

April 18, 2022

Jennifer Paris
Department Chair
College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Dear Ms. Paris:

We are pleased to inform you that the A.S.T. Early Childhood Education program at College of the Canyons has earned **Accreditation with Conditions** from the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs. The accreditation decision is based on the Commission review of the Self-Study Report, the Peer Review Report, and Written Response. The Commission evaluates the patterns of evidence indicating ability to support positive candidate outcomes in relation to the accreditation standards and offers feedback on program strengths and areas for consideration. Special attention is given to the use of candidate assessments and performance data to increase program effectiveness, capacity and innovation.

Accreditation is maintained through submission of an Annual Report and Annual Fee; your reporting date, which remains the same each year, is on the first page of the Decision Report that follows. Current fees and the Annual Report Template are posted at www.naeyc.org and in the [Accreditation Resource Library](#). **The Commission will review your first and second Annual Reports to determine whether conditions have been sufficiently addressed. If conditions are not sufficiently addressed in either the first or second Annual Report, accreditation will expire according to the timeline on the enclosed accreditation certificate.** If conditions are addressed and removed, accreditation will expire seven years after the initial decision. (Under current policies, the program would submit Annual Reports by March 31, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, and 2027, prior to submitting a renewal Self-Study Report by March 31, 2028. The Commission is currently working on some schedule adjustments to make the report submissions more meaningful and less time-consuming or programs; more information about the revised submission schedule will be forthcoming later this spring/summer.)

As we prepare for the transition to the new accreditation system standards, we encourage you to review the enclosed guidance document in considering how to address the conditions. We also host webinars twice a year for faculty preparing Annual Reports and have developed additional resources in the Accreditation Resource Library. As always, we encourage faculty to continue to use the online community website to maintain compliance with the accreditation standards, prepare Annual Reports, and sustain a culture of evidence-based quality improvement.

Please contact Pamela Ehrenberg, Director of Accreditation Services (pehrenberg@naeyc.org), if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance as you prepare to respond to the conditions. We are very pleased to include College of the Canyons to the growing community of institutions sponsoring programs that have earned NAEYC Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs.

Sincerely,



Mary Harrill
Senior Director



[Victoria Young-Chiverton](#)
Commission Chair

Accreditation Decision Report

This report presents the decision of the NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs.

Institution Name: College of the Canyons **State:** California
Dates of Site Visit: October 24-27, 2021
Degree program(s): A.S.T. Early Childhood Education program
Date of Decision: March 2022

Decision: **Accreditation with Conditions**

Conditions:

1. Revise or create new Key Assessments 1-6 to ensure instructions and rubrics meet the cognitive demands (knowledge/understanding components) and skill requirements (application/engagement components) congruent with Standards 2-6.
2. Revise rubrics to measure and describe performance expectations related to Standards 1-6 (a) to assure the rubrics clearly define and distinguish candidate expectations between levels of candidate performance and (b) to assure that the proficient/met ratings are in alignment with the expectations of meeting Standards 1-6.
3. Revise the Data Reporting and Analysis sections of the Self-Study Report to provide evidence that the program's analysis of data results in meaningful and substantive program changes designed to improve candidate proficiency in the standards.
4. Provide evidence that Key Assessments 1-6 are required of candidates who transfer credits or who have received credit for prior work experiences.
5. Provide evidence that the program's candidates are required to (a) observe and practice in at least two of the three early childhood **age groups** and (b) observe and practice in at least two of the four early childhood **settings**.

Rationale for Findings: For conditions related to key assessment alignment to the standards and/or rubric quality, the Commission has included examples of the concerns that led to the condition(s), but the program should review all relevant key assessments to consider revisions that would address the condition. In addition, when submitting its first response to conditions, the Commission encourages the program to submit revisions for all key assessments that are cited in the conditions so that the program can receive comprehensive feedback from the Commission. Finally, in an effort to provide more clarity to programs, the Commission revised some of the language of typical condition statements to better distinguish between issues related to alignment to the standards.

The NAEYC Commission on the Accreditation of Early Childhood Higher Education Programs finds that this program substantially meets expectations regarding alignment of learning opportunities with all standards. However, revisions are needed to address the conditions cited above. The Commission offers the following rationale for the condition(s):

Condition #1 was cited because the key assessments need to better align with each of the key elements, paying particular attention to meeting the cognitive demands and skill requirements congruent with Standards 2-6. For example:

