



OVERVIEW: Professional disposition transgression by a teacher candidate may lead to remediation or program dismissal based on the Professional Education Council's assessment of candidate performance.

OFFICE/DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Professional Education Unit, Executive Director

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The Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual Framework of the Professional Education Unit (PEU) at The College at Brockport is derived from the mission of the Unit. It has three primary themes: (1) a solid base of knowledge and skills (which includes these sub-themes: content knowledge in a discipline, pedagogical content knowledge, professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and reflective skills), (2) professional dispositions, and (3) impact on P-12 learners. As part of the College's accreditation through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), candidate performance relative to each of the themes of the Conceptual Framework must be assessed. This document pertains to the assessment of the second theme, professional dispositions. "NCATE expects institutions to assess professional dispositions based on observable behaviors in educational settings. The two professional dispositions that NCATE expects institutions to assess are fairness and the belief that all students can learn. Based on their mission and conceptual framework, professional education units can identify, define, and operationalize additional professional dispositions" (NCATE, 2007).

Definitions of Five Professional Education Dispositions

Professional dispositions are the "professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues and communities. These positive behaviors support student learning and development" (NCATE, 2007).

The Professional Education Unit has adopted five professional dispositions to which all candidates (both undergraduate and graduate) must adhere:

- **Positive Outlook:** Candidate demonstrates behaviors that reflect the traits for the work of a teacher on a daily basis, for example, the belief that all children can learn, cheerfulness, praise of others, finding good in most situations, seeing possibilities rather than obstacles, responding to challenges, laughing easily, and seeing crisis as opportunity. Candidate demonstrates genuine enthusiasm and optimism.
- **Intellectual Integrity:** Candidate demonstrates the ability to foster trust among and between students, colleagues, school-based teacher educators (SBTEs), and professors by maintaining a high level of reliability. Demonstrates sound moral character; is truthful, honest, and sincere; is fair and just in all situations with all students.

- **Respect:** Candidate is respectful to school staff and faculty, professors, and colleagues; respectfully self-advocates when necessary; takes the time and energy to show compassion and empathy for students, colleagues/classmates, SBTEs, and professors.
- **Self-Awareness:** Candidate demonstrates an appreciation for differences among people; has a strong ability to interact, work and be with people who have characteristics different from self, and continually seeks opportunities to learn more about others' perspectives; is open to considering the myriad of new attitudes, beliefs, ideas, and opinions that are encountered in the school environment.
- **Dedication:** Candidate does not become frustrated easily but chooses to stick to a task until the task is done at a high level of competency; independent and continually uses, develops, and adopts a wide range of personal and professional resources; consistently solves problems drawing on his or her own abilities and knowledge for their solutions.

Programs within the Unit are free to add to the Unit's list of five dispositions at their discretion and with the approval of the Professional Education Council. Candidates should become familiar with any additional dispositions associated with their program of study. [Note: Consistent with the intent of professional dispositions and consistent with the intent of Part 83 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, any information indicating that a candidate pursuing a teaching, counseling, or administrative certificate has been accused or convicted of a crime, or has committed an act which raises a reasonable question as to the individual's moral character, is considered under this policy.]

Scheduling of Dispositions Assessments

Professional dispositions are assessed regularly as candidates complete phases of the program. In addition, dispositions may be assessed and reported on when candidates have engaged in specific instances of unprofessional behavior. Dispositions are assessed according to the following methodology.

Assessment Methodology

Regularly Scheduled Assessments of Dispositions

The assessment of a candidate's status on professional dispositions focuses on value-driven conduct (i.e., observable behaviors) deemed essential to the teaching function; attitudes *per se* are not assessed (except to the extent they drive conduct). Each of the Unit's five dispositions (and any program additions) is assessed via an instrument with a rubric scale and with opportunities for comments and/or reflections:

- exemplary behavior
 - consistently (about 90+% of the time) demonstrates behaviors that reflect positive professional dispositions and support student learning and development; behaviors are consistent with those of the most effective teachers and are never deemed inappropriate

- proficient behavior
 - usually (approximately 75-89% of the time) demonstrates behaviors that reflect positive professional dispositions and support student learning and development; behaviors are consistent with good professional practice and are never deemed inappropriate
- developing behavior
 - sporadically (approximately 40-74% of the time) demonstrates behaviors that reflect positive professional dispositions and support student learning and development; behaviors generally are consistent with good professional practice and are never deemed inappropriate, but there is considerable room for improvement with additional experience or training
- professionally unacceptable behavior
 - rarely (generally less than 40% of the time) demonstrates behaviors that reflect positive professional dispositions and support student learning and development; and/or behavior is *not* consistent with good professional practice or is deemed inappropriate

Dispositions are routinely assessed with the instrument through:

- confidential self-evaluation in selected classes identified by the program
- faculty evaluation in selected classes identified by the program
- evaluations submitted by school-based teacher educators (SBTEs) in all field experiences (including student teaching) and by college supervisors in student teaching
- confidential self-evaluation before and after student teaching

Rubrics assigned by faculty, SBTEs, and College supervisors for each of the dispositions become part of the candidate's record which is maintained in the candidate's home department (the confidential self-evaluations are used only for program evaluation). While the faculty and staff of the Unit hope all candidates will aspire to exemplary behavior, proficient and developing behaviors are also considered to be acceptable for the purposes of completing the teacher certification program. Professionally unacceptable behavior, however, may jeopardize either the candidate's progress in, or completion of, the teacher certification program. Faculty and College supervisors must inform the department chairperson (or his/her designee) of any instance of professionally unacceptable behavior observed either by themselves or by school-based professionals with whom they work.

