

Statement on Professional Dispositions

The University of Houston – Clear Lake (UHCL) is one of only 11 universities in the State of Texas which have earned accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE defines dispositions as

The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors towards students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth.

As an NCATE accredited institution, we will recommend for certification only those persons who have demonstrated the necessary strong, positive dispositions associated with the professional educator.

The Policy on Professional Dispositions is provided to define the standard of behavior UHCL expects of its candidates. It is strongly felt that the way candidates approach their coursework, their field experiences and their interactions with UHCL and K-12 school faculty, staff and students is reflective of the way they will approach their commitments to their teaching position and the teaching profession. It is imperative that each candidate follow the Student Code of Conduct found either at the end of this policy statement or in the *Student Life Policies* handbook.

UHCL teacher candidates are expected to . . .

Demonstrate professional responsibility by

Being present, punctual and prepared for professional and academic activities
Maintaining confidentiality of student records and private communications
Being involved in professional development activities
Committing to being a lifelong learner and reflective practitioner
Maintaining professional competence
Meeting obligations to employer, students and parents
Using self-reflection to improve performance.

Foster collegiality by

Responding constructively to evaluations by supervisors and others and making appropriate corrections to address legitimate concerns
Using positive conflict resolution techniques
Maintaining positive working relationships with fellow candidates

Collaborating with colleagues to improve student achievement
 Showing respect for fellow students, faculty and staff
Actively participating in meetings and conferences
Assisting others when necessary.

*Embrace **diversity** by*

Adapting instruction to individual differences
 Demonstrating that diversity in the classroom and society is a strength
 Instructing with lessons which counteract negative stereotypes and bigotry
 Providing students with access to varying points of view
 Using language that meets professional standards and is not demeaning or harmful
 to any individual or group

*Demonstrate commitment to **learning** by*

Creating a learning environment which enables students to fulfill their potential
 Being an advocate for all learners
 Adapting instruction to “best practices”
Displaying creativity to enhance the instructional process.

*Maintain professional and personal **integrity** by*

Adhering to the UHCL honesty code
 Maintaining ethical and legal behaviors in interactions with others
 Adhering to the *Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators*
Maintaining a professional relationship with employer.

Every UHCL teacher candidate must be able to respond favorably to each of the following questions:

- For each of my classes, am I on time, am I prepared and do I participate?
- Do I listen to others and ask questions when I do not understand?
- Do I consider other points of view and accept things that are not negotiable?
- Do I avoid being, and discourage others from being, a distraction in class?
- Are my assignments completed in a professional manner and submitted on time?
- Do I have emotional stamina and maintain composure under pressure?
- Do I treat everyone with respect and understanding?
- Do I behave ethically and professionally, even when others are not looking?
- Do I take the actions necessary to improve myself and my teaching?
- Can I adapt to changing circumstances?
- Do I work well in a team environment?
- Do I have the mental, emotional and physical capabilities to create a learning environment in which students can reach their potential?
- Do I receive criticism from others in a professional manner and use this information to improve myself as a professional?
- Do I provide a positive role model for my colleagues and students with respect to

appearance and behavior?

- Do I accept responsibility for my actions?

There are, of course, many other questions candidates must be willing to respond to favorably. Those listed above demonstrate the kinds of behaviors which are expected of a professional in the field of education. Admission to the UHCL School of Education is an official step taken by candidates toward being admitted to the education profession. The candidates must demonstrate the positive behaviors required by their chosen profession.

Positive Behaviors

The School of Education believes that positive behaviors should be rewarded. It is a fact that an overwhelming majority of the School of Education candidates demonstrate positive behaviors in both their personal and professional lives. While the School would like to reward all positive behavior, it is not practical to do so. Extrinsic rewards can be given for candidates who show exceptional, positive behaviors. The positive behaviors are defined below:

Professionalism (e.g., being a positive role model for students and colleagues, demonstrating respect for the importance of the educational process, or consistently exceeding expectations both academically and professionally)

Commitment to the Education Profession (e.g., willingness to devote personal time to excel professionally, active involvement in professional groups)

Interpersonal Skills (e.g., maintaining a positive attitude, working well in both an independent and group settings)

The rewards may include such things as a Letter of Recommendation placed in the student's file, recognition at a faculty meeting with a Certificate and/or Pin or recognition at a Reception or Awards Banquet.