- Standard 2: Key Elements 2b and 2c - The key assessments do not measure the depth and breadth of the criteria by requiring candidates to **demonstrate** or **apply** their skills/knowledge.
- Standard 3: Key Elements 3b - The key assessments instruct students to reflect on uses of observation, but Key Element 3b requires candidates to **use** assessment.
- Standard 4: Key Elements 4b, 4c and 4d - The key assessments required candidates to be reflective in their assignment but not **apply** the skills to demonstrate their ability to use a large repertoire of skills. For example, the instructions in Key Assessment 4 direct students to “Discuss the activity and plan with your supervising teacher and modify as needed” (p. 102). The key assessment notes that this is aligned with both Key Element 4a and 4c but does not require the candidate to demonstrate the focus of either of the key elements.
- Standard 5: Key Elements 5a and 5b - In Key Assessment 6, the rubric does not cover depth and breadth of Key Element 5a; it is only focused on resources rather than an **understanding** of the content knowledge. In addition, the rubric does not cover the depth and breadth of 5b, as candidates are not asked to **use** concepts or inquiry tools. The directions for Key Assessment 6 include components for Key Elements 5a, 5b, and 5c. Portions of the directions ask candidates to reflect on information (Self-Study Report, p. 117 (5a), p. 119 (5a & 5c), while other portions are unclear as to how candidates will demonstrate actual skills, (Self-Study Report, p. 117 (5b)). The directions for this assignment did not include all the components needed to understand how candidates are actually **demonstrating** and **applying** the skills.
- Standard 6: Key Elements 6c, 6d and 6e - Within Key Assessment 6, the instructions state the assessment is addressing Key Elements 6a-6e. Candidates reflect on the information or write the information down, but the assessment does not state how the candidates will be engaged in the key element expectations such as using technology, engaging in informed advocacy, etc. (Self-Study Report, pp. 117 & 119).

For Condition #1 to be removed by the second Annual Report, the program must revise key assessments to be aligned with Standards 2-6, meeting the cognitive demands and skill requirements congruent with Standards 2-6.

Condition #2 was cited because the rubrics do not clearly define and distinguish between candidate performance between the Proficient/met and emerging/beginning levels. In some cases, the language is too similar to make a distinction. In other cases, the scoring may look more like a checklist, without adequate description of what is meant at the different performance levels. For example,

- Key Assessment 1- The rubric does not clearly differentiate the difference between the quality of knowledge demonstrated by candidates who meet the standards and candidates who do not.
- Key Element 1a-proficient states “summaries relate to all domains but could have been more elaborately described” and emerging states “summaries relate to all domains ...with some minor overlap.”
- For Key Assessments 3, 4 and 5 the rubrics serve more as a checklist, without adequate description. Additionally, primarily quantitative descriptors are used.

In addition, the condition was cited because the requirements for Proficient/met are not at a level expected by the standard. For example,

- Key Assessment 2-The proficient column for 1b only requires candidates to address some, not all, of the influences and the emerging category requires partial knowledge.
- For Key Assessment 6, the proficient column requires accurate but not yet thorough summaries of goals.

For Condition #2 to be removed by the second Annual Report, the program must assure the rubrics clearly define and distinguish candidate expectations between levels of candidate performances and align with the expectations of meeting Standards 1-6.

Condition #3 was cited because the program stated that when they reviewed the data after the first application, they decided to forgo any significant modifications to most of the assessments until they had more experience with the assessments and then the disruption of COVID-19 has impacted that work (Self-Study Report, pp. 132, 136, 140, 145, 148, and 153).

For Condition #3 to be removed by the second Annual Report, the program must revise the Data Reporting and Analysis sections to provide evidence that the program's analysis of data results in program changes that will improve candidate proficiency in relation to Standards 1-6. The Commission notes that Condition #4 may be effectively addressed through a more formally developed process that is shared as evidence; e.g., an annual faculty retreat where data are reviewed, strategies to address candidate proficiency are designed, and an implementation plan is put into place. Meaningful and substantive changes in relation to the standards could include changes to curriculum, changes to field experiences, program delivery mode, sequencing of courses/field experiences, academic support provided to candidates, professional development offered/required of faculty, among other things.

Condition #4 was cited because the program does not have a process to ensure that all students in the dual enrollment program and those who have taken courses at other institutions complete all key assessments (Self-Study Report, pp. 64, 78, 89, 101, 107, and 115).

For Condition #4 to be removed by the second Annual Report, the program must provide evidence that all candidates take all key assessments or, if there are institutional/system-wide policies or context that prevent this, the program must describe those and describe how candidates demonstrate proficiency in the standards covered in Key Assessment 1. See p. 17 in the [Accreditation Handbook](#) for more information regarding key assessment expectations.

Condition #5 was cited because while the program offers opportunities for candidates to observe and practice with young children across various age bands and in various settings, the program does not have a system in place to ensure that every candidate observes and practices with at least two of the three age groups (i.e., birth to age 3, 3-5, 5-8) and in at least two of the four settings (i.e., child care centers, child care homes, Head Start or equivalent programs, and early school grades) as described in Key Elements 7a and 7b (Peer Review Report, pp.59-60). In addition, for students that transfer into courses that hold field experiences, the program does not have a system in place to ensure that by the time they graduate they have met the expectations of Key Elements 7a and 7b.

