



Faculty Handbook

2021-2022

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Welcome to Acacia University

Welcome from the President

“The Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins With a Single Step.” -Lao-Tzu

We are delighted that you have chosen Acacia University and are committed to assisting you in your role as an instructor in our graduate programs. I am certain that in your taking advantage of everything Acacia has to offer these will be some of the greatest teaching experiences you will have in your career.

I invite you to explore both this Faculty Handbook and also our University Catalog and Student Handbook. The real keys to Acacia experience lie within each of our students and faculty members and staff. Our faculty and staff are known for the help they provide students while they flourish and grow professionally. Communicate with both our faculty and students and you will meet active and engaged students who are breaking new ground and discovering powerful and effective ways to improve the lives of others.

On behalf of the Acacia University community, I welcome you to the Acacia family and wish you the absolute best in your educational and personal growth.

Sincerely,
Tim R. Moman
President

Welcome from the Provost

As Provost at Acacia University, I am pleased to welcome you to our growing and dynamic global community. Whether you are in the process of upgrading your skills as a professional, preparing for a new career, or pursuing a pathway toward an advanced degree, you have most assuredly come to the right place. Welcome home!

Through our unique, structured approach to interactive online learning, Acacia provides a wide array of opportunities for personal and professional growth, all from the comfort of your home or workplace and at convenient times that allow full participation and engagement in your learning process. Our courses of study provide you various options for classroom experience, using strategies that allow rich immersion in both theory and practice. Typically, our courses require a least five class periods per week, as well as ample opportunities to apply lessons and strategies learned in class, all under the expert, personal supervision of your faculty mentor.

Please know that by enrolling at Acacia, you are joining a team of outstanding professionals from around the world that is truly revolutionizing higher education. We at Acacia are fully dedicated to supporting you in your journey to realize your fullest potential in whatever field or endeavor you choose to engage. I wish you every success in your studies and future career. Congratulations for choosing Acacia University!

Sincere regards,
Thomas J. Hochstettler, AB, MA, PhD, PFHEA

NOTE: *Although every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the information in the Acacia University Handbook and the Faculty Handbook, those who use the Handbook should note that laws, rules, and policies change from time to time and that these changes might alter the information contained in this publication. Changes may come in the form of government statutes, rules, and policies adopted by the Board of Directors of Acacia University, or by the President or designee. The most current or complete information may be obtained from the appropriate university administrator.*

This Faculty Handbook is neither a contract nor an offer of a contract. The information this document contains was accurate when it was published and placed on the Internet. Fees, deadlines, academic requirements, courses, degree programs, academic policies, and other matters described in this Handbook may change without notice.

The Handbook is updated regularly and there is a new Handbook for each school year (Fall through Summer sessions). Each enrollee follows the degree program of study listed in the Handbook of the year of his/her enrollment. Announcements contained in published materials such as this Handbook are subject to change without notice and may not be regarded as binding obligations for the institution. Students are subject to the policies and provisions of the most recent Handbook; however, if the student maintains continuous enrollment, every effort will be made to ensure the continuity and consistency of his or her degree program. If a student does not maintain continuous enrollment, his or her degree program is subject to change in alignment with the most recent provisions in the Handbook.

About Us

Acacia University is the result of two companies merging and the culmination of twelve years of pioneering ways to improve instruction and learning. It began with the vision of our founders (with over 100 combined years of experience at all levels) who were convinced that implementing research-based instructional strategies, learning communities within the classroom, and state of the art technology would result in enhancing teacher effectiveness and improving student learning.

In 2003, Educational Cyberconnections, Inc. began a partnership with the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) to provide onsite training to CITA schools in Egypt, Pakistan, United Emirates, and China. This training created a demand for additional and continuing training that resulted in the establishment of an onsite and online program under the title of CITA Teacher Certification Program.

The need for quality technology support for design and hosting of the program resulted in the merger with EdgePoint Technology. The name of the company was changed to Power-Ed, Inc. during the merger.

In 2005, Power-Ed and CITA developed and delivered a web-based curriculum (24 credits) that could be delivered via the internet throughout the world. For over four years we have delivered classes, mentored teachers, and improved education in countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Syria, China, and the United States.

Our learners felt the online program was so valuable that they expressed an interest in obtaining a master's degree for the courses they had taken. Our response to their request was to seek state licensing and then accreditation from an approved US Department of Education institution. Power-Ed (dba Acacia University) set a goal that the program would be convenient, affordable, provide mentoring, and teacher dialogue; thereby improving the teaching process.

Mission and Goals of Acacia University

Acacia University's Mission

Acacia University's name reflects our belief of life-long learning. The symbol and name of the acacia as the "tree of knowledge", as it is known in many cultures, embodies our ongoing commitment to provide unparalleled standards and vehicles for learning. Acacia is committed to delivering educational programs of the highest quality through innovative forms of distance learning. To this end, Acacia University offers outstanding distance education in programs that extend extraordinary and interactive opportunities for students to reach personal and career goals.

Acacia University's Vision

Acacia University believes that innovative, relevant, and rigorous educational programs offered in a responsible distance learning format throughout the world will not only enhance individual personal and career goals, but will contribute to business, social, economic, and educational needs of our society. Acacia University will be recognized as a premier program for those who desire to earn a certificate or degree while expanding and deepening their understanding of a profession and/or applying their skills in the workforce.

Our values include:

- Excellence in teaching/learning by offering a high-quality and student-focused education
- Organizational integrity by operating with the highest ethical standards
- Diversity and civility by supporting multicultural understanding and maintaining respect for all learners and staff

Our goals include:

- Increase enrollment by partnering with businesses, agencies, and programs

- Strengthen our national reputation for excellence by providing the workforce with outstanding employees
- Ensure financial stability and growth

Our objectives include:

- Provide educational opportunities at the lowest cost feasible
- Provide courses that challenge, but do not frustrate
- Maintain high academic standards
- Establish an energizing learning environment by engaging students in worthwhile learning tasks
- Build and foster a “learning community” culture that fosters questioning, stretching, and understanding
- Measure student, staff, and employer satisfaction regularly

Acacia University’s Culture

At Acacia University we understand that affordability, convenience, flexibility, support, and learning communities are key elements that should never be compromised. Our graduates claim that we are unlike other universities in our care and support for the student. Our professors are all trained to provide an environment that promotes an energetic and thoughtful learning culture.

Acacia University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, gender identity, or other legally or policy protected status, in the university's services, educational programs, and activities, including but not limited to, admission to and employment by the university. As a federal contractor, the university is committed to affirmative action in employment for women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and covered veterans.

Goals and Objectives

Acacia University believes that educator throughout the world should be able to further their education and use the knowledge gained to achieve their personal and career goals. Acacia University will be recognized as a premier program for educators who desire to earn a graduate degree while expanding and deepening their understanding of the education profession and applying skills in the school and/or classroom.

Acacia University is redefining graduate education through distance learning. Our objective is to deliver graduate degree programs of the highest quality through innovative forms of online learning.

- We provide the opportunity for you to earn your graduate degree while teaching or administering any grade or subject area, in any school.
- We make learning convenient so that you may study and learn from the comfort of your own home.
- You learn and implement research-based instructional strategies relevant to your school/classroom.

- You receive individual mentoring from experienced educators representing many areas of expertise in education.
- You earn your graduate degree while becoming a more effective educator!

Acacia University offers high quality, rigorous educational programs with the convenience and flexibility of online delivery. Acacia University has been an innovator since its inception.

Recognition

Accreditation

Acacia University is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council (DEAC). The DEAC is an educational association located in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1926, DEAC has become the agency that sets the standard for all distance education institutions.

Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC)

Accrediting Commission

1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 234-5100

www.deac.org

The Accrediting Commission of the DEAC is listed by the United States Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency. DEAC initially received federal recognition in 1959 and has continually held recognition by the U.S. Department of Education ever since. Federal recognition aims to ensure that accreditors meet expectations for institutional and program participation in federal activities, such as federal financial aid programs. Currently, the federal recognition process is largely carried out by the National Advisory Committee for Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI). The NACIQI provides recommendations to the U.S. Secretary of Education concerning whether accreditation standards are sufficiently rigorous and effective toward ensuring that a recognized accreditor is a reliable authority regarding the quality of the education provided by the institution it accredits. In 2012, NACIQI recommended to the Secretary of Education that DEAC receive recognition through 2017.

The Accrediting Commission of the DEAC is a recognized member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CHEA is a private nonprofit national organization that coordinates accreditation activity in the United States. It carries forward a long tradition that recognition of accrediting organizations should be a key strategy to ensure quality, accountability, and improvement in higher education. Recognition by CHEA affirms that standards and processes of accrediting organizations are consistent with quality, improvement, and accountability

expectations that CHEA has established. DEAC first received recognition by CHEA in 2001. It received its most recent grant of recognition from CHEA in 2013.

State Licensing

Acacia University filed with Arizona's Secretary of State to become Acacia University and applied for a degree-granting license to the State of Arizona in September 2007. Approval was granted on February 28, 2008. The AZ State Board address is:

Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education
1740 W. Adams, Ste. 3008
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Direct Line (602) 542-5709
Fax (602) 542-1253
Website: www.azppse.gov

How to Contact the Institution

To reach the University by telephone, call 480-428-6034.

University President

tmoman@acacia.edu

University Provost

thochstettler@acacia.edu

General Inquiries

information@acacia.edu

Admissions

admissions@acacia.edu

Student Affairs

studentaffairs@acacia.edu

Student Records

records@acacia.edu

Technology

technology@acacia.edu

University Governance

Acacia University, Inc. is a for-profit S corporation that is incorporated in the state of Arizona.

Advisory Board

Dr. Vivek Mohan	Dean of Academic Student Affairs, Westford Education
Dr. Bahrullah Safi	Chief Strategy Officer, Acacia University
Dr. Maurey Bond	Vice President for Growth, Acacia University
Dr. Alush Gashi	The first Minister of Health in Kosovo
	Advisor to President and Prime Minister of Kosovo
Dr. Thomas Hochstettler	Managing Partner, Global Council of Presidents
	President Emeritus, Lewis & Clark College, Provost, Abu Dhabi University, UAE
LTC Marcus Snow	Lieutenant Colonel, US Army Reserves
Dr. J.R. Flatter	Major, United States Marine Corps (retired)
Mrs. Mawusi Nudekor Awity	Director-General, Technical and Vocational Education & Training
Dr. Ying Sun	Director, University Office of Evaluation and Educational Effectiveness
Dr. Sylvia Janet Utete Masango	former Secretary at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

Hours of Operation

General office hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Mountain Standard Time, Monday through Friday. However, faculty and students may continue communications with university personnel via the help desk, online course forums, email, and fax when the university is closed. Professors and Learning Coaches maintain scheduled hours of availability and are available for online discussion at posted times. The help desk is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day and issues are addressed within twelve hours of any request.

Acacia University is closed on all U.S. federal and state holidays and on weekends. The offices will be closed on the following observed holidays:

- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day (December 31 and January 1)
- President's Day (the third Monday in February)
- Memorial Day (the last Monday of May)
- Independence Day - July 4
- Labor Day (the first Monday of September)
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday (the fourth Thursday and Friday in November)
- Christmas Day and the day prior and after (December 24, 25, and 26)

Course Scheduling

Courses begin on predetermined dates and last 16 weeks for regular sessions or 8 weeks for Fast Track sessions. Start and end dates for each session are listed in the

academic calendar, which is available on acacia.edu and in the student handbook.

Degree Programs Offered

- Master of Arts in Elementary Education
- Master of Arts in Secondary Education
- Master of Education in English as a Second Language
- Master of Education in Special Education
- Master of Education in Educational Administration
- Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Faculty

Faculty Roles

Professors

All Professors in the University have doctorate degrees (Ed.D. or Ph.D.). Each professor at Acacia is qualified to provide excellence in instruction and leadership. Professors are assigned to and responsible for all graduate courses. They also supervise any assigned Doctoral Interns and/or Doctoral Candidates performing their online or onsite internships by providing ongoing support, communication, and meaningful feedback throughout the course term. Professors, in collaboration with assigned interns or candidates, utilize the Rubrics and Scoring Guides for all assignments throughout the course. Professors assign all final course grades.

Learning Coaches

All Learning Coaches have master's degrees, post-master's courses, and have earned the Acacia University Learning Coach Training Certification (18 credits).

A Learning Coach (LC) offers assistance to the Professors in all master's courses. He/she guides, tutors, supports, explains, models, teaches, assists in scoring, and advises. The LC specifically helps and supports other students to grow and be successful.

Program Advisors

While the student is responsible for his/her academic decisions and education, Acacia provides support and advising assistance throughout the program. Program Advisors are assigned to students upon enrollment based on his/her chosen degree program. Program advisors communicate to plan, provide assistance, address any course or program concerns, and provide mentorship throughout the program.

Doctoral Intern

Doctoral Interns are students performing their online responsibilities for the Online Internship course. Each intern is placed in a course previously completed during year one or two of his/her course of study. They shadow the professor and may assist with instructional responsibilities, with the guidance and oversight of the professor.

Doctoral Candidate

Doctoral Candidates have completed all 500 and 600 level courses of their program and successfully passed their comprehensive written and oral exams. They may be placed in a course to perform research pertaining to their dissertation topic and/or continue to perform their online responsibilities for the Online Internship course. They shadow the professor and may assist with instructional responsibilities, with the guidance and oversight of the professor.

