

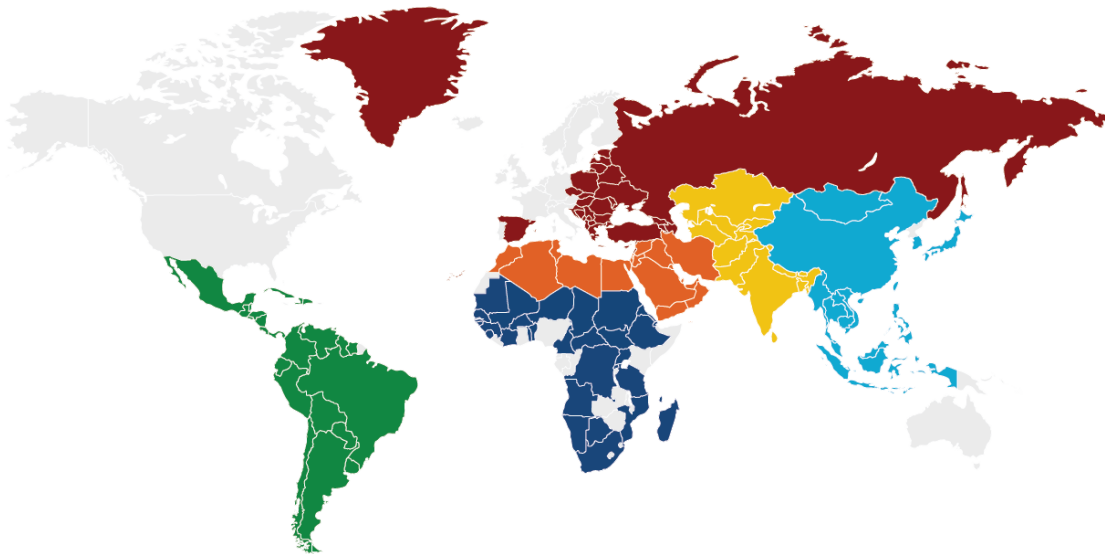


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE  
PROGRAMS

*The World is  
Your Classroom*

# *English Language Specialist Program Policy Handbook for Entirely Virtual Projects*



© *Specialist*  
[www.elprograms.org](http://www.elprograms.org)

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <i>Overview of the English Language Specialist Program</i> .....              | 3  |
| <i>Overview of Responsibilities</i> .....                                     | 4  |
| <i>Glossary of Acronyms</i> .....   | 5  |
| <i>Contacting GU/CIED</i> .....   | 5  |
| <i>Introduction to the Handbook</i> .....                                     | 6  |
| <i>1. Employment Policy and Remuneration from Other Sources</i> .....         | 6  |
| <i>2. Payments and Benefits</i> .....   | 7  |
| <i>3. Schedule and Duration of English Language Specialist Project</i> .....  | 8  |
| <i>4. Medical Clearance and Health Benefits</i> .....                         | 8  |
| <i>5. Pre-Project Orientation (PPO) and Administrative Resources</i> .....    | 8  |
| <i>6. Community of Practice (COP)</i> .....                                   | 9  |
| <i>7. Program Activities Allowance (PAA)</i> .....                            | 10 |
| <i>8. Leave, Absences, and Extensions</i> .....                               | 12 |
| <i>9. Termination</i> .....   | 12 |
| <i>10. Reporting Requirements – Expense Reports and Program Reports</i> ..... | 14 |
| <i>11. Taxes and Withholdings</i> .....                                       | 17 |
| <i>12. Return-to-Program Policy</i> .....                                     | 18 |
| <i>13. Social Media, Blogging, and Photographs</i> .....                      | 18 |
| <i>14. Representing the English Language Specialist Program</i> .....         | 20 |
| <i>15. Materials Developed During the Agreement Period</i> .....              | 20 |



## Overview of the English Language Specialist Program

The English Language Specialist Program is a U.S. Department of State (DOS) public diplomacy initiative in which experts in the field of English language education lead intensive English language projects, designed by the Public Affairs sections of U.S. Embassies around the world, to respond to local needs.

English Language Specialists exchange knowledge, build capacity, and establish partnerships benefiting participants, institutions, and communities in the United States and overseas. English Language Specialists work with universities, teacher-training institutions, ministries of education, bi-national centers, and other English language education institutions. Depending on local needs and circumstances, English Language Specialist projects can be entirely in-country, entirely virtual, or mixed (a combination of both in-country and virtual). The length of in-country projects ranges from 10 working days to three months. The length of virtual projects varies from project to project.

The program is funded by DOS through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). It is currently administered by the Center for Intercultural Education and Development at Georgetown University (GU/CIED).



