

Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium

Participating School Handbook

2011-2012



ADEDLC



AECHS



DCDL



ODE



AVHS



Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium

Participating School Handbook

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ARDL Consortium Operating Policies

Promoting School Success

■ **Welcome**

The Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium is honored to welcome you to the 2011-2012 school year. Our purpose is to provide your district with curriculum needs and assure that each distance learning student receives quality instruction through the use of 21st Century technology methods. We will provide a rigorous standards-based curriculum taught by highly qualified faculty. Maintaining the academic integrity of the educational process through distance learning is a priority of the Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium. We appreciate your school's participation and anticipate the partnership of providing opportunities to Arkansas students will be a successful one. In order to ensure success, we have devised a coordinated set of operating policies and assurances. We thank you in advance for honoring these policies.

■ **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic Dishonesty in regards to student work is an ever-increasing problem in the age of technology. Institutions across the globe are implementing policies and educational modules 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, plagiarism, stealing academic property and cheating. Students identified as being in violation of a content provider's Academic Dishonesty Policy may not receive credit for that work. If a facilitator discovers that a student is in violation, the facilitator should notify the instructor in addition to following the policy of their school. If an instructor suspects academic dishonesty the instructor may call a conference with the student and facilitator. If the academic dishonesty persists, the distance learning provider may report problems to the local principal.

■ **Attendance**

Attendance is extremely important for distance learning courses. There will be times when students have to miss class for scheduled activities, such as assemblies or organizational meetings at the local school district. If a school has scheduled an event that will interfere with a distance learning course, the instructor should be notified in advance. Students who are absent from distance learning classes are responsible for making up the missed assignments. Facilitators are responsible for taking attendance and reporting it to the instructor and appropriate individual at their school. As in the traditional classroom, we feel the distance learning courses should take priority over extracurricular activities but realize this may not always be possible. Attendance for Arkansas Early College High School is specialized due to preparation for post-secondary involvement. Any student who misses more than 8 classes of a concurrent credit course is subject to NOT receive college credit. Advanced Placement classes do not end until the Advanced Placement exam is given. In the event of extenuating student circumstances (illness, medical emergency, etc.), the content providers will work with the local administration to devise a plan for the student on a case-by-case basis.

■ **Classroom Discipline**

Classroom discipline will be in accordance with the policies of your school district. Each instructor 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. Classroom discipline is a partnership between the distance learning instructor, facilitator, and local school administration. The assistance and support of the local high school principal is necessary to provide a successful experience for all distance learning community members.

If action is merited, the procedure below may be followed upon each violation:

1st offense – Facilitator will be asked to complete a Discipline Report.

2nd offense – School Principal and Parent contact may be requested.

3rd offense – Student may lose privilege from classes for one week. Parents may be notified in writing. Student is expected to complete all assigned work for that time.

4th offense – Student may be officially dropped from the class. If this occurs, the student may not receive credit for the distance 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 be issued a W, F, or not receive a grade.

■ **Classroom Environment**

Local school administration should provide a place for students enrolled in distance learning courses that supports a healthy and optimal learning experience. Facilitators will receive training on classroom environment during the state-provided training. Local administration is encouraged to support the facilitator's efforts to design a safe, clean classroom that is conducive to learning.

■ **Classroom Facilitation**

An effective facilitator is the key to a successful distance learning classroom. According to the Arkansas Department of Education's Rules Governing Distance Learning (Section 4.05), "All distance learning courses shall have an adult facilitator to supervise any instructional activity where students meet as a group. Each participating school must provide an adult supervisor in the distance learning classroom at all times when students are present." In our experience, we have found that training and necessary communication tools are keys to a successful distance learning experience for all stakeholders. The school should insure that the facilitator completes training provided by the Arkansas Department of Education. Upon completion of the required training, facilitators will be issued a certificate for documentation. It is also necessary for facilitators be provided a planning period to prepare documents, print instructional materials, access lesson plans, if they facilitate six (6) periods of distance learning courses. Facilitators should have a personal computer in the distance learning classroom for instant communication with the instructor.

■ **Communication**

Communication between local school personnel and the distance learning provider/instructor is important to the overall success of the distance learning program. Each participating school should designate a local site coordinator that is responsible for transmitting student records, handling communication issues, student enrollment, etc. The site coordinator should provide contact information for the high school principal, high school counselor, and the site coordinator prior to the first day of class.

