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# English Language Center

**Student Handbook:  
Academic Year 2024-2025**

**created by**

**The Vanderbilt University English Language Center**

**Updated May 28, 2024**

[vanderbilt.edu/elc/](http://vanderbilt.edu/elc/)

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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 to prepare for academic study or employment in a VU department, center, or institute. The ELC serves Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff, and scholars.

We hope you will be very pleased with your experience as a student here. If you need any assistance, please let us know. This student handbook will help you become familiar with our language center.

## Schedule

The 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 also offer discipline-specific language instruction during the summer, before students matriculate into professional-school programs and during Fall and Spring semesters.

## 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 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

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

## Cost

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

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) employees are not eligible for cost-free courses. All applicants may be required to present official Vanderbilt identification and letters of appointment. Students who are not eligible for a cost-free course 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.

## EAP Course Costs for Eligible VU Community Members

Number of Courses	Eligible VU Community Members	VUMC Employees
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1st course	\$0	\$960 per course
2nd course	By permission only	\$960 per course
3rd and additional courses	By permission only	\$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](mailto:elc@vanderbilt.edu)) for inquiries and payment. Full 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](mailto:elc@vanderbilt.edu) for availability information.

Please note: Program 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 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 from the VU bookstore, you will be expected to 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 may be 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 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**

VUMC individuals must pay for courses directly or make arrangements for their departments to pay before attending class. If a department pays costs, 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.

### **Student Access 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 class accommodations.

### **ELC Courses**

See English Language [Programs](#) for course descriptions.

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## Student Enrollment, Grades, & Feedback

### *Enrollment*

In order to maintain your course enrollment, a minimum of 75% attendance, effort, and participation is required. For remote (online) asynchronous courses, “attendance” is derived from timely completion of a minimum of 75% of activities and assignments. 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 semesters, individuals who are required to pay for 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 or Associate Directors 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 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 Assistant Director, Sandra Bancroft-Billings ([sandra.bancroft-billings@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:sandra.bancroft-billings@vanderbilt.edu)) or Associate Director, Jim Cracraft ([jim.cracraft@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:jim.cracraft@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, the student should 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](mailto:susan.m.barone@vanderbilt.edu); Director; Jim Cracraft, Associate Director ([jim.cracraft@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:jim.cracraft@vanderbilt.edu)); Sandra Bancroft-Billings, Assistant Director ([sandra.bancroft-billings@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:sandra.bancroft-billings@vanderbilt.edu))

Note: the ELC follows Vanderbilt's Health and Safety Protocols <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/coronavirus/>

### ***Food and/or Drinks***

Students are not permitted to eat 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, mostly off-campus, outdoor-smoking areas.

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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 ebikes) should be locked in the bicycle racks in the rear of the ELC suite 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, or 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 and Teaching Feedback Surveys 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 Specialist via email: [elc@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:elc@vanderbilt.edu)). ELC transcripts are also available to students after the completion of a semester.

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