



VANDERBILT
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English Language
Center

Student Handbook
Academic Year 2020-2021

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Welcome

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 with your experience 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

The VU ELC offers courses during the Fall semester and Spring semester, which are 12 weeks each. Most English for Academics and Professionals (EAP) classes meet 1.5 hours a day, 2 days a week, Monday through Friday.

We offer discipline-specific language instruction during the summer, before students matriculate into professional-school programs

For important VU ELC dates see the [Calendar](#).

Assessments

All students entering the ELC are required to take language assessments. These tests are designed to help us assess each student's English proficiency in order to better advise students. If you have signed up for a writing course, you will be asked to complete a short writing assessment. If you have signed up for a speaking or pronunciation course, you will complete a brief speaking assessment.

Registration Procedure

VU ELC students who are enrolled in academic programs and interested in enrolling in [English for Academics and Professionals \(EAP\)](#) courses, must use the VU ELC online registration on our website to sign up. International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) who are so required by their department advisors must sign up via the online [ITA registration form](#).

Fees

Matriculated VU students

VU ELC students enrolled in academic programs are eligible for one tuition-free course per semester, pending availability and scheduling.

Tuition Assistance & Discounts for VU students¹, faculty, staff, & VU-affiliated² individuals

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

Tuition

The ELC offers one tuition-free English-language course each Fall and Spring semester to Vanderbilt individuals who use English as an additional language who are undergraduate, graduate, and professional students or VU faculty, staff, and scholars.*

¹ "VU Student" refers to all matriculated, degree-seeking students. Proof of status may be requested for enrollment.

² "VU affiliated" includes all other individuals at Vanderbilt University, including non-degree-seeking students, scholars, postdocs, and researchers.

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) employees are not eligible for tuition discounts. All applicants may be required to present official Vanderbilt identification and letters of appointment. Students may either pay for the course(s) themselves, or request assistance from their home or primary departments.

*Priority enrollment is given to matriculated, full-time students.

Auditing is not available.

Tuition Schedule for Eligible VU Community Members

| Number of Courses | Eligible VU Community Members | VUMC Employees |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1st course | \$0 | \$960 per course |
| 2nd course | \$480 | \$960 per course |
| 3rd and additional courses | \$960 | \$960 per course |

* Spouses and partners are not eligible for these courses. The ELC offers [chatELC and General English for Spouses/Partners \(GES\)](#) for spouses and partners of current Vanderbilt students, faculty, and staff.

Please contact the ELC administration team (+1 615-322-2277 or elc@vanderbilt.edu) for tuition inquiries and payment. Full tuition payment is due by the end of the first week of ELC classes, which also ends the drop/add period.

All registration is pending availability in courses. Contact elc@vanderbilt.edu for availability information.

Please note: Tuition costs are fixed for discipline-specific English-language courses/programs offered in conjunction with VU schools and departments.

Textbooks and Materials

Textbook and/or materials fees depend on which textbooks and/or materials a student needs. ELC students may purchase all necessary textbooks and materials through the [Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt Bookstore](#) unless you are otherwise directed by the ELC or your instructor. Although you are not required to buy books from this bookstore, we cannot accommodate any late purchases of books from non-campus vendors. Whether you choose to rent your books or to purchase new, used, or digital e-books [through this bookstore](#), you will get the correct textbooks and course materials. If you drop a course, you may return your clean textbook for a full refund during the drop/add period at the beginning of the semester. 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, they might be able to sell them back to the Barnes & Noble at Vanderbilt Bookstore at the end of a term. The bookstore will buy back clean books only if there is a need for the same textbooks the following semester and you present a VU Bookstore receipt of purchase.

Payment

For VU participants, fees must be paid during registration, before class attendance is possible. 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) in either cash or checks--no credit cards are accepted. Each student is responsible for keeping her/his 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 payments must then be made in cash. ELC fees for VU students who are enrolled in degree programs may be charged to their student accounts.

VUMC individuals must pay tuition directly or make arrangements for their departments to pay tuition before class attendance. If a department pays tuition, an email message or letter must be sent to the ELC before the first day of classes indicating that the department will pay for the course in full. The ELC will process the necessary agreement for payment of the tuition.

Accommodation Procedure

A student who needs course accommodations due to a disability, special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, or has emergency medical information that needs to be shared with the instructor, should contact the instructor as soon as possible. The [Student Access Services Office](#) provides specific accommodations for students with physical or learning disabilities. Upon receiving appropriate documentation from the student, Student Access Services will make arrangements with the instructor for the lecture accommodations.

ELC Courses

See [Programs](#) for course descriptions.

