FITNESS TO TEACH POLICY

UCCSTeach teacher preparation program (UCCSTeach program) offers a curriculum designed to academically prepare individuals for the teaching profession. However, satisfying the curriculum and testing requirements alone does not make a candidate worthy for The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) to recommend the candidate to the State of Colorado for teaching certification. All teacher candidates in the UCCSTeach program are expected to demonstrate their preparedness to teach children and youth. This preparation results from the combination of successful completion of university coursework and the demonstration of important human characteristics of dispositions all teachers should possess.

A. Required Documentation cited

Prior to formal admission to the UCCSTeach program, all teacher candidates will be apprised of the Fitness to Teach (FTT) policy. This policy applies to all students enrolled in the UCCSTeach program and remains so until the completion of their program.

1. In October and March, a reminder will be sent to faculty from the Directors of UCCSTeach to use the Fitness to Teach forms for Identification of Outstanding Students, Informal Review Summary, Formal Review: Level 1 or 2, and/or the Remediation Plan. Faculty may submit the referral forms at any time prior to or during professional level courses.

2. The completion of these forms will allow UCCSTeach to: (1) identify teacher candidates who display outstanding knowledge and/or skills who deserve recognition, and (2) identify those teacher candidates who have some difficulties, which raise concerns about the candidate’s ability to complete the program successfully. All forms completed will be sent to the Directors of UCCSTeach.

3. Students must be in good standing with UCCS.

   a. Students seeking admission to the undergraduate UCCSTeach program who have ever been referred to UCCS’s Dean of Student’s Office may have their referrals and outcomes considered by the Director of UCCSTeach to determine whether to grant admission to the program. Admission to the UCCSTeach program is at the discretion of the Directors of UCCSTeach.
b. Students who have cases pending with the Dean of Student’s Office will not be considered for admissions to the UCCSTeach program until the case has been fully adjudicated.

B. Fitness to Teach Criteria

In addition to curriculum and testing requirements stated in the UCCS catalog and other UCCS policies, all UCCSTeach teacher candidates will be held accountable to the criteria specified in this policy, including dispositions for teaching. Dispositions for teaching are defined as those professional attitudes, values, and beliefs expected of an education professional.

If all criteria are not met satisfactorily, teacher candidates may be denied full acceptance into the UCCSTeach program and/or denied the opportunity to student teach. Without unconditional acceptance into the UCCSTeach program and successful completion of all coursework, field experience, and student teaching or its equivalent, UCCSTeach does not recommend teacher candidates for Colorado Teacher Certification. As a professional program, UCCSTeach reserves the right to recommend or not recommend teacher candidates for certification.

All teacher candidates referred for review are expected to participate in the Fitness to Teach process. Refusal to participate will not terminate or invalidate the Fitness to Teach process. Fitness to Teach reviews are internal institutional reviews and are not open to the public, including family members, friends, and other professionals unless specifically requested by the Director of UCCSTeach.

1. Completed Criminal History Review

In accordance with Colorado Educator Licensing Act §22-6.5-103, an examination of each teacher candidate’s criminal history will be conducted by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation(CBI) and submitted to Director of Teacher Education at UCCS prior to participation in field-based course work, including field experience and student teaching. Criminal history record information including both conviction and arrest records is obtained. UCCS may deny a student’s placement based upon the results of that student’s criminal history background examination. If a student cannot complete course-required field work because of his/her criminal history, the student will be required to withdraw from the course. The student may retake the course if and when his/her criminal history changes allowing him/her to be cleared by the CBI. If the offense is such that it
will preclude any further fieldwork, the student will be released from the UCCSTeach program.

2. Academic Requirements

a. Teacher candidates attend all classes as required. Preparedness for class and punctuality are expected at all times.

b. Teacher candidates complete course assignments in a professional manner according to the timelines designated by the course instructor.

c. Teacher candidates complete all field experiences in a professional and timely manner as required.

d. Teacher candidates must maintain a 2.75 GPA in all teacher education classes.

e. Scholastic Integrity:
The teacher candidate demonstrates honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; doing one’s own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.

f. Communication Skills:
The teacher candidate displays written and oral skills expected of an education professional demonstrating the ability to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.

