TEACHER CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

2017-18 ARC PROGRAM

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Welcome to the Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) Program. ARC prepares talented, highly qualified adults who possess strong content knowledge to teach in Connecticut schools.

An innovative and challenging program, ARC was created as part of the Education Enhancement Act of 1986. It has been offered since 1988 and is administered by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education.

The ARC is operated by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education and is approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education. ARC is a non-credit and non-degree program, which prepares individuals who already possess at least a bachelor’s degree in their subject area to become eligible for teacher certification. The ARC Program has four major components.

ARC candidates bring a wide variety of academic, work, and life experience to classrooms across the state and come from professions such as architecture, medicine, engineering, law, the sciences, and business. Many ARC candidates have worked previously as substitute teachers, private school teachers, and college instructors. Numerous state and local organizations have recognized ARC graduates for their contributions to the teaching profession. Connecticut’s 2007 Teacher of the Year is an ARC graduate. Since 2007, more than 50 ARC graduates have been named District or Building Teacher of the Year, selected for the Presidential Award in Mathematics and Science, and received fellowships or other honors. Still others have become superintendents, district leaders, and administrators.

ARC’s Mission Statement

The mission of Connecticut’s Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) program is to provide a time-condensed pathway to teaching credentials for adults who have a strong desire to become teachers and who possess strong academic and content backgrounds as well as a wide array of life and professional experiences. ARC is a teacher preparation program that is designed to support the learning styles of adults.
Six dispositions for teaching serve as the foundation of the ARC Program. ARC strives to assure that its graduates possess the dispositions for teaching and that the dispositions are assessed in the admission process and throughout the program.

ARC’S DISPOSITIONS* FOR TEACHING

1. Have a passion for teaching that makes them committed to being the best teachers possible.
2. Care about, motivate, and actively engage students in learning in order to create a positive classroom and learning environment.
3. Value and respect the diverse learning needs and cultural backgrounds of students and their families to create a positive learning environment.
4. Understand the differing needs of their students, hold them to high expectations, and differentiate learning to ensure appropriate level of rigor.
5. Have deep knowledge of their content and how to design instruction and use tools and technology to teach it.
6. Collect, interpret, and use student learning data to monitor progress and adjust instruction.
7. Reflect on practice and continuously seek opportunities for professional learning to improve one’s practice.
8. Communicate and collaborate with colleagues, families, and the community to create positive and culturally respective relationships.
9. Understand and demonstrate professional, ethical, and responsible behavior at all times, in accordance to the Connecticut Code of Responsibility for Teachers.

*Adapted from Connecticut’s Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC)
3. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Component 1 – Program Entry and Pre-Program Requirements

Orientation Meeting: Enrolled teacher candidates must attend a mandatory orientation session approximately one month before the ARC Program’s start date. Candidates will receive access to this handbook and have an opportunity to meet with program staff and faculty, tour the facility, and receive their first assignments.

Readings – Connecticut State Department of Education Resources and Special Education: All candidates receive mandatory readings related to their preparation as a Connecticut educator. These documents serve as references to support the ongoing professional development of teachers-in-training and are mandated by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and other entities to provide a solid foundation of practical knowledge and instructional concepts to teacher candidates. These readings include:

- Common Core of Learning (CCL).
- Common Core of Teaching (CCT).
- Connecticut’s Information and Technology Literacy Curriculum Frameworks.
- An overview of the Common Core State Standards.
- The English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards to support literacy development across the disciplines.
- Content-specific standards related to each certification area and based on Connecticut and/or national standards.

Field Experience Observations: Each candidate is required to complete two full days of classroom observation in both middle and high school settings. World Language, Music, Family and Consumer Science, and Technology Education candidates may schedule one observation at the elementary level to fulfill one of the two observations. Students are required to schedule their own field placement observations and are encouraged to seek out both urban and rural districts during their inquiry process. Please note that some districts may require a background check prior to an observation.

Candidates are provided with several observation guidelines to support their classroom visitations and are then required to write a reflective journal response based on these observations. Discussions about the field experiences take place during Methods classes.

Component 2 - Core Sessions: The Foundations of Education

Candidates in the various subject areas work together during the Core sessions in a large classroom setting. Highly skilled teachers, administrators, and other experts in the field provide candidates with a solid foundation on educational topics required of all beginning teachers. These topics include relevant state and federal laws mandated in all teacher preparation programs and other areas such as: Common Core State Standards, classroom management, differentiated instruction, lesson/unit planning, assessment of student learning, special education and Section 504, English Language Learners, and integrating technology in the classroom.

The Core sessions are offered to the full class of ARC candidates and are scheduled in advance of each ARC Program cycle. Each candidate is required to complete an electronic evaluation of
each Core presenter and session. The evaluation summaries are provided to the presenters to support their continuous improvement efforts. Candidates are invited to refer questions and requests for additional feedback to the Core presenters via email or when submitting evaluation feedback.

The Core sessions are instructed by a group of experienced educators who represent K-12, higher education, and the CSDE. Many of the presenters work with teachers in professional development settings and have been actively involved in the various reform efforts related to instructional standards, teacher and administrator evaluation and assessment, and the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program. They bring to ARC a collective background of expertise, timely knowledge, and research to support the professional development of teachers and adult learners.

**Component 3 - Methods Classes**

Methods classes are organized by specific subject area and focus on rigorous content pedagogy that is aligned with state and national education and content standards. Highly experienced subject area teachers and administrators teach these classes. Methods instructors are experienced K-12 educators who are certified in their subject areas and have a record of successful classroom teaching. Many faculty members also have experience hiring and supervising teachers and are invaluable resources for ARC candidates entering the classroom after intensive teacher preparation training.