Student Enrollment, Grades, & Feedback

Enrollment

In order to maintain your course enrollment, a minimum of 75% attendance, effort, and participation is required. For remote courses, "attendance" is derived from timely completion of a minimum of 75% of activities and assignments. 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 may be published on VU ELC transcripts. When you are required to take courses by your department, grades are reported to your department.

Grading Criteria

Assuming your enrollment requirement is met and upon completion of a course, you will receive a Pass or Fail grade. Your progress is based on the following criteria:

- Achieving course objectives
- Assessment (demonstration of proficiency development based on tests, projects & presentations)
- Attendance (including punctuality), effort, & participation
- Assignments (in-class & homework)

For grading in each course, please see the specific course syllabus given by the instructor(s). If the enrollment requirement is not met, you will receive a UW (Unofficial Withdrawal).

Class Changes (Drop/Add Deadlines)

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 notify your instructor immediately.

DO NOT CHANGE CLASSES BEFORE YOU RECEIVE APPROVAL.

Withdrawal & Refund of Fees

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

For Fall and Spring semester individuals who are required to pay tuition for VU ELC courses must officially withdraw by sending an email message to their instructor indicating that they would like to withdraw from the course. **There will be no refund for withdrawing from classes after the first week of a term.** No refund is given to students who unofficially withdraw from class.

Enrollment and withdrawal policy for Summer English for Legal Purposes: Enrollment and withdrawal policy: After Summer English for Legal Purposes begins, if students withdraw by 5:00 p.m. (CDT) on Day 2 of the program, they will be issued a 90% refund. There will be no refund for withdrawing after 5:00 p.m. (CDT) on Day 2 of the program.

Class Attendance

Regular class attendance is an ELC course requirement. For remote courses, “attendance” is derived from timely completion of a minimum of 75% of activities and assignments. Any student whose class-attendance rate drops below a projected 75% (overall percentage for the semester) at any time during the semester may lose Brightspace access for the affected course(s). Students must communicate promptly with their instructor(s) whenever they must miss a class or if their course status changes.

The ELC Assistant Director and VU departments will be informed if at any time during the semester a student who is required to take an ELC course (ITAs and others) has a class-attendance rate that drops below a projected 75% for the semester.

A student will be deleted from Brightspace if the student:

- officially withdraws during the drop/add period
- unofficially withdraws after the drop/add period by communicating with the instructor
- stops attending after the drop/add period and does not respond to two communication attempts by the instructor to verify their enrollment status
 - e-mail attempt 1: after 1 week of absences
 - e-mail attempt 2: when the student cannot achieve 75% for the semester with any additional absence

Class Absence

At the VU ELC, class attendance and punctuality are very important. All students should do their best to avoid unnecessary absence from class. If special circumstances prevent you from attending class on time, you should discuss the difficulty with your teacher (in advance if possible). If the situation is recurring, you should discuss it with the Assistant Director, Adam Steffanick (adam.steffanick@vanderbilt.edu).

If you must miss class due to illness or injury, inform your instructor promptly.

Unofficial Withdrawal

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

Other Matters

If at any time during the semester the student wishes to discuss class procedure, schedule, grades, or any class situation, contact the instructor during regularly scheduled office hours or via email.

Any issue that cannot be resolved directly with the instructor should be referred to the ELC administration (campus office number +1 615-322-2277): Susan Barone, susan.m.barone@vanderbilt.edu; Director; Jim Cracraft (jim.cracraft@vanderbilt.edu), Assistant Director; or Adam Steffanick (adam.steffanick@vanderbilt.edu), Assistant Director.

Food and/or Drinks

Students are not permitted to eat or drink in classrooms while class is in session.

Smoking

VU is a smoke-free campus. Smoking (including but not limited to cigarettes, tobacco, and devices such as e-cigarettes, pipes, vaporizers) 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](#).

Locations of additional designated smoking areas for campus residents may be found on the [Housing and Residential Education website](#).

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 buildings.

Electronic Devices

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

Bicycles, Scooters, and Electric Skateboards

Bicycles (including dockless bikes) should be locked in the bicycle racks in the rear of the ELC building only. Scooters and electric skateboards are to be left near the bike racks.

Children

Students who have children are not permitted to bring them to ELC classes/1-to-1 consultations/meetings with instructors. Children in the classroom have the potential to disrupt the classroom environment and can create a potential danger to the child or expose the department and the university to liability.

Evaluations

Course evaluations are done by the ELC for 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 & Transcripts

Certification letters are available on request (contact the ELC's Administrative Assistant via email: elc@vanderbilt.edu). ELC transcripts are also available to students after the completion of a semester. The ELC cannot send out grade reports or transcripts without written permission from the student. If you wish to have one sent, you must obtain a consent form from the ELC's Administrative Assistant. 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.

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