



## **Education Support Professionals (ESPs): Professional Growth Continuum (PGC)**

### **Ethics: Knowledge of Ethical Behavior** *Proficient Level*

#### **Competency**

The ESP effectively demonstrates knowledge of ethical behavior at their worksite.

#### **Key Method**

The ESP demonstrates how understanding of ethical behavior shapes their experiences and effectiveness at work.

#### **Method Components**

This micro-credential is based on the Universal Standard of Ethics from the [NEA's ESP Professional Growth Continuum \(PGC\)](#), which defines ethics as the ability to maintain a high level of ethical behavior, confidentiality, and privacy of any information regarding students, staff, and all job-related matters.

## Knowledge of Ethical Behavior Proficient Level

Ethics for education support professionals can be broken into two skill areas:

1. Knowledge of Ethical Behavior
2. Modeling Ethical Behavior

This micro-credential focuses on *knowledge of ethical behavior*.

### Words to Know

**Breach:** to break a law, promise, agreement, or relationship; an act of breaking a rule, law, custom, or practice

**Code of Conduct:** a set of rules that members of an organization or people with a particular job or position must follow; a set of rules about how to behave and do business with other people

**Confidential:** secret or private, often in a formal, business, or military situation; private and intended to be kept secret

**Effective:** successful or achieving the result you want or the result you hoped for

**Ethics:** the study of what is morally right and wrong, or a set of beliefs about what is morally right and wrong; a system of accepted beliefs that control behavior

**Law:** a rule made by a government that states how people may and may not behave in society and in business, and that often orders particular punishments if they do not obey, or a system of such rules

**Policy:** a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that have been officially agreed upon by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party

**Privacy:** the right that someone has to keep their personal life or personal information secret or known only to a small group of people

**Procedure:** a set of actions that are the official or accepted way of doing something

**Proficient:** skilled and experienced; good at doing something because of practice

**Protocol:** the system of rules and acceptable behavior that people or organizations should follow in official situations, for example, when they have formal discussions

**Regulation:** an official rule or law

**Responsibility:** the state or fact of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for something within one's power, control, or management; a person or thing for which one is responsible

**Rule:** an accepted principle or instruction that states the way things are or should be done, and tells you what you are allowed or are not allowed to do

## NEA's ESP Professional Growth Continuum

Let's look at examples of proficient-level knowledge of ethical behavior in the NEA's ESP Professional Growth Continuum. There are many ways for ESPs to demonstrate knowledge of ethical behavior at a proficient level. Demonstrating skills and knowledge in this standard may look different depending on your unique role, worksite, community, and experience. The following language, adapted from the PGC, provides examples (indicators are bold, descriptors are sub-bullets):

- **Know the laws, district policies, and procedures related to ethical behavior and confidentiality.**  
**(For all Career Families)**
  - read and follow the employee code of conduct/handbook
  - read and follow the Technology Acceptable Use Policy
  - know and use the proper protocol to communicate and address concerns
  - maintain confidentiality concerning student and staff information
  
- **Exercise confidentiality and privacy of any information regarding students and staff in all job-related matters by following all rules, regulations, and policies.**  
**(For all Career Families)**
  - conduct conversations about students or other confidential matters privately
  - keep details of confidential matters limited to those who need to support and provide a service
  - secure and protect documents from casual viewing
  - inform appropriate personnel of breaches in confidentiality

## Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

*To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1, 2, and 3.*

If any Part of the micro-credential is incomplete or left blank, the submission will be scored “Incomplete,” you will receive an email with a note of encouragement to complete all Parts of the micro-credential and resubmit your work to NEA.

Please read the “How to earn a proficient score” section at the end of each Part below to make sure your micro-credential submission is complete and meets the requirements.

For each Part, you may choose to submit your response:

- in WRITING (created in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or another word processing software; acceptable file formats are .doc, .docx, .pdf, .rtf); OR
- through an AUDIO RECORDING (created on a mobile device like a smartphone or tablet, or on audio recording equipment; acceptable file formats are .mp3, .wav, .aiff); OR
- through a VIDEO RECORDING (created on a mobile device like a smartphone or tablet, or on audio recording equipment; acceptable file formats are .mp4, .mov, .wmv, .avi)

Video or audio recordings for each Part should be one single file. You may complete all of the responses in one clip or edit multiple clips together as one file to submit per Part.

### **IMPORTANT:**

ESPs are strongly encouraged to explore the links in the *Supporting Rationale and Research and Resources* section at the end of this document.

Do this before working on Part 1 of your micro-credential submission.

