



American University in Bulgaria

English Language Institute

**POLICIES
AND
PROCEDURES**

Student Guide

▪ Introduction

Mission: The mission of the English Language Institute (ELI) at the American University in Bulgaria is to provide English language instruction to prospective AUBG students, future leaders of the region, as well as to all others interested in learning English as a foreign language.

Objective: The objective of the English Language Institute (ELI) at the American University in Bulgaria is to help students achieve their academic goals by providing them with the highest standard of English language instruction.

Motto: The Strength of Tradition – силата на традициите

Welcome to the English Language Institute of the American University in Bulgaria. If you are dreaming of an academic career in a university with instruction in English, this is where your dreams will start coming true. Highly qualified instructors, most up-to-date state-of-the-art teaching technologies and learner-centered environment are just a few of the assets of our school. The English Language Institute is an auxiliary self-sustaining unit to the American University in Bulgaria designed to offer English language instruction from any level of English knowledge, even zero, up to Advanced level, followed by TOEFL and SAT preparation.

▪ Applicants

○ University Preparatory Program (UPP):

Students preparing to apply to the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) or any other university where English is the language of instruction should apply for the University Preparatory Program at ELI. The recommended age limit for this program is between 18 and 25 years old. The UPP is open to both Bulgarian Nationals as well as international students.

The candidates for the full-time UPP intensive courses, also called SIELC (Super Intensive English Language Course), designed to prepare students to apply to the University, should present a high school diploma with GPA of minimum 5.00 (Bulgarian Grading System) or its equivalent if the candidate is a non-Bulgarian. International students do not apply to ELI directly. They apply to AUBG with a full application package through the Admissions Office.

The Admissions Office of the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) must refer any international student(s) that wish to apply to the ELI for English language preparation. ELI will test the students' language level and the student(s) will be recommended either step 1 or 2 or 3. It should be noted for international students that since ELI does not offer a degree-earning program, students applying only to ELI would not be granted Bulgarian visas. Step 1, 2 and 3 students receive visas as

conditionally accepted AUBG students who prepare at the ELI in order to continue at AUBG.

- **Community Oriented Programs:**

The Community Oriented Programs at ELI are designed to be accessible to all Bulgarian Nationals as well as international students from the Balkan regions, Europe and Asia. With such a broad client base, ELI must register applicants on a first-come first-serve basis.

The Children's Community Oriented Program is designed toward children from 7 to 14 years old. They have the opportunity to master English from the absolute beginner to intermediate level of proficiency using original Cambridge and Oxford University Press materials. Children are provided with a relaxed atmosphere that focuses their learning through interactive games, texts, and multi-media devices. The highly qualified teaching staff, Bulgarian and Native Speakers, is well equipped with the newest English Language Teaching (ELT) methods to promote the success of every student. Upon graduating from the final level of the Children's Program, the student is fully equipped to successfully continue their education at an intermediate level in the Adult Community Oriented Program.

The Adult Community Oriented Program is designed toward 14 years and older persons who wish to further their knowledge of the English language in a learner-centered environment. The Program consists of 10 levels of English Language knowledge and skills and is open to anybody from absolute beginners to advanced students. Whether learning English for school, fun, or business, these classes are geared toward giving the students the maximum exposure to the English language in both written and spoken forms. A team of qualified Bulgarian and Native English Speakers use the widely accepted Headway series textbooks from Oxford University Press, as well as a variety of additional materials, to help the students acquire the necessary knowledge to use English with confidence.

- **Placement**

Placement into the correct level course is imperative for the student's learning success. ELI is dedicated to helping the students succeed and, therefore, the correct placement of the student is an important priority for ELI.

Students starting as absolute beginners will be registered immediately into their courses. All other students must take placement tests so ELI can evaluate their language skills and place them in a course that is suitable for their needs.

The placement test, which is a subjective test administered by a full-time ELI instructor, is used to place students coming from outside language centers and schools in the appropriate level ELI course. There is a charge of 5 euro for this test that can be paid with the course fee. The placement test includes 30-60 minutes of writing depending on the program and 15-30 minutes oral interview with the instructor.

In rare cases, a second placement test can be administered, free of charge, to the student after the course has begun (not later than the second week) if the student and the instructor feel that the student has been misplaced. Upon successful completion of this second test the student will be moved to the appropriate level.

Previous ELI students are not required to take a placement test if they have successfully completed a prior level ELI course within the last 2 years. If the student feels that he/she is at a lower/higher level since the last completed ELI course and

would like to take the placement test he/she must pay the 5 euro charge. After 2 years of completing an ELI course, it is not recommended that the student register without a placement test as their English proficiency may have changed significantly.

▪ Attendance

In the University Preparatory Program and the Adult Community Oriented Program one academic hour is equal to forty-five (45) minutes. In the Children's Community Oriented Program one academic hour is equal to forty (40) minutes. All courses start at their specified time.

Students are encouraged to attend every class. If even one class is missed during these intensive study courses, the final grade of the student will be affected. For this reason ELI has made it an official policy that strict measures for attendance will be implemented for the University Preparatory Program. For the UPP there are allowances for absences only as listed below. Otherwise, absences and excessive tardiness will not be tolerated.