Additional Dispositions Reports: Episodes of Unprofessional Behavior

In addition to the scheduled assessments, any faculty member, member of the professional staff within the Unit, or school-based professional must submit a written dispositional report to the department chairperson (or designee) when he or she becomes aware of any candidate who engages in professionally unacceptable behavior relative to any disposition at any time. This report must include a description of the circumstances and the candidate's behavior and refer to the "Three Levels of Professionally Unacceptable Behavior" described below.

Three Levels of Professionally Unacceptable Behavior

Any instance of professionally unacceptable behavior, either through faculty evaluation, SBTE or College supervisor evaluation, or dispositional report, will be referred by the chairperson (or designee) to a departmental committee for consideration. The department chairperson (or designee) must notify the candidate in writing that he or she has received either an evaluation or dispositional report indicative of professionally unacceptable behavior relative to Unit (and/or program) dispositions and that the candidate must meet with the departmental committee. The committee must follow-up with the individual who submitted the evaluation (or who submitted the report) to explore the rationale for the evaluation (or report) and must provide the candidate with the opportunity to respond to the evaluation (or report) and/or to explain his/her behavior. If the committee determines that the candidate's behavior was *not* professionally unacceptable, the committee will recommend to the chairperson (or designee) that the evaluation from a regularly scheduled assessment be modified, or in the case of a dispositional report, the committee will recommend the report be dismissed. The chairperson (or designee) will assure the candidate's record will be amended in accord with the committee's recommendation. [Note: For the purpose of these policies, and throughout this document, an "amended record" means that documentation pertaining to a charge of professionally unacceptable behavior is brought up to date to include final resolutions, such as committee decisions pertaining to the case and results of any appeals. An "amended record" is not removed from the candidate's file.] If the committee determines that the candidate's behavior *was* professionally unacceptable, it must then consider the severity of the behavior and the candidate's previous history of professionally unacceptable behavior (if any) in determining a course of action. The course of action is a function of the "level" of professionally unacceptable behavior as follows:

- Level 1 (ordinarily a first-time and less serious dispositional transgression): The candidate meets with the departmental committee and discussion focuses on 1) the behavior that was observed, 2) reasons why the behavior is cause for concern and why it is considered professionally unacceptable, 3) possible alternative behavioral responses in the future (if applicable), 4) a review of Unit and program dispositions, and 5) a review of the Unit's policy on dispositions
- Level 2 (ordinarily a second-time or more serious dispositional transgression): The candidate meets with the departmental committee and the committee reviews the candidate's behavior and, if appropriate, the candidate's prior dispositional history; at their discretion, the committee may prescribe some type of remedial activity (e.g., counseling, additional coursework, additional field work, a volunteer experience, etc.) designed to improve the candidate's professional disposition(s); it is possible the prescribed activity may cause delays in the candidate's normal progress through the program; the Unit's policy on dispositions also will be reviewed at this meeting.
- Level 3 (ordinarily a third-time or very serious dispositional transgression resulting in program dismissal): The candidate meets with the departmental committee; the candidate's behavior and prior dispositional history are reviewed, and the candidate is provided with an opportunity to explain the behavior.

The intent of the Unit's policy on the assessment of professional dispositions is that instances of professionally unacceptable behavior will be addressed incrementally and educationally. In cases where the professionally unacceptable behavior is deemed to be more egregious, however, (including,

but not limited to, behaviors that place the physical or psychological health and safety of children or adolescents at risk; behaviors that violate existing policies of the College or the field-based placement; and/or behaviors which are illegal) candidates with first-time transgressions may be assigned directly to Level 2 or Level 3 and candidates with second-time transgressions may be assigned directly to Level 3.

Appeal of Departmental Committee Decisions

If the departmental committee finds a level 1 or 2 disposition transgression, the candidate will be required to complete a remediation plan with designated follow up and consequences for failure to adhere to this plan. The candidate may appeal the finding in writing within 5 business days to the department chairperson (or designee). If the chair (or designee) upholds the appeal, the candidate's record will be amended accordingly. If the chair (or designee) denies the appeal, that decision is final and no further appeal of a Level 1 or Level 2 transgression to the chair (or designee) is possible. Under either circumstance, the candidate is notified in writing of the chairperson's decision. The candidate may then make a written appeal to the PEU Executive Director who will make a final decision regarding candidate status and notify candidate and Department Chair (or designee).