## Overview of Responsibilities

The following chart outlines which organization is responsible for specific components of the English Language Specialist Program.

| U.S. Department of State (DOS) – ECA / Office of English Language Programs   | U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Sections (PAS) & Regional English Language Officers (RELO)  | Partnering Organization(s)   |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets and monitors program policies</li> <li>• Reviews all English Language Specialist project proposals</li> <li>• Notifies PAS/RELO which projects have been selected for funding</li> <li>• Monitors projects, English Language Specialists, and activities</li> <li>• Communicates and works with PAS/RELO and GU/CIED to resolve issues</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops English Language Specialist project proposals and sends them to DOS/ECA for approval</li> <li>• Determines the English Language Specialists’ duties</li> <li>• Works with partnering organizations to determine adequate support for English Language Specialists during their projects</li> <li>• Acts as first point of contact for English Language Specialists on all programmatic issues and concerns</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determines English Language Specialists’ duties alongside PAS/RELO</li> <li>• Provides counterparts for English Language Specialists during their projects</li> </ul> |
| <b>Georgetown University – Center for Intercultural Education and Development (GU/CIED)</b>  |   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues English Language Specialist acceptance letters and processes English Language Specialist agreements</li> <li>• Coordinates the pre-project orientation</li> <li>• Issues payments and processes expense reports</li> <li>• Facilitates participation in the Community of Practice</li> <li>• Answers questions regarding the English Language Specialist agreement</li> <li>• Acts as first point of contact for English Language Specialists on all administrative issues and concerns</li> <li>• Amends English Language Specialist agreement, as needed</li> <li>• Works with English Language Specialists on alumni relations and outreach activities</li> </ul> |   |  |



## Glossary of Acronyms

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| COP     | Community of Practice   |
| DOS/ECA | U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs      |
| GU/CIED | Georgetown University, Center for Intercultural Education and Development |
| PAA     | Program Activities Allowance  |
| PAS     | Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy                                |
| PPO     | Pre-Project Orientation   |
| RELO    | Regional English Language Officer   |

## Contacting GU/CIED

| Region                           | Email address  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Sub-Saharan Africa (AF)          | <a href="mailto:AFSpecialists@georgetown.edu">AFSpecialists@georgetown.edu</a>   |
| East Asia and the Pacific (EAP)  | <a href="mailto:EAPSpecialists@georgetown.edu">EAPSpecialists@georgetown.edu</a> |
| Europe and Eurasia (EUR)         | <a href="mailto:EURSpecialists@georgetown.edu">EURSpecialists@georgetown.edu</a> |
| Near East and North Africa (NEA) | <a href="mailto:NEASpecialists@georgetown.edu">NEASpecialists@georgetown.edu</a> |
| South and Central Asia (SCA)     | <a href="mailto:SCASpecialists@georgetown.edu">SCASpecialists@georgetown.edu</a> |
| Western Hemisphere (WHA)         | <a href="mailto:WHASpecialists@georgetown.edu">WHASpecialists@georgetown.edu</a> |



## Introduction to the Handbook

This handbook has been prepared to guide you through the many policies that apply before, during and after your English Language Specialist project. **It applies to entirely virtual Specialist projects.**

This handbook complements the English Language Specialist agreement, and together they represent the full terms and conditions of your participation in an English Language Specialist project. You should always refer to both documents when referencing program policy.

## 1. Employment Policy and Remuneration from Other Sources

### **What is my employment status as an English Language Specialist?**

You are not employed by the U.S. Government, GU/CIED, the partnering organization(s), or any agency or government of the country(ies) of assignment. You are instead considered a grantee and, for tax purposes, a supplier or independent contractor. You are bound by the terms and conditions of your agreement.

### **Am I eligible to receive stipend payments if I am also filing for unemployment benefits?**

It is incumbent upon you to check with your state's employment commission to determine whether you are eligible to receive other compensation while receiving unemployment benefits (including Pandemic Unemployment Assistance). This is not a decision made by DOS/ECA or GU/CIED. If you choose to forgo the program stipend, you must notify GU/CIED before you sign your agreement.

### **What happens if I need employment verification?**

Since you are a grantee/independent contractor and not employed by the U.S. Government or GU/CIED, the only verification the program can provide is a letter confirming what is stated in your agreement such as your project dates, the country(ies) of assignment, the partnering organization(s), and your benefits package. The program is unable to complete and/or sign any documents that require employment confirmation for items such as (but not limited to) job applications, background checks, employment continuity, unemployment benefits, loan forgiveness, loan deferment, Medicare applications, Social Security, etc.

### **Who can I ask for a letter of recommendation?**

Letters of recommendation need to be requested either from the U.S. Embassy or PAS/RELO overseeing your project, or from the partnering organization(s). GU/CIED is not in a position to provide any evaluative comments related to your project.

### **Does the English Language Specialist Program participate in the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program?**

No. The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program originates at the Department of Education. It stipulates that it covers employment only; because you are not an employee, you cannot be considered for the program. Peace Corps and AmeriCorps were written into the regulation as specific exceptions; the Department of Education noted it would not reopen the regulation or consider new groups as exceptions to the employment requirement. If the regulation changes, the program will notify all participants.



### **Can I undertake other work, either paid or unpaid, during my project?**

You may accept funds from other United States government agencies, except DOS/ECA, for similar or related work performed during the agreement period.

