Dear Students:

Welcome to the English Language Institute! Whether you are a new student in our program or a returning one, we hope that your time with us is productive and enjoyable, and we will do everything possible to help you meet your goals. We are glad to have you as members of our community:

- in the ELI program
- in the Department of International Programs
- at Stephen F. Austin State University
- in Nacogdoches
- in East Texas
- in the United States of America.

We hope that you will explore and take advantage of the educational opportunities and unique experiences offered by each of these cultures. Please let our staff know any way we can help you in your adventure with us.

Sincerely,

Elaine Lambright
ELI Coordinator
# ELI Student Handbook Table of Contents

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MISSION AND APPROACH

The English Language Institute at Stephen F. Austin State University helps international students increase their English proficiency in order to succeed in American universities or American professional life.

The English Language Institute provides non-credit intensive instruction in academic English by qualified faculty, a foundation in American social and academic culture, supportive student services, and sound program administration.

Because our program is designed to prepare students for admission to and success in pursuing a degree from SFA, it primarily uses the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) approach to teaching.

ADMISSION TO THE ELI PROGRAM

Although TOEFL or IELTS scores are not required for admission to the ELI, to succeed in the ELI program, students should enter with skills equivalent to a score no lower than a 46 on the TOEFL or a 5.0 on the IELTS. Students should be able to comprehend and respond to conversational English, read and comprehend simplified academic texts, and write simple sentences. For most students, a minimum of two years' previous study of English is necessary for success in the program.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

3. New students who provide a score on the TOEFL or IELTS (taken within the past 2 years) will be placed into an appropriate ELI level as described below:

<table>
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<th>TOEFL score</th>
<th>IELTS score</th>
<th>Resulting Placement</th>
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<td>0 - 46</td>
<td>0 – 4.5</td>
<td>ELI Level 2 with caution</td>
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<td>47 – 57</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>58 - 68</td>
<td>5.5</td>
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<td>69 - 78</td>
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<td>79 - 120</td>
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Students who provide scores but wish to take the ELI proficiency / placement test may do so. They should notify the ELI Coordinator of their decision in advance of the scheduled test administration; they must take the test at the scheduled time. Their placements will be determined solely by their scores on the ELI placement test. The test is described below.
2. New students who do not provide TOEFL or other accepted test scores are placed into one of three levels based on our English proficiency/placement test. There is a $50 fee for the placement test; this fee is billed to students’ ebills.

3. The placement exam consists of 3 parts:
   * a multiple-choice exam on listening, grammar, and reading skills
   * a timed essay
   * an oral interview

   The oral interview and writing sample are graded by two ELI instructors, and their scores are averaged to get that portion’s grade. The multiple-choice exam is 50% of the total placement exam score, with the other two parts counted 25% each.

4. Level placement for returning students who have missed one or more semesters of ELI will be determined by test results. Returning students must provide a TOELF or IELTS score from a test taken no more than 4 months before the semester they return or must take the ELI proficiency/placement test. The $50 test fee will be added to the e-bills of those who take the ELI test.

5. Students who provide TOEFL or IELTS scores will receive a sheet documenting their resulting placements. Those who take the ELI proficiency/placement test will receive a sheet documenting their performance on the parts of the test, their total score, and their resulting placement.

6. Students whose TOELF, IELTS, or English proficiency/placement test score falls below the recommended minimum score for placement in Level 2 will be allowed to enter the program at that level with caution.

   The ELI program coordinator will meet individually with these applicants to discuss the possible repercussions of entering the program with low proficiency scores (possible difficulty keeping up with class progress, possible need to repeat levels, possible increased time for program completion, etc.) and will recommend steps the students should take to increase their chances of success in the program (tutoring, additional study and remediation, etc.).

   The students will be asked to sign forms indicating that:
   1. they understand that the program’s academic English curriculum will not be modified for their benefit and that they may face significant challenges if they choose to enter the program.
   2. they have been advised of steps they can take to address those challenges.

7. New or returning students who think they have been placed into the wrong level must fill out a Student Level Change Request Form (found at back of handbook) and give it to their Level Teacher before the end of the second week of classes; staff will consider their requests and reach a decision within a week.
LATE ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

1. No student will be admitted to the program after the second week of the ELI semester (indicated on the official ELI semester calendar).

2. If a late admission tests into a level that is not already in place for the semester, the new level will be created only if staffing levels, classroom space, and scheduling allow. Otherwise, late admissions will be placed into the most appropriate existing classes based on the results of their ELI placement tests.

3. Classes, labs, etc. missed due to late arrival WILL be counted toward the late admissions’ total absences for the semester.

