

STUDENT HANDBOOK
ON
PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR
AND
ETHICAL CONDUCT

**SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
& EXERCISE SCIENCE**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

TAMPA, FLORIDA

The School of Physical Education & Exercise Science takes its role in preparing students for careers in teaching and exercise science very seriously. While the curriculum is challenging and demanding, there are many rewards for those who successfully complete the program. Our graduates have a very good reputation throughout the state of Florida and the nation, and many school districts and exercise science employers prefer to hire our graduates. In order to maintain this reputation, all students are expected to take their professional preparation seriously. Students entering this program are expected to possess a high level of personal motivation to do the very best they can in all classes and practical experiences as the time and effort put forth in this program are an investment in the future. No university program can teach students all they need to know to be successful. Those who succeed recognize the need to learn more than is expected of them in any course and to accept responsibility for a significant portion of their own learning. The desire to take personal responsibility for continuous professional development and learning is perhaps the most important attitude one can develop given the fact that information acquired today is often obsolete tomorrow. The concept of lifelong learning is an important one for students to address as they prepare for teaching and exercise science careers.

Professionalism

In addition to striving for high academic performance, accepting admission into this program includes accepting responsibility for a high level of professional behavior. "Professional" is defined in Webster's Third Unabridged Dictionary as "(1): engaged in one of the learned professions or in an occupation requiring a high level of training and proficiency, (2): characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession or an occupation." Students are expected to demonstrate evidence of a high level of proficiency and a similarly high level of professional behavior and ethical conduct throughout their undergraduate program. This includes the knowledge and practical skills required of these professions as well as behaviors that are congruent with generally accepted standards of professional conduct. It would be unconscionable of university faculty to expect any less of students in terms of professional behavior than will be expected of them as professionals.

Professionalism has two separate but related aspects: appropriate personal behavior and ethical behavior. Both are essential to professional effectiveness. Appropriate personal behavior refers to such attributes as dependability, punctuality, appropriate interpersonal communication, appearance and decorum. Ethical behavior includes honesty, integrity, fairness, respect of persons and property, adherence to principles and loyalty.

Responsibilities of the Faculty

It is the duty of the School faculty to explore the significance of professionalism with their students and to encourage them to subscribe to high standards of professional behavior. Although it is not practical to attempt to cover the range of professional behaviors in every situation that might arise, it is the faculty's responsibility to address the general concepts of professionalism and, when opportunity and need arise, discuss applications of these concepts with them. From the very beginning of their preparation, students should be continuously sensitized to the importance of professionalism, what constitutes professional behavior, and the process of making appropriate judgments when faced with complex situations involving conflicting considerations and interests.

Responsibilities of the Student

It is the responsibility of students as they grow in professional skills and knowledge to continue to develop personal and ethical behaviors, striving constantly to achieve high standards of professional conduct. Although the faculty will guide students in the area of professional behavior, students must actively work toward self-improvement. Students can do this by analyzing the many situations that confront them and exploring the most ethical positions to assume, the most appropriate to take, and the most effective ways to address difficult situations.

Professional Standards and Expectations

By the time students begin their associate teaching experience, final internship, or field experiences, they should be well aware of what is expected in terms of personal behavior and ethical conduct. They should recognize that observations of their behavior are necessary components of the evaluative process and should view constructive criticism as a positive adjunct to professional growth. It is the responsibility of school faculty and internship supervisors to point out deviations from accepted standards. It is the student's right to be advised by the faculty of unprofessional or inappropriate behavior and to be given an opportunity to improve it to meet acceptable standards. If so advised, the students must alter their behavior promptly and appropriately. Students who persist in unprofessional or inappropriate behavior, especially if it interferes with classroom instruction or clinical practice, will be in jeopardy of dismissal from the program. No student has the right to interfere with or disrupt the learning process or to behave in an unprofessional manner in class or in any setting while representing the University of South Florida and the School of Physical Education & Exercise Science.

The Undergraduate Catalog addresses unacceptable student behavior during class and provides specifics regarding Academic Dishonesty and "Disruption of Academic Process".

"Disruption of academic process is defined as the act or words of a student in a classroom or teaching environment which, in the reasonable estimation of a faculty member: (a) directs attention from the academic matters at hand, such as noisy distractions; persistent, disrespectful or abusive interruptions of lecture, exam or academic discussions, or (b) presents a danger to the health, safety or well being of the faculty member or students.

Punishments of disruption of academic process will depend on the seriousness of the disruption and will range from a private verbal reprimand to dismissal from class with a final grade of "W", if the student is passing the course, shown on the student record. If the student is not passing, a grade of "F" will be shown on the student record."

