



ARCC STUDENT ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The ARCC Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) is applicable to ARCC Gap, Summer, and Custom School Participants.

ARCC Summer and Gap Programs are multi-week travel and educational programs that are unique from other study abroad and group travel experiences in that the environments that ARCC participants live in and travel through are often remote, always dynamic, and consistently physically and emotionally challenging. These environments along with the educational activities conducted require students to be fully committed to and capable of working hard, taking responsibility for themselves, being flexible to changes, and working effectively within a group to achieve the goals of the program. **The expectations and challenges of these programs may not be appropriate for some individuals.** ARCC is committed to supporting the learning and personal growth of all participants, but the health and well-being of our students, leaders/instructors, in-country partners, and staff are a top priority.

The Essential Eligibility Criteria is applicable to all students applying for an ARCC program. A qualified student is one who can meet the EEC outlined here for participation in the program. If an applicant is unable to meet these EEC criteria, we are happy to discuss alternative options for the applicant that might make the program a successful opportunity for them. However, this does not apply if these alternatives alter the fundamental structure of the program, significantly impact other students enrolled in the program, compromise the health or safety of themselves, other students, and leaders/instructors, or require an undue financial or administrative burden on ARCC. Misrepresentation of a participant's ability to comply with these EECs may lead to formal behavioral intervention, disciplinary action, early dismissal, or evacuation from the program. All costs associated with such interventions will be borne by the participant.

Mental Health Addendum: ARCC is not a therapeutic program and is not able to support students who are in need of ongoing mental health support. However, ARCC has seen students with various and stable clinical diagnoses have a successful and rewarding experience on our programs. If ARCC staff identify concerns about a student's ability to meet the EEC throughout the ARCC admissions process, we can consult our independent mental health specialist to determine if and how we are able to support a participant.

All participants must:

1. Fully disclose mental health history, substance use history, medication history, learning differences, ongoing illnesses, physical injuries, and/or other limitations during the application process.

2. If you have seen a mental health professional in the past four years, provide a reference from a mental health professional to help identify a student's ability to meet the Essential Eligibility Criteria.
3. Be able to go the duration of the program without regular professional and/or therapeutic support. *For our Gap Programs, students can continue meeting with a mental health professional if that is supportive. Due to logistics and time constraints, there are limitations to this option depending on the specific program. Please speak to your Gap Director for more information.*

Essential Eligibility Criteria For Students On All ARCC Programs

Participation and Adaptability

Each student must:

- Choose to participate of their own free will. Mandates by parents, therapists, court, or others are not allowed.
- Tolerate significant levels of uncertainty that naturally occur while traveling, such as changes in diet, basic lodgings, new and unfamiliar surroundings, homesickness, long days, and changing routines;
- Be open to pushing outside of their comfort zone, including handling scheduling and location changes with short notice;
- Demonstrate patience, understanding, and maturity in the face of changing circumstances;
- Participate in the projects and curriculum of the program and not detract from the experience of other group members;
- Abstain from phone and internet use and communication except during designated periods of connectivity;
- Understand instruction and directions delivered in English, which is the predominant language used on all ARCC programs.
- Tolerate and operate within cultural constructs that may be different from what you are used to. This could include but is not limited to: communication, gender dynamics, personal space, and time.

Safety and Judgment

Each student must:

- Travel independently to and from program start and end destinations;
- Recognize the hazards and risks of travel and outdoor living as presented in program materials and verbally throughout the program and comply with recommended measures and directions for risk reduction from program staff;
- Understand and follow directions given by others to be able to successfully execute appropriate and perhaps unfamiliar, techniques to avoid hazards and/or manage risks. These directions are usually given orally;
- Use the buddy system when traveling in foreign countries and in unknown territory;
- Uphold the entirety of ARCC's policies, including ARCC's Student Agreement, zero tolerance policies, program expectations, the guidance of field leaders/instructors, and all local, national, and international laws while on program;

- Respond appropriately to crises such as severe weather or a medical emergency;
- Stay alert and be able to focus attention for up to several hours at a time while traveling in wilderness terrain, participating in educational components, or receiving instructions.

Leadership and Expedition Behavior

Each student must:

- Work effectively in a group despite potentially stressful conditions. ARCC group members live in close quarters with limited personal time. Daily routines are variable and may change at the last minute. Participants are expected to be positive and contributing group members. This includes being willing and open to conflict resolution and accepting differences among peers;
- Contribute to a positive and safe learning environment - no verbal or physical inappropriate behavior of others is tolerated;
- Participate in ARCC's leadership curriculum;
- Recognize and accept that the needs of the group often come above the desires of any one individual group member. As such, contribute a fair share of group tasks and chores to ensure the successful functioning of the group and not allow a disproportionate amount of the burden to fall on any particular group member;
- Be able to honestly and proactively share pertinent information such as personal concerns, feedback, and specific needs (ie. medical issues, etc) with leaders/instructors or other group members;
- Be self-sufficient to a certain extent; no one student should be continually consuming a greater share of the leaders'/instructors' time and energy.