4. Missed grades will be dropped or made up at each teacher’s discretion.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The English Language Institute at SFA has three levels; each level has four academic classes. Each academic class meets twice a week and lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes. Those classes are:

Levels 2 & 3: Grammar, Writing, Reading, and Listening / Speaking
Level 4: Grammar & Rhetoric, Research & Writing, Reading, and Listening / Speaking

In addition, the program includes two labs:

Conversation Partners Labs meet for 1 hour 15 minutes twice a week for 22 sessions and incorporate practice on skills from all academic areas.

American Language and Culture Labs (Friday Labs) meet six times a semester for 2.5 hours each; these labs use analysis of American television programs to strengthen language skills and illustrate aspects of American culture.

Weekly ELI meetings, four Friday Activity days, and a major field trip are also part of the program each semester. These elements of the program provide important social, cultural, and leadership opportunities and are integral parts of the curriculum.

Each semester of ELI lasts 14 – 15 weeks for an average of 20 hours of instructional time per week for full-time students.

Half-time students attend 2 academic classes and one lab plus all ELI activities.

ELI SCHEDULE

The typical class schedule is:

* Academic class 1 from 9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays
* Academic class 2 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays
* Academic class 3 from 9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays
* Academic Class 4 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays
* ELI Meetings from 1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays unless canceled
* Conversation Partners Lab from 2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. two days a week for 22 meetings as indicated on semester calendar.
* American Language and Culture (Friday) Labs, Friday Activities, and Field Trip as indicated on semester calendar.

Students should refer to their individual class schedules and their current ELI semester calendars for exact days and times.

**CURRICULUM**

The ELI curriculum integrates the basic language skills of reading, writing, grammar, and speaking & listening at all three levels.

* Levels 2 and 3 classes focus on a solid review of English grammar and the techniques necessary for successful academic reading, writing, note-taking, and speaking at the university level.

* Level 4 classes offer training in more advanced academic skills, providing practice in critical thinking, abstraction, and oral and written expression that prepare students for American university expectations.

The Proficiency Scales attached to the end of the student handbook outline the specific student learning outcomes for each academic class at each level; the outcomes are the skills a student needs to be able to demonstrate mastery of in order to progress to the next level or to regular university classes.

**GRADING**

The semester grades for academic classes and labs indicate how well the student has met the Student Learning Outcomes for each class or lab. Attainment of student learning outcomes is measured by a variety of methods outlined in the syllabus for each lab and class. Syllabi also indicate the manner in which the class or lab average will be computed. These documents are provided to students at the beginning of the semester.

To pass an individual class or lab, a student must:
* have an average of 75 or above.
* cover at least two thirds of the material listed on the course syllabus.

**MIDTERM AND FINAL EVALUATIONS**

At midterm and at the end of the semester, each student will meet individually with his or her Level Teacher to go over the student’s progress in ELI. The student will:

1. Receive a Grade Report indicating averages for each class and lab, total absences, an academic readiness score, and teacher comments.
2. Review the Proficiency Scale of Student Learning Outcomes for that level to note areas of mastery and continued challenges.
3. Discuss any issues relevant to the student’s performance, future plans, etc.
4. Implement any stage of Academic or Attendance Probation if necessary.

LEVEL PROGRESSION AND REPETITION

A student’s ELI semester average demonstrates the degree to which the student has mastered all the Student Learning Outcomes for that level of study and determines whether that student will progress to the next level or graduate from the program. To compute the ELI semester average:

\[
\text{ELI Semester Average} = (\text{Average of academic class grades} \times 0.88) + (\text{Average of lab grades} \times 0.12)
\]

An ELI semester average of 75% or higher is required to pass an ELI level.

Students who do not meet this requirement will need to repeat a level or withdraw from the program. Students may enroll in the same level a maximum of three times. If they do not pass the level by the third attempt, they will be dropped from the ELI program.

Most ELI students progress through the program at a rate of one level per semester. However, students who begin the ELI program at Level 2 with a test score below the recommended minimum may find it necessary to repeat one or more levels.

Successful completion of Level 4 of ELI satisfies the university’s language proficiency requirement for undergraduate or graduate study.