There are two types of absences that are recognized by ELI, excused and unexcused. Excused absences may be for medical or family reasons and must, if possible, be approved in advance. While medical absences may be accounted for afterwards, the absences for family reasons must be discussed with the instructor before they occur. If a student must be absent from the course for personal reasons, it is his/her responsibility to inform the instructor/director and to arrange with the instructor to make up all work for the missed classes. If a student has an excused absence he/she will be allowed to make up any material that was covered in the class(es) during the absence. For unexcused absences, instructors are not obliged to give consultations or provide make-up work.

Absences due to medical leave are excused only if the student presents a note signed by the AUBG Health Center. If the note is issued by the students' GP, it should be reviewed and signed by the AUBG Health Center office. Unless there is a medical emergency, doctor appointments should not be scheduled during class hours. In the event that a student is referred for consultation during class hours to an outside specialist, the AUBG nurse can accompany the student to the specialist. A fellow student who accompanies another student during regular class hours will receive an unexcused absence.

Unexcused absences are any absences that are not covered in the descriptions of excused absences above. For the University Preparatory Program unexcused absences are assessed as follows:

- Missing one day of classes (whether missing a whole day at once, or missing 5/6 academic hours across different days) will result in lowering the student's final grade by 1%.
- Two (2) days [12 academic hours] of missed classes results in the student being given a verbal warning.
- If due to accumulated absences the student's final grade is lower than the passing 66%, the student will not be rewarded a certificate but will be allowed to pass on to the next step.

Excessive tardiness will result in an unexcused absence. When a student is tardy it not only affects their ability to receive instruction but also is generally disruptive for the entire class. It is the policy of ELI that all classes start at their specified time. Being tardy/late up to 15 minutes results in 1/3 of an absence. Three (3) late comings equal to one full academic hour absence. Based on the instructor's decision students

arriving more than 15 minutes late for any session may not be admitted to class and must wait until the break to join the class.

Regular attendance with the Community program is recommendable. It is the responsibility of the students to contact either the instructor or their fellow students when they have had a missed class, either excused or un-excused, so they know the homework assignment and may come prepared for the next class that they attend. Students who have missed any of the in-class evaluations/tests are responsible for arranging with their instructor(s) to make up the test. There will be no deduction of points from the test in these circumstances. For un-excused absences, the instructor is not obliged to provide make-up work or exams.

Cellular Phones and Classroom Disturbances

ELI takes learning seriously so class disturbances should be minimal. While in class, students should switch their cellular phones to the “off” or “silent” mode. In exceptional situations, when the student must be available via phone during class hours, the student should inform the instructor before class that he/she may receive a call, switch the phone to the “silent” or “vibrate” mode, and sit by the door so that when he/she receives the call he/she can exit the classroom with minimal disturbance to the other students.

During class hours students and instructors may not be asked to leave the class by an outside person for any reason. All inquiries from outside persons must wait until the class break. If the student needs to use the restroom during class hours they should take care to cause the least amount of disturbance to the rest of the class.

Food and drinks are not allowed in the classroom. Students may eat and drink outside of the building on the scheduled class breaks. Open containers must be thrown away before entering the classroom. Containers that can be resealed may be stored in the students’ bags during class.

- **No Smoking Policy**

Smoking is not permitted in any of the buildings, including the Main Building and Skaptopara Residence Halls. All buildings are equipped with smoke detection systems and if a student sets this system off, he/she is required to pay heavy monetary fines. If the students must smoke they should do so before class or during the scheduled class breaks outside of the building, at least 10 meters away from the entrance.

- **Cheating Policy**

Students are encouraged to do their own work. Any attempts to present material that is not of the student’s own making will be punished. Cheating may result in a poor grade, failure to receive a certificate at the end of the course, or in some extreme cases expulsion from the course.

Plagiarism is cheating. It can be defined as a piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work, or the act of plagiarizing; taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own. ELI has a no-

tolerance policy towards those who plagiarize. Students caught plagiarizing will be given a zero on the affected work.

- **Computer Laboratories**

The primary purpose of the computer laboratory at ELI is English language instruction and TOEFL iBT testing. Priority is given to those students using the computers for class work, homework, or test preparation. Non-ELI students are not permitted to be in the lab even if accompanied by an ELI student. If there are available computers, ELI students may check their e-mail or use Internet for personal purposes. Games are not permitted.

Students in the University Preparatory Program are provided with personal computer accounts by the end of their first week of classes. The ELI UPP Coordinator is the liaison between the students and the Information Technology (IT) office. After all students have arranged their registration and payment and have received their ID cards, this information is submitted to the IT office. The IT office then issues accounts with usernames and passwords. Upon receipt of the list of accounts, the UPP Coordinator informs the students they are ready. The students must then arrange to meet with the UPP Coordinator to sign an agreement to follow the rules for using the computer lab before receiving their usernames and passwords.

