



Austin ESL School

Confidence | Opportunity | Success



Accredited by The Commission on English
Language Program Accreditation



STUDENT HANDBOOK

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The background of the entire image is a photograph of the Texas State Capitol building in Austin, Texas. The building is a large, classical-style structure with a prominent white dome topped with a golden statue. The building is surrounded by a portico with many columns. An American flag is visible on a tall pole to the left of the building. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Austin, Texas

- fastest growing city in the USA

- referred to as the Live Music Capital of the World

- voted by Forbes magazine The Best Place to Live in the USA

- features many parks and lakes ideal for hiking, biking, boating, kayaking, and paddleboarding

- called Silicon Hills due to the large number of technology companies residing in the city

- home to University of Texas, Ballet Austin, and world-class museums

- boasts exciting culinary scene including world-renowned chefs & local fare cuisine

- features Circuit of the Americas, home to Formula 1 & MotoGP

- hosts famous film and music festivals such as South by Southwest & Austin City Limits

Table of Contents

Full-time Program	4
Part-time Program	4
TOEFL Course	4
Customized Course	5
Application Process	6
Part-Time Student	6
Registration Fees & Policy	6
Full time / international students	7
Traveling in the USA	8
F-1 Visa Requirements	8
Receive a Form I-20	8
Pay Your I-901 SEVIS fee	8
Apply for a U.S. Visa	8
Arrive at U.S. Port of Entry	8
Receive a Form 1-94	8
Maintaining Student Status	9
Useful Links	9
Arrival	9
Education	9
Upon Program Completion	9
Arriving at the School	10
Placement Test	10
Student Orientation	10
Tuition Fees	10
Tuition Fee Refund Policy	10
Rules of Conduct	10
School Calendar	10
Class Schedule	10
2020-2021 Academics Calendar	11
Academics	12
Progressing to the Next Level	12
Open Enrollment	12
Attendance Requirements	12
Achievement Scale	12
Interpretation of the Achievement Scale	13
Student Services	14
Advising & Consulting	14
School facilities information	14
Housing Options	14
Student Complaints	14
Appendix A (Attendance information)	16
Appendix B (Texas Driver's License/ID Card)	17
Appendix C (Health Insurance)	18

Welcome to AUSTIN!

Learn English in one of the most exciting cities in the US!

At Austin ESL, our team of experienced administrators and instructors will work with you to help you achieve your language goals. We offer small-sized student-oriented classes designed to help every type of learner succeed. From the beginning of the application process, to your arrival in the United States, to the day you graduate, we will be there to help navigate your path to success.

Mission Statement:

Our mission at Austin ESL School is to provide English or Chinese language training to non-native speaking students. We have designed our programs to help individual students develop their skills needed for non-academic, academic, professional, and/or social purposes. Our goal is to develop student's four core language skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) through various integrative activities. Austin ESL School strives to provide a positive and productive learning environment for our students with exemplary faculty and a challenging curriculum.



We work hard to meet every student's individual language needs!

AUSTIN ESL curricula for each course have been created to uphold the mission statement and to support students' preparation for non-academic and academic everyday life situations. The courses provide thorough integrated activities and language skills that focus on a combination of listening, reading, writing, speaking, and sub-skills of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

School Accreditation:

Austin ESL School is accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) for the period of August 2018 through August 2019 and agrees to uphold the CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions. CEA is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency for English language programs and institutions in the U.S. For further information about this accreditation, please contact CEA, 1001 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 630, Alexandria, VA 22314, (703) 665-3400, www.cea-accredit.org.



For more information about accreditation visit:
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/the-basics-of-school-accreditation>

<http://cea-accredit.org/about-cea/standards>

School Certification:

Austin ESL School is a Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified school eligible to enroll F-1 students in the United States.

For more information visit:
<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/certified-school/5024494>

ESL Programs

Austin ESL School offers three different ESL Program: full-time program, part-time program, and a TOEFL course. Below is a description of each:

Full-time Program

All international (F-1) students are required to enroll in the full-time program of study. The full-time program consists of 18 hours a week: 14-16 hours of classroom instruction and 3-4 hours of language lab & electives instruction each week. Language lab is taught and guided by an instructor. The language lab days are used for instructors to reinforce difficult topics. These days can be used in the computer lab for guided instruction through MyEnglishLab.com or other supplemental material based on individual students' needs. Further, language lab sessions may be used for electives, research and group projects with instructor supervision. Electives will be an expansion of the core language skills such as debate for listening & speaking or tourism for vocabulary & writing. Full-time students are able to complete one level of proficiency in a 15-week semester. A full-time student can complete the entire non-academic program in approximately 20 months. If a student decides to take the upper advanced Level 5, it takes approximately 24 months to complete.

