

Department of Education

## CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

**Department of Education**

**Specialization in Early Childhood and Elementary Education**

**Specialization in Teaching English as a Second Language**

**Department of Art Education**

**Specialization in Art Education – Visual Arts**

## CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF STUDENT-TEACHERS

### Preamble

The Quebec Department of Education has identified twelve core professional competencies that student teachers are expected to have attained by the end of their initial teacher training. One of these professional competencies reads as follows: “To demonstrate ethical and responsible professional behaviour in the performance of his or her duties”. Consequently, the Department of Education and the Department of Art Education are required to attest to the attainment of this competency when recommending a student for certification. The mastery of this competency is attained through both the academic component of the program and through the internships.

Teachers recognize that they are bound by standards of conduct expected of caring, knowledgeable and reasonable adults who are entrusted with the custody, care or education of students or children. They recognize their actions are bound in moral, ethical and legal considerations regarding their obligations to students, parents, peers, administrators, school authorities, communities and society at large. They acknowledge these obligations and act accordingly.

### 1.0 Code of Ethics

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to set high standards for professional conduct and teaching excellence for both novice and experienced teachers. It clarifies the attributes, competencies and



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behaviours that all student teachers are expected to develop and demonstrate even though they are not yet full-fledged teachers. The Code of Ethics also guides the work of cooperating teachers and university supervisors as they prepare student teachers for the profession.

At the core of the Code of Ethics is the expectation that student teachers will act with integrity, honesty, fairness and dignity in all their dealings with students, parents, peers, teachers, faculty, and staff in schools.

They are expected to adhere to the following principles in measure sufficient to teachers at the beginning of their professional careers:

1.1 Teachers promote and support the full development of each individual. They are responsible for nurturing all students' intellectual, physical, emotional, cultural, moral, social, spiritual and civic growth in a climate of affirmation of each individual's dignity and worth. They demonstrate respect for human dignity, freedom, justice, democracy, and the environment.

1.2 Teachers respect the dignity and rights of all. They are responsible for ensuring that their conduct is always without prejudice as to religious beliefs, cultural values, race, gender, sexual orientation, physical attributes, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity or national origin.

1.3 Teachers draw on their professional knowledge to develop and maintain a learning environment that is challenging and supportive for all. They are responsible for recognizing and responding to distinct individual needs and abilities in a fair, consistent and respectful manner that promotes optimal learning opportunities for each student.

1.4 Teachers demonstrate commitment to their professional development and to learning. They are responsible for acquiring and applying new knowledge to their teaching practice.

1.5 Teachers work with colleagues and other professionals to create learning environments in which students feel that they are physically, psychologically, socially and culturally secure. They are responsible for collaborating to support all aspects of student development in these secure learning environments.

1.6 Teachers work with parents and the community to further the educational development of students. They are responsible for contributing to an atmosphere of trust, respect and openness.

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1.7 Teachers acknowledge that their relationship with students is based on trust. They are responsible for maintaining a professional relationship that is characterized by respect, confidentiality and an absence of exploitation. They will not disclose confidential information about students and their families, except in cases where law or personal security requires this.

1.8 Teachers value the professional reputation and abilities of their fellow teachers. They are responsible for working with them to promote student development and achieve school goals. They encourage students and colleagues to have confidence in other teachers and present any criticism in confidence and in good faith.

1.9 Teachers adhere to regulations that govern the practice of teaching. They are responsible for fulfilling the obligations specified in local agreements.

## **2.0 Professional Conduct**

The Code of Professional Conduct stipulates minimum standards of professional conduct for an individual who is registered in a program at Concordia University leading to permanent certification as a qualified teacher in Quebec. Professional conduct is assessed through the attitude and behaviours demonstrated by the student teacher in both the academic and field experience components of the teacher-training program.

Student teachers must develop and display a set of consistent educational and professional values and attitudes. These include but are not limited to: honesty and a concern for truth, open-mindedness, sound judgment, a sense of fairness and justice, respect for others, trustworthiness, discretion, concern for the interest of others, courage cooperativeness, high standards in teaching and dedication to the goals of schooling.