- **ELI Administrative Personnel**

Director – Asya Alexandrova – Tel. 073/ 888 556

Administrative Assistant – Zlatina Elezova – Tel. 073/ 888 555

UPP and EU Project Coordinator – Stanislava Gurova – Tel. 073/ 888557

- **ELI Full-Time Faculty Offices**

UPP Bulgarian Instructors – Tel. 073/ 888 553

Native Speakers – Tel. 073/ 888 554/8

Younger Learners – Tel. 073/ 888 559

- **ELI Part-Time Faculty Office**

ELI Faculty Office – Tel. 073/ 888 559

- **ELI Certificate of Completion**

Upon successful completion of an ELI course, a Certificate of Completion is prepared for each student. Each certificate issued by ELI is unique for tracking purposes and to avoid fraudulent copies. The certificate is signed by both of the language instructors, the ELI Director and stamped with the seal of AUBG. The certificate is awarded on the final class meeting and should be signed for by the student receiving it. For the Fall/Spring courses, the certificates are issued within a week of the final test. For the Summer courses, they are issued the day after the final test. The certificate cannot be picked up by anyone other than the student. If the

student has outstanding financial obligations or has not returned his/her ID card, ELI will retain the certificate until all course fees have been settled with the financial office or ID card returned.

The original certificate that is presented to students upon the successful completion of the course is prepared on special watermarked security paper. In the event that this copy is lost or misplaced by the student, a basic copy prepared on regular paper will be given as a replacement at no charge. If the student must have a certificate on security paper, a certified copy of their original certificate can be prepared for a price of 10 EURO. The new certificate will bear the mark "**CERTIFIED COPY**" on the face of the document in place of the instructor's signature. If a student wishes to have a copy of the certificate on plain white paper, a certified copy of their original can be prepared for a price of 4 EURO. The new certificate will bear the mark "**CERTIFIED COPY**". **NOTE:** No replacement certificate is issued if the original certificate is older than 5 years.

▪ **Evaluations [Student]**

Students are evaluated based on a combination of their course work, test grades, and class participation. The main emphasis falls on the final examination. Attendance is imperative to a student's success in all ELI courses.

▪ **Grading Policy**

To obtain a certificate from ELI acknowledging the successful completion of any level, a student must achieve at least 66% in the course (on a six point scale this is at least a 4, on a four point scale this is a C average). The final grade is a combination of attendance, class participation, quizzes, evaluation tests, mid-term test and final test. It is left to the discretion of the instructor(s) how much weight each of the components bear in the final grade. Students are responsible for acquainting themselves with the syllabus at the beginning of the term.

If, for any reason, a student does not successfully complete his/her chosen course, he/she may do one of the following:

- Retake the course
- Retake the final test only (given at the next session, the first time for a fee of 5 EURO, any time afterwards 15 EURO.)
- Take a make-up final test on an officially offered date **ONLY** in case the final achievement is above 60%. Successful students will not be granted certificates but will be allowed to pass on to a higher level.

▪ **Health Care**

At ELI, students' health is vitally important. It is the students' responsibility to provide immunization records and to obtain and maintain adequate health insurance while studying at ELI. Bulgarian and international students are under different regulations regarding health insurance. If students have any questions about health coverage or immunizations, they must go directly to the AUBG Health Center as ELI staff are not qualified or obliged to provide this information.

In terms of Bulgarian academic standards, only Bulgarian students who are in degree programs are covered by national health benefits. Since ELI is not a degree-earning program, students are not covered and must have individual health insurance plans covered by their families.

International students are required to obtain semester based health plans through the AUBG Health Center. The health insurance fees are published on the AUBG website and can also be obtained by contacting the AUBG Health Center directly. It is important to note that these are semester-based plans and need to be paid at the beginning of **EACH SEMESTER** attended at ELI.

- **Housing**

Due to a shortage of space in the AUBG dormitories, rooms are only made available to ELI students on a space-available basis. Priority is given to international students when there are rooms available. Inquiries for available housing should be directed to the Director of Residential Life 073/888 515.

- **Intensive Study**

ELI provides intensive study of English. The environment provided by ELI is made conducive to the rapid acquisition of language. Since instruction at ELI is intensive, 4-6 hours per day in the UPP, students must be prepared to rigorously practice and study English to learn the material within a short time. Students are expected to study and use English in all ELI activities – in class, doing homework, during out-of-class activities, and in everyday life as much as possible. Keeping in mind that study is intensive, it is the **students' responsibility** to make up material they have missed during the class, even for excused absences. Instructors are only obliged to give consultation hours to students who have excused absences.

- **Registration, Discounts and Refunds**

Since all classes are on a first-come first-serve basis, people wishing to enroll in the respective courses should register as early as possible. ELI maintains a rolling registration to be more accessible to the students. This means that the students can register for courses up to the day the course begins as long as there are available spaces. Late registration is not encouraged, however allowances are made. If the student has missed up to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the course they must pay full tuition, if they have missed more than $\frac{1}{4}$ they are either not registered or if they insist on being registered then they are registered at a discounted price. Success cannot be guaranteed if the student has missed more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the course work.

In order to register for the ELI University Preparatory Program, students should apply through the Admissions Office at AUBG and be conditionally accepted. For the Community Oriented Programs students should fill in or e-mail an application form with the Administrative Assistant of ELI. The e-mail addresses are listed below:

Director – Asya Alexandrova – Asya@aubg.bg

Administrative Assistant – Zlatina Elezova – Zlatina@aubg.bg

UPP Coordinator – Stanislava Gurova – Sgurova@aubg.bg

General ELI E-mail Account – ELI@aubg.bg

The following steps should be taken to complete the application process for the Community Oriented Programs:

Step 1: Fill in Application Form

- Step 2: Print 2 copies
- Step 3: Submit 1 copy to ELI
- Step 4: Submit 1 copy to AUBG Business Office upon payment
- Step 5: Bring receipt of payment back to ELI for payment confirmation.

