

Professional Dispositions and Technical Standards

The University of Southern Mississippi PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT TECHNICAL STANDARDS and PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS POLICY

Introduction and Rationale

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.

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 the Southern Miss professional preparation programs are expected to demonstrate that they are prepared to work with children and youth in educational settings. This preparation results from the combination of successful completion of University coursework and field/internship experiences and the demonstration of important human characteristics and dispositions that all educators should possess. These characteristics and dispositions, the *Professional Education Unit Professional Dispositions and Technical Standards*, are outlined below.

Professional Education Unit Technical Standards and Professional Dispositions

The Professional Education Unit Technical Standards are grouped into three categories: Communication/Interpersonal Skills, Emotional and Physical Abilities, and Cognitive Dispositions. The Teacher Education Professional Dispositions are grouped into seven standards: Classroom Characteristics, Reliability/Dependability, Communication, Interpersonal Skills, Responsibility, Ethics, and Self-Reflection and Professionalism.

Within the professional context to which each candidate aspires, all candidates must possess:

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.

Have communication skills that are responsive to different perspectives represented in diverse classrooms and/or other professional environments

- Candidates appreciate the value of diversity and look beyond self in interactions with others. They must not impose personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on others.
- Candidates demonstrate an awareness of appropriate social boundaries between students and educators and show that they are ready and able to observe those boundaries.

Have the necessary interpersonal competencies to function effectively with students and parents, and to function collaboratively as part of a professional team

- Candidates demonstrate positive social skills in professional and social interactions with faculty, colleagues, parents, and students.
- Candidates demonstrate the ability to express their viewpoints and negotiate difficulties appropriately, without behaving unprofessionally with instructors, peers, or students.

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 tolerate physically demanding workloads and to function effectively under stress.

Cognitive Dispositions

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 analyze, synthesize, integrate concepts, and problem-solve to formulate assessment and educational judgments.
- Candidates demonstrate the ability to think analytically about educational issues. They are thoughtfully reflective about their practice.
- Candidates demonstrate the ability to multi-task and to adapt to and display flexibility in changing situations.
- Candidates perceive events realistically, think clearly and rationally, and function appropriately in routine and stressful situations.

Within the professional context to which each candidate aspires, all candidates must possess the following Teacher Education Professional Dispositions:

1. Standard One: Classroom Characteristics

- 1.1. Candidate is positive, enthusiastic, and optimistic.
- 1.2. Candidate is patient, fair, and empathetic.
- 1.3. Candidate is inquisitive and resourceful.
- 1.4. Candidate places needs of students first.
- 1.5. Candidate respects individual differences.
- 1.6. Candidate shows initiative and creativity.
- 1.7. Candidate is dedicated to teaching and learning.
- 1.8. Candidate demonstrates persistence in helping all children achieve success.
- 1.9. Candidate exhibits classroom awareness and caring attitude toward all students, faculty, and peers.

2. Standard Two: Reliability/Dependability

- 2.1. Candidate is present and punctual.
- 2.2. Candidate is prepared for classes and field experiences.
- 2.3. Candidate completes assignments in a timely manner.
- 2.4. Candidate is dependable.
- 2.5. Candidate is cooperative.
- 2.6. Candidate knows and follows guidelines in course syllabi, university, and school handbooks.
- 2.7. Candidate exhibits dress and grooming appropriate for setting.
- 2.8. Candidate is self-directed.

3. Standard Three: Communication

- 3.1. Candidate uses appropriate language.
- 3.2. Candidate demonstrates ability to speak and write with clarity.
- 3.3. Candidate uses Standard English in writing and speaking.
- 3.4. Candidate is an active listener.

4. Standard Four: Interpersonal Skills

- 4.1. Candidate shows courtesy and respect for students, teachers, staff, peers, parents, and members of the community.
- 4.2. Candidate works collaboratively with all stakeholders.
- 4.3. Candidate demonstrates equitable treatment and respect for others without prejudicial thinking.
- 4.4. Candidate establishes positive rapport and appropriate relationships.

45. Candidate shows sensitivity to all students.
46. Candidate is committed to diversity.
47. Candidate is familiar with different cultures and students with special needs.
48. Candidate is open-minded.
49. Candidate is supportive and encouraging.
5. **Standard Five: Responsibility**
 51. Candidate is mature, exhibits self-control and reacts appropriately under stress.
 52. Candidate is flexible, adapts to change.
 53. Candidate is able to accept and express different points of view in a professional manner.
 54. Candidate uses good judgment.
 55. Candidate accepts responsibility for own actions.
6. **Standard Six: Ethics**
 61. Candidate demonstrates truthfulness and honesty.
 62. Candidate maintains ethical and legal behaviors in interactions with others.
 63. Candidate maintains confidentiality.
 64. Candidate respects intellectual property of others by giving credit and avoiding plagiarism and cheating.
 65. Candidate adheres to ethics and policies of university, schools, and profession.
7. **Standard Seven: Self-Reflection and Professionalism**
 71. Candidate engages in problems solving and self-evaluation.
 72. Candidate reflects on decisions made concerning students, teaching methods, and subject matter.
 73. Candidate accepts constructive criticism in a positive manner.
 74. Candidate uses feedback to make improvements.
 75. Candidate shows a willingness to learn and grow professionally.

