

ELI Policies and Procedures

STUDENT'S GUIDE

Introduction

Welcome to the English Language Institute (ELI) at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG)!

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 among the very few of the assets that our school provides. The English Language Institute is a self-sustaining unit to the AUBG designed to offer English language instruction at any level of English knowledge: from absolute "Beginner" to "Advanced" level, followed by university admission test preparation.

Mission: The mission of the ELI at the AUBG 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 ELI at the AUBG is to help students achieve their academic goals by providing them with the highest standards of English language instruction.

Motto: The Strength of Tradition

Applicants

English For Academic Purposes (EAP):

Students who need preparation to apply to the AUBG or any other university where English is the language of instruction should apply for the English for Academic Purposes at ELI. The recommended age limit for this program is between 18 and 25 years old. The EAP is open to both Bulgarian citizens as well as international applicants. Students apply to EAP through the Admissions Office application portal.

Community-Oriented Programs:

The Community Oriented Programs at ELI are designed to be accessible to all Bulgarian citizens as well as international students.

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 13 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 boosts their learning through interactive games, texts, and multi-media devices.

The highly qualified teaching staff, Bulgarian and (semi-) 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 in the Adult Community Oriented Program.

The Adult Community Oriented Program is designed toward 14 + year-olds who wish to further their knowledge of the English language in a learner- centered environment. The Program consists of 9 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 instructors 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 students' 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. Full-time ELI instructors administer the placement test. The test is used to place students coming from outside language centers and schools in the appropriate ELI course. There is a charge of EUR 10 for this test that is paid with the course fee. Previous ELI students are not required to take a placement test if they have successfully completed an ELI course within the last 2 years. 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 Adult Community Program one academic hour is equal to forty-five (45) minutes. In the Children's Community 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 a student must be absent from the course for personal and/or medical reasons, it is his/her responsibility to inform the instructor(s) and to arrange with the instructor to make up all work for the missed classes.

Students in the EAP are provided with personal computer accounts by the end of their first week of classes. The ELI EAP 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 EAP Coordinator informs the students they are ready. The students must then arrange to meet with the EAP Coordinator to sign an agreement to

follow the rules for using the computer labs before receiving their usernames and passwords.

ELI Administrative Personnel

Director: Nikolina Radeva – Tel. 073/ 888 556

Assistant Director/ EAP Coordinator: Stanislava Gurova– Tel. 073/ 888 557

Administrative Assistant: Mihail Ivanov – Tel. 073/ 888 555

ELI Full-Time Faculty Offices

EAP Bulgarian Instructors: Tel. 073/ 888 553

ELI Faculty Office: Tel. 073/ 888 559

ELI Certificate of Completion

Upon the 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 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 EUR 20. The new certificate will bear the mark "CERTIFIED COPY" on the face of the document in place of the instructor's signature.

Evaluations [Students]

Students are evaluated based on a combination of different components. 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 60% in the course. The final grade is a combination of attendance, class participation, quizzes, evaluation tests, mid-term test and final test. Students are responsible for acquainting themselves with the syllabus at the beginning of the term.

It is the responsibility of the students to contact either the instructor or their fellow students when they have missed a class, so they know the homework assignment and come prepared for the next class. Students who have missed any of the in-class evaluations are responsible for arranging with their instructor(s) to make up for the missed material. Only Midterm tests can be made up. For excused absences, the make-up exam can be arranged before the absence with the instructor for a time that is convenient for both the student and the instructor. There will be no deduction of points from the test in these circumstances.

The final test date is fixed. If a student has a good reason not to take the final test, then s/he has 2 options: 1) either take a make-up test (on another fixed date), which allows the student to receive a certificate only if s/he has passed the test successfully or 2) take a final test from the corresponding level at the end of the following semester. In the latter case, the student is awarded a certificate after successfully passing the final test.