Students should pay all fees upon registration, unless otherwise arranged. ELI accepts payment in cash (BGN or USD), or bank transfer (BGN or USD or EURO). For bank transfers please contact the ELI at +359 73/888 555/7 or +359 73/888 556. Considering Bulgarian students' needs, Bulgarian candidates for the Academic Program only may arrange to pay the tuition in two installments upon request.

Refunds may be arranged when a student must cancel registration before beginning or for withdrawing from a course for **medical reasons**. Before the course begins, students will be refunded 80% of the cost of the course. After the course begins refunds must be negotiated based on the percentage of the course that has been completed. At least 20% of the tuition fee will be retained by ELI as an administrative cost. With UPP students refunds are made following the AUBG Refund Policy.

Discounts are available for ELI programs. In all programs, members of the same family can receive a 15% discount for one member when registering for the same semester. Return customers in the Community Program for Adults who register for courses in two consecutive semesters get a 5% discount of the tuition fee for every consecutive course they register for.

Further questions about registration should be directed to the ELI administrative staff:

- Director – Asya Alexandrova – 073/ 888 556
- Administrative Assistant – Zlatina Elezova – 073/ 888 555
- UPP Coordinator – Stanislava Gurova – 073/888557

▪ **Course Prices and Descriptions**

University Preparatory Program Courses

Steps	Academic Hours	Tuition
Step 1 or 2	500	\$1790
Step 3	350	\$1110

The University Preparatory Program offered at ELI is open to all Bulgarian and International students that qualify. The ages recommended for this course are 18-25 years old. Steps 1 & 2 are offered in the Fall [Aug-Dec] and Spring [Jan-May] semesters. Step 3 is offered in the Fall [Aug to mid-Nov] and Spring [Jan to mid-Apr]. Step 1 & 2 are intensive courses offered for approximately seventeen (17) weeks for six (6) hours a day. Step 3 is an intensive course offered for fourteen (14) weeks for five (5) hours a day. One academic hour in the University Preparatory Program is equal to forty-five (45) minutes.

For Bulgarian candidates some special rules apply. Those Bulgarian candidates applying for the University Preparatory Program, which is designed to prepare students to apply to AUBG, should present a high school diploma with a

minimum GPA of 5.00. Bulgarian candidates, not applying through/to AUBG, are eligible for up to 20% discount.

There are also special rules applying to International Students. International candidates who wish to apply to ELI must first be conditionally accepted by AUBG. They are eligible for AUBG scholarship (different each year) for Step 3. Since ELI is not a degree-earning program, candidates applying only for ELI will not be granted visas by Bulgarian authorities. The candidates must obtain their visa through AUBG.

Adult Community Oriented Program Courses

Course Level Per Semester	Academic Hours	Bulgarian Students*	International Students*
Beginner	100	182 EURO	346 EURO
Elementary	100	182 EURO	346 EURO
Pre-Intermediate 1	80	162 EURO	346 EURO
Pre-Intermediate 2	80	162 EURO	346 EURO
Intermediate 1	80	162 EURO	346 EURO
Intermediate 2	80	162 EURO	346 EURO
Upper-Intermediate 1	80	162 EURO	346 EURO
Upper-Intermediate 2	80	162 EURO	346 EURO
Advanced	80	162 EURO	346 EURO
Advanced 3	80	162 EURO	346 EURO
English for Specific Purposes:			
TOEFL prep	80/80	198 EURO	394 EURO
SAT prep	80/80	198 EURO	394 EURO
IELTS prep	80/80	198 EURO	394 EURO
Cambridge Advanced English prep	80/80	198 EURO	394 EURO

The Adult Community Oriented Program at ELI is geared toward students 16 years and over who wish to increase their linguistic abilities in English. One academic hour in this program is equal to forty-five (45) minutes.

During the academic year [Oct-May] this program serves Blagoevgrad and the surrounding regions. For beginner and elementary level students, classes meet twice a week for four hours a day with a Bulgarian teacher. For pre-intermediate through advanced level students, classes meet twice a week for three hours. One of these classes is with a Bulgarian instructor; the other one is with a native English speaker.

During the summer semester [July], this program services Bulgaria and the Balkan Region. Classes in this course meet every day for four weeks. The 100 academic hour course meets for 5 hours each day. The 80 academic hour course meets 4 hours each day, 2 hours with a Bulgarian instructor and 2 hours with a native English speaker.

Children's Community Oriented Program

Course Level Per Semester	Academic Hours	Bulgarian Students*	International students
Pre-Starter A	60	139 EURO	278 EURO
Pre-Starter B	60	139 EURO	278 EURO

Starter	60	139 EURO 278 EURO
Elementary	60	139 EURO 278 EURO
Pre-Intermediate	60	139 EURO 278 EURO
Intermediate A	60	139 EURO 278 EURO
Intermediate B	60	139 EURO 278 EURO

The Children's Community Oriented Program is geared toward students from 7-14 years old who want to learn English. One academic hour in this program is equal to forty (40) minutes.

During the academic year [Oct-May] this program serves Blagoevgrad and the surrounding region. The courses last for a full academic year and are paid in two installments. The pre-starter A level meets twice a week for two hours a day with a Bulgarian instructor. The pre-starter B through intermediate levels meet twice a week for 2 hours a day. Two hours are with a Bulgarian instructor and two hours are with a native English speaker. On a subjective basis, students may be permitted to enter the course in the middle of an academic year, between the semesters, if they can demonstrate the appropriate level of English proficiency.

