UNM College of Education and Human Sciences
Teacher Preparation Continuation Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the process by which a teacher candidate's academic performance, professional behavior, and/ or field experiences can be addressed within the College of Education and Human Sciences (COEHS) at the University of New Mexico through informal and formal processes. This policy provides a fair, supportive, and transparent mechanism for ensuring teacher candidate readiness and program quality.

Background

The COEHS is committed to preparing teacher candidates who demonstrate strong academic knowledge, ethical practices, and a deep commitment to the learners and communities they will serve. Educator preparation is a holistic process that includes coursework, clinical field experiences, and the ongoing development of professional dispositions essential to effective teaching and learning.

COEHS and its Educator Preparation Programs take pride in supporting teacher candidates as they grow into reflective, responsive, and equity-minded educators. As part of this commitment, the COEHS recommends teacher candidates to the New Mexico Public Education Department for licensure based on their successful demonstration of academic competence, professional behavior, and readiness to meet the needs of diverse learning environments.

Occasionally, a teacher candidate may benefit from additional support in one or more of these areas. The Teacher Candidate Continuation Policy provides a clear, supportive structure for addressing concerns when they arise. Its primary goal is to guide and assist teacher candidates in strengthening their practice, ensuring they have every opportunity to succeed. In cases where challenges persist, the policy outlines options for continued support, conditional progression, or, when necessary, transition out of the program.

Guiding Principles of the Continuation Policy

- Promote teacher candidate success through timely feedback and developmentally appropriate support.
- Ensure alignment with New Mexico licensure requirements and the Educator Code of Ethics.
- Maintain a learning environment grounded in equity, transparency, and high expectations.
- Provide clearly defined processes for early intervention, support planning, and appeal.

Section I: Definitions

- **Teacher Candidate**: A student enrolled in a COEHS licensure or endorsement program.
- **Educator Preparation Program Coordinator** The COEHS faculty member who manages an educator licensure pathway program and is responsible for monitoring teacher candidates' progress within that program.
- **Concerned Party**: Any program faculty, supervisor, cooperating teacher, or administrator who identifies an issue related to the teacher candidate's performance or behavior.
- **Informal Review**: A preliminary process to address concerns through direct communication, reflection, and goal-setting.
- **Formal Review**: A structured, multi-level process for addressing persistent or serious concerns.
- **Corrective Action Plan (CAP)**: A documented plan identifying specific actions, benchmarks, and timelines for improvement. Corrective actions are intended to assist the teacher candidate with their professional learning experiences and improve the teacher candidate's overall performance in the program and/or field experience.
- **Probation**: When a teacher candidate is temporarily removed from the licensure program and/or school site for a period of time.
- **Removal from Field Experience and/or Program:** When a teacher candidate is formally and permanently removed from their field experience and/or licensure program. The teacher candidate is informed in writing of this decision.
- **Withdrawal from Program:** A teacher candidate may elect to withdraw from their licensure program at any time. The teacher candidate's withdrawal will be confirmed in writing by the licensure program.

Section II: Types of Review

Table 1. Summary of Types of Review

Review Type	Trigger	Outcome	Leads to
Informal Review	Concern about progress or behavior	Resolution or documentation	Formal Review if unresolved
Formal Review – Level 1	Persistent concern or unmet expectations	Corrective Action Plan (CAP)	Continuation or Level 2 Review
Formal Review – Level 2	Unresolved concern, serious misconduct	Program decision (continue, suspend, exit)	Appeal or further action following the UNM Student Code of Conduct.