If, however, you will have a coinciding full-time employment contract with or will be employed by another USG agency during the agreement period, you are required either to waive the Stipend portions of the agreement or to take an unpaid leave of absence from the other USG agency for the duration of the agreement period. You must provide confirmation, in writing, indicating which of these two options has been agreed upon and, in the case of the unpaid leave of absence, documentation from the other USG agency confirming the leave.

Performance of any other professional activity which you may be independently contracted or employed to execute must not interfere with or be in conflict with the duties specified in the agreement.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*

## **2. Payments and Benefits**

### **How will I be paid for my participation in an English Language Specialist project with virtual activities only?**

English Language Specialists receive a stipend for virtual activities, and a stipend for planning. Refer to your agreement for details on your benefits, and a detailed payment schedule.

All payments will be deposited electronically into a single, United States bank account. The program cannot pay you via wire transfer or check, divide your payments to more than one account, or make payments to foreign bank accounts.

If you need to change the bank account used by GU/CIED to deposit your payments, contact GU/CIED. Any change in account information during your agreement period may result in a delay of payment.

Some payments may be processed through a third-party vendor called Viewpost. If you have any questions, contact GU/CIED.

### **What are living allowances and what do they cover?**

Living allowances – including allowances for local transportation, lodging and meals – are **not** provided for projects with virtual activities only.

### **Do I need to keep receipts for any costs I incur during my project?**

Benefits and allowances for projects with virtual activities only are provided in two categories:

1. Non-reimbursable benefits which *do not* require the submission of receipts and are paid according to the payment schedule outlined in your agreement. These include the stipend for virtual activities and the stipend for planning.
2. Reimbursable allowances which require the submission of receipts. These include the program activities allowance (PAA). When applicable, you will pay out of pocket and then submit receipts, along with a complete expense report, to GU/CIED for reimbursement of actual, allowable costs incurred under PAA. It is important to understand what costs are allowable



under PAA. Do not incur PAA costs before reviewing the relevant sections of this handbook and your agreement regarding PAA, as well as the details and policies regarding the submission of expense reports. Contact GU/CIED with any questions.

*Further information: Section 7 and 10 of this handbook and the Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*

### 3. Schedule and Duration of English Language Specialist Project

#### **How long is my project and what is my schedule of activities?**

Your agreement period is stated on page one of your agreement. Appendix A of your agreement details a general schedule of your project and description of your scope of work. The schedule is provided to guide your preparations, but is always subject to change. Contact the partnering organization(s) and the PAS/RELO in charge of your project to discuss the details.

#### **What happens if I am invited to participate in activities that are not included in the schedule as presented in my agreement?**

You must speak with PAS/RELO and receive prior, written approval for any activities not included in your schedule.

#### **Do I get any breaks?**

See Section 8 of this handbook.

#### **What if I cannot begin my project as planned, or I have to leave my project early?**

See Section 8 this handbook.

*Further information: Section 8 of this handbook and the Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*

### 4. Medical Clearance and Health Benefits

#### **Will I receive health insurance coverage during my project?**

The program provides a self-funded, limited health care benefits plan called Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of in-country activity and travel dates. **ASPE is not provided for projects with virtual activities only.**

#### **Am I required to receive medical clearance to participate in an English Language Specialist project?**

#### **What is ASPE coverage contingent on?**

Medical clearance is not required to participate in projects with virtual activities only.

### 5. Pre-Project Orientation (PPO) and Administrative Resources

#### **Am I provided an orientation to the program before my project begins?**

The pre-project orientation (PPO) slide deck relevant to your project, which is linked in your acceptance letter and can be found through the *Participant Documents* icon on the [Community of Practice](#) (COP), provides an overview of the program and important information about preparing for your project. All English Language Specialists are asked to submit a form confirming that you have reviewed the PPO.





Additionally, GU/CIED will contact you to schedule a pre-project call to discuss reporting requirements and answer any remaining questions you may have.

### **Where can I find administrative resources, such as report templates, branded materials, or required forms?**

You will receive an acceptance letter from GU/CIED with links to the main administrative resources folder. You can also access these resources at any time through the Participant Documents page on the Community of Practice (COP). The Participant Documents icon appears in the header of any page on the COP. Follow the links to resources for Entirely Virtual Specialist Projects.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*

## **6. Community of Practice (COP)**

### **What is the COP and what role does it play in my project?**

The COP (pronounced C-O-P), located at [cop.elprograms.org](http://cop.elprograms.org), is a virtual meeting space for all participants and alumni of English Language Programs. It is a place to:

- Submit Highlights and Alumni Impact Statements;
- Share resources, ideas, best practices, photos, events, and experiences from around the world;
- Find teaching and teacher training tools;
- Connect with other English Language Specialists and Fellows;
- Participate in professional development opportunities provided by the program;
- Stay up-to-date on the latest events and resources available on the English Language Programs and [American English](http://American English) websites;
- Post job announcements and search for job opportunities; and,
- Stay connected and contribute to the program as alumni.

If your project is terminated, you may be unsubscribed from the COP. Any questions regarding the COP can be directed to [cop@elprograms.org](mailto:cop@elprograms.org).

### **What are the guidelines for engaging on the COP?**

The COP is an invitation-only community for current and former Fellows and Specialists; staff of the Office of English Language Programs, DOS/ECA, and GU/CIED staff. The program does not control and cannot guarantee the relevance, timeliness, or accuracy of the information or materials shared on the COP. The program asks that all participants commit to the following principles when posting:

- Be respectful in all communication.
- Maintain professional standards in all postings, including profile information, photos, personal blogs, comments, and shared materials.
- When sharing resources:
  - Include accurate information regarding authorship and ownership;
  - Provide an abstract indicating topic/theme, target audience (proficiency, age, class size, learning/teaching context), example of past use;
  - Produce materials that are easy to use/read and free of errors; and
  - Respect international copyright laws and fair use practices.
- When downloading and using resources:
  - Observe professional standards in using shared materials, giving credit to the original author where appropriate and using materials only in the context in which they were originally intended.
  - Respect international copyright laws and fair use practices.



These guidelines may be modified at any time. You can also find these guidelines on the COP, [here](#).

## 7. Program Activities Allowance (PAA)

### What is the program activities allowance (PAA)?

PAA is provided to supplement and enhance the work you do on your project. PAA is a reimbursable benefit, which means the funds are not provided to you in advance. You will make any approved purchases out-of-pocket, and then submit an expense report to GU/CIED for reimbursement of approved costs.

To receive reimbursement for expenses incurred, you must retain receipts for all costs incurred under PAA and submit a complete expense report to GU/CIED for payment. Detailed instructions about completing expense reports – and the deadlines for doing so – are provided in this handbook and in the PPO.

### Do not incur any PAA expenses until...

1. Your agreement is fully signed;
2. You have reviewed the relevant sections of this handbook and your agreement regarding allowable costs and the details and policies regarding the submission of expense reports; AND,
3. You have received advance approval, in writing, from your PAS/RELO **for each PAA expense**.

You must also keep receipts for any items purchased to submit with your expense report.

Unallowable expenses will not be reimbursed, even if approved by PAS/RELO. If you have questions, contact GU/CIED before incurring the expense.

### How much money do I have to spend?

Your PAA ceiling is indicated on page one of your agreement. You are responsible for keeping track of your PAA expenses, as you will not be reimbursed for any expenses that exceed the PAA ceiling listed in your agreement.

### What kinds of things can I spend my PAA on?

The most typical PAA expenses for Specialists with virtual activities include new subscriptions to Zoom or other video/web conferencing services or upgrades to existing subscriptions (necessary to meet the needs and duration of your project), online teaching platforms, specialized software required by the project, and computer peripherals necessary to deliver quality online instruction.

### Are there any expenses that are not covered by my PAA?

Here are examples of expenses that are not covered by PAA. You cannot receive reimbursement for these expenses, **even if they are approved by PAS/RELO**:

- Expenses and/or compensation for your companions, colleagues, students, trainees, and/or workshop participants; USG exchange participants (such as, but not limited to, English Language Fellows, English Language Specialists, Fulbright Scholars, and Fulbright English Language Teaching Assistants); Peace Corps volunteers; DOS/ECA employees; and United States citizens;
- Alcohol, flowers, prizes, and gifts;
- Local language lessons or classes;
- Your travel costs to the annual TESOL International Convention in the United States;



- Your TESOL International Association membership fees;
- Professional development training programs;
- Standard computer software such as operating systems, MS Office, Adobe, etc. for your personal use;
- Internet access charges;
- Existing subscriptions to tele-conferencing and webinar platforms such as, but not limited to, Zoom, GoToMeeting, Webex, Adobe Connect, etc.;
- Other unallowable expenses.

Note that it is not an exhaustive list. If you are unsure whether your purchases will be reimbursed, ask GU/CIED in advance of making the purchase.

**Are there any restrictions associated with the purchase of subscriptions to web conferencing services, online teaching platforms, and specialized software?**

Yes. The program will reimburse you only for the cost of the least expensive subscription necessary to meet the needs and duration of your project. In addition to including receipts for your subscription purchase, your expense report must include the available subscription pricing plans and their duration. Note that you cannot claim reimbursement for existing subscriptions.

Section 10 of this handbook provides complete details on the submission of expense reports.

**Can I provide funds or grants to colleagues, students, trainees or workshop participants using PAA?**

**Can I use PAA funds to procure services from a third party?**

No. Providing or granting funds to colleagues, students, trainees, and/or workshop participants for any reason, or engaging with a third party (individual or business) to procure or provide services are not allowable PAA expenses for any English Language Specialists. Contact GU/CIED with any questions.

**Can I incur PAA expenses prior to the start of my project?**

It is possible, but not recommended. It is also important to remember that you cannot incur any PAA expenses prior to signing your agreement, even with PAS/RELO approval.

**Can I incur PAA expenses after my project ends?**

Yes. You have up to thirty (30) days following the end of your agreement period to incur and submit reimbursement requests for PAS/RELO-approved PAA expenses.

