



RELAY/GSE
GRADUATE SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION

FACULTY HANDBOOK

2021

This handbook is maintained and posted in [Support Center](#).
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Welcome to Relay Graduate School of Education

Dear Relay Faculty,

Welcome to Relay Graduate School of Education! Whether you're brand-new to Relay or a Relay veteran, we are excited to have you as part of the Relay community. We are eager to help you teach your students and grow their skills to develop in all of *their* PK-12 students the academic skills and strength of character they need to lead choice-filled lives.

Relay was founded by innovative educators driven to improve PK-12 education through a bold vision for pragmatic and meaningful teacher preparation. . To date, over 1,000,000 PK-12 students across the United States have been educated by more than 6,500 Relay teachers and 2,000 Relay-trained school leaders. We are proud to be one of the nation's largest and most diverse graduate schools in the country, with nearly two-thirds of our students and about half of our faculty identifying as people of color. At Relay, our flexible and affordable online programs allow our students to work full-time while earning their degrees. The curriculum combines theory and practical application, so our students learn research-based teaching strategies that have the greatest impact on PK-12 student learning.

To achieve these outcomes, Relay's faculty and staff have spent over a decade refining the policies and procedures detailed in this handbook to ensure that they serve you (our great faculty), our students (great teachers and leaders), and all of *their* PK-12 students. While endeavoring to simultaneously serve these three groups requires thoughtful balancing of sometimes competing interests, we hope that the resulting policies and systems are clear, equitable, helpful, and lead to productive and transformative experiences for both you and your students.

You are part of a team of educators and leaders that is among the best in the field, and we can't wait to see you prepare your students for success. We look forward to helping, pushing, and cheering for you in all of your efforts here at Relay!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hostetter', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Mayme Hostetter
President, Relay Graduate School of Education

Relay GSE Overview

Founding Mission Statement

Our founding mission at Relay Graduate School of Education is to teach PK–12 teachers and leaders to develop in all students the academic skills and strength of character needed to succeed in life.

Relay’s programs prepare current and future teachers and education leaders to reach diverse groups of students and transform student lives. Our long-term vision is that the institution will bring about transformational change across teacher and leader preparation and will become a place where a new generation of continuously improving, mission-driven individuals can fulfill their destinies in the world’s greatest profession.

Approach

At Relay Graduate School of Education (Relay), we believe that becoming a great teacher or school leader is much like becoming a great musician or doctor. It takes continuous practice, feedback, and dedication. We give Relay students unparalleled opportunities not only to learn the techniques that will make them more effective but also to practice them with faculty and peers. The feedback they receive helps them refine their practice until they’re ready to lead with confidence in the classroom. Students emerge with the skills needed to embark on a career as a transformational educator prepared to inspire thousands of children.

Our approach to preparing teachers and school leaders is unique in the world of higher education. It begins with a curriculum rooted in pedagogical theory and grounded in evidence of what works best in schools. Our programs emphasize the specific teaching and instructional-leadership skills and mindsets that have the greatest impact on student learning and character development. In order to achieve our mission of improving opportunities and outcomes for children, Relay’s approach focuses on the proven practices that enable teachers and leaders to become highly effective educators.

We also encourage teachers and school leaders to adopt a strong focus on personal character strengths and social-emotional learning skills that will help their students grow up to be happy, responsible citizens who show grit, respect, integrity, and love for themselves and others. Our programs are designed to help students support and reflect upon both academic and social-emotional measures of student growth. Relay also works to infuse equity-centered and inclusive learning practices into our curriculum to support students’ ability to teach across lines of difference.

To develop and lead our programs, Relay has turned to the teachers and school leaders who’ve supported thousands of students as they achieved exceptional academic and character growth. These passionate educators are driven by a desire to transform the lives of children. They share a deep commitment to bringing out the best in their fellow teachers and principals. They are never far from PK–12 schools, and they are our Relay faculty members.

History

Relay was granted a charter by the New York State Board of Regents in 2011, becoming the first stand-alone graduate school of education to emerge in the state in more than eight decades.

Today, Relay is an accredited national nonprofit institution of higher education serving approximately 4,000 teachers and 1,200 school leaders across the United States. Our offerings include master’s degrees and certification programs for teachers, teaching Residents, fellowships for principals and school leaders, and offerings for those interested in professional development and continuing education.

Accreditation and State Authorization

Relay is institutionally accredited by the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#) (MSCHE) (3624 Market Street, Suite 2 West, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104). The Middle States Commission is recognized by the United States Department of Education as an institutional accrediting agency for institutions of higher education. Relay was initially accredited in 2012, and in 2017 MSCHE acted to reaffirm its accreditation status and commend the institution on its self-study process. The next evaluation visit is scheduled for 2025–2026.

New York

Relay was granted a charter in 2011 by the Board of Regents in the state of New York for its postsecondary education programs at its New York City campus. New York also serves as Relay’s home state for participation in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), as outlined in the subsequent section.

State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)

Relay was approved to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) on May 31, 2018, by the New York State Education Department, which acts as the SARA State Portal Entity for the state of New York. SARA is a voluntary, interstate reciprocity agreement that establishes comparable standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education. As a result of Relay’s participation in SARA, Relay may offer distance education programs in SARA member states. SARA only applies to distance education and does not cover instruction provided on-ground at any Relay campus.

California

Relay Graduate School of Education is not required to be authorized by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education to enroll California residents into its online programs pursuant to California Education Code (CEC) section 94801.5(c).

Colorado

Relay is authorized to operate and grant degrees in the state of Colorado by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

Connecticut

Relay is authorized to operate as an institution of higher learning in the state of Connecticut by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education.

Delaware

Relay has full approval for degree granting authority by the Delaware Department of Education to offer courses, programs of courses, and/or degrees in the state of Delaware.

District of Columbia

Relay is licensed by the District of Columbia Higher Education Learning Commission to offer courses or instruction leading to the award of certificates, diplomas, or degrees in the District of Columbia.

Georgia

Relay Graduate School of Education is authorized under the nonpublic Postsecondary Educational Institutions Act of 1990.

Illinois

Relay Graduate School of Education is authorized to operate as a postsecondary educational institution by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 333, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1377, www.ibhe.org

Indiana

Relay is authorized to operate in the state of Indiana by the Indiana Board for Proprietary Education, 101 W. Ohio Street, Suite 670, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-1984.

Louisiana

Relay is currently licensed by the Board of Regents of the State of Louisiana. Licenses are renewed by the State Board of Regents every two years. Licensed institutions have met minimal operational standards set forth by the state, but licensure does not constitute accreditation, guarantee the transferability of credit, nor signify that programs are certifiable by any professional agency or organization.

New Jersey

Relay is licensed by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to offer programs in New Jersey.

Tennessee

Relay is authorized by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. This authorization must be renewed each year and is based on an evaluation of minimum standards concerning quality of education, ethical business practices, health and safety, and fiscal responsibility.

Texas

Relay is legally authorized to operate and grant degrees in Texas by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

For more information about Relay's authorizations, see Appendix A of the [Student Handbook](#). To review accreditation and authorization documentation or to request information on contacting any agency that regulates the institution, email support@relay.edu.

Educator Preparation

Relay was granted accreditation in 2020 by the [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation](#) (CAEP) (1140 19th Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036), a programmatic accrediting body for educator-preparation programs that is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Many of Relay's [academic programs](#) are designed to meet educational requirements for educator licensure. In compliance with US Department of Education regulations (§ 668.43(a)(5)(v) and § 668.43(c)), Relay has made [determinations](#) about whether its programs meet the educational requirements for educator licensure in each state. Educational requirements include coursework and clinical experience tied to coursework. Note that even though a program may meet these requirements, individual students must also meet state- and program-specific requirements for [admission to](#) and completion of an educator-preparation program and any other state licensure requirements (e.g., testing, background checks) to be eligible for licensure.

Relay Programs of Study

Relay Graduate School of Education offers four programs:

- Master of Arts in Teaching (36 credits)
- Master of Arts in Teaching in Special Education/Dual Certification (42 credits)
- Certification Only: Alternate Route (varies)
- Certificate/Advanced Certificate in Special Education (21 credits)

The Student Handbook includes an overview of each of these programs. Individual program details vary by state, and not all programs are available at all locations or in both online and local modalities. State- and program-specific details can be found on the Relay website at www.relay.edu.

Prospective teachers may participate in Relay's degree and licensure programs through the Relay Teaching Residency, which offers structured support for aspiring teachers. The Relay Teaching Residency is offered through partnerships with select partner schools, districts, and networks.

Academic Overview

[Relay's Academic Programs Guide can be found here.](#)

Relay Board of Trustees

Relay's board of trustees is responsible for the success of the institution's academic programs, its operation as an institution that is faithful to the terms of its charter, and Relay's persistence as a viable institution. Although the board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to Relay's administrative leaders, the board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the institution operates in a manner that is congruent with and supports the delivery of Relay's mission and vision.