1) Written:
The teacher candidate writes clearly using correct grammar and spelling; demonstrates professional level skills in written English; understands written content presented in the program; and adequately completes all written assignments as specified by faculty.
2) *Oral:*
The teacher candidate communicates effectively with other students, faculty, staff and professionals; expresses ideas and feelings clearly; demonstrates willingness and ability to listen to others; demonstrates professional level skills in spoken English; understands oral content presented in the program; adequately completes all oral assignments; and meets the objectives of field placement experiences as specified by faculty.

3) *Electronic Communication:*
The teacher candidate refrains from inappropriate communication with a faculty member and/or a student including electronic communications by cell phone, text message, instant message, Facebook, Twitter, or any other social network communications.

3. **Personal and Professional Requirements**

   a. A teacher candidate does not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves a professional purpose or is required by law.

   b. Teacher candidates demonstrate interpersonal skills required for successful professional teaching. These skills include:

      1) a commitment to accept and try new ways of teaching;

      2) the ability to accept and act upon constructive criticism;

      3) the ability to understand the perspective of others concerning teaching;

      4) the ability to separate personal and professional issues when in the classroom or completing professional course work;

      5) the ability to work collegially with parents, teachers, staff, and administrators in school settings and elsewhere;

      6) the ability to work collegially and productively with classmates in course assigned group projects; and

      7) the disposition to always act for the benefit of all students.
c. The teacher candidate does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with their students, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal or sexual ways.

d. Teacher candidates demonstrate positive personal hygiene habits.

e. Teacher candidates dress appropriately in their professional contexts such as class or in a school building.

4. Cultural and Social Attitudes and Behavior

a. Teacher candidates demonstrate respect for superiors, peers, and children and youth in all settings.

b. Teacher candidates understand and appreciate the value of diversity and look beyond self in interactions with others; respect differences of race, ethnicity, religion, social class, and cultural heritage.

c. Teacher candidates exhibit acceptance of and provide accommodations for exceptional learners.

d. Teacher candidates are able to work productively with their peers.

e. Teacher candidates are able to speak in a manner appropriate to the context of the classroom.

f. Teacher candidates must display positive attitudes toward faculty, colleagues, and students and their parents.

g. Teacher candidates demonstrate positive social skills in professional and social interactions with faculty, colleagues, parents, and students.
5. Physical Skills

The teacher candidate exhibits motor and sensory abilities sufficient to attend and participate in class and practicum placements, with or without accommodations as recommended by the Office of Disabilities Services.

Note:
No otherwise qualified teacher candidate shall, on the basis of disability, be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in the UCCSTeach program. A teacher candidate with a disability may be protected by Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, thereby being eligible for a reasonable accommodation that provides an equal opportunity to meet the academic criteria related to professional behavior and scholastic performance.

Any otherwise qualified teacher candidate with a qualified disability who requests an accommodation must notify the Office of Disability Services and provide documentation as needed. The Office of Disability Services makes recommendations for accommodations. A UCCSTeach ad hoc committee will review academic performance criteria in light of individual circumstances to explore issues of appropriate accommodations. An initial assessment, subsequent plans, use of outside experts (including the Office of Disabilities Services), and periodic checks between the committee and the teacher candidate are appropriate courses of action in making accommodations.

6. Emotional Dispositions

a. Stress Management:
The teacher candidate demonstrates the ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. He or she handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.

b. Emotional and Mental Capabilities
1) The teacher candidate uses sound mature judgment.
2) The teacher candidate demonstrates the emotional and mental health required to function effectively as a teacher.
c. Cognitive Dispositions
   1) Teacher candidates think analytically about educational issues.
   2) Teacher candidates are thoughtfully reflective about their practice.
   3) Teacher candidates are flexible, open to new ideas, and willing and able to modify their beliefs and practices.
   4) Teacher candidates question and test their assumptions regarding teaching and schooling.

C. Admission to the UCCSTeach Teacher Certification Program

1. Provisional Admission:

   All teacher candidates in UCCSTeach are provisionally admitted to the UCCSTeach Teacher Certification Program upon submission of application, written goal statement, and satisfactory completion of all admission criteria during the semester in which Knowing & Learning is taken.

2. Official Admission:

   Official Admission in the UCCSTeach Teacher Certification Program is granted after interview is complete, file is scored and reviewed by UCCSTeach Director; and, teacher candidate reviews and signs the formal acceptance letter.

