Illinois Fifth-Year Review Process
Glossary of Terms

**Assessment System.** A comprehensive and integrated set of evaluation measures that provides information for use in monitoring candidate performance and managing and improving unit operations and programs for the preparation of professional educators.

**Candidate Performance Data.** Information derived from assessments of candidate proficiencies, in areas of teaching and effects on student learning, candidate knowledge, and dispositions. Candidate performance may be derived from a wide variety of sources, such as projects, essays or tests demonstrating subject content mastery; employer evaluations; state certification tests; and mentoring year “portfolios” as well as assessments, projects, reflections, clinical observations, and other evidence of pedagogical and professional teaching proficiencies.

**Candidates.** Individuals admitted to, or enrolled in, programs for the initial or advanced preparation of teachers, teachers continuing their professional development, or other professional school personnel. Candidates are distinguished from “students” in P-12 schools.

**Conceptual Framework.** An underlying structure in a professional education unit that gives conceptual meanings through an articulated rationale to the unit’s operation, and provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, faculty scholarship and service, and unit accountability.

**NCATE-accredited institution.** An institution that has been recognized by the State Board of Education to prepare educational personnel, and which has voluntarily sought and received national accreditation by the NCATE.

**Non-NCATE-accredited institution.** An institution that has been recognized by the State Board of Education to prepare educational personnel, but has not sought national accreditation by NCATE.

**Performance Assessment.** A comprehensive assessment through which candidates demonstrate their proficiencies in subject, professional, and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions, including their abilities to have positive effects on student learning.

**Performance-based Program.** A professional preparation program that systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses data for self-improvement and candidate advisement, especially data that demonstrate candidate proficiencies, including positive effects on student learning.

**Performance-based Accreditation System.** A practice in accreditation that makes use of assessment information describing candidate proficiencies or actions of professional education units as evidence for determining whether professional standards are “met” or “not met.” It contrasts with accreditation decisions based solely on course offerings, program experiences, and “inputs” as the evidence for judging attainment of professional standards.

**Unit.** The institution, college, school, department, or other administrative body with the responsibility for managing or coordinating all programs offered for the initial and continuing preparation of teachers and other school personnel, regardless of where these programs are administratively housed. Also known as the “educational unit.”

**Weakness.** A statement written in the team report indicating that a unit has not met expected levels of achievement in one or more elements of a standard. The team may cite a weakness or weaknesses and still recommend that the standard is met. Units must report on progress made toward correcting weaknesses in their annual reports to the State Board of Education.