GENERAL ELI STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

ELI students are expected to:

1. Adhere to all local, state, and federal laws and the SFA Student Code of Conduct, which can be read at: http://www.sfasu/policies/student-code-of-conduct_10.4.pdf
2. Attend all classes, labs, meetings, and activities and participate actively.
3. Come to class, lab, etc. with appropriate materials and prepared for the day’s activities.
4. Work independently (unless instructed otherwise) on assignments, tests, writing assignments, etc.
5. Speak only English in classes, labs, etc. unless instructed otherwise.
6. Follow directions and meet deadlines.
7. Document words, information, and ideas taken from outside sources.
8. Refer to class and lab syllabi for course-specific policies and adhere to those policies.
9. Communicate with ELI staff, check email and D2L daily for messages, and respond to communications from staff.
10. Silence and put away all cell phones, etc. during classes, labs, and activities unless instructed otherwise.
11. Refrain from activities that might be disruptive, such as taking photographs or bringing guests to class, without permission from the teacher.
12. Treat all faculty, staff, facilities, and other students with respect.

Depending on the nature, severity, and numbers of violations, failure to meet these expectations may result in:

1. A Disciplinary Report’s being placed in the student’s file to document the incident.
2. The student’s being asked to leave class, lab, etc. and being counted absent for that session.
3. Grade deductions or refusal to accept late work or work on which the student has not followed directions.
4. Failing grades or zeros on any tests, papers, or presentations in which any form of cheating or plagiarism has occurred.
5. Dismissal from the program.

**INDIVIDUAL CLASS AND LAB EXPECTATIONS**

Students will receive a syllabus for each academic class and lab outlining specific student learning objectives, explaining how the class or lab average is computed, detailing any specific policies for that course or lab (for example, policies on late work and makeup work), and providing information about office hours and contact information for that teacher. Students are expected to read these syllabi carefully, keep them handy, and follow their provisions.

**ATTENDANCE**

1. Attendance is required for all academic classes, labs, and scheduled ELI activities, meetings, and field trips. There are no excused absences.
2. Leaving early is treated the same as arriving late for attendance purposes.

3. Absences are counted as follows:
   * one academic class = 1 hour 45 minutes
   * one Conversation Partners lab = 1 hour 15 minutes
   * one Friday lab = 2 hours 30 minutes
   * one Friday activity = 3 hours
   * one weekly ELI meeting = 30 minutes
   * one major field trip = 8 hours

4. A student who arrives at any class, lab, activity, etc. without the proper materials or without having completed the assigned preparation or who does not participate in class activities can be dismissed and counted absent.

5. A student whose behavior is disruptive may be dismissed from and counted absent for a class, lab, or activity.

6. Total absences and % attendance will be recorded on midterm and final reports.

7. If a student is having problems that cause him or her to have excessive absences, that student should talk to his or her Level Teacher or the ELI Coordinator.

8. Excessive absences may lead to Attendance Probation (see “Probation”).

9. If a student must miss a class, lab, meeting, or activity, that student should:
   * email the teacher in charge to notify him or her.
   * find out what instruction has been missed and what assignments have been given.
   * return to the class, etc. caught up on work and ready to proceed with the class.
   * make up missed work as allowed by the teacher in charge as stated on the syllabus.

**TARDINESS**

* One tardy (15 minutes or more) or 3 tardies (less than 15 minutes) in a given class, lab, etc. = 1 hour’s absence in that class, lab, etc.

* A student who is more than 1 hour late to any class, lab, activity, etc. is counted absent for the entire period but may attend the remaining class, lab, etc.

* Students who arrive late should enter and take their seats with as little disruption of the class as possible.

**TEACHER ABSENCE AND/OR CLASS CANCELLATION**

1. If a teacher is absent when it is time for a class, lab, or activity to begin, students must:
* check the meeting place for posted instructions.
* wait 15 minutes before assuming the class, lab, or activity has been canceled.
* check their emails for messages / assignments from the teacher in charge.
* still attend other classes, labs, and activities scheduled for the day.

2. If SFA cancels all classes due to weather or other emergency, ELI classes also will not meet. Students can verify university closings on the SFA webpage or by signing up for the free SFA Emergency Notification through My SFA.

PROBATION

**Academic Probation.** A student who is not making sufficient progress in meeting the student learning outcomes for a level may be placed on Academic Probation as follows:

1. If the student’s overall ELI semester average is below 75 at midterm of the first semester’s study in a level, the student will be placed on Academic Notice that he or she is in danger of not passing the level.

2. If a student has an ELI semester average below 75 at the end of the first semester’s study in a level, the student is placed on Academic Probation. He or she will have the option of repeating the level but may have to meet additional requirements as a condition of probation.

3. If a student has an ELI semester average below 75 at midterm of the second semester’s study in a level, he or she will receive a Suspension Alert notifying him or her that failure to earn a passing semester average will result in Academic Suspension.

4. If a student has an ELI semester average below 75 at the end of the second semester of study in a level, he or she will be placed on Academic Suspension and may, at the discretion of ELI staff, be dismissed from the program. In this case, the student’s immigration status will be terminated.

