



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION

Professional Concerns Committee Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

It is generally well understood and respected that every individual within the School of Education has a duty to behave in a responsible, professional, and ethical manner. In rare situations if a student's performance/behaviour is believed to be unprofessional and/or unethical, according to the School of Education Guidelines for Professional Conduct expectations (which references the Non-Judicial Student Code of Conduct, the Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union Code of Ethics, and/or the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice), the student may be referred to the Professional Concerns Committee.

REFERAL

Any School of Education Faculty Member or the B.Ed. Program Manager/Practicum Manager or the M.Ed. Clinical Practicum Coordinator may refer a student to the Professional Concerns Committee. Students who have concerns about their colleagues may raise these concerns with the Director or another faculty member who can choose to bring these forward to the Professional Concerns Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

The Professional Concerns Committee is a standing committee of the School of Education.

The Professional Concerns Committee is comprised of the Director and two members of faculty. For issues pertaining to the B.Ed. practicum, the Bachelor of Education Program Manager and Practicum Coordinator will also be part the committee. For issues pertaining to the M.Ed. practicum, the Clinical Coordinator will also be part of the committee.

PROCESS

Once referred to the Professional Concerns Committee, the process will be as follows:

- The Director of the School of Education shall call a meeting of the School of Education Professional Concerns Committee, which will examine the circumstances of the reported incident(s).
- In some cases, such as when the professional conduct of a student falls outside of the expertise of the committee, and/or occurs in a time and/or location outside of the field or practicum experience, the Director and the School of Education Professional Concern Committee may request assistance from other internal university officers (e.g., Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer or Executive Director of Student Services) or other external practicum partners (e.g., Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education). In instances where conduct is related to alleged violations of the Acadia Non-Academic Judicial Code of Conduct, Acadia's Policy Against Harassment of Discrimination or Acadia's Sexualized Violence Policy, these cases would be referred to those relevant bodies (i.e., Discipline Committee, Responsible Authority for Sexual Violence). Decisions and actions taken by these bodies will also inform the decisions made by the School of Education Professional Concerns Committee.
- Professional Concerns Committee, along with internal university officers or external partners where applicable, shall meet with the student to discuss the incident(s). The student would be informed that they may choose to have an advocate (for example: a member of the B. Ed. Society or another student) present at this meeting.
- The Committee will make a determination if the matter is MINOR or MAJOR and follow the pathway below.
- The Director will ensure that the matter is dealt with in a timely fashion and ensure the work of the Committee does not avoid any unnecessary delays.

Minor Incident(s)

- If the matter is of a minor nature (e.g., consistent lack of professionalism related to punctuality, planning, preparation), the student will have an opportunity to address the concern. If the student does not provide a satisfactory explanation and/or resolution, as determined by the committee, a plan to address the concern will be developed by the Committee in collaboration with the student.
- At the end of the delineated period, the student and the Director will meet to determine if the concerns have been addressed. The Director will report to the Professional Concerns Committee.
- If the student has not addressed the concerns, the Professional Concerns committee shall make a recommendation to the Dean of Professional Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies with suggested penalties stating the justification for the recommendation, which may include delay in program completion, failure of the practicum experience, or suspension or dismissal from the program.

Major Incident(s)

- If the matter is of a major nature (e.g., lack of professionalism related to conduct in online environments; failure to adhere to NSTU Code of Ethics; unethical conduct that contradicts the requirements of CCPA's Code of Ethics and/or Standards of Practice), the Professional Concerns committee shall make an immediate recommendation to the Dean of Professional Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies with suggested penalties stating the justification for the recommendation, which may include delay in program completion, failure of the practicum experience, or suspension or dismissal from the program.

NOTIFICATION

Any School of Education student incurring academic probation or dismissal will be advised in writing of their academic status, appeal procedures, and dates (identified at the beginning of Acadia University's [Academic Calendar](#)).

APPEAL

Students may appeal the penalty to the Senate Admission and Academic Standing Appeals Committee.

Approved by School of Education School Council: November 02, 2022