Broadly speaking, the board of trustees is asked to:

- Determine and refine the institution's mission and purpose;
- Ensure effective institutional planning;
- Ensure adequate resources to meet Relay's mission;
- Ensure that resources are managed effectively;
- Determine, monitor, and strengthen Relay's programs and services;
- Monitor and ensure compliance with state and federal regulatory statutes;
- Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability;
- Recruit and orient new board members; and
- Assess board performance.

In AY21–22, Relay's board of trustees is composed of ten members:

- **Norman Atkins** – [Chair] President, Together Education; president emeritus, Relay Graduate School of Education
- **Dr. Donnell Butler** – Managing director of College Initiatives, Together Education
- **Aimée Eubanks Davis** – Founder and CEO, Braven
- **Dr. Mayme Hostetter** – President, Relay Graduate School of Education
- **David Levin** – [Secretary] Cofounder, KIPP
- **Larry Robbins** – Founder and CEO, Glenview Capital Management
- **David Saltzman** – [Treasurer] Senior vice president, Two Sigma Investments, LP; Former executive director, Robin Hood Foundation
- **Shayne Spalten** – Director, education, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation
- **Dr. David Steiner** – Executive director, Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy; Professor
- **Dacia Toll** – [Vice Chair] Co-CEO and president, Achievement First

Each board member brings specific skills, knowledge, and experience that benefit the institution in important ways. The current board offers valuable expertise in finance, higher-education administration, fundraising, organizational development, strategic growth, teacher preparation, and the PK–12 public-education sector.

The board of trustees officers include a chair, a vice chair, a secretary, and a treasurer. In addition, the board has five standing committees. These committees — the executive committee, the committee on trustees, the finance committee, the audit and compensation committee, and the academic and student affairs committee — are responsible for managing a variety of board responsibilities.

Relay Leadership

The institution's president and executive team direct the Relay senior leader team. Relay senior leaders are composed of the executive team and their direct reports. This body oversees the daily functioning and long-term strategic planning of the institution.

Key Offices at Relay

Institutional Governance, Administration, and Support

Each of Relay’s programs has the support of Relay’s national administrative office. Relay is governed by: the board of trustees, who are responsible for oversight of the institution; the president, who is responsible for the overall health and direction of the institution; and the executive team, consisting of the provost of teacher preparation, the provost of professional education, the chief financial and operating officer, the chief external affairs officer, the chief of staff, the chief equity officer, and general counsel, who are responsible, respectively, for academics, accreditation, assessment, student services and faculty; human resources, operations, and finances of the institution; external affairs and development; institutional projects and culture; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and legal affairs.

Office of the Provost

The Office of the Provost is charged with developing policies and programs that enable all in our community to learn and contribute to the world. Our priorities are shaped by Relay’s mission:

Our mission is to teach teachers and school leaders to develop in all students the academic skills and strength of character needed to succeed in college and life.

Relay’s teacher programming is committed to excellent teaching and the personal and intellectual growth of its students in a diverse academic community. The Office of the Provost strives to support faculty and students by removing barriers to faculty and student success and ensuring that the academic affairs, student affairs, and enrollment management operations of the university are working together to provide high-quality learning environments for our students. In addition, the Office of the Provost oversees all academic components of the program, including curriculum, instruction, assessment, advising, certification support, and referral services for students with disabilities.

The Office of the Provost provides accurate, up-to-date information to faculty and students regarding Relay degree requirements, course registration, state certification, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations; works in partnership with Relay faculty, administration, and staff, as well as leaders from students’ placement PK–12 schools and organizations; and works with students to support their development in the classroom.

The provost is responsible for providing visionary leadership for teaching and learning programs and is responsible for program evaluation and general academic-policy development and implementation.

Vice Provost of Teacher Preparation

The vice provost of teacher preparation provides vision and guidance for Relay’s teacher programs and is responsible for ensuring that students have an equitable, inclusive, meaningful, and supportive learning experience. The vice provost of teacher preparation leads the development of comprehensive programmatic structure and facilitation of programs via a dynamic teacher-preparation faculty.

Program Directors

Program directors manage and lead the Relay Teaching Residency program at their campuses. They teach, observe, coach, and grade assessments for Relay Residents and train, oversee, and develop supports for Resident Advisors in mentoring residents. Program directors also build strong relationships with external partners (e.g., school partners) in collaboration with the location

director and speak to the instructional progress of candidates at the campus as necessary. They will oversee and direct program implementation in compliance with state regulations.

Vice Provost of Academic Compliance

The vice provost of academic compliance leads the Regulatory and Accreditation Team, a primary driver of quality assurance at Relay. The Regulatory and Accreditation Team prioritizes Relay's graduate students — enrolled, prospective, and alumni — by safeguarding the quality, legitimacy, and reputation of their credential(s).

The Regulatory and Accreditation Team are responsible for higher-education authorizations, educator-preparation program approvals, certification-program compliance, institutional accreditation through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and programmatic accreditation through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

Vice Provost of Data and Research

The vice provost of data and research provides insights into Relay's impact on teacher and school leader preparation and facilitates a culture of continuous improvement to ensure that Relay GSE provides high quality preparation to teachers and school leaders. Through purposeful organization, robust analysis, and clear communication of data, the vice provost of data and research at Relay supports our institutional commitment to continuous improvement of our programs. This is accomplished by collecting critical data from students, faculty, staff, school leaders, alumni, and partners while also advancing research on teacher preparation through collaborative partnerships with research experts.

Vice Provost of Student Affairs

The vice provost of student affairs leads the Office of Student Affairs and works closely with faculty, staff, and students to create a safe, inclusive, and meaningful experience for all Relay students and alumni. Through a variety of services, programs, and activities, the vice provost of student affairs at Relay supports and encourages the sociocultural, intellectual, and personal development of Relay's students and alumni. You can reach the Office of Student Affairs at support@relay.edu.

Student Services

Student services comprises several key teams that work together to provide individualized support and resources to prospective and enrolled Relay students and alumni: admissions, alumni affairs, AmeriCorps residency programs, prospective student advising, Registrar's Office, student financial services (SFS), and technology. Below is specific information about each student services team:

Admissions

The Admissions team manages the admissions process at Relay. The team's responsibilities include reviewing incoming applications and transcripts, supporting applicants through their admissions process, and maintaining admissions student records.

Alumni Affairs

The Alumni Affairs team aims to support Relay's alumni network professionally, grow intellectually, engage socially, and give back to Relay's many communities. The team connects alumni worldwide with the Relay nation and provides alumni with various opportunities to share their input (e.g., Alumni and Student Advisory Council, Alumni Survey) and expertise (e.g., the Writing Center, Kappa Delta Pi) with the faculty/staff and currently enrolled students.

AmeriCorps Residency Programs

In order to provide a high-quality education at an affordable cost, Relay partners with AmeriCorps to help lower the out-of-pocket tuition costs for students enrolled in Relay's Teaching Residency program. Relay's AmeriCorps Team oversees the administration of the AmeriCorps state and national grant program. Additionally, the team supports program leaders in the implementation of grant requirements.

Prospective Student Advising

Prospective Student Advising (PSA) will provide a standardized, structured, streamlined, seamless, and supportive experience to all prospective students prior to their program start. The PSA model will be centered around prospective student advising and will be proactive, differentiated, and culturally responsive to our incoming students' needs. As a result of this experience, prospective students will be informed, excited, engaged, and prepared for their Relay program. As a part of the larger Prospective Students team, the PSA team supports selection, placement, and admissions work.

Registrar's Office

The Registrar's Office oversees, maintains, and processes all aspects of student registration, changes to enrollment (e.g., withdrawals and leaves of absence), reenrollment, transfers, student benefits and reporting (e.g., veterans affairs benefits, loan deferment), Relay transcripts and enrollment letters, student academic progress (SAP), and program-completion operations (e.g., diplomas and degree audits). In addition, the Registrar's Office manages academic records and enrollment and academic policies.

Student Financial Services

The Student Financial Services (SFS) team provides students with information, financing, and services needed to pay for their Relay education. SFS oversees student accounts, including the billing and collection of tuition and fees, and provides counseling regarding payment options. SFS is also responsible for issuing refunds from student accounts as needed and for disbursing and administering scholarship funds. Finally, SFS administers federal Title IV funds, including direct unsubsidized loans and TEACH grants, for eligible students who require federal financial aid to pay for their tuition and fees at Relay. Students may access their student accounts and pay their outstanding balances on [Nelnet](#), Relay's online, secure student-payment portal.

Technology

The Technology team is responsible for providing staff and student information systems, applications, and platforms that are integrated, secure, and easily accessible. They work to maximize industry-leading technology that furthers the needs and priorities of the institution through leadership and innovation in information technology planning, implementing efficient and scalable solutions, acquiring or developing and deploying information technology products, and delivering responsive information technology support services. For a list of hardware and software requirements, please see [Support Center](#).