The main focus in Methods is teaching ARC candidates how to plan, teach specific content, and assess student learning. Candidates are expected to apply major concepts learned from Core sessions in their Methods classes. Candidates learn how to plan lessons, develop units in their subject area, and analyze and assess student work. They receive instruction in various teaching strategies, classroom management, student behavior, and have the opportunity to plan and teach lessons during classroom for the student practicum experience. Some of these lessons are videotaped, and candidates receive feedback from both peers and instructors with the rubric that is used during the practicum. Candidates also learn how to effectively collaborate with the larger educational community including establishing communication networks with students, colleagues, parents, and others in the K-12 system.

Assessment throughout the ARC Program is an important requirement of the ARC training experience during the Methods program. All candidates are prepared for certification eligibility by completing several Methods assessments, with specific assessments designed to support a successful practicum experience. The following assessments are specifically included for the preparation and support of candidates throughout the practicum experience:

- **Lesson Plans:** Candidates complete detailed lesson plans in alignment with an ARC-provided lesson plan template, which is aligned with state and national education standards.
- **Microteaching:** Candidates spend time planning and implementing classroom lessons with ARC classmates in preparation for their clinical placement. Candidates are evaluated and then provided feedback from their classmates and instructional faculty.
- **Unit Plan:** Candidates complete a comprehensive unit plan that includes several tasks and requirements, including a series of lesson plans, assessments, safety plans (if
Candidates also develop formative and summative assessments in Methods in order to assess student learning and modify instruction for their students. Safety assignments and assessments are also a focus for areas of certification requiring preparation in science.

Component 4 - Practicum

The practicum is the culminating experience of the ARC Program. Candidates are placed in a public school district for a six-week period (30 consecutive days). The purpose of the practicum is to provide candidates with an opportunity, under careful supervision, to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become effective teachers. During the practicum, a TEAM-trained or designated cooperating teacher from the school district and an Evaluator from the ARC Program evaluate candidates.

The practicum placement is assigned by the ARC Program and is determined by the candidate’s area of certification and appropriate range of grade levels. Candidates submit a form providing information about districts of interest. Final practicum placements are made by the ARC Program in consultation with the school district based on the availability of qualified cooperating teachers, other logistics unique to the placement request, and the candidate’s qualifications.

School districts employ a variety of procedures and policies when considering student teachers and require that teacher preparation program staff work directly with the district’s practicum placement coordinator. School districts receive a resume, copies of transcripts, and recommendation letters for each practicum placement. Candidates are encouraged to provide an updated resume with the submission of their practicum placement forms.

ARC evaluates practicum performance in alignment with the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and content-specific standards as required by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Each candidate is evaluated by an ARC Evaluator who is either an instructional faculty member or an assessment specialist with appropriate evaluation experience. Student teachers also work with a cooperating teacher, an experienced classroom teacher who agrees to host and mentor a student teacher in their classroom.

The cooperating teacher completes a minimum of three classroom observations and one final summative evaluation. The evaluator also completes a minimum of three classroom observations and one final summative evaluation throughout the duration of the clinical experience. In addition, mid-point and final assessments of teaching dispositions and professional expectations related to teaching are completed by the cooperating teacher. An individual must receive a score of “Acceptable” or better on all indicators to successfully complete the practicum.

- **Fingerprinting and Background Checks**

  A state law went into effect on July 1, 2010, requiring that all teacher preparation candidates complete a fingerprinting and criminal background check 30 days prior to the
start date of the practicum. If the candidate has been initially hired and checked by the public school district where the practicum will occur, there is no need for an additional fingerprinting. If the candidate has substituted in a district other than where the practicum will occur, then the candidate must be fingerprinted again.

In accordance with CSDE guidance, all fingerprinting must be handled by Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs), with all expenses paid by the student. Only RESCs have the authority to share the fingerprint results with local or regional boards of education and with other RESCs within Connecticut.

The background check will be subject to review and may lead to program dismissal if any item on it is a violation of the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers. Students receive information about the procedures for acquiring fingerprinting services and what verification is needed for the ARC Administration at the time of acceptance and again during the program orientation. Practicum placements cannot proceed without appropriate fingerprinting verification on file by the required filing deadline.

Fingerprinting verification for the 2017-18 ARC practicum placements is due by October 2, 2017. Candidates are provided with a requisition form that must be signed and dated by the RESC providing the fingerprinting services. A receipt and copy of the fingerprinting results are also acceptable forms of verification.

Fingerprinting and background checks completed by a RESC after July 1, 2017 are acceptable for candidates who were previously fingerprinted for K-12 employment. The candidate can provide ARC with any official verification of fingerprinting and background check information already on file with a participating RESC.

- **Candidate Convictions**

  All candidates are required to undergo background checks, first for the program and again if hired in a district. A conviction of a criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation, any indicated finding of child abuse filed in your name, or the appearance on any Sex Offender Database in any state or country, must be disclosed to the ARC Administration as soon as possible.

  Hiring districts must be made aware prior to hiring. Failure to disclose prior convictions and offenses in a timely fashion may result in dismissal from the program or the revocation of a job offer. Once a candidate is identified as having a conviction record, the Director may formally request that the candidate provide documentation for consideration in deciding to admit, maintain admission, or dismiss from the program. Documentation may include:

  (a) A written explanation of the circumstances which led to the conviction(s) and an attestation that there are no further incidents.
  (b) An official court disposition for the conviction(s), or a letter from the Court Clerk indicating that no records are available (a photocopy is not acceptable).
3. PROGRAM COMPONENTS (continued)

(c) Verification by the appropriate state agency that all probation and/or community service requirements were successfully completed (if applicable).