The fifth level or Level 4 has been specifically designed for students whose goal is to continue their education at a U.S. college or university. In order to place in Level 4, students must show proficiency in all concepts covered in the four lower levels that we offer (Fundamentals, Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3). Reading, writing, and vocabulary skills in Level 4 are taught through research and academic essay writing. Speaking and listening are taught through lectures, guided debates, and presentations. Advanced grammar concepts are reviewed and practiced extensively in all skill areas. After successfully completing this level with an overall grade of 85% or higher, a student has the option to successfully complete and graduate from our ESL Program or they can continue their English Education with Level 5.

The sixth level or Upper Level 5 will aid in covering a more in-depth study and practice of (a) Academic & University readiness English or a (b) Proficient Real Live Situational readiness English for those students that wish to reach a more proficient level of English before attending a university or exiting the program.

Part-time Program

Our part-time program offers a minimum of 6 hours of mandatory classroom instruction and an up to an optional 12 hours per week. Students would have the option to enroll in any of the available opened classes. If a class is not available at their level, they may choose to enroll in private sessions before entering a class. Students are able to complete 1 level of proficiency in two 15-week semesters. Therefore, a part-time student can complete the non-academic program in approximately 40 months. If a student decides to take the academic advanced course, it takes approximately 48 months to complete.

*Although, full-time is the recommended plan at AUSTIN, this part-time option is for students that do not have F1 Visa requirements, the allocated schedule, and/or financial means to take full-time courses.

TOEFL Course

The *TOEFL*® test is a highly respected English language proficiency test, helping millions of students like you attend English-speaking institutes all over the world. The *TOEFL* test measures the ability of non-native English speakers to use and understand English at the university level. Austin ESL School TOEFL course was carefully designed for anyone who wishes to study at an English-speaking university or program. Our preparatory course will teach you useful test taking strategies, and provide you with realistic testing experiences, which include a diagnostic test to establish your baseline performance, plus a set of full-length practice exams to prepare you for your test day.

Customized Courses

At Austin ESL School, we offer customized courses for groups of 5 or more students with flexible start dates, length, structure, and content. Offering customized courses allows us to work with your schedule and specific learning needs. These courses are ideal for families and groups of friends who are unable to attend our regular part-time and full-time courses. When your group signs up for a customized course, you will be able to build your ideal course.



Application Process

Part-time Students

If you are a local student and wish to enroll in our part-time program, follow the directions below:

Step 1: Registration Fee Payment

Option 1: PAY ONLINE

<https://www.austinesl.com/index.php/how-to-apply/>

Option 2: PAY IN PERSON

Visit the school and pay by cash or check.



Step 2: Application Form

Option 1: APPLY ONLINE

Complete and submit the application form available on our website:
<https://www.austinesl.com/index.php/enrollment/registration/>

Option 2: APPLY IN PERSON

Visit the school, request the application form from the ESL office and submit it in person.

Registration Fee and Refund Policy

All students must pay our registration fee of \$100.00. The registration fee is only paid once and it is non-refundable.

“It was the greatest English learning experience I’ve ever had. The instructor’s patience, kindness, and professional skills benefited me so much. I am very lucky to be a student at AUSTIN and I am looking forward to coming back in the future.”

-Alex

Full-time / International (F-1) Students

If you are an international student and wish to enroll in our full-time program, follow the directions below:

Step 1: Registration Fee Payment

Pay THE \$100.00 REGISTRATION FEE ONLINE

This is a one-time fee and it is non-refundable.

<https://www.austinesl.com/index.php/how-to-apply/>



Step 2: Application Form

APPLY ONLINE

Complete and submit the application form available on our website (<http://www.austinesl.com/index.php/enrollment/registration/>).