Implementation and Review Procedures

Prior to receiving the Gold Card, candidates will receive a copy of the *Professional Education Unit Technical Standards and Professional Dispositions Policy* and be asked to sign a *Technical Standards and Professional Dispositions Acknowledgement Form*. Candidates in the undergraduate teacher preparation programs will be required to submit an updated Professional Education Unit Technical Standards and Professional Dispositions Acknowledgement Form as part of the College's selective admissions review prior to their capstone experience.

Self-assessments of candidates and faculty evaluations of students on the technical standards will occur during each field/internship experience (see *Candidate's Self Assessment* and *Technical Standards and Professional Dispositions Evaluation Form*). 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 areas 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.

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 emailing ODA at oda@usm.edu.

**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT
TECHNICAL STANDARDS and PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

Within the professional context to which each candidate 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 Dispositions

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

Within the professional context to which each candidate aspires, all candidates must display the following:

Professional Dispositions

- Classroom Characteristics; \ Reliability/Dependability; \ Communication; \ Interpersonal Skills; \ Responsibility; \ Ethics; and \ Self-Reflection and Professionalism.

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

Candidate 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).

**PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT
TECHNICAL STANDARDS and PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS
CANDIDATE'S SELF ASSESSMENT**

Within the professional context to which I aspire (elementary education, secondary, or K - 12 education), I believe I am able to:

YES	NO	Communication / Interpersonal Skills
		Communicate effectively concepts, assignments, evaluations, and expectations with members of the learning community such as University faculty, students, parents, administrators, and other staff;
		demonstrate communication skills that are responsive to different perspectives represented in diverse classrooms and/or other professional environments;
		exhibit the necessary interpersonal competencies to function effectively with students and parents, and to function collaboratively as part of a professional team;
YES	NO	Emotional and Physical Abilities
		work under time constraints, concentrate in distracting situations, make subjective judgments, and ensure safety in emergencies;
		possess the sensory, cognitive, and physical abilities to execute appropriate decisions;
		demonstrate 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;
YES	NO	Cognitive Dispositions
		organize time and materials, prioritize tasks, perform several tasks at once, and adapt to changing situations;
YES	NO	Professional Dispositions
		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 repeated absences or lateness
		seek assistance and follow supervision in a timely manner, and accept and respond appropriately to constructive review of their work from supervisors;
		demonstrate attitudes of integrity, responsibility, and tolerance;
		show respect for self and others; and

		project an image of professionalism.
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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 and Professional Dispositions Policy.

Candidate Signature

Date

Candidate'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 and
PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS
EVALUATION FORM**

Candidate Name: _____ Emp. ID _____

Program Area: _____ Advisor: _____

Rate the candidate on each of the standards listed below:

**KEY: 4 – Frequently 3 – Sometimes 2 – Rarely Ever 1 – Not Applicable
Insufficient Opportunity to Observe**

4	3	2	1	<u>Technical Standards</u>
				Communicates effectively concepts, assignments, evaluations, and expectations with members of the learning community such as University faculty, students, parents, administrators, and other staff
				Demonstrates communication skills that are responsive to different perspectives represented in diverse classrooms and/or other professional environments
				Exhibits the necessary interpersonal competencies to function effectively with students and parents, and to function collaboratively as part of a professional team
				Works under time constraints, concentrates in distracting situations, makes subjective judgments, and ensures safety in emergencies
				Possesses the sensory, cognitive, and physical abilities to execute appropriate decisions
				Has 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
				Organizes time and materials, prioritizes tasks, performs several tasks at once, and adapts to changing situations
				Arrives on time for professional commitments, including classes and field experiences
				Meets deadlines for course assignments and program requirements with no pattern of repeated absences or lateness

				Seeks assistance and follows supervision in a timely manner, and accepts and responds appropriately to constructive feedback from supervisors
				Demonstrates attitudes of integrity, responsibility, and tolerance
				Shows respect for self and others
				Projects an image of professionalism

Recommendation for program entrance: ____yes ____no ____probationary

Recommendation for program continuance: ____yes ____no ____remediation

Additional Comments:

_____ Name/Title _____ Signature/Date

_____ Name/Title _____ Signature/Date

_____ Name/Title _____ Signature/Date

_____ Name/Title _____ Signature/Date