MEASURE 3: CANDIDATE COMPETENCY AT COMPLETION (R3.3, RA3.4)

Initial Programs

ILLINOIS CONTENT TEST

BACKGROUND
Beginning in 1988, the Illinois school code has required individuals seeking licensure as teachers, school service personnel, or administrators to pass the Illinois Content Test (ICT) in their specified field. The purpose of the Content Test is to assess educators’ knowledge of the discipline and pedagogy. The ICT are criterion referenced, objective based, and aligned to state standards. The Illinois Licensure Testing System (ILTS) reports scores to higher education institutions and the Illinois State Board of Education.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS
Successful completion means meeting or exceeding the cut score of 240 to become eligible for a Professional Educator License in the state of Illinois.

QUALITY ASSURANCE
The constructs measured in the Content Area tests are aligned to the 2014 Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and national standards for individual specialty program areas. The Illinois Content Tests were developed by the Evaluation Systems Group of Pearson. Specific information about the validity of this instrument can be found on the Illinois Licensure Testing System website.

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENT
At the Unit Accreditation Coordinating Council (UACC) meetings, trends over time and comparisons of data from candidates across programs are analyzed. Areas of strength and areas for improvement are identified. Recommendations are then brought to the appropriate stakeholders to be discussed and implemented. This assessment tool and its data are used by programs as a key assessment when reviewing their programs and their candidates’ progress. While the candidates may take their Content Test at the time of admission into the Teacher Education Program, most candidates take the test during their senior year. The Unit recently implemented a mandatory tutoring session for candidates that fail their Content Area Test two consecutive times before making further attempts.
INITIAL PROGRAM RESULTS

2019-2021 COMPARISON
In Illinois, candidates are not considered completers until they pass the Illinois Content Test(s) in their field, so these results represent passing scores for SIUC Initial Program Completers. The Illinois State Board of Education separates data for initial programs into the endorsement areas.

Between 2019 and 2021, Pearson piloted new versions of some of the Content Tests for initial endorsements alongside a current version, so it was not possible to determine from this data how many candidates were represented. A comparison of the averages from 2019 to 2021 did not reveal any trends. Some cohort averages were better before the pandemic (early childhood, math, and biology), and others saw an increase in their averages in the 2021 Cycle (Spanish, music, and art). Two cohort averages actually peaked slightly during the 2020 Cycle (LBSI and English).
2019 Cycle
2019 will always be known as the year before the global pandemic, and it may become a benchmark for future analysis. During the 2019 Cycle, SIUC initial candidates’ averages on the Content Tests were above the state averages in every endorsement area. The differences ranged from 1-point (LBSI) to 32 points (math).
2020 CYCLE
Similar to the previous cycle, the 2020 initial candidates’ averages exceeded the state averages. The greatest differential was in English; SIUC candidates’ averages were 23-points higher than the state average. It could be noted that SIUC’s math candidates’ averages dropped by 30 points between 2019 and 2020; however, the enrollment in this program was low enough that it was most likely skewed in either direction by an outlier.
2021 CYCLE
The averages for the 2021 cohort exceeded the state averages with a differential range of 6-points (history) to 33-points (Spanish).