To complete the online application, you will need the following documents:

- proof of registration fee payment (copy of your receipt)
- copy of the identification page of your passport
- copy of your current U.S. visa (if applicable)
- recent bank account statement showing your name, date within the past 6 months, and a balance in excess of \$2,400 USD for each month for the duration of study in the USA plus additional \$400 USD a month for each dependent (a spouse or a child). For example, if you are coming to study in the USA for 6 months, the bank account statement must show a balance in excess of \$14,400 USD (6 x 2,400). If you are coming for 6 months and are traveling with one dependent, your bank account statement must show a balance in excess of \$16,800 USD ((6 x 2,400) + (6 x 400)). If the bank account statement is in another person's name (your sponsor), you must also upload a letter from your sponsor.
- letter from your sponsor (if applicable) including sponsor's name as it appears on the bank account statement, your (student's) name, and the sponsor's agreement to cover all tuition fees, study materials, health insurance, housing, food, and any other personal expenses throughout the duration of your stay in the U.S.A.

F-1 Visa Requirement

All international students who wish to study in the United States must obtain an F-1 visa. The information below is to help you understand the process of obtaining your F-1 visa:

Receive Your Form I-20

Once you complete the application process and the school receives and approves all your documentation (see page 6), the designated school official (DSO) will issue you a Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status. The DSO is there to help you understand and follow the rules for studying in the United States. The Form I-20 is an important document that you should keep safe, as you will need it throughout the international student process. For more information about the Form I-20 and when you need it, please visit the What is the Form I-20? page on Study in the States.

Pay Your I-901 SEVIS Fee

After you receive your Form I-20, next is to pay your I-901 SEVIS Fee. Regulation requires that all international students pay this fee before the Department of State issues them a visa. Visit the Paying the I-901 SEVIS Fee page on Study in the States and watch the I-901 SEVIS Fee payment tutorial to learn about each step of the payment process. Remember to keep your I-901 SEVIS Fee payment receipt and be sure to check that the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) identification (ID) number on the receipt matches the SEVIS ID number that appears on your Form I-20. Please contact SEVP if the SEVIS ID number on these two documents does not match or if you encounter other issues during the payment process.

Apply for a U.S. Visa

After getting a receipt for payment of the I-901 SEVIS Fee, you can apply for a visa at a U.S. embassy or consulate. Visit the U.S. Department of State's website for more information about applying for an F-1 visa. You can also find your nearest embassy or consulate by visiting the U.S. Embassy website. Once you receive your visa, check to make sure that you received the right type of visa (F-1) and that your name and date of birth are correct and match the information in your passport.

Traveling to the USA

Traveling to the United States requires that you take certain steps before your arrival. It is also necessary to be prepared and organized when you arrive at the U.S. port of entry.

Arrive at U.S. Port of Entry

You may enter the United States up to 30 days before your official program start date listed on your Form I-20. When you arrive to the United States, you will meet a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBS) officer who has the authority to admit or deny your entrance into the country. You must present the CBS officer with your Form I-20, as well as your valid visa and passport. It is also a good idea to have your AUSTIN acceptance letter which we will send you with your Form I-20, your evidence of financial support, and the name and telephone number of your DSO. Be sure to keep these documents and information in your carry-on luggage, as you will not be able to access any of your checked baggage until after you pass through the U.S. port of entry.

Receive a Form I-94

If CBP admits you into the country, they will give you an admission stamp in your passport and issue an electronic Form I-94, "Arrival and Departure Record." The Form I-94 includes information about when you were admitted, what status you must maintain (F-1) and how long you can stay in the United States. The CBP officer will inform you where to find your electronic Form I-94. You should verify that the "Admit Until" date on your Form I-94 and admission stamp on your passport lists "D/S" (that means, Duration of Status) and not a specific date.

Maintaining Student Status

While studying in the United States, it is important to maintain your F student status. Your status relates to the purpose, or reason for why you want to come to the United States. The U.S. Department of State issues you your visa based on your intended purpose.

If the Department of State issues you an F student visa, this means that you are coming to the United States to study. You should not take any action that detracts from that purpose. Maintaining your status means:

- Fulfilling the purpose for why the Department of State issued you your visa.
- Following the regulations associated with that purpose.

Arrival

When arriving to the United States, F students must:

- Enter the United States no more than 30 days before your program of study begins.
- Immediately contact your designated school official (DSO) when you enter the United States.
- When you arrive at school, you need to contact your DSO again, no later than the program start date listed on your [Form I-20](#).

