

THE TRANSITION PROGRAMS AT SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY:
SOAR/EMBARK STUDENT HANDBOOK SEPTEMBER 2021-JUNE 2022

NORTHSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

**THE TRANSITIONS PROGRAMS
(SOAR/EMBARK)
AT
SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
PARENT & STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2021-2022**



121 Loring Avenue
Salem, MA 01970
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MISSION STATEMENT

The Transition Program(s) at Salem State University (SOAR and EMBARK) provide opportunities for students who have been diagnosed with neurodevelopmental disorder. Diagnoses such as Asperger's, executive functioning issues, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and other related disorders to reach increased levels of personal growth, social skill development and independent functioning across all settings.

Current clinical research and the Consortium's years of experience working with young adults recognizes that while a large number of our student's have unique intellectual and assorted creative gifts and abilities, many of them struggle to manage and negotiate social situations and interactions independently, appropriately and comfortably.

In the Transition Programs we assist each student to address not only their academic and vocational goals but encourage the development of self advocacy, building and maintaining ongoing social relationships with peers and adults and increasing individual personal responsibility for independent decision making.

The SOAR and EMBARK Programs are located on the campus of Salem State University in Salem Massachusetts. The goal of The Programs are to assist each student to continue their post high school journey by transitioning to college and/or the world of work.

Students will experience the benefits of navigating a university campus while learning academic, social and life and career skills. These may include how to negotiate public transportation, improving their organizational ability, money management and budgeting, career exploration through paid internships, expanding their study skills, and improving their social and relational development.

The programs are geared toward students 18-22 years of age who are motivated to prepare for their next level of independence in a post-secondary setting and/or job setting.

INTRODUCTION

The Transition Programs at Salem State University (SOAR and EMBARK) focus on each individual student's development at school, in a vocational setting and in the community. The Programs Student Handbook has been developed as a reference tool and guide for students and their families.

The Programs functional academic component concentrates on the application of knowledge from academic classes such as language arts, math, computer, consumer skills and current events. In addition, a second concentration regarding vocational training and social expectations is also a key aspect of The Programs day-to-day operation. Students integrate independent public transportation training, personal & social growth, community awareness, personal health, money management and budgeting and activities of daily living to round out their classroom experience with community experience.

Program students become familiar with using community resources such as public transportation, libraries, banks, stores, the post office, the Registry of Motor Vehicles and other public service agencies (Massachusetts Rehab Commission, DDS's Career Center.) Simultaneously students are broadening and applying their behavioral and emotional coping skills by practicing them with support of their job coaches, peer mentors, teachers and program clinical social worker and interns. The goals of these activities are to increase each student's independent functioning by exposing them (with the support of our staff) to these community resources and opportunities.

The Programs vocational component emphasizes the development of skills and behaviors appropriate to the workplace. Job coaches initially provide a supportive presence at each student's job site and gradually decrease their support as the student increases their own sense of confidence and greater independence. The Programs provide a hands-on opportunity for each student to transfer and apply aspects of their classroom instruction, clinical support services and vocational training to successfully complete their internships or employment opportunities.

**THE PROGRAMS AT SSU
SOAR/EMBARK
ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**

In order to be considered for an admission to one of The Transition Programs at Salem State University, applicants should meet the following criteria:

- 1) Have completed 4 years in a high school environment.
- 2) Be 18-22 years of age with a documented disability.
- 3) Have the ability and motivation to explore work in various settings.
- 4) Have completed THE PROGRAM application packet.
- 5) Participate in at least one day's visit to THE PROGRAM classes.
- 6) Participate in a personal interview with THE PROGRAM staff.

PROGRAM students should have the social maturity necessary to positively transition from a high school to a college environment.

Referrals

All referral information should be sent to:

Ellen Heald
Enterprise Center
121 Loring Avenue, Suite 270
Salem MA 01970
eheald@nsedu.org

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance is mandatory for a student's successful integration into the Program. If attendance is a concern, students and their parents will be required to meet with program staff to develop a remedial attendance improvement plan. Students must bring a doctor's note for any illness treated under the physician's care. **In the event of a sudden illness/ or an emergency, the student is expected to telephone Program staff and his/her employer as soon as possible.**

Because employers are expecting Program students to be at their designated work site, it is critical that Program staff be informed as soon as possible if a student is going to be absent. By calling into The Program other student's may be able to cover the absent student's shift and the employer and student will both benefit.