Faculty List

Faculty Professors

Dr. Hannah Hosn Assaf, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University
Program Advisor – Secondary Education

Dr. Aliko Constantinou, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Dr. Serra Coruh, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Dr. John Croteau, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Dr. James Dean, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Dr. Mary Donahue, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Dr. Cynthia Lopez, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, University of Texas

Dr. Essra Mahmoud, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Dr. Lisa Oliphant, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University
Program Advisor – Special Education

Dr. Farah Zannad, Ed.D. Educational Leadership, Acacia University

Learning Coaches

Khadija Gaber, M.A. Secondary Education, Acacia University; Doctoral Candidate, Acacia University

Adriana Kerr, M.A. Special Education, Acacia University; Doctoral Candidate, Acacia University

Cyndy Tschanz, M.A. Secondary Education, Acacia University

Faculty Responsibilities

Professor

The professor is responsible for the following:

- Understanding and supporting the university mission and objectives
- Demonstrating excellence in instructional skills in terms of engaging students to learn
- Showing skill and commitment to integrating coursework in the learning process
- Showing the ability to inspire, motivate, and empower students to think critically about coursework
- Developing curriculum and program planning

- Evaluating students using university rubrics and scoring guides
- Monitoring academic progress of students
- Engaging in research in chosen field
- Collaborating with colleagues
- Publishing and assisting others in publishing in scholarly journals
- Presenting findings and research at academic conferences
- Advising students regarding coursework, time management, and assignments
- Participating in demonstrating leadership in faculty meetings and the Learning Coach Seminar course
- Participating in curriculum development and course revision committees
- Actively serving the university and community
- Mentoring and advising master and doctoral students and interns
- Modeling a service leadership mind-set in all activities and interactions with all stakeholders
- Defining, evaluating, and validating course objectives and student outcomes
- Developing individualized instruction using a variety of well-designed instructional material including multimedia presentations and current interactive technologies, focusing primarily on experiential and project-based learning.
- Selecting and improving learning materials and resources
- Serving on research and dissertation committees
- Contributing to other areas as well as professorial role, such as student recruitment and selection, interviews, professional development and internships
- Enthusiastically serving college and community obligations
- Specifying or approve learning approaches and required resources.
- Evaluate student achievement and assess the student's work within assigned courses
- Contributing to other administrative areas to support students, department and institution such as student recruitment and selection, timetabling, facility design, professional development, student employment and control of supplies and equipment

Learning Coach

- Review course materials, the Site Orientation, resources, and rubrics and scoring guides for familiarity
- Utilize course rubrics and scoring guides for grading of student posts, responses, and assignments.
- Draw on rubrics and scoring guides to justify grades if contested by a course participant
- Is available online at least five times per week without missing more than two consecutive days
- Utilize the course messaging system, email, and/or online video conferencing (utilization of other methods of communication when necessary for success of participants) to communicate with the professor, graduate assistants, doctoral interns, and course participants

- Utilize the course forums for communicating, giving feedback, and clarifying posts or responses
- Provide support, ideas, suggestions, modeling, and assistance to students enrolled in courses assigned
- Draw on courses and experience resources to model and give sound educational suggestions to mentees
- Maintain confidentiality of information learned about mentees or students enrolled in the courses
- Maintain confidentiality of information shared by the professor, administrator, another LC, or student during the course
- Maintain regular communication with the professor via email, online video conferencing, or through the online LC Forum
- Participate in the LC Seminar
- Maintain accurate time records of online and offline activities related to being an LC
- Provide support to approximately all students in each course assigned in a professional manner while maintaining confidentiality
- Report and record any cases of plagiarism to professor and contact student, sharing concerns, giving warning along with constructive guidance
- Review and submit revision requests for course content if needed, share any suggestion for course improvements or need for clarification
- Devote an average of 30 minutes per student per week
- Provide weekly posts on the course VLC forum
- During each course session schedule at least one individual meeting with each student
- Schedule at least one partnering/group activity related to an assignment each session
- Attend or view one technology tutorial per year
- Participate in ongoing curriculum development/revision
- Complete professional development activities equivalent to three graduate credits/CEUs per year

Program Advisor

- Clarify student responsibilities to his/her academic plans
- Plan program of study to meet individual goals
- Provide academic motivation and goal-setting
- Arrange for support with specific non-academic issues (study habits, time management, etc.)
- Refer to other appropriate University resources
- Intervene and assist students identified as not meeting learning outcomes
- Select courses for each term
- Serve on interview and screening committees
- Recommend course and program reviews and/or changes
- Assist professors with research and other projects
- Help students define and develop realistic educational career plans through schedule planning for each semester and summer school, if appropriate
- Assist each assigned student in planning an academic program of study

- Meet with advisee upon acceptance to the university to assist student with initial adjustment to university academic life
- Monitor progress toward educational/career goals and meet at least once each semester to review the progress toward completing the proposed academic program and to discuss grades and other performance indicators
- Discuss and reinforce linkages and relationships between instructional program, occupation/career, and internships
- Interpret and provide rationale for institutional policies, procedures, and requirements
- Follow-up with the advisee on any report of unsatisfactory work, plagiarism, or academic probation
- Monitor assigned students who are placed on academic probation
- Approve all designated educational transactions (e.g., pre-registration/registration schedule, drops/adds, withdrawals, change of major and advisor, waivers, graduation requirements, etc.).
- Demonstrate personal interest in students, as individuals
- Review student records and transcripts each semester
- Inform and, if necessary, refer students to other institutional resources when academic, attitudinal, attendance, or other personal problems require intervention by educational professionals

Faculty Evaluation

All faculty members undergo a formal performance evaluation annually. Faculty will be evaluated on the responsibilities listed in their official Acacia job description during a conference and goal setting session. If the faculty member does not meet expectations, they will be placed on probation and monitored by the Provost during the following session, after which, they will be reevaluated. If their performance does not improve, they will be dismissed from their faculty position.

Faculty Professional Development

Acacia faculty must participate in professional development (conferences, workshops, seminars, presentations, etc.) equal to 3 graduate credits or 45 CEUs each year.

Faculty are required to complete the Professional Development Log for each professional development opportunity they complete and submit it to the Provost at the end of each calendar year.

Learning Coach Training Certificate Program

Learning Coach trainees are graduates of Acacia University who apply and are accepted into the training program. Each master's graduate is considered based on Grade Point Averages, recommendations from other Learning Coaches and Professors, and the application essay. Each trainee participates in a special training program each of three consecutive academic terms while also participating as a Learning Coach trainee in a class for each of three consecutive academic terms.

Each trainee is assigned to Professors who display different teaching styles from each other so that the trainee is exposed to various ways of communicating and providing feedback to students. Successful trainees earn 18 post-master's credits and are eligible to be employed as Learning Coaches at Acacia.