Education

While studying in the United States, F students must:

- Attend and pass all your classes. If school is too difficult, speak with your DSO immediately.
- If you believe that you will be unable to complete your program by the end date listed on your Form I-20, talk with your DSO about requesting a possible program extension.
- You must take a full course of study each term; if you cannot study full-time, contact your DSO immediately.
- Do not drop a class without first speaking with your DSO.

Upon Program Completion

- F-1 students must take action to maintain legal status or depart the United States after completing your program of study.
- Once you complete your program of study, you have 60 days after completion of your program (the program end date on your Form I-20) to leave the United States. If you wish to extend your stay in the United States, talk with your DSO to learn more about your options.

Useful Links

For more information, visit the government website:

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students>

Here are specific pages to help you with the process:

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/financial-ability>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students-and-the-form-i-20>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/student-forms>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2015/06/five-ways-to-prepare-for-your-visa-interview>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/getting-to-the-united-states>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/maintaining-status>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/full-course-of-study>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/i-901-sevis-fee-payment-tutorial>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/paying-the-i-901-sevis-fee>

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/redirect?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fmjfee.com%2F>

Arriving at the School

Prior to the first day of classes, all students must take a placement test to determine their level, attend student orientation, and pay all tuition fees.

Placement Test

At AUSTIN, we use the TrackTest English Test. This test will accurately place you in appropriate level based on your English proficiency. TrackTest English Test uses for evaluation the popular **CEFR standard (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)** which aligns with our curriculum. After you submit the application form and pay the registration fee, the ESL office will send you an invitation to take the placement test. You will receive your placement test results together with your class schedules before the first day of class.

Student Orientation

There is a mandatory student orientation which all students must attend before they begin classes. At their orientation, students learn about program policies, schedules, course content, grading criteria, attendance requirements, additional student services, and general information about Austin. At the orientation, you will also be able to purchase your class books. The First day of class student orientation provides an opportunity to meet the instructors and other students.

Tuition Fees

All tuition fees must be paid in full prior to the first day of classes. Students can pay the fees online, or at the school by credit card or check. Please contact the ESL office for any enquiries regarding tuition payment.

Tuition Fee Refund Policy

Students who cancel 24 hours prior to classes starting will receive a 100% refund of their tuition fees. Students who cancel prior to the second week starting will receive a 50% refund of their tuition fees. Cancellations during or after the second week will receive no refund. Registration fee and books are non-refundable.

School Calendar

AUSTIN offers 2 semesters a year: Fall (September – December), Spring (January – May). Exact start dates of the next session can be found on the last page of this handbook and on the school’s website.

Class Schedule

Weekly Class Schedule for Four – Days per week class						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
8:30am -10:30am	Combined-skills class with focus on grammar	Combined-skills class with focus on Conversation	Combined-skills class with focus on Reading & Writing	Combined-skills class with focus on Conversation	No Class	
10:30am -12:30pm						
<i>Break</i>						
1:00pm – 2:00pm	No Class	Elective	No Class	Elective		
Weekly Class Schedule for Two – Days per week class						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
8:30am -10:30am	No Class	Combined-skills class with focus on Conversation & Reading	No Class	Combined-skills class with focus on Conversation & Reading	No Class	
10:30am -12:30pm						
<i>Break</i>						
1:00pm – 2:00pm	No Class	Elective	No Class	Elective		
2:00pm – 4:00pm		Combined-skills class with focus on Writing		Combined-skills class with focus on Writing		
4:00pm – 6:00pm		Combined-skills class with focus on grammar		Combined-skills class with focus on grammar		

Rules of Conduct

While at AUSTIN Learning Center, Students are expected to:

- ✓ be academically professional, responsible, respectful, and non-disruptive
- ✓ dress appropriately as to not distract others
- ✓ arrive on time to each class
- ✓ complete all assignments
- ✓ purchase books during the first week of school and bring them to class every day

2021-2022 Academic Calendar

Austin ESL Program

2021 - 2022 School Calendar

Fall Semester

August '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

September '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

November '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

December '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Spring Semester

January '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

July '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- School Closed/ Holidays
- Summer Vacation | No Classes
May 9 – Aug. 30
- Winter Vacation | No classes
Dec. 20 – Jan. 14

- Spring Break | No Classes
Mar 14 – 18
- First Day of Semester
Aug 30 & Jan. 18
- Last Day of Semester
Dec. 16 & May 5