   After official admission teacher candidates must maintain the criteria listed below.

   a. Have no negative Fitness to Teach reviews;

   b. The teacher candidate successfully completes Step 1, Step 2, Knowing and Learning, and continue to take UCCSTeach courses as outlined in their advising document;

   c. The teacher candidate has earned the required grades and GPA in content coursework; and

   d. The teacher candidate has earned the required grades and GPA in any and all teacher preparation courses.
3. **Probationary Acceptance:**

The teacher candidates are placed on probationary status in the case of a Level 1 or 2 Formal Review. (See below.) Teacher candidates remain on probationary status until such time as they have successfully completed a remediation plan or a decision to revoke candidacy has been made. If a student successfully completes a remediation plan and additional *Fitness to Teach* referrals arise, the student’s full program history will be reviewed to determine the student’s status in the UCCSTeach program.

**D. Conditions for Completion of Apprentice Teaching**

Successful completion of Apprentice Teaching is a prerequisite for meeting teacher certification requirements. *Students may attempt to successfully complete Apprentice Teaching a maximum of two times at UCCS. If the student does not successfully complete the second Apprentice teaching experience, they will not be eligible to enroll in Apprentice Teaching a third time.* The student may appeal to the *Fitness to Teach Council* to be reinstated only in the case of documented extenuating circumstances.

**E. Review of Teacher Candidates at UCCS**

All teacher candidates referred for review are expected to participate in the process. Refusal to participate will not terminate the process. The level of review will depend on factors such as the nature, severity, frequency of the incident or concern. For example, repeated violations may result in immediate Formal Review: Level 2. Violations of the UCCS student code of conduct and/or host school district’s or school field-based entity’s faculty code of conduct will result in immediate Formal Review: Level 2.

1. **Informal Review:**

An informal review involves a faculty member and a teacher candidate. When a faculty member has concerns about a teacher candidate meeting any of the *Fitness to Teach* criteria, the faculty member will:

a. discuss the concerns directly with the teacher candidate and seek to work with the candidate to resolve the difficulties;
b. advise the Directors of UCCSTeach of the concern(s) in order to identify potential patterns and issues related to the teacher candidate;
c. document dates and content of meetings with the teacher candidate; and
d. send copies of all documentation to UCCSTeach to be placed in the teacher candidate’s file.

If a problem arises in the field, the clinical/mentor teacher of the host school district may discuss concerns directly with the appropriate UCCSTeach personnel.

- Field Experience: Field Course Master Teacher
- Apprentice Teaching: UCCSTeach supervising teacher

The teacher candidate may also be included in this meeting.

2. **Formal Review: Level 1**

When a faculty member is sufficiently concerned about a teacher candidate’s fitness to teach, s/he will complete the *Fitness to Teach Formal Review: Level 1* form. The completed form(s) is given to the Directors of UCCSTeach or his/her designee. At the conference with the teacher candidate, a remediation plan will be developed. The nature and content of the remediation plan will be specific to the situation with remedial criteria stated in measurable, objective terms including a timeline for accomplishment of the stated criteria. The remedial plan will be signed by all parties involved. If the teacher candidate fails to successfully complete the remediation plan within the stated timeline, s/he will be placed on Formal Review: Level 2. If the teacher candidate successfully accomplishes the remediation plan, s/he will be removed from probationary status. The remediation plan may continue for more than one semester depending on individual circumstances.
3. **Formal Review: Level 2**

If a second incident or concern arises for a teacher candidate, if a teacher candidate fails a Level 1 remediation plan, or the seriousness of the incident warrant, the *Fitness to Teach Council* will be convened. The FTT Council (made of faculty and chaired by the Directors of UCCSTeach or his/her designee) will meet to:

a. review the paperwork,

b. interview the faculty member(s) who have instructed the teacher candidate to date,

c. interview the teacher candidate, and

d. make a determination regarding the teacher candidate’s suitability to continue in the UCCSTeach program.

The teacher candidate is afforded due process throughout these proceedings. Following a Level 2 review, the teacher candidate may submit a letter of appeal to the UCCS Director of Teacher Education. Director of Teacher Education’s decision is final.
Fitness to Teach
Identification of Outstanding Student

Teacher candidate: ____________________________________________ UCCS ID: __________

I have observed or evaluated this teacher candidate in the following context(s):

☐ Advising  ☐ Class  ☐ Field Experience  ☐ Student Teaching

☐ Other:________________________________________________________

Directions: Please summarize why the teacher candidate is recognized as an Outstanding Student. Attach additional sheets as needed.