## Part 1: Skill Area Learning – Knowledge of Ethical Behavior at Your Worksite

### Directions:

1. Locate a copy of your job description or think about the tasks/job responsibilities you do on a daily basis in your job.
2. Select two specific examples of tasks you do regularly that are dependent on your knowledge of ethical behavior and list them below.

Task #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Task #2: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Based on what you selected above for Task #1, check the box or boxes of all the PGC indicators of knowledge of ethical behavior skills that you think are related to the task. (There are no wrong answers).
  - Know the laws, district policies, and procedures related to ethical behavior and confidentiality
  - Exercise confidentiality and privacy of any information regarding students and staff in all job-related matters by following all rules, regulations, and policies
4. Based on what you selected above for Task #2, check the box or boxes of all the PGC indicators of knowledge of ethical behavior skills that you think are related to the task. (There are no wrong answers).
  - Know the laws, district policies, and procedures related to ethical behavior and confidentiality
  - Exercise confidentiality and privacy of any information regarding students and staff in all job-related matters by following all rules, regulations, and policies
5. Explain how having knowledge of ethical behavior is essential to how you complete Task #1 and #2 using the skill(s) you identified above. As you explain, be sure to include the following:
  - a. Tell us:

## Knowledge of Ethical Behavior Proficient Level

- your career family title;
  - your worksite type (elementary, middle, high school, district, or institution of higher education); and
  - the PGC indicator that best connects to each task.
- b. How is having knowledge of ethical behavior essential to how you complete these tasks?
- c. What could happen if you did not have any knowledge of ethical behavior? What impact(s) could it have on students, schools, etc.?
- d. How does having knowledge of ethical behavior help you help the people you interact with during the workday, e.g., students, co-workers, colleagues, administrators, supervisors, family and community members, etc.)?
- e. Describe a time when having knowledge of ethical behavior was a challenge for you and what you did to address the challenge.

You may choose to submit a **written response** for Part 1. If you do this:

- Create a new Word document.
- Copy and paste your responses to items #2 – 5. This should include answers/responses to all of the above questions and prompts. Save the document.
- Upload the document file to the NEA Certification Bank submission page section for Part 1.

**OR**

You may submit an **audio or video response** for Part 1. If you do this:

- Use a mobile device (e.g., smartphone or tablet) to make an audio or video recording of yourself answering all of the questions and prompts for items #2 – 5 above. Feel free to refer to any notes you have made while exploring the topic. Save your recording.
- Upload the file of the recording to the NEA Certification Bank submission page section for Part 1.

The audio or video recording should be no more than 7 minutes in length. If a submitted recording for Part 1 is longer than 7 minutes, only the first 7 minutes will be reviewed.

**Submission Checklist:**

- Upload your written, audio, or video recording to Part 1.
- Completely answer each question/prompt; and
- If you submit an audio or video recording: make sure the total length of your responses for Part 1 is no longer than 7 minutes.
- If you submit a written response: make sure the total length of your response for Part 1 is 350 words minimum and no longer than 1000 words.
- \*If you have a job description, please upload a copy of it along with the rest of your files in Part 1 of the NEA Certification Bank submission page for this micro-credential. This will help NEA learn more about how employers view ESP roles, and will not affect your score. Submitting your employer-created job description is not required to earn a proficient score on this micro-credential.

**How to earn a passing and proficient score in Part 1:**

**Part 1 Passing:** Responses to directions #2-4 identify the work tasks that are dependent upon the PGC indicators for the skill area in this micro-credential. At least three terms from the “Words to Know” section must be integrated accurately into your responses.

**Part 1 Rubric:** Responses to direction #5 including sub bullets

| <b>Score:</b>   | <b>Developing</b>  | <b>Proficient</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| Direction #5:<br>Explain how knowledge of ethical behavior is essential to how you complete work tasks #1 and #2 using the PGC skills identified. | Provide answers to some or all questions but little to no detail illustrating the points shared. | Provide answers to all questions using examples from work experiences of how knowledge of ethical behavior is essential to completing work tasks. Examples describe negative and positive impacts as well as challenges. |

## Part 2: Interview

### **Directions:**

Follow the steps below, make an audio or video recording or written transcription of the interview, and save it to upload as part of your submission.

Identify one person from your ESP career family with whom you feel comfortable having a conversation about their knowledge of ethical behavior. Do not have the interviewee share any personal information that could be used to identify them (e.g., name, school, district, etc.) as they should remain anonymous.

**Before the interview, provide the interviewee with a copy of the questions, PGC indicators, and descriptors listed above.** The recording should be 5-10 minutes in length. If a submitted recording for Part 2 is longer than 10 minutes, only the first 10 minutes will be reviewed. Written transcriptions should be no longer than 1000 words.

