



**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**2023 – 2024**

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Welcome to the exciting world of digital education! Your school district has chosen to provide these 21st Century technology classes on your campus to offer curricular opportunities that may not otherwise be available to you. To make the most of this privilege, you need to be aware of the structure of the classes, policies, and tools utilized by teachers. All Virtual Arkansas digital learning courses follow a blended-learning model of instruction that includes digital face-to-face time and online time. This handbook is designed to help you become a successful digital learning student and make the most of your technology-based learning experience.

Read this handbook completely. Your parent or guardian will need to read and sign the Audio Visual (AV) Release and provide one email address and one telephone number. You, the student, will need to read and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and turn the MOU in within the first 10 days of being enrolled in a course. This document is at the end of the handbook, page 12.

**Overview of Technology:** Canvas is the Learning Management Systems (LMS) used by Virtual Arkansas. Students will access course material and assessments by logging into the Portal and then they will click on their course and will automatically be logged into the Canvas LMS. Zoom is the interactive technology you will use to participate in the interactive live Zoom sessions. Zoom allows students and teachers to see and hear each other in real time. Interaction is much the same as in the traditional classroom.

**Your Classes:** As a student enrolled in Virtual Arkansas, you may have a course or courses in one or more of the five campuses - Core, CTE (Career and Technical Education), Concurrent Credit, Middle School, and Off-Campus Fully Online. When you participate in the interactive sessions, you will interact with students from other schools. Each course will begin with a Gateway session designed to help you make a successful transition to the online classroom. Please pay special attention to the strategies and tools provided during these sessions.

**Your Teacher:** Virtual Arkansas employs teachers who are certified/licensed in their subject areas and have the responsibility of teaching and grading in Virtual Arkansas courses. Teachers post their contact information, content resources, and Zoom information to help you succeed.

**Your Facilitator:** Under the guidance of your teacher, facilitators supervise students at individual schools. The trained facilitator is responsible for monitoring your progress, maintaining a positive learning environment, ensuring the appropriate resources are available, managing ethical testing, keeping students on task, and communicating with the teacher. The facilitator has the authority to enforce school, Virtual Arkansas, and teacher policies. Students are expected to behave respectfully towards the facilitators.

**Your Grades:** You can access your grades through the Portal and the Canvas Learning Management System. The Portal is updated nightly. Some assignments within your course are automatically graded, while some must be graded by the teacher. Unless otherwise noted by your teacher for specialized assignments, grades are expected to be available in the gradebook within seven calendar days of the due date. You may check your grades at any time and should communicate any concerns to the Virtual Arkansas teacher immediately. We encouraged students to provide their parents or guardian access to their grades.

#### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Institutions are implementing policies and strategies to address academic dishonesty and to ensure that students do their own work and give credit to the originator of the ideas, when using the thoughts or work of others. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs or apps on assignments, plagiarism, stealing

academic property, and cheating. Virtual Arkansas subscribes to online services to identify material that may have been plagiarized. Students identified as being in violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy may not receive credit for that work and may suffer additional penalties based on local school policy. Depending on the severity of the academic dishonesty, as determined by the principal/campus director and teacher, a student may receive a zero (0) for the assignment.

The Virtual Arkansas campuses may impose, but are not limited to, the following actions in situations involving academic dishonesty.

1. The student may receive a lower grade, with the possibility of revision,
2. The student may receive a grade of zero for the test or assignment,
3. The student may be awarded a failing grade for the course, or
4. The student may be withdrawn from the course.

### Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Academic Integrity

For further information regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI), please review the [Virtual Arkansas Student Guidelines for Using AI](#).

The information below provides specific AI academic integrity information as it relates to Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit and Advanced Placement (AP) courses:

#### **Concurrent Courses**

Virtual Arkansas partners with Arkansas Tech University for concurrent coursework. According to the [Arkansas Department of Higher Education Concurrent Policy](#), “college/university administration must exercise direct oversight of all aspects of the concurrent course, including participation in the faculty selection, orientation, and evaluation processes.” This means that students enrolled in concurrent courses must also adhere to [ATU’s Code of Academic Integrity](#). ATU considers the use of AI as a violation under the section on “Impersonation, Fabrication, and Forgery” (page 2).

#### **Advanced Placement Courses**

College Board has issued the following statement regarding its [policy](#) regarding the use of AI:

“Students are categorically prohibited from using any and all Artificial Intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT or DALL-E) or essay writing services (e.g. Chegg or Course Hero) to guide, brainstorm, draft, or create student work related to any AP assessment, including written projects and performance tasks. The AP Program reserves the right to validate student work submitted for AP African American Studies, AP Art and Design, AP Computer Science Principles, AP Research, and AP Seminar with plagiarism detection tools and other investigative efforts to identify non-student generated work. Any use of Artificial Intelligence tools or essay writing services will be considered an exam violation and may result in the cancellation of a student’s AP score(s).”

While this policy speaks to the use of artificial intelligence tools for testing purposes, students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas AP courses are advised that the use of these tools is also prohibited for any graded assignment.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in an online course consists of your logging into your courses, attending Zoom class periods, corresponding with your teachers, completing assignments, and more.

In an online environment, you assume more responsibility for keeping up with the course requirements. It is critical that you access and interact with the online content on a daily basis and participate in the interactive sessions. If you are absent from a digital learning class, you are responsible for making up the missed assignments, as explained in Expectations for Student Success. Your local school may have specific online attendance requirements. Make sure you know and abide by any and all of these requirements.

Attendance for the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus is specialized due to preparation for post-secondary involvement. You should communicate in advance with the teacher regarding absences and making up assignments/tests, except in emergency situations. You will be expected to adhere to the specific guidelines given in each teacher's course syllabus.

Advanced Placement classes do not end until the Advanced Placement exam is given. In the event of absences due to extenuating circumstances (illness, medical emergency, etc.), the Directors/Principals of each Virtual Arkansas campus will work on a case-by-case basis with the local administration to devise a plan for the student.

Virtual Arkansas has the ability to pull student activity reports that document when a student has accessed course content and the length of time a student has spent interacting with the content.

For Off-Campus and Fully Online Program students, attendance and participation are vital to course completion and success. Students who are not participating and attending their courses may be dropped from their classes by Virtual Arkansas. In addition, your local school will likely have attendance and participation guidelines that you must follow.

Schools will assign an individual locally to monitor the students enrolled in the OCFO program. Local administrators will be alerted of those students who are not logging into courses and completing assignments. Students who have not logged in after ten (10) school days should be investigated and a determination made on if the student should be dropped from the courses.

## **CALENDAR**

Students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas courses will follow the Virtual Arkansas calendar for those enrollments.

## **CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE**

Classroom discipline will be in accordance with the policies of the local school district. Each teacher may establish his/her own class rules and procedures as long as they do not conflict with local school policy. In the event of serious student discipline issues, the name of the student and the specifics of the problem will be reported to the local principal. If action is merited, the procedure below may be followed.

1<sup>st</sup> offense – Facilitator will complete a local school Discipline Report and turn this into the principal.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – Facilitator will complete a local school Discipline Report and turn this into the principal. The local school principal should contact the parent and inform the parent of the issue.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Student will be disciplined according to local school policy.

4<sup>th</sup> offense – Student may be officially dropped from the class. If this occurs, the student may not receive credit for the digital learning course.

*\*Please be aware that some actions may result in immediate removal from class, regardless of whether it is the first, second or third offense. If a student is removed from class, he/she may receive a W, F, or not receive a grade.*

### COMPUTER USAGE

Your school district's computer usage policy will be enforced in the Virtual Arkansas digital learning classroom. In regard to digital learning applications (i.e., Zoom), unacceptable usage includes, but is not limited to, using inappropriate language, cyberbullying, harassment, and trespassing in the files of others. These actions may result in the loss of access to these applications and websites. Any communication or content within the digital learning application is subject to access and review by local school and Virtual Arkansas personnel at any time.

### COPYRIGHT OF VIRTUAL ARKANSAS COURSE CONTENT

All original content contained in Virtual Arkansas courses and housed within the LMS is the property of Virtual Arkansas. Some content may be sourced from other creators and is used under agreed upon licensing terms. Course content may include, but is not limited to: reading material, assignment/tests, images, course resources, videos, and Zoom recordings. This content is intended for the sole use of students currently enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas course and is not to be reproduced, copied, shared, used locally by districts, or posted to any outside services, e.g. social media, without the written permission of Virtual Arkansas.

### COURSE ACCESS

You will access your courses by first logging in through the Portal. Once logged into the Portal, you will see your dashboard. From the dashboard, you will click on the course you want to access and you will be automatically logged into the Canvas LMS.

You will be expected to actively participate in your digital learning experience. Virtual Arkansas is an online program that does not provide paper assignments and assignments must be completed within the Learning Management System (LMS). If submission of an assignments can only be made using paper documents, you must receive prior approval from the teacher.

### DROP/ADD PROCEDURES – CORE AND CTE STUDENTS

All drops/adds in Virtual Arkansas classes are done using the registration system and will be submitted by your local school Registrar.

**General Drop Policy** - Virtual Arkansas teachers will do everything possible to help students succeed in coursework, but there may be situations when students are dropped from enrollment in Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE classes. These situations are usually failure to complete work, discipline, or an academic dishonesty violation. To be successful, students should not procrastinate in completing coursework, but do it on a timely basis. These policies are intended

to minimize the adverse effects on students when they are not progressing in the course.

Schools should consider dropping students who have not logged in to begin working within the first 10 school days after enrollment, or the instructional start date.

**Virtual Arkansas Drop Policy:** Virtual Arkansas students must meet attendance and participation requirements to maintain enrollment in Virtual Arkansas courses. The following policies will go into effect during the 2023-2024 school year: Virtual Arkansas will have a Census Day on the 15th day of each 9 weeks. Students who have not logged in to their Virtual Arkansas course(s) for seven consecutive school days on Census Day will automatically be dropped from their Virtual Arkansas course(s) prior to invoice day, which is the twentieth day of each nine weeks.

#### **DROP/ADD PROCEDURE – CONCURRENT CREDIT STUDENTS**

Please refer to your syllabi or contact the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit office for information regarding university deadlines to add/drop classes. The school administrator or counselor has access to the withdrawal forms and must follow the university's procedures for dropping students from concurrent classes.

You should be prepared for the academic rigor of concurrent credit courses.

- When dropping a student from a Concurrent Credit course, the student must be dropped from the course through the Concurrent Credit office.
- Before withdrawing/dropping a course, a student should consider the impact on future financial aid.
- College hours attempted in high school under pre-freshman status count toward the maximum number of hours a student is allowed to attempt under federal and state grant programs.

Students should use good judgment and consult the post-secondary institution they currently attend, as well as the post-secondary institution they plan to attend after high school graduation, for advice before withdrawing.

#### **DUE PROCESS**

Appropriate conduct is expected of all students at the school. Students are guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

#### **EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

**Attend Class:** Attendance is extremely important. If you are absent, review the pacing guide for assignment due dates. You are responsible for homework, notes, and all class-related assignments and materials according to your school's policy. Check with your facilitator and, if necessary, with the teacher for the materials you need for class.

**Avoid Plagiarism:** Plagiarism continues to be an ever-growing problem in our current world of sharing resources online. Review the Academic Dishonesty section on page 2. Each teacher will provide a review of plagiarism and share resources to assist you in following policies of academic honesty. Consequences for engaging in plagiarism include, but are not limited to re-submitting the assignment for reduced credit or receiving no credit on the assignment.

**Be Considerate:** You may be in class with students of varying backgrounds from different schools. Treat everyone in your class with respect at all times. This includes teachers, facilitators and students from all sites. Disrespectful or derogatory comments toward the digital learning community members are not acceptable and will be dealt with appropriately.

**Be Prepared:** Come to class prepared and on time. You should bring all required materials to class every day and begin work immediately when class begins.

**Be Responsible:** Take responsibility for your learning and managing your time. The pacing guide is your tool to organize your school week and to help with managing your time. You are expected to be mature learners by paying attention, asking questions, completing homework, studying for quizzes/tests, and checking your inbox, messages, and announcements from teachers daily.

**Engage in Developing 21st Century Technical Skills:** By nature, digital learning courses will provide you with the opportunity to master keyboarding skills, creating files, saving files, uploading files, electronic communication, and basic software utilization.

**Know Your Policies:** Become familiar with your local school student policies, the Virtual Arkansas operating policies, and teacher procedures. In order for you to be fully enrolled in the course, the signed Audio Visual (AV) release and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be returned within the first 10 days of your enrollment and given to your facilitator. Failure to return these forms, signed, within the time frame required, may delay your accessing the course content or may result in you being dropped from the class.

**Participate:** Participation involves attending Zoom sessions, sending and responding to messages from the teacher, paying attention during instruction, answering when called upon, engaging in all lesson content, including readings and videos, and watching the recorded lessons. To ask a question, wait to be recognized and speak politely. You are encouraged to attend all Zoom sessions. You are also expected to know your teacher's Zoom schedules, enter the Zoom room on time, and follow your teacher's Zoom room procedures and expectations. Data indicates there is a direct positive correlation between student engagement and grades.

**Practice Ethical Testing Procedures:** Follow the teacher's procedures for ethical testing, which may include utilizing a cover sheet, forbidden usage of electronic devices, such as cell phones and smartwatches, and clearing your desk. The best practice is to not engage in academic dishonesty of any kind.

### **WITHIN NINE-WEEK EXTENSIONS/EARLY TESTING**

- All extension requests MUST be approved by the local school administrators

For students under controlled pacing, there will be situations within a nine-week period when a student, school, or a parent requests an extension or early testing. Extensions for the 1st and 3rd nine-week sessions will be for one (1) or two (2) weeks only from the end of the grading period. Students must have a legitimate extenuating circumstance that requires an extension.

1. Local administrators will be required to complete an Extension Request form providing the specifics of why the extension is required.
2. This does not apply to Concurrent Credit courses

Incompletes for Concurrent Credit exams and assignments must be approved by the teacher in advance.

### **FLEX PACED ENROLLMENT GUIDELINES**

- Available ONLY for students enrolled in Core and CTE courses
- Not an option for Concurrent, AP, or Middle School enrollments
- Once the final exam for a nine-week session or the semester is taken, students are not permitted to go back and submit assignments

### Fall Semester

Flexible pacing is designed for students whose pacing is not controlled by the teacher. Flexible pacing is meant for those students who may not or cannot meet the course requirements by the end of the term or for students who are working at an accelerated pace. Flexible pacing allows students to progress at a steady and differentiated pace that is appropriate for them.

The request to move/change a student to Flexible pacing will only be approved on a case-by-case basis and should be made prior to the conclusion of the 1st nine-week period or the conclusion of the 3rd nine-week period.

Students who are under Flexible pacing and need additional time beyond the end of the first semester will have until January 15th, or the first school day following the 15<sup>th</sup> if it falls on a weekend or the MLK Jr. Holiday, to complete the course requirements for that section or semester, or until the semester exam is taken. If incomplete on January 15th, the student may be enrolled in the same course content for the Spring semester or the student will receive an incomplete designation and will lose course access.

### Spring Semester

Requests to change students from Traditional to Flexible pacing must be made prior to the conclusion of the 3rd nine-week period.

If, at the end of the Spring semester, the student has not completed the course or section requirements, the student will receive an incomplete designation. The student may be re-enrolled in the course during the summer session if the course is offered during the summer session, or the following fall semester if the course or section is offered.

## GRADE POLICY

- Once the final exam for a nine-week session or the semester is taken, students are not permitted to go back and submit assignments
- Bonus points are not awarded for any assignment or assessment

Students should follow the course pacing guide and teachers should report updated grades by each Monday. Exceptions will be made for CR/Flex and students who are working significantly behind or ahead. Teachers will make every effort to provide prompt grading in these situations.

Students in a teacher-led course who do not turn in an assignment by a set deadline stated in the pacing guide and/or set by the teacher that is well communicated will receive a "0" (zero) for missing work. Once the student turns in the assignment the grade will reflect the grade earned on the assignment. In order for students to have an accurate understanding of their performance in the course, a "0" (zero) is awarded with the intent that it can be changed if the work is completed in accordance with the teacher's guidelines.\*\*

\*\*Concurrent Courses will follow Concurrent Grading Guidelines in this area.

### GRADE REPORTING — CORE AND CTE STUDENTS

In Core and CTE courses, teachers will provide numerical grades based on a range from zero to one hundred in four nine-week periods based on the Virtual Arkansas academic calendar. Semester averages will be calculated using the 45 – 45 – 10 formula (1st or 3rd quarter grade = 45% of final grade; 2nd or 4th quarter grade = 45% of final grade; semester exam = 10% of final grade).

Virtual Arkansas adheres to the Virtual Arkansas calendar posted on the Virtual Arkansas website

and released through the newsletter. Official nine-week and semester grades are released on specific dates each semester. Grades accessed prior to the release of official grades may not reflect the official grade.

For concurrent credit courses, consult the course syllabus for the semester grade calculation.

### **GRADE REPORTING - CONCURRENT CREDIT STUDENTS**

The Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus operates on semester calendars. College grades earned through the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus are part of your permanent college transcript. The grade will affect your college grade point average. The effect of pre-freshman status grades varies from one post-secondary institution to another. If you are concerned about the grade that you receive, you are encouraged to check with the post-secondary institution you plan to attend after high school graduation for advice.

### **ATTENDING LIVE ZOOM SESSIONS FROM LOCATIONS OTHER THAN THE LOCAL SCHOOL**

If allowed by local district policy or as part of the Off-Campus and Fully Online Program, some students may attend live Zoom sessions from a location other than their local school. Any student attending a Virtual Arkansas Zoom session from a location other than their local school must be aware of the following guidelines:

1. The environment from which the student attends the Zoom session should be appropriate and conducive to learning. Please be aware of the following expectations regarding the Zoom environment:
2. During live Zoom sessions, the background should be appropriate and not distracting. There should not be any visible offensive material.
3. Background noise should be minimal or non-existent during Zoom sessions.
4. Students should not eat or drink while in a Zoom session.
5. Other individuals not enrolled in the class should not be present during the Zoom session.
6. Pets should not be visible during a Zoom session.
7. The student should be dressed appropriately, according to the local school handbook, just as if the student was attending class on-campus.

The teacher may remove a student or turn the students' camera off regardless of where the student is located during the live Zoom session if that teacher feels the student is not dressed appropriately, displaying offensive behavior, or if distractions or the background view is/are considered inappropriate and/or interfering with other students who are in attendance.

If a student is removed from a live session, the teacher will document the incident immediately and send that documentation to their campus director. The campus director will then contact an administrator or school official and provide the documentation of the incident.

### **MAKE-UP POLICY**

For Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE classes, if a student has an excused absence, the student should complete all graded assignments as allowed by his/her local school's make-up policy. It is the student's responsibility to check with the facilitator/teacher for the materials needed to complete missed assignments. In cases of an extended excused absence, the Virtual Arkansas campus supervisor will consult with the local principal to develop a plan for a student to complete the coursework.

Students under Controlled pacing may re-submit assignments after an intervention meeting with

the teacher. Assessments may not be re-taken.

Students under Flexible pacing may submit assignments from the 1st or 3rd nine-week periods at the end of the Fall or Spring semesters.

Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit courses must follow the guidelines set by the partnering institution of higher education in respect to make-up policies. These guidelines are included in each course syllabus.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Virtual Arkansas teachers utilize the information provided by local schools to attempt parent/guardian contact regarding student performance and achievement. If parent/guardian contact is not provided, Virtual Arkansas teachers will attempt to obtain this information from the local schools. Parents/guardians will have the opportunity to provide an email address and a phone number at the beginning of the year while signing the Virtual Arkansas Student AV Release and MOU. The primary means of parent contact will be via email, but phone calls may also be made by Virtual Arkansas teachers.

Parent-Teacher conferences are an excellent time to provide parents an opportunity to experience the digital learning environment and to see how technology is integrated into their child's education. Local personnel should be involved in advocating these opportunities with parents and stakeholders whenever possible. The classroom facilitator, Super User, or Registrar should be present during these conferences. At any time, parents may request that the Virtual Arkansas teacher contact the parent by telephone or email to discuss the grades or behavior of their child.

Students and a parent/guardian of the Off-Campus and Fully Online Program will be sent information via messaging or email regarding Parent-Teacher Conferences attendance opportunities. To receive parent emails from Virtual Arkansas, the parent email information must be populated in the Virtual Arkansas Student Information System (SIS). It is the local school's responsibility to ensure parental contact information is correct within eSchool. Virtual Arkansas draws this information from the local school.

Virtual Arkansas concurrent credit teachers must abide by federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. FERPA is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The regulations are found at [Ed.gov, \(https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-A/part-99\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-A/part-99).

For students who are eighteen (18) years of age or older, who do not want academic information provided to parents or guardians, it is the school's responsibility to remove the parental contact information from TRIAND (eSchool) so that the Virtual Arkansas SIS does not pull the parental contact information from TRIAND.

## **REPORTING CONCERNS**

Most issues or questions can and should be resolved at the lowest level. Your first point of contact for classroom issues or concerns is the teacher.

There may be a time when you or someone from your school will need assistance beyond the teacher. Below you will find the steps to take when you need further assistance beyond the teacher:

    Contact the Virtual Arkansas instructor to seek a resolution.

    If you need further assistance, contact the applicable Virtual Arkansas campus supervisor to seek a resolution.

**CTE Campus Director/Principal:** Christie Lewis  
Phone: 870-246-9063  
Email: [christie.lewis@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:christie.lewis@virtualarkansas.org)

**Core Campus Principal:** Jason Bohler  
Phone: 501-477-2781  
Email: [jason.bohler@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:jason.bohler@virtualarkansas.org)

**Concurrent Credit Campus Principal:** Ty Bibby  
Email: [ellora.hicks@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:ellora.hicks@virtualarkansas.org)

**Off-Campus Fully Online Principal:** Dr. Nic Mounts  
Phone: 501-477-2781  
Email: [nic.mounts@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:nic.mounts@virtualarkansas.org)

If a resolution is not reached through the individuals above, contact the Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction

**Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction:** Dr. Brandie Benton  
Phone: 501-477-2781  
Email: [brandie.benton@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:brandie.benton@virtualarkansas.org)

If a resolution is not reached through the individuals above, contact a local administrator at your local school.

## SEMESTER EXTENSIONS

- Local administrators will be required to complete an Extension Request form providing the specifics of why the extension is required.

For Core and CTE students, who are controlled paced, semester extensions will be considered on a per case basis. The request for a particular student must be made by a local school administrator. Fall semester extensions for controlled paced students will not extend past January 15<sup>th</sup> day, or the next school day, of the Spring semester.

Students needing an extension to complete the course requirements at the conclusion of the Spring semester have two options:

1. The student may be enrolled in the Summer Session to complete the remaining course requirements.
2. The student may be enrolled in the Fall semester of the new academic year to complete the course requirements.

The Concurrent Credit Campus will follow the ATU semester final exam schedule policy. Students must have incompletes approved by the teacher in advance.

## STUDENT SAFETY TIPS

As a student in a digital online class, please remember how easy it is for information to be spread in a digital world. Pictures and text can easily be copied and/or pasted into many public places, such as social media sites, and easily distributed. Please keep in mind that you are responsible and are accountable for any such action if you choose to distribute inappropriate or private media or information.

**Keep Your Accounts Secure** – Each time you leave your computer or electronic device, be sure to log out of your classroom and any other sites you are using for course work. Also, remember to log off the computer or electronic device itself each time you leave the device so that the next student to use the computer or electronic device will not have access to your course under your username and password. Never share your username or password with anyone in order to protect your accounts.

**Maintain Privacy** – It is fun to meet new people in an online course, but you should not share your age, telephone number, email address or home address anywhere within the online digital learning sites.

**Don't Respond** – If you receive an inappropriate message that makes you feel uncomfortable or is hurtful, do not respond. Take a screenshot of the offensive message if possible and notify the facilitator or teacher right away.

**Don't Participate in Cyberbullying** – Inappropriate pictures or writing are not allowed within the digital learning coursework. Screenshots may be kept of all student work and will be utilized in discipline referrals, if necessary.

**Stay on Task** - When students have an individual computer to access coursework, there is sometimes the temptation to “surf the web” or visit non-instructional websites. In order to be safe and engaged in the instruction, refrain from visiting non-instructional websites.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

**Hardware**– Participating schools are responsible for maintaining local equipment for their students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas courses. In order to support a 21st Century blended-learning experience, it is required that each student have daily access to a computer connected to the internet, a headset with a microphone, and webcam. We recommend computers be hard-wired to the network in the digital learning classroom. Schools may use a wireless configuration, but performance may be negatively impacted as the number of computer connections increase in a wireless setting. Districts should ensure that the technology requirements are satisfied prior to classes beginning. A computer specification sheet is available for all students at <https://www.virtualarkansas.org/technology>. Students' may need access to certain technology based on specific course enrollments. Please consult the textbook and resources list, as well as the course catalog, for any special hardware or software needed for a course.

**Software** – Some courses require specialized software to be installed on the local digital learning room computers. To access the required software, go to <https://virtualarkansas.org/technology>. **Please check the Textbook List to see if the courses you are enrolled in require specific software.**

## TESTING POLICY

- Once the final exam for a nine-week session or the semester is taken, students are not permitted to go back and submit assignments.

Section 3.10.4 of the Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning requires “The Teacher of Record shall be responsible for supervising the administration of student assessments or ensuring, through a designee, that appropriate supervision of administration of student assessments is provided.” Virtual Arkansas has designated assessments to be supervised by the local facilitator or other trained school employee for Content + Teacher Supplemental courses. For the Off-Campus and Fully Online Program, Virtual Arkansas will provide assessment proctoring. To ensure that assessments are administered with appropriate supervision, all facilitators are required to attend facilitator training.

All students enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE courses are required to take all nine-weeks and cumulative/semester exams as detailed by the teacher. Any assessment requiring a password **MUST** be taken under the supervision of a local school designee (proctor). All Concurrent Credit assessments must adhere to the Assessment Guidelines provided by each instructor.

All students enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE courses are required to take all nine-weeks and cumulative/semester exams as detailed by the teacher. Any assessment requiring a password **MUST** be taken under the supervision of a local school designee (proctor). All Concurrent Credit assessments must adhere to the Assessment Guidelines provided by each instructor.

Family members and relatives are not permitted to proctor or supervise a student taking an assessment that requires a password.

**There are no exemptions for Virtual Arkansas Core, CTE, or Concurrent Credit cumulative/semester exams.** However, students who take the AP Exam, may substitute this for the second semester final exam. Students enrolled in an AP course and who do not take the AP Exam must take the second semester final exam for the AP course. If a student misses a major exam and does not make it up during the time frame allowed by district policy, the student will receive a zero for the exam. A school administrator must request that the student be provided the opportunity to make up the missed exam.

Students enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses must take the AP exam for each AP course in which the student is enrolled to receive weighted credit at the district level.

Semester final dates for Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit classes are established by the partnering universities and are listed in the course syllabus.

## TESTING RETAKES – EXIT AND MODULE TESTS

The following criteria must be met to retake an exit test:

1. All coursework is completed in the applicable module
2. Exit test is completed for the applicable module
3. The exit test is within the current 9 weeks.
4. There must be some intervention between teacher and student as determined by the teacher.

**\*\*Concurrent Courses will follow Concurrent Grading Guidelines in this area.**

## TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS – CONCURRENT CREDIT

To request a transcript for students enrolled in Concurrent Credit courses, go to the ATU website. The institution has specific instructions for requesting a transcript with your college grades and



the URL is <https://www.atu.edu/registrar/transcript.php>.

By checking the box to the left, I am authorizing Virtual Arkansas to use audio and/or visual representations of my child/legal dependent in class recordings, publications, websites, video presentations or any other electronic or published media, to promote or communicate the advancement of Virtual Arkansas digital courses.

OR

By checking the box to the left, I am not authorizing Virtual Arkansas to use audio and/or visual representations of my child/legal dependent in any way, as described above. However, I DO give permission for my child to participate in the interactive Zoom sessions which may be recorded and used in Virtual Arkansas staff-only events, such as instructor evaluations.

This Audio Visual release and Memorandum of Understanding must be signed and returned in to the facilitator within the first 10 days of entering a Virtual Arkansas course. This release will be maintained by the local school.

**Parents:** Please sign below to indicate that you have read and understand the Virtual Arkansas Student Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please provide one parent/guardian email address and one parent/guardian phone that may be used to communicate student progress.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

1. It is my responsibility to familiarize myself and abide by all Virtual Arkansas policies as outlined in the handbook. The Student Handbook may be accessed at <https://virtualarkansas.org/studenthandbook> .
2. I will maintain appropriate classroom behavior as outlined by my high school handbook, the Virtual Arkansas Student Handbook, and my digital learning teacher classroom procedures.
3. I will be accountable for all class activities, including online and offline instruction.
4. I will be respectful to all digital learning teachers, facilitators, and other students participating in class.
5. I will actively participate in my digital learning experience.
6. I will not willingly participate in activities that are dishonest, including, but not limited to, cheating and plagiarism.
7. I will follow the computer usage guidelines of my local school district, my digital learning teacher, and make every effort to attend the interactive sessions.
8. I will make my digital learning class a priority and make every effort to access the course content daily.
9. I will take the responsibility to obtain and complete missed assignments when I am absent.
10. I understand that I may be removed from a Virtual Arkansas class and receive a W, F, or no grade, if I am involved in a severe discipline or academic dishonesty incident.

**Please sign in ink.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(PRINTED LEGAL Student Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School/District)

## VIRTUAL ARKANSAS CHALLENGE TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS POLICY

### Definitions

“Curriculum” is defined as follows: “The sequences of public school student learning expectations, pacing, materials, and resources that are used to teach the Arkansas academic standards and the processes for evaluating mastery of the Arkansas academic standards at particular points in time throughout the kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) educational program.”

“Instructional Material” is defined as follows: “Instructional content that is provided to a public school student, regardless of its format that includes without limitation printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital format, such as materials accessible through the Internet; however, instructional materials does not include academic tests or academic assessments.”

“Parent” is defined as follows: The parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of a student, or person standing in loco parentis for an enrolled student.