Access to all Relay technology resources is controlled via a secure login and password. Each student uses a unique username and password to access Okta, the institution's single sign-on platform. Students are provisioned access to this system upon enrollment and can choose their own passwords (using a link sent to the email address they supplied upon admission). Once provisioned, students use the same credentials to access all online platforms (e.g., Canvas and Microsoft Office 365). When a student exits Relay (e.g., takes a leave of absence, withdraws), access to all applications is removed with the exception of email, Minerva, Financial Aid, and Program Admissions.

All [Canvas](#)-related support is handled by Canvas staff and not by Relay's Technology team.

A Note on Communications via Email

- Once students receive their Relay-issued email address and it is activated, Relay will use ONLY Relay-issued email addresses to communicate with students. **This is the official channel for all Relay communications, including after students exit Relay.** Students are responsible for checking their Relay-issued email address regularly.
- If students prefer to use a different email address, they must forward emails from their Relay-issued email address to their preferred email address. Instructions on forwarding emails can be found in [Relay Email Account Troubleshooting and FAQs](#).

Resources

Admissions Process

<http://www.relay.edu/apply>

Students use this portal to apply for admission to Relay.

[Prospective Students Website](#) (applicant-facing; can send to partners, too)

1. The website provides an overview of the admissions process with instructions aimed at helping applicants walk through the admissions process.

[Prospective Students Team Resources](#)

1. [Here you can reference key resources from the Prospective Students team to assist leaders in navigating the steps in a prospective student's journey at Relay.](#)

Canvas

<https://canvas.relay.edu>

Canvas is Relay's learning-management system and serves as the central access point for students to find important due dates, complete online coursework, upload assessments, track progress, view instructor feedback on completed assessments, communicate with instructors, and collaborate with peers. Support from Canvas experts is available to staff and students 24 hours a day, seven days per week, via phone, email, and chat. Canvas Support can be accessed through the [Help \(?\)](#) icon within Canvas.

Relay Connect

<https://relayconnect.org/>

[Relay Connect](#) is Relay's members-only online portal where the staff, students, and alumni of Relay's programs virtually meet and share information. It hosts a jobs board, event postings, news updates, and a weekly newsletter. All members of the Relay community are welcome to join the platform and engage with one another.

Relay Website

<https://relay.edu>

The Relay website provides information on all aspects of Relay, including the organization's history, approach, and programs. While the website provides logistical information such as the application process, students can also visit the website to read the Relay blog as well as articles and news coverage featuring Relay's students, staff, and alumni.

Support@relay.edu

support@relay.edu

[Support@relay.edu](mailto:support@relay.edu) is the email address for nonacademic student-support requests. Requests are processed Monday–Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST.

Support Center

<https://support.relay.edu>

Relay maintains a robust collection of information and resources for students, staff, and the public at [Support Center](#). This collection allows individuals to self-serve support when they need it. [Support Center](#) is accessible via Relay’s website 24 hours a day, seven days per week. When signed in through [Relay’s Okta home page](#), students and staff have access to additional support articles not available to the public.

Relay Library

<http://www.relay.edu/library/>

Relay primarily employs an electronic and digital approach to providing library and information resources to students and faculty. The majority of Relay Library materials are available in an online or electronic format, accessible through the library catalog. These resources include electronic books (e-books), videos, curriculum resources, and subscriptions to prominent education journals offered through database providers such as EBSCO, ProQuest, JSTOR, and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Relay provides these content subscriptions for use by current Relay students, faculty, and staff. Username and password information is to be kept confidential, and material-access privileges may not be shared. Relay Library also participates in a national interlibrary loan service that allows students and faculty to request from other institutions articles not owned by Relay Library.

Relay Library maintains a core collection of books, periodicals, and other print resources at its central office in New York City for use in coursework and research. These materials are listed on the Relay online library catalog so that students and faculty may locate and browse physical materials held in the library.

Relay is also a member of the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO), a consortium of over 250 public and private libraries throughout New York City and Westchester County. Students and faculty thereby have the opportunity to use the print and electronic resources of New York City’s finest reference and research libraries. Please email library@relay.edu to request a guest pass to any of the participating METRO locations.

For guidance using these materials, and for other library questions, faculty should reference the library course in [Canvas](#), LIB-201: Relay Library for Faculty. Faculty may also email library@relay.edu with feedback or questions.

Relay Facilities

National Administrative Office

Relay's national administrative office is located at 25 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, New York 10004.

Locations

Relay takes great care in selecting instructional and administrative spaces for its locations. After assessing the needs of each location, operational staff members work in conjunction with location leads to select facilities that meet a number of criteria, including but not limited to:

- quality of instructional experience for students,
- comfort of staff,
- ease of faculty facilitation,
- cost-effectiveness that leads to financial sustainability,
- proximity to student-teaching placements, and
- partner alignment to Relay mission/vision.

Relay often intentionally chooses to hold weekend content classes in PK–12 schools to strengthen the connection for students between Relay program coursework and PK–12 instruction.

Addresses for Relay administrative offices can be found in the [Student Handbook](#).

Student Housing

Relay does not offer student housing at any location.

Faculty Roles

At Relay, the faculty has the primary responsibilities of instruction, coaching, assessment, and student advising. Several roles exist within this department, but all involve a core set of responsibilities related to one of three roles: professor, adjunct instructor, or field supervisors.

Two other groups work in close conjunction with the faculty — the program and research teams. The former creates the curriculum; the latter are central to the evaluation of institutional efficacy. As described later in this section, some members of the faculty are also members of the program and/or research teams and vice versa.

Governance Policies and Faculty

There are two types of faculty members at Relay: full-time employees who teach as part of their regular professional role and part-time employees who serve as adjunct faculty members. For both groups, faculty participation is essential to the success of Relay. This participation begins with faculty voice, which is solicited and discussed in a number of venues that are outlined below.

Faculty input on institutional policies and practices takes place in part by the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC). Board of trustees members on the academic affairs committee are also welcome and invited to attend any FAC meetings.

In AY 21–22, the FAC will comprise at least eight members: the provost, teacher preparation, six to eight faculty members (including 50% adjuncts); and Relay’s general counsel. The members are selected via annual election.

At the first FAC meeting of each year, members elect a FAC chair. The provost, teacher preparation, or designated deputy creates the meeting agendas and solicits input for agenda items from faculty members and program deans. During each meeting, the provost, teacher preparation, solicits input from the faculty and invites faculty members to discuss opportunities and challenges.

With respect to the curriculum, the faculty discusses and revises the academic content via weekly, monthly, and end-of-term meetings.

Professors and Professors of Practice

Full-time lead instructional faculty members occupy the position of professor or professor of practice. Faculty members in these roles are usually former PK–12 teachers with many years of experience helping lead PK–12 students to meaningful academic and social growth. Professors have earned doctoral degrees. Professors of practice — Relay’s clinical faculty members — have earned master’s degrees. This path to professor begins with the assistant-professor position, ascending to the associate-professor role, and finally to a full-professor role. Ascension through these ranks is discussed in the faculty personnel policies section. The roles and responsibilities outlined in this handbook apply to any faculty member with a professorial title. As such, for the remainder of this document, all assistant professors and assistant professors of practice are referred to in this handbook as “professors.”

Professors teach “core” class sessions and/or “content” sessions. Professors also observe students, provide feedback on students’ assessments and classroom teaching, advise students, collaborate with school leaders to promote student development, and implement and add to Relay’s curriculum.

Research Faculty

Relay's research faculty members focus on advancing the institution's contributions to the field of education scholarship. Research faculty members prioritize four areas of research, which serve as the basis of the institution's published research agenda: (1) elements of effective teaching, (2) preparing effective teachers of high-need students, (3) tracking and measuring student achievement and character development, and (4) teachers' career trajectories.

Curriculum-Design Faculty

Curriculum-design faculty members create and revise Relay's core and content curriculum. They are experienced PK–12 teachers and school leaders with expertise in their fields of curriculum. Curriculum-design faculty members occasionally teach core or content courses in addition to their curriculum-design responsibilities.

Adjunct Instructors

Relay's adjunct instructors are part-time faculty members who usually teach "content" sessions. Adjunct instructors are current PK–12 teachers and school leaders who have master's degrees. In addition to instruction, adjunct instructors evaluate students' assessments and revise the curriculum as needed. Adjunct instructors are referred to as "instructors" throughout this handbook.

Field Supervisors

Field supervisors partner with professors to assist with observing, coaching, teaching, advising, and evaluating students. Much like the other members of faculty, these individuals have experience in PK–12 classrooms and possess at least a master's degree.

Expectations and policies related to the execution of these responsibilities are discussed in the [Faculty Personnel Policies](#) section of this handbook.

Program Directors

Program directors manage and lead the Relay Teaching Residency program. They teach, observe, coach, and grade assessments for Relay Residents and train, oversee, and develop supports for Resident Advisors in mentoring residents. They also build strong relationships with external partners (e.g., school partners) in collaboration with the location director, and speak to the instructional progress of candidates at the campus as necessary. Program Directors will oversee and direct program implementation in compliance with state regulations.