**Interview the person using only questions #1-3 below and include their responses. After conducting the interview, answer all the questions yourself:**

1. What is one aspect of knowledge of ethical behavior that you feel confident in?
  - a. What specifically did you do or what happened to help you to gain that confidence?
2. What is one aspect of knowledge of ethical behavior where you think you have the most growing or learning to do?
  - a. Why do you think you have the most growing or learning to do in this aspect?
3. Do you think that we, at our worksite, are encouraging adults to develop and use their knowledge of ethical behavior?



Knowledge of Ethical Behavior Proficient Level

- a. If yes, provide a specific example of what we are doing well to make this happen, and how you know it is working.
- b. If no, what specifically do you think we could do differently?
- 4. What have you learned from talking with a co-worker or colleague about knowledge of ethical behavior?

**Submission Checklist:**

- Upload your audio or video recording or written transcription of your interview to Part 2 of the NEA Certification Bank submission page.
- Include complete, relevant responses to all questions from the interviewee AND from the submitter/you.
  - Answer 1, 1a, 2, 2a, 3; then
  - Answer either 3a or 3b.
- For questions 1 and 2, provide specific and relevant examples.
- For questions 3a or 3b, provide relevant specifics on how school/worksite/community staff and/or leaders are encouraging the development and usage of knowledge of ethical behavior or provide achievable ideas for what could be done differently to do better in this area.
- Make sure the length of a recording is no longer than 10 minutes, and the length of a written transcription is no longer than 1000 words.

How to earn a passing score in Part 2:

**Part 2 Rubric:**

| <b>Score:</b> | <b>Developing</b>  | <b>Proficient</b>   |
|---------------|--|---|
| Interviews    | Interview of co-worker and self do not provide answers to all questions, or give answers to all questions but only with general examples of how confidence has been gained in knowledge of ethical behavior, areas of growth or learning | Interview of co-worker and self provide answers to all questions, demonstrating understanding of knowledge of ethical behavior and describe with work examples how confidence has been gained in knowledge of ethical |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <p>related to the skill area; and whether adults are encouraged to develop and use their knowledge in this skill area on the job.</p> | <p>behavior; identify areas of growth or learning related to the skill area; whether adults are encouraged to develop and use their knowledge in this skill area on the job and how this could be improved if needed; and apply understanding of the co-worker's experiences to inform the submitter's knowledge about the skill area.</p> |
|--|---|--|

## Part 3: Reflection

### Directions:

Read all of the text in the three numbered prompts/below.

Then respond to all three prompts/questions through a written response, **OR** through an audio or video recording of yourself.

- If you submit a written response: make sure your Part 3 response is 350 words minimum and no longer than 750 words.
- If you submit a recording (audio or video): make sure your recording for Part 3 is no longer than 5 minutes.

### Prompts/Questions:

1. Describe one missed opportunity at your worksite, when you or others could have done a better job using knowledge of ethical behavior skills effectively. (\*Your response describing a missed opportunity will not negatively impact your score and will not be shared.)

2. What action step or small change can you make in the next seven months to strengthen your knowledge of ethical behavior? How could you put those stronger skills to use at your worksite, school, community, or institution of higher education?

Some examples:

- Talk about your exploration into knowledge of ethical behavior with another member of your worksite community. Share what you've learned or realized, and ask them about their thoughts on the topic.
  - Describe how you can change your approach to one task or a part of your day using your knowledge of ethical behavior.
3. Describe who will benefit from your steps to develop and deepen your own knowledge of ethical behavior. Tell us how and why they will benefit.

#### **Submission Checklist:**

- Upload your written, audio, or video response to the NEA Certification Bank submission page for Part 3.
- Include relevant, complete, and specific responses to all three prompts/questions.
- Make sure your responses reflect an understanding of what proficient knowledge of ethical behavior means for ESPs.
- Make sure the length of your written response is 350 words minimum and no longer than 750 words, or the length of your recording is no longer than 5 minutes.

#### **How to earn a passing score in Part 3:**

**Part 3 Passing:** Your reflection identifies an action step or change that you can make to strengthen your knowledge of ethical behavior skills, how you will put those stronger skills to use at your worksite, school, community, or institution of higher education, along with who will benefit and how they will benefit.

## Supporting Rationale and Research

ESPs are strongly encouraged to explore the links in the Supporting Rationale, Research, and Resources section below before beginning to work on Part 1 of the micro-credential.

National Education Association: [NEA ESP Professional Growth Continuum](#)

### **Resources:**

The PGC: What it is and how to use it

- [English video](#)
- [Spanish video](#)
- [Spanish resources](#)

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD): [Whole Child Approach to Education](#)

[Model Code of Ethics for Educators \(MCEE\)](#) by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC)