

## **CELS Elementary Cohort Program Professional Disposition Policy, Procedures, and Contract**

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), a national organization that confers professional accreditation to schools, colleges, and departments of education to help to establish high quality teacher, specialist, and administrator preparation, define teacher dispositions as follows:

**Professional Dispositions:** *Professional attitudes, values, habits, aptitudes, 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 expects institutions to assess professional dispositions based on observable behaviors in educational settings. (NCATE Glossary)<sup>1</sup>.*

A disposition is developed over a lifetime and includes the temperament, habits, aptitudes, beliefs, and behaviors appropriate to the profession. An educator's professional disposition includes, but is not limited to: self-sufficiency, intellectual curiosity, reflective practice, and ongoing development. **Self-sufficiency** is the ability to work autonomously, communicate effectively, seek assistance and obtain additional information when needed, work within established timelines, and work effectively with peers, colleagues, and communities. **Intellectual curiosity** refers to the acute awareness that learning does not simply occur within the classroom walls and that it may necessitate extra effort to obtain the intended knowledge. **Reflective practice** "describes a process of problem solving, reconstruction of meaning and subsequent reflective judgments while persons are engaged in significant new activity" (Reiman, 1999, p. 598)<sup>2</sup>. As such, reflection refers to the ability to consider experiences (e.g. new ways of teaching a topic) and its influence on your own understanding, the understanding of the students you will teach, or potential teaching practices. By reflecting on experiences, teacher or those who aim to become teachers

demonstrate a capacity (or disposition) to analyze the process of what they are doing, and to reconstruct their professional and personal knowledge schemes, while simultaneously making judgments to adapt their practice so that it best matches the needs of students. Theoretically, it connotes conceptually complex, ethical, caring, and flexible persons who consider alternative viewpoints. (Reiman, 1999, p. 598).

**Ongoing improvement** refers to the recognition that current states, strategies, practices, or lines of thinking may not be the most appropriate or effective and the willingness to attempt things differently if an appropriate rationale surfaces.

### **Elementary Ed Professional Disposition Indicators**

In concert with the expectations outlined above, the Department of CELS has established the following Professional Disposition Indicators that are used during the quantitative and qualitative assessment of all students. These indicators may be used in the determination of course grades and to determine continued enrollment in programs, regardless of a students' grade point average (GPA). Unacceptable professional disposition may jeopardize a candidate's progress in or completion of the program.

---

<sup>1</sup> NCATE Glossary. Retrieved on September 7, 2011 from  
<http://www.ncate.org/Standards/NCATEUnitStandards/NCATEGlossary/tabid/477/Default.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Reiman, Alan J. (1999). The evolution of the social roletaking and guided reflection framework in teacher education: Recent theory and quantitative synthesis of the research. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15, 597-612.

**1. Professionalism and Positive Outlook:** Students portray positive, professional attitude and enthusiasm for education and the schooling process.

***Indicators of Professionalism and Positive Outlook***

***Demeanor***

- Exhibits professional demeanor and behavior, appropriate to the setting
- Exemplifies the belief that (s)he and all students can learn
- Displays a positive attitude and emotional maturity
- Fosters trust among and between K-12 students, peers, colleagues, and professors by maintaining a high level of reliability
- Demonstrates sound moral character
- Has the ability to interact, work, and be with people who have characteristics different from self
- Demonstrates deep interest in acquiring content knowledge and pedagogical expertise
- Establishes and maintains respectful and professional collaborative relationship with others
- Consistently demonstrates initiative, interest in, and enthusiasm for teaching and learning
- Demonstrates behaviors conducive to appropriate classroom participation and commitment to learning

***Interpersonal and Communication Skills***

- Communicates effectively and thoughtfully through well-organized and clearly expressed ideas in spoken and written language
- Communicates in ways appropriate to the professional context
- Strive to establish positive interpersonal connections
- Is able to establish rapport with students, peers, colleagues, and professors

***Presence***

- Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate, professional dress which adheres to the school's dress codes and expectations
- Follows established dress codes and conventions when in school settings

**2. Intellectual Curiosity and Integrity:** Student demonstrates a sincere interest in learning about and demonstrating the effects on new knowledge of behaviors and actions.

***Indicators of Intellectual Curiosity and Integrity***

- Demonstrates curiosity and willingness to learn
- Is disposed toward inquiry, problem-solving, and reflection as demonstrated in meaningful and appropriate discussions.
- Is receptive to professional feedback concerning work/behavior
- Adjusts performance in response to professional feedback and/or suggestions from others
- Poses probing questions and problems
- Engages in professional inquiry and conversation
- Effectively analyzes, synthesizes, and evaluates information
- Seeks appropriate support and resources
- Exhibits the ability to create and/or implement new ideas
- Is able to recognize difficulties or deficiencies in ones' teaching and learning
- Demonstrates flexibility in modifying ideas
- Initiate, suggests, contribute, and share ideas and materials
- Seeks understanding of complex issues in order to solve problems both independently and collaboratively.
- Commits to mastering best practices informed by sound theory
- Seeks opportunities to grow professionally

3. **Diversity and Self-Awareness:** Students demonstrate an appreciation for differences among people and continually seek opportunities to learn more about others' perspectives.

