



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE  
PROGRAMS

*The World is  
Your Classroom*

*English Language Specialist Program*

# *Policy Handbook*



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## Introduction to the Handbook

This handbook has been prepared to guide English Language (EL) Specialists through the many policies that apply before, during, and after their project. It complements the EL Specialist Agreement, and together they represent the full terms and conditions of participating in an EL Specialist project. EL Specialists should always refer to both documents when referencing any policy.

## Overview of the English Language Specialist Program

The EL Specialist Program supports highly experienced Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) professionals serving as high-level consultants for short-term English language projects worldwide. EL Specialists exchange knowledge, build capacity, and establish partnerships benefiting participants, institutions, and communities in the United States and overseas. EL Specialists work with universities, teacher-training institutions, and ministries of education, bi-national centers, and other English language education institutions. EL Specialist projects range from 10 working days to three months, and can include in-country activities, virtual activities, or a combination of both.

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

## Who to Contact at GU/CIED

GU/CIED Regional Email Accounts	
Region	Coordinator email address
Sub-Saharan Africa (AF)	<a href="mailto:afparticipants@georgetown.edu">afparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
East Asia and the Pacific (EAP)	<a href="mailto:eapparticipants@georgetown.edu">eapparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
Europe and Eurasia (EUR)	<a href="mailto:eurparticipants@georgetown.edu">eurparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
Near East and North Africa (NEA)	<a href="mailto:neaparticipants@georgetown.edu">neaparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
South and Central Asia (SCA)	<a href="mailto:scaparticipants@georgetown.edu">scaparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
Western Hemisphere (WHA)	<a href="mailto:whaparticipants@georgetown.edu">whaparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>

## Glossary of Acronyms

ACS	American Citizen Services of the U.S. Embassy
ASPE	Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges
COP	Community of Practice
DOS/ECA	U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
FAA	Fly America Act
GU/CIED	Georgetown University, Center for Intercultural Education and Development
PAA	Program Activities Allowance
PAO	Public Affairs Officer
PAS	Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy
VPDO	Virtual Pre-Departure Orientation
RELO	Regional English Language Officer
RSO	Regional Security Officer
STEP	Smart Traveler Enrollment Program
VPDO	Virtual Pre-departure Orientation



### Overview of Responsibilities

Here is a quick one-page reference chart to help you understand which organization is responsible for specific components of the EL Specialist Program.

<b>U.S. Department of State (DOS) – Office of English Language Programs</b>	<b>U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Sections (PAS) &amp; Regional English Language Officers (RELO)</b>	<b>Partnering Organization(s)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets and monitors program policies</li> <li>• Reviews all Specialist project proposals</li> <li>• Notifies PAS/RELO which projects have been selected for funding</li> <li>• Monitors projects, EL 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 project proposals for EL Specialists and sends to DOS for approval</li> <li>• Determines the EL Specialists’ duties</li> <li>• Works with partnering organizations to determine adequate support for EL Specialists during their projects</li> <li>• Approves international travel</li> <li>• Acts as first line of communication for EL Specialists on all programmatic issues, concerns and in-country logistics</li> <li>• Acts as first point of contact in emergency or evacuation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determines EL Specialists’ duties alongside PAS/RELO</li> <li>• Provides counterparts for EL Specialists during their projects</li> <li>• If applicable, provides cost sharing to supplement the EL Specialist Agreement (e.g. partnering organizations may pay for a portion of housing costs or provide housing, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Georgetown University (GU) – Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues EL Specialist acceptance letters and processes EL Specialist Agreements</li> <li>• Coordinates Virtual Pre-Departure Orientation</li> <li>• Coordinates international travel to/from the country of assignment</li> <li>• If applicable (for in-country projects of more than 45 days), receives Health Verification Forms and notifies EL Specialists of clearance status</li> <li>• Enrolls EL Specialists in ASPE</li> <li>• Issues payments and processes expense reports</li> <li>• Facilitates participation in the Community of Practice</li> <li>• Answers questions regarding the EL Specialist Agreement</li> <li>• Acts as first line of communication with EL Specialists on all administrative issues and concerns</li> <li>• Acts as second point of contact in emergency or evacuation</li> <li>• Amends EL Specialist Agreement, as needed</li> <li>• Works with EL Specialists on alumni relations and activities</li> </ul>		

