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. The teaching profession requires 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 demonstrate professional behaviors in a school environment. This document sets forth those 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 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 behavior that all educators should possess. These professional behaviors 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.

As a professional discipline, education is “vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service.” 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. In addition to fulfilling all academic requirements, successful completion of all field experiences requires demonstrated 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 experiences is a requirement for continuation in the education program.

¹Adapted from the University of Maryland, College Park (2005) College of Education Technical Standards Policy. Used with permission
Program Expectations of Behavior

The Education Program’s Expectations of Professional Behavior are grouped into three categories: Communication/Interpersonal Skills, Emotional and Physical Abilities, and Personal and Professional Behavior.

Candidates enrolled in an education program must:

Communication/Interpersonal Skills

- express themselves effectively in standard 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 Standard 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 Standard English to understand content presented in the program, to adequately complete all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty.

- have communication skills that are responsive to a variety of 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 their awareness of appropriate social boundaries between students and educators and their readiness to observe those boundaries.

- have the necessary interpersonal competencies to function effectively with students and parents/guardians, and to function collaboratively as part of a professional team
  - Candidates demonstrate positive social skills in professional and social interactions with faculty, colleagues, parents/guardians, 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 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
  - Candidates demonstrate the ability to work with frequent interruptions, to respond appropriately to unexpected situations, and to cope with variations in workload and stress levels.
  - Candidates demonstrate the ability to multi-task and to adapt to and display flexibility in changing situations.
Candidates possess the ability to make and execute quick, appropriate, and accurate decisions in a complex, stressful environment.

Candidates 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.

**Personal and Professional Behavior**

- **arrive 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 reviews of their work from supervisors**
  - Candidates reflect on their practice and accept constructive feedback in a professional manner. They demonstrate the ability to act upon appropriate suggestions and reasonable criticism.
  - Candidates are flexible, open to new ideas and willing to modify their beliefs and practices to best serve the needs of their students.

- **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.
  - 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 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 and colleague information unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

- **show 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 know cell phone use is prohibited during class hours (inc.texting).
  - Candidates are free of the influence of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages on university premises and field placements. They are expected to abide by the Towson University Code of Student Behavior.
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 that may interfere with scholastic and/or professional performance.

Candidates realize their representations on the internet will be considered within the scope of their professional demeanor.

- **project an image of professionalism**
  - Candidates demonstrate appropriate personal hygiene.
  - Candidates dress appropriately for their professional contexts.
  - Candidates possess maturity, self-discipline, and appropriate professional judgment.
  - Candidates attend and assist as needed in lessons being observed.
  - Candidates demonstrate good attendance, integrity, honesty, conscientiousness in work, and teamwork.

- **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.

**Implementation and Review Procedures**

Each program of education 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 the entry of the clinical experiences. Candidates in the programs will be required to submit an updated *Professional Behavior Policy Acknowledgment Form* prior to entry into the Professional Year.

At various points (e.g., field experiences) candidates will be notified of Professional 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**

Professional behavior 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 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 Disability Support Services (410-704-2638) and follow established university policy and procedures.

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

**Communication/Interpersonal Skills**

- be able to express themselves effectively in standard 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

**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

- project an image of professionalism

- adhere to social media policy

I have read and acknowledge receipt of the Professional Behavior Policy. I understand that if the criteria listed above are not met satisfactorily, I may be recommended for dismissal from the Teaching Program and/or denied the opportunity to complete the internship and student teaching component of the curriculum.

Candidate Signature __________________________________________________________________________

PRINTED Name __________________________________________________________________________

Date ______________________________________________________________________________________

This document should be given to the Department Chair.

NOTE: The University has a legal obligation to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Documented disability students seeking accommodations, should register with the University's Office of Disability Support Services and notify your course instructor, and/or academic advisor prior to the start of classes and/or field experience.
As well as academic preparation and teaching skills, the teaching profession also requires non-academic professional behaviors, such as interpersonal skills, which are as critical to success as those in the academic domain. The “Education Professional Behavior Policy” (part 2 of this document) describes the professional behavior expected of teacher candidates in all placements. Candidates who fail to demonstrate appropriate professional behavior pedagogical skills, or mastery of content may be removed from the field placement after other options may be explored.

