

Policies and Procedures for Assessing Teacher Candidates Dispositions at the University of Memphis

Teacher candidates at the University of Memphis are expected to demonstrate content knowledge and teaching skills necessary for all students to learn. However, content knowledge and teaching skills are not the only requirements of the Teacher Education Program at the University of Memphis.

As published in both the University of Memphis Undergraduate Bulletin and Graduate Bulletin: In programs where candidates are specializing in a professional area, awarding a degree or recommending for a professional license does not merely attest to the accumulation of the specified number of hours in the classroom or other professional setting but also to the demonstration of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The faculty has the responsibility to both the public and the profession to award a degree or license only when the candidate has demonstrated a satisfactory level of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions as judged by the program faculty. Further, candidates must exhibit integrity and character consistent with the standards of ethical principles set forth by appropriate professional associations and Tennessee law.

As noted in both the College's Conceptual Framework and the Pillars of Practice, teacher candidates at the University of Memphis must demonstrate the dispositions (attitudes, values and professional ethics and behaviors) required of professional educators. The National Council for the Accreditation of Colleges of Education defines dispositions as: *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.* The College of Education has adopted the following as key dispositions and behaviors¹ essential for all candidates to demonstrate across their programs of study.

Behavioral Examples by Category of Professional Dispositions

Teachers and other school professional candidates at the University of Memphis are expected to demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of the following dispositions characteristic of effective educators. Examples of behaviors demonstrating each disposition are provided following each disposition statement.

The candidate shows a disposition toward and commitment to each of the following:

Social Justice

1. Promoting social justice

- Holds high expectations for all students with no signs of bias or prejudice within those expectations.

¹ Permission has been granted by the University of Tennessee-Knoxville for the use of the disposition outcomes and behavioral indicators included in this list.

- Employs a variety of instructional practices that assure academic success for diverse groups of students, particularly those marginalized in U.S. educational settings.
- Links academically challenging curriculum to the cultural, intellectual, contextual, interest, and emotional assets and needs of students.
- Develops personal bonds with students to avoid viewing students as separate or as other.
- Constructs lessons that include the perspectives of different groups.
- Explicitly teaches students about society's injustices and the dynamics of privilege.
- Advocates for, gives significant voice to, and collaborates with parents and the community in educational decisions and processes.
- Seeks opportunities to strengthen social justice understanding and practice as integral to everyday practice.

2. Providing equitable learning opportunities for all students

- Adapts instruction to meet varying needs and abilities; for example, fulfills instruction as detailed on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for a student
- Holds high expectations for all students
- Demonstrates no sign of overt bias, prejudice, or lack of fairness toward certain students or groups of people
- Creates a learning environment that enables all students to reach their full potential.

3. Promoting the achievement of students at all levels

- Demonstrates persistence in helping all children achieve success
- Holds positive expectations for all students to learn
- Reinforces student achievement for all students
- Does not negatively compare current students to other students with whom they have worked
- Conveys high expectations for student achievement
- Advocates for all learners

4. Recognizing students' unique prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests as part of the context for student learning

- Demonstrates the belief that diversity in the classroom, in the school, and in society enhances learning
- Develops lessons that encourage students to value and draw upon their unique life circumstances
- Selects materials, develops lessons, and promotes classroom environments that counteract negative stereotypes and bigotry
- Fosters student appreciation for diversity in the classroom
- Demonstrates sensitivity to the legitimate needs and concerns of others.
- Demonstrates positive attitudes toward diverse cultures and learners
- Provides students with access to varying points of view

Integrity

5. Maintaining her/his position as a positive role model for students and others

- Arrives for class/field experiences/clinical experiences on time
- Attends class except when excused in advance

- Exhibits a positive attitude toward the discipline and/or teaching profession
- Acts and dresses according to the standards of the school where the candidate is placed
- Maintains composure in the classroom
- Demonstrates situationally appropriate behavior and professional demeanor
- Uses language free of profanity and malicious statements toward any individual or groups
- Models behavior expected of both teachers and learners in an educational setting
- Uses an appropriate tone of voice
- Maintains emotional control
- Uses self-disclosure appropriately
- Uses appropriate non-verbal expressions
- Responds appropriately to the actions and reactions of others
- Demonstrates good personal hygiene and grooming
- Recognizes the need for, and seeks help in, one of the areas above (self-monitoring)

6. Demonstrating positive work habits and interpersonal skills, demonstrating a positive attitude, dependability, honesty and respect for others