During the Summer semester [June] this program services Bulgaria and the Balkan Region. Classes in this course meet every day for three weeks. Students coming from outside areas will be tested so that they are placed in the appropriate level course. The pre-starter A class meets four hours a day with a Bulgarian instructor. Pre-starter B through intermediate classes meet every day for three weeks, two hours a day with a Bulgarian instructor and two hours a day with a native English speaker. Summer courses are made to reinforce the material learned during the academic year, therefore they are more interactive and focus on getting the children to participate in the application of their language skills.

*** All Courses and Course Fees Are Subject to Change. Bulgarian nationals are eligible for discounted prices.**

- **Rights and Privileges**

Previous ELI students have priority registration and do not need to take placement tests if they have completed the course within the last two years. It is recommended that if it has been more than two years since the student attended ELI, they should take a placement test just in case their level of English has changed due to outside factors. (Example: They have been living in an English speaking country.)

Private computer accounts, which are available to academic program students only, are provided by the end of the first week of the students' respective steps. If academic students need to e-mail their family upon arrival at ELI, they can either use their outside e-mail addresses or they may ask to use an administrator's e-mail account to send the message. For the other programs, although private computer accounts are not provided, the computer lab is available for students to use their own outside e-mail addresses for correspondence. Computers in the computer lab may only be used by ELI students for e-mail and academic work. No games are allowed.

- **Scholarships**

ELI offers a full academic year scholarship for a Younger Learners Program financially challenged applicant with good academic achievements. The scholarship is known as “Diane Love Younger Learners Scholarship” and was generously donated by Ms. Diane Love, a very successful teacher in the Program.

Detailed information on how to apply can be received in the ELI Administrative Offices or on the ELI Web site.

- **Student ID Cards**

All ELI UPP students are issued personal AUBG identification cards at the beginning of the semester. These cards must be used to access all facilities.

Community Oriented Program students are issued general ID cards by ELI. These cards must be used to access all facilities in Skaptopara Residence Halls. Upon completion of the course, the students must return these cards to ELI administrative staff. If a student fails to return the card, the certificate of completion will be withheld until the card has been returned. If a student has lost his/her card, he/she must pay a replacement fee of 15 BGN.

International students must obtain a Bulgarian ID card while studying at ELI. For assistance in obtaining a Bulgarian ID card, international students should contact the International Student Coordinator. There are different fees for each country, the student must inquire about his/her country either directly with the Police or with the International Student Coordinator. Upon the completion of the semester, international students who will not be returning should return the Bulgarian ID cards to the International Student Coordinator. If the student fails to return the card, any future visits to Bulgaria may become problematic.

- **TOEFL & SAT**

ELI is an official TOEFL testing site. Any student wishing to take the TOEFL may register for the available test dates and take the test at ELI. Students who wish to pay by credit card may do so at www.ets.org. If they do not have a credit card they may pay and register at the main building in the Business Office.

UPP students can take ITP TOEFL, a paper based TOEFL, as part of their preparatory program (cost included in tuition), or if they prefer they may register for the iBT TOEFL, an electronic based TOEFL, for an additional fee. The ITP TOEFL is compulsory for Step 3 students as an assessment test.

- **University Activities**

UPP students, conditionally accepted to AUBG, can participate fully in student life and events as long as these do not prevent them from their basic job to learn English intensively. They owe the respective student activity fee.

- **Class Materials**

Students are responsible for obtaining all material required for their classes (e.g. textbooks, workbooks, etc.). These materials are **NOT** included in the tuition fee paid

for the course. All textbooks and workbooks that are required may be bought from the AUBG Bookstore. All reference materials (e.g. grammar books, dictionaries, etc.) can be used in the library or bought by the students individually. Even though they are extremely helpful in the language acquisition, they are not a requirement of ELI.

- **Use of English in the ELI**

English is the official language at ELI; therefore, students are expected to converse in English while in the classroom and on all ELI premises. They are also encouraged to use English as much as possible outside of class as this will help them succeed not only in their course work but also in their general understanding and usage of English as a Foreign Language.

- **Questions**

All questions about these policies/procedures should be directed to ELI Administrative Staff.

ELI Staff Procedures

▪ Hiring Procedures/Payment: Instructors

The English Language Institute (ELI) hires both Bulgarians and Foreign Nationals for English language instruction purposes. Bulgarian candidates must have a university degree in English, preferably a Master's Degree. Foreign Nationals who are Native English speakers, possess a degree in the area of Humanities, or demonstrate the ability to speak English with sufficient capacity, can qualify to teach English at the ELI as well. Preference is given to ESL certified candidates.

ELI places a special emphasis on providing our students with exposure to both Bulgarian and Native English speakers, as the Native Speaker's knowledge is vital to the proper acquisition of English. The Bulgarian instructors emphasize the form of the language (e.g. grammatical) while the Native Speakers focus on the usage (e.g. speaking, reading, and listening).

