

NORTHSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

**THE TRANSITIONS PROGRAMS
(SOAR/EMBARK)**

AT

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025



121 Loring Avenue
Salem, MA 01970
978-740-5913

THE TRANSITION PROGRAMS AT SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY: SOAR/EMBARK
STUDENT HANDBOOK SEPTEMBER 2024-JUNE 2025

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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 Autism, 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 students 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 the world of work and explore post-secondary options such as certificate programs and college classes.

Students will experience the benefits of navigating a university campus while learning academic, social, 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, financial literacy, technology, independent life skills, social skills and current events. In addition, vocational training and social expectations is also a key aspect of The Programs day-to-day operations. 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 located 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 behavioral expectations and motivation to explore work in various settings.
- 4) Participate in at least one visit to THE PROGRAM.
- 5) 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 as soon as possible.** Because internship 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.

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

Absence line: 978-740-5913, option 1

PUNCTUALITY

Students are expected to arrive at The Program on time and be prepared for class or work. If a student has excessive tardiness/absences a corrective plan will be developed with the assistance of the program staff, the student, and their parent/guardian.

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 internship. 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 the student's physician. Physician approvals must be written and kept in student records. The physician's note must include the diagnosis 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.

HARASSMENT

In keeping with federal and state laws regarding harassment, The Program promotes a school and work environment that is pleasant, healthy, comfortable, and free from intimidation, hostility, or other offenses which might interfere with school or work performance. Harassment of any sort: verbal, physical, visual or on social media will not be tolerated.

What is harassment?

Harassment can take many forms. This may include direct contact targeted at an individual or group. It may be, but is not limited to: words, signs, pranks, intimidation, physical contact, or violence. This can occur both directly in the physical spaces of the program or through a variety of social media. Harassment is not necessarily sexual in nature and can take the form of any sort of prejudicial, racial or ethnic targeting.

When an individual is being sexually targeted for harassment the conduct may include unwelcome sexual advances, the dissemination of sexually explicit photos or dialogue over the internet, requests for sexual favors, or any other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. This then prevents the targeted individual from effectively performing in the classroom internship site. It can create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive classroom or working environment and will not be tolerated.

Responsibility

All Program staff and employers, and particularly managers, have a responsibility to keep the classroom and work environment free from harassment. Any student who becomes aware of an incident of harassment, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, must report it to his/her teacher or immediate supervisor or any Program staff and/or work personnel with whom he/she feels comfortable. When school staff and/or management become aware that harassment might exist, they are obligated by law to take prompt and appropriate action, whether or not the victim wants the school or company to do so.

Reporting

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Any incidents of harassment must be immediately reported to any staff member. Appropriate investigation and disciplinary action will be taken. All reports will be promptly investigated with due regard for the privacy of everyone involved. Any student found to have harassed and or targeted a fellow student, co-worker, or staff will be subject to severe disciplinary action and possible termination from The Program or worksite. Every effort will be made to appropriately remedy the situation. No adverse school placement or employment will be taken for any individual making a good faith report of alleged harassment.

The Programs and businesses accept no liability for harassment of one individual by another. The individual who makes unwelcome advances, threatens, or in any way harasses another individual is personally liable for such actions and their consequences. The Programs and any business with whom The Programs are affiliated will not provide legal, financial, or any other assistance to any individual accused of harassment if a legal complaint is filed.

HAZING

Hazing means any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

All Program staff and employers, have a responsibility to keep the classroom and work environment free from hazing. Any student who becomes aware of an incident of hazing, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, must report it to his/her teacher or immediate supervisor or any Program staff and/or work personnel with whom he/she feels comfortable. When school staff and/or management become aware that hazing might exist, they are obligated by law to take prompt and appropriate action, whether or not the victim wants the school or company to do so.

Reporting

Any incidents of hazing must be immediately reported to a staff member. Appropriate investigation and disciplinary action will be taken. All reports will be promptly investigated with due regard for the privacy of everyone involved. Any student found to have hazed and or targeted a fellow student, co-worker, or staff will be subject to severe disciplinary action and possible termination from The Program or worksite. Every effort will be made to appropriately remedy the situation. No adverse school placement or employment will be taken for any individual making a good faith report of alleged hazing.

The Programs and businesses accept no liability for hazing of one individual by another. The individual who makes unwelcome advances, threatens, or in any way engages in activity that indicates that they hazed another individual is personally liable for such actions and their consequences. The Programs and any business with whom

The Programs are affiliated will not provide legal, financial, or any other assistance to any individual accused of hazing if a legal complaint is filed.