Responsibilities include:

- Participating in the Learning Coach Training Seminar class for three consecutive academic terms
- Accepting supervision and placement directions from the supervising faculty of the training program and assigned classes
- Being online a minimum of four times per week and not missing more than two consecutive days during any course term in either the Learning Coach training class or the assigned class
- Using the Rubrics and Scoring Guides to grade, rate, and/or score all student assignments, posts, responses, and projects
- Following the course outcome objectives and teaching the content
- Reporting any plagiarism or other questionable online findings to supervising faculty
- Providing insightful and meaningful feedback to students assigned
- Writing reports and keeping a journal of training experiences
- Participating in three end-of-course revision projects – one each term or a large curriculum development project involving major changes to a course, assessments, assignments, or content

Institutional Policies

All faculty members are responsible for adhering to Acacia University policies and also helping students understand and follow policies.

Student Privacy Policy (FERPA)

Acacia University will not disclose your personal information, except as required to do so by law or in the good faith belief that such action is necessary to: (a) conform to the edicts of the law or comply with legal process served on Acacia University; (b) protect and defend the rights or property of Acacia University; or, (c) act under exigent circumstances to protect the personal safety of users of Acacia University, its websites, or the public.

Under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 a student's academic and financial files at Acacia University will not be released to any third party without the written consent of the Learner.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18

or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Acacia University is in compliance with all requirements imposed by or pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The institution does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in its activities, programs, or employment policies, in accordance with Federal, State, and local laws.

Disabilities

Acacia University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. In compliance with federal and state regulations, Acacia University will provide reasonable accommodations or services to qualified students with disabilities.

Acacia will deem a request for accommodation or services reasonable if the request:

- Is based on documented individual needs
- Does not compromise essential requirements of a course or program
- Does not impose a financial or administrative burden upon the University beyond that which is deemed reasonable and customary
- Is within the scope of the University's control

Acacia defines a qualified student as one whom, with or without reasonable accommodations, is able to perform the essential functions of program or course requirements. The essential requirements of an academic course or program do not need modification to accommodate an individual with a disability.

Final responsibility for selection of the most appropriate accommodation rests with the Student Affairs Office of Acacia University and is determined on a case-by-case basis, dependent upon the nature of the disability of a student. A student seeking accommodations or services is encouraged to e-mail studentaffairs@acacia.edu to discuss potential academic accommodations or services and begin the review process. The University, in consultation with the student, will determine the accommodation.

Student responsibility includes:

- Follow the accommodation procedure outlined above
- Identify the disability to the staff and/or faculty of the University
- Provide and incur expense for current appropriate documentation, from a qualified medical or other licensed professional, of the disability and the accommodation or service needed
- Provide a signed medical opinion stating that with the reasonably requested accommodation or service, the student would be physically and/or mentally able to perform the essential functions of program or course requirements
- Request specific accommodations or services

If a student identifies a disability that may prevent him/her from completing a degree program or seeking employment in a field for which the degree program is designed to prepare him/her, the University will take all information into consideration, including medical or professional documentation, when determining whether and what type of an accommodation will be made.

Intellectual Property

It is the policy of Acacia University that any course materials prepared by faculty, staff, or students which may be eligible for copyright protection in the United States or elsewhere shall be considered property of Acacia University. All rights, titles, and interest in the copyright of such work are waived. This also includes the waiving of all moral rights relating to the work developed or produced, including, and without limitation, any and all rights of identification of authorship and any and all rights of approval, restriction or limitation on use of subsequent modifications.

The Website and its entire content, features and functionality (including but not limited to all information, software, text, displays, images, video and audio, and the design, selection and arrangement thereof), are owned by Acacia, its licensors or other providers of such material and are protected by United States and international copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret and other intellectual property or proprietary rights laws. Acacia does not claim ownership of Copyrights owned by third parties. These Terms of Use permit you to use the Website for your personal, non-commercial use only.

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Copyright

It is the policy of Acacia University to comply with copyright law. If you believe your copyrighted work is being infringed on an Acacia University site (acacia.edu or courses.acacia.edu), please notify the University.

Contact Information

Email: information@acacia.edu

Phone: (480) 428-6034

Fax: (480) 428-6033

Mail: Acacia University

7665 S. Research Drive

Tempe, AZ 85284-1812

In notifying us of the alleged copyright infringement, please be sure to include the following information:

- a description of the copyrighted work that is the subject of the claimed infringement;
- a description of the infringing material and information sufficient to permit Acacia University to locate the material;
- contact information, including your address, telephone number and/or email address;

- a statement by you that you have a good faith belief that use of the material in the manner complained of is not authorized by the copyright owner, or its agent, or the law;
- a statement by you, signed under penalty of perjury, that the information in the notification is accurate and that you have the authority to enforce the copyrights that are claimed to be infringed; and
- a physical or electronic signature of the copyright owner or a person authorized to act on its behalf.

Failure to include all of the above-listed information may result in a delay of the processing of your complaint. Acacia University will terminate the online privileges of users who infringe the copyright of others.

Code of Conduct

All students at Acacia University are expected to be honorable and observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The graduate school promotes, as part of its mission and purpose, the development of educators of strong character and responsibility. Self-discipline is extremely important in participating and completing the online courses.

Faculty Recruitment, Development, and Evaluation

Professors and Learning Coaches are recruited from graduates of Acacia University. Invitations are extended to all graduates earning a 3.75 GPA or higher to apply for the Professor – Learning Coach Training Certificate Program. Applications are reviewed by Acacia Administration and, depending on expected enrollment, as many as five trainees are accepted. Training occurs during three semesters/sessions and includes participation in a Training Seminar class, participation in curriculum development and/or course review projects, and placement in a course each of three sessions. The role of the Trainee is to work with the Professor to assist, learn, and practice all faculty expectations while being mentored by the Professor.

Professors are recruited from practitioners who have a wide range of experience in education and have earned doctoral degrees. Applications are sent to those interested and are kept on file for one year, if not employed. New professors are interviewed and selected by an administrative/faculty committee. New professors undergo a training program for one semester/session under the supervision of another professor who mentors them in course practices and expectations. Professors are expected to participate in curriculum development/and or course review projects each school year.

It is estimated that faculty spend about 20 minutes per student, per week in assigned classes. Some courses require more time than that, depending on format and amount of research activities and projects. In addition, online video conferences, forum posts and responses, and other responsibilities may add to time per week required.

Support for faculty includes access to all Acacia administrators, the online library (LIRN), annual membership to ASCD, and the annual Professor/Learning Coach Seminar forums. Frequent communication with Administration is encouraged and course/student assistance is provided when requested or when the faculty member needs to be offline for more than two consecutive days.

Professional development and incentives for faculty include a paid subscription for ASCD (Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development), mini-training sessions, opportunities to present and attend conferences, consultant opportunities, and training during curriculum development projects. Rubric and scoring calibration sessions are held once per school year.