■ **Computer Usage**

The school district's computer usage policy will be enforced in the distance learning classroom. In regards to distance learning applications (i.e. Moodle, Blackboard), unacceptable usage includes but is not limited to using inappropriate language, cyber bullying, 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 distance learning applications are subject to access and review by local school and distance learning program personnel at any time.

■ **Drop/Add Procedures**

Any student's drop or add status should be communicated to the distance learning instructor as soon as possible. Specific Drop/Add status notification instructions are located on each individual content provider's website.

Arkansas Virtual High School Students (in addition to other listed policies)

General Drop Policy - AVHS instructors will do everything possible to help students succeed in coursework but there may be situations when students are dropped from enrollment in AVHS. These situations are usually failure to complete work or an academic dishonesty violation. Students should not procrastinate and wait until the last minute to complete coursework.

- Students who have not logged in to begin working within the first two weeks of enrollment may be dropped.
- At the end of four weeks of enrollment, students who have not completed 50% of the assigned work with a passing grade may be dropped.
- After the first and third nine-weeks, students will not be dropped. They will receive grade earned.
- The school will be notified by email prior to a student being dropped from AVHS.

Arkansas Early College High School Students (in addition to other listed policies)

General Drop Policy - Students should be prepared for the academic rigor of concurrent credit courses.

- Before withdrawing/dropping a course a student should consider the impact on future financial aid. College hours attempted in high school under pre-freshmen status count towards the maximum number of hours 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. To contact your instructor for guidance, visit the AECHS website.
- If it is determined that withdrawal is the best option, the form for withdrawing from the class is also on the AECHS website. The high school principal and/or counselor must submit the form to the AECHS Coordinator and follow

the university's procedure for withdrawing. Students are responsible for course drop fees and withdrawal from the institution if applicable.

- Local school personnel should counsel any student with a C, D or F prior to the official "drop date" of the participating post secondary partner. AECHS will notify students in writing of official drop dates and will post the dates on the AECH Website. Students are responsible for paying the partnering post secondary institution any fees related to dropping a course. Failure to pay these fees may prevent a student from receiving an official college transcript.

Transcript Requests – To request a transcript, go to the post-secondary institution website and go to the registrar page. Each institution has specific instructions on how to send a transcript with your college grades.

■ **Educational Materials**

Participating schools should provide each student with the required text and ancillary materials (calculators, dictionaries, etc. necessary for the distance learning classes by the first day of class.

■ **Enrollment**

Unlike planning and scheduling for one school, the Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium is faced with the task of coordinating the delivery of instruction to over 150 Arkansas high schools. Please partner with us to provide our services in the most efficient and effective way possible. In order to provide faculty in the most efficient way possible, we ask schools to be diligent in reserving only the needed seats in any ARDL Consortium Course. We are aware that seat needs may change from April to August and ask that each school communicate these changes to the Content Provider as soon as possible.

Enrollment Status - Student enrollment is not guaranteed until a signed Memorandum of Understanding is received from the district Superintendent and high school principal. The original M.O.U for the Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium should be mailed to Cathi Swan at the Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative, 101 Bulldog Drive, Plumerville, AR 72127. To participate in an ARDL Course, each student must complete the Audio/Visual Release Form and Student Contract. These forms should also be signed by the parents or guardian of the students. The originals for these forms should be mailed or faxed to the content provider providing services to each student enrolled.

Fee Structure – On September 1, if a school has students enrolled in an Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium course and has returned the Participating School M.O.U., the school district will be assessed a \$2500.00 ARDL Consortium Membership Fee for the 2011-2012 school year. This fee is a yearly membership that affords districts the ability to enroll students in any course offered in the ARDL Consortium Master Schedule as long as resources are available.

Pre-Requisites – Many courses adhere to a set of pre-requisites that are in the best interest of student success. Each school administration should take measures to insure that students have met any pre-requisites and are academically prepared for the intended course.

Arkansas Virtual High School Students - Students should not be re-enrolled that fail any fall semester classes. A student that failed a fall semester class will only be allowed another opportunity in summer school or in the next fall semester.