**What do I do with the items that I purchased with my PAA?**

For items purchased with PAA during projects with virtual activities only that exceed \$100 (for each item), you must work with your PAS/RELO at the completion of your project to make arrangements to send those items to: PAS/RELO, the partnering organization, or GU/CIED. In your final report, you will submit an inventory of all applicable items purchased with PAA and confirmation that the items have been sent to an appropriate recipient.

*Further information: Section 10 of this handbook and the Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*



## 8. Leave, Absences, and Extensions

### **Do I have any personal leave time or breaks during my project?**

Projects with virtual activities only do not include specific leave times; you need to ensure you are available to complete the project according to the description and schedule in Appendix A of your agreement, and as determined in consultation with the partnering organization(s) and PAS/RELO.

The schedule is provided to guide your preparations, but is always subject to change. Contact the partnering organization(s) and the PAS/RELO in charge of your project to discuss the details.

### **What if I cannot begin my project as scheduled for a personal or medical reason?**

If you cannot begin your project as scheduled, for any reason, DOS/ECA and PAS/RELO will determine if the project can be continued or if it should be cancelled, resulting in termination.

### **What if I need to stop working due to a personal or medical reason?**

If you can't continue to perform your project duties, if you need to take a break, or if you need to leave the project before the end date of your agreement – for any reason – you must promptly notify the partnering organization(s), PAS/RELO, and GU/CIED in writing. The agreement will either be terminated as of that date or amended to reflect new project dates, as determined by DOS/ECA and PAS/RELO. If your agreement is terminated, all termination conditions outlined in your agreement will apply.

### **What if my project is extended?**

If DOS/ECA and your PAS/RELO decide to extend your project's end date, you will receive an amendment from GU/CIED reflecting the amended agreement period and any changes to your benefits, if applicable.

*Further information: Section 9 of this handbook, and the Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*

## 9. Termination

### **What if I cannot begin or complete my project? Can I make any financial claims?**

No. Neither GU/CIED nor DOS/ECA are responsible for any financial claims you may make if you cannot begin or complete your duties as an English Language Specialist. This remains the case even if this is because of circumstances beyond your control.

### **Is the implementation of my project contingent on anything?**

Yes. Implementation of your project is contingent upon:

- Submission of all required program documents; and,
- Appropriate conditions that exist prior to and during your English Language Specialist project in the country(ies) of assignment. "Appropriate conditions" typically refer to issues around political, public health, social, and economic stability in the region and they are determined by your PAS/RELO in consultation with DOS/ECA.

### **What are program related reasons for which my agreement may be terminated?**



Your PAS/RELO can direct GU/CIED to terminate your agreement at any time prior to the start of, or during, your agreement period. Program-related grounds for termination of your agreement may include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- The partnering organization(s) and/or PAS/RELO cancels or terminates the project due to conditions beyond your control in the country(ies) of assignment or related to the partnering organization(s).

### **What are non-program related reasons for which my agreement may be terminated?**

Your PAS/RELO can direct GU/CIED to terminate your agreement at any time prior to the start of, or during, your agreement period. Non-program related grounds for termination of your agreement may include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- You fail to achieve the goals of the program;
- You choose to abandon your duties before the end of the agreement period;
- You perform your duties unsatisfactorily;
- You are unable to perform your duties for personal (non-medical, or illness-related) reasons;
- You are unable to perform your duties for medical and/or illness-related reasons;
- You fail to observe satisfactory professional ethics;
- You violate any law of the United States or the country(ies) of assignment;
- You violate the rules and/or policies of the partnering organization;
- You fail to observe the social norms of the country(ies) of assignment;
- You do not respond to requests by GU/CIED and/or by PAS/RELO in a timely manner;
- You refuse to follow directions/guidance from PAS/RELO;
- You give offense, intentionally or otherwise, to the United States or the country(ies) of assignment, which is contrary to the spirit of mutual understanding;
- You engage in any unauthorized income-producing activity;
- You materially misrepresent yourself in a Specialist application form or Specialist document;
- You conduct yourself in a manner that could bring DOS/ECA, PAS/RELO, GU/CIED, and/or the partnering organization into disrepute;
- You act in a way that is inappropriate or dangerous to yourself or others;
- You fail to comply with the agreement and the attached terms and conditions.

### **How will I know I have been terminated? What payments will I receive?**

The program will send you a formal termination letter via email. This letter officially amends your agreement period and outlines details on payments you have received to date, specifying what funds you can keep, and what funds, if any, you are required to return to the program.

### **What other conditions should I be aware of if my agreement is terminated?**

If your agreement is terminated, you should be aware of the following termination conditions, as applicable, and stated in your termination letter:

- You shall cease performing your duties as of the date stated in your termination letter.
- You must submit within thirty (30) days of termination expense reports to claim any reimbursement for approved PAA expenses. Any reimbursement due to you will not be issued until any amount owed to the program is refunded in full by the due date specified in the termination letter.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*



## 10. Reporting Requirements – Expense Reports and Program Reports

### Do I need to submit reports as part of my project?

Yes. There are two kinds of reports:

1. **Program reports:** You are required to submit a final report and Highlight(s), and requested to complete an Alumni Impact Statement. **Report templates and submission deadlines are included in your agreement and on the COP.**
2. **Expense reports:** These must be submitted in order for you to get reimbursed for approved, reimbursable PAA expenses.