All faculty members undergo a formal performance evaluation annually. Faculty will be evaluated on the responsibilities listed in their official Acacia job description during a conference and goal setting session. If the faculty member does not meet expectations, they will be placed on probation and monitored by the Provost during the following session, after which, they will be reevaluated. If their performance does not improve, they will be dismissed from their faculty position.

Additional Course Policies and Guidelines for Students (taken from the University Handbook and Course Catalog)

All Faculty are expected to read and become familiar with all additional course policies and guidelines, grading criteria, rubrics, and course information.

Study Suggestions

Every student at Acacia University has access to the Introduction to Graduate Studies - Site Orientation. This orientation helps students assess their readiness for online learning and provides guidance for improving areas where a student may need help in being a successful online learner. The orientation also provides basic information about understanding and using computers and the internet; instruction and practice in navigating the course site and completing assignments; and an explanation of the grading system.

Professors, Learning Coaches, and Program Advisors help all new enrollees understand expectations and provide individualized study suggestions, as needed.

Course materials

Required textbooks are provided in an electronic format. Students have access to the e-textbook for the duration of the course in which it is required. Access to required textbooks is provided at no cost to the student and is not included in the cost for tuition.

Additional resources are also provided in each course to support specific lesson topics.

Quizzes and exams

Quizzes, mid-term exams, and final exams are administered electronically. These assessments are system scored and students can view their grade immediately upon submission. Quizzes are allotted 30-60 minutes and mid-term and final exams are allotted 60-120 minutes, depending on the course.

Assignments

There are several types of assignments used in Acacia courses. A brief description of each is listed below:

- **Lesson Assessments:** Lesson Assessments are short essay-type questions. These assignments require one to three written paragraphs with careful professional thought including insight and classroom application.
- **Virtual Learning Community Activities:** Virtual Learning Community (VLC) activities are interactive forum-based assignments. These assignments represent interactive discussions among participants. Students must answer a question based on the lesson topic. Each student is then required to respond to two of their classmates' original posts, offering insightful feedback, comments, suggestions, etc. Grades are given for the student's answer as well as their responses to classmates.
- **Strategy Plans:** As part of the coursework in the three Power Strategies® courses, you will be asked to complete several strategy plans. These plans will demonstrate how you are integrating the Power Strategies® into your daily instruction.
- **Literature Reviews:** Literature reviews are common assignments in graduate courses. They are designed to strengthen research skills while the individuals extend and deepen their knowledge on a specific topic related to the course. Literature reviews have characteristics that enhance critical thinking skills and writing clarity. APA formatting is required.
- **Projects:** a project requires that you collect information regarding a topic, analyze the information, apply the course content, and design a plan that you can use in your classroom. Projects allow you to demonstrate a high level of skill in the application of the concepts of a course. There are several projects that are included in the courses.

All written assignments are graded using a specific rubric for that type of assignment.

Rubrics

Each assignment has a specific rubric. The rubrics are set up to provide a detailed explanation of all expectations. All Professors and Learning Coaches use this tool to objectively score all assignments. Rubrics are found on the home page as well as each course page. Reviewing and using these rubrics while completing each assignment will help to ensure optimum points are earned.

Academic Progress

Satisfactory Academic Progress

This program does not allow students to work at their own pace. Students are expected to keep up with the posted course schedule of lessons and assignments. Course activities and assignments are graded on a weekly basis by professors/Learning Coaches. Rubrics are used for scoring all formative assignments and assessments. Other assignments and assessments are electronically scored with immediate feedback. Students can access their grades for assigned lesson material, discussions, assignments, and assessments for each lesson at any time during the course.

Faculty and program advisors monitor the progress of each student. If the student does not make satisfactory academic progress during a course (falls behind in assignments, has unsatisfactory attendance, or lacks course participation), the professor/Learning Coach contacts the student to schedule an individual conference to assess needs.

If a student maintains a 3.0 GPA or higher, it is assumed that there is satisfactory academic progress. Should the GPA fall below 3.0, the Student Services Support Director will contact the student to schedule a conference. While Acacia University understands that students may have extenuating circumstances (e.g. medical emergencies) during a term, documentation may need to be provided and will be placed in the student record.

When the GPA is below 3.0 the student is placed on academic probation following that term and a note will be placed on the student record. The student will receive a warning that the GPA must be raised during the next two terms. Academic probation is permissible for only two terms, after which, the student will be dismissed from the university.

Master's Degree Programs

D and F grades are not acceptable in the master's program. Two C grades are acceptable if a GPA of 3.0 is maintained. If the GPA falls below 3.0, the student is placed on academic probation and the retake of a course must occur prior to registering for a new course.

Each course can be retaken only once. Retake courses are subject to the normal master's tuition rate.

Note: retake courses will be indicated with an "(R)" on transcripts.

Satisfactory academic progress in the master's program is monitored by faculty program advisors, who meet with advisees two times each academic year to discuss the pace of courses, grades, and academic progress.

Online participation, effort, and timeliness are reviewed and discussed with each student. Program goals and outcomes are reviewed and discussed so that the

program advisor can determine student progress in the program. Notes of insufficiencies are recorded in the comments section of the student's records. Program advisors indicate areas of support needed and regularly check the transcript to monitor GPA. If a student maintains a 3.0 GPA or higher and has not expressed academic concerns, it is assumed that there is satisfactory academic progress.

Academic probation will not exceed two sessions. If, during the following two sessions, the student's grade average is still unsatisfactory, the student will be promptly notified by the Student Support Services Director of the recommendation for academic dismissal. At that time, the student may appeal by submitting a letter of grievance to the Student Support Services Director, who will convene an independent hearing to determine the status of SAP.

Quantitative Criteria

Students must earn at least a 3.0 GPA to meet program requirements. If two or more courses are taken simultaneously, no more than one course can receive a grade lower than a C. A GPA lower than a 3.0 will automatically initiate probationary status and require course retake. Students will maintain a program GPA of 3.0 (grade of B) or higher on a 4.0 grade scale.

Qualitative Criteria

Each course has a qualitative component based on timeliness, professionalism, progress, and effort based on a Participation and Effort Rubric that contributes 10% to their final course grade. Satisfactory progress (good standing) is maintained when master's students earn a program GPA of 3.0 (grade of B) or higher on a 4.0 grade scale. Students who do not maintain a 3.0 GPA will be placed on academic probation the following session and be required to repeat the course.

Doctoral Program

C, D, and F grades are not acceptable in the doctoral program. If a grade of C or lower is earned, the course must be retaken the next time it is offered and completed with a grade of B or higher. A retake of a course must occur prior to registering for a new course.

If two C or lower grades are earned, the student is placed on academic probation and both courses must be retaken with satisfactory grades earned before registering for another course in the program of study.

If a third grade of C or lower is earned in any future doctoral course (even if two prior courses are retaken and higher grades are earned), the student will be ineligible to continue in the doctoral program and will be officially dismissed for unsatisfactory academic progress.