Expectations and policies related to the execution of these responsibilities are discussed in the [Faculty Personnel Policies](#) section of this handbook.

Faculty Personnel Policies

Relay Employee Handbook

Relay faculty are expected to review and abide by all terms of [Relay's Employee Handbook](#). All employees are expected to review the handbook thoroughly and acknowledge they agree to abide by all terms within Unit4 Business World.

The sections that follow include additional detail regarding faculty-specific personnel policies at Relay, including the faculty code of conduct.

Academic Freedom

Relay respects the fundamental concepts of academic freedom as these pertain to teaching, learning, and scholarship. Relay respects academic freedom as an important component in the culture of higher education and the freedom it represents to explore the subject matter of instruction, to conduct research in a field, and to express one's views as a part of the robust and vigorous dialogue that constitutes an educational community. This important freedom carries with it a corresponding obligation to act in a professional and responsible manner.

Faculty Assignments

Full-time professors are expected to teach at minimum two sections of students per course taught. Professors are responsible for the instructional delivery of all sections taught in addition to the grading and advisement of a minimum of 50 students from those sections and support of field supervisors that may support the grading of the section if there are more than 50 students.

Faculty members also fulfill instructional commitments related to course preparation, preview, internalization, and practice, student advisement, professional development, and administrative tasks. These hours are not included in semester hours, but Relay recognizes the work. To this end, Relay carefully monitors the time that faculty members spend preparing for classes, teaching classes, advising students, and providing feedback to students. In some circumstances faculty with large loads may have the opportunity to have a teaching assistant who helps facilitate large group instruction online and who helps with grading assessment.

- **Assessments:** In addition to instruction, faculty members evaluate students' work. Assessments take the form of written assignments and video of students' instruction. Faculty members are expected to complete the evaluation of assessments no later than 14 days after the due date. In the case of late submissions, faculty members have 14 days after the late submission to complete the evaluation.
- **Observations:** Professors and field supervisors also observe students in the PK–12 classrooms where they teach or via video submissions. Professors conduct a minimum of four formal observations and at least one informal observation over the course of a student's enrollment at Relay. Faculty may also provide additional in-person or video observations to support and coach teachers in the classroom or to meet state-certification requirements. For formal observations, faculty assess the teacher's readiness to succeed on their midterm and final portfolio assessments, which include video of the teacher teaching and are scored on a five-point rubric that measures teacher effectiveness. Faculty members meet with each student within a few days of the formal observation, providing meaningful feedback to push the students' classroom practice.
- **Student Advisement:** Professors have a significant role in advising students. The faculty fields a wide range of questions and concerns from students, including academic questions about Relay coursework and assessments, instructional

questions for students' PK–12 classrooms, questions from those seeking state certification, and recommendations on managing professional relationships at students' PK–12 schools.

- o To address these questions and concerns, faculty members schedule office hours, make classroom visits, and are accessible via phone, video conference, and email. The intention is to encourage and facilitate regular communication between the faculty and students to proactively provide support and to resolve academic and professional issues before they develop into deeper troubles that may affect academic performance.
 - o Individual faculty members are but one aspect of the strong student support that Relay offers. The national Support@relay.edu provides a one-stop shop of additional resources, guidance, and continual support and communication with students. As needed, faculty members are encouraged to direct students to these resources.
- **Office Hours:** Professors teaching classes hold office hours at a day of week, time, and location to be determined by those faculty members and communicated to students.

Faculty Scholarship and Research

Research is an integral component of Relay's development, refinement, and expansion. As a result, the institution has prioritized four areas of research, which serve as the basis of its published-research agenda. Relay's four major areas of research interest are: elements of effective teaching and leadership, preparing effective teachers and leaders of high-need students and schools, tracking and measuring student achievement and character development, and teachers' career trajectories.

The institution values the individual scholarly interests of its faculty and encourages academic scholarship including:

- Publishing books or articles in peer-reviewed and professional journals;
- Presenting at regional and national conferences;
- Conducting institutional research, for example, regarding the efficacy of Relay's programs;
- Creating content and curriculum for new or existing courses at Relay;
- Creating content, in collaboration with the senior instructional team, to contribute to the video library; and
- Pursuing terminal degrees

Faculty Professional Development

Relay views faculty as being central in not only preparing students for the profession of teaching but also in helping drive PK–12 student growth and achievement in the classrooms of our students. To serve in this role, Relay assumes the stance of continuous improvement in instruction and leverages the expertise among its members and external resources to support this development.

Ensuring Continuous Growth

In order to identify the internal and external resources that will support this continuous improvement among the faculty, Relay relies on observations conducted by colleagues, feedback from students, and students' programmatic performance data. With respect to observations, instructional leaders (professors, instructors, field supervisors, etc.) regularly observe one another, using a shared faculty-observation rubric.

The faculty also relies on student feedback gathered from twice-annual institutional survey responses and in-class exit tickets. In the fall and late spring, students complete a survey in which they reflect on their experiences in Relay classrooms. Students provide feedback on the instruction provided by faculty members, among other items related to curriculum, self-efficacy, and overall experience. Post-class exit tickets also provide faculty with quick feedback on that session.

This feedback, along with the reflections of instructional leaders and faculty members, informs the identification of individual faculty members' strengths and departments of growth.

Relay Internal Professional-Development Activities

Professional development with new faculty whose training involves workshops in Relay's pedagogical practices, institutional and curricular policies, organizational structure and practices, and the institution's use of technology.

All newer faculty members also participate in a biweekly cycle of preview, prep, and practice. Previewing upcoming instruction takes the form of a faculty member or program director teaching the material that all will teach in two weeks, then getting colleagues' feedback and ideas on that instruction, as in a lesson study. Preparing curriculum is an optional but well-attended biweekly opportunity to share ideas for the upcoming class. Practicing is a required weekly event in which all newer faculty members at a given location gather to practice parts of their upcoming classes with colleagues, receiving feedback and revising and strengthening their approaches to instruction as a result.

In addition, Relay has a series of faculty professional-development courses offered to continue training for all faculty and workshops for leaders and managers. Relay's faculty-development courses meet synchronously online for three to five sessions over the year. They offer faculty a wide variety of topics from specific instructional strategies, like shifting the cognitive lift, to more theoretical, like the relevance of John Dewey to our current work. Some courses around pedagogy ask faculty to video themselves teaching and bring these videos to the practice labs for feedback and shared development. As Relay develops its 2.0 curriculum, faculty groups are engaged in reviewing and providing feedback to that curriculum as it develops.

As needed, program directors and curriculum leads, working with other members of faculty, may create workshops to address specific learning needs of professors, instructors, and instructional fellows. Previous workshops have ranged from supporting students through mental-health challenges to debates regarding value-added accountability models in teacher evaluations.

Finally, managers have a series of optional and mandatory trainings around leadership, monitoring bias, effective evaluation, hiring practices, budget management, strategic planning, etc.

External Professional-Development Activities

The internal strengths of the faculty will neither address all learning needs nor individual professional-development interests. As a result, faculty members are also encouraged to pursue external professional-development opportunities. These include, but are not limited to:

- Formal channels for continued education;
- National conferences;
- Regional trainings focused on both adult and child learning; and
- Presentations and workshops by external providers and partners like Student Achievement Partners and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion presenters.

Provosts, program directors, and other members of the Relay administration may scan the field to inform faculty members of such opportunities. Relay, however, encourages faculty members to conduct their own search. In support of professional-development interests, full-time faculty members may request financial support from the [Individual PD Fund](#) (this link references the AY20-21 Individual PD Fund - the AY21-22 Individual PD Fund information is forthcoming). Additionally, campus and subject matter leaders may apply for funds for team-wide professional development by accessing the "Team PD" form on UBW.

Faculty Recruitment and Hiring

Relay has taken a number of steps to ensure a clear and equitable hiring process. Policies related to hiring are made available to all faculty members in the [Relay's Employee Handbook](#), and include, but are not limited, to the following policies:

- Equal-opportunity employer,
- Nepotism policy,
- Regular full-time and temporary employment, and
- Policy on work schedule for nonexempt employees.

For all job openings, detailed job descriptions exist to provide a clear understanding of the prospective role, including qualifications. For faculty positions in particular, specific qualifications exist related to degrees, state teaching credentials, years of experience, and demonstrated competencies in the field.

Candidates who successfully pass the application and phone-interview stages are asked to provide a thorough response to a performance task that includes teaching a demonstration lesson, thereby supplying the institution with concrete, tangible evidence of knowledge and skills to evaluate each candidate's functional and technical potential. Internal candidates who successfully pass the application stage are also asked to provide a thorough response to a performance task and/or participate in an interview in order for the hiring committee to assess their knowledge and skills objectively.