■ **Grade Reporting**

The distance learning instructors will provide numerical grades based on a range from zero (0) to one hundred (100) in four nine-week periods based on the Arkansas Distance Learning Initiative academic calendar. Calculation of the semester averages will be based on each local school's policy. Progress grades will be provided upon request. The Facilitator should submit the request for a progress report to the instructor at least one week prior to the date the progress report is needed.

Concurrent Credit Students – College grades earned through the AECHS are part of a student's permanent college transcript. The grade can affect grade point averages. The effect of pre-freshmen status grades vary from one post-secondary institution to another. Each student is encouraged to check with the post-secondary institution they plan to attend after high school graduation for advice if the student is concerned about their grade assignment.

■ **Inclement Weather**

Due to the coordination and scheduling aspects of the distance learning program, it may not be possible for each instructor to be present during all make-up days for districts in the case of inclement weather. The distance learning program will respect each local school district policy regarding inclement weather and make lesson plans and content available to the students and facilitators as needed. If the instructors are not online due to inclement weather, students and facilitators should access the emergency lesson plans provided.

■ **Maintaining Records**

Section 4.05.1 of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules and Regulations Governing Distance Learning requires that "documentation of student achievement assessments shall be maintained at the receiving school for a minimum of five years after the final grade for the student has been issued. Documentation shall include the assessment questions, student responses, and the grade for each student assessment and grading period."

■ **Make-up Policy**

If a student has an excused absence, the student should complete all graded assignments as allowed by their local school's make-up policy and submit the material to the facilitator. It is the student's responsibility to check with the facilitator/instructor for the materials needed for make-up. If the absence extends more than three days, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor for timely completion of the work. In cases of extended excused absence, the distance learning program may consult with the local principal to develop a plan for the student to complete the coursework. In the case of unexcused absences, make-up is at the discretion of the instructor.

■ **Parental Involvement**

Instructors and content providers maintain frequent contact with parents regarding student performance and achievement. Distance learning instructors may participate in the Parent-Teacher conferences as requested by the participating schools. They may also plan Open-House nights to parents a chance to experience distance learning technology. In many cases, parents do not understand the nature of distance learning technology. It is helpful for local personnel to be involved in advocating these opportunities with parents and stakeholders whenever possible. It is also helpful to have the classroom facilitator or site coordinator present during conferences and Open Houses.

■ **Reporting Concerns**

If a student, facilitator, or administrator has a concern or a personality conflict with an instructor, they should share the concern with the local site coordinator. The local site coordinator should report concerns to the program manager of the content provider.

Concurrent Credit – The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) Coordinating Board policy regarding off-campus instruction provides a process by which ADHE will resolve any conflict between institutions related to service area. Please contact the AECHS Program Manager for details regarding this policy.

■ **Scheduling Courses**

Academic Calendar – According to the ADE Rules Governing the Availability of Distance Learning (5.01.2) requires “school districts providing distance learning courses to adopt a calendar and bell schedule consistent with the distance learning course provider’s course schedule that permits students to optimally participate in distance learning and local courses. The school’s local calendar must be designed in a manner that will permit students to take both distance learning courses and local school courses. The local school calendar and the calendar of any distance learning course provider that the school is using to offer courses must align in such a way that students taking distance learning courses are able to participate in the courses without missing more than five days. The policy for making up any missed days will be determined by the distance learning provider. “

Bell Schedule – According to the ADE Rules Governing the Availability of Distance Learning (4.01.2) requires “school districts providing distance learning courses to adopt a bell schedule consistent with the distance learning course providers that permits students to optimally participate in distance learning and local courses. The school’s bell schedule must be aligned with the distance learning provider’s class schedule in such a way that it will permit students to take both distance learning classes and locally scheduled classes. Students must be able to consistently join classes on either schedule within the first five minutes or not leave classes more than five minutes before the scheduled end of class so that no more than five minutes of any class is missed.”

■ School Dismissal

In rare cases, a school may not meet its responsibilities outlined in these policies. Communication between the program manager of the content provider and local school administration should take place to rectify any issues that need attention. When warranted, failure to abide by ARDL Consortium policies and Arkansas Rules and Regulations may result in a school being removed from receiving services.

