



**Education Support Professionals (ESPs):
Professional Growth Continuum (PGC)
Communication:
Responsible Communication
*Proficient Level***

Competency

The ESP demonstrates responsible communication with diverse audiences that may include students, parents/guardians, staff, visitors, coworkers/colleagues, supervisors, and community members effectively at their worksite.

Key Method

The ESP demonstrates how responsible communication shapes their experiences and effectiveness at work.

Method Components

This micro-credential is based on the Universal Standard of *Communication* from the [NEA's ESP Professional Growth Continuum \(PGC\)](#), which defines communication as the ability to effectively listen and communicate (written and verbal) with a diverse audience including students, parents/guardians, staff, visitors, and community.

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

1. Responsible Communication
2. Effective Communication

This micro-credential focuses on *responsible communication*.

Words to Know

Appropriate: suitable or right for a particular situation or occasion

Context: the situation within which something exists or happens, and that can help explain it

Disseminate: to spread or give out something, especially news, information, ideas, etc., to a lot of people

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

Escalate: to increase or be increased in extent, intensity, or magnitude

Essential: necessary or needed

Expectation: what you believe or hope will happen in the future

Guideline: information intended to advise people on how something should be done or what something should be

Intervene: to become involved intentionally in a difficult situation in order to change it or improve it, or prevent it from getting worse

Liaison: someone who helps groups to work effectively with each other; communication between people or groups who work with each other

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

Reinforce: to make something stronger; if something reinforces an idea or opinion, it provides more proof or support for it and makes it seem true

Responsible: to have control and authority over something or someone and the duty of taking care of it or them

NEA's ESP Professional Growth Continuum

Let's look at examples of proficient-level responsible communication in the NEA's ESP Professional Growth Continuum

There are many ways for ESPs to demonstrate responsible communication at a proficient level. Demonstrating skills and knowledge in this standard may look different depending on one's unique role, worksite, community, and experience. The following language, adapted from the PGC, provides examples (indicators are bulleted, descriptors are sub-bullets):

- **Know expectations and guidelines for communicating in routine, sensitive, and confidential matters.**

(For Clerical Services, Custodial and Maintenance, Food Services, Health and Student Services, Paraeducators, Security Services, Skilled Trades, and Technical Services)

- access and respond to emails, texts, and other required formats
- factually and promptly report any unusual situations or events to administration or designee

(For Transportation Services)

- access and respond to emails, texts, and other required formats to stay informed about school and district activities, requirements of the law and code, Board policy and regulations, and other information regarding school transportation
- factually and promptly report any unusual situations or events to supervisor, administration, or designee

- **Manage information important to creating a safe learning environment.**

- **(For All Career Families)**

- Write clear and grammatically correct emails, texts, and reports required by job duties

- **(For Clerical Services)**

- coordinate the dissemination of information

- **(For Custodial and Maintenance)**

- keep staff informed about school/district activities, requirements of the law and code, Board policy and regulations, and other information necessary for the functioning of the school facility

- **(For Food Services)**

- provide comprehensive and accurate information regarding school nutritional services, sanitation and safety standards, and food allergy precautions, as needed

- **(For Health and Student Services)**

- coordinate the dissemination of information about health services and expectations for attendance

- **(For Paraeducators)**

- provide comprehensive and accurate information to create a safe learning environment

- **(For Security Services)**

- coordinate dissemination of information to create a safe learning environment

- **(For Skilled Trades)**

- keep staff and coworkers informed about school and district projects, requirements of the law and code, Board policy and regulations, and other information necessary for the maintenance and enhancement of the school facility

(For Technical Services)

- coordinate dissemination of information (e.g., email, website, and social media postings about outage and service windows, regulations for use, and policies/laws)
- write emails, texts, and technical job aids as required by job duties that are clear and grammatically correct

(For Transportation Services)

- provide the necessary verbal and/or written documentation to transportation staff, other staff, and parents/guardians when handling unusual situations

- **Act as a liaison between the school and community when interacting with and assisting students, parents/guardians, staff, visitors, and the community.**

(For all Career Families)

- know when and how to intervene in escalating situations (e.g., tone of voice, proximity, stance, etc.)