Appointments (medical, dental, therapies, etc.) should be made after school and work hours.

Absence line: 978-476-2866 or 978-740-5913

PUNCTUALITY

Students are expected to arrive at The Program and or their job site on time and be prepared for class or work. No more than (3) tardies are permitted per semester. If a student exceeds this number a corrective plan will be developed with the assistance of the program staff, the student and their parent/guardian. Excessive episodes of lateness will require a review of the student's appropriateness for the Program.

DRESS CODE

In dress, conduct, and interpersonal relationships, students should recognize that they represent The Program, their classmates, their worksites, Salem State University staff and students, and the community at large.

Program students are expected to practice good conduct, use respectful manners, and dress appropriately for both work and school.

Students are expected to maintain their personal hygiene (regular bathing, brushed teeth, personal hygiene products etc.) Students are required to wear clean clothes daily and personal clothing needs to be suitable for The Program classes and/or their place of employment. Clothing should be in good taste and appropriate for the settings.

PICK-UP AND DROP OFF PROCEDURES

Pick up and drop off should be in lot E adjacent to fence by the loading dock.

Student driver's need permission from the program director and will need to complete the necessary forms.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

No student will be allowed to come to school with any type of orthopedic equipment without the proper documentation from his/her physician. Physician approvals must be written and kept in his/her records. The physician's note must include the diagnoses of the medical problem and an indication of how long the orthopedic equipment is to be used.

SMOKING

Smoking is prohibited in the Program and on the Salem State University campus.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The use, possession, distribution, and sale of drugs and or alcoholic beverages are prohibited in The Program, Salem State University campus and all worksites.

THE following penalties will result from any infractions of this policy:

- 1) If at school or work, the police will be notified and take possession of the substance.
- 2) If at work, the student will follow company policies.
- 3) Within 48 hours a meeting will be held with the student, his/her parents or guardian, school district personnel, and The Program staff to determine appropriate next steps as determined by The Program Director (and/or their designee) up to and including suspension or expulsion from The Program.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Program students are expected to behave in a socially mature manner. In the event the student does not behave in a socially acceptable manner, the following will take place:

- First offense Program staff will meet with the student to discuss the issue and develop an action plan to change the behavior.
- Second offense: Program staff will notify parents about the student's behavior. Parents/Guardians will be informed of the previous offense.
- Third offense: Program staff will reconvene the TEAM to discuss other program options.

SUSPENSION

Program students will be suspended for the following behaviors:

- 1) Gross insubordination.
- 2) Any behavior that threatens another student, staff, community members, themselves, or the physical plant of the school.
- 3) Harassment/Bullying in person or through and type of social media.

A re-entry meeting with the student, parent and school administration will be required after a suspension to determine the student's continuation in the program.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION

NEC Transportation Policy

"If NEC decides to close school even if SSU is open, you will receive an email/text/call."

1. All NEC Schools, except SOAR and Embark will be closed if the TOWN IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED closes school due to a weather emergency.

The Embark & SOAR Program follow Salem State University closure. If NEC decides to close school even if SSU is open, you will receive an email/text/call.

2. NEC may choose to close ALL NEC SCHOOLS even if not all host towns are closed.
3. If an NEC School is open, but some towns are closed, **those towns may choose not transport students. This is the town's decision.** Parents can choose to bring their child in if we are open.
4. All employees are expected to do their best to get to school if we are open.
5. Communication regarding school closures will take place via:
 - a. Automated email, text and voicemail alerts. Please make sure we have correct information on file.
 - b. An alert on our website home page.
 - c. Posting on WBZ

TRANSPORTATION

A significant goal of The Program is to teach students how to use public transportation. Program students will each be educated on how to use public transportation to get to and from The Program (if public transportation is available in their community), the worksite, and to travel within the North Shore.