■ Students with Special Needs

It is the policy of the Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium to accommodate individuals with disabilities pursuant to federal law in regard to equal educational opportunities. It is the responsibility of any learning-disabled student to inform the instructor of any necessary accommodations at the start of the course in any semester. Disability notifications must be made within the first ten days of class. As the teacher-of-record for administering a course to your district, our instructors are legally bound to provide modifications to students. Student IEP and/or 504 records should be received by the content provider within 10 days of the beginning of school.

■ Technical Difficulties

Occasionally, technical difficulties with the Arkansas Video Network may arise. If transmission of the class is unsuccessful, the facilitator will have access to emergency lesson plans for students. Students are expected to perform on the emergency lesson plan just as they would an in-class regular assignment. If school internet connectivity is not affected by the technical difficulties, students may meet the instructor in the online classroom. If a school site is experiencing connection issues, the facilitator should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

■ Technology Requirements

Hardware – Participating schools are responsible for maintaining local compressed interactive video equipment. In order to support a 21st Century blended learning experience, it is recommended that students have daily access to an internet-capable computer. This can be through hard-wired computers in the distance learning classroom or through a wireless lab. If a district is having difficulty providing computers to the distance learning classroom, please notify the content provider upon enrolling students. A computer specification sheet is available by the Content Provider upon request. Students may need access to the following technology: audio-cassette player, digital camera, video camera, and fax machine/printer/scanner.

Software – Some courses require specialized software that should be installed on the local distance learning lab computers. All measures have been taken to reduce the burden on districts i.e. installing the software on every other computer

■ Testing Policy

Students enrolled in a distance learning course are required to take all 9 weeks and semester exams as detailed by the instructor. **There are no exemptions for distance learning course cumulative exams.** If a student misses a major exam, the student must present acceptable documentation to be allowed to make up the exam. 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. For Advanced Placement Courses: A student must take the AP exam for each AP course enrolled.

Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium

School Memorandum of Understanding

1. We will honor the policies set forth in the ARDL Consortium Operating Policies for Participating Schools.
2. We will make every effort to reserve only the necessary seats during the registration process.
3. We will accept the grade assigned by ARDL Consortium instructors.
4. We will provide a trained facilitator for each distance learning course and insure that they have the tools and supplies needed for effective facilitation.
5. We will report and repair technical problems as soon as possible to minimize loss of instruction.
6. We will ensure that students have met the prerequisite requirements prior to enrolling them in a distance learning course.
7. We will provide each student with the required text and ancillary materials requested by the instructor.
8. We will work with parents of distance learning students to assist them in understanding the nature of the course(s) and distance learning.
9. We will ensure that any facilitator that facilitates 6 periods of distance learning courses has a planning period for the preparation of instructional materials.
10. We will support the academic and disciplinary decisions of instructors in respect to course content and classroom management and assist when applicable.
11. We agree that we will pay the Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium Membership Fee of \$2500 for participation in coursework for 2011-2012 once a student is enrolled in a course and this M.O.U. is signed and returned.

Superintendent Name

District

Date

High School Principal Name

High School

Date

Arkansas Distance Learning Consortium

Contact Information

AEDELC



Arkansas Department of Education Distance Learning Center

601 Carnahan Drive Maumelle, AR 72113
Phone: 501-803-5400 Fax: 501-803-5410 <http://dlc.k12.ar.us>
Program Manager: Michael Lar

AECHS



Arkansas Early College High School

Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative
1022 Scogin Drive Monticello, AR 71655
Phone: 870-367-6848 Fax: 870-367-8179 <http://se.sesc.k12.ar.us/echS>
Program Manager: Ellora Hicks



Arkansas Virtual High School

Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative
17 Garren Lane Enola, AR 72047
Phone: 501-849-3548 Fax: 501-849-2175 <http://avhs@windstream.net>
Program Manager: Sandy O'Reilly

DCDL



Dawson Center for Distance Learning

Dawson Education Service Cooperative
711 Clinton Street Arkadelphia, AR 71923
Phone: 870-246-2813 Fax: 870-403-0662 www.dawson.dsc.k12.ar.us
Program Manager: April Shepherd

ODE



Office of Distance Education

Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts
200 Whittington Avenue Hot Springs, AR 71901
Phone: 501-622-5141 Fax: 501-622-5144 <http://ode.asmsa.org>
Program Manager: Chris Robbins



State Office of K-12 Distance Learning, Arkansas Department of Education

101 Bulldog Drive Plumerville, AR 71272
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Program Director: Cathi Swan