(d) A minimum of three current letters of recommendation specifically addressing the candidate’s character, success as an educator and/or degree of rehabilitation. These original letters must be signed and dated within the past three months and include the contact information for the signatories.

If the candidate does not have an official record of the court documentation, he or she will need to:

(a) Contact the Court Clerk at the court house where the proceedings occurred and request the official court disposition for the case(s); or
(b) Contact the State Police in the state where the incident occurred and request the official records; or
(c) Contact the appropriate RESC and arrange to have the official results sent to the institution; or
(d) Provide a written release authorizing the appropriate institution to directly obtain documentation from the RESC. (We recommend that you work with legal counsel to develop a standard release form.)

In determining the candidate’s eligibility to continue in the program, the Director will consider the statutory basis on which a certificate may be denied by the CSDE, including program standards for dispositions.

The ARC Program reserves the right to use candidate competencies/standards established above and beyond state and national standards to determine if the candidate’s conviction is, or is not, grounds for dismissal from the program.

4. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Assessment of Student Performance

ARC views candidate assessment as an on-going process, and a continuum of assessments are used throughout the program. ARC uses an evaluation system of “Unacceptable,” “Acceptable,” and “Target” indicators, and candidates must receive ratings of “Acceptable” or “Target” on all criteria in each assessment to successfully complete the program and be recommended for teacher certification. If a candidate is unable to meet the requirements of an assessment, policies are in place to support appropriate interventions and training outcomes as noted in the handbook section “Program Policies.”

A summary of specific program requirements that are part of the overall program assessment include the items listed below. These specific assessments are evaluated and rated in the student’s mid-program and final progress reports.

- **Core Readings and Assignments**
  Successful completion of all Core assignments is required.
• **Field Observations**
  Prior to the beginning of the program, each candidate must spend two full school days observing teachers in both a middle and high school environment and will also complete a structured, reflective journal entry based on their classroom and teacher observations.

• **Lesson Plans and Unit Plans**
  Candidates are required to write a number of lesson plans and at least one unit plan during the Methods component.

• **Micro-Teaching Lesson Development and Classroom Instruction**
  All candidates must plan and present lessons during the Methods component to practice skills and timing in preparation for the practicum and assessment. Peer and instructor feedback provide guidance for the candidate. Lessons may be videotaped to enable the candidate to view and critique his or her teaching style and presence in support of continuous improvement efforts required of teacher candidates. Assessments aligned with the CCT, CCSS, and Specialized Professional Association (SPA) standards are utilized during this process.

• **Reflective Journals**
  Candidates are required to keep a daily reflective journal to facilitate their learning process and make connections between theory and practice. Journaling prepares candidates to meet TEAM training requirements and allows faculty members to receive feedback about the connections candidates are making in response to their instruction and various training methods/resources. They also reveal candidates’ attitudes and professional dispositions toward teaching and learning.

• **Methods Assignments**
  Each Methods area has its own additional assignments (e.g., readings, papers, demonstrations, etc.) that must also be completed in order to fulfill all program requirements for each area of certification. In all cases, assignments are based on state-mandated topics, state and national standards, or foundational instructional strategies and techniques that are necessary for rigorous curriculum development and instruction.

• **Practicum**
  As the culminating activity for the ARC training experience, a successful demonstration of teaching ability is evaluated by an ARC student practicum evaluator and cooperating teacher in alignment with rigorous assessments. Students must receive “Target” or “Acceptable” on each indicator of the final evaluation in order to pass student practicum. Students are required to comment on both the cooperating teacher’s and ARC evaluator’s observations. In addition, a weekly written reflection of the student practicum experience is also required.

• **Program Evaluations**
  Candidates are required to complete evaluations of all Core presenters, Methods instructors, and the overall program preparation experience. Candidates will be advised of submission deadlines throughout the program.

• **Attendance and Punctuality**
To assure that ARC candidates adhere to the attendance expectations required of teachers and that the professional dispositions required for a certification recommendation adhere to the standards of the ARC Program and the CSDE, attendance and punctuality are requirements for successful completion of the ARC Program. Thus, attendance is recorded for each class by the Methods faculty and for each Core presentation by the site facilitator. Patterns of tardiness and absence are unacceptable and will be treated as disciplinary issues.

Excused absences are limited to serious illness and emergency situations that cannot be controlled within the confines of the ARC schedule. Make-up work will apply to any sessions that are missed, either partial or full, at the discretion of the program faculty and Director. Please note that attendance matters will also impact letters of recommendation from the program faculty.

- **Active Participation in the Core Sessions and Methods Classes**
  At Core sessions, candidates are expected to be active learners, focusing their attention solely on the presentations and actively engaging in all activities of the presentation. Side conversations and activities unrelated to the presentation are disruptive and not acceptable. Students are expected to participate actively in all Methods class activities, making positive contributions to the class as expected for candidates enrolled in a graduate-level academic program. Improper behavior may result in expulsion from the session and disciplinary action by the ARC Director.

- **PRAXIS II or ACTFL Examinations**
  Successful completion of Praxis II or ACTFL exams is required of all ARC candidates. In circumstances where conditional admission was granted based on incomplete results, all exams must be passed before a practicum assignment will be arranged. Praxis II is administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), and registration must be done online at [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis).

  Note that you must have your Praxis II scores sent by ETS to both ARC and to the CSDE. Use the following codes when you register for the Praxis II exam(s):
  - ARC – R3007
  - SDE – R7050

  Registration for the ACTFL exams required for World Language certification is done through Language Testing International either online at [http://www.languagetesting.com](http://www.languagetesting.com) or by phone at 914-963-7110, ext. 10.

