

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS
INITIAL AND ADVANCED CANDIDATE
EARLY ALERT SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the professional dispositions system for prospective candidates and candidates enrolled in the Professional Education Unit at Salisbury University.

Because of the nature of professional education practice, the Professional Education Unit has additional expectations for prospective candidates and candidates who desire to complete programs in professional education. Professional dispositions are linked to a prospective candidates' and candidates' ability to become an effective teacher or administrator in today's schools. These guidelines have been developed to provide clear policies and procedures regarding expectations that address professional behavior and ethical concerns for prospective candidates and candidates, and faculty. The ultimate goal of these guidelines is to help all prospective candidates and candidates successfully matriculate through professional education programs.

Becoming a professional educator is a gradual process. Faculty, administrators and school personnel will apply their professional judgment¹ to determine if the Professional Education Unit's expectations for professional behavior are being met across a candidate's educational career.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

Professional practice and dispositions of all Salisbury University prospective candidates and candidates enrolled in education programs are guided by these three documents:

National Education Association Code of Ethics
Salisbury University Student Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures
Salisbury University Professional Education Unit Early Alert System

Prospective candidates and candidates who are identified as not meeting professional dispositions will be subject to a review process. The review process follows a series of steps depending on the severity and persistence of the infractions.

All members of the Professional Education Unit community are encouraged to attempt to resolve differences between themselves and others in an informal manner. This process may entail a conversation between the candidate and a faculty member,

¹ Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the profession, combined with a professional's own experience and practical wisdom.

administrator or school personnel where the views of both parties are aired in a mutually satisfactory manner.

STEP 1

A Step 1 review of a candidate may be prompted by faculty, administrators, or school personnel after an unsatisfactory evaluation on one or more of the following assessments:

Course-Based Professional Progress Report
Field Experience Professional Progress Report

STEP 1 FACULTY/ADVISOR REVIEW

A faculty member, who prepares a course progress report or has concerns about a candidate's dispositions related to professional practice, will:

- ask the candidate to complete self-assessment
- discuss those concerns directly with the candidate and seek to work with the candidate to resolve the deficiency;
- apprise the appropriate Program Director and Department Chair of the concerns in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the candidate;
- document dates and content of meetings with the candidate;
- file Candidate Self-Assessment and/or the Course-Based Professional Progress Report in the candidate advising folder.

STEP 1 FIELD EXPERIENCE REVIEW

School personnel who identify a concern about a candidate's dispositions related to professional practice will:

- ask the candidate to complete self-assessment
- discuss those concerns directly with the candidate and seek to work with the candidate to resolve the deficiency;
- apprise the appropriate school personnel (PDS liaison and PDS site coordinator), Field Experience Coordinator and PDS Coordinator of the concerns in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the candidate;
- document dates and content of meetings with the candidate and forward documentation to the Field Experience Coordinator.

The Field Experience Coordinator will:

- apprise the Department Chair, Program Director and faculty advisor of the concerns regarding the candidate in order to identify potential patterns;
- file the Candidate Self-Assessment and/or the Field-Experience Professional Progress Report in the candidate advising folder.

In many instances, meetings between a faculty member or school personnel and the candidate resolve Step 1 concerns. In those cases, further review will not be needed.

STEP 2

A Step 2 review is initiated when a repeated pattern of Step 1 assessments are noted in the candidate's advising file (e.g., Course Based Professional Progress Report or Field Experience Professional Progress Report). A Step 2 review may be initiated by faculty, unit administrators or school personnel.

FACULTY/ FACULTY ADVISOR REVIEW

A faculty member, who has concerns about a candidate's dispositions related to professional practice, will:

- schedule a meeting that includes the candidate and the Program Director;
- seek a solution along with the Program Director to resolve candidate deficiencies;
- apprise the Department Chair and if needed faculty advisor of the concerns in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the candidate;
- document dates and content of meetings with the candidate;
- file appropriate documents (Course Based Professional Progress Report, summary of candidate meeting) in the candidate's advising folder.

