X	X		X
U. of La Verne	X	X		X
U. of San Diego	X	X		X
U. of the Pacific	X	X		X