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 end of the next semester, the first time for a fee of EUR 10, any time afterwards EUR 20.)
- Sit a make-up test and pass it with a minimum of 60%. A make-up test can be taken by students who received between 55% and 59% on their failed final test. The student may use the make-up test option only when there is not sufficient time for either of the two previous options and the student would like to continue with his/her studies. The make-up test gives a student the right to sign up for the next level in case the candidate scores a minimum of 60% on the make-up test.

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 assimilation of language. Since instruction at ELI is intensive, 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

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. Students can register for courses up to a given deadline or before all seats are taken. Late registration is not encouraged.

In order to register for the ELI English for Academic Purposes Program, students should apply through the Admissions Office at AUBG and be conditionally accepted.

For the Community Oriented Programs students should fill in an online application form.

The e-mail addresses of Administrative staff are listed below:

Director: Nikolina Radeva – nradeva@aubg.edu

Administrative Assistant: Mihail Ivanov – mbivanov@aubg.edu

Assistant Director / EAP Coordinator: Stanislava Gurova – sgurova@aubg.edu

General ELI e-mail Account: eli@aubg.edu

The following steps should be taken to complete the application process, as follows:

Community Oriented Programs:

- Step 1: Fill in an online Application Form
- Step 2: Receive a confirmation email with the bank details by the ELI team
- Step 3: Pay and send a copy of the bank transfer to eli@aubg.edu

Students should pay all fees before the stipulated payment deadline. ELI accepts bank transfers in BGN or EURO.

In case an international student is denied a visa, 80% of the tuition fee can be refunded.

For bank transfers please contact the ELI at eli@aubg.edu.

All payments should be made in the AUBG Main Building Business Office located at 1 Georgi Izmirliiev Square or via a bank transfer.

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.

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.

Further questions about registration should be directed to the ELI administrative staff: eli@aubg.edu.

Course Prices and Descriptions

English for Academic Purposes

The English for Academic Purposes offered at ELI is open to all Bulgarian and International students that qualify. The ages recommended for this course are 18- 25 years old. The courses are offered in the Fall [Sep-Dec] and Spring [Jan-May] semesters.

Bulgarian candidates, applying through/to AUBG, are eligible for up to 20% discount.

There are also special rules applying to international students. Since EAP is not a degree-earning program, candidates applying directly to ELI will not be granted visas by Bulgarian authorities. The candidates must obtain their visa through AUBG.

The current tuition fees are posted on the website* (tuition fees are subject to change).

The Adult Community Oriented Program at ELI is geared toward students 14 years and over who wish to increase their linguistic abilities in English. One academic hour in the program is 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 academic hours. The classes are taught by a team of two instructors. Upon availability, one of the instructors is a native speaker. Online classes are also available for students outside of the Blagoevgrad region as long as there are enough candidates (min. 10) to form a whole group of the same level.

During the summer semester [July], this program provides classes to Bulgarian as well as international students. 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.

Children's Community Oriented Program

The current tuition fees are posted on the website (*tuition fees are subject to change)

The Children's Community Oriented Program is geared toward students from 7-13 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 before the beginning of each semester. The pre-starter level meets twice a week for two hours a day with one or two Bulgarian instructor/s. The starter through intermediate levels meet twice a week for 2 academic hours a day. 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 provides classes to Bulgarian as well as international students. Classes in this course meet every day for two or three weeks. Students coming from outside areas will be tested so that they are placed in the appropriate level course. Summer courses are designed to reinforce the material learned during the academic year. This is why 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.

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 Rays of Hope for Bulgaria.

Student Numbers

All ELI EAP 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 the classrooms for the evening programs. 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 BGN 20.

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 Migration's Office 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.

University Activities

Academic Program students, conditionally accepted to AUBG, can participate fully in student life and events as long as these do not prevent them from attending their intensive English classes.

