

Department of School Leadership, Middle and Secondary Teacher Education  
DISPOSITIONS GUIDELINES

Students enrolled in Teachers College coursework need to be aware that dispositions are a part of every course, as outlined in the conceptual framework of the Teachers College. It is extremely important to understand each of these dispositions and how they impact students in their academic program (see Assessment of Student Dispositions). These dispositions are stressed in all aspects of admission, coursework, assessment, and graduation requirements. As a point of clarification, dispositions are all about character and temperament: “Temperament applies broadly to the sum of physical, emotional, and intellectual components that affect or determine a person's actions and reactions” (Bartleby.com)

1. As an NCATE accredited institution it is the responsibility of the Department of School Leadership/Middle and Secondary Teacher Education to make sure candidates possess the highest standards of academic and personal character. To meet this responsibility, department faculty members regularly discuss students and their dispositions. Regular faculty meetings are held to share concerns about student academic achievement, attitudes, ethics, and academic honesty in order to assess student progress in coursework and programs. Concerns are also shared with other department chairs for those students not within a School Leadership program of study. The department will maintain documentation regarding student dispositions.
2. One such disposition, *Commitment to Professionalism and Ethical Standards*, is addressed in the Teachers College Ethics Policy (see below). Some highlights of this disposition follow:
  - **Attitudes** – Students are expected to maintain a professional and courteous attitude toward professors, other students and course content. It is important to communicate with professors and peers in a professional and respectful manner. Example: if you begin correspondence with “I don’t mean to be disrespectful/whine/complain, but …” you should not send it.
  - **Behavior** – Students are expected to demonstrate behavior consistent with a professional attitude both in traditional classroom settings and online classes. Behavior that is unacceptable includes doing anything that disrupts a class, whether onsite or online. Students should always treat each other, professors and office staff with respect and courtesy. Even when students disagree with a teaching strategy, procedure, or grade, they should conduct themselves with decorum and respect. When a student has concerns relative to a course or a professor, such concerns should be discussed FIRST with the professor in a sincere and concerted effort to resolve the concern between the two of them. If, after a good faith effort, the concern is unresolved, it may then be shared with the department chair. In most instances, problems and concerns can be resolved within the department and department faculty should be given full opportunity to do so. Displaying inappropriate behavior regarding coursework, professor, or university procedures could result in being dropped from a course.
  - **Responsibility** – In order to do quality work as a student, a reasonable amount of time and commitment is required. When you enroll in a course it is your responsibility to meet the expectations of the course. Weigh your time carefully when planning your course load each semester. It is university policy that incomplete grades are not awarded when students do not plan sufficient time to complete coursework.
  - **Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism** – Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, activities such as cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating should never occur in graduate studies. Please read the attached examples to make sure you **fully** understand plagiarism. No lenience will be granted for lack of knowledge. The following procedures will apply in instances of academic dishonesty/plagiarism.

- a. *Incidents of academic dishonesty/plagiarism shall be classified by the instructor as either a major or minor infraction. Examples of major infractions include plagiarism of a final paper, major project, mid-term or final exam, etc. Examples of minor infractions include academic dishonesty on a course assignment, failure to appropriately cite the work of another, etc.*
- b. *A first instance of a minor infraction shall be handled by the instructor with a written report issued to the department chair, the vice-president of Academic Affairs, the student's advisor, the student, and the chair of the department's Student Concern Committee. The first such instance will result in the student being placed on academic probation.*
  - i. *Students on academic probation will be prohibited from program coursework for one semester following the incident.*
  - ii. *Students on academic probation will be closely monitored by all department faculty members for the remainder of his/her program.*
- c. *A second instance of a minor infraction in any course shall result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program.*
- d. *A first instance of a major infraction shall be reported in writing, by the instructor, to the department chair, the vice-president of Academic Affairs, the student, and the student's advisor. A major infraction shall result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program.*
- e. *The department's Student Concern Committee will review recommendations and make final decisions regarding dismissal from the program.*
- f. *Students who wish to initiate an appeal process may contact the department chair.*

Approved 5/04/4 – Revised 3/17/05

#### PREVENTING PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words, ideas, theories, and/or writing without explicitly giving credit to that source. The intent to plagiarize may be purposeful as in taking another student's essay, changing the name on it, and submitting it as your own. This instance is unforgivable. Very often, however, the act of plagiarism is due to a lack of knowledge about what constitutes plagiarism - specifically how to paraphrase correctly.