### What program reports do I have to submit?

All program reports listed below should be submitted to GU/CIED and your PAS/RELO by the stated deadline.

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Final report</b>            | Due within thirty (30) days after the end date of your agreement period; the final report includes a required Highlight submission via the <a href="#">COP</a> .<br><br>For projects with multiple phases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one final report will be due no later than thirty (30) days from the end of the agreement period for the <i>final</i> phase</li> <li>• a Highlight submission is required at the end of <i>each</i> phase.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Alumni Impact Statement</b> | Approximately three months after the completion of your project, you will receive a reminder email from GU/CIED to submit an impact statement on the COP: <a href="https://cop.elprograms.org/alumni-impact-statements/">https://cop.elprograms.org/alumni-impact-statements/</a> . However, you can submit impact statements anytime, and as often as you see fit.   |

### What expense reports do I have to submit?

You must submit expense reports (and therefore retain receipts for all expenses incurred) to GU/CIED for approved expenditures under the program activities allowance (PAA).

You are NOT required to retain receipts or submit expense reports for the following allowances:

- Stipend for virtual activities;
- Stipend for planning.

### How do I prepare my expense report?

There are strict policies around expense reports. The more precise and detailed you are, the faster you will receive your reimbursement. Contact GU/CIED with any questions. You can also find more information in the PPO slide deck.

**Note: Expense reports must be submitted to GU/CIED within 60 days of incurring an expense, and no later than 30 days after the end date of your agreement period. Expense reports which are received late will not be processed.**

Here is an overview of what you need to do when preparing an expense report:

|    |                          |   |
|----|--------------------------|---|
| 1. | Fill out an expense log. | You can find a blank expense log through the <i>Participant Documents</i> icon on the <a href="#">COP</a> , or you can request one from |
|----|--------------------------|---|



|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   |   | <p>GU/CIED via email. List every single expense on the log. Each line of the expense log should correspond to a receipt.</p> <p>Fill out the log completely and include as many details as possible regarding each expense, following the who/what/where/when/why principle. The program needs this for audit purposes. The more specific and precise you are, the faster GU/CIED can process your claim.</p>  |
| 2 | Organize and number your receipts following your expense log entries and include written approval from PAS/RELO for each submitted expense. | <p><b>You must follow all regulations for reimbursable expenses as outlined in this handbook and in your agreement.</b></p> <p>Every expense you list on your expense log must have a corresponding receipt. Do not aggregate different cost categories or expenses incurred on different dates. Be sure to reconcile your expense log with your receipts before sending to GU/CIED or it could delay the processing of your claim. If you do not have a receipt for an expense, contact GU/CIED.</p> <p>Every expense you list on your expense log must also have corresponding approval from PAS/RELO. PAS/RELO approval is usually submitted as a PDF of an email you received from PAS/RELO with the approval.</p> |
| 3 | For subscription purchases, include information about available pricing plans.  | <p>The program will reimburse you only for the cost of the least expensive subscription necessary to meet the needs and duration of your project. In addition to including receipts for your subscription purchase, your expense report must include the available subscription pricing plans and their duration.</p> <p>For example: if your project is three months in length, and a monthly subscription plan is available that meets the needs of your project, you must purchase the monthly plan versus a year-long option. If you purchase a year-long option, but a monthly plan is available, the program will prorate your reimbursement for the duration of your assignment.</p>                            |
| 4 | Include a copy of the exchange rate(s).   | <p>If your expenses were paid in a currency other than U.S. dollars (USD), you may choose to include a historical exchange rate for EACH of the dates the purchases were made (an exchange conversion should be then attached to each expense in another currency).</p> <p>You can use an online exchange rate website such as <a href="http://www.oanda.com">www.oanda.com</a>. You can also include a copy of your credit or debit card statement, if it includes the exchange rates or an exchange receipt from a bank.</p>   |



|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   |   | If you choose not to include a historical exchange rate for EACH of the dates the purchases were made, GU/CIED will use the historical exchange rates found on <a href="http://www.oanda.com">www.oanda.com</a> .  |
| 5 | Make a copy of your complete expense report for your records. | Make a copy of all pieces of your expense report, including the log and all receipts.  |
| 6 | Send completed expense report to GU/CIED.                     | Email a PDF of your complete expense report in one document to GU/CIED.<br><br>Expense reports must be submitted within 60 days of incurring the expense and within 30 days of the end of your agreement. Expense reports which are received late will not be processed. |

**Can I dispose of the original receipts now that I have sent them to GU/CIED?**

No, for audit purposes, you must keep all the original receipts for 60 days after the end of your agreement period.