○ Bulgarian Instructors

ELI is an equal opportunity employer of instructors. The hiring procedure for full-time Bulgarian instructors starts with an advertisement in the local or national media or on the AUBG website. Candidates who reply to the advertisement must submit their application to the Human Resource Department of AUBG. These candidates' credentials are then short listed by the ELI Director and Human Resource Manager, and only those short listed are contacted for an interview. At the interview, candidates must demonstrate their ability to speak/write English fluently and be able to prepare a general lesson plan on a given English language topic. Sometimes successful candidates are offered the opportunity to teach a lesson, followed by a discussion on specific ELT methods used and objectives achieved. Upon successful completion of the interview process, references are checked and then the position is offered to the best suited candidate.

Bulgarian instructors and EU citizens are hired per Bulgarian Labor Code on either a full-time or part-time basis. A full-time position is created when there is a stable program that funds the position. Part-time instructors are hired based on student registration and the number of hours available each semester, as the number of hours available may differ. Preference will be given to part-time instructors who have demonstrated professional excellence when a full-time position becomes available. Full-time instructors are considered permanent employees and are hired with a labor contract. They are paid on a monthly basis in Bulgarian leva (BGN) and receive social insurance. Part-time instructors are hired with civil contracts, which must be signed on a monthly basis, and are paid monthly in Bulgarian leva (BGN) based on the number of hours worked.

○ Native Speakers of English

The hiring of Native English Speakers varies significantly from the hiring of Bulgarian instructors. Native Speakers apply to ELI and must undergo an interview. Certified ESL candidates and holders of degrees in the Humanities are given preference over non-certified candidates.

Native Speakers (Americans) are hired on a short-term contractual basis. They are responsible for their living visa(s), however they may contact the Human

Resource Department and the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG) for their work visas. Native Speakers are hired on fixed term contracts signed with the Provost with copies forwarded to ELI Director, the HR Manager for expatriates, and the Finance Director (CFO). The contract can be indefinitely renewed at the mutual consent of the Native Speaker and the administration of ELI. Native Speakers (Americans) are paid via check or direct deposit in US Dollars (USD) in equal monthly installments based on an estimated contractual work load per semester. This number must be an estimate because at the beginning of each semester the actual amount of hours that will be available for each instructor or the need for substitutes in case of emergencies and unplanned absences are still unknown to the ELI. At the end of the term, any discrepancies in compensation are adjusted based on the actual number of hours worked by the instructor. For this same reason, very often native speakers receive their contracts after the add/drop week.

- **Work Schedules: Instructors**

Work schedules at the ELI vary based on the instructors' employment status. Full-time Bulgarian instructors are expected to teach 20-22 academic hours per week in the classroom plus spend any additional time needed for homework/test correction and lesson planning. Part-time Bulgarian instructors and Native Speakers are expected to teach anywhere from 3-22 academic hours per week in the classroom and allow extra time for class preparation and homework/test correction.

- **Evaluation: Instructors**

All instructors are evaluated periodically for their performance at ELI. Full-time Bulgarian instructors can expect to have a formal annual review as well as any in term reviews that the Director sees fit. Part-time Bulgarian instructors and Native Speakers are reviewed by a combination of in-class observation by the Director of ELI and student/peer evaluations.

- **Substitution: Instructors**

Classes are never cancelled in ELI. In the case of emergency, personal time off, or illness, substitution of an instructor may be required. For all programs, the best match for any substitute will come from a teacher of the same type and level. If the same type and level of instructor cannot be found then the priorities are as follows; 1) other program instructors, 2) outside instructors (e.g. instructors from other institutions). If an instructor cannot be found within the time after notice is given, the class will be postponed and the program will be extended to reach the specified academic hours. This method is used in extreme cases only. In cases where there is insufficient time to replace an absent instructor, students will be contacted via phone and informed that classes have been cancelled and the time will be made up during or at the end of the course based on availability and majority consent of instructor and students.

- **Materials: Instructors**

All instructors are provided with the necessary basic resource materials to teach their classes and also have additional reference material at their disposal. These materials include, but are not limited to: teacher's book, student's book, workbook, DVDs, video activity books, grammar references, dictionaries, multi-media projector,

VHS player, DVD player, computers, keys to classrooms/faculty room/offices, ID cards and a copy machine.

After completing all of the required textbook material, the instructors are allowed to bring appropriate material to share with their classes as long as the emphasis is placed on English language acquisition or practice. This can include games, videos, DVDs, or other multi-media tools. These materials are to be used as supplements only and in no way replace the material that is to be covered from the required curriculum.

Keys, textbooks and DVDs are distributed at the beginning of each semester. They must be signed out with the secretary of ELI and must be returned upon the completion of each course. There is a limited amount of resource material available so returning all materials should be prompt.

Instructors are provided with ID cards that allow access to the ELI after 5pm, the AUBG Main Building, and the Skaptopara Campus buildings. To get the card, the instructor must go to the AUBG main building to have a picture taken and the card made and activated. This card should be kept with the instructor while at ELI and prominently displayed while at work.

- **Facilities: Instructors**

ELI is located in Southeast Ground floor of the Main Building of AUBG. The floor consists of 12 classrooms, 2 computer labs, 5 faculty offices, and 2 administrative offices. There are also copy machines, telephones, a fax, and computers made available to the instructors for class preparation or conducting ELI business.

Instructors are encouraged to do their class preparatory work in their office (full-time instructors) or in the faculty office (part-time instructors), but may elect to do their preparation at home. In the faculty room, Director's Office, and Secretary's Office, there are additional reference resources on grammar and learning activities, which are available for instructor use.

