1. **Description of the Assessment and Its Use in the Program**

The Functional Communication Project is designed to appraise a candidate’s ability to diagnose and assess the level and effectiveness of the communication skills of a student with moderate to intensive developmental disabilities. The assessment is also designed to assess a candidate’s ability to address individual student communication deficiencies by constructing and developing a plan that will serve to improve communication in the following ways:

- increase the number of individuals with whom students with moderate to intensive developmental disabilities can communicate
- increase the number of situations within which students with moderate to intensive developmental disabilities can communicate
- increase the content of the communication of students with moderate to intensive developmental disabilities

A candidate carries out Key Licensure Assessment #8 by interacting with a single student at the P-12 level and the student’s family as a specific field assignment that occurs as part of the EDUC 526: Functional Communication course. The project is assessed by the course instructor.

To be admitted into clinical practice at Gateway 3, candidates must complete Key Licensure Assessments #6 - #8 (Independence Skills and Transition Plan, Intensive Behavior Intervention Project, and **Functional Communication Project**) with at least 80% of the major elements of the initial level CEC content standards across the three assessments rated at **meets major element** and no major element rated **unacceptable**.

2. **Description of How the Assessment Specifically Aligns with the Initial Level Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Content Standards (2012)**

The following major elements of Initial Level CEC Content Standards 1 - 7 are evaluated through this key licensure assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1 - Major Element 1: Know of similarities and differences in human development, and how exceptional learning conditions can interact with the domains of human development, family beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community, as well as an individual’s ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1 - Major Element 2: Use knowledge of learning differences to individualize instruction to provide meaningful, culturally responsive, and challenging learning for individuals with exceptionalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2 - Major Element 3: Actively create learning environments for individuals with exceptionalities that foster safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions and cultural understanding, and active engagement and independence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard 2 - Major Element 5: Provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Standard 3 - Major Element 6: Know relevant philosophies, theories, laws, policies, and the issues of human diversity

Standard 3 - Major Element 7: Know principles of evidence-based practice

Standard 4 - Major Element 13: Know augmentative and alternative communication systems, and other assistive technologies to support and enhance communication and learning of individuals with exceptional needs

Standard 4 - Major Element 14: Select, adapt, and create a repertoire of powerful evidence-based instructional strategies to promote positive learning results in general and special curricula, to appropriately individualize and modify learning for individuals with exceptionalities, and to enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem-solving, and performance skills of individuals with exceptionalities including acquisition, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the life span

Standard 5 - Major Element 20: Know measurement theory and use multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions including: referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with exceptionalities, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Standard 5 - Major Element 22: Conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to design learning experiences and to identify supports and adaptations required for individuals with exceptionalities to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, system, and statewide assessment programs

Standard 6 - Major Element 24: Know that culture and language can interact with exceptionalities, and are sensitive to the many aspects of diversity of individuals with exceptionalities and their families

Standard 7 - Major Element 27: Collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways

Standard 7 - Major Element 28: Promote and advocate the learning and well-being of individuals with exceptionalities across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences

3. Assessment Instrument

Functional Communication Project Guidelines

As you complete the following, refer to the scoring guide for Key Licensure Assessment #8 to ensure that you include all expectations for this assessment.

Directions:

Component I – Subject Selection and Data Collection

Select a single student with moderate to intensive developmental disabilities as the subject of your study. Record the student’s communication skills through observation and audio recordings of communication samples of the student. The data that are collected from the recordings are to be used in conjunction with the Functional Communication Inventory to assist in the design and development of the Functional Communication plan that will serve to improve the areas of the student’s communication that are outlined in Component III.

Component II – Functional Communication Inventory

The Functional Communication Inventory is to be used to determine the communication function and communication level of the student. Complete the Functional Communication Inventory by meeting with the student and then meet with members of the student’s family, direct care providers, and other team members, asking questions regarding the items on the Inventory relevant to functional communication. The intent of the Inventory interviews with the student, members of the student’s family, direct care providers and other team members is to acquire information about the student’s communication behaviors, skills, and experiences.
Component III – Communication Dictionary and the Development of a Functional Communication Plan

Using the data collected from observations, recordings of communication samples of the student, the Functional Communication Inventory, and interviews, create an individualized communication dictionary representative of the student. The creation of the dictionary is the first step in developing a Functional Communication Plan that is based on the data collected.

Develop a specific Functional Communication Plan that addresses the following three areas in which an increase in communication is needed: (1) the number of individuals with whom the student can communicate, (2) the number of situations in which the student can communicate, and (3) an increase in the content of the communication of the student. The recommendations outlined in the plan must include provisions for training in new communication techniques, and new strategies to improve current communication levels. The plan is also to include information about the involvement of other relevant professionals and paraprofessionals in the construction and development of the plan and its implementation, and how the student and his/her family were involved in developing the Functional Communication Plan and would be engaged in the implementation of the Functional Communication Plan.