Negative Behaviors

Although rare, negative behaviors result in a detrimental impact upon the profession, and, therefore, require consequences. For a description of the negative behaviors and the consequences of such behaviors, read the Student Code of Conduct at the end of this policy statement or in the *Student Life Policies* handbook.

It should be noted that in the definition given in section 2.1 of the Student Code of Conduct, conduct occurring in field placements and internships is covered as part of "university sponsored events off campus" since both activities are part of UHCL courses.

In addition to the negative behaviors defined in the Student Code of Conduct (Section 2.2) this policy adds the following which are specific to candidates seeking teacher certification:

Lack of Professionalism (e.g., dishonest/unethical behavior, persistently late or unprepared, inability to accept responsibility for actions, disrupting the educational process, inappropriate professional behavior)

Lack of Commitment to the Education Profession (e.g., lack of professional growth and development, lack of participation with professional associations)

Lack of Interpersonal Skills (e.g., doesn't respond well to constructive criticism, doesn't work effectively in team situations, lack of ability to maintain composure, insubordination)

The consequences of negative behavior in these last three areas which are specific to candidates seeking teacher certification are left to the School of Education.

The material below is from the UHCL Website version of the *Student Life Policies* handbook:

1.2 Student Code of Conduct

Approved by University Council July 8, 1994

1. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Each member of the university community is expected to exercise responsibility and to govern his or her conduct by legal and moral standards and by ethical judgment even when those standards are disregarded by others. It is assumed that students, having voluntarily enrolled in the university community, will be responsible members and will abide by the regulations and accepted practices of the university until such time as these may be changed by orderly procedure.

The University of Houston-Clear Lake encourages student self-government and self-discipline within the framework of its general objectives. It is the responsibility of the university to examine its policies and practices continuously. Students are encouraged to participate in this process through recognized student organizations, the student newspaper, and appropriate investigations, questioning, discussion, and criticism.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. Jurisdiction of the University

Generally, university jurisdiction and discipline shall be limited to conduct which occurs on university premises or at university sponsored events off campus.

2.2. Conduct - Rules and Regulations

Any student found to have committed the following acts of misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in a following section.

2.2.1 Acts of dishonesty, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Furnishing false information to any university official, faculty member or university representative.
- b. Forgery, alteration or misuse of any university document, record or instrument of identification.
- c. Tampering with the election of any university recognized student organization.

2.2.2 Disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, other university activities including its public-service functions on or off campus, or other unauthorized non-university activities, when the act occurs on university premises.

2.2.3 Physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion and/or other conduct which threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person.

2.2.4 Theft of property or damage other than accidental to property of the university or of a member of the university community or campus visitor.

2.2.5 Violation of federal, state or local law on university premises or at university sponsored or supervised activities.

2.2.6 Hazing, defined as an act which endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or which destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, a group or organization.

2.2.7 Unauthorized possession, duplication or use of keys to university premises or unauthorized entry to or use of university premises.

2.2.8 Illegal use, possession or distribution of narcotic or other controlled substances.

2.2.9 Unauthorized possession of firearms, explosives or other weapons on university premises.

2.2.10 Failure to comply with reasonable directions of or failure to heed an official summons of university officials performing their duties.

2.2.11 Participation in campus demonstrations which disrupts the normal operations of the university and infringes on the rights of other members of the university community; leading or inciting others to disrupt scheduled and/or normal activities within any campus building or area; intentional obstruction which unreasonably interferes with freedom of movement either pedestrian or vehicular, on campus.

2.2.12 Disorderly or indecent conduct on university owned/controlled property or at university sponsored or university supervised functions.