- **Other State-Mandated Training Requirements**
  All teacher candidates in the State of Connecticut are now required to complete several training requirements. This training includes topics on dyslexia, English Language Learners (ELL), and mandated reporting. Access to training opportunities will be shared with candidates in advance of the program due dates.
5. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONNECTICUT TEACHER CERTIFICATION

90-Day Temporary Certificate

Candidates who successfully complete the ARC Program become eligible for the 90-Day Temporary Teaching Certificate issued by the CSDE. The 90-Day Temporary Certificate is available only for ARC-prepared teachers hired in a Connecticut public school for a permanent teaching position or as a long-term substitute serving for 90-days or longer in the subject/grade in the area of ARC preparation. When an ARC graduate has signed a teaching contract in a school district, he or she must apply to the CSDE for the 90-Day Temporary Certificate. The ED-172 application form for the certificate is distributed to graduates at the end of the ARC Program. It is also available on SDE’s website at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/Cert/certform/ed_172.pdf.

The school district that wishes to hire the ARC graduate must complete Section IV of this application, affirming that the individual is to be hired and thus requesting that the 90-day certificate be issued. The official ARC “Statement of Preparing Institution – ED 125” form for the student must be submitted with the ED 172 before the 90-day certificate will be issued by the CSDE. ARC cannot sign the “Statement of Preparing Institution – ED 125” until all ARC and certification requirements have been met.

During the 90-days, ARC offers additional instructional coaching support provided by K-12 educators and professional development seminars. To transition from the 90-day to the initial educator certificate, the district superintendent must recommend that the temporary certificate be converted to the Initial Educator Certificate. This request is provided to the CSDE two weeks before the expiration date of the 90-day credential. The same employing district must recommend the ARC graduate for both the 90-day and the initial educator certificates.

It is the ARC graduate’s responsibility to meet any state certification requirement enacted after completing the program. Graduates should be aware that the more time that passes between the completion of the ARC program and their pursuit of a permanent position in a public school, the greater the likelihood that additional state certification requirements will have to be met.

ARC Support for Beginning Teachers

Instructional Coaching: ARC offers instructional coaching support to its graduates during the first 90-120 days on the job. Instructional coaches are experienced K-12 educators who offer a variety of support while observing classes leading to continuous improvement during the first year of teaching. Instructional coaches plan an individualized support schedule with each new teacher that may consist of assistance in handling classroom management and other types of instructional problems, assistance with lesson planning, curriculum development, assessment, time management and organizational methods, or general advisement regarding communication and networking within the learning community. ARC instructional coaches have no formal role in the new teacher’s evaluation and assessment process and do not report any details to the ARC Office or school administration unless requested to do so by the new teacher.

Although optional, first year ARC teachers are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the instructional coaching provided through ARC. ARC graduates are reminded to inform the ARC Administration when they obtain a teaching position so that coaching support can be arranged. Please also be courteous in responding to emails and phone calls from instructional coaches, even when decisions are made to discontinue coaching services. If the services of an ARC
Instructional coach are no longer needed, it is important to notify the ARC Administration as soon as possible.

**Instructional Coaching for Candidates with a Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP) or an ongoing Long Term Substitute (LTS) Position:** For candidates who secure a teaching job while in training, coaching occurs early in the placement rather than after completing the program. Within approximately two weeks of beginning the placement, an ARC coach will visit your classroom to observe a lesson and meet with you and your school mentor. The purpose of the visit is to assure that you are doing well in this new role. The coach will provide feedback and will complete a checklist of questions so that Methods instructors can assist you in adjusting to being a teacher-in-training. The completed checklist will be shared with the ARC Administration and instructors. Another visit will be planned for two weeks later. These coaching session replace the coaching opportunity after completing the program. They are required.

If the student secures an LTS position, coaching may, or may not occur, depending on the timing of the practicum. You are reminded to notify the ARC Office if you accept a long term substitute position.

**Social Security and Teaching in Connecticut**

Connecticut teachers are part of the Connecticut Teacher Retirement System and may not contribute to Social Security. Teachers who retire under the Connecticut Teacher Retirement System and who are also eligible for Social Security will most likely have their Social Security benefits reduced. For more information, refer to the Connecticut Teacher Retirement Board website at [http://www.ct.gov/trb/site/default.asp](http://www.ct.gov/trb/site/default.asp).

**Job Placement**

ARC cannot guarantee job placements for its graduates, and ARC graduates are responsible for their own job searches.

ARC frequently receives inquiries from districts about job openings and provides announcements about statewide teacher vacancies via email. An annual teacher recruitment event is usually held at the ARC location and provides an opportunity for students and graduates to network with K-12 administrators, distribute resumes, and apply for openings for the following school year.

Other types of teacher recruitment and hiring events take place throughout the state, and graduates are notified about such events as the information is received. Job searches can also be conducted at [www.cea.org/jobs](http://www.cea.org/jobs), which is a website that is regularly monitored and updated by the Connecticut Education Association. Other educator employment hiring sources are maintained by the Connecticut Regional Education Service Center (RESC) Alliance at [www.ctreap.net](http://www.ctreap.net) and the Connecticut Association of Schools at [www.cas.casciacc.org](http://www.cas.casciacc.org).

**Transcripts**

ARC is not a credit bearing or degree granting program; therefore, candidates will not receive a transcript at the completion of their ARC training. ARC graduates will receive a statement of
completion to verify the full completion and eligibility for teacher certification upon hire by a public school.

Candidates who are interested in pursuing a graduate degree to fulfill future certification requirements may be able to apply ARC training towards graduate credit at Eastern Connecticut State University and Central Connecticut State University. More information can be obtained by contacting the respective colleges.

6. TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

ARC Resource Library

The ARC Program has an online resource library to provide program announcements, resources for candidates and teachers, and required readings, handouts and assignments. **Candidates are responsible for checking the library on a regular basis to look for updates, and it is the ARC student’s responsibility to access all required Core and Methods materials as needed.**

Computer Lab

ARC candidates will have access to a computer lab throughout the duration of the program experience. Aside from technology sessions that are part of the program training, candidates will be able to work on assignments during the lunch hour and other scheduled times.

Wi-Fi

All ARC classrooms, including B-39, have Wi-Fi access for anyone wishing to bring laptops or other electronic devices to class. Please note that any handouts or materials needed for class should be downloaded into a laptop or device prior to each class to avoid any disruption with program training when and if the Wi-Fi service is unavailable. It is also the candidate’s responsibility to bring a flash drive to each session for back-up materials or to download any resources that are provided by the instructors.

7. OFFICE COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Contacting the ARC Office

**Responses to Questions:** Requests by ARC candidates for copies of transcripts, reference letters, or any other materials from the candidate’s permanent file must be made in writing, either by mail or email. Please note that reference letters will not be released without the permission of the referee, whose signature is required on the “Freedom of Information” disclosure statement included in the reference letter form.

ARC candidates who need to drop off forms or have official documents signed must make an appointment in advance to assure that the individuals with signature authority are available.

**Email Communication/Name Changes**

It is very important that you keep your email address and legal name changes current with the ARC office. ARC communicates with its students via email on a frequent basis, including
notification of any changes in the program schedule and **invitations to professional development activities**. Please send email address or name changes to arc@ctohe.org.

**Social Media**

Social media is an increasingly important and commonplace source of information and entertainment. Our ability to share information quickly and effectively on social media make it a powerfully effective tool for communication. If abused, however, it can also lead to misinformation, slander, and offense. Consequently, the ARC Program has established social media guidelines as follows:

- The integrity of our program is critical to its continued success. Avoid writing or posting anything that would embarrass ARC or compromise your ability to succeed in the program and in the profession.
- Assume that your professional life and your personal life will merge online regardless of any effort you make to separate them.
- Even if you use privacy tools (determining who can view your page or profile, for instance), assume that everything you write, exchange, or receive on a social media site is public.
- Unless authorized to speak on behalf of ARC, you must state that the views expressed about ARC are your own.
- Act responsibly and ethically. When participating in online communities, do not misrepresent yourself or ever share personal information about your fellow ARC candidates, your students, and ARC faculty and staff.
- Assume conversations about ARC are internal and private. Ask permission prior to sharing these conversations via social media properties.
- Always show respect. Don’t publish content containing slurs, personal insults or attacks, profanity or obscenity, and don’t engage in any conduct on a social media site that would not be acceptable in ARC or school classrooms.

**8. PROGRAM POLICIES**

**Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance and punctuality are considered very important in the ARC Program, and both are monitored and assessed throughout the duration of the program. There are two major reasons for the importance given to attendance and punctuality: First, the ARC Program is a time-condensed teacher preparation program that covers a significant amount of information in a short amount of time; second, school districts expect their teachers to be conscientious about being on time and in attendance as part of their daily responsibilities to students, colleagues, and their learning community.

Daily attendance and punctuality is recorded for Methods and Core sessions, and a record of absences and tardiness will be included in the candidate’s permanent file. Candidates are expected to be in attendance at all Core and Methods sessions and for the full duration of the practicum unless there are major extenuating circumstances beyond a candidate’s control (e.g., illness of student, family emergencies, etc.). **No absence or missed class time will be excused.**
and all work missed as a result of an absence or missed class time must be made up promptly and in accordance with the expectations established by the instructor assigning it. Every attempt should be made to notify the instructor(s) in advance of any absence or missed class time.

The candidate will be responsible for material that was covered during any absence or tardiness and will be required to complete make-up assignments per the discretion of the program faculty and Director. **Unexcused absences will result in referral to the ARC Administration and may result in dismissal from the program.**

Practicum attendance will be strictly monitored and enforced. If an absence is to occur during the practicum, the student teacher must promptly contact the cooperating teacher and ARC Evaluator well in advance of the school day reporting time to ensure other preparations can be made to cover classes. Make-up days for absences during the practicum will be determined by the ARC Evaluator and cooperating teacher in consultation with the ARC Administration and may result in additional practicum time after the scheduled completion of the ARC Program. The practicum experience requires a commitment of six consecutive weeks, which is equivalent to 30 days of on-site instructional time.

**Tardiness**
- Candidates who are not present at the start of a session or otherwise miss up to half of a session will be considered tardy and expected to make up missed work accordingly. Make up work assigned for tardiness is at the discretion of the instructor and ARC Administration.
- If a candidate demonstrates a pattern of tardiness, as determined by the ARC Administration, a probation notice will be issued. Candidates who receive a probation notice will be required to meet with the Dean and Director and may face further disciplinary action or dismissal from the program. Each probation notice will require that no additional infractions occur for the remainder of the program.

**Absences**
- Candidates who miss either one half of a session or a session in its entirety will be considered absent and required to complete all make-up work.
- If a candidate demonstrates a pattern of absences, as determined by the ARC Administration, a probation notice will be issued. Candidates who receive a probation notice will be required to meet with the Dean and Director and may face further disciplinary action or dismissal from the program. Each probation notice will require that no additional infractions occur for the remainder of the program.
- If a candidate must miss multiple days of the program due to an unanticipated circumstance beyond the Candidate’s control (e.g., emergency surgery or serious illness) the candidate may request a hearing with the Dean and Director regarding an extension for program completion. The ARC Administration will request and expect medical documentation or other supporting information to support a candidate’s request for the extension.

**Cell Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices**

Cell phones and other electronic communication devices should be turned off during Core presentations and during Methods classes unless their use is invited by the instructor.

8. PROGRAM POLICIES (continued)
general rule is to apply the same professional and mature discretion with these devices that you would expect from your own students when you are teaching.

**Acceptable Use Policies for ARC Computers and Wi-Fi Access**

The ARC Computer lab may only be used for work related to program training during hours when scheduled classes are not in session. The lab will be available one half hour before classes begin and during the lunch hour when the ARC Program is in session.

- If there is a need to use the computer lab during a class break, please see the on-site administrator in the event that a technology class may be in session.
- No food or drink is allowed in the computer lab.
- Printing is restricted to work done during the integrative technology sessions. All printing for class should be prepared in advance using personal resources.
- All flash drives should be scanned prior to use in the computer lab to assure they are virus free and present no risk to state equipment.
- No work should be downloaded or saved into the ARC system with the exception of work saved online.

Per State of Connecticut computer usage policies, the following also applies.

**Examples of Unacceptable Use of State Systems**

- Any unauthorized access to any computer system, application, or service.
- Connecting personally-owned hardware or installing and/or using non-State licensed software. State policy on downloading software is included in Connecticut Software Management Policy. See “Additional Resources” below.
- Any usage of CTNET for illegal or inappropriate purposes is prohibited. Illegal activities are violations of local, state, and/or federal laws and regulations (please see Connecticut General Statutes, §53a-251). Inappropriate uses are violations of the appropriate use of state systems, as defined in this document.
- Any activities for private, commercial purposes, such as business transactions between individuals and/or commercial organizations.
- Any and all personal activities involving any of the state systems, including personal email and Internet accounts.
- Any usage that interferes with or disrupts network users, services, or computers. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of unsolicited advertising and deliberate propagation of computer viruses.
- Any activities where users engage in acts that are deliberately wasteful of computing resources or which unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others. These acts include, but are not limited to, broadcasting unsolicited mailings or other messages, creating unnecessary output or printing, or creating unnecessary network traffic.

**Program Completion Requirements**

Candidates are expected to complete all requirements of the program by the established due dates. No candidate will be recommended for certification, unless and until, all requirements and
obligations are met. The Director may require a meeting with any candidate to discuss issues related to disposition or conduct as a requirement for program completion. Failure to attend such a meeting may result in dismissal from the program.

Failure to complete all program requirements on time may lead to dismissal from the program. An extension may be granted for up to six months. Subsequent requests for extensions may be granted for periods of time not to exceed six months. Should the candidate fail to make a request or if the request is denied, the candidate’s file will be closed and reported as a “non-completion” in the ARC system.

For each missed deadline in either Core or Methods, a Counseling Form will be provided to the student for his or her signature acknowledging the nature of the infraction and its consequences. Should the student choose not to sign the Counseling Form, a meeting with the Dean and Director will be required and may result in further disciplinary action or dismissal from the program.

- An academic warning will be issued each time a student misses a Core or Methods assignment deadline. Students will be provided with a deadline by which the work is to be completed. If the assignment is satisfactorily completed prior to the deadline, the warning will be removed.
- If a candidate exhibits a pattern of incomplete or missed assignments, as determined by the Administration, a probation notice will be issued. Candidates who receive a probation notice will be required to meet with the Dean and Director and may face further disciplinary action or dismissal from the program. Each probation notice will require that no additional infractions occur for the remainder of the program.

Notification of any programmatic decisions regarding academic progress caused by incomplete or late work will be made in writing and documented in the candidate’s file. If a candidate does not complete his or her work as required and is dismissed from the program, the candidate’s file will be closed and his or her status will be reported as a “non-completer” in the ARC system.

**Deferring the Practicum**

A candidate may request of the ARC Director a meeting to defer the practicum for up to one year of the ARC session’s completion date in which he or she was enrolled due to unforeseen extenuating circumstances. These circumstances must have arisen after the candidate was accepted into the program and must be documented accordingly to confirm the timing of the circumstances. A request for a practicum deferral must be submitted in writing to the ARC Director with a detailed explanation of why the request is being made. If the candidate has not satisfactorily completed the practicum within the time granted by the deferment, his or her file will be closed and reported as a “non-completion” in the ARC system. Only one deferment of the practicum may be granted due to the accelerated nature of program instruction.

**Additional Courses**

Candidates who are granted conditional admission due to incomplete coursework will be granted continued active ARC status for six months after completion of the program to which he or she was admitted. If required courses are not completed by the deadline, a candidate must request an extension with the ARC Director.
If a candidate does not request an extension or is otherwise denied the opportunity for an extension, the file will be closed and the candidate reported as a “non-completer” in the ARC system. The candidate is responsible for submitting all applicable official transcripts with completed requirements provided directly by the college or university in a sealed envelope. It is the candidate’s responsibility to accurately represent their ARC status in effect at the end of the program session to potential employers and K-12 administrators.

Cancellation or Delayed Openings

If a session of the program must be cancelled or delayed due to inclement weather or an emergency situation such as the loss of power, faculty members will be notified by email as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to announce a cancellation by 2:00 p.m. on Friday or by 6:00 a.m. on Saturday. An email will be sent to all candidates and faculty members. In addition, announcements will be posted with one or more of the following media outlets:

- WFSB – Channel 3
- WTNH – Channel 8
- WVIT – Channel 30
- WTIC – Channel 61

Controlled Substances

Candidates are not to be under the influence of, nor in possession of, a controlled substance such as alcohol, marijuana, or other drug (unless the drug has been legally prescribed by a medical professional) while at the program site or an alternative site if so scheduled. Violators of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from the program.

Non-Discrimination

The ARC Program recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person and strives to foster tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among all candidates and staff and believes that diversity among its candidates and staff is a critical component in preparing teachers for Connecticut’s schools. As such, the ARC Program fully complies with all laws and regulations, as outlined in Connecticut General Statutes 46a-51.

Accommodations

The ARC Program is committed to providing all candidates with the opportunity to succeed and welcomes reasonable accommodation requests. Each request will be reviewed by the Director on a case-by-case basis. In determining reasonable accommodations, he or she considers each candidate’s condition(s), history, experience, request, and the unique characteristics of the ARC Program.

In order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations, candidates may be required to provide information from other sources in order to establish a disability and the impact it has on living and/or learning in a postsecondary environment.

Receipt of prior accommodations (e.g., in high school or in another university setting) will inform the process of determining appropriate accommodations but will not guarantee receipt of the same accommodations. While the law requires that priority consideration be given to the
specific methods requested, it does not imply that a particular accommodation must be granted if it is deemed unreasonable or other suitable methods are available.

All requests for accommodations must be made in writing to the Director as soon as possible, prior to the start of that component of the program for which an accommodation(s) is sought.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is considered dishonest and a serious violation of intellectual integrity. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism will not be tolerated in the ARC Program.

- **Definition of Plagiarism:**

  Plagiarism is using the words and/or ideas that belong to someone else as if they were your own. Whenever you use someone else’s words or ideas, you must document the source, thus giving credit to that person. If you do not, you are plagiarizing.

  1. If you submit work under your name that was done by someone else in whole or part, you have plagiarized. This, of course, includes submitting a paper written by someone else under your own name.

  2. If you use the exact words written by someone else, you must put those words in quotation marks and document the source, or you are plagiarizing. Generally, if you use more than 3 or 4 words in succession from an author, use quotation marks.

  3. If you have taken an idea or an interpretation from an author, even if you have paraphrased (i.e., reworded) it, you must document the source, or you have plagiarized. Note that the exception to this is an idea that is considered common knowledge in the field, so common that you would find the same idea in most works on the topic. When in doubt, cite the source.

  4. If you include information that you did not know prior to locating it and that information is not considered common knowledge in the field, you must document that information, or you have plagiarized.

  5. If you cut and paste from the Internet and do not cite the source of the material, you have plagiarized.

- **Penalties for Plagiarism:**

  1. If an instructor believes a candidate has unintentionally plagiarized, the instructor will meet with the candidate to discuss the problem. If the instructor concludes that the plagiarism was unintentional, the candidate will be required to redo the assignment to correct the problem. Failure to redo the assignment will result in dismissal from ARC.

  2. If the instructor believes a candidate intentionally plagiarized, the instructor may recommend to the ARC Director that the candidate be dismissed from the program. The ARC Director will meet with the instructor and the candidate and then render a decision. Intentional plagiarism will result in dismissal from the program.
Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment by a candidate or staff member will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, and/or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature whether overt or subtle. Any candidate or staff member who is determined to have sexually harassed another candidate or staff member will be disciplined and may be dismissed from the program. Complaints regarding alleged or actual sexual harassment should be submitted in writing to the Director.

Practicum Placements

The ARC Administration is solely responsible for arranging practicum placements. Placements must occur only within public schools. ARC candidates should not make contact with schools or districts to try and arrange their own placements.

- Satisfactory Completion of the Practicum

A student teacher must receive at least an “Acceptable” rating on all criteria included in the final evaluation assessment that is submitted by the ARC Evaluator in collaboration with the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher’s evaluation will be taken into consideration when the ARC Evaluator completes the final evaluation, but the final decision submitted by the ARC Evaluator determines satisfactory completion. The student teacher may appeal his or her final practicum evaluation to the ARC Director.

- Repeating the Practicum

If an ARC student teacher does not satisfactorily complete the practicum, the ARC Director and ARC Evaluator(s) will decide if a second chance will be approved for a placement, for a minimum of six weeks, during the following school year. The ARC Director will meet with the student teacher, the ARC Evaluator, and/or the cooperating teacher and others as needed to discuss the assessment outcome. The ARC Director will then render a final decision based on the consensus of said individuals. A candidate who is allowed to repeat his or her practicum will be required to pay an additional fee of $800.00. Candidates who are allowed to repeat the practicum will not be permitted a third placement. If the second experience is not successful, the ARC candidate’s file will be closed, and the candidate will be considered a non-completer.

If approved, the student teacher will also be required to spend a minimum of three days observing the cooperating teacher before the start date of the practicum assignment. Candidates are encouraged to spend additional time observing their second placement site if time permits and if approved by the district. Following the completion of the program session in which the student is enrolled, ARC will schedule the second student practicum assignment as soon as possible.

Withdrawals and Tuition Refunds

If an applicant is admitted, a non-refundable deposit of $1,650 is required to guarantee a spot in ARC, and this $1,650 is deducted from the cost of tuition. The remaining tuition must be paid prior to the start of the ARC Program. Any request for a tuition refund must be submitted in writing to the ARC office and must adhere to the following program timelines:
- For requests granted prior to the first day of class, 80 percent of the tuition paid minus the $1,650 non-refundable deposit will be refunded.
- For requests granted prior to the beginning of the second week of class, 60 percent of the tuition minus the $1,650 non-refundable deposit will be refunded.
- No refund will be issued after the beginning of the third week of class.

**Deferment and Leave of Absence**

A candidate who has been accepted into the program may request a deferment of his or her acceptance until the following program offering is such a request is made prior to the start of the third week of the program. If the deferment is granted, the non-refundable deposit will be kept to secure a position in the new program session. Should the tuition increase beyond the 2017-18 ARC rate, the candidate will be responsible for any additional tuition amount that is in place at the time of program attendance. Only a single deferment may be granted.

Because of the condensed nature of the ARC Program, candidates shall not be awarded a leave of absence. Unless a deferment has been granted, anyone who withdraws from the program or is otherwise removed and desires to resume his or her program will be required to apply again for admission. Waivers for previously met requirements will not be awarded, and no tuition or fees previously paid will be prorated. Refunds are limited to the stipulations outlined in this handbook.

**Academic Warning, Probation, and Dismissal**

The ARC Director may issue an academic warning, place a candidate on probation, or dismiss a candidate from the program for issues related to Methods, Core, practicum, attendance, professional dispositions, or any other matters related to violations of ARC policies or the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers. A corrective action may be developed as needed.

If an issue occurs during the Methods portion of the program, Methods faculty will meet with the candidate to discuss the problem(s) and suggest corrective actions to resolve it. If the issue(s) persists or is not resolved in a timely manner, the faculty member will notify the ARC Director in writing. The ARC Director will review the situation on a case-by-case basis and may require a meeting with the candidate.

A corrective action plan may also be developed (warning/academic probation) outlining the specific improvements needed. A notation will be made in the candidate’s evaluation report(s), and a copy any disciplinary actions described above will be placed in the candidate’s file. Failure to meet any corrective action plan in a timely manner or meet the conditions outlined in the academic warning or probation letters will result in dismissal from the program. A due process appeal conference may be requested with the Executive Director of the Office of Higher Education or the Executive Director’s designee. A formal appeal request must be filed within ten (10) working days of the notice of the candidate’s dismissal. Participation in the ARC Program during the appeal process is at the discretion of the ARC Director.

The Executive Director or designee will meet with the candidate and may invite other individuals to this meeting at his or her discretion. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the Executive Director or designee will hear the appeal within fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the candidate’s appeal.
Candidate s will receive a written notification of the Executive Director’s decision or estimated time frame for further investigation within five (5) working days of the date of the appeal meeting.

**Procedures and Resolution of Candidate Complaints**

ARC faculty and administration are committed to supporting candidates during their participation in the ARC Program. Candidate issues that interfere with the successful completion of the ARC Program are taken seriously, and procedures are in effect to help candidates resolve concerns or formal complaints in a timely fashion. On occasion, problems or issues that need clarification or resolution may arise. When a problem or issue arises, candidates are advised to review this handbook for information on the matter. Candidates should seek guidance from Methods faculty if they have questions or concerns about ARC Program policies or procedures.

If an issue cannot be solved through informal discussions with ARC faculty, a formal complaint may be filed.

**STEP 1: The Complaint**

Candidates are required to meet first with their Methods faculty to seek additional information and to resolve the problem as soon as possible. If informal discussions do not resolve the issue as stated above, the candidate may make a written complaint to the member of the Methods faculty responsible for instruction. The Methods faculty member will then attempt to find a resolution to the issue.

The faculty member involved must acknowledge to the candidate and ARC Director receipt of the complaint, in writing, within five (5) working days from receipt. The faculty member will send a written response to the candidate with a decision. This will be completed in a timely manner and every attempt will be made to resolve the complaint within ten (10) working days from receipt of the complaint. The majority of the concerns are usually resolved at STEP 1. If the complaint is not addressed satisfactorily, the candidate then can proceed to STEP 2.

If the complaint does not involve Methods faculty, the candidate should contact the ARC Director for clarification and assistance and, if necessary, proceed directly to STEP 2.

**STEP 2: The Review**

A candidate who feels that his or her complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily in STEP 1 can request in writing a review by the ARC Director within ten (10) working days of the date of notification of the decision in STEP 1. The Director must acknowledge the complaint with five (5) working days of receipt. The Director will independently review the complaint, and may ask for additional information or meet with the candidate. The Director may invite other individuals to this meeting at his or her discretion. The Director will send a written response to the candidate with a decision. This will be completed in a timely manner and every effort will be made to resolve the complaint within ten (10) working days of receipt. Extensions of this timeline may be necessary depending on the nature of the complaint. The Director will either support the original decision in STEP 1 or provide an alternative resolution. If the original complaint involved the Director, the Executive Director or designee will conduct the review.

**STEP 3: The Appeal**
A candidate who feels that his or her complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily in STEP 2 can appeal the decision to the Executive Director within ten (10) working days of the date of the notification of the decision in STEP 2. The Executive Director or designee may ask for additional information or to meet with the candidate. The Executive Director or designee may invite other individuals to this meeting at his or her discretion. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the Executive Director or designee will hear the complaint within fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the candidate’s appeal. Candidates will receive a written notification of the Executive Director’s decision or estimated time frame for further investigation within five (5) working days of the date of the appeal meeting.

**Withdrawing a Complaint**

Candidates have the right to withdraw a complaint at any time during the process, in which case the complaint shall be registered as concluded and noted as withdrawn. Candidates who choose to withdraw complaints must include their reason(s) for the withdrawal in writing. The candidate should address in writing the withdrawal to the ARC Director, who will advise all parties in writing that the complaint has been withdrawn. The Director may still decide to initiate appropriate corrective action depending on the nature of the complaint. The complaint will then be concluded and no further correspondence will be required.