

**VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**  
**English Language Center**

# Student Handbook

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Academic Year 2012

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# WELCOME TO THE VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY English Language Center

The Vanderbilt University (VU) English Language Center (ELC) provides excellent language instruction in a friendly, supportive atmosphere. Students from all over the world have been studying English at the ELC since 1978 in order to prepare for academic study or employment in a VU department, center, or institute. The VU ELC serves Vanderbilt students, faculty, and staff.

We hope you will be very pleased as a student here. If you need any assistance, please let us know. To help you understand our language center better, we have provided important information in this student handbook.

## SCHEDULE

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The VU ELC has 2 semesters: the fall semester and spring semester, which are 12 weeks each. We also offer discipline-specific language instruction during the summer, before students matriculate into professional school programs. Most classes meet 1.5 hours a day, 2 days a week, between Monday and Friday. I-20 students are enrolled as full-time students.

## CALENDAR

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For important VU ELC dates see the [Calendar](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/calendar): [www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/calendar](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/calendar)

## APPLICATION

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VU ELC applicants enroll in classes via the VU ELC online registration on our website([www.vanderbilt.edu/elc](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc)).

VU ELC students who are not yet enrolled in academic programs but have been required by academic departments to complete language instruction before matriculating in one of the university's schools must contact our Admissions Coordinator, Irene Race, in order to complete an application for an I-20.

# PLACEMENT TESTING

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All students entering the ELC are required to take assessments. These tests are designed to help us assess each student's English proficiency. Full-time ELC students are expected to take all tests at the beginning of their program. Testing typically lasts for an hour and a half .

# REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

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VU ELC students who are enrolled in academic programs must sign up for EAP courses via the VU ELC online registration on our website.

ITAs who are so required by their department advisors must sign up via the ITA signup link.

VU ELC I-20 students must complete specific steps in order to enroll in ELC classes (Contact Irene Race, [irene.race@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:irene.race@vanderbilt.edu)).

# FEES

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## **Matriculated VU students:**

VU ELC students who are enrolled in academic programs are eligible for one tuition-free course per semester. These courses are funded by the University Provost's office.

## **Tuition Assistance and Discounts for VU students<sup>1</sup>, faculty, and staff and VU affiliated<sup>2</sup>:**

VU ELC provides tuition discounts for *bona fide* faculty, staff members, and students. Assistance and discounts apply to courses taken at VU ELC during Fall and Spring semesters only. Tuition assistance and discounts apply to courses taken at VU ELC only. VU ID cards must be presented.

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<sup>1</sup> "VU Student" refers to all matriculated, degree-seeking students. Proof of status must be presented for enrollment.

<sup>2</sup> "VU affiliated" includes all other individuals, including non-degree seeking students, scholars, postdocs, and researchers.

## Eligibility

For Faculty and Staff:

You are eligible to participate in the following assistance and discounts if you are a faculty or staff member.

You are eligible for one discounted ELC course with application, testing, and tuition fees waived. You may receive a 50% discount on one course per semester, and the application and testing fees are waived.

## Tuition Assistance and Discounts

Individual	Application Fee	Testing Fee	Tuition Fee
VU Faculty/Staff	Waived	Waived	50% discount (1 course)
VU Student	Waived	Waived	Waived (1 course)

All registration is pending availability in courses - contact [elc@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:elc@vanderbilt.edu) for availability information.

### Please note:

Tuition discounts do not apply to discipline-specific English-language courses/programs offered in conjunction with VU schools and departments.

**Books and Materials** Fees depend on which books a student needs. ELC students can purchase all necessary books and materials at the VU Bookstore. Although you are not required to buy books from the VU Bookstore, we cannot accommodate any late purchases of books from non-campus vendors. There is a “materials charge” for any ELC class that does not use a specific textbook. If a student does not wish to keep certain textbooks, he/she might be able to sell them back to the VU Bookstore at the end of a term. The VU Bookstore will buy back books only if there is a need for the same textbooks the following semester and you present a VU Bookstore receipt of purchase.

## PAYMENT

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Fees must be paid during registration, before class attendance. Students who do not pay course fees in full will not be allowed to attend classes. Payment is made at the ELC Office (Rm. 106). Each student is responsible for keeping his/her receipt to verify payment of ELC fees. In the event that a check is returned by the bank because of insufficient funds in a student's account, or for any other reason, an additional fee of \$50 will be charged. And full payment must then be made in cash. ELC-only students who are sponsored by outside agencies may have their fees billed to those agencies if prior written authorization to do so is on file in the ELC Office. However, if for any reason a sponsor does not pay, the student is ultimately responsible for paying all of his/her own fees. ELC fees for VU students who are enrolled in degree programs may be charged to their student accounts.

# ELC COURSES

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For course descriptions, see  
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc>

Students issued I-20s by VU for ESL study must enroll full-time.

## GRADING SYSTEM

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Your course grades and rate of class attendance are very important. All grades and attendance become part of a student's permanent record at the ELC and are published on VU ELC transcripts.

