



Council for the  
Accreditation of  
Educator Preparation

# Making Your Case for Accreditation

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# Session Description

- This session will provide guidance on how to use data and evidence to "make the case" for a positive accreditation decision.
- Examples will be provided specific to conclusions that can and cannot be supported with data and evidence.

# The Purpose

- In general, the purpose of accreditation is to signify that institutions and programs meet the quality expectations that stakeholders deem important.
- This aids their decision-making about whether to invest their resources in the institution or program, and/or whether the products/services they produce are safe, effective, and useful.
- Building a case for CAEP accreditation is about persuasively communicating that an EPP meets the quality expectations of the USDE, states, prospective teachers, parents, P-12 students, and the public.

# The Challenge

- EPPs are under pressure from a variety of stakeholders with diverse expectations.
- The CAEP Standards are an effort to condense and synthesize those expectations and centralize reporting so that EPPs don't have to repeatedly report to all of these different stakeholders.
- But building the case for quality via accreditation is still an immense investment of time and energy.
- Hopefully, by the end of the session, you will have strategies to make building your case a more manageable and fruitful undertaking.

# Making Your Case: The Steps

1. Decide what you want to argue about your program's quality
  - Examine the standards and components and decide how you meet them and which you want to emphasize in your narrative or claims.
2. Decide what is convincing
  - What convinces you that your program meets each standard or component?
  - Think of an EPP or alternative preparation model that raises doubts for you about quality. What are your doubts and what would they need to provide to you to convince you that they have a quality program?

3. Accept the generous gifts of research science
  - There is a variety of methodologies and methods for rigorous inquiry. Some are more appropriate for some questions than others. Sharp dividing lines create hard boundaries around minds, and factions between which understanding does not flow as freely as criticism. Power struggles are the result.
4. Communication is the best tool for diffusing the tension, but communication needs to be objective to transcend boundaries.

# Increasing Objectivity

- While complete objectivity is not possible, and “objective” communication is no panacea, the effort yields better results than messages that appear vague, defensive, or self-serving.
- Data and evidence increase the objectivity of communications, which makes the case stronger.
- The examples that follow are designed to demonstrate this, but due to time constraints, focus at the level of one component rather than a whole standard.
  - Meeting the standard is based on the preponderance of the evidence about the standard as a whole, but the strongest case will generally be the more detailed case.

# Example 1: Component 1.2

Providers ensure that completers [at exit] use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

## Case 1: Weaker Case (see handout)

### • Features

- It is not clear how the research literature in the syllabi distributed across the areas mentioned in the standard. Did they focus mostly on the teaching profession but minimally or not at all on how to measure progress or evaluate practice?
- It is not clear what the assignments in the syllabi that involved research asked the candidates to do. Were they given sources or asked to do their own literature search? If they conducted their own literature search, were the sources that they used current, credible, and strong?
- The survey instrument asks vague and leading questions. Responses may reflect social-desirability bias.
- The results are filled with conclusions, not with the data or evidence that gave rise to the conclusions.



# Example 2: Component 1.2

Providers ensure that completers [at exit] use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

## Case 2: Stronger Case (see handout)

### • Features

- The method is clearer. The reader can see how the data sources were evaluated and that the survey instrument led to more valid conclusions.
- The assignment instructions are provided and they show that candidates complete assignments that address each area of the component (understanding the profession, using research and evidence to measure student progress, and using research and evidence to assess their own professional practice).
- The results disaggregate the findings across the three areas of the component and make it clear what was accomplished regarding the component as a whole.

# Conclusions Supported/Not Supported

## Case 1 (Weaker Case)

- Supported
  - The candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession.
  - They commit to use research and evidence throughout their careers to evaluate student progress and their practice.
- Not Supported
  - Candidates evaluate student's progress and their own professional practice using research and evidence.

# Conclusions Supported/Not Supported

## Case 2 (Stronger Case)

- Supported

- The candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession.
- They evaluate student's progress and their own professional practice using research and evidence.
- They commit to use research and evidence throughout their careers to evaluate student progress and their practice.

- Not Supported

- None

# Implications

- These programs may well have taken the exact same approach to preparing their teachers.
- But the second case is stronger because it presents the evidence in the results rather than a series of conclusions as in the first case.
  - A reader can query the data and procedures in the second case and decide whether the approach is reasonable and the whether the conclusions are justified.
- A reader may have additional questions and you can never eliminate all doubt among the skeptical.

# Closing Thoughts

- But CAEP is not among the skeptics.
  - We believe that most EPPs are committed to quality and get good results. What we need in order to fulfill our role as a quality assurance agent is access to the hidden detail that would allow us to make a case to stakeholders about the field, rather than produce anecdotes that they may not believe.
  - Your case becomes our data and evidence, and we are committed via handbooks, assessment review, formative evaluation, conferences, and other avenues, to providing support and improving the data and evidence we use to make the case that educator preparation is good and getting better all the time.

# Closing Thoughts

- This presentation presented an example of making a case for a single component. Your actual self-study does not have to make a case for every component, but the process for making a case for a standard is similar.
  - Rather than breaking down the component into its subparts, you would break down the standard by components and report the extent to which your program meets each one. You would then draw a conclusion about whether your program meets each standard on the whole.

# Feedback Opportunity

- Engaged feedback is vital to CAEP. You will have an opportunity to complete a survey at the end of the conference. Surveys will be sent via email on Friday, April 10. We encourage your participation.

**Thank You!**