There are 2 copy machines located in the copy room for copying class materials. The copier is not for personal use and should only be used for class preparation. If an instructor needs several packets copied, they can place a request with the secretary at least one day in advance and the secretary will have the copies made.

The small computer lab may also be used by the instructors when there is not a test or a class in progress. Computers may be used for creating, researching, or printing necessary documents for class. The working hours of the computer lab are officially 8 am to 5 pm and a key is provided for those instructors needing to use the lab for instructional purposes from 5 pm to 9 pm. The big computer lab is used for IBT testing as ELI is a certified TOEFL Test Center, part of the ETS worldwide net. It is also used for computer-based English classes or TOEFL prep classes. Instructors receive the key from the secretary and promptly return it upon finishing classes. Under no circumstances should the key leave the ELI facility.

Telephones and a fax are available to the instructors at ELI. The phones may be used by the instructors for conducting ELI business or for personal use to local numbers only. Out of area calls or the calling of cell phones should be cleared with the administration before placement of the call and should not be for personal use. A fax for business purposes is available in the Secretary's office. (+359 073/88 32 25) Any emergency use of the phones or fax will be handled on a case by case basis with the Director of the ELI.

- **Record Keeping: Instructors**

At the end of each month the part-time instructors submit with the Secretary the total number of hours they have taught for the current month in order to have their civil contract prepared. Failing to provide this form the instructors do not receive a civil contract and their payment is postponed till the following month.

- **Deadlines: Instructors**

There are several deadlines that must be met by instructors. These include, but are not limited to: syllabi, tests, and certificates. The syllabi and tests must be prepared by the instructors and provided to the students in a timely manner. After the grading of these tests at the end of each semester, certificates are prepared based on the results.

- **Syllabi**

Syllabi should be created by the instructors and provided to the students, with a copy going to the ELI Director. A syllabus should contain: instructor information (name, contact information, office hours, etc.), course description, course objectives, the applicable term (e.g. Spring, Summer, Fall), evaluation policies, attendance requirements, discipline, participation expectations, textbooks/materials that will be covered, an optional general time line for the course (including national holidays if possible). The instructor should strictly adhere to these policies in the classroom to maintain a fair learning environment for the students.

- **Tests**

Tests that are administered to the students are created and proctored by the instructors. The scores from these tests are combined with other graded activities during the semester to come up with the student's final grade. This must include both instructors' portions when in a team teaching capacity. The majority of the final grade should be on the final exam. It is up to the discretion of the instructors when teaching in a team environment what percentage of the student's grade will come from each instructor (e.g. 1 to 1, or .7 to .3, etc.)

Deadlines associated with the final exams and grades are of the utmost importance. A copy of the instructor's final exam must be provided to the Secretary of ELI at least two days prior to the final exam dates to allow enough time for the Secretary to prepare the necessary copies for each instructor. This is especially important during the summer programs as all instructors give their tests on the same day.

- **Certificates**

Directly related to the results of all course work are the certificates. The certificates are created by the Secretary of the ELI, however the instructors are responsible for getting the combined scores to the Secretary as soon as possible, usually one to two days after the final test have been proctored, so that the Secretary has sufficient time to print, seal and have all appropriate parties sign the certificates before they are presented to the students. During the summer programs, results should be submitted the same day as the certificates are presented to students the day following the exams.

- **Course Instruction**

Courses at ELI differ in intensity and diversity based on the students' need. The basic difference between the Academic and the Community Oriented Courses is that courses are varied in the intensity, scope of material, and target group.

The Academic Program focuses on preparing academic students to enter the University with a sufficient level of English language fluency to do well in their course work. The Community Oriented Courses are focused on a wide variety of English language learners. These students come from diverse backgrounds and are motivated to learn by wide ranging interests whether it is for those learning English for personal interest, for academic proficiency, or as a professional development.

The Academic Program involves team teaching from the first level to the last, while the Community Oriented Programs utilize only the Bulgarian instructors for the Beginner and Elementary levels and team teaching for subsequent levels. In courses that are team taught, each instructor is responsible for testing the material that they have covered in class. For final tests, the two instructors must collaborate in their efforts to include all the material that was covered in the course. Native speakers generally provide 40% of the test due to the nature of the material they teach.

Each program consists of a different number of contact hours. The courses finish when the number of contact hours for that course have been completed. This means that if, for some reason, the course must be extended to achieve the total number of hours, it will be. (In extreme cases only!)

The instructor is responsible for creating a learner-centered environment in the classroom. This includes being prepared and allowing the students sufficient participation time, as well as maintaining an orderly atmosphere by the strict adherence to discipline policies outlined in the course syllabus. In the classroom there can be many distractions which should be minimized by the instructor. These distractions can include: cell phones, talking at inappropriate times, use of native languages, and cheating.

At the beginning of each class, students should be asked to turn their cell phones off. If the students fail to do this, there should be an agreed upon policy between the instructor and students for disciplinary action. If the phone is an absolute necessity, for work or emergency purposes, it should be put on the silent/vibrate function and the student should sit near the door to minimize the disruption of the class.

Students are encouraged to take an active role in speaking during most classes as this is an integral part of language acquisition. However, there are appropriate times for the students to talk and these will be made known to them and guided by the instructor in speaking exercises. Questions are welcome, but students should be reminded to wait until the instructor has finished an explanation before interrupting. Students speaking in their native languages freely during class should not be tolerated.

