

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
TECHNICAL STANDARDS/
FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES POLICY¹**
(May 2004; revised August 2005; title revised August 2007)

Introduction and Rationale

The College of Education has a responsibility to the educational community to ensure that individuals whom the University of Maryland recommends to the State of Maryland for certification are qualified to join the education profession. Teaching and other preK-12 and community education-related professions require strong academic preparation and mastery of pedagogy or other professional competencies. These professions also require 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” (Foundational Competencies) that are common to all preK-12 and community professional preparation programs at the University.

Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies serve several important functions, including, but not limited to: (a) providing information to those considering preK-12 and community professional careers that will help such students in their career decision-making; (b) advising applicants of non-academic criteria considered in admissions decisions made by the University’s preK-12 and community professional preparation programs; (c) serving as the basis for feedback provided to students in these programs regarding their progress toward mastery of all program objectives; and (d) serving as the basis for the final assessment of attainment of graduation requirements and recommendation for certification.

All candidates in the UM 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 *College of Education Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies*, are outlined below.

¹ The primary source used in the preparation of this document was the policy and procedure document from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Additional sources include, but are not limited to, policy and procedure documents from the University of Rochester Medical Center; University of West Virginia at Parkersburg; University of Wisconsin, Madison; Michigan State University; Medical College of Wisconsin; New Hampshire Technical Institute; Franklin College; and the University of Iowa.

College of Education Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies

The College of Education Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies are grouped into four categories: Communication/Interpersonal Skills, Emotional and Physical Abilities, Cognitive Dispositions, and Personal and Professional Requirements.

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

Communication/Interpersonal Skills

- **Be able to express themselves effectively in written and oral English in order to communicate 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 spoken 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 emergencies**
 - 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 possess the ability to make and execute quick, appropriate, and accurate decisions in a stressful environment.
 - 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.

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 are able to 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 are able to perform the above skills independently. The use of a trained intermediary is not acceptable in many classroom/school situations, because a candidate must be able to exercise independent judgment without relying on or having the filter of someone else's power of observation and selection.

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.

- **Seek assistance and follow supervision in a timely manner, and accept and respond appropriately to constructive review of their work from supervisors**
 - Candidates show that they are ready to reflect on their practice and accept constructive feedback in a professional manner. They demonstrate the ability to act upon reasonable criticism.
 - Candidates are flexible, open to new ideas, and willing and able to modify their beliefs and practices related to their work.

- **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 interact courteously, fairly, and professionally with people from diverse racial, cultural, and social backgrounds and of different genders or sexual preferences. Conduct in violation of the University's Human Relations Code is not acceptable (see <http://www.inform.umd.edu/PRES/policies/vi100b.html>).
 - 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 demonstrate the ability to understand the perspectives of others in the context of teaching, counseling, administration, etc. and the ability to separate personal and professional issues.
 - Candidates exhibit acceptance of and are able to make appropriate adjustments for exceptional learners.
 - 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 University of Maryland 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. They are expected to abide by the University of Maryland Code of Student

Conduct (<http://www.inform.umd.edu/PRES/policies/v100b.html>).

The Code prohibits the use of any controlled substance or illegal drug on university premises or at university sponsored activities.

- 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

During the orientation phase of their professional programs, candidates will receive a copy of the *College of Education Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies Policy* and be asked to sign a *Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies Acknowledgement Form*. Candidates in the undergraduate teacher preparation programs will be required to submit an updated College of Education Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies Acknowledgement Form as part of the College's selective admissions review in the sophomore or junior year.

Self-assessments of candidates and faculty evaluations of students on the Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies will occur during each field/internship experience (see *Candidate's Self Assessment* and *Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies 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 sought before any action is taken. 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/Foundational Competencies 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. Therefore, the College of Education will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations with respect to its Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies for an applicant with a disability who is otherwise qualified. "Disability" shall mean, with respect to an individual, (1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life functions of such individual; (2) a record of such an impairment; or (3) being regarded as having such an impairment. The University reserves the right to reject any requests for accommodations that are unreasonable, including those that would involve the use of an intermediary that would require a student to rely on someone else's power of selection and observation, fundamentally alter the nature of the University's educational program, lower academic standards, cause an undue hardship on the University, or endanger the safety of students or others.

Questions or requests for accommodations pertaining to the College of Education Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies should be directed to Dr. Kathy Angeletti, Assistant Dean, College of Education (301/405-2358; kangel@umd.edu) or Dr. Donna Wiseman, Associate Dean, College of Education (3119 Benjamin; 301/405-0866; dlwise@umd.edu).

For all other requests for accommodations, students should contact the University's Disability Support Services and follow established university policy and procedures.

Confidentiality

Unless a student has expressly waived his or her privilege to confidentiality of medical records provided to substantiate either a disability or a recommendation for an accommodation, the College of Education administrators to which such information has been communicated shall maintain such information in a manner that preserves its confidentiality. Under no circumstances shall such information become part of a student's academic records.

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION TECHNICAL
STANDARDS/FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

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

Communication/Interpersonal Skills

- be able to express themselves effectively in written and oral English in order to communicate 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;

Personal and Professional Requirements

- arrive (and be on time) for professional commitments, including classes and field experiences;
- 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.

I have read and acknowledge receipt of the College of Education Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies Policy. I understand that if the criteria listed above are not met satisfactorily, I may be denied full admission into the College of Education Professional Preparation Program and/or denied the opportunity to complete the extensive internship component of the curriculum.

Candidate Signature

PRINTED Name

Date

NOTE: The University has a legal obligation to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability and are seeking accommodations, you should register with the University's Office of Disability Support Services and notify your course instructor, academic advisor, and/or the Office of Student Services (1204 Benjamin Building; 301/405-2364) of your specific needs, as appropriate. Students should initiate this process as soon as possible (prior to the start of classes and/or field experience).

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION TECHNICAL STANDARDS/
FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES CANDIDATE’S SELF ASSESSMENT**

Within the professional context to which I aspire (for example, elementary education, school counseling, school administration), I believe I am able to:

YES	NO	Communication/Interpersonal Skills
		express myself effectively in written and oral English in order to communicate 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;
		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	Personal and Professional Requirements
		arrive (and be on time) for professional commitments, including classes and field experiences;
		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.

Students should submit an explanation for each item checked “NO.”

I have reviewed the College of Education Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies Policy and understand that if the criteria listed above are not met satisfactorily, I may be denied the opportunity to continue in the professional preparation program and to complete the extensive internship component of the curriculum.

Candidate Signature

Date

Candidate’s **PRINTED** Name

NOTE: The University has a legal obligation to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and are seeking accommodations, you should register with the University’s Disability Support Services and notify your course instructor, academic advisor, and/or the Office of Student Services (1204 Benjamin Building; 301/405-2364) of your specific needs, as appropriate. Students should initiate this process as soon as possible (prior to the start of classes and/or field experience).

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION TECHNICAL STANDARDS/
FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES EVALUATION FORM**

Candidate Name: _____

Program Area: _____

Rate the candidate on each of the standards listed below:

KEY: A – Frequently B – Sometimes C – Rarely Ever N/A – Not Applicable/
Insufficient Opportunity to Observe

A	B	C	NA	<i>Technical Standards/Foundational Competencies</i>
				Expresses him/herself effectively in written and oral English in order to communicate 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
				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
				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 continuance: _____ yes _____ no _____ probationary

Recommendation for program completion and certification: _____ yes _____ no _____ N.A.

Additional Comments:

Name/Title

Signature/Date

Name/Title

Signature/Date

Name/Title

Signature/Date