Academics

Progressing to the Next Level

Students will progress to the next level after each 15-week semester if they pass the level with 70% accuracy in Fundamentals – Level 3 and with 85% accuracy in Level 4. Level 5 is optional and can be successfully completed with a 70% accuracy. If students are not passing, they will be advised through an interim progress report and will be given recommendations on how to improve their grades. Official progress reports will be given at midterm and at the end of each semester prior to the next semester starting. If a student fails a class, he or she may repeat the class in the next session. Each class/level can only be repeated once. If a student fails the same class/level twice, he or she will not be able to enroll in the same class/level again. At that point, international (F-1) student will be considered “out of status” in the SEVIS computer system which may result in losing the F-1 visa.

Open Enrollment

Students are allowed to enroll and enter classes at any time during the semester. However, if students begin after the 10th week of class, they must be placed in the level below their level test, in order to fully complete their initial placement level.

Attendance Requirements

In order to maintain a student status, F-1 students must maintain regular attendance. Instructors record student attendance daily. If students miss too many classes, they may not be able to pass their midterm and final exam. Further, missing classes may result in receiving a zero on other graded materials which will lower the student’s overall grade. If a student receives a failing final grade, he or she will have to repeat the level. Each level can only be repeated once. If the student fails the same level twice, he or she will not be allowed to enroll in the same level again. At that point, international (F-1) student will be considered “out of status” in the SEVIS computer system which may result in losing the F-1 visa.

(Please look at Appendix A at the end of this handbook for more info on Attendance and Vacation)

Achievement Scale

AUSTIN ESL Program achievement scale is directly aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The following table is a graphic representation of the alignment of AUSTIN levels with the CEFR, Cambridge English Scale and widely accepted tests and exams:

AUSTIN Levels Names		Common European Framework of Reference	Cambridge English Scale	Cambridge Exams	Global Scale of English (Pearson)	TOEFL PBT	TOEFL iBT	IELTS
Level 5	A	C2 Proficient	200 - 230	Proficiency (CPE)	85-90	590 - 677	95-120	8 - 9
	B					587-637	95-110	6.5-7.5
Level 4		C1 Advanced	180 - 200	Advanced (CEA)	76-84	587 - 637	95-110	6.6-7.5
Level 3		B2 Upper Intermediate	160 - 179	First (FCE)	59-75	533 - 587	72-94	5.5-6
Level 2		B1 Intermediate	140 - 159	Preliminary (PET)	43-58	440 - 527	42-71	4-5
Level 1		A2 Elementary	120 - 140	Key (KET)	30-42	340 - 473	18 - 42	0 - 4
Fundamentals Level		A1 Beginner	100-119		22-29			

Interpretation of the Achievement Scale

	AUSTIN Levels	Common European Framework of Reference	Achievement Scale Interpretation
Proficient User	Level 5	C2 Proficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. ➤ Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments, and accounts in coherent presentation. ➤ Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.
Advanced User	Level 4	C1 Advanced (Effective operational proficiency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer clauses, and recognize implicit meaning. ➤ Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. ➤ Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. ➤ Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	Level 3	B2 Upper Intermediate (Vantage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialization. ➤ Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. ➤ Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages of disadvantages of various options.
	Level 2	B1 Intermediate (Threshold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. ➤ Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. ➤ Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. ➤ Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	Level 1	A2 Elementary (Waystage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). ➤ Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. ➤ Can describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	Fundamentals Level	A1 Beginner (Breakthrough)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. ➤ Can introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people they know and things they have. ➤ Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Student Services

Academic, Immigration, and Personal Advising

As new students, we want you to adjust to American life as comfortably as possible. The ESL Program Coordinator/DSO, Co-director/PDSO, your instructor or another staff member will be available to answer any questions or assist you in contacting the right person who can best help you adjust in a new country.

New Student Orientation

There will be a mandatory orientation a student must attend before starting classes. Students will learn about program policies, schedules, course content, grading criteria, attendance requirements, additional student services, and general information about Austin.

Excursion and Social Events

There will be scheduled excursions and social events for all students to experience U.S. and Austin's culture and to provide you with opportunities to apply your language skills outside the classroom.

How to get an ID

(Please look at Appendix B at the end of this handbook for more info on obtaining a Texas Driver's License/Texas ID Card)

Computer Labs

There are two computer labs with a total of 15 computer stations and a printer available to students to work on projects and assignments.

Printing

Printer is available to students in Computer Lab #1. Students are limited to ten pages of a class-assigned paper at a time, black and white printing only.

Parking

There is plenty of free parking around the school.

Immigration Advising

From the time you apply from your home country to the time you complete the program of study, the PDSO and DSO will be available to assist you with any immigration related questions or situations you may face.

Housing Options

Currently, we do not offer on-campus housing. However, we can assist students in finding suitable housing. There are several options AUSTIN students can choose from. Local off-campus options include homestays, and private or shared apartments.

Health Insurance

Currently, we do not offer students health insurance. However, we can provide students with guidance on how to select and enroll in a suitable health plan.

(Please look at Appendix C at the end of this handbook for more info on general information about health insurance for international students.)

College Admission Consulting

For students who are planning to attend US colleges, we can assist students in the complicated application processes including college application planning, preparation and essay review at additional cost.

Student Complaints

Austin ESL School strives to provide a comfortable atmosphere and environment to improve learning. We appreciate any advice on how to improve and grow our school. Written informal comments and complaints can be submitted anonymously to either a coordinator or director. Students with serious (formal) complaints and concerns must fill out a "complaint form" found in either the coordinator or director's offices. These must be submitted to the coordinator or director. Each will be handled privately and resolved in a timely manner.

Homestay

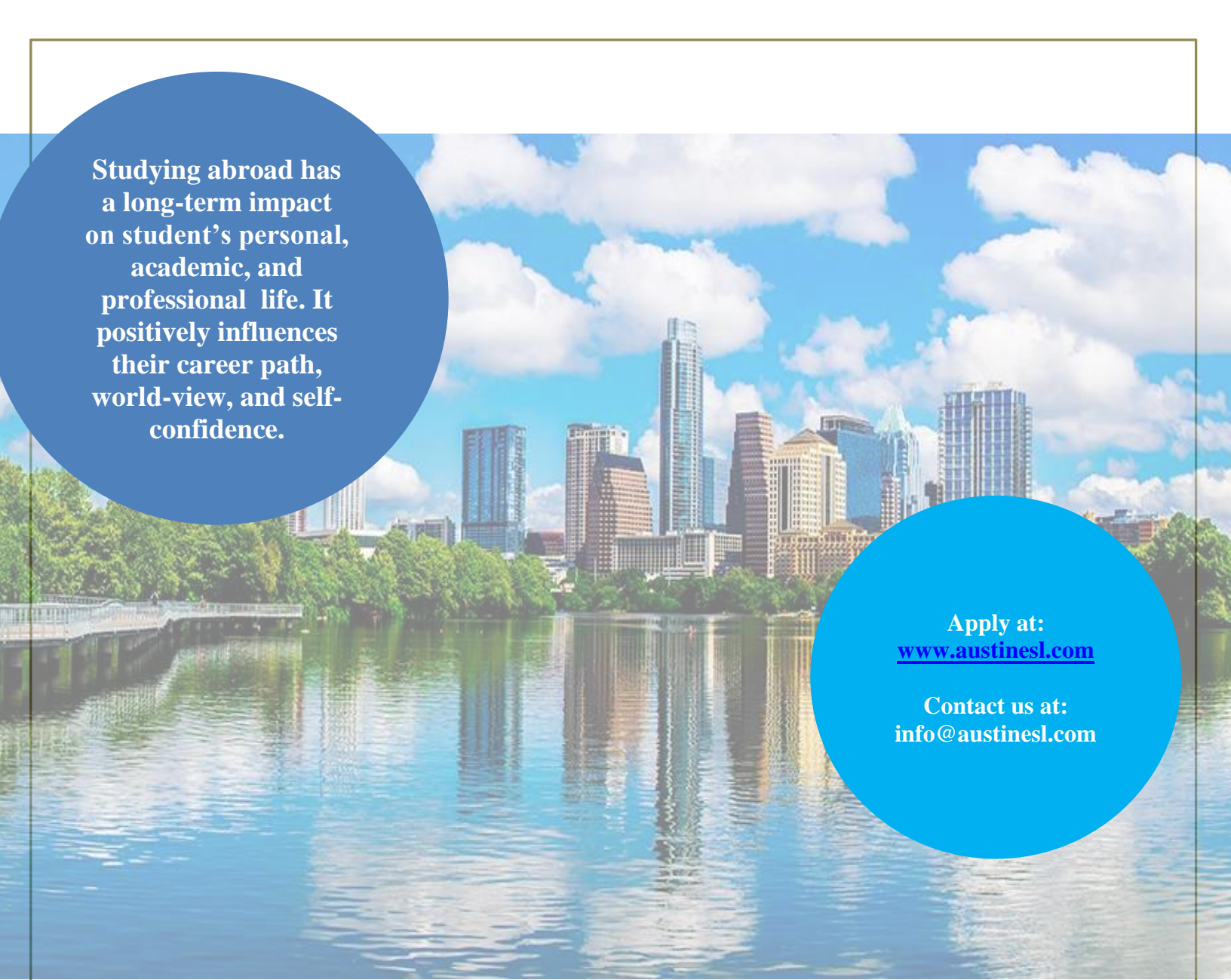
Homestay provides an opportunity to stay with a local family during your time in the United States. It is an affordable accommodation option ideal for anyone looking for cultural immersion and more support. You may have a private or shared room. Homestay families provide meals, and may help with transportation. One of the companies that can assist you in finding a homestay in the area is [My International Family](#).