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS ACCESS:

With the student's acceptance into The Programs, each student will secure an SSU "Clipper Card". The "Clipper Card" allows Program students to use the following facilities on the campus of Salem State University:

- SSU Bookstore
- SSU Student Center
- SSU Library
- SSU Cafeterias and surrounding restaurants
- SSU Shuttle bus

Progress Reports & Report Cards

Students will receive quarterly progress reports. Report Cards will be distributed at the end of each semester.

LINKAGES

Program staff makes appropriate linkages with adult service agencies (i.e. Department of Mental Health, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Disability Services, etc.). If an individual transitional plan has not been formulated, SOAR will coordinate the ITP meeting with the Lead Education Agency and the lead adult service agency.

The Transition Programs at SSU work closely with several community partners to facilitate each student's finding their next steps into adulthood and greater independence. The Programs work closely with the Department of Mental Health, Department of Disability Services, The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, The Social Security Office and a variety of community partners.

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

The Programs' classes are designed to utilize a foundation of knowledge that can be applied across various settings. Courses are interrelated so that information learned in one content area can be applied to another. Instruction is devised to assist students in applying their knowledge in school, work, and the community. Classes meet one to two times per week.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

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All students participate in community activities, which promote independence, the application of knowledge, and appropriate social interactions. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a socially mature manner in all settings.

INTERNSHIP/EMPLOYMENT

Students participate in an internship placement or community job that best reflects their interests and abilities. Throughout the school year students increase their internship hours while The Program job coaches decrease their onsite support as deemed appropriate. Students are supervised, and evaluated by Program staff and their worksite supervisor on a regular basis to assess student readiness for independent employment. Program staff members make a consistent effort to maintain open lines of communication between site supervisors and the program. This is provided for each student to offer them the greatest chance of success.

FIELD TRIP/VOCATIONAL INFO

Students will have the opportunity to participate in community-based field trips and vocational internships. Students will travel by public transportation, walking, school vans, The Ride or staff cars. Students should dress appropriately for the weather and maintain expected behavior in all settings.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for the following:

ATTENDANCE/CLOTHING:

- Maintaining good attendance.
- Arriving on time.
- Maintaining proper hygiene.
- Wearing appropriate clothing
 - Girls: no breasts, no bellies, no bums
 - Boys: no sagging pants.

CLASSROOM/WORKSITE:

- NO CELL PHONE USAGE during class or internships. Using electronic devices of any kind (Phone, MP3, headphones, etc.) will only be allowed during break time or lunch. Use of electronics during other times can only be used with the permission of The Program staff.
- Keeping a notebook/folder for each class as needed.
- Having writing utensils and any other supplies necessary for class.

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- Passing in completed homework assignments on the day they are due.
- Increase knowledge and usage of technology for keeping appointments, travel routes, homework, calendars etc.

BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL:

- Come to the program with a positive attitude each day.
- Treat your classmates, Program staff, employers and members of the community with respect and dignity.
- Respect the physical boundaries of others. (No hugs etc. without asking the other person's permission first)
- Appropriate language in all settings.

**THE TRANSITION PROGRAMS AT
SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
STAFF DIRECTORY
September 2021- June 2022**

| Name | Role | Phone | E Mail |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Ellen Heald | Director | 978-476-2866 | eheald@nsedu.org |
| Michelle Liming | Admin Assistant | 978-740-5913 | mliming@nsedu.org |
| Jon Kessler | Social Worker | 978-223-5508 | jonkessler@nsedu.org |
| Daniel Petronzio | Social Worker | 508-843-7771 | dpetronzio@nsedu.org |
| Ally Dugan | Soar Teacher | 781-820-3144 | adugan@nsedu.org |
| Chris Mastone | Soar Teacher | 978-852-7593 | cmastone@nsedu.org |
| Dan Fraser | Embark Teacher | 978-740-5913 | dfraser@nsedu.org |
| Chris McAlpine | Embark Teacher | 978-740-5913 | cmcalpine@nsedu.org |
| Melissa Nobles | Occupational Support | 978-210-8886 | mnobles@nsedu.org |

Student Handbook Signature Page

I have read and understand all the information provided to me in the Northshore Education Consortium SOAR/Embark Program Handbook for the 2021-2022 school year.

Student Name (PRINT) **Date**

Student **Signature**
Date

Parent **Signature**
Date

***This signature page must be returned to school.**