**The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**

**Fitness to Lead and Policy Exit Guidelines and Procedures for Professional Dispositions in the Department of Organization and School Leadership for**

**Master in Educational Leadership and Principal Certification**

**I. PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS STATEMENT**

This policy applies to all applicants for admission and students enrolled in the Master in Education Leadership and the Principal Certification Program at the College of Education and P-16 Integration. This includes applicants in both the Accelerated Online Program and the Traditional Face-to-Face Program. The Master in Educational Leadership and the Principal Certification Program are designed to prepare applicants for the role of a certified school administrator academically. However, satisfying the curriculum and testing requirements alone does not make an applicant worthy of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to recommend an applicant for candidacy to the State of Texas for certification.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible, and professional manner. This conduct is evaluated through the Leadership and Fitness Dispositions (LFD) policy as an element of students' performance in the program. The purpose of the LFD review process is to regularly monitor students' professional and personal development to ensure students demonstrate appropriate progress towards developing the necessary behaviors, attitudes, and professional competencies to practice as school leaders. Students who do not comply with the LFD policy may be removed from the program.

The Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 241, Rule 241.1 (a), states that "Due to the critical role the principal plays in campus effectiveness and student achievement, and consistent with the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 21.046(c), the rules adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification ensure that each candidate for the Principal Certificate is of the highest caliber and possesses the knowledge and skills necessary for success." Therefore, all principal candidates in the UTRGV principal preparation program are expected to demonstrate that they are prepared to lead schools. This preparation results from the combination of successful completion of university coursework, successful field experiences, and the demonstration of required professional skills that all principal candidates should possess. The standards of learning required to satisfy TEC.21.046(b)(1)-(6) will emphasize instructional leadership, administration, supervision and communication skills, curriculum and instruction management, performance evaluation, organization, and fiscal management. The Department of Organization and School Leadership also believes in a set of core values for all leadership candidates: honesty, authenticity, the vital importance of relationships, and intellectual, moral, and ethical integrity.

Students in both programs are responsible for being knowledgeable about and complying with the requirements and standards of the University and particular to their program. This includes the Regents' Rules and Regulations, the UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures, the UTRGV Catalog, and other program policies, procedures, and criteria, including those addressed in this document and incorporates the Department of Organization and School Leadership Dispositions and the Code of Ethics and Practices for Educators in Texas, Title 19, Texas Administrative Code, Rule 247.2.

**A. Academic Requirements**

**Scholastic Integrity**

The principal candidate must demonstrate honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications, doing one's work, giving credit for the ideas, and providing proper citation of source materials.

**II.** **Essential Leadership Abilities**

The ability to perform the following functions, with or without reasonable accommodations, is required:

1. **Communication Skills**

The principal candidate must demonstrate sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings in English.

1. ***Written****:*   Writes clearly, uses correct grammar and spelling. Demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to understand the content presented in the program and to complete all written assignments as specified by faculty.
2. ***Oral****:*   Communicates effectively in English with other students, faculty, staff, and professionals. Expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others. Demonstrates sufficient spoken English skills to understand the program's content, complete all oral assignments adequately, and meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty.
3. **Psychomotor Skills**

The principal candidate must exhibit motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placements.

1. **Intellectual and Cognitive Abilities**

The principal candidate must measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, integrate, and apply information.

1. **Behavioral and Social Attributes**

The principal candidate must possess the emotional health required to fully use their intellectual abilities, such as exercising sound judgment and developing mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with others such as the teachers, parents, students, and colleagues. Candidates must possess the ability to function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments and display flexibility.

**III. PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS GUIDELINES**

*The following Professional Dispositions Guidelines are to be followed by all students and candidates in the Department of Organization and School Leadership. The standards referenced are those of the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 241, Rule 241.1, National Board Certification for Principals (NB), National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards (NELPS), Council for the Accreditation for Educational Preparation (CAEP), Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (NB) students and candidates are responsible for identifying and following professional standards and policies for their state.*

**A. Dispositions**

**1. Required Professional Demeanor and Work Habit Dispositions**

a. Exhibits confidence in the performance of daily tasks and leadership

activities

b. Exhibits initiative and creativity in performing daily tasks and in

problem-solving situations

1. Demonstrates a strong work ethic and completes tasks and projects

efficiently and effectively

1. Demonstrates effective organizational and management skills in

performing tasks

e. Exhibits commitment to the mission and vision of an organization

f. Exhibits dedication and conscientiousness in leadership

performance

g. Models professional conduct appropriate for school leaders

h. Demonstrates the ability to work as a team member and team builder to accomplish organizational tasks