Apartment

Renting an apartment is a great option for anyone looking for more flexibility and independence. When living in an apartment, students are responsible for preparing their own meals and paying utility bills. Students may rent an apartment alone, or share a place with one or more roommates. There are many available options of short-term and long-term rentals and students can choose between furnished or unfurnished apartments. [Simply International](#) is one of the many companies that can help you find a suitable apartment in the area.

[Hunters Chase Apartment Homes](#)

are located a 30-minute walk from the school and a short drive to downtown Austin. The smoke-free community features two sparkling pools, manicured lawns perfect for barbecues or picnics, and a 24-hour



Studying abroad has a long-term impact on student's personal, academic, and professional life. It positively influences their career path, world-view, and self-confidence.

Apply at:
www.austinesl.com

Contact us at:
info@austinesl.com

Appendix A

An F-1 student may not miss more than 20% classes in order to maintain visa status – this includes coming to class on time.

Absence Calculations:

- One tardy = less than 15 minutes late to class
- Three tardies in a class = one class absence
- More than 30 minutes late = one class absence

Excessive Absences:

- After 10% total class absences – student receives a warning letter from ESL coordinator
- After 13% total class absences – student is placed on probation and meets with the ESL Director
- After 15% total class absences – student receives a final warning letter from the ESL coordinator
- After 20% total class absences – student is in danger of dismissal (visa status issues)

Excused absences

Student must contact the ESL coordinator by phone, text or e-mail with a valid reason before the start of class. Driving exams and regular doctor appointments do not qualify as excused absences. Students who are sick and miss more than three classes must have a doctor's note to be excused – this note must be submitted to the ESL coordinator the day the student returns to class. Regular sick days are not considered excused absences.

Unexcused absences: Student does not contact the ESL coordinator before class or does not have a valid reason for missing class. Students should schedule appointments when ESL classes are not in session.

Excused absences are still recorded as an absence, but special circumstances may be considered when calculating totals. We understand that students become ill or have an emergency but reporting their status to the ESL coordinator ensures that we have accurate records and also allows us to know when a student might require assistance.

Attendance notes

- **Tardy:** A student is tardy if he/she is not physically in the room when class should start. If a student's bag/books are in the room, but the student comes in the room 15 minutes after the class start time, she/he should be counted tardy. Instructors may be gracious with one or two minutes late, but no longer.
- **Leaving early:** Students who leave class early will be marked tardy if leaving less than 15 minutes early or tardy absent if more than 15 minutes early, unless prior accommodations have been approved by the ESL coordinator.
- **Parking:** Difficulty in finding parking will not be a valid excuse for being tardy.
- **Appointments:** If a student is absent from class due to a scheduled doctor's appointment, driver's license appointment, etc., he/she is still absent and is considered unexcused. Students should make appointments around their class schedule. If a student chooses to schedule an appointment for class time, he/she is still absent.
- **Emergencies:** If there is an emergency that causes a student to miss several days and has been excused, he/she will still be marked absent. If attendance becomes an issue later in the term, the situation will be taken into consideration in an overall assessment.
- **Religious holidays:** Only specific religious holidays will be excused, but all assignments must be completed. Tests, quizzes, presentations, etc. should be rescheduled for the next class day. Students must notify the ESL coordinator one week before the holiday for approval. No excused absence will be given without prior notification or approval.