- Completes assignments, duties, or tasks on time
- Demonstrates a willingness to adapt instruction to “best practices”
- Interacts in a positive and professional manner with students, peers, teachers, university personnel, and others
- Communicates without intent to deceive
- Considers opinions of others with an open mind
- Listens attentively to others in a variety of contexts
- Interacts in a polite and respectful manner
- Respects the property of others
- Demonstrates empathy and concern for others
- Displays the equitable treatment of others
- Acknowledges perspectives of individuals from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds
- Interacts appropriately in relation to cultural norms
- Acts from a positive frame of reference, including when changes occur
- Returns borrowed materials in a timely manner
- Respects the intellectual property of others by giving credit to others when using their work and avoiding plagiarism
- Adheres to the accepted standards of truthfulness, honesty, and ethical behavior as stated in the university’s Student Handbook, student teaching guidelines, and course syllabi
- Provides students access to varying points of view
- Shows due courtesy and consideration for people and ideas
- Maintains positive working relationships with peers

7. Maintaining the standards of confidentiality regarding student information and communications

- Maintains the confidentiality of student records, parent communications, and private professional communications.
- Uses language that meets professional standards and is not demeaning or harmful to any individual or group.

Excellence

8. Understanding and involving a wide variety of resources in the school, family, culture, and community to facilitate student learning

- Appreciates unique community culture
- Provides materials for students of different cultures (bulletin boards, library books)
- Welcomes the involvement of family and community members
- Recognizes, values, and utilizes assets in the community

9. Seeking out, developing, and implementing the most appropriate methods to meet the diverse learning needs of the students

- Adapts teaching to changing classroom circumstances (flexibility)
- Adapts instruction and assessment to fit various learning styles
- Adapts instruction and assessment for students with special needs
- Is aware of the process for making referrals
- Seeks and supports student services when appropriate

10. Developing students' skills as problem solvers as they progress toward becoming independent, self-directed learners

- Models problem-solving skills
- Provides opportunities for students to learn conflict resolution skills
- Utilizes peer tutors in the classroom
- Provides opportunities for students to learn to function in cooperative learning groups
- Provides opportunities for student decision making
- Shares decision making with students

11. Using effective planning and classroom organization as tools in maximizing the time available for instruction and learning

- Prepares for classes, meetings, and group work
- Submits lesson plans within agreed-upon timelines
- Plans daily instruction in light of long-range goals and objectives
- Manages time effectively
- Establishes routines and procedures to maximize instructional time (how to submit homework, taking attendance, etc.)
- Organizes seating and resources for efficiency
- Completes assigned tasks from group activities within an acceptable time frame
- Prioritizes work based upon established goals

Respect

12. Collaborating with other professionals to improve the overall learning of students

- Works together with others to achieve a common goal
- Responds positively to requests from other professionals for collaboration
- Makes a contribution to group effort
- Shares information and materials with others
- Assists peers

- Supports decisions of the group willingly, even if different from her/his own
- Supports the work of others
- Establishes professional goals that are aligned with those of the organization.
- Plans and sets goals and priorities with others
- Maximizes individuals' talents
- Distributes responsibilities evenly
- Keeps groups on task

Accountability

13. Accepting responsibility for what occurs in her/his classroom and for other school-wide responsibilities that contribute to student learning and a safe, orderly environment

- Consciously avoids acting in a dangerous or irresponsible manner that might put students at risk
- Identifies personal responsibility in conflict/problem situations
- Initiates communication to resolve conflict
- Adapts to new or unexpected situations
- Accepts consequences for personal actions or decisions
- Submits assignments/reports on time or follows procedures for extensions
- Takes action to solve problems within the authority granted to the candidate
- Takes initiative to get materials and notes when absent from meetings or classes
- Seeks/locates needed resources
- Maintains order
- Follows school procedures for disciplinary referrals
- Ensures the accuracy of information for which he/she is responsible
- Supports assignments outside the classroom, such as bus duty or restroom duty
- Supports school system policies regarding health and safety issues
- Knows and is prepared to implement plans for disasters and emergencies as required by the school system

14. Using sound judgment and thoughtful decision making with consideration of the consequences

- Uses credible and data-based sources
- Generates effective/productive options to situations
- Analyzes situations, comments, and interactions, and makes appropriate adjustments that promote a positive learning environment
- Makes reasoned decisions with supporting evidence
- Uses appropriate strategies to respond to emotional and emergency situations
- Supports and follows school, system, and university directives
- Avoids engaging in illegal or unethical conduct involving minor children or other behavior which would be grounds for dismissal from a teaching position

Continuous Learning

15. Demonstrating life-long learning and personal growth through reflection, seeking constructive feedback, and being willing to learn from others and past experience

- Values and participates in opportunities to improve instructional practices and teaching activities
- Seeks opportunities to learn new skills
- Views reflection as a component of the instructional process
- Responds constructively to professional feedback from supervisors and others, making changes to address legitimate concerns
- Seeks clarification and/or assistance as needed
- Exhibits curiosity about new and seemingly old concepts
- Displays creative ideas about and applications to educational concepts
- Models flexibility regarding course content, process, and tasks
- Makes connections to previous readings/experiences/courses, etc.