**Are there deadlines for my expense reports?**

Yes. In accordance with GU/CIED policies and IRS publication 463, you must account for expenses by submitting complete expense reports to GU/CIED within 60 days after the expense was incurred. In addition, final requests for reimbursement must be submitted to GU/CIED no later than 30 days after the end of your agreement period, including termination.

**Expense reports which are received late will not be processed.**

**Could my reimbursement request be denied?**

Yes. GU/CIED must follow very strict rules around financial matters for auditing purposes. Following are examples of reasons why an expense report claim may be denied:

- PAS/RELO approval for the purchase is not included;
- Expense report was submitted 61 or more days after the expense was incurred or 31 or more days after the end of your agreement period;
- Your PAA ceiling, as listed your agreement, has been exceeded;
- Incomplete documentation: you must submit all your documentation for an expense report in one complete package;
- Insufficient expense details: your receipts should show the breakdown of each expense in detail. If the receipt is not detailed, it is up to you to include an explanation of what the precise expense was;
- Disallowed expense items: if the expense is not allowed under the program policies, your reimbursement will be denied. If you are not sure if an expense is allowable, contact GU/CIED prior to purchase;
- The scan of your expense report is illegible (too small or too blurry to read);





- Recurring expenses only have one receipt instead of multiple receipts for each of the recurring expenses;
- Receipts pasted on top of one another blocking information and therefore considered incomplete;
- Split receipts not showing clearly your share of the expense;
- Receipts for subscription services do not include sufficient back-up information about available pricing plans and their duration;
- Submitting exact same expense more than once;
- Amazon or other on-line vendor receipts without proof that the purchased items have been shipped and delivered;
- Costs were incurred prior to signing your agreement.

If your expense report contains errors or incomplete information, it will be returned to you for revision. You will receive your payment once your expense report is correct and approved for payment.

Reimbursement payments can be expected within 10-15 business days following submission of a complete, approved expense report.

#### **What is the minimum amount I can claim on my expense report?**

There is no minimum amount required to claim reimbursement. Since you must submit your reimbursement requests within 60 days of incurring the expense, it is important that you submit your reimbursement request within that time frame regardless of the claimed amount.

#### **What happens if I exceed my PAA ceiling?**

It is your responsibility to keep track of your PAA expenses and make sure that you do not exceed your PAA ceiling, as stated in your agreement. The program cannot reimburse you for amounts that exceed your PAA ceiling, even if approved by PAS/RELO. In some cases, your PAA ceiling may be increased with advance approval from your PAS/RELO and DOS/ECA.

#### **Do I need to provide daily exchange rates for my expenses?**

Ideally, your expense report should include daily exchange rates for each corresponding expense. If you are unable to provide these, submit your expense report in local currency and GU/CIED will calculate the daily exchange rates for you based on the rates posted on [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com).

#### **What else do I need to know about expense reports?**

There are numerous “fine points” when it comes to expense reports. If you have questions or you are not sure about something, contact GU/CIED. We will answer your questions and provide you with helpful examples and tips to make these reports easier for you.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*

## **11. Taxes and Withholdings**

#### **Do I have to pay U.S. income tax?**

Yes. For taxation purposes, you are considered a supplier or independent contractor. You are not employed by the U.S. government or GU/CIED. As such, you are providing a fee-for-service. As these fees are taxable, your payments will be reported both to you and to the IRS on Form 1099-NEC in Box 1.



These fees are called “non-employee compensation” and they are considered taxable income. Taxable income and benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Stipend for virtual activities;
- Stipend for planning.

You are advised to consult a tax specialist or the IRS for guidance. GU/CIED and DOS/ECA cannot provide any tax guidance. Filing and paying your taxes are solely your responsibility.

### **What about my withholdings?**

You are responsible for all applicable withholdings such as, but not limited to, federal personal income tax, state personal income tax, Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA), state unemployment insurance tax, Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Program (OASDI), state disability insurance tax, Social Security, and Medicare.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*

## **12. Return-to-Program Policy**

### **Can I reapply to the program?**

Once you have participated in the program, there is no need to reapply. However, we encourage you to update your English Language Specialist application, including your CV, at [portal.elprograms.org](http://portal.elprograms.org) at least once a year, to ensure we have your most current information and resume on file.

### **Can I participate in the program again?**

DOS/ECA strongly encourages the use of new English Language Specialist candidates. The program prioritizes projects that seek to give new opportunities to a diverse array of American citizens in celebration of the cross-cultural sharing and educational exchange that is the hallmark of the English Language Specialist Program. As of January 2020, English Language Specialists will be eligible for one project per calendar year. That is 1-1-1: one English Language Specialist – one project – one calendar year. For this policy, multi-phase and multi-country projects will count as one project. This policy includes all project types (in-country, mixed, and virtual).

If you are selected to participate in the program again, you may not be on more than one U.S. Government-funded grant at the same time and you must successfully close out your current agreement before receiving another one.

If you are delinquent in submitting reports, deliverables, or materials, you will not be eligible for additional projects until you have submitted all the required documents. Similarly, if you owe funds to the program for any reason, including funds following termination of your agreement, you will not be eligible for consideration for additional projects until you have returned all owed funds to the program.

