

Dispositions Policy
Department of Counselor Education and Student Affairs
Kutztown University

- I. Purpose.** The purpose of the Disposition Policy is to promote and assure student professionalism aligned to national standards. To that end, this policy defines guidelines for educating students about professional disposition in their discipline, evaluation of professional dispositions, establishment of fair process procedures for review of concerns, and the creation of remediation plans.
- II. Scope.** All students in counseling or student affairs graduate programs.
- III. Informing and Educating Students about the Professionalism Policy**
All prospective students will, in their new student agreement letter, be directed by the department to read the online student handbook containing the disposition policy and the Student Academic Performance Evaluation Rubric (SAPER); students will be asked to attest and sign that they have read and understood the student handbook and agree to abide by all department policies. Incoming students are also required to attend a mandatory initial advisement seminar meeting that provides additional information and training about the disposition policy. Any failure on the part of the student (e.g., attesting that they read the handbook when in fact they did not; failing to ask questions about aspects of the policy that they do not understand) does not relieve the student of responsibility for understanding this policy.
- IV. Evaluative Elements:** The SAPER is the primary evaluation instrument; please see the online student handbook for the detailed rubric. SAPER criteria considered in evaluation of counseling and student affairs students include problematic behavior in any of the following nine areas:
- Openness to New Ideas and Feedback
 - Cooperation with Others
 - Self/Other Awareness
 - Acceptance of Responsibility
 - Expression of Feelings and Thoughts
 - Attention to Ethical, Legal, and Academic Standards
 - Initiation and Motivation
 - Respectfulness
 - Cultural Sensitivity
- V. Evaluative Arenas.** Students will be evaluated by counseling and student affairs faculty for professional competency in all academic, practicum, and field experience courses. An evaluation of each student will also be conducted by the faculty advisor at the time of the student's candidacy, and by the faculty and on-site supervisor during a student's field experience.

VI. Informal Mentoring

All students are developing as professionals and are expected to have varying needs for professional disposition growth. Individual faculty commonly identify areas of growth as they mentor and help students in courses and during field experiences to develop as professionals, and advisors may also address needs for growth through informal mentoring. The department as a whole periodically reviews students who are identified as needing support and work together to bring issues to an informal resolution. If concerns persist after informal guidance has been given or if a serious dispositional incident has occurred, then faculty may contact their chair to request a formal review.

If an issue arises, the faculty member will have an informal discussion with the student. If the faculty member or the student does not feel that this initial informal discussion resolved the issue, then a second informal mentoring meeting between the faculty member and the student, along with the student's advisor, will take place to further discuss an informal resolution to the issue. If the faculty member or the student do not feel that the issue was resolved at this second informal mentoring meeting, then a Disposition Formal Review will take place.

VII. Disposition Formal Review

1. Formal review is initiated by the faculty member who first identified the concern or the Department as a whole. A formal meeting should only occur when informal mentoring has been unsuccessful or a serious incident has occurred.
2. Formal review related to identified concerns will take place in a meeting including the student and any advocate that the student requests to include in the meeting, the faculty member(s) who identified the issue, and the student's advisor. In cases involving field experience, input from the field experience site will be solicited, either through direct participation in the meeting or through other means (e.g., written comments regarding the concern).
3. Formal review of professional dispositions will be completed using the SAPER.
4. Students must be notified in writing at least one day in advance of the purpose of the meeting and the fact that it could result in an unsatisfactory review and the implementation of a Remediation Plan. Students will be informed that they will have a right to appeal the evaluation of their dispositions or the Remediation Plan and that they may bring an advocate and relevant evidence to the meeting. There should be no decisions or plans drafted before the meeting.
5. If the meeting results in an unsatisfactory rating, a Remediation Plan will be collaboratively created in the meeting; in the event that a Remediation Plan is not created in the initial meeting, the plan will be created within 7 days and the student will be notified. Remediation Plans should specify current deficiencies, goals, support provided to meet goals, identification of point-in-time when goal achievement will be assessed, and potential consequences for failure to meet goals. Potential remediation may include recommendations to take time off or initiate personal counseling, requirements to take or retake courses to address deficiencies or to complete additional weeks of field experience, or removal from the program.

6. If the review finds that the student's behavior is such that participation in any field placements could result in unsatisfactory professional performance that could affect students or clients in that field placement then Kutztown University reserves the right to not place a student in a field experience or to withdraw the student from a field experience until the student has been successful with their Remediation Plan. The Remediation Plan may include an additional short-term field experience not part of their regular program where the student can demonstrate success before entering or completing a field experience that is part of the program.
7. A lead faculty member will be identified to assess whether the goals of the Remediation Plan have been met. A student may appeal the evaluation of their dispositions or the success of the Remediation Plan, as set forth below.

Appeals Process

1. Students have a right to appeal decisions arising from the formal review process. The first appeal is to the Department of Counselor Education and Student Affairs faculty who were not involved in the initial formal meeting.
2. Final appeal is to the Dean of the College of Education. The Dean of the College of Education will consider appeals based on (1) whether the procedures defined in this document have been followed, (2) new evidence that was not available to the Appeals Committee has been found, or (3) if the sanction is not commensurate with the severity of the disposition concern.

Overview of Process

Stage in Process	Context	Delivery by whom/by what method
Informing students of policy and rubric.	So that students understand expectations and procedures.	a) Departmental new student agreement letter directs students to disposition policies and SAPER published online in student handbook on department website; b) at mandatory initial advisement seminar meeting
Ongoing evaluation of student progress	To identify areas of concern	Concerns are identified throughout the program, (including in all classes, field experiences, and advisement) and discussed during department meetings by all counseling and student affairs faculty
Evaluation of student progress at candidacy	To assess student readiness to progress in the program	Candidacy applications

Evaluation of student progress during field experience	To assess student ability to competently perform during field experience	Faculty and onsite supervisor evaluations of students during field experience
Informal mentoring and support.	To provide support and to improve performance in line with acceptable criteria in disposition rubric.	Faculty and advisors working with students.
Formal dispositions review meeting	Initiated when informal mentoring does not lead to improvement or more serious incident aligned with unsatisfactory criteria occurs. Students have due process rights for informal meetings.	Faculty request the department chair arrange a meeting. The department chair includes the appropriate faculty and assures the student is informed in writing of their rights.
Appeals committee	Students may appeal the findings coming from the formal meetings, the Remediation Plan, or the evaluation of the success of the Remediation Plan.	Department faculty not directly involved in the initial SAPER meeting
Appeal to Dean	Students have a second level of appeal after the appeals committee to the Dean of the College of Education. These appeals may focus on three criteria described in the policy.	The Dean of the College of Education.