

## **Educator Preparation Unit Philosophy, Purposes, Goals**

The mission and vision for the College of Education, reflecting the ideals and goals embodied in the vision and mission of the University of South Florida, informs the conceptual framework for the Educator Preparation Unit. The framework is representative of both initial and advanced teacher preparation programs and advanced programs that prepare other personnel for the P-12 schools. The major themes reflected in candidate outcomes and dispositions are summarized by the acronym **CARE**: Collaboration, Academic excellence, **R**esearch, **E**thical practice.

### **Unit Goals**

Unit goals are expressed as the outcomes we have established for our graduates. There are six outcome “domains” that encompass both initial and advanced preparation programs. Each domain includes:

- a “rationale” or explanation that informs the outcome, based on our beliefs of what it means to be an education professional,
- an outcome statement of what the USF graduate will know or be able to do.

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### **1. Collaboration**

Professionals are members of several communities simultaneously (districts, schools, agencies, departments, professional societies, caregivers, and policymakers). This shared membership informs practices and policies to insure the education and care of each individual. At the advanced preparation level, other school professionals must become skilled at problem-solving and conflict resolution within and among the various constituencies they serve.

**USF graduates will:**

- **Collaborate and work in partnership with schools, families, other professionals and agencies.**

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## **2. Content and Professional Knowledge**

Professionals demonstrate an understanding of their respective content areas by providing quality instruction and services. Content knowledge is not synonymous with knowledge of how to teach that content. Teachers must integrate content knowledge with pedagogical content knowledge as well as the knowledge base that is fundamental to all education professionals that includes, at a minimum, that which incorporates (a) the behavior and process of learning and the theoretical bases of human development; (b) the historical and social context of schools, families and communities; (c) cultural impacts on learning; (d) the impact of language on learning for non-native English speaking persons; and (e) inclusion and equity concepts in schools and community. Education professionals in other service roles as well must integrate the knowledge base fundamental to the education and human services professions, with the knowledge base specific to their professional domain. Content and professional knowledge and expertise also assumes currency of that knowledge and expertise.

**USF graduates will:**

- **Have expertise in a common professional knowledge base and the content-specific bases of their fields and the ability to integrate content and professional knowledge into teaching and service.**

## **3. Technology**

Professionals are skilled in utilizing a variety of technologies in instruction, assessment, and service and assist learners and clients in becoming competent with technology. To do so, education professionals must be both technologically proficient and literate. They have basic technical skills to utilize hardware and software, and are familiar with the range of available information technologies and on-line information sources relevant to their field of practice. They are able to choose appropriately among available technologies and information sources to enhance instruction and service. In addition, professionals must be aware of equity issues surrounding the use of technology and access to information, and understand how socio-cultural contexts can influence attitudes about technology. Professionals utilize information technologies in their own research and professional development.

**USF graduates will:**

- **Be technologically proficient and literate professionals.**

#### **4. Reflection, Analysis and Inquiry**

Professionals make sound decisions about complex events by considering alternative theories and research perspectives, as well as their personal beliefs. Professionals continuously inquire about theory and practice. They are active consumers of scholarship, and maintain an open mind toward new theories and perspectives while analyzing the research relevant to their professional field. Teachers and other education professionals engage in productive inquiry appropriate to their field and degree. Active engagement in inquiry fosters habits of reflection and analysis and commitment to life long learning. Educational professionals assess their own practices and monitor the progress of learners and clients in ways that inform decision-making and enhance subsequent practices.

**USF graduates will:**

- **Integrate reflection, analysis, and systematic inquiry into their professional practice.**

#### **5. Ethics and Diversity**

Education professionals function in schools and agencies as advocates in culturally diverse settings. This requires self-awareness, inclusive values, and skills in critiquing cultural practices. Educators must be skilled in addressing a wide range of diverse characteristics, including exceptionalities, in their recipient populations. Ethical practice requires not only adhering to professional codes of conduct, it requires as well enabling a positive egalitarian social environment.

**USF graduates will:**

- **engage in ethical practice and effectively integrate awareness of and sensitivity to issues of diversity and exceptionality among the populations they serve.**

## **6. Student Learning and Development**

Teachers and other school professionals create, enrich and maintain environments that provide opportunities for positive outcomes for all learners and clients. They focus on the academic, emotional, and social growth and well being of those being served and engage in the most effective professional practices as identified by current research. Teachers strive to enhance the critical, creative and reflective thinking capabilities of all learners. Achieving outcome goals requires professionals to maintain flexibility in their approaches to teaching and service. They must be able to modify and adapt instruction, service or interventions, based upon continuous assessment and monitoring of learner and client progress, to achieve positive outcomes among a diversity of populations.

**USF graduates will:**

- **Provide instruction, services and/or programs that contribute to positive learning and developmental outcomes.**

These outcome domains represent the knowledge and skills that faculty have identified for all graduates of USF P-12 educator preparation programs. At the programmatic level, knowledge, skills, and dispositions are further defined, and assessed, in accordance with the specific expectations of that particular field.

### **Dispositions**

The faculty have identified the following candidate dispositions reflective of the “CARE” theme (Collaboration, Academic excellence, Research, Ethical practice) of the conceptual framework:

- Commitment to Collaboration
- Continuous professional development
- Reflective thinking
- Respect for Diversity
- Ethical Responsibility
- Care and Advocacy for Students

“Dispositions” are defined here as the habits of mind and commitments that lead to intentional, conscious, and voluntary patterns of behavior toward students, families, colleagues and communities. These are the habitual actions or behaviors across outcomes to which our graduates should be regularly disposed in order to be effective educators.

**Commitment to collaboration**

Educators must work together with their professional colleagues in schools and agencies, as well as with students, families, and communities to achieve common goals and solve problems. Collaboration is founded upon the intentional seeking out of the opinions, expertise, and knowledge of others, consideration of all points of view, and a willingness to compromise to reach common goals.

**Continuous professional development**

Academic excellence and engagement in research reflect habits of mind and commitments consistent with continuous professional development. To meet high standards of instruction and service, and to assist those served to achieve to the highest possible levels, educators must strive to increase their knowledge and improve their skills. Through their commitment to continuous professional development, educators remain current with theory and practice in their field and with technological innovations, and they continuously improve their own practice through self-assessment and progress monitoring.

**Reflective thinking**

Academic excellence and engagement in research also reflect habits of mind and commitments consistent with reflective thinking. Reflective thinking engages educators in active and persistent consideration and evaluation of information acquired through inquiry and observation, and in careful deliberation and reasoning in making decisions and choosing courses of action in instruction and service.

**Respect for diversity**

Ethical practice is founded upon a respect for diversity. Educators demonstrate respect for diversity by engaging in practices that promote culturally diverse and culturally sensitive opportunities for learning and development and by treating all individuals equitably and fairly.

**Ethical responsibility**

Ethical practice is also guided by a commitment to adhere to professional codes of behavior. Ethical responsibility is demonstrated by holding oneself to the high standards of conduct that guide educators in their interactions with students, colleagues, families, and the community.

**Care and advocacy for students**

Another foundation of ethical practice is a commitment to care about and advocate for the health and well being of students. Educators demonstrate care and advocacy for students by taking an active interest in the physical, emotional, and intellectual health, well-being and growth of students served. They take appropriate steps to intervene when student health or well being is in jeopardy, and support and encourage students to reach their full potential.