

## **TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

### **Birth through Kindergarten Teacher Licensure (BKTE) and Early Care and Education (ECE) Programs**

#### **OVERVIEW and PURPOSE**

To successfully complete the early childhood BK and ECE programs, students must meet all academic and technical standards required by the programs. Technical standards are all non-academic criteria or standards for admission to or participation in the program in question. A technical standard is a description of the physical and mental abilities required of students to perform successfully in an academic program. Students are responsible for knowing the technical standards of their intended academic program. Technical standards are documents that can and should be used in the advising process, both when students are exploring different majors and when they want specific information on what is required in a particular program, including the early childhood BK and ECE programs.

Technical Standards include, but are not limited to physical, cognitive, communication, and technological proficiency essential to becoming a licensed teacher of children from birth through kindergarten as required by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, (NC DPI), Council on Exceptional Children (CEC)/Division of Early Childhood (DEC), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the International Society for Technology in Education (INSTE).

To be admitted and maintain enrollment in either of the early childhood programs each student can be expected to complete course requirements which necessitates the physical and mental abilities listed below. Any student who thinks he/she does not possess one or more of the following skills should seek assistance from an academic counselor or faculty advisor and the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) concerning program requirements and possible accommodation through technical aids and assistance.

#### **PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Observe/participate in activities associated with preparing to be a teacher, including but not limited to classroom demonstrations, lessons, classroom interactions, child observation and assessment, classroom management and child guidance, lesson planning, lesson implementation, and physically picking up, holding, caring for infants, toddlers, preschool, and kindergarten age children.

Perform the typical techniques used during instruction such as visual assessment of child engagement and the management of a safe and responsive instructional environment.

Work a typical teacher's contracted day and perform extended and additional duties such as conducting family conferences, attending after-school events, and other assigned duties.

#### **INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS**

Comprehend, assimilate and apply complex information presented in the form of lectures, small group work, written materials, and field experiences.

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Independently analyze, synthesize, integrate concepts using critical thinking skills to formulate educational judgments appropriate to the practice of teaching.

Problem-solve, make decisions, and/or take action over time and in the moment to respond to the changing needs of children, classroom situations, and families.

Demonstrate flexibility under stress (e.g. work under time constraints, concentrate in distracting situations, cope with variations in workload and tasks) and/or take the perspective of others.

Display emotional capacity including compassion, empathy, and self-regulation to handle the varying demands of a teacher's duties.

## **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Express himself/herself effectively in spontaneous written and spoken English in communication interactions with university faculty, parents of young children, cooperating teachers, teaching assistants, school administrators, and support personnel (e.g. speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists).

Demonstrates appropriate communication as outlined in Appropriate Communication documents. See Appendix A.

Demonstrate the ability to use grammatically appropriate and correctly spelled Standard English in written and spoken formats.

Communicate and collaborate effectively, efficiently and sensitively with colleagues, supervisors, families and children with sociocultural competence, in a manner respectful of diverse gender, ethnicity/race, lifestyle, socioeconomic, disability, religion or cultural and social background.

## **TECHNOLOGY PROFECIENCY REQUIREMENTS**

Demonstrate computational thinking skills to operate digital-age hardware, software, and emerging technologies required in early childhood classrooms as well as for online courses.

Effectively access and navigate the Internet and utilize web-based resources to enhance learning experiences for children according to the NAEYC position statement on interactive media and technology as well as to access course resources, complete assignments, and manage assignments and course materials in Canvas.

Be prepared for 21<sup>st</sup> century professional responsibilities that utilize technology when working with children and families.

Independently access UNCG's technology resources for questions or challenges related to software and hardware issues (i.e. using mics, bandwidth, video, Canvas, assignments, and more).

And, must project an image of professionalism in personal appearance and dress during online meetings and classes.

## REVIEW PROCESS

Candidates for the early childhood programs are required to verify that they understand and meet these Technical Standards *or* that they believe that they can meet the standards, with specific reasonable accommodations, as reflected in documentation provided by the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS).

The goal of any review of Technical Standards is to provide students with candid, constructive feedback related to areas of challenge and/or concerns and the entirety of the Technical Standards document, so they can be engaged in program learning experiences and courses, improve as teacher candidates, and eventually become effective teachers. The vast majority of students demonstrate competency in the areas included in the Technical Standards document.

However, students who show difficulties in one or more of the areas included in the Technical Standards documents will meet with instructors and/or faculty and develop strategies to facilitate, support, and monitor improvement in the specified area. The BK faculty are willing and committed to working with students and developing strategies; failure on the part of a student to show improvement and maintain changes in the areas identified will be grounds for dismissal from the BK and ECE programs.

### Support and Resource Strategies to Consider Related to Technical Standards:

Referral to Office of Accessibility Resources and Services

Referral to Students First

Referral to the Dean of Students

Referral to Writing and/or Speaking Center

Referral to UNCG Counseling Center

### **Initial Meeting**

During a Technical Standards initial review meeting, strategies related to the areas of concern as well as review of the complete Technical Standards document will be discussed with input from the student and ad hoc committee members (and if appropriate personnel from the OARS as determined by the student). The Initial Meeting Form will be signed (see Appendix B) by the student and committee members and kept on file with the BK Program Coordinator in HDF5. If during the initial meeting, the ad hoc committee suggests contacting OARS, the student must initiate an appropriate evaluation and the student must provide appropriate documentation of a qualified disability and properly request a reasonable accommodation pursuant to applicable laws.

If the stated condition is a qualified disability, the university will confer with the student and appropriate professionals to identify possible reasonable accommodations and determine whether the student can meet the Technical Standards with a reasonable accommodation. The accommodation shall not jeopardize the safety or educational progress of children, the University student, or any University employee, including all coursework, fieldwork/practica, and internships deemed essential to graduation.

If the student continues to demonstrate difficulty in the identified areas of Technical Standards or presents a concern in an additional area of the technical standards, a Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) will be recommended. The review committee members and/or instructors will be responsible for developing, and monitoring the implementation and expected outcomes outlined

on the PIP. Students must implement the strategies within the specific timeline and demonstrate targeted expected behaviors and maintain the expected behaviors included on the PIP.

In most cases, if at the end of the semester, the student has demonstrated the expected behaviors related to Technical Standards, the form and documentation is filed with BK Program Coordinator and the concern is considered resolved. Some students, especially those whose concern is addressed in the latter half of the semester, may have plans with a longer duration, perhaps through their completion of the program. Implementation and expected outcome timelines are developed by the committee. Student documents related to technical standards and plans for improvement may be made available for review by current and future course instructors to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the expected behaviors.

Student who fail to implement strategies, refuse to sign the form, do not demonstrate consistent improvement as identified on the form, or continue to have concerns noted by faculty, the committee working with the student may recommend that the student be dismissed from the BK and ECE programs. Students who fail to reply to communication regarding Technical Standards, schedule and/or attend a meeting related to Technical Standards or circumvent in other ways this review process may be recommended for dismissal as well. Recommendations for dismissal will be shared with the Director of Undergraduate Programs and HDFS Department Chair.

If dismissal related to Technical Standards is recommended, the student will be notified of their required attendance at a dismissal meeting with the HDFS Department Chair and ad hoc committee. Students are required to attend this meeting and will be given the opportunity to respond ; however, if students fail to reply to communication regarding this meeting, to attend the meeting or circumvent in other ways this meeting, the meeting will be held in their absence. Students will also be notified in writing indicating that they have been dismissed from the BK and ECE programs and cannot return to either of these programs at a later date. It is at the discretion of the HDFS department Chair and Undergraduate Director as to whether a student dismissed from the BK and ECE programs would be allowed to switch to the Child, Youth and Family Development program.

**STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

**I certify that I have read and understand the Technical Standards for admission to one of the early childhood programs listed above, and I believe to the best of my knowledge that I meet each of these standards with or without reasonable accommodation. I understand that if I am unable to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodation, I will not be admitted or be allowed to remain enrolled in the program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

NOTE: The primary sources used in the preparation of this document were technical standards from the University of Maryland and the University of Illinois at Chicago.  
Reviewed 08-2017 (Todd Davis, UNCG lawyer)  
Revised 04-2019

## Appendix A

### BK/ECE Initial Communication Form

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Issue Addressed:

Description of Communication with Student (Informal conversation/formal conference, topics discussed, actions student/faculty agreed to take, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Faculty Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student (if formal conference held)

Reason for Initial Meeting: Check all that apply

\_\_\_ Technical Standards

\_\_\_ Dispositions

## Appendix B

### Appropriate Communications Guidelines for Students (With instructors, advisors, colleagues, and other UNCG personnel)

#### Email

Format of email:

- View an email to a professor as a professional Interaction. In many ways, writing to a professor via email is no different from writing a business letter.
- Be clear and concise, use proper grammar and capitalization, complete sentences and appropriate punctuation. Proofread your email before sending and access spell/grammar check. Make sure you have clearly articulated your question or comment in your email
- Begin your email by addressing your professor by title and name, and end your email with a closing and your signature. Different instructors have different titles and preferences for how students address them. Either default to addressing your instructor as Dr. or Professor, or check with your instructor about how they would like to be addressed.
- Always use an informative subject line. Do not leave the subject line blank.
- Use your UNCG email address. Faculty will typically initiate and respond to UNCG accounts only.
- Make sure any picture connected with your UNCG email account is professional in appearance.

Tone - Be Respectful:

- Make sure you have clearly articulated your question or comment in your email.
- Students should consider how the tone of their email will be perceived by the reader (i.e. typing in all caps is perceived as aggressive, like yelling).
- Consider whether anything you have written might sound rude or offensive to the instructor or staff. Do not use slang or profanity in your emails.
- Speak only for yourself. Student's thoughts should be communicated by each student independently and individually.
- Please note: Class policies, such as office hours, assignment details, writing guidelines, grading criteria, policies on missed classes and exams, etc. are almost always addressed in the syllabus or on Canvas. If after having reviewed the syllabus, something is still not clear, then email your instructor with a specific question.

Response Time:

- Instructors have individual policies regarding email communication, read your syllabus carefully.
- Expect a 48-72 business hour turnaround for an email to be returned. Some instructors do not respond to emails over the weekend, plan accordingly.
- If an email is not responded to in 72 hours- student should send the instructor a friendly email reminder. Do not just resend the original email.

- Wait until you have heard from the instructor or staff person before emailing a second person. If you copy another person on an email, indicate in the email that you are doing so to avoid confusion in responses.
- Please note, if a student contacts multiple people with the same question (advisor, instructor, HDF staff, program coordinator, BK director, person on another department) it generally will take longer for a response to the student, as the persons contacted must coordinate with each other before responding to student. Courses with co-instructors are the only exception, students must always email both instructors.

### **Phone calls/Virtual Meetings:**

- Students should try and first schedule a phone call if you need to speak directly with an instructor. If your call to an instructor is not a scheduled call, then students should realize the person they are calling may not be free to talk, or may not have time for a lengthy conversation at that time. The student should be prepared to schedule a follow up phone call. During phone calls, students should have their questions/concerns prepared, and be aware of the time/length of the conversations.
- If a phone message is left for an instructor, student should expect a 48-72 business hour turn around for a phone calls to be returned. (Faculty often are not in their office during winter and summer breaks. Listen carefully to their phone message; some faculty ask you to email them if they are out of the office.)
- Students should be calm and professional when discussing an issue or concern with all instructors and HDFS staff both on the phone and during a Google hangout.
- Students not call multiple people with the same question/concern, at the same time.
- If you are participating in a Google hangout with an instructor, you should plan to be focused and free from distractions during the meeting.
- Google hangouts should be viewed as professional meetings.

### **Texts:**

- Not all instructors will provide students with a cell phone number to text them; students should not expect to use texts as a means of communication.
- If cell phone numbers are given to students, texts should be sent sparingly.
- Texts should be sent only between regular working hours, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Individual instructors for each course may have differing policies. Check with your course instructor to know the hours they accept texts from students.

### **Online Synchronous Courses and Meetings and Video Assignments:**

- In meeting for synchronous courses, online meetings with advisors or instructors and class video assignments where you use your webcam, please dress and groom appropriately and professionally as you would when attending a seated class or face to face meeting.
- In meeting for synchronous courses, online meetings with advisors or instructors and class video assignments where you use your webcam, please be sure you are in a quiet room with no noise distractions. The surrounding environment should also be

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suitable for times when students take the camera. Set up in a quiet place that enables you to be attentive in your interactions and maintain a professional demeanor when online to participate in the class. Good sitting posture is crucial to being seen by faculty, instructors or your fellow students when you are speaking, especially presenting.

- Treat meeting for synchronous courses, online meetings with advisors or instructors and class video assignments as you would if these would occur on campus. Have the same professional standards you would when using your webcam as you would for meeting in person.
- Be sure to have a “Plan B” for computer or internet access in case of computer or internet problems. UNCG's many computer labs or a local public library offer access. Don't wait until too close to class time or a meeting to realize you have no internet access.

**Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Signature**