Annual vacation

F-1 visa students must attend four terms in a row before taking a vacation term. Vacations for transfer students from another U.S. school will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Vacation Time

A vacation is defined as a semester during which a qualifying F-1 student is not required to enroll in classes (excluding designated school holidays and weekends). AUSTIN only has Vacation Time available for Full-time students during the Summer. Before starting a vacation, a student must:

1. Complete two full, consecutive semesters (at AUSTIN or another school if transferring)
2. Maintain valid F-1 status, as per school and USCIS policies
3. Fulfill all outstanding financial requirements
4. If traveling, Notify ESL Administration of dates, and general plans
5. Pay a registration fee for the following semester to be credited toward the next semester's tuition

Appendix B

Texas Driver License/ Texas ID Card

In the case that students would like to drive a vehicle while in the city, please take note of the following information. Students who do not plan to drive a car, but still have an immigration document valid for the next 6-months, should apply for a Texas Identification Card at the DPS.

A person 18 to 75 years of age with a valid out-of-country driver license in their possession may drive a car for up to one year from the date of entry into the U.S. if there is an international reciprocity agreement for driver licensing with the U.S. and the country that issued the driver license.

Please take the following steps to apply for a Texas Driver License or follow Step 3 to apply for a Texas ID card:

1. Study the information about traffic laws in the Texas Driver's Handbook: www.txdps.state.tx.us/ftp/forms/Dlhandbook.pdf
2. Take the written and in-car exam for driving at any DPS office. If you do not have a driver license from another state, you must take both a written and a driving test. There is a \$24.00 fee, valid for three opportunities to take the test within a 90-day period.
3. You will need the following documents to apply for the Texas Driver License OR Texas ID card: Passport, Visa, I-20 or DS-2019 (with a program end date of at least 6 months into the future), I-94 card, current enrollment letter from ESL Services, and Social Security Card. If you are NOT eligible for a Social Security Number, you will need to sign a "Social Security Affidavit" at the DPS office when applying for your Texas Driver License. There is a \$15 fee for the Texas ID card.

Dependents can also apply for Texas Driver License or Texas ID Card. Dependents follow steps 1-3 above and provide primary visa holder's current enrollment letter, and copies of primary visa holder's immigration documents.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICES <http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/>

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday • 6121 North Lamar Blvd.

- 13730 Research Blvd.
- 4719 South Congress Ave.

Renewing your Driver's license

512-424-2076 512-335-8131 512-444-5241

If you have a current Texas driver license, it can be renewed online through the Texas Online website. The fee is \$25 and must be paid with a credit card.

Appendix C

Health Insurance

Although AUSTIN does not provide health insurance to our international students, we do offer information in regards to the insurance plan you may get from a third party facility such as the one below:

The graphic is a blue-bordered advertisement for International Student Insurance. It features a background of white medical icons like a stethoscope, syringe, pill, and DNA helix. At the top right, a dark blue rounded rectangle contains the text "Perfect for: F1, J1, and OPT". Below this, the "International Student Insurance" logo is displayed. A white rounded rectangle on the left contains the "About Us" section. To the right of this is a white box with the text "Student Health Insurance". At the bottom left, a white rounded rectangle contains the "Contact Us" information. On the right side, there are several white medical icons: a syringe, a thermometer, a pill bottle with a cross, a stethoscope, a bandage, a tooth, a pill, and male/female symbols.

Perfect for: F1, J1, and OPT

International Student Insurance

Student Health Insurance

About Us

International Student Insurance is a specialized insurance agency, offering health and travel insurance to students around the world. ISI is owned and operated by Envisage International Corporation, which is headquartered in Neptune Beach, Florida. Online since 2001, ISI has been a trusted industry leader for years.

We are also a NAFA Global Partner, and accredited with an A+ rating by the Better Business Bureau. Our team of highly trained professionals can help you choose the best insurance product for your school and your students.

Contact Us

International Student Insurance
224 First Street Neptune Beach, FL 32266 USA
Phone: 877-758-4391 | Int'l: +1 904-758-4391
Fax: 904-212-0412

info@InternationalStudentInsurance.com
InternationalStudentInsurance.com