The educational and professional values and attitudes to be acquired by students are modeled by faculty and instructors, are examined throughout the program of studies in various courses, are the subject of pre-internship preparation and of the reflective seminars attached to each internship. In particular, prior to each of the internships, students are informed of expectations regarding their behaviour and attitude, receive suggestions on how to foster positive relations and resolve conflicts with their cooperating teachers and other staff at the school, and are advised of

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the availability of their university supervisors to assist them in completing successful internships. Students may call on their academic advisors, the person responsible for student teaching, or their university internship supervisors to clarify issues of an ethical or professional nature that may arise. Faculty, instructors, academic advisors, and the person responsible for student teaching accept their responsibility of alerting or advising a student whenever a student displays a behaviour or attitude that is in conflict with acceptable educational and professional values and attitudes.

It is understood that student teachers may not have acquired these values and attitudes all to the same degree. Student teachers, however, have the responsibility to develop these characteristics and acquire the knowledge, understanding and competence sufficient for beginning teachers. In cases where this development does not occur to a desired level, an individual's conduct will be reviewed within the context of these expectations in accordance with the procedures established to evaluate unprofessional conduct.

2.1 In addition to meeting the academic standards of the teacher-training program of studies, acceptable professional conduct means that student teachers are expected to:

2.1.1 Adhere to academic regulations in the Concordia University Undergraduate calendar.

2.1.2 Cite references when using materials or information that they have not developed, including information and materials from the Web;

2.1.3 Submit a separate and distinct assignment for each course. A single assignment cannot be used for more than one course, unless prior approval is obtained;

2.1.4 Adhere to copyright laws and regulations;

2.1.5 Respect Concordia University's Code of Rights and Responsibilities so that all students, faculty and staff can enjoy a civil and safe learning and working environment. Toward



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that end, recognize the authority of the instructor; arrive on time for class; attend all classes unless unavoidably absent for a serious reason; stay for the duration of the class, unless prior approval for an early dismissal was obtained; complete course assignments in the required time frame; turn off cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices while classes are in session; participate in classroom activities and discussions in a manner respectful of instructors and other students through the avoidance of disruptive comments and inappropriately aggressive behaviour;

2.1.6. Submit to a police check prior to the first practicum where required by law.

2.2 While on a field experience, acceptable professional conduct means that student teachers are expected to:

2.2.1 Be mindful of the Code of Ethics and its implications in relation to pupils, colleagues, school authorities, and the profession;

2.2.2 Recognize that they are representatives of Concordia University and guests in the host schools;

2.2.3 Adhere to the procedures outlined for student teacher placements;

2.2.4 Follow the instructions in the Student Handbook with respect to responsibilities both prior to and during a practicum;

2.2.5 Work in a respectful and cooperative manner with the cooperating teacher and exhibit collegial behaviour;

2.2.6 Accept constructive analysis of performance by cooperating teacher, principal, or university supervisor and implement suggestions;

2.2.7 Prepare and submit instructional plans in a timely fashion;

2.2.8 Enrich classroom instruction beyond routine textbook/workbook exercises;

2.2.9 Demonstrate professional commitment;



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2.2.10 Adhere to the rules and requirements that apply to full time teachers;

2.2.11 Be present each day, unless an absence, duly reported, is due to unavoidable circumstances;

2.2.12 Be on time everyday and respect the workday of teachers at the school;

2.2.13 Ensure the safety and security of students at all times;

2.2.14 Establish proper rapport with students based upon their developmental levels and needs;

2.2.15 Establish and maintain appropriate professional and personal relationships with teachers, school staff, parents, etc.;

2.2.16 Communicate using correct language in both oral and written forms;

2.2.17 Abide by the regulations, procedures, instructional practices, and professional and personal expectancies of the host school and school board;

2.2.18 Reflect professionalism by their mannerisms, vocabulary, conversational style, appearance and thoughtful behaviour;

2.2.19 Ensure confidentiality of any information regarding the site, students and their families, or staff revealed during the student teaching experience.

2.3 The Department of Education or the Department of Art Education, depending on the program in which the student teacher is enrolled, has the right and responsibility to assess a student's professional conduct. Action may be taken any time a student is suspected of unprofessional conduct that, for example, contravenes the Code of Ethics for acceptable professional behaviour or the Quebec Education Act and other legislation governing teaching practices or displays inappropriate behaviour or impaired judgment in fulfillment of program requirements.

2.3.1 Failure to meet expectations set out in Concordia's academic regulations and Codes will be handled under the provisions of those regulations and Codes and may result in:

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. A student being required to withdraw from a course or a practicum at any time during the semester; or

. A student being assigned a grade of “F” for the component where standards of professional conduct were not met, which may result in a student being required to withdraw from the practicum.

2.3.2 A student may be required to withdraw from a practicum, at any time during the practicum, by reason of:

. Conduct during the practicum which has resulted in the Cooperating Teacher or school authorities having required the student’s withdrawal from the assigned classroom or school; or

. Evidence of inability to carry out duties established for a student in the practicum.

2.3.3 A student may be required to withdraw from a course at any time during the semester for repeated or serious breaches of the Concordia University’s Code of Conduct (Academic).

2.4 Any student who has displayed unprofessional conduct or who has been convicted of a criminal offence may be required to withdraw from the teacher specialization program or to undertake a supplemental or remedial program.

### **3.0 Internships**

Internships in a school are governed by an agreement between the university and the school board. These agreements respect the protocol regarding the placement of student teachers that has been negotiated between the school board and its local teacher union. These agreements and protocols are unique to each school board and, as a result, vary in the manner in which student placements may be made. The person responsible for student teaching is responsible for assuring the respect of the agreements with the school boards and is the only person authorized to confirm student placements and to settle any issues that may arise. Student teachers are required to scrupulously adhere to the procedures outlined for student teacher placements by the person responsible for student teaching.

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At times during a practicum, some questions or concerns may arise among student teacher, cooperating teacher and university supervisor. Usually these can be resolved through open communication among the parties. The most effective way of addressing a dispute between a student teacher and a cooperating teacher is direct communication. If it appears that an issue cannot be settled between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher, then the university supervisor should be involved.

A breach of the rules governing internships is considered unprofessional conduct.

3.1 Students must obtain permission of their advisor to enroll in a practicum.

3.2 Students must satisfy all the prerequisites for any practicum.

3.3 The person responsible for student teaching is the only person who may assign a placement.

3.4 Students must inform the person responsible for student teaching if the assigned placement is in a school where an immediate family member is employed as such an assignment would be judged inappropriate.

3.5 Prior to commencing the practicum, the student teacher must contact the school principal and/or the cooperating teacher to arrange a meeting.

3.6 A student may not change the location of the placement without the specific permission of the person responsible for student teaching.

3.6.1 If for a just and sufficient reason, a student teacher wishes to change the location of an internship prior to its starting date, he or she must submit the request in writing stating the reasons to the person responsible for student teaching.

3.6.2 If the person responsible for student teaching judges the reason as just and sufficient, a new placement will be found; if the reason is judged insufficient, the student must complete his or her internship at the assigned location.

3.7 A student may not terminate an internship before its end date without the specific permission of the person responsible for student teaching.

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- 3.7.1 If for very serious, exceptional personal or pedagogical reasons, a student teacher wishes to terminate an internship prior to its end date, he or she must submit the request in writing stating the reasons to the person responsible for student teaching.
- 3.7.2 If the person responsible for student teaching judges the reason as serious and exceptional, the student may be permitted to terminate his or her placement early and the student assumes the academic penalties that may be imposed by university regulation; if the reason is not judged as serious and exceptional, the student teacher is expected to complete the internship.
- 3.8 A university supervisor may not bring an early end to an internship without the permission of the person responsible for student teaching.
  - 3.8.1 If for just and sufficient reason a university supervisor wishes to bring an internship to an early end, he or she advises the person responsible for student teaching after having discussed his or her reasons with the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the principal of the school.
  - 3.8.2 If the person responsible for student teaching judges the reasons as just and sufficient, he or she advises the student teacher of the termination of the internship and of the academic and/or professional consequences.
- 3.9 The principal or the cooperating teacher who, for serious reasons, wishes to bring an internship to an early end is expected to advise the university supervisor or the person responsible for student teaching in writing of these reasons.
  - 3.9.1 Prior to advising the student teacher of the intention to bring the internship to an early end, the person responsible for student teaching, the university supervisor of the student teacher, the principal and the cooperating teacher meet to explore measures that could be taken to avoid an early end to the internship.
  - 3.9.2 While awaiting a final decision, a student teacher may be advised that the internship is temporarily suspended.
  - 3.9.3 The person responsible for student teaching advises the student teacher of the decision taken following the meeting with the principal, cooperating teacher and

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university supervisor. If the decision is to end the internship, the person responsible for student teaching advises the student teacher of the academic and professional consequences of the decision.