***Indicators of Diversity and Self-Awareness***

- Demonstrates ability to honor, value, and demonstrate consideration and regard for oneself and others
- Is open to considering the myriad of new attitudes, beliefs, ideas, and opinions that are encountered in the school environment
- Exhibits an understanding of factors that contribute to diversity such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and privilege in American Society
- Appreciates the value of diversity (individual, social, cultural) and is committed to providing equitable access to instruction
- Demonstrate sensitivity to other's feelings, opinions, and cultures
- Shows compassion and empathy for students, colleagues/classmates, and professors
- Demonstrates sensitivity to others' feelings and opinion
- Respectfully listens to the views of others
- Provides opportunities for all students, peers, and colleagues to learn
- Interacts effectively, respectfully, and empathetically across a wide range of situations and people
- Seeks opportunities to learn from and about other's perspectives
- Shows respect in interactions with others
- Demonstrates awareness of own values and how they may impact others
- Displays open mindedness, flexibility, and willingness to learn from others whose perspectives differ
- Evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others

4. **Responsibility & Dedication:** Students are independent thinkers, who continually use, develop, and adopt a wide range of personal and professional resources, consistently solve problems drawing on his or her own abilities and knowledge for their solution, and demonstrates a commitment to professional development and lifelong learning.

***Indicators of Responsibility and Dedication***

*Responsibility for Actions*

- Reflects on and takes responsibility for actions and decisions
- Demonstrate the ability to appropriately handle situations that may be emotionally, physically, or intellectually stressful
- Resolve differences or misunderstandings respectfully and reflectively
- Works effectively with limited supervision and resources
- Exercises sound professional judgment
- Meets obligations and deadlines
- Is reliable when making commitments
- Respectfully, self-advocates when necessary

*Responsibilities associated with academic performance*

- Demonstrate timeliness and attendance consistently in class, group work, appointments, field experiences, and student teaching
- Prepares for class, field experiences/student teaching and completes work in a timely manner
- Meets established standards for assignments and produces high quality work

*Commitment to lifelong learning*

- Seeks and participates in formal and informal professional growth opportunities
- Participates in professional organizations

honesty, make ethical decisions, and are respectful to school staff and faculty, peers, colleagues, professors, and students.

***Indicators of Ethical and Respectful Behavior***

- Is fair and just in all situations with all students, peers, colleagues, staff, and professors
- Demonstrates discretion when discussing students, peers, faculty, schools by not participating in disparaging conversations and/or works to diffuse such language
- Appropriately cites the bases for conclusion and give credit when credit is due
- Understands and maintains confidentiality related to student records, personal family information, and student ability/disability in educational programming in order to protect the individual, child's, and family's privacy, unless such disclosure serves a professionally compelling purpose or is required by law
- Observes all federal, state, and local mandates, policies, and procedures pertinent to the teaching profession.
- Understands, upholds, and follows professional ethics, policies, and legal codes of professional codes of professional conduct

**Use of Professional Disposition Policy as a basis for  
Continued Enrollment in Department of CELS**

Faculty in CELS reviews student disposition each semester to determine eligibility for students to continue in the program each semester. A student in the Dept. of CELS will be required to meet with the department's Professional Standards Committee if

1. An instructor requests it, OR
2. A student is judged to consistently demonstrate inappropriate professional disposition by the program faculty, OR
3. If (s)he receives a grade below C- in or withdraws from any program course OR
4. If student's professional education and specialization GPA falls below a 2.5

The committee will review the information, deliberate the appropriate course of action, and make one of the following recommendations:

1. Permit the student to proceed in the program, with appropriate recommendations, OR
2. Remove the student from the program. OR
3. In the case of lower than a C- grade or course withdrawal, require student to complete course before progressing to the next semester. Note: this may require waiting two full semesters before the course is offered again in the cohort.

Remediation plans should indicate a clear course of action expected of the student, a timeline for demonstrating proficiency, and a process for continued review of satisfactory progress in the identified area.

**Appeal Process:** A student who wishes to appeal the Committee's decision must prepare a written appeal and present it to the Chair of CELS. The Chair may make the final decision, in consultation with the Professional Standards Committee. Further information about the appeal process is available at <http://generalcounsel.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-30-053.pdf>

**Disposition contract**

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the expectations of demonstrating professional dispositions to maintain enrollment in your teacher preparation program.

---

Student Name Printed

---

Student Signature & Date