Each course can be retaken only once. If a grade of B or higher is not achieved upon completion of a retake, the student will be officially dismissed for unsatisfactory academic progress. Retake courses are subject to the normal doctoral tuition rate.

Note: retake courses will be indicated with an "(R)" on transcripts.

Satisfactory academic progress in the doctoral program is monitored by faculty program advisors, who meet with advisees two times each academic year to discuss the pace of courses, grades, and academic progress.

Online participation, effort, and timeliness are reviewed and discussed with each student. Program goals and outcomes are reviewed and discussed so that the program advisor can determine student progress in the program. Notes of insufficiencies are recorded in the comments section of the student's records. Program advisors indicate areas of support needed and regularly check the transcript to monitor GPA. If a student maintains a 3.0 GPA or higher and has not expressed academic concerns, it is assumed that there is satisfactory academic progress.

Academic probation will not exceed two sessions. If, during the following two sessions, the student's grade average is still unsatisfactory, the student will be promptly notified by the Student Support Services Director of the recommendation for academic dismissal. At that time, the student may appeal by submitting a letter of grievance to the Student Support Services Director, who will convene an independent hearing to determine the status of SAP.

Quantitative Criteria

Students must earn at least a B grade in each course taken to meet program requirements. If two or more courses are taken simultaneously, no more than one course can receive a grade lower than a B. A grade lower than a B will automatically initiate probationary status and require course retake. Students will maintain a program GPA of 3.0 (grade of B) or higher on a 4.0 grade scale.

Qualitative Criteria

Each course has a qualitative component based on timeliness, professionalism, progress, and effort based on a Participation and Effort Rubric that contributes 10% to their final course grade. Satisfactory progress (good standing) is maintained when doctoral students earn a program GPA of 3.0 (grade of B) or higher on a 4.0 grade scale. Students who do not earn at least a B in every course during an academic session will be placed on academic probation the following session and be required to repeat the course.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating

Cheating includes any conduct that involves unauthorized use of written or oral information, electronic or mechanical devices, or other aids to complete a test, examination, or assignment. Buying or selling information related to a test or examination is also defined as cheating. Unauthorized collaboration with another

person, whether a student or not, is also cheating. Cheating is also defined as submitting the same work for multiple assignments.

A student suspected of cheating will receive notification from his/her Professor/Learning Coach citing the evidence used to document the offense. A copy of the notification will also be submitted to the Program Advisor and Provost. A student has 48 hours to respond in writing to the Professor/Learning Coach regarding the allegation.

Professors/Learning Coaches will apply consequences to the student assignment and/or course grades according to suggested guidelines which can range from resubmitting an assignment for half points possible to failing the course.

If it is determined that cheating has occurred, the student will not receive full credit for that assignment. If cheating reoccurs, the student will not earn credit for that course. A third incident of cheating will result in expulsion or suspension from Acacia University.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Acacia University uses current technology to identify possible instances of plagiarism by comparing student submissions against internet sites, academic journals, and previously submitted student assignments. Submissions that are flagged as possible plagiarism are reviewed by the Professor/Learning Coach to verify if plagiarism really occurred and what action needs to be taken.

If it is determined by the Professor/Learning Coach that plagiarism by a student has occurred, the student will not receive full credit for that assignment. If plagiarism reoccurs, the student's will not earn credit for that course. A third incident of detected plagiarism will result in expulsion or suspension from Acacia University.

The expectation is that the work you submit will be your own and not that of others. Copying others' work without giving them credit is called **plagiarism** and is a serious offense in the US. Copyright laws protect the ideas of authors from being copied without citing the reference. This includes any work that is written or recorded in any way. Books, magazines, and online articles are protected in this way.

There are three ways that plagiarism can exist in an online course. The first is answering a question by copying directly from the content text. It is appropriate to reference a statement or section from the content, but the reference has to be stated in your words and not just copied from the text. This demonstrates your understanding. Phrases such as "according to the text" or "as found in section ____" can be used to present the idea, but the explanation has to be in your words.

The second is copying from colleagues. For example, one of your colleagues in your VLC may submit a strategy plan to be reviewed. If you read the plan and then write a plan that is almost identical to your colleagues, that is plagiarism. You may like

that strategy plan and want to use it in your classroom. That is appropriate, but submitting the same plan for credit is not. You can avoid this problem by completing your plans before you read the plans of others.

The most common way plagiarism occurs in online courses is by using the ideas from resources (books, articles, websites, etc.) and not providing citations for them. The citation can be for a section that uses the ideas of others or can be for an exact quote that is shown in quotation marks with proper APA citation.

Finally, copying complete sections or articles from other sources is plagiarism because you are presenting it as your work. Even if cited, this is not appropriate. Use notes from articles and include the ideas in your own words. This will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of the sources you have researched. Information about plagiarism is provided in the Resource Library section of each course.

Grading Policy

Acacia University uses the following system of course grading:

Grading: (No rounding)

A = 92 - 100%

B = 84% - 91.99%

C = 76% - 83.99%

D = 65% - 75.99%

F = 64.99% or lower

Incomplete – Incomplete (INC) grades are granted on an individualized basis. During a course term, if a student has an extenuating or personal circumstance that prohibits him/her from completing the course within the posted schedule, special arrangements to complete the work must be made with the Professor/Learning Coach. If a student does not complete the assigned course work within the agreed upon schedule, the course grade will be converted from INC to the grade earned as of the scheduled deadline. Grades of "D" or "Failing" do not earn credits that apply toward a graduate degree and require a retake of the course.

Grade Point Average

Grades are also calculated in terms of a 4-point grade system:

A = 4.00 points

B = 3.00 points

C = 2.00 points

D = 1.00 points

F = 0.00 points

A student may earn as many as two grades of "C" but must balance the grades with at least two grades of "A" to achieve the minimum required grade average. A student must achieve a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative grade point average (GPA) to graduate with the graduate degree.

End of Term

At the end of each term, courses are closed from student access for grading. Professors will grade all coursework and then meet with doctoral interns and/or candidates and Learning Coaches to review and discuss the grades. When all grading is completed the professor will notify the provost. The provost will then notify student records to transfer the grades to the student information system (Populi) and the technology department to reopen the courses for students to view grades. All courses must be reopened within two weeks of the end of the term.

Academic Probation

When a student has completed three or more courses and the student's cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 for two terms, academic probation occurs. A student on academic probation has one term to raise the cumulative average above the minimum standard, either by completing additional courses or repeating courses bearing inadequate grades.

In the event a course is repeated, the original grade is replaced by the subsequent course grade. The cost for repeating a course is determined by the current tuition schedule. Academic suspension will follow only if a student is unable to return to active status or the grade point average is not raised within the following term. Suspended students may apply for readmission to Acacia University after a period of one year.