3.10 Usually, an internship that is not seen to term results in the student teacher receiving a failing grade for the practicum.

3.10.1 The person responsible for student teaching may determine that the reasons for bringing an internship to an end warrants another grade, i.e. for medical reasons.

3.11 A student may appeal the decision of the person responsible for student teaching to the Chair of the Department in accordance with university regulations and departmental practices.

## 4.0 Procedures

Generally, other than in exceptional cases warranting immediate action, the procedures outlined below are to be implemented only after the issues that relate to professional conduct have not been resolved despite planned corrective measures.

Any complainant, including faculty member, instructor, field supervisor, principal, cooperating teacher or student, who identifies a student whose conduct is deemed unprofessional as outlined in the criteria above, may initiate the following process once the student teacher has been fully informed by the complainant of the nature of the criticism.

4.1 Complaints of an academic nature

4.1.1 Complaints of an academic nature are subject to the procedures outlined in Concordia's Code of Conduct (Academic).

4.2 Complaints related to inappropriate behaviour exhibited by one university member toward another university member or against university property

4.2.1 Complaints related to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, threatening or violent conduct, and offences against property are subject to

the procedures outlined in Concordia University's Code of Rights and Responsibilities.

#### 4.3 Complaints related to internships

- 4.3.1 The complainant shall document in writing to the person responsible for student teaching, the incident(s) and behaviours(s) deemed indicative of unsatisfactory professional conduct.
- 4.3.2 The person responsible for student teaching shall request meetings with the complainant and the student teacher at the earliest convenient time, but within 10 working days of having received the complaint, to clarify all aspects of the matter and attempt a resolution.
- 4.3.3 No later than 5 working days after having met the complainant and the student teacher, the person responsible for student teaching informs the complainant and student teacher of the decision or recommendation regarding the matter and forwards a copy of the decision to the Chair of the Department.
- 4.3.4 If either the complainant or the student teacher is not satisfied with the decision or recommendation of the person responsible for student teaching, he or she may appeal in writing, citing reasons, directly to the Chair of the Department no later than 10 working days after having received the recommendation or decision of the person responsible for student teaching.
- 4.3.5 The Chair of the Department, within 10 days of receiving a referral or an appeal of a decision or a recommendation from the person responsible for student teaching, shall establish a review panel composed of at least three persons – a faculty member unconnected with the facts of the case who will be the chair, a practicing teacher, and a student acceptable to the education student association.
- 4.3.6 The Chair of the Department will notify the student teacher and the complainant by registered letter at least 5 working days prior to the meeting of the review panel to discuss the referral or appeal. The letter

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will specify the date, time and place of the meeting and be accompanied by a copy of all supporting documentation and will advise the student teacher that he or she may be accompanied by an advocate.

- 4.3.7 The review panel will meet in closed session with the student to discuss his or her professional conduct. The student teacher's advocate may advise the student and may speak on his or her behalf. Members of the review panel are required to observe confidentiality regarding all matters pursuant to the review.
- 4.3.8 The review panel may make one of the following recommendations to the Chair of the Department within 5 days of the completion of the hearing:
- . that the student be allowed to continue in the program without qualification;
  - . that the student be allowed to continue on a provisional basis with conditions indicated in writing;
  - . that the student be required to discontinue for a specified period or indefinitely in accordance with the regulations of Concordia University.
- 4.3.9 After due deliberation, but within 10 days of having received the recommendations of the review panel, the Chair of the Department will convey his or her decision in writing with reasons and advise the student of the right to appeal the decision to the Dean.

Adopted by the Concordia Teacher Education Council (CTEC) on January 19, 2005.