Evaluation of Teaching and Professional Performance

Relay's evaluation systems hinge on three institutional priorities:

- The teachers and principals we train and develop will have meaningful impacts on PK–12 students.
- Our graduate students — and undergraduates and other trainees — will have a meaningful experience at Relay.
- As an institution, we will create meaningful tools and systems to help shape US PK–12 and higher education.

Using these three priorities as the starting point, location and program leaders lead a goal-setting process at the beginning of the academic year.

Faculty also set goals at the beginning of the academic year. The following is typical guidance provided to faculty members during that process:

- In collaboration with their managers, faculty will pick three goals from the shared goals to measure performance management.
- Those three goals should be picked and restated to represent (a) faculty role/performance and (b) success of students.
- The fourth goal can be chosen in collaboration with their managers.
- All faculty members should have at least one student-level goal and one faculty-level goal.

Leaders and faculty measure their performance to goals across the course of a yearlong review cycle, reporting updates at each quarter and planning for next steps with the most up-to-date data as the point of reflection. These will include observations of teaching performance based on the Relay Faculty Rubric and potentially a review of student survey results. In August of each year, each faculty member reports final performance-to-goals data as part of their end-of-year review.

Promotion

For full-time faculty, promotion can take three forms:

1. A raise for strong performance (based on the annual review cycle described above)
2. A promotion to a different, more senior role (e.g., moving from instructional fellow to assistant professor or from assistant professor to director of Residency)
3. A promotion from one rank of professorship to the next (e.g., from assistant to associate professor)

Faculty Code of Conduct

All members of Relay's faculty have an obligation to observe and follow Relay's policies included in [Relay's Employee Handbook](#), including the code of conduct. For faculty-specific code of conduct policies, please see below.

Research Misconduct

Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or in reporting research results. These terms are defined as follows:

- Fabrication: Making up data or results and recording or reporting them
- Falsification: Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record
- Plagiarism: Appropriating another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit

Research misconduct does not include honest errors or differences of opinion.

A finding of research misconduct requires that:

- There be a significant departure from accepted practices of the relevant research community;
- The misconduct be committed intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly; and
- The allegation be proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

Plagiarism and Copyright Law

Relay Graduate School of Education requires that all faculty members maintain compliance with United States Copyright Law (Title 17, United States Code, § 101 - 122). Similar to the Relay plagiarism policy to which all students must adhere, faculty members are expected to develop curriculum in a way that follows scholarly expectations and is legally compliant. Faculty members are reminded that the use of third-party materials is governed by fair use (Title 17, United States Code, § 107), and Relay provides internal frameworks and support staff to help faculty members determine when a use qualifies as fair. When materials exceed fair use, Relay pays royalties, either directly to the publisher or through a copyright clearinghouse.

Copyright law is complicated, and to help clarify the nuances, Relay provides resources on understanding copyright compliance and fair use in the virtual and physical classrooms. All faculty members are urged to complete the online, self-paced modules on copyright compliance available on Canvas in the library course (LIB-201: Relay Library for Faculty). After reviewing the module, any questions about copyright compliance or fair use may be directed to library@relay.edu.

Student Academic Policies

As Relay has many programs, the particulars of each program's policies are detailed in the [Student Handbook](#).

Academic Program Requirements

The [Student Handbook](#) contains all academic policies and academic program requirements, including, but not limited to:

- Academic expectations and progress
- Academic and program-completion requirements
- Graduation and program-completion policy
- Academic standing and satisfactory progress
- Academic honors
- Academic probation and dismissal policy

Two policies are outlined below in further detail for campus leaders, faculty, and instructors.

Graduation Honors

Distinction is an honor awarded only at graduation. (Unlike Distinction, which is a graduation-only honor, Dean’s List is a term-by-term-only honor. In other words, a graduate may have earned Dean’s List honors in his/her last term — or all terms — at Relay, but no one “graduates with Dean’s List honors.”)

Students can graduate at two different levels based on achievement. Relay differentiates these levels by the colors of batons handed out at the graduation ceremony. See below for the recommended baton colors based on graduation level.

Graduation Level	Requirements	Baton Color*
Standard	Program completion	Red
Distinction	<p>For students in the General Education MAT, Distinction will be possible with the criteria below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPA of 3.5 • Teaching Portfolio, Data Narrative & Oral Presentation Average \geq 95% <p>For students in the TEL MAT, Distinction will be possible with the criteria below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPA of 3.5 • Spring Observation \geq 95% • Capstone Written Report and Oral Presentation Average \geq 95% 	Blue

**This is the recommended baton color scheme to use at graduation. However, supplies on hand or available to order may not make these feasible. Please use best judgment in getting as close to the recommended colors as possible.*

Academic Honesty and Collaboration

There are two major tenets of our academic honor code:

1. Successful teachers find communities or other teachers for socio-emotional support and to share resources. Relay encourages collaboration AND all collaboration on Relay assignments must always be verbal in nature.

2. Though students may receive resources from their school or colleagues for their classroom, all assessments that are submitted to Relay should represent students' unique work.

Academic honesty and collaboration policies and procedures are described in detail in the [Student Handbook](#).

The default expectation for students is to sign an [Academic Honesty Infraction Form](#) and submit all original work. However, some courses might better lend themselves to significant revision of school or network-based resources. If there are questions on the ratio of original work to cited work and/or the level of revision permitted, faculty should reach out to their leaders.

Student Support Data Cycle and Structures

Academic Planning

[End-of-Term Academic Plans](#) are required for all students on probation at the beginning of a term (following the previous term's end-of-term SAP). [Midterm Academic Plans](#) are also suggested for all students in danger of dismissal at the end of the term based on midterm academic progress. Academic plans are strongly encouraged for students who struggle with time and task management (regardless of SAP status) as well as students who are in danger of probation at the midterm. Finally, academic plans are required for students who were dismissed at the end of the previous term but who have successfully petitioned to reenroll. Advisors complete academic plans with their advisees and encourage the students to share those plans with instructors and school personnel as is appropriate and relevant.

Academic-plan templates are available in the Midterm and End-of-Term Student Academic Progress (SAP) modules of the [Registrar-101](#) course located on the Canvas dashboard. These academic-plan templates are also linked in SAP emails. Advisors should upload each student's completed academic plan in their [state/city folder](#). Please use the following naming convention: Student ID_MTAP (for midterm plans), or Student ID_EOTAP (for end-of-term plans). Relay asks that faculty and advisors use Student IDs as a way to maintain student privacy.

Office Hours

Faculty members should hold consistent office hours at times that are convenient and accessible to students. Office hours can be by appointment but should be offered consistently. In light of Relay's teaching online and the convenience provided, Zoom office hours are most strongly recommended.

Relay Open-Office Hours

Relay Open-Office Hours is an open-office time staffed by at least one Relay faculty member. Typically, Relay Open-Office Hours are held on Saturdays; however, occasionally other Relay Open-Office Hours events may be held on weekdays (namely the summer, end of term, etc.). Relay Open-Office Hours in this section refer to a time and space for students to attend for open study.

Shared Services Connection

Students on Hold

When students do not comply with requirements necessary for their enrollment at Relay, student services teams may place student accounts on a hold. Students on a hold:

- Cannot register for courses in the upcoming term
 - They do continue to remain enrolled and access coursework for the current term
- Cannot obtain an official transcript or receive a diploma
 - They can request unofficial transcripts and enrollment-verification letters

Student holds are outlined in detail in the [Student Handbook](#).

Updating Student Information

When a student has updated contact information (e.g., phone number or mailing address), updated employment information (e.g., school, grade, or subject area), or any other pertinent personal information changes, the student must fill out Relay's [student update form](#). This step is critical for several reasons. First, all centralized communications rely on student information available through the most recent Rise reports, including academic communication such as dismissals and probation notifications, as well as student financial services communication like tuition, fees, financial aid, and payment deadlines. In addition, employment changes may affect students' financial aid awards and tuition bills. Finally, federal regulations effective July 1, 2020¹ require that students who relocate to another state while enrolled receive direct (e.g., email) disclosures notifying them if the program in which they are enrolled does not, or has not been determined to, meet the educational requirements for licensure in the state to which they are relocating. Because Relay graduate students typically intend to pursue licensure in the state of their teaching placement while enrolled, Relay will use the state of the student's teaching placement to determine the student's location for the purposes of compliance with this requirement.

If it is not clear whether the student has updated personal information, a student's current information can be viewed on [Rise](#). Faculty can request access to Rise by emailing the Registrar's Office at support@relay.edu. Refer to the [Navigating Rise](#) resource document for assistance with navigating that system. Faculty who need to update information on behalf of the student can do so through the [staff update form](#), which is also located at the bottom right-hand corner of every Rise landing page.