1. Informal Review

- **Purpose**: Address concerns early and collaboratively and provide suggestions to the teacher candidate on areas for improvement.
- **Initiation**: Informal Reviews can be initiated by faculty in the program, university supervisors, school personnel (e.g., cooperating teacher, Principal, Director), personnel in the Center for Student Success, Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or teacher candidate.
- **Participants**: All knowledgeable parties
- **Process**:
    - Initiated by a concerned party with knowledge of the teacher candidate.
    - ***Discuss:*** Includes a meeting with the teacher candidate to discuss the concern. Discussion includes efforts to work with the teacher candidate to prevent or resolve concerns or challenges.
    - **Document**: The ***Informal Review Summary*** is completed as an informal documentation that includes agreed-upon action steps and the dates and content of the meeting discussion. The ***Informal Review Summary*** form is then shared with the teacher candidate's Program Coordinator, and at the discretion of the Project Coordinator, the Department Chair, Director of Licensure and/or the Associate Dean. shared with the teacher candidate's Program.
    - **Advise**: The initiator of the Informal Review and knowledgeable parties will then advise the appropriate Program Coordinator to identify the teacher candidate's compliance with the Informal Review Summary.
- **Outcome**:
    - If resolved, no further action is taken.
    - If unresolved or repeated, may lead to a formal review.

2. Formal Review: Level 1

- **Purpose**: To document actions that the teacher candidate must address or improve when a concern has not been corrected after the Informal Review meeting, or in response to egregious actions warranting a Formal Level 1 Review
- **Initiation**: Initiated by faculty in the program, university supervisor, or Program Coordinator.
- **Participants**: Teacher Candidate, Program Coordinator, relevant faculty or university supervisor, and the cooperating teacher if necessary.
- **Process**:
    - The initiator completes the Formal Review Level 1 form and submits it to the teacher candidate's Program Coordinator. Copies are sent to the Department Chair, Director of Licensure and the Associate Dean.
    - Within ten (10) business days, a Formal Review Level 1 meeting will be scheduled by the Program Coordinator with the involved parties and initiator, including the teacher candidate.
    - Written documentation of the concern is shared with the teacher candidate.
    - A ***Corrective Action Plan (CAP)*** is developed collaboratively, including the nature, content, and time frame for the plan, which depends on the situation. The Corrective Action Plan is signed by all parties.
    - Progress is reviewed at designated intervals.
- **Outcomes**:
    - Satisfactory progress: Teacher candidate continues in program.
    - Unsatisfactory progress: advance to Level 2.

3. Formal Review: Level 2

- **Purpose**: To document actions that the teacher candidate must address or improve and document adverse actions that result.
- **Initiation**: Initiated when CAP goals are unmet or serious issues emerge.
- **Participants**: Teacher Candidate, Program Coordinator, Director of Licensure, the Associate Dean, and additional relevant personnel (i.e., 4 Program Coordinators as required by the Decision-Making Process outlined below).
- **Process**:
    - The initiator submits a referral letter to the teacher candidate's Department Chair and Program Coordinator detailing the concern or challenge. The Department Chair and Program Coordinator notify the teacher candidate of the reason for the referral for initiating the Formal Review Level 2 process.
    - Teacher candidates may submit a written response within ten (10) business days of receipt of the notification.

- The Department Chair and Program Coordinator engage in a fact-finding investigation based upon the referral letter and the teacher candidate's response to the referral letter. A letter and a synopsis and, as relevant, any copies of the information gathered during the investigation will be sent ot the teacher candidate.
- The Program Coordinator convenes a ***Level 2 Review Hearing*** of additional Program Coordinators to which the teacher candidate is invited to and permitted to bring witnesses.
    - The teacher candidate may also provide any additional information that they would like the Program Coordinator committee to know.
    - This information may be provided in writing prior to the meeting or orally at the meeting.
    - All other written documentation that the student would like to submit must be provided three (3) days prior to the Level 2 review hearing.
- The Level 2 Review Hearing Committee will determine the resulting adverse action.
    - Adverse actions could include probation, repetition of an entire program phase, or dismissal from the licensure program or the COEHS. The decision must be based on
        - 1) whether or not the reported behavior (or absence of action) or failure to meet a program standard occurred; and, if so
        - 2) whether the behavior (or absence thereof) or failure to meet program standards has violated any of the COEHS Teacher Candidate Continuation Policy. Determination is made regarding continuation, conditional continuation, or dismissal.
    - The teacher candidate can decide to withdraw from the Program and forego any additional adverse actions.
- Determination decisions are conveyed to the teacher candidate within 15 business days of the meeting. Any adverse actions imposed by the Level 2 Review Hearing Committee is considered an academic decision of the COEHS and can be appealed.
- The Level 2 Review Chair (the teacher candidate's Program Coordinator) will complete the ***Teacher Candidate Continuation Review*** form and will submit copies to the teacher candidate's Department Chair, the Director of Licensure, and the Associate Dean.