**Attendance Probation.** An excessive level of absences will place a student on Attendance Probation as follows:

1. If a student’s overall ELI attendance is below 65% at midterm, that student will be placed on Attendance Probation.

2. If a student on Attendance Probation misses more than 10 additional hours of ELI classes, labs, activities, etc., that student may be dismissed from the program.

3. If a student’s overall ELI attendance is below 65% at the end of a semester, ELI staff will decide whether that student should be placed on Attendance Probation for the following semester or dismissed from the program.
4. If a student is absent for 10 consecutive class days at any point in the semester without providing notification and documentation of a valid reason (such as hospitalization), that student may be dismissed from the program.

**Disciplinary Probation**  Serious or repeated violations of the ELI student conduct expectations may result in a student’s being placed on Disciplinary Probation at any time during the semester. Continued infractions may result in dismissal from the program at any time in the semester.

**CHALLENGING PROGRAM DECISIONS; MAKING A COMPLAINT**

**A. Grade Challenge**

1. To challenge an academic course or lab average, the student should first speak to the teacher in charge.

2. If the issue is not resolved, the student should fill out the ELI Complaint Form found at the end of the student handbook and turn it in to the ELI Coordinator.

**B. Initial Level Placement Challenge:**

To challenge an initial level placement, the student should fill out the Level Change Request Form found at the end of the student handbook. This form must be turned in to the ELI Coordinator by 5:00 p.m. Thursday of the second week of the semester.

**C. Level Progression Decision Challenge:**

1. To challenge an level progression decision, the student should first fill out the Level Change Request Form found at the end of the student handbook.

2. The student should turn in his or her folder of returned work for the semester, plus the Level Change Request Form, to the ELI Coordinator by 5:00 p.m. Thursday of the last week of the semester.

**D. Other Complaints**

1. If a student has any other complaint about the ELI program or its staff, that student should first talk informally to the ELI Coordinator about the issue.

2. If the issue is not resolved, the student should fill out the ELI Complaint Form found at the end of the student handbook and turn it in to the ELI Coordinator, who will make the student a copy of the completed form.

3. If the student is not satisfied after meeting formally with the ELI Coordinator to address the complaint, the student should take his or her copy of the complaint form to the OIP Director.
ELI TUTION AND OTHER PROGRAM EXPENSES

1. Students who take the placement exam must pay a $50 testing fee. This fee will appear on their student ebills.

2. Students must pay their SFA tuition & fees as soon as they are registered for classes. Deadlines for paying without late fees, for paying without being suspended from participation in ELI classes, labs and activities, and for paying before being dropped from the university are detailed in a brochure given to students during ELI Orientation. Payment deadlines are also printed on the ELI semester calendar given to every ELI student. The tuition payment brochure also details how and where students may pay tuition. For a full-time ELI student, one semester’s tuition and fees total approximately $4,200.00.

3. The ELI application form requires students to provide evidence that they have sufficient financial resources to meet all living expenses for one year of study and reminds them that they will not be allowed to work off campus. Students should be financially able to bear the expense of however long they need to be in the program. Level progression decisions are determined by students’ attainment of student learning outcomes, not influenced by students’ financial needs.

4. SFA requires all students to carry student health insurance. Prices vary, but a good policy costs about $1100.00 a year.

5. Students MUST have their textbooks with them on the first class day. New textbooks for a level cost approximately $250.00; most levels will also spend $5.00 on a novel.

6. Students will be expected to purchase basic school supplies throughout the semester, including a folder to keep all returned work.

7. There are additional expenses (admission charges, meals, transportation charges, etc.) for the ELI field trip and many Friday activities. Students will be notified of these expenses ahead of time. As a general estimate, students should expect to pay no more than $30 for each Friday activity and no more than $60 for the ELI field trip. Students can earn credits towards trip expenses by providing proof of participation in a variety of campus events.

SFA FACILITIES, ACTIVITIES, AND RESOURCES

ELI students qualify to use all the services and recreational programs available to students in regular university classes. These include use of the SFA library, Baker Pattillo Student Center, Student Health Center, Recreation Center, etc. ELI students may attend athletic and Fine Arts events, participate in organizations, be tutored at the Academic Assistance Center (ARC), etc.

ELI students who have documented or suspected learning disabilities can seek the help of Disability Services; those who experience stress, test anxiety, culture shock, etc. can go to Counseling Services to speak to a certified counselor.
SFA’s Student Success Center, located in the library, offers a range of support services for students and also serves as a clearinghouse for information to help students resolve any university-related problems.