Graduation Requirements

To be eligible for graduation, students must do the following:

1. Complete all program of study requirements.
2. Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
3. Complete the program of study within four (4) years after completing the first course. The graduate school may grant an extension of one year.
4. Meet all the requirements listed in Acacia University Handbook at the time of enrollment, or at the time of changing the program of study.
5. Fulfill all financial obligations to Acacia University prior to graduation.
6. Complete and submit program of study exit survey.

School/Course Enrollment Status

Withdrawal from the University

University withdrawal is cancelling your enrollment for all courses and leaving the University altogether. If you decide to formally withdraw from the University, you must drop all courses and provide notice, in any manner, to the Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@acacia.edu) to update your academic status. Simply dropping courses or non-attendance does not constitute an official withdrawal. This notice MUST be followed by a written confirmation within 30 days. The confirmation is to indicate the last date of attendance and be signed and dated by the student.

If a student does not return from an authorized leave of absence (LOA), they will be withdrawn from the university. The withdrawal date will be the date the student was scheduled to return from the LOA and failed to do so.

Course withdrawal

A student may withdraw from a course by notifying the professor and contacting the Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@acacia.edu), in any manner, stating your request to withdraw from the course, the course number, and reason for withdrawing.

A course withdrawal will be recorded as a "W" on the student's transcript. If more than 50% of the course is completed, the student cannot withdraw and will receive the grade earned regardless of attendance from that point.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, no student may withdraw from the same course more than once.

The official course withdrawal date will be the date the student submits the course withdrawal request to the Office of Student Affairs.

Course Extension Policy

A student may request a two-week extension no later than the end date of a course (excluding doctoral Capstone courses), if he/she will not be able to successfully complete all course requirements on time. Extensions are reviewed and approved or denied at the professor's discretion. Extensions may be granted in cases where the student has made acceptable progress in the course but has experienced an extenuating circumstance that will prohibit successful completion of the course on the scheduled end date. Acceptable progress is defined as:

- the student has actively participated in course activities up to the point of the extenuating circumstance
- the student is current with all assignment submissions
- the student has earned a grade of at least 76% for the work up to that point

Extensions are not granted for lack of participation or failure to submit work on time by the student. Documentation of the extenuating circumstance will be required for every course extension request.

Extensions are limited to a maximum of two-weeks, one extension per course. The student is responsible for contacting the course professor to request the extension and provide documentation to validate the reason for the extension request by the course's scheduled end date. Professors will not ask for specific documents. It is the responsibility of the student to provide documentation that a reasonable person would consider sufficient to explain the reason for the extension request. However, faculty can request follow-up information related to the completeness and validity of documentation for the extenuating circumstance. The professor reserves the right to approve an extension or not, based on the student's effort in the course.

Leave of Absence

Students may request a leave of absence (LOA) for up to two years. A leave of absence may be granted to students who face military obligations, long-term health concerns, a serious family emergency, extenuating job circumstances, or critical life circumstances that prevent them from being able to take courses for an extended period of time. To request a Leave of Absence, submit the following information to the Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@acacia.edu):

- Full name
- Explanation of situation
- Last course completed
- Date the LOA will begin (or began) and date of expected return (if student does not return at expected date and does not submit a request for an extension of LOA, the student will be withdrawn from the university and will be required to apply for readmission)

If approved, a letter of confirmation will be sent to the student within 30 days.

If a student does not return from an authorized leave of absence, they will be withdrawn from the university. The withdrawal date will be the date the student was scheduled to return from the LOA and failed to do so.

Inactive Status

In the event the student fails to enroll for any course for two consecutive terms, excluding summer, he/she will be placed on inactive status. To return to active status, submit the following information to the Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@acacia.edu):

- Full name (as on current student records)
- Date/term to return

Returning students will be billed the \$25.00 reactivation fee prior to enrollment. If an inactive student chooses not to return to active status during the following term period, the graduate school will initiate the process of withdrawal.

Student Services

Student/Program Advising

While the student is responsible for his/her academic decisions and education, Acacia provides support and advising throughout the program. Program Advisors are assigned upon enrollment based on his/her chosen degree program.

Program Advisors will assist with the following:

- Clarifying student responsibilities to his/her academic plans
- Planning program of study to meet individual needs
- Providing academic motivation and goal-setting
- Arranging for support with specific non-academic issues (study habits, time management, etc.)
- Referring to other appropriate University resources

- Intervening and assisting students identified as at-risk
- Communicating to the proper department any concerns that the student may experience
- Registering for courses each term

Any questions or concerns related to the above should be directed to your assigned Program Advisor.

Professors/Learning Coaches will assist with the following:

- Lead and review the learner work that is posted
- Ask questions about the work to expand learner thinking about the topics
- Provide examples and suggestions about how to use strategies in real-life situations
- Use rubrics to grade learners' work and provide specific feedback on the work
- Encourage learners to strive for a high level of quality in what they do
- Encourage learners in the analysis of their work and that of other students
- Help develop learners' analysis skills

In order to assist students most effectively, it is the student's responsibility to immediately communicate needs and/or concerns to the appropriate Professor, Learning Coach, program advisor, or Acacia academic administrator for a timely resolution.

Orientation

Every student at Acacia University has access to the Introduction to Graduate Studies - Site Orientation. This orientation helps students assess their readiness for online learning and provides guidance for improving areas where a student may need help in being a successful online learner. The orientation also provides basic information about understanding and using computers and the internet; instruction and practice in navigating the course site and completing assignments; and an explanation of the grading system.

Forums

The general forums are located on the home page. These are subject-area forums accessible to all students so that they may interact and share information with other students in their specialty subject area (Math, Science, ESL, Special Education, etc.).

The course forums are located on each course page. These forums are used by the Professor/Learning Coach to share pertinent information regarding the progress of the course. Another purpose of the course forums is to allow students to post questions they may have regarding particular assignments. It is expected that students check the course forums each time they access the course to ensure access to all information that has been shared by the Professor/Learning Coach and other participants.

Library Services

Acacia University provides students free access to the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN). The LIRN provides students with millions of peer-reviewed and full-text journal, magazine, and newspaper articles, e-books, podcasts, audio, and video resources to support their academic studies.

Resources

Other online resources include e-books, articles, lesson examples, classroom instructional resources, exemplars, rubrics, and examples of student assignments from course activities. Internet links to resources supporting course content are included in the course content and/or the Resource section of each course.

Student Privacy Policy (FERPA)

Acacia University will not disclose your personal information, except as required to do so by law or in the good faith belief that such action is necessary to: (a) conform to the edicts of the law or comply with legal process served on Acacia University; (b) protect and defend the rights or property of Acacia University; or, (c) act under exigent circumstances to protect the personal safety of users of Acacia University, its websites, or the public.