Inclusivity Criterion and Access

Each student must:

- Be willing and able to engage with other students, leaders/instructors, and partners from diverse backgrounds (with regard to socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, political beliefs, physical ability, and more) in a respectful manner;
- Commit to creating a safe environment for all students, including not threatening others physically or verbally;
- Treat every member of the group, staff, and host community, in a kind, respectful, and valued manner through speech and actions;
- Maintain a cultural awareness and sensitivity towards host members and communities;
- Be able to share living and sleeping spaces with other students, occasionally of a different sex, gender, and/or sexual orientation;
- Respect the gender identity, pronouns, and name of all other group members, leaders/instructors, or others the group engages with;
- Willingly participate in curriculum topics such as privilege, social justice, indigenous rights, and more.

Environmental and Social Sustainability

Each student must:

- Learn about and uphold the principles of Leave No Trace ethics and minimum impact travel while on program;
- Buy local when available to keep money in local communities and reduce the environmental impact of transporting food and goods large distances;
- Abide by local cultural norms for dress and behavior, which includes adhering to culturally appropriate dress codes as dictated by leaders/instructors or community partners;
- Use Steri-pens or other suggested water purification systems to reduce plastic bottle consumption while traveling;
- Minimize waste and resource usage.

Physical Health Criteria

Each student must:

- Communicate proactively and honestly about any physical health challenges that arise prior to or during the program;
- Proactively take steps to maintain physical health while on program through healthy behaviors such as exercise, journaling, meditation, yoga, proper sleep routines, healthy eating/hydration, personal hygiene, appropriate peer interaction, and reaching out for support as needed;
- Carry all individual luggage and gear on uneven surfaces for up to one mile;
- Meet the minimum physical demands for all program components, such as hiking, traveling, homestays, etc. For programs with longer hikes, this may include carrying a daypack (up to 20 pounds) for 4+ hours and up to 8 miles;
- Navigate in environments that may have limited mobility accommodations, such as streets without sidewalks, dirt roads, flights of stairs, and other mobility access limitations;
- Be willing and able to participate in the various outdoor activities included in the program itinerary, which vary depending on location and can include but are not limited to: white water rafting, surfing, hiking, trekking, SCUBA diving, snorkeling, and zip-lining. If concerns or an inability to perform these activities arise, I will make these known to ARCC immediately.

Emotional and Mental Health Criteria

Each student must:

- Communicate proactively and honestly about any mental health challenges that arise prior to or during the program. If a mental health condition is not disclosed in the application process, ARCC reserves the right to withdraw the student from the program at the expense of the participant;
- Adapt to and cope with disconnection from standard sources of comfort and support, such as family, friends, doctors, technology, mental health professionals, etc;
- Be at least one year out of any in-patient therapeutic or rehabilitation program, including but not limited to: wilderness therapy, therapeutic boarding school, drug and alcohol treatment, eating disorder treatment, etc;
- If applicable, make a wellness Plan of Action prior to departure that includes strategies for maintaining mental health during the program;
- Proactively take steps to maintain mental health while on program through healthy behaviors such as exercise, journaling, meditation, yoga, proper sleep routines, healthy eating/hydration, personal hygiene, appropriate peer interaction, and reaching out for support as needed;

- Accept full responsibility for mental health, including complying fully with medication routines and self-care strategies recommended pre-departure by medical/mental health professionals;
- Communicate with leaders/instructors about changes in their mental health and seek out, as needed, consultations with mental health professionals while on the program or fully comply with our recommendation to do the same and follow all treatment advice secured from these consultations.
- Be able to discuss and manage social and emotional challenges that may arise on the program, including practicing active listening, openly expressing emotions, and being willing to engage in a collaborative problem-solving process as guided by ARCC staff when emotional or behavioral challenges arise;
- If taking prescription medication, be able to hold, self-administer, and maintain proper dosage as prescribed without assistance from leaders/instructors or others unless under emergency circumstances;
- Never be in possession of or consume prescription medication that is not prescribed;

Outdoor Skills: Front-Country Camping (*applicable only for programs that include camping*)

Each student must:

- Learn and competently perform the fundamental camping skills of setting up a shelter and cooking with a camp stove;
- Remain adequately hydrated, fed, and properly dressed so as to remain generally healthy and be able to avoid environmental injuries such as hypothermia, heat illness, sunburn, or frostbite;
- Be able to move about the campsite in order to attend to projects, personal toiletry needs, and contribute to group camping tasks as necessary.