In order for Condition #5 to be removed by the second Annual Report, the program must provide evidence that candidates are required to (a) observe and practice in at least two of the three early childhood **age groups** and (b) observe and practice in at least two of the four early childhood **settings**. This might be done through developing a tracking system that allows programs to document candidate completion of field experiences so that candidates can be guided to engage in the necessary field experiences to meet the expectations of Standard 7.

Annual Reporting Date: March

First Report Due: March 31, 2023

Accreditation Decision Report: The Accreditation Standards

Nationally accredited programs must substantially meet the Accreditation Standards through evidence provided in the Self-Study Report and Peer Review Team site visit. The accreditation decision is based on evidence that the program meets the Accreditation Standards through four indicators: documented learning opportunities, key assessments, data on candidate performance on key assessments, and use of that data to improve the program in relation to the accreditation standards. (NAEYC Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation Handbook, p. 37, 60).

Program Strengths in relation to Accreditation Standards:

1. The program provides candidates with a wide variety of strong learning opportunities that are aligned with Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6.
2. The program ensures that candidates have access to high-quality materials and Open Educational Resources to support student learning across all of the standards and core courses in the program.
3. The program demonstrated the value of the lab site for field experiences by giving up the adult learning classrooms to ensure all children were accommodated after a fire destroyed the previous lab site.

Areas for Program Improvement in relation to Accreditation Standards:

1. Instructions could be strengthened with more details. For example, in Key Assessment 1 it is unclear whether the student is observing one child and reflecting on the notes over a period of time throughout the course. In Key Assessment 2 (Creating a Case Study), it is unclear whether the assignment is a case study or an interview or a combination of both. Is the family interview conducted virtually? There are some parts of the assignment that are unclear whether the information gained from the family is guiding the reflection. In Key Assessment 4 the instructions do not provide clear information about what candidates are required to do to demonstrate competence.
2. The program is encouraged to eliminate clustering of key elements in candidate instructions for Key Elements 4b and 6a in Key Assessment 5 (Self-Study Report, pp. 109-110), so that each part of the instructions identifies/labels only one key element.
3. The program is encouraged to review its key assessments to ensure there is consistency between the instructions and rubrics. For example, Key Assessment 3 is missing Key Elements 6d and 6e within the instructions, but the key elements are addressed within the rubric, and in Key Assessment 4, Key Element 4b is identified within the rubric, but not within the assignment instructions.
4. The Commission identified some areas in the key assessments where alignment to the concepts in the relevant key elements (as identified by the program) could be strengthened. For example, the instructions of Key Assessment 4 are not aligned with 5a. Candidates are only instructed to document the learning they observe in a classroom. In addition, Key Elements 2b and 2c are not clearly aligned in their designated key assessments.
5. The program's data tables can be strengthened with minor revisions. The data tables do not clearly identify the data disaggregated by key elements as they are presented. There is some confusion in easily identifying where the key element data is shown.

Accreditation Decision Report: The Accreditation Criteria

Learning opportunities and assessments are developed and implemented in unique programs that are responsive to particular candidates, faculty and communities. This unique program context is described through the twelve Accreditation Criteria. The rest of this report offers feedback on your program's areas of strength and areas for improvement related to Accreditation Criteria. (NAEYC Early Childhood Higher Education Accreditation Handbook, p. 27, 59).

Program Strengths in relation to Accreditation Criteria:

1. The College of the Canyons program demonstrates a commitment to supporting the college's mission to celebrate diversity, cultivating partnerships, and being a leader in the field of early childhood education.
2. The program includes a combination of courses and field and clinical experiences that prepare candidates to have a positive impact on the lives of young children and families, and the program also takes state early learning standards into account.
3. The institution and faculty are aware of the "various preparedness levels that exist with our students," so faculty refer students to various campus support systems as needed (Self-Study Report, p. 27).

Areas for Program Improvement in Relation to Accreditation Criteria:

The Commission supports the program's self-identified areas noted in the Self-Study Report.

Annual Report Expectations

The following conditions must be addressed in the first Annual Report and must be met by the second Annual Report in order to continue accreditation:

- Revise or create new Key Assessments 1-6 to ensure instructions and rubrics meet the cognitive demands (knowledge/understanding components) and skill requirements (application/engagement components) congruent with Standards 2-6.
- Revise rubrics to measure and describe performance expectations related to Standards 1-6 (a) to assure the rubrics clearly define and distinguish candidate expectations between levels of candidate performance and (b) to assure that the proficient/met ratings are in alignment with the expectations of meeting Standards 1-6.
- Revise the Data Reporting and Analysis sections of the Self-Study Report to provide evidence that the program's analysis of data results in meaningful and substantive program changes designed to improve candidate proficiency in the standards.
- Provide evidence that Key Assessments 1-6 are required of candidates who transfer credits or who have received credit for prior work experiences.
- Provide evidence that the program's candidates are required to (a) observe and practice in at least two of the three early childhood **age groups** and (b) observe and practice in at least two of the four early childhood **settings**.