Cheating is a serious offense and should be dealt with accordingly. Students should be reminded about the seriousness of their actions when it comes to cheating and in no circumstance should it go unpunished. Policies for cheating in class should be outlined in the course syllabus and thoroughly discussed on the first day of class. It is the instructor's responsibility to create a cheat-free environment as much as possible. It is at the instructor's discretion on how to combat this offense.

In all cases different or not mentioned in this document, a decision should be sought in the AUBG Catalogue, AUBG Policies and Procedures Manual, Bulgarian Labor Code, Policies and Procedures Code for Bulgarian High Schools issued by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education.

Vacation and Holiday Procedures

Vacation and holidays for Academic and Community Oriented Programs.

All national holidays are non-working days for all programs. AUBG and ELI are free to make decisions independently on whether or not to follow the holiday compensation policy (working Saturdays) of the national government.

If, for reasons beyond the control of ELI, a teacher is unavailable for any of the classes during the course term due to a national holiday that was not foreseen, the academic hours are compensated to the students at the end of the term or on a case by case basis. Because of Bulgarian governmental policies, it is possible for employees to be given an extended holiday in the form of a four day weekend in cases where the national holiday falls on a Thursday, but it may be required that employees make up the time given for Friday on the following Saturday.

Vacation & Holidays: All Staff

Administrative staff and full-time teaching staff receive all Bulgarian national holidays as well as the 4th of July as paid holidays when they fall on a regular working day. Administrative staff are allowed approximately 25 days of paid vacation during the year. Full-time instructors are allowed 30 days paid vacation. All staff must place a request with the HR Office with a copy to the Director of ELI for their vacations. Part-time instructors, Bulgarian or Native Speakers, are not compensated for vacation time. When their working days fall on a national holiday, they must make up the lost hours to their students by holding an additional class.

The administrative staff should take into consideration the needs of ELI when planning their vacation requests. Although the administrative staff can request vacation at any time during the year, vacation requests made during exceptionally busy periods at ELI may not be granted.

Full-time teaching staff may request their vacation days only between programs when they are not actively teaching. Because only the full-time instructors may teach for the specialized test preparation courses that last through July, it is requested that they not submit vacation requests for longer than a three-week interval in August based on the course schedule. During the academic year when there are gaps between the programs, an instructor may opt to take vacation time or compensation time, if they have taught more than the normal weekly workload, or be involved in placement testing. If they do not have compensation time already available, they may also work additional academic hours in the classroom to compensate for the time taken. These options must be discussed and finalized with the ELI Director.

Personal Time Off/ Sick Leave: All Staff

ELI follows the HR policies of AUBG in the respect to paid personal or sick leave. See the HR policies and procedures manual or the Bulgarian labor code for further information.

Unpaid Leave: All Staff

If administrative staff or a full-time staff have used up their paid vacation or paid sick leave, they may request to have unpaid leave for personal reasons. It is up to the discretion of the ELI Director whether or not to approve this additional leave based on ELI needs at the time of request.

Bulgarian National Holidays – Students/Staff/Faculty

January	1
February	
March	3
April	Easter (dates vary each year)
May	1, 24
June	
July	
August	
September	6, 22
October	
November	1
December	24, 25, 26

Academic Program:

- ❖ Fall Semester:
 - Students:
 - See Bulgarian National Holiday Schedule
 - Christmas Holidays: Dec 23 - Jan 2 inclusive
 - Staff/Faculty
 - See Bulgarian National Holiday Schedule
 - Christmas Holidays: Dec 24 - Jan 1 inclusive
 - Note: Dec 27-30 are subject to Bulgarian holiday compensation policies, however AUBG and ELI reserve the right to make independent decisions on whether or not to follow these guidelines.
 - Note: On the days that students are not present during the Christmas holiday instructors may either work or may take the days off with the understanding that these days will be deducted from their annual paid leave.
- ❖ Spring Semester:
 - Students
 - See Bulgarian National Holiday Schedule
 - Easter Holiday includes the Friday before Easter Sunday through the Tuesday following Easter Sunday. (Ex. 2006 Easter Vacation is Apr 21 – 25 inclusive)
 - Staff/Faculty

- See Bulgarian National Holiday Schedule
 - Easter Holiday includes the Friday before Easter Sunday and Monday after the Easter weekend.
 - Note: On the days that students are not present during the Easter holiday instructors may either work or may take the days off with the understanding that these days will be deducted from their annual paid leave.
- ❖ Summer Semester
- Students
 - See Bulgarian National Holiday Schedule
 - Summer school candidates get 4 full weeks to cover the 80-100 course hours, if there is a national holiday in this 4 week period the students will be compensated by adding additional time at the end of the course.
 - Staff/Faculty
 - Will be compensated for holidays that are not observed as time off. (e.g. 4th of July)
 - **Community Oriented Program**
 - Adult Program
 - The adult programs observe all Bulgarian national holidays.
 - Any extension of vacation days that are made due to Bulgarian national holiday compensation policies that affect the number of academic hours will extend the course in the end of the term so that all academic hours are covered.
 - Children's Program
 - The children's program observes all Bulgarian national holidays.
 - There are no classes at ELI when the children are on Winter and Spring vacations from their regular school attendance.