Section III: Decision-Making Processes

Decision Making and Hearings

For the purposes of decision-making and hearings (i.e., Level 2 Review Hearing), a quorum of four (4) Program Coordinators will be needed and the group will make decisions based on a majority vote. The Level 2 Review Hearing Chair is the teacher candidate's Program Coordinator.

For a teacher candidate who is a graduate student the Program Coordinator will inform the teacher candidate's Faculty Advisory of any Teacher Continuation planning, including Emergency Actions or Temporary Removals.

Adverse Actions

Decisions about adverse actions are made within the following context and expectations:

Probation

When a teacher candidate is placed on probation, the Level 2 Review Committee will develop a written plan of action in collaboration with the teacher candidate. This plan will include clearly defined expectations, support strategies, and the specific duration of the probationary period, and conditions to be met before being considered for re-entry into the program.

Repetition of a Program Phase

A teacher candidate may be required to repeat an entire phase of their program (e.g., field experience) if additional time and experience are necessary to meet or sustain academic, professional, or dispositional expectations. This decision is made following a review by the Level 2 Review Committee) and is intended to support the teacher candidate's continued development.

Release from the Licensure Program and/or College of Education and Human Sciences

If a teacher candidate is unable to meet the academic, professional, or dispositional standards outlined in the Educator Preparation Policies and Procedures Unit Handbook, the teacher candidate may be released from their licensure program and/or the College of Education and Human Sciences. This decision is made with careful consideration and after all appropriate supports and review processes have been followed.

Withdrawal from Program:

A teacher candidate may elect to withdraw from their licensure program at any time. The teacher candidate's withdrawal will be confirmed in writing by the licensure program. No further action is necessary.

Emergency Action & Temporary Removal

In cases involving immediate risk to student safety and/ or well-being, or serious violation of policy:

- The Director of Licensure, Associate Dean, or Program Coordinator may enact an emergency suspension or temporary removal from field placement or coursework.
- The teacher candidate will be notified in writing and a Formal Level 2 Review will be initiated promptly.

The purpose of an **emergency suspension** is to provide an immediate response to an emergency situation by removing the teacher candidate from the situation/environment. An emergency suspension is enacted when there are egregious violations of the UNM Student Code of Conduct, the NMAC 6.60.9 Code of Ethical Responsibility for Educators, or the teacher candidate's host school or district's code of conduct.

The Director of Licensure and/or the Associate Dean, in consultation with the Program Coordinator and Department Chair, may impose an emergency suspension if there is reasonable belief that the teacher candidate's conduct poses a risk of harm to themselves or others, or significantly disrupts the learning environment.

Emergency suspension is typically reserved for acute incidents or repeated, serious misconduct that raises immediate concerns about the teacher candidate's ability to function safely and professionally in educational settings.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence is optional and may be used when the teacher candidate, the Program Coordinator, and the COEHS agree that the teacher candidate agree that a period of time away from the UNM classroom or school site would be beneficial to attend to personal circumstances.

A teacher candidate may request a leave of absence by submitting a written request to the Program Coordinators and the Associate Dean. This option allows the teacher candidate to temporarily step away from educational activities for personal or professional reasons.

If the leave of absence is approved, the teacher candidate will receive written notification from the Program Coordinator outlining the terms of the leave and the process for returning to the program. The Program Coordinator will also inform the teacher candidate's Department Chair in writing of both the request and the final decision.

Section IV: Appeals

Identified corrective actions at **Level I** cannot be appealed by the teacher candidate, but may be reviewed by the Director of Licensure and/or the Associate Dean at the teacher candidate's request.