16. Participating in professional growth activities within and outside the school

- Attends school and school system inservice/staff development sessions
- Pursues opportunities in professional educational organizations and associations
- Is open to opportunities to attend/present at meetings of professional organizations

Candidate Understanding of Dispositional Expectations

Each candidate applying for admission to the Teacher Education Program will sign a dispositions verification form indicating that they understand the dispositions that they are to demonstrate in all course work, field/clinical experiences and other activities associated with their becoming a licensed teacher or other support personnel. This form will be turned in to the Office of Teacher Education and Student Support Services (TESS) and become part of her/his professional education file. For candidates in Other School Personnel Programs, program coordinators will forward copies of the dispositions verification forms to the Office of Teacher Education and Support Services.

Faculty Reporting of Dispositional Deficiencies

Faculty will submit to both the chair of their department and the Director of Teacher Education documentation of any candidate's lack of proficiency about targeted dispositions. Prior to submitting the documentation, the faculty member must meet with the candidate, discuss the candidate's deficiency(s), and obtain a signature from the candidate. The signature does not mean that the student agrees with the decision of the faculty member; rather it is just an indicator that the candidate was informed. Before forwarding to the chair and Director of Teacher Education, the faculty member will summarize the conference with the candidate. Please note: if the deficiency is at a field/clinical site, then both the mentor teacher and university faculty mentor should meet with the candidate to discuss the candidate's deficiency(s) and follow the same procedure outlined above.

Retention Procedures

1. Candidates who have a dispositional deficiency report filed in the Office of Teacher Education, will be required to meet with the College of Education's Admission and Retention Committee (ARC), a subcommittee made up of members of the Teacher Education Advisory

Council. The end result could be a recommendation from the ARC to allow the candidate to continue, the development of a required remediation plan and/or recommendation for dismissal from the program.

2. In cases of academic dishonesty (cheating and plagiarism), the candidate will follow appeal procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook. The Admission and Retention Committee, following notification of the decision of the Judicial Affairs Office about the candidate's appeal will make a decision about disqualification from the teacher preparation program.

3. The subcommittee will be made up of three faculty members, one of whom will represent the licensure area of the candidate.

4. At the meeting, the candidate will be provided an opportunity to explain her/his position and provide the committee any additional relevant information concerning the candidate's performance in the program.

5. The committee will make a determination about the candidate's continuance in the program. The committee may prescribe a remediation plan in conjunction with area faculty or recommend disqualification from the program. The committee's remediation plan or disqualification recommendation must be submitted within 7 working days to the Director of Teacher Education.

6. The Director of Teacher Education will meet with the candidate and clarify the action of the committee and have the candidate sign the remediation plan or disqualification recommendation as evidence that the candidate was informed. The candidate's signature does not indicate agreement with the committee's decision.

7. The candidate may appeal the committee's decision by scheduling a meeting with the Dean or Dean's representative within 14 days. Prior to this meeting all documentation will be provided to the Dean's office so that a final determination may be made to either support the committee's decision or rule in favor of the candidate, whereby the candidate will not have to complete the remediation plan and/or may be readmitted to her/his program.

Disqualification from Teacher Education

The College of Education's desire to prepare highly qualified professional educators who exemplify the professional ethics and behaviors as discussed in the section on dispositions has led to the identification of some actions on the part of candidates that will result in disqualification from the program. They include:

1. Failure to earn a minimum grade of "C" when repeating a professional education related course or course in major (i.e. ICL, EDPR, LEAD, PETE, MUSE, ART ED, PSYC, COUN)
2. Failure to earn a satisfactory grade in a methods course when repeating the course for an unsatisfactory grade

3. Failure to earn a minimum grade of “C” or “S” in two or more education related courses or courses in major
4. Professional/academic misconduct or dishonesty (i. e., cheating, plagiarism, inappropriate behavior in clinical settings, and submitting work products of someone else for a grade.)
5. Falsification of an academic or assessment record
6. Field/Clinical practice that results in a field/clinical site mentor or administrator recommending removal because of misconduct or inability to demonstrate the necessary knowledge/skill to teach children or youth.
7. Field Experience/Clinical Experience while under the influence of alcohol or an illegal substance.
8. Background check reveals either a felony or misdemeanor conviction.
9. Name appears on State Registry for Sex Offenders.
10. Failure to complete recommended counseling or complete successfully the remediation plan prescribed by the College Admission and Retention Committee.