These facilities, activities, and resources are free for ELI students. More information on these resources can be found on the SFA website; additionally, ELI staff would be happy to assist ELI students in accessing any of these programs or activities.

ELI students are encouraged to participate in the International Friendship Program and to become a member of the International Student Association. They also can apply for a President’s Volunteer Service Award from OIP for performing volunteer work off and on campus.

**EARLY WITHDRAWAL OR DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM**

1. Students who withdraw from the program are eligible for tuition refunds as described in SFA’s tuition refund schedule (See SFA website).

2. Students may be dismissed from the program for the following reasons:
   - * Failure to meet attendance requirements (see “Attendance Probation.”)
   - * Failure to make sufficient academic progress (see “Academic Probation.”)
   - * Serious or repeated failure to follow expectations for appropriate student behavior (see “Disciplinary Probation”).

3. Students who are dismissed from the program are not eligible for any refunds.

4. Students who leave the program for any reason before graduating will have their immigration status adjusted accordingly; they should confer with the Designated School Official about the effects of this status change.

**STUDENT PRIVACY**

The ELI program follows the provisions of FERPA, the federal law designed to protect the privacy of education records. Therefore:

1. ELI students’ placement scores, grades, and academic progress are private information and will not be revealed to anyone other than ELI / university staff and the student himself or herself without written consent from the student.

2. ELI Students have the right to see everything in their “educational record” except information about other students, financial records of parents, and confidential letters of recommendation if they waived their rights of access.

3. ELI students have the right to refuse to have their “directory information”
(name, level, email address, intended academic major, and phone number) shared with other ELI students. A student who does not wish this information shared should check the “no directory release” option on his or her student contract.

4. ELI students have the right to refuse to have their photographs and to have video produced by or containing them released publicly. ELI / OIP faculty, staff, and students often photograph or video events and activities, and students often produce photo records of their activities or video projects for their classes. These photographs and videos may be used in printed or electronic promotional materials for the program (printed brochure, website, Facebook page, etc.) unless a student notes his or her objection on his or her student contract.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. Although ELI students are not required to live on campus at SFA, they are encouraged to do so in order to become involved in campus life and strengthen their English skills. Levels 3 & 4 students should be aware that once they enroll in regular university classes, they will be required to live on campus unless they meet certain very specific conditions, and they will not be able to register for classes unless they meet the residence requirement. It is especially important to remember this requirement when considering a long-term apartment contract in order to avoid paying for both an apartment AND a dorm room. Full details are laid out in the SFA Residence Life web page.

2. The International Student Handbook, available on the SFA International Programs website, (www.sfasu.edu/oip) contains a great deal of helpful information on topics such as immigration regulations, cultural adaptation and culture shock, US / Texas laws, SFA facilities, American holidays, health care information, and many other practical issues of interest to international students.

3. A great deal of helpful information about SFA is available on the SFA website, www.sfasu.edu. Students should click on the “Student” tab at the top of the web page. This will bring up a host of helpful and important information. Examples:

   There are listings for D2L, mySFA, Campus Recreation, Dining Services, Housing, Residence Life, Movie Listings, Bookstore, Parking Map, and many other topics.

   “Schedule of Classes” gives information on when SFA classes are offered and how to register, drop, etc. It also includes information about FERPA and student privacy.

4 The Information Desk on the first level of the Student Center is staffed by knowledgeable people who can help students find answers to any questions about the SFA campus and the city.

5. For details about fine arts, athletic, or campus recreation events, students can go to these websites: www.finearts.sfasu.edu; www.sfajacks.com; www.sfasu.edu/campusrec.
6. For more helpful information about Nacogdoches, students should visit the official website for the city of Nacogdoches, [www.ci.nacogdoches.tx.us](http://www.ci.nacogdoches.tx.us). It includes helpful information about city services and events. The Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce sponsors the website [www.visitnacogdoches.org](http://www.visitnacogdoches.org). It has information about where to go and what to do in the city and includes a calendar of events.

7. Staff members in ELI and OIP are always happy to help ELI students find answers to any problems they may encounter during their studies at SFA and to help students learn about the university, the Nacogdoches area, the state of Texas, and the U.S.

**ADDENDA AND FORMS**

The following addenda and forms appear on the pages that follow:

- Student Proficiency Scales (described on page 6 of handbook)
- Complaint Form (described on page 10 of handbook)
- Level Change Request Form (described on page 11 of handbook)

The following materials are referred to in this handbook but are handed out separately:

- Tuition payment pamphlet with payment instructions, deadlines, and penalties
- ELI semester calendar
- * ELI class and lab schedule
- * Textbook list
- Syllabi for all academic classes and both labs