Submitted by: _______________________________ Position: __________________

Please Print

Course title: _______________________________ Date: __________________

Please return to the UCCSTeach Program Office, OCSE A331
Developing Colorado’s Next Generation of Math & Science Teachers.

Fitness to Teach
Informal Review: Summary

Teacher candidate: ___________________________ UCCS ID: ___________________________

The concern is: (Check all that apply)

☐ Academic Requirements ☐ Personal & Professional Requirements ☐ Physical Skills

☐ Cultural & Social Attitudes and Behavior ☐ Emotional Dispositions

Directions: Please attach additional sheets as needed.

1. State your concern(s) for the teacher candidate.
2. Summarize your discussion with the teacher candidate regarding the concern(s) and its solution(s).

We have discussed the concern(s) and possible solution(s).

Printed names: ____________________________________________
Faculty Teacher Candidate

Signatures: ____________________________________________
Faculty Teacher Candidate

Course title: ____________________________________________ Date: ______________

Please return to the UCCSTeach Program Office, OCSE A331
Fitness to Teach
Formal Review: Level 1

Teacher candidate: ______________________________ UCCS ID: ________________

The concern is: (Check all that apply)

☐ Academic Requirements  ☐ Personal & Professional Requirements  ☐ Physical Skills

☐ Cultural & Social Attitudes and Behavior  ☐ Emotional Dispositions

Directions: Please attach additional sheets as needed.
1. State your concern(s) for the teacher candidate.
2. Summarize your discussion with the teacher candidate regarding the concern(s) and its Remediation Plan.

Student signature indicates notification regarding concern(s) and is not an indication of agreement.

Signature: ____________________________________________________________ Date

Student

Signature: ____________________________________________________________ Date

Faculty

Course title: __________________________________________________________

Please return to the UCCSTeach Program Office, OCSE A331
Fitness to Teach
Formal Review: Level 2

Teacher candidate: ___________________________ UCCS ID: ______________

The concern is: (Check all that apply)

☐ Academic Requirements ☐ Personal & Professional Requirements ☐ Physical Skills
☐ Cultural & Social Attitudes and Behavior ☐ Emotional Dispositions

Directions: Please attach additional sheets as needed.
1. State your concern(s) for the teacher candidate.

2. Please briefly describe the behavior, situation or class requirement and the setting(s) in which it was recognized that motivated you to complete this form. Attach additional sheets as needed.
Following the review of the data presented from the previous FTT meetings, the interview with the teacher candidate, and the interview with concerned faculty, the FTT Council make the following recommendation:

☐ Student may proceed in the UCCSTeach program without a Remediation Plan.

☐ Student may proceed in the UCCSTeach program with the attached Remediation Plan.

☐ Student may not proceed in the UCCSTeach program and is released from the UCCSTeach program effectively immediately.

The student’s signature indicates notification regarding the FTT Council’s decision and is not an indication of agreement.

Student: ________________________________________________

Signature  Date

Council Signatures:

____________________________________________  ______________________________________________

Please Print  Signature

____________________________________________

Please Print  Signature

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Please Print  Signature

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Please Print  Signature

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Please Print  Signature

Please return to the UCCSTeach Program Office, OCSE A331
Fitness to Teach
Formal Review: Level 2
Remediation Plan

Teacher candidate: ________________________________ UCCS ID: ________________

The concern is: (Check all that apply)

☐ Academic Requirements  ☐ Personal & Professional Requirements  ☐ Physical Skills

☐ Cultural & Social Attitudes and Behavior  ☐ Emotional Dispositions

Directions: Indicate the Remediation Plan below including timelines and benchmarks as required. Please attach additional sheets as needed.

Student signature indicates agreement with the Remediation Plan and consent to follow the Plan.

Signature: ____________________________________________

Student ____________________________________________________________________________

Date

Signature: ____________________________________________

Faculty or Council Chair ____________________________________________________________________

Date

Please return to the UCCSTeach Program Office, OCSE A331
Fitness to Teach

Statement of Affirmation

As a teacher candidate in the UCCSTeach program, I affirm I will comply with the Fitness to Teach Policy.

As a teacher candidate in the UCCSTeach program, I will maintain the dignity of my profession as an educator. I will demonstrate personal integrity and exemplify honesty.

I affirm I will read and thoroughly understand the Fitness to Teach Policy and will abide by all aspects of this policy.

Teacher Candidate’s Signature

Date