Class Materials

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

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 should possess or pursue a degree in the area of Humanities, or demonstrate the ability to speak English with sufficient capacity. Preference is given to ESL certified candidates.

o Bulgarian Instructors

ELI provides an equal opportunity to instructors. The hiring procedure for Bulgarian instructors starts with an advertisement in the local, national and social media, as well as the 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 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 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 on 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.

o Foreign Nationals

The hiring of Foreign Nationals varies significantly from the hiring of Bulgarian instructors. Foreign nationals apply to ELI or are referred by mutual acquaintance and must undergo an interview. Certified ESL candidates and holders of degrees in the Humanities are given preference over non-certified candidates. There are different contracts and different procedures when hiring foreign nationals: 1. A foreign national with an EU citizenship; 2. A foreign national with a permanent Bulgarian residence status; 3. A foreign national who is a dependent on a Bulgarian citizen; 4. A foreign national dependent on a person with a permanent Bulgarian residence status; 5. An AUBG exchange student; 6. An AUBG student.

Foreign nationals 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.

Work Schedules: Instructors

Work schedules at the ELI vary based on the instructors' employment status.

Full-time Bulgarian instructors are expected to teach 21 academic hours per week in the classroom. What is more, instructors 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 3-30 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 foreign nationals can be reviewed by a combination of in-class observation by the Director of ELI and student/peer evaluations.

Substitution: Instructors

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 is not available, then the priorities are as follows: 1) other full-time instructors, 2) outside instructors (e.g. instructors from other institutions). If a substitute instructor cannot be found within the time after notice is given, the class will be cancelled for the day but 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 email 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, grammar references, dictionaries, multi-media projectors, computers, online resources, ID cards and a photocopying machine. After completing all of the required textbook material, the instructors are allowed to use 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 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.

Textbooks are distributed at the beginning of each semester. They must be signed out with the administrative assistant 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 and the AUBG Main Building during the summer school. 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 AUBG Main Building. The floor consists of 12 classrooms, a computer lab, a faculty office, administrative offices, and full-time instructor offices for ELI use only.

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

A copy machine is available for copying class materials. The copier is **not** for personal use and should only be used for class preparation. Photocopying should be minimized to save resources.

Telephones 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. Any emergency use of the phones will be handled on a case by case basis with the Director of the ELI.

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.

o Syllabi

Syllabi should be provided to the students at the beginning of the semester with a copy sent to the ELI Director. A syllabus should contain: instructor information (name, contact information, office hours, etc.), course objectives, the applicable term (e.g. Spring,

Summer, Fall), evaluation policies, textbooks/materials that will be covered, a general time line for the course (including national holidays). The instructor should strictly adhere to these policies in the classroom to maintain a fair learning environment for the students.

o Tests

The scores from the tests are combined with other graded activities during the semester to come up with the student's final grade.

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 Administrative Assistant of ELI at least two days prior to the final exam dates to allow enough time for the him/her 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.

o Certificates

Directly related to the results of all course work are the certificates. The certificates are prepared by the Administrative Assistant of the ELI; however, the instructors are responsible for getting the combined scores to the Administrative assistant as soon as possible (usually one to two days after the final test has been proctored), so that the Administrative assistant has sufficient time to print, seal and have all appropriate parties sign the certificates before they are handed to the students. During the summer programs, results should be submitted on the same day as the certificates are handed 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 vary depending on 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. 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 (i.e. for personal interest, for academic proficiency, or as a professional development).

In courses that are team taught, each instructor must collaborate their efforts to include all the material that was covered in the course.

Each program consists of a different number of contact hours. The courses finish when the number of contact hours for that course has been completed. This means that if, for some reason, the course must be extended to achieve the total number of hours, it might 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. In the classroom there can be many distractions. The instructor should minimize these distractions. Distractions can include but are not limited to: cell phones, talking at inappropriate times, use of native languages, and cheating.

At the beginning of each class, students should be asked to turn off their cell phones. 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 under no circumstances 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.

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 Ministry of Education.