A Note on Communications via Email

- Once students receive their Relay-issued email address and it is activated, Relay will use ONLY Relay-issued email addresses to communicate with students. **This is the official channel for all Relay communications, including after students exit Relay.** Students are responsible for checking their Relay-issued email address regularly.
- If students prefer to use a different email address, they must forward emails from their Relay-issued email address to their preferred email address. Instructions on forwarding emails can be found in [Relay Email Account Troubleshooting and FAQs](#).

Exceptional Student Cases

All policies related to exceptional student cases are included in the [Student Handbook](#). Faculty members are responsible for reviewing the student handbook and seeking appropriate guidance before making exceptions to policies in the handbook.

¹ 34 CFR 668.43 (a)(5)(v) and 34 CFR 668.43 (c)

Other

Communication with Students

Relay faculty and staff primarily communicate with students in Canvas through the Global Announcements, Course Announcements (instructors), Gradebook, SpeedGrader, and Conversations communication tools (instructors and graders). Additionally, instructors communicate with students and students can communicate with one another using Conversations, Discussion, and Peer Review. Faculty may also occasionally communicate through regular email and, at faculty discretion, text messaging.

Principal/School Leader Communication

Relay staff and faculty are partners in this work with principals and school leaders of the PK–12 schools in which our students serve as teachers. While the program director and location leaders are the main points of contact for school leaders, each location has best practices in place to allow faculty communication with school leaders. Faculty should reach out to location leaders if they have questions about how to communicate with principals and school leaders.

There are times when Relay needs to leverage school leaders for nonresponsive students and/or students who are struggling. Relay strives to provide students with opportunities to tell their school leaders any high-stakes statuses before Relay communicates directly with school leaders; however, this is not always possible. Reactive communication with school leaders could include:

- Notifying school leaders about students who are struggling:
 - students who are in danger of dismissal
 - students who are on probation
 - students who are nonresponsive about academic planning
 - students who are failing to make certification progress
- Other situations as needed

Note that students waive their privacy rights in their admissions agreement. Again, Relay strives to give students an opportunity to share sensitive information with their principals before Relay communicates with leadership. If any students exhibit displeasure with this policy, faculty should reach out to their dean for language to address this.

Childcare

Children of students are not allowed to attend in-person Relay classes on a regular basis. In case of a childcare emergency, if possible, students should plan to attend an alternate class date (where available). One-time accommodations can be granted by instructors, and students must reach out to faculty in advance of class to request one-time accommodations.

Institutional Policies

Education Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords students certain rights with respect to their education records, in particular the privacy of those records. Relay fully complies with the provisions outlined in FERPA. Students' education rights and related policies are outlined in detail in the [Student Handbook](#).

Social Conduct

All students have an obligation to observe and follow Relay's policies and to maintain proper standards of conduct at all times. The Relay code of conduct and all related policies are outlined in detail in the [Student Handbook](#).

Relay is committed to a policy of actively supporting equality for all persons. Relay does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, citizenship status, veteran status, disability, or any other criterion specified by federal, state, or local laws in the administration of its admissions, employment and educational policies, or scholarship, loan, and other school-administered programs. Rather, Relay affirms that it admits students and selects employees regardless of their race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, citizenship status, veteran status, disability, or any other criterion specified by federal, state, or local laws and thereafter accords them all the rights and privileges generally made available to students or employees at the school.

Appendix

Assessment, Extensions, and Scoring

Course Failure

Students who score less than 70% on a course will fail the course. Students who fail a course in a term must retake the course during a future term where the course is offered. Consequently, they are not guaranteed to graduate on time and will have to repay for that course. The price to repeat a course is \$275 per credit. Students who extend their coursework into a third year may be required to pay the full term fee and will not graduate with their class. Options for retaking a failed course may include taking the course online, if available, or taking the course with a future cohort. In order to continue eligibility for receiving federal financial aid, where available, students must be on track to graduate within 150% of the normal timeframe for the program (e.g., within three years for a two-year program).

See the [Student Handbook](#) for the repeat-coursework policy.

Per Relay’s stated developmental-resubmission policy ([see below](#)), professors should allow students who have made a good-faith effort to complete an assignment and received a score of 70% or below based on the rubric score (not due to late penalties) to complete a developmental resubmission for full credit prior to the end of the term. All other resubmissions are at the faculty member’s discretion. Resubmission of an original late assignment should still reflect the original late penalty in the final score and must take place within the term.

Notes for Faculty Serving Students Enrolled in New York, Georgia, and Pennsylvania

New York	Starting summer 2021, all New York students enrolled in a New York Trans B or Advanced Certificate program, in accordance with New York State requirements for graduate-level coursework for teacher-preparation programs, must earn a B- (80%) or higher in each course to earn credit for the course and be on track to fulfill graduation and program - requirements.
Georgia	Students seeking to apply for licensure in Georgia should be advised that GaPSC requires evidence of earning a B or higher in a 3-credit course on special education. SGA-302 fulfills this requirement.
Pennsylvania	The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires candidates to demonstrate a minimum 3.0 cumulative (overall) GPA at the end of the first year of academic coursework in the program and at the completion of required clinical practice coursework to be eligible for certification in the state.

Prerequisite Policy for TEL

Special Education Programs: Teaching Exceptional Learners coursework is sequential — the content intentionally builds in complexity across the program. To ensure that students are set up for success in this coursework, there are prerequisite courses built into the program. If students do not pass a prerequisite course, they may not be eligible to complete the program within the defined program length. At the beginning of each term, the instructor will clearly identify which courses are prerequisites for future enrollment and will discuss the implications for student progression through the program should a student fail to pass those courses. Please note, depending on the certification policies in the state, failing a prerequisite course may have an impact on student employment status.

Canvas Basics

Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) used at Relay. Relay provides training and practice opportunities for faculty members on how to use Canvas ([Canvas Basics](#)). These trainings can be found using the dashboard or course links in the navigation bar. Faculty members who need access to this course can email tech@relay.edu to be enrolled.

Gradebook

Each course has a single [Gradebook](#). All coursework scores automatically feed into the Gradebook, which is used to monitor student progress and inform student-support actions. Gradebooks are critical to ensuring our support is targeted, prioritized, and comprehensive. Using the Gradebook in Canvas is required. Canvas will treat all unmarked assignments as zero, which will calculate in the student's final score. Best practice is to adjust Gradebook to enable the [Missing Assignments Policy](#) to have a better understanding of a student's final progress throughout the course.

Sections

Within a course, instructors have the ability to segment the Gradebook so that instructors can see all student grades, as well as only the students for which they are grading. This is called [Sections](#) in Canvas. For course offerings with multiple graders (e.g., an APP, an IF, and a grader), sections will be created within the course by a member of that instructional team. Sections are not needed if there is only one grader for a course.

SpeedGrader

[SpeedGrader](#) allows faculty to view and grade submissions in one place using a simple point scale or complex rubric. Some document assignments can be marked up for feedback directly within the submission using [DocViewer](#). Faculty can also provide feedback to their students with text or media comments. It is required to use SpeedGrader to grade all assignments.

Grading in Canvas

Rubric-Based Assignments

More about [rubrics](#) can be found in Canvas Basics. Relay instructors measure student performance on assessments using the following scale:

Exemplary - Students who earn Exemplary (100%) on a rubric row have demonstrated truly outstanding performance of the knowledge, skills, or mindset described in that row. Earning an Exemplary is rare because it requires a high level of nuance and differentiation. Earning Exemplary on all rubric rows would equate to an overall grade of A+.

Proficient - Students who earn Proficient (90%) on a rubric row have demonstrated solid, proficient performance of the knowledge, skills, or mindset described in that row. Earning a Proficient is the expected outcome, as it demonstrates competency. Earning Proficient marks on all rubric rows would equate to an overall grade of A-.

Foundational - Students who earn Foundational (75%) on a rubric row have demonstrated foundational skills with respect to the strategy or technique described in that row. With more support, they will likely be able to demonstrate proficiency of that strategy or skill. Earning Foundational marks on all rubric rows would equate to an overall grade of C.

Attempting - Students who earn Attempting (65%) on a rubric row have attempted the strategy or technique described in that row. They will need more support and/or need to put in more work before they can demonstrate proficiency with that strategy or technique. Earning Attempting marks on all rubric rows would equate to an assessment grade of D.

Lacking - Students who earn Lacking (0%) on a rubric row have not attempted to master the strategy or technique described in that row. Earning Lacking marks on all rubric rows would equate to an assessment grade of F.

Once graded, the overall grade for the assignment will be a percentage (e.g., 85%), which is calculated by tallying the total points earned on the rubric over the total points possible. Relay believes that percentages have meaning to students; seeing 85% has more immediate meaning for students than seeing 17 out of 20 points. In almost all rubrics, the rows are weighted equally. In a few rare instances, rows may carry different weight, which is shown in the total point values for the row.

Discussions and Quizzes

Discussions and quizzes are graded using points. The points are tallied throughout the term and included in an overall assignment group. For most courses, this work is part of online work. Online work will require faculty to regularly check for completion, provide brief feedback, and review student responses prior to class. Faculty are encouraged to review online work submissions and utilize student responses in class to increase student feedback and investment in online work completion.