Teacher Candidates may appeal **Level 2** decisions following university grievance procedures:

- Undergraduate students: Follow [UNM Undergraduate Grievance Policy]. https://pathfinder.unm.edu/student-grievance-procedure.html
- Graduate students: Follow [UNM Graduate Student Grievance Policy]. https://pathfinder.unm.edu/campus-policies/graduate-student-grievance-procedure.html

Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 business days of the decision and include supporting evidence.

If a teacher candidate placed on **emergency suspension,** they may request a meeting with the Director of Licensure or Associate Dean. This meeting must occur as soon as possible and no later than five (5) working days from the request. During the meeting, the teacher candidate will have an opportunity to present their perspective and submit any supporting evidence.

After the meeting, the Director of Licensure or Associate Dean will determine whether to:

- Lift the suspension,
- Modify the conditions of the suspension, or
- Continue the suspension.

If the suspension is continued due to ongoing safety or conduct concerns, the matter will be referred to the Program Coordinators for a Level 2 Formal Review. The Level 2 Review Hearing Committee will convene as soon as possible to determine next steps.

The teacher candidate will receive written notification of the Associate Dean's decision within five (5) working days following the meeting. The decision may be appealed according to university policy, as outlined in the UNM Pathfinder.

Appendices

- Teacher Candidate Dispositions
- Code of Ethical Responsibility of the Education Profession
- Sample Decision Making Matrix
- Sample Corrective Action Plan Template
- Documentation Checklist for Informal and Formal Reviews
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Key Resources:
    - UNM Student Code of Conduct
    - COEHS Licensure Information Page

Sample Decision-Making Matrix

Concern Category	Example Scenario(s)	Initial Action	Possible Review Level
Academic Performance	• Missed or incomplete assignments • GPA below program requirement	Faculty/advisor outreach	Informal Review
	• -Repeated failure to meet assignment expectations or field goals	Document concern, set goals	Formal ReviewLevel 1
	• -Failure to complete CAP goals or repeated course failure	Formal Review Level 1	Formal ReviewLevel 2
Dispositional Concerns	• -Unprofessional communication (e.g., email tone, dismissiveness)	Private conversation with support	Informal Review
	• -Poor attendance, lack of preparation for teaching or meetings	Document and create improvement plan	Formal ReviewLevel 1
	• -Refusal to accept feedback; pattern of unprofessional behavior	Escalate concern to EPPC	Formal Revie Level 2
Field Experience Concerns	• -Difficulty building rapport with students, families, and or cooperating teacher	Supervisor feedback + reflection	Informal Review
	• Undermining cooperating teacher; classroom mismanagement	Written concern from site mentor	Formal Review Level 1 or 2
	• Placement refusal by multiple schools and/or repeated removal from placements	Program Coordinator discussion + Formal Review Level 1	Formal ReviewLevel 2
Ethical or Safety Concerns	• Disregard of student privacy (e.g., posting on social media)	Immediate documentation & consult	Formal Review Level 2
	• Suspected substance use during placement; harm to self or others	Emergency removal, Title IX or DOS	Emergency Suspension + Level 2 Review
	• Alleged violation of Educator Code of Ethics (NMAC 6.60.9)	Emergency Suspension	Emergency Suspension
Personal Circumstances	• Extended illness, family emergency	Supportive planning meeting	Leave of Absence (optional)
	• Teacher Candidate requests time away for mental health or caregiving	Written request, reviewed by Director of licensure and/or Associate Dean	Leave of Absence (optional)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Understanding the Teacher Candidate Continuation Policy

1. What is the Continuation Policy, and why does it matter?

The Continuation Policy outlines how concerns about academic progress, professionalism, and/or field performance are addressed. It's designed to support your success and ensure you are fully prepared for licensure and teaching.

2. What happens if someone has a concern about me?

Concerns may be shared by faculty, supervisors, cooperating teachers, or others. In most cases, concerns are addressed through an **Informal Review**, where you'll meet with a faculty member to discuss the situation and set goals for improvement.

3. Will I automatically be removed from my program if a concern is raised?

No. The goal is to support your growth. Most concerns are resolved informally. A formal review or program change only happens when concerns are repeated, serious, or not resolved through support.