FIELD EXPERIENCE REVIEW

- School Personnel notify the Field Experience Coordinator of a candidate's problem in a field experience site.
- The Field Experience Coordinator determines the school personnel who will be present at the review.
- The Field Experience Coordinator schedules a meeting with the identified school personnel, the Program Director, the University field experience course faculty member(s) and the candidate.
- The Field Experience Coordinator seeks a solution along with the invested personnel to resolve candidate deficiencies.
- The Field Experience Coordinator apprises the Department Chair and faculty advisor of the concerns in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the candidate.
- The Field Experience Coordinator documents dates and contents of meetings with the candidate.
- The Field Experience Coordinator will file appropriate documents (Field Experience Professional Progress Report, summary of candidate's meeting) in the candidate's advising folder.

The appropriate Program Director will assess the nature of these concerns with the concerned faculty member and advisor, Field Experience Coordinator and Department

Chair to jointly reach a decision as to whether it is necessary to conduct a more comprehensive review, pursuant to Step 3.

STEP 3

A Step 3 review will occur following unsatisfactory candidate progress toward a solution that was agreed upon during a Step 2 Review. A Step 3 review may also be initiated when candidate's professional practice or dispositions are serious enough to require formal consultation regarding program of study continuance. Step 3 reviews are initiated by the Program Director or Field Experience Coordinator.

Program Director/Field Experience Coordinator Review

- Review the candidate's advising folder and solicit input as needed.
- Schedule a meeting with the Department Chair and candidate to seek a solution and identify alternatives for remediation.
- Notify the candidate of the time, date and meeting place.
- Recommend a plan of action for the candidate.
- Document dates and content of meetings with the candidate and file in the Advising Folder
- Department Chair finalizes the action decision and formally informs the candidate in writing of the Step 3 Review action (see above)

STEP 3 ACTIONS

Continue the candidate in the program with no conditions.

In these situations, the concern has been addressed and no further action by the candidate, faculty members or administrators is required.

Establish formal conditions for the candidate's continuance in the program.

In these situations, specific conditions must be met in order for the candidate to remain in the program. Action may include establishing goals, a plan with a timeline, and appropriate monitoring; providing mentoring and support; placing the candidate on probation and monitoring the candidate during the probationary period; referring the candidate to counseling and/or advising services; delaying entry to the field practicum; administratively withdrawing the candidate from the program with the option of reapplying, or other conditions appropriate to the situation.

Consult with and/or refer to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

In some instances, depending on the nature of the problem, the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs may be consulted. If a referral is made to that Office after consultation, the candidate will be notified in writing about the nature of the concern and the fact that the referral is taking place. Situations which may result in referral to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs include hazing, racial or sexual harassment, possession or use of firearms or other weapons on university property, damage or destruction of university property, conduct that endangers the health and safety of any other person, or other violations of the Salisbury University Student Code of Conduct.

Counsel the candidate to change majors/degree programs and/or discontinue the candidate in the program.

In some situations, it will be recommended that the candidate no longer continue in the Professional Education Program. The candidate may be counseled to voluntarily change majors or degree programs. If that does not occur, the candidate will be dismissed from the program. In either case, the candidate will be provided with documentation regarding the specific reasons for his/her dismissal and the conditions, if any, under which he/she may apply for program re-admission.

Prospective candidates and candidates will be notified of the decision in writing, as soon as feasible, generally within ten calendar days of the review. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to communicate the decision to the candidate.

Immediate Withdrawal

In extreme circumstances, such as those involving the safety of any other person, or profound neglect of professional responsibilities, the Department Chair, in consultation with the Field Experience Coordinator and other professionals knowledgeable of the situation, may immediately remove a candidate from a field placement until a Step 3 review has taken place and appropriate action has been determined. In such a case the Field Experience Coordinator, Program Director, and Office of Student Affairs will be immediately notified, and they will notify the appropriate mentor teacher(s), supervisors and faculty members.

Candidate Appeal of Decisions

Prospective candidates and candidates have the prerogative to appeal any action taken under this policy using the procedures outlined in the Salisbury University Student Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures Appeals on Judicial Action. While an appeal is pending, the candidate will abide by the decisions of the faculty and/or administrators involved in the review, which may include terminating a field experience until the matter is resolved. In cases where a candidate is removed from a field experience, the program requirements for field experiences must be satisfied before matriculation through the program can continue.