For the sake of example, the following text will be used to examine what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate paraphrasing:

**Driscoll, M. P. (2000). *Psychology of learning for instruction*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, (p. 43).**

**When individuals perceive that their actions have little effect on aversive events, they, too, begin to exhibit symptoms of learned helplessness. In the context of learning, experiencing repeated failure or constant belittlement of their efforts can lead students to say, "I can't do this. I'm not a good reader" (or writer, or test-taker, or what have you).**

Changing only a few words and/or phrases is *still plagiarism*:

**When individuals' actions have little effect on aversive events, so they start to show symptoms of learned helplessness.**

Notice the difference in meaning: "when individuals *perceive* their actions ..." and "when *individuals' actions have no effect*..." What's more problematic is that no source is credited.

An appropriate paraphrase:

**When students continue to experience failure despite numerous attempts, and their efforts are not acknowledged, they begin to believe that they are incapable of being successful at a particular task, an indication of learned helplessness (Driscoll, 2000).**

Another method:

**According to Driscoll (2000), individuals exhibit signs of learned helplessness when they sense their attempts at a specific task will remain unsuccessful, or be criticized.**

A direct quote must also provide a page number:

**"In the context of learning, experiencing repeated failure or constant belittlement of their efforts can lead students to say, "I can't do this. I'm not a good reader" (or writer, or test-taker, or what have you)." (Driscoll, 2000, p. 43)**

From these examples, you should note that it is extremely important to paraphrase without changing the writer's original meaning, AND credit your source OR quote directly giving credit where credit is due.

Final note: Plagiarism also extends to the use of information such as graphs, charts, statistics, etc.

Helpful Websites: <http://poynter.org/column.asp?id=52&aid=70742> <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

## TEACHERS COLLEGE ETHICS POLICY

Since it is a responsibility of the University and The Teachers College to instill and develop professional and ethical attitudes and practices in its candidates for certification as educational professionals, the Council on Teacher Education states the following position on matters of student behavior that is academically dishonest, belligerent, disruptive of order in the learning environment, or abusive of classmates, students, colleagues, or teachers. Such behavior will be considered to be unethical and/or unprofessional in the developing candidate for certification.

1. Academic dishonesty shall be interpreted to include all cases in which a student tries to pass off as his/her own the work of others (fellow classmates, authors [published or unpublished], visual or graphic representations, computer or media applications, etc.) without giving appropriate credit to the originator of the idea. Cheating and plagiarism are considered to be very serious breaches of ethics.
2. Behavior and/or use of language which is belligerent, disruptive of the learning environment, or abusive of classmates, students, colleagues, or teachers is considered to be inappropriate and a serious breach of professional behavior.

In keeping with the university policy stated in the Faculty Handbook #5C.09 the faculty members (1) may make such disposition of the case as they deem appropriate and (2) shall make available to the chair of the department and to the office of the vice president of student affairs a record of the dishonest or disruptive behavior and the action taken by the faculty member, and (3) a copy of the report shall be sent to the student's advisor together with a copy of this policy on ethics and professionalism.

Further, the chair(s) of the students teaching field(s) shall cause a file to be maintained of such offenses and if a student exhibits one or more instance of such inappropriate behaviors before admission to Phase I, it is possible that said student may not be admitted to Phase I of the teacher preparation program (elementary or secondary). An offense during or after Phase I shall be deemed sufficient cause to warrant a hearing before the Admissions Committee. The Committee may take a variety of actions including refusing admission or postponing the admission to Phase II and/or the assignment to student teaching for one semester.

–Adopted 11/3/94. Council on Teacher Education

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Signature

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Date

**As a part of the admissions procedure of the department, you will write a short paragraph in your own words, affirming your understanding of and commitment to professionalism and ethical standards**

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Signature

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Date