**2. Moral and Ethical Dispositions**

a. Believes that all children can learn and succeed regardless of student needs and varying abilities

b. Treats individuals with equity, dignity, and respect

c. Models honest, genuineness, and ethical behaviors

d. Exhibits responsibility for one's actions

e. Abides and implements school district mission, policies, procedures, and programs

f. Models ethical behavior and fairness

g. Promotes social justice

h. Safeguards the values of democracy, equity and promotes the values of diversity

i. Evaluates moral and legal consequences of decisions

j. Builds and sustains trustworthy relationships

k. Works to serve others

l. Maintains confidentiality

**3. Intellectual Integrity/Cognitive Dispositions**

a. Models and promotes the highest standard of conduct, ethical principles, and integrity in decision making, actions, and behavior

b. Abides by the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

c. Serves an advocate for all children

d. Articulates the importance of education in a free democratic society

e. Seeks professional development, must be inquiring, a learner, intellectual curiosity

f. Thinks analytically about educational issues

g. Reflective about their practice

h. Flexible, open to new ideas, willing and able to modify their beliefs and practice

**4. Relationship Dispositions**

a. Communicates effectively in oral, written, and electronic form

b. Engages in a cooperative and collaborative manner

c. Approaches situations with a positive outlook

d. Practices effective listening skills

e. Exhibits the ability to motivate, encourage and involve others

toward shared leadership

f. Builds relationships in a culturally appropriate manner

**IV. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING DIGRESSIONS FROM OSL PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS POLICY**

*The following procedures will be implemented when digressions in Professional Dispositions Guidelines and the Exit Policy occur.*

**A. The FTL Evaluation Process**

All students will be evaluated based on their instructor's Essential Abilities and Fitness to Lead Standards (FTL) at the end of every semester. In addition, students can be evaluated as necessary throughout the program. An FTL review may be initiated on any student if a faculty member, staff member, course instructor, program advisor, or field supervisor believes the student has displayed behavior, which suggests the student does not possess sufficient competency on one or more essential abilities or FTL criteria. Students' competence is evaluated using the *Fitness to Lead Standards* and documented with the *FTL Evaluation Form*.

Admission into the master's program or the principal certification program does not guarantee fitness to remain a student in the program. Also, an FTL review may be initiated on any student at any time if a faculty member, staff member, course instructor, program advisor, or field supervisor believes the student has displayed behavior that suggests the student does not possess sufficient competency on one or more FTL criteria. Faculty also may initiate an FTP review at any time for:

* Students who engage in illegal or unethical behaviors,
* Students who present a threat to the wellbeing of others, or
* Students who violate the UTRGV Student Code of Conduct, the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP), any other applicable UTRGV policies or procedures, or any other UTRGV departmental policies or practices.

In such cases, depending upon the circumstances, the fitness to lead process may result in the student being dismissed from the Master in Educational Leadership and/or Principal Certification Program.

Faculty members, staff members, course instructors, program advisors, and field supervisors will evaluate all students according to these standards. Students will have the opportunity to participate and respond at each step of the FTL process.

Performance on the FTL standards will be rated on a scale of 0 (competence not achieved) to 1 (competence performed) described in the *Fitness to Lead Standards*. A rating of 1 on all FTL standards will indicate competence. The *FTL Evaluation Form* will then be shared with the student and a copy placed in the student's TK20 file. A rating of 0 on any of the FTP standards will initiate the following procedure:

1. The student will be contacted to schedule a meeting to review the *FTL Evaluation Form*. The conference would be held with the issuing faculty member unless the FTL process was initiated because the student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others, or violated the UTRGV Student Code of Conduct or the Handbook of Operating Procedures (in which case, the meeting will be held with a faculty review committee, as outlined in Step 3 below).

The student has five business days to respond to the request to schedule a meeting. If the student does *not* respond by the close of business on the fifth business day, the matter will proceed to step 3 below.

1. At the meeting, the issuing faculty will review the *FTL Evaluation Form* with the student and discuss a remediation plan. Within ten business days after the meeting, the issuing faculty will provide a final copy of the remediation plan (incorporating any changes agreed upon at the meeting) to the student for review and signature. The student will have ten business days to review, sign, and return the remediation plan. Failure of the student to sign and/or return the remediation plan by the close of business on the tenth business day will not impede the process and may be considered during the fitness to lead the process.

The remediation plan may include

* Specific competency(ies) from the *Fitness to Lead Standards* which require remediation,
* Specific recommendations to achieve remediation,
* Detailed requirements to demonstrate remediation efforts have been successful, and,
* A specific deadline for subsequent monitoring to evaluate progress.

The student and issuing faculty should retain copies of the signed *FTL Evaluation Form,* and the remediation plan and documents will be placed in the student's TK20 folder. The issuing faculty member may refer the student to a faculty review committee during the remediation process.

1. A faculty review committee will be convened if:
   1. The FTL process was initiated because the student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others, or violated the UTRGV Student Code of Conduct or the Handbook of Operating Procedures,
   2. A student fails to respond to the issuing faculty's request to schedule a meeting to review the *FTL Evaluation Form*,
   3. A student fails to show reasonable progress in the remediation plan, or
   4. A student receives more than one *FTL Evaluation Form* rated 0 during their Program of Study.