Dispositional Deficiency Form

Instructor/Mentor: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher Candidate: _____ **UID/SSN:** _____

Check the Dispositional Area(s) of Concern

- 1. Promoting social justice.
- 2. Providing equitable learning opportunities for all students.
- 3. Promoting the achievement of students at all levels.
- 4. Recognizing students' unique prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests as part of the context for student learning.
- 5. Maintaining her/his position as a positive role model for students and others in regular attendance, grooming, punctuality, and professional demeanor.
- 6. Demonstrating positive work habits and interpersonal skills, a positive attitude, dependability, honesty, and respect for others.
- 7. Maintaining the standards of confidentiality regarding student information and communications.
- 8. Understanding and involving a wide variety of resources in the school, family, culture and community to facilitate student learning.
- 9. Seeking out, developing, and implementing the most appropriate methods to meet the diverse learning needs of the students.
- 10. Developing students' skills as problem solvers as they progress toward becoming independent, self-directed learners.
- 11. Effective planning and classroom organization as tools in maximizing the time available for instruction and learning.
- 12. Collaborating with other professionals to improve the overall learning of students.
- 13. Accepting responsibility for what occurs in her/his classroom and for other school-wide responsibilities that contribute to student learning and a safe, orderly environment.
- 14. Using sound judgment and thoughtful decision making with consideration of the consequences.

___15. Using continuous learning through reflection, seeking constructive feedback, and willingness to learn from others and past experience.

___16. Participating in professional growth activities within and outside the school.

Please describe the dispositional behavior and/or language indicating a deficiency. (Attach additional paper as needed.)

Signatures:

Teacher Candidate _____
(Signature indicates awareness not necessarily agreement)

Instructor/Mentor _____
Please return to the Office of Teacher Education in Room 202 Ball Hall.

Check Appropriate Statement: This dispositional form will be placed in the candidate's matrix file for further reference regardless of statement checked.

___ Deficiency resolved. No Admission/Retention Committee action required.

___ Admission/Retention Committee action required

Stakeholder Involvement in Establishing Disposition Outcomes, Policies, and Procedures

The Teacher Education Advisory Council met December 6, 2007 and reviewed this document. After several suggested changes were approved the document as a whole was approved. It should be noted that there are program areas that currently have dispositional procedures in place that this COE document does not intend to replace. This document is designed to provide a vehicle for program areas to provide candidates who have dispositional issues an avenue for **due process** when necessary. The Office of Teacher Education and Student Support Services also will maintain electronic files for every student who has dispositional referrals, thus lightening the load for departments to maintain such files.

Fairness and Equity in Assessing Candidate Dispositions

Because all candidates must be assessed on all 16 dispositions prior to student teaching or program completion, it will be necessary for each program area to determine which specific dispositions will be assessed in which courses. This will address the fairness and equitable treatment of all students required by NCATE. This does not mean that a faculty member cannot make a referral in a course they teach; rather, this is a method to ensure the fair and equitable application of assessing all 16 for each candidate.

Example: If I teach a course where none of the 16 dispositions are specifically assigned to be assessed, I can still make a referral to the Admission/Retention Committee if something occurs in my course or associated field experience. It is the instructor's call whether or not to make a referral. I would also like to point out that the bulleted items under each dispositional category are not intended to be exhaustive, nor will they be part of the document that candidates will be required to sign indicating that they are aware of the dispositional behaviors expected by the College of Education.

Procedures for Comprehensive and Systematic Assessment of Candidate Dispositions

Candidates will be introduced to the disposition outcomes and assessment policies during Level I classes taken prior to admission to the Teacher Education Program (e.g., LEAD 2010, LEAD 6000). At the time of admission to the Teacher Education Program (assessment point 1), candidates will be required to indicate by their signature that they have read and understand the disposition outcomes and policies. Each initial and advanced program will identify a point or points in the program prior to admission to the capstone experience (assessment point 2) when all candidates will be assessed on the disposition outcomes. Each initial and advanced program will identify a point or points prior to completing the capstone experience (assessment point 3) when all candidates will be assessed on the disposition outcomes. The results of disposition assessment at each assessment point will be entered into the COEAS database by the instructor who completes the assessment.