Appropriate Professional Behavior

To provide students a clear understanding of what generally constitutes appropriate professional behavior, the following behaviors have been identified by the faculty of the School of Physical Education & Exercise Science as ones that contribute positively to the role of a professional. Professional behavior standards apply to all courses and activities engaged in by students at USF in schools, and at health/fitness facilities. While in this program, students are expected to:

1. arrive on time; however, if students should arrive late, they should enter the classroom quietly without disrupting anyone.
2. refrain from talking to other students during the class while the instructor or a student is addressing the class.
3. turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before entering the classroom.
4. refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms.
5. remain in the classroom until dismissed for a break or at the end of class.
6. return on time from breaks.
7. help keep the classroom neat and clean.
8. sit as close to the front of the classroom as possible.
9. be prepared and willing to contribute to the class discussions.

10. submit all assignments on or before the due date.
11. attend class regularly. (Please see “Class Attendance Policy” below.)
12. do only work in class pertaining to that class.
13. conduct one’s self in an ethical and professional manner when participating in the classroom, schools, and clinical sites.
14. be courteous and attentive when guest speakers are invited to class.
15. be sensitive and supportive of individual differences among students, such as race, gender, ethnic background, religious preference.
16. refrain from the use of illegal drugs and abuse of alcohol, etc.
17. be a positive role model for other students at USF.
18. be honest and refrain from any form of academic dishonesty.
19. dress appropriately as directed by faculty for classroom, physical activity, public school settings, and health/fitness settings
20. display good sporting behavior during participation in courses, intramural competition, recreational activities, and as a spectator at sporting events.

Class Attendance Policy

The University of South Florida excuses absences due to religious holidays or required participation in an official university-sponsored activity. The School of Physical Education & Exercise Science follows this policy for all courses in the Physical Education and Exercise Science Programs. For both excused and unexcused absences, the Physical Education and Exercise Science Programs hold students responsible for all instruction and any announcements of assignments. If assignments are due during a class meeting that the student will miss, the assignment must be submitted on time or prior to the absence. Faculty may deduct points for unexcused absences from the student’s final grade if stated in the course syllabus. In addition, the School regards class tardiness as unacceptable professional behavior. A “tardy” is defined as being late to class or leaving class early.

Deviations from the behaviors described above will be discussed with students so that they have an opportunity to alter the problem behavior(s). The faculty will adhere to the following procedures for making students aware of inappropriate professional behavior.

1. Faculty will include a copy of this handbook in materials given to prospective students.
2. During one of the first few class meetings an instructor will discuss the Handbook on Professional Behavior and Ethical Conduct with students, pointing out very clearly what kinds of behavior are expected and why. The instructors will also discuss the consequences of inappropriate behavior with the students. The students will be asked

to sign a statement that they have read the handbook, that they understand the importance of professionalism, and that they are willing to abide by the guidelines for professional behavior set forth in the handbook.

3. The first time unprofessional behavior is observed during a class or other setting, the instructor will speak privately with the student(s) and remind them of the school's policy on disruption of the academic process. If the behavior is so disruptive that is difficult to continue to teach, the student(s) will be asked to eliminate the behavior in question and/or leave the classroom. After the class is over, the instructor will talk with the student(s) and decide a course of action regarding the student's return to the class.
4. If the unacceptable behavior persists in subsequent classes, the faculty member will report the problem to the Program Coordinator. They will consult with other program faculty to determine if this pattern of behavior is evident in other classes. The Program Coordinator will refer the student to the School Director to discuss the problem and to help the student(s) develop a written plan of action to correct the problem (signed by the student). A copy of the plan will be given to the Program Coordinator, involved faculty, as well as the student(s).
5. If the plan of action is not executed immediately and appropriately, the student(s) will be advised that a recommendation will be made to the entire faculty to dismiss the student from his/her program of studies in the School of Physical Education & Exercise Science. At this time, the student will be made aware of the College of Education grievance procedures and will be placed on hold for registration in further courses in the College of Education.
6. Students who file a grievance must sign a statement acknowledging that they understand that any courses taken while the case is being appealed might not count toward a degree in the College of Education at USF.

It is the sincere desire of this faculty that these policies and procedures be recognized by students as necessary to insure that all students benefit maximally from their program of studies at USF. In addition, a commitment to these standards will help students make a successful transition from the role of student to that of practicing professional.

**SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
& EXERCISE SCIENCE**

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I have read this handbook thoroughly and agree to abide by the standards set forth in it. I recognize the importance of conducting one's self as a professional at all times and understand the consequences of unprofessional behavior while a student in this program.

Print Student's Name

Student's Signature

Date