The committee will be comprised of three core faculty appointed by the Program Coordinator. The student will be required to meet with the faculty review committee following the procedures described in #1 and #2 above. The faculty review committee may consult with any of the College of Education and P-16 Integration faculty regarding the development of alternative remedial strategies and/or evaluation of the student's fitness for continuation in the Master in Educational Leadership Program and/or Principal Certification Program. The committee will complete a Fitness to Lead Evaluation Form, including a remediation plan (if applicable). A copy of this form will be provided to the student and placed in the student's TK20 folder.

If the student is placed on a remediation plan, the faculty review committee will monitor the student's progress. Suppose the student is determined not to be making satisfactory progress at any time. Then, in that case, the faculty review committee may either modify the remediation plan or dismiss the student from the Master in Educational Leadership Program and/or Principal Certification Program.

Students dismissed from the Master in Educational Leadership Program and/or Principal Certification Program may leave the program or switch to a non-certification track.

1. Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. All faculty review committee decisions for a student's dismissal from the Master in Educational Leadership Program and/or Principal Certification Program will be provided to the student in writing by the end of ten business days after the meeting and forwarded to the Department Chair. The student may appeal the committee's decision to the department chair and appropriate Dean(s) in accordance with the Academic Appeals process in the University Catalog~~. Decisions by the Associate Dean are final.~~

**University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**

**Master in Educational Leadership Program and Principal Certification Program**

***Fitness to Lead (FTL) Evaluation Form***

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your professional performance and dispositions have been evaluated according to the Master in Educational Leadership Program and/or Principal Certification Program Fitness to Lead policy and Exit Policy.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Standard** | **Competence Not Achieved (0)** | **Competence Achieved**  **(1)** | **No Opportunity to Observe** |
| **Academic Achievement and Integrity** | | | |
| Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better and present grades of C or better in courses to be counted toward the degree. |  |  |  |
| Demonstrate honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications, doing one's work, giving credit for others' ideas, and providing proper citation of source materials. |  |  |  |
| Demonstrate sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and effectively communicate ideas and feelings. |  |  |  |
| **Professional Dispositions** | | | |
| Display multicultural competence |  |  |  |
| Be open to new ideas, responsive, adaptable, and cooperative. |  |  |  |
| Be aware of their impact on others |  |  |  |
| Receptive to and using feedback |  |  |  |
| Respond to conflict appropriately |  |  |  |
| Accept personal responsibility |  |  |  |
| Be dependable in meeting obligations. |  |  |  |
| **Ethical and Legal Considerations** | | | |
| Conform with standard practices and ethical conduct rules toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and community members. |  |  |  |
| Maintain confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law. |  |  |  |

Is competence achieved in each FTP Standard observed? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_\_no

If competence in each FTP standard observed is **not** achieved, describe the specific behavior(s) indicating this:

What steps does the student need to take to remediate this issue? *(include specific recommendations, how success will be evaluated, and a deadline for subsequent monitoring of progress)*

Signatures *(acknowledging student receipt of this evaluation)*

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Evaluator

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Witness/Others in Attendance Witness/Other in Attendance

Issue resolved/remediation successful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Issue referred to Faculty Review Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

**University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**

**Master in Educational Leadership and The Principal Certification Program**

***Fitness to Lead (FTL) Evaluation—Faculty Review Committee***

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Faculty Review Committee will meet with the student to discuss this form and any actions resulting from the FTP review.

The student has been referred to the Faculty Review Committee because:

\_\_\_\_\_ The student did not show sufficient progress on a remediation plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ The student did not respond to an evaluator's request to schedule a meeting to review the FTP Evaluation Form.

\_\_\_\_\_ The student has received more than one 0 rating on an FTP Evaluation form during his/her program of study.

\_\_\_\_\_ The student engaged in illegal or unethical activities, presented a threat to the wellbeing of others or violated the UTRGV Student Code of Conduct or the Handbook of Operating Procedures.

The specific areas of concern that have resulted in this referral, including any standards where the student has not achieved competence, are as follows:

After examining evidence presented from previous FTL reviews, information from the student, and information from faculty/staff involved in the case, the Faculty Review Committee has made the following recommendation:

\_\_\_\_\_ The student is allowed to proceed in the program without a further remediation plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ The student is allowed to proceed in the program with a remediation plan (*see attached specific recommendations, how success will be evaluated, and a deadline for subsequent monitoring of progress*).

\_\_\_\_\_The student is dismissed from the program effective immediately.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature *(indicates notification of the decision and is not an indication of agreement)*

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Committee Member Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member

For students placed on remediation plan:

Issue resolved/remediation successful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Issue returned to Faculty Review Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date)