Video Assignments and Studio

When submitting assignments using Studio, students could be prompted by the assignment guidelines to leave time-stamped comments. Professors should use their discretion in determining the best way to interact with comments, including replying directly into the video using Studio and/or using the comment feature in SpeedGrader.

Please note that students enter comments on their videos after submitting their video via Studio. This is by Canvas design, to create multiple commenting environments for students. Each Studio assignment submission is considered a private environment between a student and instructor. This allows a student to use a Studio video multiple times for different Canvas assignments without having comments from previous courses/instructors appear on their submission. Students also have a second public environment that can be accessed in their Studio library. Students can use this environment to get feedback from peers or instructors and generate a conversation on their videos. Comments here are visible to anyone the video is shared with, but will not appear if the video is submitted to an assignment. Student-facing instructions on how to add comments to a Studio video post submission can be found in GEN-101: Orientation and Student Resources, which can be accessed via their dashboard, as well as in the directions of most midterm and final assignments.

All comments in Studio are time-stamped, so a professor will know if a comment was added after the due date. It is important to note that this means that technically a student could submit an assignment that is marked on time and enter comments late. Faculty should use their discretion in applying the late deduction for these students.

Online Work

All asynchronous online work should have a due date that is at 11:59 p.m. the night before a synchronous session. The expectation is that students complete this work before class. However, Relay believes that online work has value, even if completed after the synchronous session. As a result, students will have unlimited tries to complete online work and can submit this work late without penalty. Our assumption is that if this work is not completed, synchronous participation will suffer, which would be reflected in the student's attendance and participation grade. Instructors are strongly encouraged to check asynchronous work and provide feedback to encourage meaningful participation.

N/A or Muting a Rubric Row

The initial decision to allow for a [rubric row\(s\) to be muted](#) will be made during course design and approved by the program dean. The program dean should consult with the Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation in a similar fashion as with the program strawman during the scope and sequence setting process. The Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation should be made aware of assignments with muted rubric rows during course rollout and should work with their program dean when making any modifications. Individual instructors should not make any updates to assignments regarding muting a rubric row.

End-of-Term Grading

At the end of each term, faculty members are required to perform a series of steps in Canvas to calculate the students' final grades for the Office of the Provost of Teacher Programs to communicate student's academic progress (SAP). Training for concluding a term can be found in the [Registrar-101 faculty-training course](#). For access, please reach out to Tech@relay.edu.

Course Timeline

Each student-facing course on Canvas has a start and an end date, which are the dates during which students have access to a course. Student course accessibility is contingent upon Relay's institutional term dates, which are made available in the [Student Handbook](#). To accommodate course accessibility with campuses' class sessions start dates, Canvas courses will be made available to students as early as two weeks before the term, and to ensure that faculty can complete grading and students can view grades at the end of a term, courses will be open one week after the start of the following term, typically after the date by when the SAP check is due. Students and faculty will have "read-only" access (i.e., students cannot submit coursework and faculty cannot grade coursework) to closed courses in Canvas under their [past enrollments](#). Refer to [Table I](#) for course accessibility dates by term.

Table I

Term	Course Start Date	Term Start Date	Term End Date	Course End Date
Summer 2021	June 7, 2021	June 21, 2021	August 30, 2021	September 14, 2021
Fall 2021	August 24, 2021	September 7, 2021	January 10, 2022	February 7, 2022
Spring 2022	January 14, 2022	January 31, 2022	June 6, 2022	June 27, 2022
Summer 2022	June 6, 2022	June 20, 2022	August 29, 2022	September 13, 2022

Adjunct Canvas Responsibilities

Relay defines an adjunct professor as anyone who teaches less than 50% of a full-time role. For PK-12 and TEL programs, Relay believes that the roles and responsibilities for adjuncts should be defined at a national level.

When working in Canvas, adjuncts will be expected to:

- Own their own Gradebook
- Grade assignments
- Enter attendance
- Track extensions
- Enter communications regarding overrides of assignment grades or rubric rows

Adjuncts will not be responsible for setting or maintaining due dates and class dates. The management of due dates and class dates in Canvas is to be completed by a member of the instructional faculty (e.g., adjunct manager or full-time faculty member).

New and returning adjuncts should be trained on Canvas functionality during beginning of year adjunct training, as well as assigned a faculty member mentor or buddy (or simply monitored closely by their manager) during their first year using Canvas. This training will be a condensed version of Relay faculty training.

Attendance and Professionalism

Attendance is measured using the [Roll Call Attendance](#) tool in Canvas. Students who are late will receive 80% credit for their attendance for the day. This percentage has been set as the default in Canvas and should not be changed by the course instructor. Accurate attendance must be entered by faculty within 24 hours of a class to ensure students and advisors have accurate insight into student progress. Missing attendance will alert the student services team and can potentially lead to student administrative withdrawal. Detailed policies outlining attendance and professionalism are included in the [Student Handbook](#).

Tracking and Entering Attendance

Students will be instructed to communicate about absences directly with their instructors (APPs and/or IFs), who will be responsible for tracking and entering attendance information in Canvas. *If a student has an excused absence*, a professor should leave this student's attendance marking with the default Unmarked/Excused (gray with a line through it). Students who are excused should not be marked as Present, as this has implications for financial-aid data integrity.

If a student makes up a missed class, a professor should mark the student as Present for the date of the class that they made up and go back to the day that the student missed class and update that day's attendance record from Absent to Excused/Unmarked. This will keep the overall denominator of classes the same for this student as for their peers, negate the 0% for missing class, and provide an accurate record of when the student was in class, which is important for financial-aid records.

*Please note: If a course has multiple sections, only take attendance for a single student in a single section for the duration of the course. If attendance is taken for a student in Section A and then later take attendance for that same student in Section B, the Gradebook will only reflect the attendance from the most recent section (Section B) where attendance was entered.

Persistent Absence

Students who demonstrate persistent absence are subjective to an administrative withdrawal. Relay defines persistent absence as having failed to attend synchronous class sessions for 30 consecutive days and submit any course assignments within that time period. The Registrar's Office performs a routine process to help identify these students, then contacts them to determine their intentions to remain enrolled and provides necessary support.

However, if faculty members notice enrolled students in their course(s) who have been persistently absent prior to the Registrar's Office routine process, they must immediately identify these students to the Registrar's Office by sending an email to support@relay.edu. The Registrar's Office will move forward with contacting the students.

Students who continue to demonstrate persistent absence after they have been contacted may be administratively withdrawn from Relay.

Location-specific persistent absence policies can be found in the [Student Handbook](#).

Professionalism Score Calculations

Professionalism will be weighed as 10% of all courses. Professionalism will be measured in two ways:

- (1) Attendance: 5%
- (2) Online Engagement: 5%

Attendance will be measured using the Roll Call tool in Canvas. Online engagement will be measured via the completion of all online work, including CFUs, discussion posts, and quizzes. Students will have unlimited tries to complete this work (through the end of the term in which the course occurs).

Late Assignments

All assignment due dates and times are posted on Canvas. These due dates are posted on each course calendar as well as on the syllabus. They also appear on the right-hand side of a course homepage when assignments are upcoming.

All assignments submitted after the posted due date are accepted, with a penalty of 10% for one to seven days. Faculty should enter a zero for the assignment in Gradebook after seven days, or more specifically, on day eight. (Note: This applies to the MAT, Residency, and TEL programs; leadership's policy is slightly different). Scores are typically due two weeks after the assignment due date.

This is a national policy, and it is expected that the penalty is applied to all students who do not request an extension.

Entering Zeros

For the MAT, Residency, and TEL Programs, faculty should enter zeros on the eighth day after an assessment is due for anyone who has not submitted and/or requested an extension. For more information on how to input zeros, please view "Part 1: Verify the Accuracy of Your Gradebook - [STEP 4](#)" in Canvas-101.

Extensions, Retroactive Extensions, and Revisions

Extensions

Extensions are granted at faculty discretion for an assignment during the term. Relay recommends granting extensions for students who proactively request an extension with compelling rationale and who offer a new due date to submit. When granting an extension, faculty must update the associated assignment due date in Canvas. This will track the extensions in both the student and faculty calendars, as well as in Gradebook. Instructions for completing this work are [here](#) (scroll down to "Assign Different Dates to Students"). If students do not meet the extension due date, zeros should be entered immediately. Core faculty will not offer extensions on behalf of content faculty. Instead, they should direct students to connect with their content faculty, who will make the updates in their courses within the term window.

Retroactive Extensions aka Post-Due-Date Extensions (During the Term)

Faculty may, at their discretion, provide a retroactive extension to a student if it is during the term. Relay strongly recommends faculty meet with students in person to discuss circumstances before granting a retroactive extension. When granting an extension, faculty must update the associated assignment due date in Canvas. This will track the extensions in both the student

and faculty calendars, as well as in Gradebook. Instructions for completing this work are [here](#) (scroll down to “Assign Different Dates to Students”).