Under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 a student's academic and financial files at Acacia University will not be released to any third party without the written consent of the Learner.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Acacia University is in compliance with all requirements imposed by or pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The institution does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in its activities, programs, or employment policies, in accordance with Federal, State, and local laws.

Disabilities

Acacia University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. In compliance with federal and state regulations, Acacia University will provide reasonable accommodations or services to qualified students with disabilities.

Acacia will deem a request for accommodation or services reasonable if the request:

- Is based on documented individual needs
- Does not compromise essential requirements of a course or program
- Does not impose a financial or administrative burden upon the University beyond that which is deemed reasonable and customary
- Is within the scope of the University's control

Acacia defines a qualified student as one whom, with or without reasonable accommodations, is able to perform the essential functions of program or course requirements. The essential requirements of an academic course or program do not need modification to accommodate an individual with a disability.

Final responsibility for selection of the most appropriate accommodation rests with the Student Affairs Office of Acacia University and is determined on a case-by-case basis, dependent upon the nature of the disability of a student. A student seeking accommodations or services is encouraged to e-mail studentaffairs@acacia.edu to discuss potential academic accommodations or services and begin the review process. The University, in consultation with the student, will determine the accommodation.

Student responsibility includes:

- Follow the accommodation procedure outlined above
- Identify the disability to the staff and/or faculty of the University
- Provide and incur expense for current appropriate documentation, from a qualified medical or other licensed professional, of the disability and the accommodation or service needed
- Provide a signed medical opinion stating that with the reasonably requested accommodation or service, the student would be physically and/or mentally able to perform the essential functions of program or course requirements
- Request specific accommodations or services

If a student identifies a disability that may prevent him/her from completing a degree program or seeking employment in a field for which the degree program is designed to prepare him/her, the University will take all information into consideration, including medical or professional documentation, when determining whether and what type of an accommodation will be made.

Intellectual Property

It is the policy of Acacia University that any course materials prepared by faculty, staff, or students which may be eligible for copyright protection in the United States or elsewhere shall be considered property of Acacia University. All rights, titles, and interest in the copyright of such work are waived. This also includes the waiving of all moral rights relating to the work developed or produced, including, and without limitation, any and all rights of identification of authorship and any and all rights of approval, restriction or limitation on use of subsequent modifications.

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Code of Conduct

All students and staff at Acacia University are expected to be honorable and observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The graduate school promotes, as part of its mission and purpose, the development of educators of strong character and responsibility. Self-discipline is extremely important in participating and completing the online courses.

Members of the Acacia University community are expected to conduct themselves professionally, and refrain from acts of misconduct including but not limited to the following:

- Dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation or furnishing false information, forgery, or misuse of academic or administrative materials.
- Actions, oral statements, and written statements which threaten or violate the personal safety of any member of the faculty, staff, or other students.
- Failure to respect the diversity of opinions among the Professor/Learning Coach and members of the class and respond to them in a courteous manner
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching or other components of the academic process, administration, or University activity.
- Failure to maintain an environment free of harassment, stalking, threats, abuse, insults, or humiliation to the Professor/Learning Coach and members of the class. This includes, but is not limited to, demeaning written or oral comments of an ethnic, religious, sexist (or sexual orientation), or racist nature; and the unwanted sexual advances or intimidations by email, on discussion boards, and other postings in courses.
- Failure to comply with published University policies.
- Failure to respect the integrity of the University's communication systems, intellectual property, and information systems
- Sharing student credentials, including online login information, with any person other than Acacia University Technical Support.

Grievance Policy

While Acacia University endeavors to maintain a congenial and responsive atmosphere for its students conducive with its educational purposes, it recognizes that from time to time, misunderstandings and disagreements may arise during the course of a student's enrollment. In response to this situation, Acacia University has established procedures to resolve problems and ensure fair adjudication of student rights.

Informal Procedures

Initially, disagreements, complaints, misunderstandings, and grievances can be resolved by the University by using informal discussion, exchanges, persuasion, and

other informal procedures. It is the intent of this policy to maximize these informal procedures so long as such measures prove effective.

The formal procedure provisions of this policy should be set in motion only when the informal procedures prove to be or manifestly will be ineffective. It is expected that the great majority of cases will continue to be handled in accordance with informal procedures.

Complaint

If a student feels that he or she has been treated unfairly or unjustly by an employee, online mentor, Learning Coach, or professor with regard to an academic process such as grading, testing, or assignments, the student must submit a written statement of the grievance, including the allegation; all relevant names and dates, a brief description of the actions forming the basis of the complaint; and copies of any available documents or materials that support the allegations, to the Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@acacia.edu), who is the final authority on all academic matters.

If a student has a grievance on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, age, marital status, national origin, physical disability, veteran's status, any other basis prohibited by applicable US federal, state, or local laws or any other matter, the student must submit a written statement, including the allegation; all relevant names and dates, a brief description of the actions forming the basis of the complaint; and copies of any available documents or materials that support the allegations, to the Office of Student Affairs (studentaffairs@acacia.edu). The student's grievance will be assessed within 30 days.

If the complaint cannot be resolved after exhausting the institution's grievance procedure, the student may file a complaint with the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education. The student must contact the State Board for further details.

The State Board address is:
1740 W. Adams, Ste. 3008
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Direct Line (602) 542-5709
Fax (602) 542-1253
Website: www.azppse.gov

Students who are or were students of Acacia University and who believe that the school, or anyone representing the school, has acted unlawfully, have the right to file a complaint with the accrediting commission:

Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC)
1101 17th Street NW, Suite 808
Washington, DC 20036
Website: www.deac.org

DEAC has an "Online Complaint System" that enables individuals to file a complaint directly from the DEAC website. The complaint form may be found at www.deac.org (select "Contact Us" and select the link in the left-hand column). All complaints should be submitted using this form. For those who cannot access the Internet, written complaints will be accepted provided they include the complainant's name and contact information and a release from the complainant(s) authorizing the Commission to forward a copy of the complaint, including identification of the complainant(s) to the institution. Where circumstances warrant, the complainant may remain anonymous to the institution, but all identifying information must be given to DEAC.

Written complaints must contain the following: the basis of any allegation of noncompliance with DEAC standards and policies; all relevant names and dates and a brief description of the actions forming the basis of the complaint; copies of any available documents or materials that support the allegations; a release authorizing the Commission to forward a copy of the complaint, including identification of the complainant(s) to the institution. In cases of anonymous complaints or where the complainant requests for his/her name to be kept confidential, the Commission considers how to proceed and whether the anonymous complaint sets forth reasonable and credible information that an institution may be in violation of the Commission's standards and whether the complainant's identity is not necessary to investigate.

Distance education students, who have completed the internal institutional grievance process and the applicable state grievance process, may appeal non-instructional complaints to the AZ SARA Council. For additional information on the complaint process, please visit the AZ SARA Complaint page.

Webpage: <https://azsara.arizona.edu/content/complaint-process>