## **13. Social Media, Blogging, and Photographs**

### **I have a blog or website. Are there any restrictions on what I post to it during my project?**

No, but understand that U.S. freedom of speech guarantees may not be applicable in the country(ies) of assignment. Privacy settings, even if you enable them, may not work and your posts may be viewable by the authorities or even citizens of the country(ies) of assignment. Be aware of this when you are posting comments on blogs, websites, or other social media platforms. Be mindful of any local sensitivities while



in the country(ies) of assignment, and consider the reaction of local colleagues and authorities who may read your posts. Offensive posts could create tension and ultimately result in the termination of your project.

Also, as these will be your personal views and not those of the DOS during the time of your project, you are asked to post the following disclaimer on your personal blog or website for added clarity:

*"This website is not an official U.S. Department of State website. The views and information presented are the English Language Specialist's own and do not represent the English Language Specialist Program or the U.S. Department of State."*

### **How do I share my English Language Specialist experience on social media?**

The English Language Programs has robust presence on social media and we encourage you to engage with us on social media by sharing your English Language Specialist experience. You can access our social media platforms as follows: [Twitter](#); [Facebook](#); [Instagram](#); [LinkedIn](#).

On Twitter, Facebook, Instagram you can tag us with @ELPrograms and also use the #ELSpecialist hashtag with your posts. Make sure to check with your PAS/RELO about the safety and security protocols regarding social media posts related to the country(ies) of assignment or your project.

### **If I take photos of my work during my project, how will these be used by the English Language Specialist Program?**

You are welcome to submit stories and photos of your project's impact on the [COP](#) or via email to GU/CIED at any time, as well as engage with us on social media as noted above. The program will formally collect stories and photos from you in two primary ways: through the submission of your final report (via email) and Highlight (via the COP), as well as through the submission of your Alumni Impact Statement, which is due three months after the completion of your project (also via the COP).

Vibrant stories and photos may be selected for publication on the U.S. Department of State and English Language Programs websites. In some cases, your stories and photos may also be used in the program's PPO, to help prepare future English Language Specialists. We also encourage you to submit your stories to your university communications office to showcase how your project benefits your campus community.

### **Are the subjects of my photographs required to sign a consent form or a release waiver?**

In most cases, yes. You are not required to get consent from participants in order for your photos to be posted solely on the [elprograms.org](#) website. However, if your photos will be used on U.S. Department of State websites, have those photographed sign the **Non-Program Participant Consent and Release Form** and submit those forms to GU/CIED. You can also use the disclaimer slide, in advance of the beginning of your presentations, provided on the COP. It is highly recommended to collect consent signatures from guardians when photographing minors. Further, in order for the program to feature you in any outreach or promotional materials (via Internet, broadcast channels, and/or print media), you must sign and submit the **Participant Consent and Release Form for All Exchange Participants**.

These forms are linked in your acceptance letter, and can also be found through the *Participant Documents* icon on the [COP](#).

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*



## 14. Representing the English Language Specialist Program

### **I have been asked to make a presentation during my project. How should I introduce and represent myself?**

There may be times when you are asked to present, participate in a media event, or represent the English Language Specialist Program in another way during your project. You should present yourself as an English Language Specialist of the English Language Specialist Program, a program funded by the U.S. Department of State. Remember you are not an employee of the partnering organization(s), DOS/ECA, or GU/CIED.

## 15. Materials Developed During the Agreement Period

### **I developed materials specifically for use on my English Language Specialist project. Do I own the copyright? What about materials that I create during my English Language Specialist project?**

All materials created or developed by you in advance of and/or during the agreement period for the specific fulfillment of the project duties become the exclusive property of the English Language Specialist Program. The spirit of this exchange program is to provide access to educational materials to all and therefore, you may be asked to provide a full copy of any product or accompanying materials (PowerPoint presentations, handouts, etc.) you create for the English Language Specialist Program to the partnering organization(s), PAS/RELO, GU/CIED, and/or participants.

For example, a participant in a workshop may request a copy of your presentation to adapt for his/her own classroom. If you developed the presentation specifically for the English Language Specialist project, the program asks that you make those materials available upon request.

If you are adapting materials created previously and for a different purpose for your English Language Specialist project, note that the English Language Specialist Program cannot control what happens to materials that are used on a project. Workshop participants may choose to record your presentation, take pictures of slides you show, or make copies of handouts provided. The use of materials and resources created previously is at your own discretion.

### **What does the program intend to do with these materials?**

The program intends to make these materials freely available to all by placing the copyright in the public domain. This will make them available to anyone who wishes to use them for whatever purpose. If you want to use any of these materials, the program will grant you or anyone else who wishes to use them a royalty-free, fully transferable, non-exclusive, irrevocable, and unconditional license to use them. This license covers use in all territories worldwide:

- For the maximum duration provided by applicable law or treaty (including future time extensions);
- In any current or future medium and for any number of copies; and
- For any purpose whatsoever, including and without limitation commercial, advertising, or promotional purposes.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the English Language Specialist Agreement.*