### Policy

[Virtual Arkansas’s](#) (VA) mission is to equip, engage, and empower students through unique digital opportunities. As the State of Arkansas’s Virtual School (SVS), we partner with local schools to provide course opportunities to students that might not otherwise be available with local resources. Virtual Arkansas is not an online school or a diploma-granting institution but serves as a resource for supplementing the education of local students. Virtual Arkansas’s program is implemented through a partnership between the Arkansas Department of Education and the Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives. This initiative is guided by Act 2325 of 2005: An Act to Provide Distance Learning. Additional information about Virtual Arkansas can be found in our [Program Informational Guide](#).

All course content, including but not limited to curricular materials, instructional materials, and assessments, are designed and developed, or vetted and selected by Virtual Arkansas’s Departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Design and Development and are adopted for their compatibility with Virtual Arkansas’s educational program and unique learning model. Curriculum and instructional materials are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for grade-level learners, are in alignment with the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks, and that they fulfill our organization’s educational goals and objectives.

Arkansas Act 684 (§6-16-152) guarantees the right of a parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of a student, or person standing in loco parentis to a student to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for a public school student. The rights provided to parents under this policy transfer to the student when the student turns eighteen (18) years old.

### Request to Inspect Process

Parents (as defined above) may request to inspect any instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum. In addition to all other inspection rights under this policy, the following shall be made available for inspection following a formal request:

- Curricula
- Materials
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Activities

Instructional materials (as defined above) do not include academic tests or assessments. Additionally, Virtual Arkansas will not share any items that may violate the FERPA protections of other enrolled students (i.e., Zoom recorded synchronous sessions, discussion boards, etc.)

To make a formal request to access the materials, parents will follow the steps outlined below.

Email the teacher of record for the course. The teacher should communicate with the parent regarding access to Canvas via the Observer Role and send instructions.

The teacher should verify that the parent has been able to access the student's course via the Observer Role by looking in the People tab of the Canvas course.

If the parent is not satisfied with the Observer Role, the teacher of record will provide the "parent" with a link to the [Request to Inspect Curriculum Materials Form](#).

The "parent" will complete the form and indicate a variety of important information including relationship to student and specific curriculum components and course titles to be inspected.

The form response will be sent to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Design and Development who will forward it to a Curriculum Review Committee composed of the appropriate campus director and others, to include the teacher of record.

The Curriculum Review Committee shall affirm that the requester meets the legal definition of "parent" as described in Act 684 and is enrolled in the course for the current academic term. If this cannot be determined by the information in the Virtual Arkansas student information system, an email will be sent to the local school affiliation to confirm the requester's relationship to the student.

The Curriculum Review Committee will make a determination regarding access to requested materials, specific to the type of material requested within the form.

If access to inspect is provided, the parent will have fourteen (14) calendar days to inspect requested materials.

The granted access is non-transferrable to other parties and is only given to the specific "parent" requesting the access. Once accessed, the "parent" is expected to honor the privacy and legal protections in relation to the content shared with them.

After fourteen (14) calendar days, "parent" access to inspect requested materials will be removed except for those access pieces already available to all parents for the duration of the enrollment through the observer role.

### **Formal Challenge to the Curriculum Process**

Parents (as defined above) wishing to challenge or express concerns about curriculum, instructional, or supplemental materials including classroom events or activities associated with classroom instruction may do so by filling out a [Formal Challenge to the Curriculum Form](#) available upon request following the formal inspection process outlined above.

The following procedures will be followed once the form is received:

The form response will be sent to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Design and Development who will forward it to a Curriculum Review Committee composed of the appropriate campus director and others.

The Curriculum Review Committee shall consult with the teacher and others regarding the contested material. The committee shall decide whether to retain the material, limit the availability of the material, or remove the material from the curriculum. The committee's consideration in reaching its decision shall be if the instructional and supplemental materials including classroom events or activities associated with classroom instruction are as following:



- Not aligned to the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and/or course objectives.
- Misleading
- Factually inaccurate; or
- Otherwise inappropriate for the intended educational use.

Following the Curriculum Review, the campus director shall notify the “parent” of the outcome and if the curriculum item is retained, and inform him/her regarding the criteria used for the selection of the material and its relevance to the educational program as well as any other pertinent information in support of the use of the material.

If the “parent” is not satisfied with the campus director’s response, the “parent” shall be advised to contact the student’s school district of record to seek further resolution.

Regardless of the outcome, the campus director will have two (2) working days to write a summary of the concerns expressed by the individual and the Curriculum Review Committee’s response to those concerns. The outcome shall be shared with VA Leadership and maintained within a shared folder for future reference.

**Legal Reference:** A.C.A. §6-16-152