2.2.13 Theft or other abuse of computing time, software or equipment.

2.2.14 Abuse of the disciplinary system, such as:

- a. Failure to obey the summons of the Dean of Students.
- b. Falsification, distortion or misrepresentation of information in a disciplinary proceeding.
- c. Knowingly initiating disciplinary proceeding without cause.
- d. Failure to comply with the sanction(s) imposed under the student policies.

2.2.15 Distribution of surveys not in accordance with the Human Subjects Policy.

2.2.16 Violation of published university policies, including but not limited to those which govern academic matters, alcoholic beverage use, fiscal affairs, student services, and maintenance of the health, safety and welfare of the university community. Incidence of academic honesty as defined in the Academic Honesty Policy will be subject to procedures and sanctions defined therein.

3. VIOLATION OF LAW AND UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINE

3.1 If a student is charged with only an off-campus violation of federal, state or local laws, but not with any other violation of these policies, disciplinary action may be taken and sanctions imposed for misconduct which demonstrates flagrant disregard for the university community. In such cases, no sanction may be imposed unless the student has been found guilty in a court of law or has declined to contest such charges, although not actually admitting guilt (e.g. "no contest").

3.2 University disciplinary proceedings may be instituted against a student charged with violation of a law which is also a violation of these policies. For example, if both violations result from the same factual situation, without regard to the pendency of civil litigation in court or criminal arrest and prosecution. At the university's discretion, proceedings under these policies may be carried out prior to, simultaneously with, or following off-campus civil or criminal proceedings.

1.3 STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES (NON-ACADEMIC)

1. POLICY

1.1 The administration of student discipline is recognized as a vital part of the educational process. The university must exercise this role within the procedures of fair, properly established and legally acceptable due process. The procedures designated herein may be modified by the university in order to effect justice.

1.2 The Dean of Students is the principal administrator for student discipline arising from violations of the student code of conduct at UHCL. The Dean of Students may designate another hearing officer to act on behalf of the university in these proceedings.

1.3 Any member of the university community may file charges against a student for misconduct. A written statement should be prepared including the charge, date and time of the alleged violation, witnesses, evidence, and directed to the Dean of Students. Any charge should be submitted as soon as possible after the event takes place.

1.4 The Dean of Students (or a designee) may conduct an investigation to determine if the charges have merit and may dismiss charges that were without merit. If the charges can be settled by mutual agreement of the parties involved, such agreement shall be binding.

1.5 Charges shall be presented to the accused student in written form. A student accused of a violation of these policies will be given written notice to appear before the Dean of Students (or a designee).

1.6 Students who fail to respond when summoned by the Dean of Students (or a designee) may be suspended until such time as the student does appear.

1.7 Interim Suspension: In certain circumstances, the Dean of Students (or a designee) may impose a university suspension prior to the disciplinary hearing.

1.7.1 Interim suspension may be imposed only:

- a. To ensure the safety and well-being of members of the university community or preservation of university property.
- b. To ensure the student's own physical or emotional safety and well-being;
- c. If the student presents a threat to the normal operations of the university.

1.7.2 During the interim suspension, students shall be denied access to the campus (including classes) and/or all other university activities or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible.

1.7.3 The student shall be granted a hearing in accordance with these policies, within 7 working days of the interim suspension.

1.8 Hearing Process

1.8.1 In response to the summons from the Dean of Students, the student schedules an appointment with the dean or other designated hearing officer within a specified time frame.

1.8.2 In this meeting, the student is apprised of the options available to process the complaint and the procedural requirements for exercising these options.

- a. The student may choose to have the designated university hearing officer settle the case. The hearing officer will conduct the investigation and hearing, examine the evidence and question witnesses, and make a determination if a policy has been violated. The hearing officer will decide the university sanctions which will be applied. The student would have the right to appeal the hearing officer's decision to the Student Life Council. The decision of the Student Life Council will be final.