4. What is a Corrective Action Plan (CAP)?

A CAP is a written plan created with you to help address specific concerns, which includes clear goals, timelines, and supports. Your progress will be reviewed to determine next steps.

5. Can I request time away from the program?

Yes. You can request a **Leave of Absence** if you need to step away for personal, medical, or other reasons. This should be done in writing and discussed with your Program Coordinator and the Associate Dean.

6. What if I feel the decision about me is unfair?

You have the right to appeal decisions made during a formal review or emergency suspension. Appeals follow university policies described in the **UNM Pathfinder** or **Graduate Student Handbook**.

7. Who can I talk to for support during a review?

You are encouraged to reach out to your:

- Program Coordinator or faculty advisor
- Field Services staff
- UNM Center for Teaching and Learning (academic help)
- SHAC (for counseling and/or health services)

8. Will this affect my ability to become licensed?

Only if a serious concern goes unaddressed or if you are unable to meet program requirements after support has been provided. The policy is designed to help you stay on track, not to remove you without cause

APPENDIX F

Informal Review Summary

This form documents an Informal Review of a teacher candidate. The purpose of the Informal Review Summary is to collaboratively address concerns early and/or to document progress. Outcomes may include agreed-upon action steps, documentation of progress, and identification of next steps.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Review initiated by an appropriate party (faculty, supervisor, school personnel, Center for Student Success, Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or teacher candidate).
- ☐ Meeting held with the teacher candidate to discuss concerns or progress.
- ☐ Discussion documented, including efforts to support the candidate and to prevent or resolve concerns.
- ☐ Informal Review Summary form completed, including meeting date(s), discussion summary, action steps, and timeline.
- ☐ Summary shared with the Program Coordinator (and, if needed, Department Chair, Director of Licensure, or Associate Dean).
- ☐ Program Coordinator monitors compliance with action steps.
- ☐ Outcome documented: Resolved (no further action) OR Unresolved/Repeated (advance to Level I).

CANDIDATE & INITIATOR INFORMATION

Teacher Candidate:	**UNM ID:**	**Program Concentration:**
Initiator (Name):	**Initiator's Role/Title:**	

Summary of Reason for Informal Review Initiation:

Efforts to Support Candidate / Prevent or Resolve Concerns / Progress Monitoring Efforts:

SUMMARY

Summary of Related Conversations/Meetings (with dates):

Relevant Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline

PARTICIPANTS

Role	Name	Email	Date
Teacher Candidate			
Initiator			
Program Coordinator			
Other			
Other			

SIGNATURES

I (we) have discussed the concern(s) and possible solutions with the teacher candidate. Signing this document does not necessarily indicate agreement.

Teacher Candidate Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Initiator Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Program Coordinator Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

Note: This form becomes part of the teacher candidate's file. Copies must be provided to the Program Coordinator and, if applicable, the Department Chair, Director of Licensure, and/or Associate Dean.

PROGRESS REVIEW (IF APPLICABLE)

To be completed according to the action steps above, if necessary.

Progress Review Date:	

☐ Resolved (no further action)
☐ Unresolved (consider Level I Formal Review)

APPENDIX G

Level 1 Formal Review

This form is used to document a Level 1 Formal Review (initial corrective action) of a teacher or principal candidate. It provides a unified process for documenting concerns and developing a corrective action plan.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Initiator completes the "Initiation" section of the Level 1 Formal Review Form and submits it to the Program Coordinator. Copies are distributed to the Department Chair, Director of Licensure, and Associate Dean.
- ☐ Program Coordinator schedules the Level 1 meeting within ten (10) business days.
- ☐ Written documentation of the concern is shared with the candidate before the meeting.
- ☐ Meeting participants include the Teacher Candidate, Program Coordinator, relevant faculty/supervisor, and cooperating teacher (if needed).
- ☐ Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is developed and signed, specifying concerns, action steps, and timeline.
- ☐ Progress is reviewed at the designated time.
- ☐ Outcome is documented: Satisfactory progress (candidate continues) OR Unsatisfactory progress (advance to Level 2).