Should a school leader request the removal of an intern from a school placement, the placement at that school shall be ended immediately. The intern will proceed to step five of this policy if the school requests that the intern be removed from the setting. If a candidate’s actions are considered illegal activities, there is an automatic referral to step five of this policy. If a candidate fails to demonstrate competence in one or more expectations in the school placement, the following policy shall be implemented.

Procedure for Removing Candidates from Field Experiences and Concurrent Courses:

1. The university supervisor ensures that the mentor teacher has modeled appropriate planning and instruction and has involved the intern in a gradual progression of appropriate professional experiences such as co-teaching, small group instruction, whole class instruction, and independent teaching if that is warranted. The University supervisor is responsible for observing the intern and providing both oral and written feedback for each lesson observed. The mentor teacher should give written feedback to any candidate that is having difficulty after formative discussions with the candidate have occurred.

2. When an intern encounters difficulty in the school/classroom, it is the university supervisor’s responsibility to inform the intern, in writing, that he/she is not meeting expectations and to specify the behaviors, dispositions, knowledge, and/or skills that need remediation. Once informed of the area(s) requiring remediation, the candidate is responsible for developing/proposing an Assistance Plan (in response to the area(s) requiring remediation) with the university supervisor. After review, discussion, and revision (as needed) of the proposed plan, the university supervisor, along with the mentor teacher and the intern, will finalize and sign an Assistance Plan that includes the areas of weakness and the steps the intern must follow to remediate those weaknesses. The plan will include a timeline that specifies how and when the candidate will be expected to address the identified weaknesses, benchmarks, criteria, and the steps that will follow if the weaknesses are not remediated within the time frame. Each time the university supervisor and the mentor teacher observe the candidate, references will be written as to the progress being made on the Assistance Plan. The university supervisor will give a copy of the Assistance Plan to the TU department chair or the program director as a way to alert them that the candidate is experiencing difficulty. Should the candidate refuse to sign or fail to implement the Assistance Plan, the candidate will be removed from the placement and will proceed to step five of this policy.

3. At the end of the time frame set forth in the Assistance Plan, the intern is either allowed to proceed in the field experience as long as he/she is able to maintain all of the responsibilities expected of the experience, or he/she is removed from the field experience due to lack of progress on the Assistance Plan. This decision will be made by the university supervisor in collaboration with the department chair; the director of the Center of Professional Practice (CPP) will be notified in writing of the decision that is made.

4. If an intern is removed from a field placement, he/she will receive a grade of F or U for the internship course. If the withdrawal occurs before the deadline for officially withdrawing from courses, the candidate may be allowed to withdraw from the internship and receive a grade of W for the course. Candidates taking concurrent courses will be allowed to finish those courses if the courses do not require continuing work with children/students in the field placement. Candidates may not work with other children/students outside of the given placement to fulfill the field placement components of the internship and concurrent courses.
5. Candidates may appeal the removal from field placement to the Dean of the College of Education or appropriate College within 48 hours of being removed from the placement. The Dean will make a decision on the appeal based on university policy as stated in the appropriate catalog. If the Dean rules in favor of the candidate, the candidate will be placed back in an appropriate classroom setting. The candidate will not return to the original classroom or school, but may be reinstated in an internship in a different setting or in a future semester.

6. To be reinstated in a field placement and/or the concurrent courses in a subsequent semester, the candidate must make a written request to the department chair or the program director at least 30 days before the beginning of the semester in which the placement is sought. Individual departments will set requirements for reinstatement.
Towson University

**Professional Year Assistance Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student: ___________________________</th>
<th>Towson ID# ___________________</th>
<th>Program: ________________</th>
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<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Action &amp; Date</th>
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Failure to complete this plan satisfactorily may result in removal from internship.

Follow-Up:

_________________________________ ____________________________________
Copy to: Dept. chair and ____________________
TU Intern                          University Liaison               Center for Professional Practice  Date