If the departmental committee determines that a Level 3 transgression has occurred, the candidate is notified in writing by the committee chair of the recommendation for dismissal from the program. The candidate must respond in writing within 5 business days to the PEU Executive Director who determines if there may be appropriate appeal grounds (discrepancies in facts, findings, sanction level or due process). If so, the PEU Executive Director then appoints a Dispositions Review Committee to examine facts, findings, sanction level or due process. The candidate is provided with an opportunity to meet with the Dispositions Review Committee. At the discretion of the Committee, the candidate has the opportunity to bring pertinent witnesses and/or advocate to the meeting. After reviewing the facts, findings, sanction level or due process, the Dispositions Review Committee notifies the PEU Executive Director of their recommendation in writing. The PEU Executive Director makes the final decision regarding candidate status and notifies the candidate and Department Chair (or designee) in writing. Records are maintained in the Department and the PEU.

A candidate whose behavior has been found to be professionally unacceptable by the departmental committee and the Dispositions Review Committee at Level 3 and who has received a letter from the Head of the Unit indicating that the candidate has been dismissed from the PEU education program will have 5 business days to appeal the decision in writing to the PEU Executive Director. The PEU Executive Director has broad discretion in considering the appeal and may: 1) convene an independent panel to review the case and provide recommendations to the PEU Executive Director, 2) simply review the findings of the two previous committees to arrive at a decision, or 3) employ other strategies (including interactions with committee members, witnesses, and/or the candidate) to weigh the merit of the appeal. Under any circumstance, the PEU Executive Director's decision is final (although the Provost retains discretion to review appeals). If the PEU Executive Director rules against the appeal, the departmental and Dispositions Review Committee recommendations (including the candidate's dismissal from the program) are upheld. If the PEU Executive Director rules in favor of the appeal, the transgression may be either dismissed or downgraded to a lower level, but in either case the candidate is restored to the program and the candidate's record is amended. Regardless of the outcome of the appeal, the candidate and department chair (or designee) is notified in writing of the PEU Executive Director's decision.

Candidate Rights

Candidates have the following rights pertaining to the determination of professionally unacceptable behavior relative to professional dispositions.

- The candidate must be notified by the instructor in writing within 5 business days if he or she has received an evaluation of professionally unacceptable behavior on any professional disposition during a regularly scheduled assessment OR if a dispositional report has been submitted to the department chairperson (or designee) relative to the candidate's behavior.
- The candidate must have the opportunity to respond to instructor in writing within 5 business days of date of initial letter of correspondence to the evaluation or report and the opportunity to explain his/her behavior to a departmental committee.
- The departmental committee must notify the candidate in writing within 5 business days of the findings of its review, including, as appropriate, the level of professionally unacceptable behavior.
- The candidate has the right to appeal the findings of the departmental committee in writing within 5 business days of date of departmental committee findings to the chairperson (or designee) of the home department for Level 1 and 2 transgressions.
- For Level 1 and 2 transgressions, the candidate has the right to appeal the findings of the departmental chairperson (or designee) in writing. This must be done within 5 business days of date of the chairperson's (or designee's) findings and be addressed to the PEU Executive Director.
- For Level 3 transgressions, the candidate has the right to appeal the findings of the Departmental and Unit's Dispositions Review Committees in writing. This must be done within 5 business days of date of the written communiqué and be addressed to the PEU Executive Director.
- The PEU Executive Director makes the final decision regarding the charge of a Level 3 transgression and must notify the candidate and Department Chair (or designee) in writing within 3 business days of date of departmental/Dispositions Review Committee findings.
- The candidate may bring witnesses and/or an advocate to the meeting with the Dispositions Review Committee for Level 3 appeals (however, only members of the College community may serve as advocates and advocates may only address the committee when answering questions directed to them by committee members).
- The candidate may continue to participate in any campus-based classes in which he/she is enrolled during the committee's review or, if appropriate, during an appeal to the PEU Executive Director. However, the PEU reserves the right to exclude the candidate from any field experience during the review and appeal processes.
- Provided no other College policies have been violated, candidates who are dismissed from a PEU education program due to dispositional transgressions may pursue completion of another academic program on campus. It should be recognized, however, that some professionally unacceptable behaviors in the field of education might be unacceptable in other professional programs outside the PEU.
- A candidate who has been dismissed from a PEU teacher education program, Counselor Education program, or School Building and District Leader program is no longer eligible to apply to any other PEU education program.

[Note: The policies and procedures described herein pertain only to a candidate's status within the Professional Education Unit and are not meant to supplant existing college-wide policies or procedures. Candidates are still subject to all college-wide policies and procedures. It is expected that

when candidates go through existing systems on campus (e.g., a charge of academic dishonesty, a hearing with the student or administrative conduct board, a referral to the Student Behavioral Consultant Team), department chairs within the Unit will be informed of the outcome of those circumstances. At that time, the department chair may decide to submit a dispositional report on the candidate. So, individuals affiliated with the Unit are subject to policies and procedures as *students* within the College and as *candidates* within the Unit.]