- b. The student may choose to have the Student Life Council serve as a hearing panel. The Dean of Students (or a designee) will convene a hearing with the council where evidence and witnesses will be presented. The council will determine if a policy has been violated and will decide the university sanctions which will be applied. The student would have the right to appeal the council's decision to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. The decision of the Vice President will be final.

1.8.3 Hearings normally shall be conducted in private. Admission of any person to the hearing shall be at the discretion of the Dean of Students (or a designee).

1.8.4 Hearings involving more than one accused student may be conducted together or separately, at the discretion of the Dean of Students (or a designee).

1.8.5 The complainant and the accused may each be assisted by any adviser they choose, at their own expense. The complainant and/or the accused is responsible for presenting his or her own case and, therefore, advisers, including attorney advisers, are not permitted to speak on behalf of the complainant or the accused, or to participate directly in any hearing.

1.8.6 Permanent records, exhibits and written statements may be accepted as evidence and will be provided to the accused and the hearing officer or panel.

1.8.7 Each party shall have the right to appear and present evidence in person. The accused, the complainant, the hearing officer or panel will have the right to ask relevant questions of the witnesses.

1.8.8 If an accused student fails to appear, the hearing may proceed without the student.

1.8.9 All procedural questions are subject to the decision of the Dean of Students (or a designee).

1.8.10 In the case of hearings before the Student Life Council, the council will determine by majority vote whether the student has violated the policy(ies) in question.

1.8.11 The decision of the hearing officer or panel shall be made on the basis of the preponderance of evidence.

1.9 Appeals

1.9.1 Appeals shall be submitted in writing and reviewed on the basis of the records of previous deliberations.

1.9.2 Appeals must be submitted within ten working days after the receipt of the official notification of the decision of the preceding body/official.

1.9.3 Appeals shall be reviewed for one or more of the following purposes:

- a. To determine whether the original hearing was conducted fairly in light of the charges and evidence

presented, and in conformity with prescribed procedures.

b. To determine whether the decision reached regarding the accused student was based on substantial evidence. That is, whether the facts in the case were sufficient to establish that a violation of Student Life Policies occurred.

c. To determine whether the sanction(s) imposed were appropriate for the violation of the policy which the student was found to have committed.

1.9.4 In cases involving appeals by the student accused of violating Student Life Policies, review of the sanction on appeal may not result in more severe sanctions(s) for appellate body/person may reduce sanctions imposed.

1.10 The following sanctions may be imposed separately or in combination, when a student is found to have violated the student code.

1.10.1 *Warning* - A notice in writing to a student who has violated a university policy and whose continuation of such conduct may result in further disciplinary action.

1.10.2 *Restricted privileges* - Denial or restriction of one or more privileges granted to students including, but not limited to, participation in extracurricular activities, holding an office in a student organization or representing the university in any official capacity.

1.10.3 *Restitution* - Compensation for loss, damage or injury. This may take the form of appropriate service and/or monetary or material replacement.

1.10.4 *Discretionary sanctions* - Work assignments, service to the university, educational programs or other related discretionary assignments.

1.10.5 *Disciplinary probation* - Written warning that a student's continued enrollment is conditioned upon adherence to published university policies, usually for a specified period of time.

1.10.6 *Withholding transcripts* - Prohibits a student from receiving or the Registrar from issuing official transcripts.

1.10.7 *Suspension* - Separation of the student from the university for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for re admission may be specified. When suspended, a student may not attend class or participate in any university activity.

1.10.8 *Expulsion* - Permanent separation of the student from the university.

1.11 In the case of suspension (Section J, No. 7), the entry "Disciplinary Suspension" with the specified dates will be posted on the student's transcript. At the request of the student, such entries will be removed at the conclusion of the specified suspension period. In the case of expulsion (Section J, No.8), the entry "Disciplinary Expulsion" will be noted permanently on the transcript. No other disciplinary actions will be noted on the student's transcript.

1.12 The following sanctions may be imposed upon groups or organizations:

1.12.1 Those listed in Section J, 1 through 5.

1.12.2 Deactivation or loss of privileges, including university recognition, for a specified period of time.