(For Clerical Services)

- use language that reinforces the positive academic and social expectations to increase appropriate school behavior

(For Custodial and Maintenance)

- explain and reinforce worksite/district expectations for a positive learning environment

(For Food Services)

- provide comprehensive and accurate information regarding school nutritional services, sanitation and safety standards, and food allergy precautions as needed

(For Health and Student Services)

- coordinate dissemination of information about health services and expectations for attendance

(For Paraeducators)

- participate in a reciprocal feedback process with parents/guardians and staff in order to adjust academic and behavioral instruction and reinforcement; be aware of social and

cultural dynamics, adjusting communication style to respond in a culturally relevant manner

(For Security Services)

- explain and reinforce worksite/district expectations for a positive learning environment

(For Skilled Trades)

- explain and reinforce worksite/district expectations for a positive learning environment

(For Technical Services)

- participate in a reciprocal feedback process with parents/guardians and staff in order to adjust academic and behavioral instruction and reinforcement; be aware of social and cultural dynamics, adjusting communication style to respond in a culturally relevant manner
- use language that reinforces the positive academic and social expectations to increase appropriate school behavior

(For Transportation Services)

- use language that reinforces the positive academic and social expectations to increase appropriate school behavior

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn this micro-credential you must receive a proficient score in Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3.

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

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- 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 you may edit multiple clips together as one file to submit per Part.

IMPORTANT:

ESPs are strongly encouraged to take time 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 – Responsible Communication 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 on a regular basis that are dependent on your responsible communication skills and list them below.

Task #1: _____

Task #2: _____

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3. Based on what you selected above for Task #1, check the box or boxes of all the PGC indicators of responsible communication skills you think are related to the task. (There are no wrong answers).
 - Know expectations and guidelines for communicating in routine, sensitive, and confidential matters.
 - Manage information important to creating a safe learning environment.
 - Act as a liaison between school and the community when interacting with and assisting students, parents/guardians, staff, visitors, and the community.
4. Based on what you selected above for Task #2, check the box or boxes of all the PGC indicators of responsible communication skills you think are related to the task. (There are no wrong answers).
 - Know expectations and guidelines for communicating in routine, sensitive, and confidential matters.
 - Manage information important to creating a safe learning environment.
 - Act as a liaison between school and community when interacting with and assisting students, parents/guardians, staff, visitors, and the community.
5. Explain how responsible communication 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:
 - 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 responsible communication essential to how you complete these tasks?
 - c. What could happen if you were unable to communicate responsibly? What impact(s) could it have on students, schools, etc.?
 - d. How do your responsible communication skills 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 communicating responsibly 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 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 choose to 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 during your exploration of 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

Score:	Developing	Proficient
Direction #5: Explain how responsible communication 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 describing, with examples from work experiences, how responsible communication is essential to the completion of work tasks. Examples describe positive and negative 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 responsible communication. 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 and the 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 of the questions yourself:

1. What is one aspect of responsible communication that you feel confident in?
 - a. What specifically did you do or what happened to help you gain that confidence related to responsible communication?
2. What is one aspect of responsible communication 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 of responsible communication?
3. Do you think that we, at our worksite, are encouraging adults to develop and use their skills in responsible communication?
 - 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 responsible communication?

Submission Checklist:

- Upload your audio or video recording or written transcription of your interview to Part 2 of the NEA Certification Bank submission page.

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

How to earn a proficient score in Part 2:

Part 2 Rubric:

Score:	Developing	Proficient
Interviews	Interview of co-worker and self do not provide answers to all questions, or provide answers to all questions but only with general examples on how confidence has been gained in responsible communication, areas of growth or learning related to the skill area; and whether adults are encouraged to develop and use their knowledge in this skill area on the job.	Interview of co-worker and self provide answers to all questions, demonstrating understanding of responsible communication and describe with work examples how confidence has been gained in responsible communication, 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.
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Part 3: Reflection

Directions: Read all of the text in the three numbered prompts/questions 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 in responsible communication. (*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 responsible communication skills? 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 of responsible communication 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 part of your day through responsible communication.
3. Describe who will benefit from your steps to develop and deepen your own responsible communication skills. 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 responsible communication 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 you can make to strengthen your responsible communication skills, how you will put those stronger skills to use at your worksite, school, community, or institution of higher education, and who will benefit and how they will benefit.

Supporting Rationale and Research

*ESP*s are strongly encouraged to explore the links in the Supporting Rationale and 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:

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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](#)