

**TOWSON UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION PROGRAM
PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR POLICY**

INTRODUCTION and RATIONALE

The Teacher Education Executive Board (TEEB) has a responsibility to the education community to ensure that individuals whom Towson University recommends to the State of Maryland for certification are highly qualified to join the education profession. Those entering the teaching profession are required to have strong academic preparation, mastery of pedagogy, and other professional competencies. The profession also requires non-academic professional behaviors, such as interpersonal skills, which are as critical to success as those in the academic domain. The goal of this Professional Behavior Policy is to help candidates know and demonstrate professional behaviors in a school environment. This document sets forth the essential professional behaviors for the entire education unit.

A professional behavior policy serves several important functions, including, but not limited to: (a) providing information to those considering teaching careers that will help such students in their career decision-making; (b) serving as the basis for feedback provided to students throughout their teaching program regarding their progress toward mastery of all program objectives; and (c) serving as the basis for the final assessment of attainment of graduation requirements and recommendation for certification.

All candidates in education programs are expected to demonstrate that they are prepared to work with students and adults in educational settings. This preparation results from the combination of successful completion of Towson University coursework, field/internship experiences, and the demonstration of professional behaviors that all educators should possess. The professional behaviors and conduct deemed compatible with Towson University and/or schools are outlined below.

EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR STATEMENT

The Teacher Education Executive Board (TEEB) reserves the right for each department/program to refuse, deny, or revoke the application for admission to professional education programs or continuation in professional education programs of any student whose observed behavior is deemed incongruent with established guidelines of professional behavior.

All teacher education students agree to accept “the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards of professional behavior.” Placing the importance of professional behavior and duties above one’s own convenience is the cornerstone of professionalism.

All teacher education students are responsible for understanding department- and program-specific professional expectations. Fulfilling all academic requirements and successful completion of all field and classroom experiences require professional behavior including, but not limited to, punctuality, attendance, professional attire, discretion, respect for confidentiality, effective and appropriate communication with University and school-based students and personnel, and acceptance of diversity.

All teacher education students must exhibit behaviors consistent with the University’s Code of Behavior and established professional practice in educational and clinical settings. Successful completion of all field and academic experiences is a requirement for continuation in the education program.

Program Expectations of Behavior

The Education Program's Expectations of Professional Behavior are grouped into five categories: Communication/Interpersonal Skills, Emotional and Physical Abilities, Personal and Professional Behavior and Respect for Self and Others, and Social Media Policy.

Candidates enrolled in an education program must exhibit effective:

1. Communication/Interpersonal Skills

- **Candidates express themselves effectively in written and oral communication regarding concepts, assignments, evaluations, and expectations with members of the learning community such as University faculty, students, parents, administrators, and other staff. Candidates will:**
 - communicate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, and professionals. Candidate express ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and an ability to listen to others.
 - write clearly and use correct grammar and spelling. Candidates demonstrate sufficient skills to adequately complete all written assignments, as specified by faculty.
 - demonstrate sufficient oral skills to adequately complete all oral assignments and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty.
- **Candidates have communication skills that are responsive to a variety of perspectives represented in diverse classrooms and/or other professional environments. Candidates will:**
 - demonstrate communication skills that are responsive to a variety of perspectives represented in diverse classrooms and/or other professional environments.
 - appreciate the value of diversity and look beyond self in interactions with others. They must not impose personal, political, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on others.
- **Candidates possess the necessary interpersonal competencies to function effectively with students, faculty, colleagues, and parents/guardians and to function collaboratively as part of a professional team. Candidates will:**
 - demonstrate positive social skills in professional and social interactions with faculty, colleagues, parents/guardians, and students.
 - express their viewpoints and negotiate difficulties appropriately, without behaving unprofessionally with instructors, peers, or students.

2. Emotional and Physical Abilities

- **Candidates will be able to work appropriately with time constraints and deadlines, to concentrate in distracting situations, to make subjective judgments to best serve the needs of students, and to ensure safety in the classroom and in emergency situations. They will:**
 - work with frequent interruptions, respond appropriately to unexpected situations, and cope with variations in workload and stress levels.
 - multi-task and adapt to and display flexibility in changing situations.
 - make and execute quick, appropriate, and accurate decisions in a complex, stressful environment.
 - maintain composure and continue to function well in a myriad of situations.
- **Candidates will 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. They will:**
 - exhibit motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placements.
 - tolerate physically demanding workloads and function effectively under stress.

3. Personal and Professional Behavior

- **Candidates will arrive on time and stay for the duration of the planned experience for professional commitments, including classes and field experiences. They will:**
 - 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.

- **Candidates will seek assistance and follow supervision in a timely manner; modify and respond appropriately to constructive reviews of their work from supervisors. They will:**
 - reflect on their practice and accept constructive feedback in a professional manner. They demonstrate the ability to act upon appropriate suggestions and reasonable criticism.
 - be flexible, open to new ideas and modify their classroom practices to best serve the needs of the students.
- **Candidates will demonstrate attitudes of integrity, responsibility, and tolerance. They will:**
 - 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.
 - interact courteously, fairly, and professionally with people from diverse racial, cultural, and social backgrounds and of different genders, gender identities, or sexual preferences.
 - 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.
 - understand the perspectives of others and demonstrate the ability to separate personal and professional issues.
 - exhibit acceptance of and be able to make appropriate adjustments for all learners.
 - protect the confidentiality of student and colleague information unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

4. Respect for Self and Others

- **Candidates exhibit respect for all Towson University and school personnel, peers/colleagues, students, their parents/guardians, and community members.**
- **Candidates respect the rule that cell phone for personal use is prohibited during class hours; possible exceptions for emergencies may be approved in advance.**
- **Candidates are free of the influence of illegal drugs and/or the abuse of legal drugs and/or alcoholic beverages on University premises and in field placements. Candidates are expected to abide by the Towson University Code of Student Conduct and the Student Academic Integrity Policy.**
- **Candidates demonstrate the ability to deal with personal and professional 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 (from resources such as the Towson University Health Center, Disability Support Services, and the Towson University Counseling Center) that may interfere with academic and/or professional performance.**
- **Candidates project an image of professionalism. They will:**
 - demonstrate appropriate personal hygiene.
 - dress appropriately for their professional contexts.
 - possess maturity, self-discipline, and appropriate professional judgment.

5. Social Media Policy

- **The same principles and guidelines that apply to students' activities in general also apply to their activities online. This includes all forms of online publishing and discussion, including blogs, user-generated video and audio, social networks and other social media applications. The Internet is neither anonymous nor forgetful, and there is no clear line between one's professional life and personal life on a social media site. Teacher candidates need to weigh every posting for how it affects their effectiveness as teachers.**
 - Candidates realize their representations on the internet will be considered within the scope of their professional demeanor.
 - Candidates/interns shall not engage (that is "friend") classroom students, mentor teachers, parents/legal guardians on any social media site or device.
 - Candidates shall not take photos of classroom students or students' work without specific written consent from the students' parents/legal guardian for the photos/work/oral presentations/activities.

Implementation and Review Procedures

Each program in the Education Unit will introduce this policy, and candidates will receive a copy of the *Program's Professional Behavior Policy* and sign a *Professional Behavior Policy Acknowledgement Form* prior to entry into all field and/or clinical experiences. Candidates in all Education Unit programs will be required to sign a *Professional Behavior Policy Acknowledgment Form* prior to entry into the Professional Year.

At various points in an Education program candidates will be notified of professional and/or academic behavior 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 Towson University or other sources. If the problem seems to be beyond remediation, the candidate's continuation in professional programs, graduation, or recommendation for certification may be denied.

Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities

Requirements of the Professional Behavior Policy 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, Towson University will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations with respect to its professional behavior standards 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.

For all requests for accommodations, students should contact Towson University's Accessibility & Disability Services (ADS) (410-704-2638) and follow established university policy and procedures.

Unless a student has expressly waived his or her privilege to confidentiality of records provided to substantiate either a disability or a recommendation for an accommodation, program 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.

**TOWSON UNIVERSITY
PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR POLICY
EDUCATION STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

Candidates enrolled in an education program must exhibit effective:

Communication/Interpersonal Skills

- be able to express themselves effectively in written and oral communication in regards to 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

Personal and Professional Behavior

- arrive 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
- project an image of professionalism

Respect for Self and Others

- respect for all TU and school/classroom personnel
- obey appropriate cell phone use
- remain drug and alcohol free on University and field/internship placements
- use sound judgment and deal with personal and professional stressors appropriately

Social Media Policy

- refrain from engaging (“friending”) classroom students, mentor teachers, parents/legal guardians on any social media site or device for non-academic purposes
- abide by all school and district policies related to the use of social media for academic purposes and ensure any accounts used for such purposes are “professional” accounts, keeping personal social content separate
- realize that candidates cannot take and/or post photos and/or videos of classroom students or students’ work without written consent from the students’ parents/legal guardian.

I have read and acknowledge receipt of the Professional Behavior Policy in its entirety. I understand that if the expectations outlined in the Policy are not met satisfactorily, I may be recommended for dismissal from the Education Preparation Program and/or denied the opportunity to complete course, field experience, and/or internship components of the Program.

Candidate Signature

Date

PRINTED Name

Date

This signed document should be given to the **Department Chair or Program Director**.

NOTE: The University has a legal obligation to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students seeking accommodations, should register with the University's Office of Accessibility & Disability Services (ADS) and notify course instructors prior to the start of classes, field experiences, or internships.

Revised 11/2019

Approved 11/19/2019