INITIATOR & CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name:	**Title:**	**Role:**

Name:	**Candidate Type:**	**UNM ID:**
Program/Concentration:		

Academic	**Behavioral**	**Other**

Additional Documentation Provided:

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN (CAP)

Developed collaboratively during the Level 1 Formal Review meeting. Outlines the actions required of the candidate, expected outcomes, and completion timeline.

Area of Concern	Required Action(s)	Timeline/Deadline	Evidence of Completion

MEETING NOTIFICATION

Date of scheduled Level 1 Formal Review meeting:

Prior to meeting:

☐ Teacher candidate is notified of concerns.

☐ Meeting is scheduled within ten (10) days of the initiation.

MEETING SUMMARY

Only complete this section if a Level 1 Formal Review was initiated.

Meeting Date:	Concerns Discussed at Meeting?	Candidate Present at Meeting?

PARTICIPANTS

Name	Title	Email	Date
Teacher Candidate			
Initiator			
Program Coordinator			

SIGNATURES

Teacher Candidate Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Initiator Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Program Coordinator Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Other Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Other Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

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APPENDIX H

Level II Formal Review

This form is used to document a Level 2 Formal Review (serious issues, unmet CAP goals, or adverse actions). This combined form provides a unified process for documenting concerns and recording outcomes of a Review Hearing.

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Initiator completes "Initiation" section of the Level 1 Formal Review Form and submits to Program Coordinator.
- ☐ Teacher Candidate removed from field experience.
- ☐ Program Coordinator contacts Review Hearing Committee and schedules Review Hearing immediately. Hearing must be held within five (5) days of written notification.
- ☐ Within three (3) days of written notification, teacher candidate is notified of reason for initiating Level 2 Formal Review and date of scheduled Review Hearing.
- ☐ Candidate allowed to submit written response prior to Review Hearing.
- ☐ Fact-finding investigation conducted by Department Chair & Program Coordinator (collect evidence, candidate response, documentation).
- ☐ Program Coordinator convenes Level 2 Review Hearing with committee of Program Coordinators.
- ☐ Candidate invited.
- ☐ Committee determines: Did behavior/inaction occur? Did it violate standards/policies?
- ☐ Level 2 Formal Review Form complete, including "Hearing Summary" section and "Adverse Actions" section.
- ☐ Teacher candidate provided with written materials/copies within five (5) days of completion of the Review Hearing.

INITIATOR & CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name:	**Title:**	**Role:**

Name:	**Candidate Type:**	**UNM ID:**
Program/Concentration:		

Academic	Behavioral	Other

Additional Documentation Provided:

MEETING NOTIFICATION

Date of Teacher Candidate Removal from Field Experience:	Date of Scheduled Review Hearing:

Prior to meeting:

☐ Review Hearing Committee is convened.

☐ Teacher candidate is notified of permissions (to submit a written response, to provide written additional information prior to Review Hearing, to plan to provide additional information at Review Hearing, plan to bring relevant witnesses).

☐ Meeting is scheduled within five (5) days of the initiation.

INVESTIGATION

Summary of materials obtained during fact-finding investigation:

Summary of additional information from investigation provided to Review Hearing Committee:

HEARING SUMMARY

Review Hearing Requirements:

☐ Summary of Investigation is provided to teacher candidate and relevant participants.

☐ Teacher candidate is permitted to respond orally to the summary of the investigation and provide additional information.

☐ Review Hearing Committee considers Adverse Actions in the absence of the teacher candidate. Decisions are based on 1) whether or not the reported behavior (or absence of action) or failure to meet a program standard occurred and, if so, 2) whether the behavior (or absence thereof) or failure to meet the program standards has violated any of the COEHS Teacher Candidate Continuation Policy.

☐ Upon return, teacher candidate is provided a verbal summary of the decisions made by the Review Hearing Committee.

Additional Hearing Summary Notes (if applicable):

PARTICIPANTS

Role	Name	Email	Date
Teacher Candidate			
Initiator			
Program Coordinator			
Director of Licensure			
Cooperating Teacher			

SIGNATURES

Teacher Candidate Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Initiator Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Program Coordinator Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Director of Licensure Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*
Cooperating Teacher Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

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