EAP courses are graded Pass (P) / Fail (F).

For I-20 students, the U.S. Immigration Service may refuse to readmit a student with a poor record of study and who has left the U.S.

Once enrolled, ELC 1-20 students' progress in English is evaluated in several ways:

- achievement of course objectives
- active/appropriate participation in class
- completed homework assignments
- class attendance and punctuality
- quizzes and tests

For grading in each course, please see the specific course syllabus given to you by each instructor.

## CLASS CHANGES (DROP/ADD DEADLINES)

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Dropping or adding a course may take place only within the first week of classes each semester. If you wish to drop a course, you must so notify your instructor immediately.

**DO NOT CHANGE CLASSES BEFORE YOU RECEIVE A WRITTEN APPROVAL.**

## WITHDRAWAL & REFUND/REDUCTION OF FEES

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**For VU degree students:**

**Failure to notify your instructor and withdraw within the drop/add period**  
may jeopardize your placement in future tuition-free VU ELC courses.

## For faculty and staff:

Faculty and staff who are required to pay tuition for VU ELC courses must officially withdraw from the course by completing the Application for Withdrawal in order to complete their record.

Faculty and staff may officially withdraw from classes (regardless of the date he/she stops attending class) any day during the first week of a term, in order to receive a refund of 100% of the course-fee payment. (A refund does not include other charges.) **There will be no refund for withdrawing from classes after the first week of a term.** A check-request form for the amount of the refund will be sent to the University Accounts Payable Office, which will then mail a refund check to the ELC. This process should take a minimum of three weeks. No refund is given to students who unofficially withdraw from class.

## For I-20 students:

To withdraw from a class, a student must complete and sign the Application for Withdrawal form. A student may officially withdraw from classes (regardless of the date he/she stops attending class) any day during the first week of a term, in order to receive a refund of 100% of the course-fee payment. (A refund does not include other charges.) **There will be no refund for withdrawing from classes after the first week of a term.** A check-request form for the amount of the refund will be sent to the University Accounts Payable Office, which will then mail a refund check to the ELC. This process should take a minimum of three weeks. No refund is given to students who unofficially withdraw from class.

# CLASS ABSENCE

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At the VU ELC, class attendance and punctuality are very important. All students should do their best to avoid unnecessary absence from class. In addition, students who are in the U.S. on a student visa (F-1) can endanger their visa status by missing classes. If special circumstances prevent a student from arriving at class on time, he or she should discuss the difficulty with the teacher (in advance if possible). If the situation is recurring, the student should discuss it with the Assistant Director, Lee Martin (Room 203). Regarding attendance, being late 3 times is equal to a 1-hour absence.

If you must miss class due to illness or injury, inform your instructor promptly. F-1 students should give Irene Race a written statement signed by a medical authority when they return to classes; otherwise, no absence will be excused. In the case of required standardized tests (TOEFL, GRE, etc.), students should present their test-admittance form to the secretary in advance of the test date. "Excused absence" allows students to make up missed work (homework, tests, etc.); however, it is still recorded as an absence. Students may not be allowed to make up missed work for unexcused absences and may receive a "0" for such missed assignments.

## OTHER CLASS MATTERS

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**Food and/or Drinks** Students may have hot or cold drinks in class as long as they do not disturb others. No food or drinks are permitted in the Computer Area (Room 107) at any time. This rule is necessary for the safety of delicate equipment.

**Smoking:** VU is a smoke-free campus. Smoking is **prohibited** in all buildings on campus, including University residence halls and Greek chapter houses, and on the grounds of the campus with the exception of designated outdoor-smoking areas.

Locations of designated smoking areas for students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors may be found on the map on the website: [www.vanderbilt.edu/info/smokingpolicy/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/info/smokingpolicy/)

Locations of additional designated smoking areas for campus residents may be found on the Housing and Residential Education website: [www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd/main/housing/housing-policies/smoke-free-policy/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ResEd/main/housing/housing-policies/smoke-free-policy/)

Designated smoking areas will be marked with signs and include cigarette urns for disposal. VU is committed to providing a healthy, comfortable, and productive environment and offers several resources for smoking cessation.

There is no smoking in or around the ELC building.

**Mobile Phones** Students should not answer or make phone calls or text messages during class. If you have a cell phone or beeper, please keep it turned off or on vibrate while you are in class.

## VU ELC COMPUTERS

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The VU ELC computers (Rm. 107) are available to all ELC students from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Students with a VU ID card also have access to the computers in VU computer labs and in the university's libraries. Also, students are responsible for their own faxes or photocopies.

## LEAVING THE ELC EARLY

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VU matriculated students who unofficially withdraw from classes may be unable to enroll in VU ELC courses in future semesters.

If an I-20 student does not maintain status, unofficially withdraws from school, or does not attend classes full-time without first obtaining approval on his/her SEVIS record, the student is considered out of status and may have to leave the country immediately. To maintain status, students need to attend classes and receive passing grades. Please see Irene Race (Rm. 106) immediately if you have any questions regarding this policy.



# EVALUATIONS

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Course evaluations are done through the VU online-evaluation system (VOICE) in each class at the end of the term. Notifications will be sent out via email. We ask you to take a few minutes to complete these forms honestly, accurately, and fully. They help us make the ELC a better place to study.

# CERTIFICATION LETTERS AND TRANSCRIPTS

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Certification letters are available on request (see Irene Race). VU ELC transcripts are also available to students at the completion of a semester. The ELC cannot send out grade reports or transcripts without a written permission from the student. If you wish to have one sent, you must obtain a consent form from Irene Race (Rm. 106). Unofficial transcripts are for students' personal use. They are stamped "unofficial" and are free of charge. Only official transcripts are sent directly to other institutions.

# INFORMATION for I-20 Students

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**Students' Responsibilities** An F-1 visa student who has been issued an I-20 from the ELC is required by law to attend classes full-time. Therefore, if a student does not register for classes, misses too many classes, or is not making satisfactory progress, he or she will be reported to SEVIS. If a student is reported, he or she may have to leave the country immediately and may experience difficulties upon re-entering the U.S. in the future.

**The Application Fee** There is a \$150 application fee for all students who receive an I-20 from the ELC. (VU students, student spouses, and other members of the VU community do not pay the application fee.) Payment is due at the time of application submission.

Each 12-week course at the ELC costs \$960. Full-time is equal to four courses per term. Full-time students taking more than four courses pay an additional \$960 per course.

**Testing Fee** For the complete series of ELC placement tests, the fee is \$90. This payment must be made before testing.

**VU Student Services Card** All I-20 students must purchase the student-services card. This card provides access to the Student Health Center, Student Recreation Center, VU Computer Center, VU Libraries, and the Sarratt Student Center.

**Employment** ELC F-1 students **may NOT work** off-campus. They may work on-campus only. The ELC policy at VU is that ELC students may apply for on-campus employment only after completing one semester at the ELC. This policy ensures that students immerse themselves in their language

studies and focus on improving their proficiency level. After this initial study period, ELC students should consult the ELC Director to seek authorization to work on campus.

**Transfer** F-1 students must transfer their I-20s in order to enter VU as a matriculated student. The student must see Irene Race (Rm. 106) to begin the transfer process.

**Vacation** Students on F-1 visas must attend the Fall and Spring semesters full-time.

**Travel** Travel outside and return to the U.S. requires an authorized signature on the back of your I-20. Be sure to have your I-20 signed prior to each departure (check the back of your I-20 for the signature). If not, you may not be able to return. Make an appointment with Heather Young at ISSS (322-2753) for this process.

**I-20 End Date** Remember the end date on your I-20. If you need to study English past that date, you must apply for an extension of your I-20 before it expires. See Irene Race Rm.106 to request extension.

**Parking** A special permit is required for parking on the VU campus. A parking permit may be obtained by presenting a memo from Assistant Director, Lee Martin (Room 203), to the Traffic & Parking Office, on the first floor of Wesley Place parking garage at 21st Ave. S. and Scarritt Place (behind CVS Pharmacy, and across 21st from the VU General Library). With this permit, students may park in a specially assigned lot. Payment is made at the Traffic & Parking Office. If you park on campus without a permit or in the wrong place, you will receive a ticket from the campus police. Also, your car may be towed, which will cost a high additional fee to claim your car back. To be safe, obtain a parking permit and park only where you are permitted.

**Car Insurance** Coverage must be purchased from an insurance agency. It is illegal in Tennessee to drive a car without insurance. If you are responsible for injury to others or damage to their property, you will pay. [See the VU International Students and Scholar Services website for more information.](#)

**Health Insurance** Coverage (for medical/hospital expenses) is required for all full-time I-20 ELC students. If you have a private policy (from your own country, for example), its coverage must be equal to or more comprehensive than VU's international-student health insurance. If not, you must obtain such insurance through VU while you are a full-time I-20 student at the ELC. Students who have family members here must insure them also, at separate rates. If you have other insurance, be prepared at registration to show printed information with details about the areas and amounts covered. (For women, your insurance coverage must include maternity care.) Insurance through VU covers you from semester to semester. You must pay for the full insurance coverage at registration each term.

**Student Health Center** Only full-time students who have paid the student services fee and have received a card may use the Health Center.

**If you are sick or injured:**

- If your problem is minor (for example, a cold, a headache, nausea, etc.), go to the VU [Student Health Center](#) first. (See the ELC Office for directions.)

- Or see your personal physician.
- If your condition is truly severe (for example, a high fever, a deep cut, etc.) go to a hospital emergency room. (The wait may be long and the cost may be high.)
- If you need help, call 911. An ambulance will pick you up and take you to the hospital emergency room.

Please report any serious health problems to the ELC secretary as soon as you are able to do so.

See [Transportation and Driving](#) in the [International Students and Scholars Services Student Handbook](#).  
[www.vanderbilt.edu/iss](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/iss)

For additional information for international students at VU, please see the [International Students and Scholars Services Student Handbook](#).