At this time, the length of extensions are at faculty discretion. Extensions that extend past the end of the term will need to be Incompletes. Please refer to the [Incomplete policy below](#).

Revisions (aka Developmental Resubmissions)

Because Relay wants all students to master the knowledge and skills tested in assessments, students who have made a good-faith effort to complete an assessment and earn a score of 70% or below (not due to late penalties) may be given a chance to resubmit for full credit prior to the course-closure date (refer to [course timeline](#) above). Such developmental resubmissions are at the faculty member’s discretion, but should be offered whenever possible. Resubmission of a late assessment will still reflect the original late penalty in the final score.

When granting a developmental resubmission, faculty should set a due date for the resubmission with the student within the term grading window. *Note: If the student is resubmitting a late assignment, the resubmission should still reflect the original late penalty. However, it is a national policy to accept resubmissions without penalty (i.e., assignments that are submitted on time but are resubmitted are not penalized for the resubmission).* Both the student and faculty members should track the due date in their **personal** Canvas calendars. (Do not use the course calendar, as the event will be public to all students in the course.) Faculty should also document the due date of the resubmission using the Assignment Comment feature (either from Gradebook or SpeedGrader). Instructions for adding a personal calendar event are [here](#).

Post-End-of-Term Extensions

100% of scores are due by 9:00 a.m. on the Monday of SAP week at their campus. Any extensions that would prohibit faculty from being able to meet this scoring deadline must be approved by the faculty manager and of the Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation in alignment with nationally set dates.

Incompletes

If faculty members are not prepared to give a final grade for a course at the end of the term due to some justifiable delay in students’ completion of specific coursework, faculty members may give students a temporary grade of Incomplete and communicate the nationally set Incomplete due date for the given term (see [Table II](#) for Incomplete due dates). The assignment must be submitted and graded by the Incomplete-resolution due date for the given term. The due date indicates when grades must be submitted by faculty members. This process is initiated by faculty members. If students do not complete all outstanding work within the nationally set Incomplete due date, the standing course grade on Canvas will replace the Incomplete.

Table II

Term	Incomplete-Resolution Due Date
Summer 2021	January 10, 2022
Fall 2021	June 6, 2022
Spring 2022 and Summer 2022	January 9, 2023

It is the responsibility of the professor and/or advisor to²:

- Notify students that they are receiving an Incomplete and communicate with the Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation to award an Incomplete*

² Responsibilities indicated with an * are also in the [Student Handbook](#)

- Submit grades no later than the Incomplete-resolution due date listed in Table 2. Faculty members should also work with students to set an assignment due date, ensuring enough time to submit grades by that due date.*
- Notify the Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation at the end of the term that the student’s grade should be marked as INC. The Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation will then determine if the student is categorized as a student with extenuating circumstances (refer to exceptional cases below). The dean will then notify the Registrar’s Office during the end-of-term SAP activity.
- Work with the student throughout the term to make sure that incomplete work is completed on time.
 - It is important to know that the course in which the student receives an Incomplete will close based on the [course timeline](#) policy. Students and professors will have “read-only” access to closed courses in Canvas under their [past enrollments](#). Students must submit their coursework directly to the faculty member for it to be graded.
- Notify the Office of the Provost of Teacher Programs with the final course grade, then submit the [Incomplete Form](#) to the Registrar’s Office. The Registrar’s Office will then update the student’s grade accordingly.
- In the event the work is not complete by the nationally set due date or if a student withdraws or has been withdrawn from Relay before the nationally set due date, the standing grade will replace the INC.
- Be knowledgeable about the student-facing Incomplete policy. Additional guidance about Incompletes can be found in the [Incompletes FAQs](#). If the student receives a failing grade, they will be required to retake the failing course and pay a fee for that course. Students who retake courses may not graduate on time with their cohort.

The Registrar’s Office will be monitoring the use of Incompletes closely. **Individual professors and leaders should have no more than 3% of students each term with INC’s.**

Eligible students who end the term with an Incomplete will be able to request federal financial aid for the subsequent enrolled term. Student Financial Services will closely monitor Incomplete students’ academic progress throughout the remainder of the student’s enrollment at Relay and will have full discretion of not releasing/approving federal financial aid funds if a student’s progress falls below good academic standing.

Grade Appeals for Courses

Grade appeals should always be reviewed first by the grader of the assessment. If a student receives a grade for an assignment that they believe does not accurately represent their performance in a given course, the student can submit a written grade change appeal (via email) to the faculty member who awarded the course grade. Appeals must be submitted by students within one week of receiving the grade and no later than the end of the following term that the grade was awarded.

The student must include in their written appeal the specific reasons they disagree with the grade they received, as well as the evidence they feel justifies a grade change (e.g., “I disagree with my grade of 70% in the ‘cold call’ row; if you look at 2:35–2:55 in my video, you will see that I asked the question, waited a couple of seconds, and then stated the student’s name, per the criteria for strong cold call that we learned in class.”).

This grade-change appeal process recognizes that:

- Every student has a right to receive a grade assigned upon a fair and unprejudiced evaluation based on a practice that is not arbitrary. Below are the reasons students can appeal to change a grade for a course:
 - The grade awarded by the faculty member is not an exercise of professional judgment.
 - The grade awarded by the faculty member does not accurately represent the student’s performance on an assessment.
 - The grade awarded by the faculty member was a mistake.
- Faculty members have the right to assign a grade based on any method that is professionally acceptable, viewable on Canvas, and applied equally.

The grade-change appeal process is **not** intended to be a means for students to resubmit coursework to boost their grades in a given course.

- Faculty members have the agency to approve students' appeals. However, they should be governed by the guidelines outlined below.
 - **Approves:**
 - **During term changes:** Faculty directly updates the grade on Canvas.
 - **Post-end-of-term changes:** The faculty member must first consult with their manager regarding the grade-change request (e.g., if the grade-change rationale does not align with professional judgment, student's performance, and/or the original grade awarded was in error). The faculty member, supported by their manager, and with the approval of the Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation will recommend approval of the new grade. If there are no concerns with the grade-change request, the faculty member with the approval of both their manager and the Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation then submits the [Grade-Change Request Form](#).
 - Registrar's Office reviews Grade-Change Request form submissions and follows up with the submitter if there are discrepancies (e.g., grade not included in the form).
 - Registrar's Office processes the submissions by updating the grade in Canvas and Rise and mark it as "final" to appear on the student's transcript.
 - Registrar's Office notifies the student that a grade for their course has been changed in their records (two-week turnaround time from faculty or dean's submission of grade-change form).
 - **Denies:** If faculty, manager, or the Office of the Provost of Teacher Preparation denies the appeal and the student still does not agree with the grade, they may appeal to the Office of Student Affairs by sending an email to the Office of Student Affairs requesting a review of the grade change. The Office of Student Affairs will conduct an investigation, make a decision, and notify all parties when a decision has been made. If the appeal is approved, the faculty member proceeds with the grade-change process. All grade change appeal decisions made by the Office of Student Affairs will be final.

Calculating a GPA

Calculating Grade Point Average

There are two types of GPAs: term and cumulative. The term GPA is calculated using only the courses taken in a specific term. The cumulative GPA is a summary of all Relay courses taken over a student's program. To calculate a GPA, you need to know the course grade and the course credits (see the [Student Handbook](#) for detailed information). [Table III](#) outlines the grade point equivalents for Relay.

Table III

GPA	Letter Grade	Percentage Range	
4	A+	100%	97%
4	A	<97%	93%
3.7	A-	<93%	90%
3.3	B+	<90%	87%
3	B	<87%	83%
2.7	B-	<83%	80%
2.3	C+	<80%	77%
2	C	<77%	73%
1.7	C-	<73%	70%
0	F	<70%	0%

To calculate a GPA, students must first multiply the number of course credits for each course by the grade point values associated with the grade received in that course. Then students must add all those totals together and divide that sum by the

total number of course credits. For a term GPA, students must average all regularly graded courses in *that* term and for the cumulative GPA, they must use all courses. Students should not average term GPAs in order to calculate the cumulative GPA, as this would wash out credit weightings. [Relay's GPA predictor tool](#) will help students and faculty with the calculation. Pass/Fail, Incomplete, and Withdrawn courses are not weighted in a student's term or cumulative GPA. Pass/Fail courses can only be courses that are not part of a program (e.g., DASA).

Please note, if a student was enrolled at Relay prior to 2017 and/or completed coursework on the Course Platform, please reach out to the Registrar's Office for additional guidance on calculating a student's GPA from their prior program.

[Table IV](#) shows an example of a term GPA.

Table IV

Course	Grade	Credits	Grade Points	Credits x Grade Points
#1	A	3	4	12
#2	B	2	3	6
#3	B-	1	2.7	2.7
Total		6		20.7
Term GPA		$20.7/6 = 3.45$		