Department of Education, UNC Asheville
Memorandum of Understanding Re: Admission to and Continuance in Teacher Education

Candidate Name: _______________________________  ID #: _______________________________
Licensure Area(s): _______________________________  Advisor: _______________________________

The Department of Education faculty is glad that you are interested in pursuing licensure and we look forward to working with you over the next several semesters. The purpose of this memo is to inform you about national accreditation standards, state requirements, and school system policies pertaining to professionalism, professional dispositions, and criminal background checks that may affect your progress towards teacher licensure. It is our duty to ensure that we prepare candidates who are professionally responsible, morally fit, and ethical when working in a classroom setting with young people.

The teacher education program at UNC Asheville is subject to the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP; http://caepnet.org/) standards for professional dispositions; the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC: http://cte.jhu.edu/pds/resources/intasc_principles.htm) standards; the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators (http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/profdev/standards). These standards must be adhered to by all candidates in the Teacher Education program, and are periodically assessed by course instructors, education advisors and Local Education Agency representatives (classroom teachers, administrators) using the Candidate Professional Dispositions Checklist and the Field Experience Evaluation Form. These are filed in each candidate’s advising folder and reviewed by the candidate’s advisor and the Candidate Assessment Committee (CAC).

Any candidate for a license determined to be deficient on any standard or found to be deficient in any area of professionalism or professional dispositions may be required to complete a Plan of Action. A Plan of Action identifies the behavior or activity found to be deficient, outlines a corrective or remedial action, determines a timetable for the Plan, and is signed by the candidate. A continued deficiency, a pattern of deficiencies over time, or behaviors and professional dispositions found to violate professional dispositions standards and/or the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators may result in the removal of the candidate from the licensure program by the CAC. This may be appealed to the Dean of Social Sciences, and finally the Provost if desired, as outlined in the UNC Asheville catalog and Student Handbook.

The State of North Carolina and its school systems are now scrutinizing the backgrounds of teacher education candidates in relationship to drug, alcohol, and other illegal activity that may show up on a background check. It is the responsibility of the candidate to notify an appropriate member of the Department of Education of any prior convictions and to update that information immediately should any future incidents occur. Additionally, a criminal background check is conducted in the first course required for licensure containing a field experience that the candidate takes and prior to admission to the professional year (capstone methods course and clinical practice). Results of these background checks, as well as any issues related to professional dispositions, may be shared with school systems in which candidates are being placed for field, clinical, and/or clinical practice experiences and/or members of the Department of Education as appropriate. Some individuals are not permitted to enter teacher education programs because of serious crimes. Others are admissible to the teacher education program, but may encounter the following barriers:

1. Field and Clinical Practice Placements: Our partner school systems may vary in their decisions about accepting candidates with court records and/or professional dispositions issues. The UNC Asheville Department of Education will make no more than three attempts to place candidates with background check and/or professional dispositions issues in school systems. If, after three attempts, placement is not possible, the candidate will be removed from the program.
2. Teaching License: The Ethics Committee of the State Board of Education reviews all teacher education applications when the candidate has any criminal background history and makes a decision about granting licensure.
3. Employment: If the Ethics Committee clears a teacher education program graduate for licensure, it is still possible that some school systems will not hire a person because of their local policies about criminal background/history.

Please make an appointment with your advisor if you desire more information or guidance about these policies.

My signature indicates I have been informed about the possible barriers to field, clinical, and student teaching placements; licensure; and employment due to any past, present, or future criminal activity and/or professional dispositions issues. My signature also provides permission for background check and professional dispositions information to be shared with school systems in which I may be placed for field, clinical, and/or student teaching experiences.

Candidate Signature: _______________________________  Date: _______________________________