

THE TRANSITION PROGRAMS AT SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY:
SOAR/EMBARK STUDENT HANDBOOK SEPTEMBER 2017-JUNE 2018

NORTHSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

**THE TRANSITIONS PROGRAMS
(SOAR/EMBARK)
AT
SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT HANDBOOK
2017-2018**



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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 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, 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) Be eligible or have eligibility pending from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.
- 4) Have the ability and motivation to explore work in various settings.
- 5) Have completed THE PROGRAM application packet.
- 6) Participate in at least one day's visit to THE PROGRAM classes.
- 7) 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.

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory for a student's successful integration into the The Program. Students are permitted three (3) unexcused absences per semester. If a student exceeds this number of absences he/she will be penalized one letter grade. Additionally, 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 physicians 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 students shift and the employer and student will both benefit.

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

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 then (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.

Students will be attending wellness classes at the Y.M.C.A. or at the Salem State Athletic Center. Appropriate athletic wear (sweatshirt/pants, sneakers, socks or bathing suit if they choose to swim) must be brought to school on wellness days. After the Wellness class Program students are expected to change from their fitness clothing to those appropriate for class and/or the workplace. Employer expectations vary depending upon the job/internship placement. Uniforms may be required.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT/MEDICATION POLICY

No student will be allowed to come to The Program with any type of orthopedic equipment or prescribed medication without 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 equipment/medication is to be used. If a prescription medication must be taken during school hours, the following requirements are mandatory:

- 1) A note from the prescribing physician with diagnosis, dosage and time(s) the medication should be taken.
- 2) The medication must be in labeled container from a licensed pharmacy. Each bottle must have the doctor's name and phone number printed on the pharmacy label. Each bottle must state the medication type, dosage and instructions.

If a student will require Tylenol/Advil or ibuprofen on occasion, the student must have his/her own bottle labeled with his/her name. In addition, the medication Policy Form must be signed.

This policy must be strictly followed to ensure the physiological safety of the students during all Program activities.

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 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.

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 or on the job. 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

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

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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

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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

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.

Definitions:

AGGRESSOR: is a student or other person associated with The Programs but are not limited to an educator, administrator, or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.

BULLYING:

Is the repeated use by one or more student or my member of The Programs but are not limited to an educator, administrator, or paraprofessional of a written, verbal electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that a) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property. b) Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property. c) Creates a hostile environment at The Programs for the target. d) Infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of The Program's process.

Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including an individual taking again 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

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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.

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-bullying 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 Program's are affiliated will not provide legal, financial, or any other assistance to any individual accused of hazing if a legal complaint is filed.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION

The Program classes are canceled when Salem State University campus is closed. Tune in to radio WBZ 1030 AM or any local television station to determine if school has been canceled due to poor weather conditions.

Program students should use their best judgment when weather conditions are poor. If the student and his/her family feel that his/her safety is threatened, he/she should stay home. If a student stays home due to a weather related condition, he/she should telephone The Program staff to report his/her absence.

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:

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

- Sullivan and Meier Hall for academic classes
- Harrington Building
- Salem State Preschool
- SSU Bookstore
- SSU Student Center
- SSU Library
- SSU Cafeterias and small shops
- SSU Shuttle bus

GRADING

Students will receive quarterly progress reports. Final exams are held the end of each semester (December and June). All students will receive first and second semester grade reports after exams are completed. Final exams are held on the last five days of each semester. Each exam day is considered a half-day and students attend school from 8:15 am to 11:30 am.

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

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 on site support as deemed appropriate. Student 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.

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. 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.
- Having writing utensils and any other supplies necessary for class.
- Passing in completed homework assignments on the day they are due.
- Increase knowledge and usage of cell phone 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).

THE TRANSITION PROGRAMS AT SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY STAFF DIRECTORY September 2017- June 2018

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