

**Department of Education
Teacher Dispositions/
Foundational Competencies
Policy**



**Elizabethtown
College**

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TEACHER DISPOSITIONS/ FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES POLICY¹

Introduction and Rationale

The Department of Education has a responsibility to the educational community to ensure that individuals whom Elizabethtown College recommends to the State of Pennsylvania 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 teaching dispositions (Foundational Competencies).

Teacher Dispositions/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 college'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 Elizabethtown College 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 college coursework and field/internship experiences and the demonstration of important human characteristics and dispositions that all educators should possess. These characteristics and dispositions, the *Elizabethtown College Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies Policy*, are outlined below.

Definition

Dispositions are defined as internal values, beliefs, and attitudes that are manifested in patterns of professional behaviors. The Dispositional Assessment system does not assess values, beliefs, or attitudes directly; instead, dispositions are only assessed as they are manifested in patterns of behaviors and candidate performances in their work with preK-12 students and their families, peers, faculty, and the community

¹ The primary source used in the preparation of this document was the policy and procedure document from the University of Maryland and 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.

Department of Education Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies

The Department of Education Teacher Dispositions/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 college faculty, students, parents, administrators, and other staff.**
 - Candidates must 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 must 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 must 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 must 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 must 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 must demonstrate positive social skills in professional and social interactions with faculty, colleagues, parents, and students.

- Candidates must 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 must 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 must possess the ability to make and execute quick, appropriate, and accurate decisions in a stressful environment.
 - Candidates must 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 must exhibit motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placements.
 - Candidates must be 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 must have the mental capacity for complex thought as demonstrated in prerequisite college level course work and in standardized testing.
 - Candidates must 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 must be able to analyze, synthesize, integrate concepts, and problem solve to formulate assessment and educational judgments.
 - Candidates must demonstrate the ability to think analytically about educational issues. They are thoughtfully reflective about their practice.
 - Candidates must demonstrate the ability to multi-task and to adapt to and display flexibility in changing situations.
 - Candidates must be 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 must 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 must 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 must be 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 must 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 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 emotional, verbal or physical threats or intimidation; 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 must 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 must exhibit acceptance of and are able to make appropriate adjustments for exceptional learners.
 - Candidates must protect the confidentiality of student information unless disclosure serves professional purpose or is required by law.

- **Show respect for self and others.**
 - Candidates must exhibit respect for all Elizabethtown College and school personnel, as well as peers, children and their families and members of their communities.

- Candidates must be free of the influence of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages in classes and field placements. They are expected to abide by the Elizabethtown College Student Social Conduct Code.
 - Candidates must 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 must 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 must demonstrate appropriate personal hygiene habits.
 - Candidates must dress appropriately for their professional contexts.
 - Candidates must possess maturity, self-discipline, and good judgment.
 - Candidates must demonstrate good attendance, integrity, honesty, conscientiousness in work, and teamwork.

Implementation and Review Procedures

During the orientation phase of their professional programs and/or at the beginning of education courses requiring field/internship experiences, candidates will receive a copy of the *Department of Education Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies Policy* and be asked to sign a *Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies Acknowledgement Form*. The original, signed form will be kept in the candidate's permanent file, and a copy will be returned to the student.

Self-assessments by students on the Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies will occur during the students' first 100-level education course, as part of provisional acceptance, as part of formal acceptance, and during senior seminar (see *Candidate's Self Assessment*). At the end of each semester, faculty teaching courses in Education will evaluate students using the *Dispositions/Foundational Competencies Evaluation Form*. Students who are evaluated as not meeting proficiency on the Dispositions/Foundational Competencies will be reviewed by the Education Standards Committee (ESC). The ESC will make recommendations regarding necessary actions students will be expected to take to achieve proficiency. The ESC may also make recommendations concerning continuation in the Education Department's program to prepare certified teachers.

Proactive Involvement of Students

1. The Education department will make every effort to help teacher candidates understand the importance of dispositions to the profession as well as the specific expectations on which they will be assessed. The rubric will be discussed in designated classes and students will self-assess using the rubric. Students will receive a copy of the Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies Policy.

2. All documents relating to the rating of student's dispositions and other competencies will be treated as student records and thus as subject to the privacy rules and other provisions of FERPA.

Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies Evaluation System

1. Teacher dispositions of students will be evaluated at the end of the semester by faculty of each Education course. If a student receives a rating of *Does not meet proficiency* in any competency, the student will have an opportunity to meet with the professor for clarification, sign the evaluation form, and receive a copy of the form. If a student receives a rating of *Partially proficient* in one or more categories, the student will also have the opportunity to meet with the professor for clarification, sign the evaluation form, and receive a copy of the form. A copy of the evaluation form will be submitted to the department for inclusion in the student's file. .
2. A student who receives a rating of *Does not meet proficiency* in any competency must be reviewed by the *Education Standards Committee* (ESC) of the Education Department at the end of the semester. Faculty may also ask ESC to review students who receive a rating of *Partially proficient* in one or more competencies.
3. Students whose evaluations will be reviewed by ESC will receive written notice that the review will occur. They may elect to submit a written statement for consideration by ESC.
4. ESC reviews all cases individually and makes recommendations to the Chair of the Education Department. ESC recommendations may include, but are not limited to, continuation in the Education Department's program to prepare certified teachers with suggestions for improving areas of identified problems, frequent monitoring of progress, or additional fieldwork. If the problems are not ameliorated or seem to be beyond remediation, ESC may recommend that continuation in the Education Department's program to prepare certified teachers be denied.
5. The student will receive a letter from ESC indicating its recommendation. A copy of the letter will be sent to the student's department chair(s), advisor, and the faculty member who completed the evaluation form.
6. The Chair of the Education Department does not serve on ESC but receives ESC's recommendations. Students may appeal the recommendation of ESC to the Chair of the Education Department.
7. If ESC recommends discontinuation in the Education Department's program to prepare certified teachers, and the Chair of the Education Department concurs, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Dean of Faculty for action; other recommendations will be acted on within the department.

8. Student may appeal actions by the Chair of Education to the Dean of Faculty, and appeal actions by Dean of Faculty to the Provost/Senior Vice President.

Special Notice of Concern

1. A *Special Notice of Concern* may be sent to the Chair of the Education Department. This *Special Notice of Concern* may be reported by any of the following associated with Elizabethtown College: a) faculty member of any department, b) professional staff member, c) college supervisor or d) any professional member of a school such as a building principal or cooperating teacher.
2. Following documentation and review of a *Special Notice of Concern*, the Chair of the Education Department may take one or more actions including, but not limited to, the following: a) request a meeting with the student, b) request an urgent review by ESC, c) request a review by ESC at the end of the semester, and d) request a judicial review by Dean of Students or designee.

Assistance For Individuals With Disabilities

Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies may be met with, or without, accommodations. The College complies with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Therefore, the Department of Education will endeavor to make reasonable accommodations with respect to its Teaching Dispositions/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 College 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 College's educational program, lower academic standards, cause an undue hardship on the College, or endanger the safety of students or others.

Questions or requests for accommodations pertaining to the Department of Education Teacher Dispositions/Foundational Competencies should be directed to Lynne Davies, Director of Disability Services (717-361-1549; daviesk@etown.edu) or Dr. Carroll Tyminski, Chair, Department of Education (717-361-1210; tyminscr@etown.edu).

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 Department of Education administrators to which such information has been communicated shall maintain such information in a manner that preserves its confidentiality.

TEACHER DISPOSITIONS/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 college 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 refrain from making emotional, verbal, or physical threats or intimidation
- project an image of professionalism.

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

Candidate Signature

PRINTED Name

Date

NOTE: The College 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 Office of Disability Services (717-361-1549) and notify your course instructors, academic advisor of your specific approved accommodations, as appropriate. Students should initiate this process as soon as possible (prior to the start of classes and/or field experience).

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TEACHER DISPOSITIONS/
FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES CANDIDATE’S SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Within the professional context to which I aspire (for example, teacher certification), I rate myself on each of the standards listed below:

KEY: 3 –Proficient 2 –Partially proficient 1 –Does not meet proficiency N/A – Not Applicable

3	2	1	NA	
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 College 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.
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.
Cognitive Dispositions				
				Organize time and materials, prioritize tasks, perform several tasks at once, and 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 my work from supervisors;
				Demonstrate attitudes of integrity, responsibility, and tolerance;
				Show respect for self and others; and refrain from making emotional, verbal, or physical threats or intimidation;
				Project an image of professionalism.

Students should submit an explanation for each item checked “1 or N/A.”

I have reviewed the Department of Education Teacher Dispositions/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/or to complete the extensive internship component of the curriculum.

Candidate Signature

Date

Candidate’s **PRINTED** Name

NOTE: The College 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 Elizabethtown College’s Disability Services (717-361-1549) and notify your course instructor, academic advisor of your specific approved accommodations, as appropriate. Students should initiate this process as soon as possible (prior to the start of classes and/or field experience).

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TEACHER DISPOSITIONS/
FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES EVALUATION FORM**

Candidate Name: _____

Program Area: _____

Rate the candidate on each of the standards listed below:

KEY: 3 –Proficient 2 –Partially proficient 1 –Does not meet proficiency N/A – Not Applicable/
Insufficient Opportunity to Observe

3	2	1	NA	<i>Teacher Dispositions/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 College 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, and refrains from making emotional, verbal, or physical threats or intimidation
				Projects an image of professionalism

Additional Comments:

Name/Title

Signature/Date

Student's Name

Signature/Date