BULLYING

Bullying Prevention Policy

"Bullying", the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

"Perpetrator", a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.

Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including an individual taking action against his/her will: oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; stalking, threatening looks, gestures, or actions, cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

CYBER-BULLYING:

Is the bullying through the use of technology or electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signal, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to electronic mail, internet communications, instant messaging or fax communications.

Cyber-bullying may include a) The creating of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person. b) The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated above in the definition of bullying. c) The distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated above in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing, or threatening email messages, instant messages or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate picture or images of others.

The Programs are committed to maintaining an environment free from both bullying or cyber-bullying and the effects thereof. Acts of bullying and cyber-bullying on school grounds or at any school sponsored activity, function or program or through the use of technology or any other electronic device(s) that create a hostile environment at school for the individual, infringes on the rights of the individual at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process for the student, or their family will be subject to investigation of the bullying incident.

All of The Program's staff and employers, and particularly managers, have a responsibility to keep the classroom and work environment free from bullying and/or cyber-bullying. Any student who becomes aware of an incident of bullying or cyber-bullying whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, must report it to his/her teacher or immediate supervisor or any Program staff and/or work personnel with whom he/she feels comfortable. When school staff and/or management become aware that bullying or cyber-bullying might exist, they are obligated by law to take prompt and appropriate action, whether or not the target wants the school or company to do so.

Reporting

Any incidents of bullying or cyber-bullying must be immediately reported to a teacher or manager. Appropriate investigation and disciplinary action will be taken. All reports will be promptly investigated with due regard for the privacy of everyone involved. Any student found to have bullied or been cyber-bulling a targeted a fellow student, co-worker, or staff will be subject to severe disciplinary action and possible termination from any of either The Program or worksite. Every effort will be made to appropriately remedy the situation. No

adverse school placement or employment will be taken for any individual making a good faith report of alleged bullying or cyber-bullying.

The Programs and any affiliated businesses accept no liability for the bullying or cyber-bullying of one individual by another. The individual who makes unwelcome advances, threatens, or in any way engages in activity that indicates that they bullied or cyber-bullied another individual is personally liable for such actions and their consequences. The Program's and any business with whom The Programs are affiliated will not provide legal, financial, or any other assistance to any individual accused of hazing if a legal complaint is filed.

**POLICY OF NON-DISCRIMINATION (Title IX)
Grievance Procedures for complaints alleging discrimination or harassment**

Northshore Education Consortium does not discriminate on the basis race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion, limited English speaking ability, sexual orientation or homelessness. This applies to student admission, access to services or treatment, and employment in all NEC services and programs.

Any concerns, complaints, or grievances related to discrimination or harassment should be brought to the attention of your School Principal, Program Director, the NEC Executive Director, or NEC Compliance Coordinator for Title IX, Title II, and Section 504 Nancy Macedo at nmacedo@nsedu; 112 Sohier Road Beverly, MA 01915; 978-232-9755 ext. 1255. Grievances will be addressed in a prompt and equitable

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 any 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 Fitness Center
- SSU Student Center
- SSU Library
- SSU Cafeterias and surrounding restaurants
- SSU Shuttle bus

Progress Reports

Students will receive quarterly progress reports.

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, Staff will coordinate a 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.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

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. Students are supervised, and evaluated by Program staff and their worksite supervisor on a regular basis to assess student progress. 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 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 USEAGE during class or internships. Using electronic devices of any kind (Phone, tablets, 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.
- Having writing utensils and any other supplies necessary for class.
- Passing in completed assignments on the day they are due.
- Increase knowledge and usage of technology for keeping appointments, travel routes, homework, calendars etc.

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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 2024- June 2025**

Name	Role	Phone	E Mail
Ellen Heald	Director	978-476-2866	eheald@nsedu.org
Michelle Liming	Admin Assistant	978-740-5913	mliming@nsedu.org
Daniel Petronzio	Social Worker	508-843-7771	dpetronzio@nsedu.org
Julie Stoelzel	Social Worker	978-740-5913 Google voice mail 781-469-1131	jstoelzel@nsedu.org
Ally Dugan	Soar Teacher	781-820-3144	adugan@nsedu.org
Michael Giannetti	Soar Teacher	781-740-5913	mgiannetti@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
April Pierson	Speech & Language	978-740-5913	apierson@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 2024-2025 school year.

Student Name (PRINT) **Date**

Student **Signature**
Date

Parent **Signature**
Date

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