Purpose:

The Professional Education Unit has a responsibility to the educational community to ensure that individuals whom The University of Southern Mississippi recommends to the State of Mississippi for certification are qualified to join the education profession. Teaching requires strong academic preparation and mastery of pedagogy or other professional competencies. It also requires non-academic competencies, such as communication or interpersonal skills, which are as critical to success as those in the academic domain. This document sets forth those essential non-academic criteria or “technical standards” that are common to all unit-wide licensure programs at the University.

Policy:

Introduction and Rationale

Technical standards serve several important functions, including, but not limited to: (a) providing information to those considering licensure programs provided by the University; (b) advising applicants of non-academic criteria required to successfully complete the teacher education program; and (c) serving as the basis for feedback provided to students in these programs regarding their progress toward mastery of all program objectives.

All candidates in Southern Miss professional preparation programs are expected to demonstrate that they are prepared to work with children and youth in educational settings. The preparation results from the combination of successful completion of University coursework and field/internship experiences and the demonstration of important human characteristics that all educators should possess. Technical Standards are outlined below.

Professional Education Unit Technical Standards

The Professional Education Unit Technical Standards are grouped into four categories: Communication/Interpersonal Skills, Emotional and Physical Abilities, Cognitive Capacity, and Personal and Professional Requirements.
Within the professional context to which each intern aspires, all candidates must:

1. Communication/Interpersonal Skills
   - Be able to communicate effectively concepts, assignments, evaluations, and expectations with members of the learning community such as University faculty, students, parents, administrators, and other staff
     - Candidates write clearly and use correct grammar and spelling. They demonstrate sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and to adequately complete all written assignments, as specified by faculty.
     - Candidates communicate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, and professionals. They express ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and an ability to listen to others.
     - Candidates demonstrate sufficient skills in English to understand content presented in the program, to adequately complete all verbal assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty.

2. Emotional and Physical Abilities
   - Be able to work under time constraints, concentrate in distracting situations, make subjective judgments, and ensure safety in all situations
     - Candidates possess the sensory ability to effectively assess behavior in the classroom.
     - Candidates possess the sensory, cognitive, and physical abilities to make and execute appropriate decisions in a stressful environment.
     - Candidates demonstrate the ability to work with frequent interruptions, to respond appropriately to unexpected situations; and to cope with extreme variations in workload and stress levels.
     - Candidates have the capacity to maintain composure and continue to function well in a myriad of situations.

   - Have the physical stamina to work a contractual day and perform extended and additional duties of a school professional such as parent conferences, after-school events, and other assigned duties
     - Candidates exhibit motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placements.
     - Candidates are able to tolerate physically demanding workloads and to function effectively under stress.

3. Cognitive Capacity
   - Be able to organize time and materials, to prioritize tasks, to perform several tasks at once, and to adapt to changing situations
     - Candidates have the mental capacity for complex thought as demonstrated in prerequisite college level course work and in standardized testing.
     - Candidates have sufficient cognitive (mental) capacities to assimilate the technically detailed and complex information presented in formal lectures; small group discussions; and individual teaching, counseling, or administrative settings; and in classroom and school settings.
     - Candidates demonstrate the ability to think analytically about educational issues.
     - Candidates demonstrate the ability to multi-task and to adapt to and display flexibility in changing situations.
Candidates are able to perceive events realistically, to think clearly and rationally, and to function appropriately in routine and stressful situations.

4. Personal and Professional Requirements

- Arrive (and be on time) for professional commitments, including classes and field experiences
  - Candidates meet deadlines for course assignments and program requirements. A pattern of repeated absences, lateness, and failure to meet deadlines in courses or fieldwork is not acceptable.

- Demonstrate attitudes of integrity, responsibility, and tolerance
  - Candidates demonstrate honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; doing their own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.
  - Candidates must not make verbal or physical threats; engage in sexual harassment; become involved in sexual relationships with their students, supervisors, or faculty; or abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways.
  - Candidates protect the confidentiality of student information unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

- Show respect for self and others
  - Candidates exhibit respect for all The University of Southern Mississippi and school personnel, as well as peers, children and their families and members of their communities.
  - Candidates are expected to be free of the influence of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages in classes and field placements.
  - Candidates demonstrate the ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. They handle stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and by developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.
  - Candidates use sound judgment. They seek and effectively use help for medical and emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and/or professional performance.

- Project an image of professionalism
  - Candidates demonstrate appropriate personal hygiene habits.
  - Candidates dress appropriately for their professional contexts.
  - Candidates possess maturity, self-discipline, and good judgment.
  - Candidates demonstrate good attendance, integrity, honesty, conscientiousness in work, and teamwork.

Implementation and Review Procedures

Students will be monitored and given feedback throughout the program. At specified points (e.g., field experiences), students will be notified of inadequacies that may prevent them from progressing through their program. Documentation and consensus regarding the student’s functioning will be obtained. Candidates who experience deficiencies in any area will be encouraged to seek appropriate professional help from University or other sources. If the problem seems to be beyond remediation, continuation in professional programs, graduation, or recommendation for certification may be denied.

- Prior to receiving the Gold Card, candidates will receive a copy of the Professional Education Unit Technical Standards Policy and be asked to sign an acknowledgment form.
- Candidates in the undergraduate teacher preparation programs will be required to submit an updated acknowledgement form during their first experience.

Date Adopted by PEC: December 2008
Date Last Modified: February 4, 2014
• A self-assessment of candidates will occur during the second experience (see Intern’s Self Assessment Form).
• Faculty evaluations of students on the technical standards will occur during each field/internship experience (see Technical Standards Evaluation Form).

Assistance For Individuals With Disabilities

Technical standards may be met with or without accommodations. The University complies with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Requests for accommodations should be directed to the Office for Disability Accommodations and follow established university policy and procedures. Voice Telephone: 601.266-5024 or 228.214.3232 Fax: 601.266.6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1.800.582.2233 (TTY) or email Suzy Hebert at Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu.
Within the professional context to which each intern aspires, all candidates must:

Communication/Interpersonal Skills

• be able to communicate effectively concepts, assignments, evaluations, and expectations with members of the learning community such as University faculty, students, parents, administrators, and other staff;
• have communication skills that are responsive to different perspectives represented in diverse classrooms and/or other professional environments;
• have the necessary interpersonal competencies to function effectively with students and parents, and to function collaboratively as part of a professional team;

Emotional and Physical Abilities

• be able to work under time constraints, concentrate in distracting situations, make subjective judgments, and ensure safety in emergencies;
• have the physical stamina to work a contractual day and perform extended and additional duties of a school professional such as parent conferences, after-school events, and other assigned duties;

Cognitive Capacity

• be able to organize time and materials, to prioritize tasks, to perform several tasks at once, and to adapt to changing situations;

Personal and Professional Requirements

• arrive (and be on time) for professional commitments, including classes and field experiences;
• meet deadlines for course assignments and program requirements with no pattern of absences or lateness;
• show respect for self and others; and
• project an image of professionalism.

I have read and acknowledge receipt of the Professional Education Unit Technical Standards Policy.

__________________________  ______________________  ______________________
Intern Signature  PRINTED Name  Date

NOTE: If you have a documented disability and are seeking accommodations, you should register with the University’s Office of Disability Accommodations. Students should initiate this process as soon as possible (prior to the start of classes and/or field experiences).
### Communication/Interpersonal Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
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*Students should submit on back an explanation for each item checked “NO.”*

I have reviewed the Professional Education Unit Technical Standards Policy.

___________________________________________  
Intern Signature  
Date

Intern’s PRINTED Name

**NOTE:** If you have a documented disability and are seeking accommodations, you should register with the University’s Office of Disability Accommodations. Students should initiate this process as soon as possible (prior to the start of classes and/or field experiences).
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT
TECHNICAL STANDARDS EVALUATION FORM

Intern Name: ___________________________ Emp. ID __________

Program Area: _________________________ Advisor: ________________

Rate the intern on each of the standards listed below:

**KEY:**

- 4 – Frequently
- 3 – Sometimes
- 2 – Rarely Ever
- 1 – Not Applicable

> Insufficient Opportunity to Observe

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<th>4</th>
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Recommendation for program entrance: _____ yes _____ no _____ probationary

Recommendation for program continuance: _____ yes _____ no _____ remediation

Additional Comments:

______________________________  ______________________________
Name/Title  Signature/Date

______________________________  ______________________________
Name/Title  Signature/Date