### Before You Go

When selected for a specific project, EL Specialists receive an acceptance package from GU/CIED with access to required pre-departure forms and materials. In advance of your departure, you will also receive a reminder from GU/CIED to:

1. Ensure your ASPE ID card is printed and available to you during your project.
2. Maintain and keep handy, a list of in-country contact details – including local phone numbers and email addresses – for your points of contact at the U.S. Embassy in the country of assignment, your RELO, your primary point person at your partnering organization, and GU/CIED.



- a. In the case of an **emergency during your project**, contact both your partnering organization and PAS/RELO. If you contact anyone by e-mail, cc your GU/CIED program coordinator.
- b. If you are unable to reach anyone at your partnering organization or your PAS/RELO, or *if you encounter an emergency en route to your project*, you can contact GU/CIED.
  - i. During normal business hours of 8:30am to 5pm EST, contact your GU/CIED program coordinator.
  - ii. Outside of normal business hours and on weekends, email [elf@georgetown.edu](mailto:elf@georgetown.edu) or call [+1-800-806-1726](tel:+18008061726). If you are directed to voice mail, leave detailed information about who you are, where you are, how you can be reached, and the nature of the emergency.
- 3. Register with **STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program)**, a service of the Bureau of Consular Affairs. By enrolling in the program, you will receive important safety information about your country of assignment and allow the U.S. Embassy to contact you in emergency situations.

GU/CIED Regional Email Accounts	
Region	Email address
Sub-Saharan Africa (AF)	<a href="mailto:afparticipants@georgetown.edu">afparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
East Asia and the Pacific (EAP)	<a href="mailto:eapparticipants@georgetown.edu">eapparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
East Asia and the Pacific (EAP)	<a href="mailto:eurparticipants@georgetown.edu">eurparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
Europe and Eurasia (EUR)	<a href="mailto:neaparticipants@georgetown.edu">neaparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
Near East and North Africa (NEA)	<a href="mailto:scaparticipants@georgetown.edu">scaparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>
Western Hemisphere (WHA)	<a href="mailto:whaparticipants@georgetown.edu">whaparticipants@georgetown.edu</a>

## 1. Employment Policy

### What is my employment status as an EL Specialist?

You are not employed by the U.S. Government, GU/CIED, or any agency or government of your country 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 the EL Specialist Agreement and cannot expect any additional compensation or benefits, except what is detailed and explained within your Agreement.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the EL Specialist 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 EL Specialist Agreement such as your project dates, your country of assignment, your partnering organization, 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, etc.

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

Since GU/CIED does not supervise your work as an EL Specialist, letters of recommendation need to be requested either from the U.S. Embassy or PAS/RELO overseeing your project, or from your partnering organization. GU/CIED is not in a position to provide any evaluative comments related to your project.



## 2. Virtual Pre-Departure Orientation (VPDO)

### How does the program prepare me for my project?

EL Specialists are required to participate in a VPDO (online materials reviewing program policies, documents, and resources) prior to the start of the Agreement Period. You will receive links to these materials from your contacts at GU/CIED and are asked to submit a form confirming that you have viewed and reviewed them. All pre-departure resources are also available [on the Community of Practice](#).

Additionally, GU/CIED contacts each EL Specialist by phone approximately two weeks prior to the start date of each project to ensure your questions are answered and that you are in contact with the partnering organization(s) and PAS/RELO.

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

## 3. Community of Practice (COP)

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

The COP is a virtual meeting space for all participants and alumni of the EL Programs to stay connected and contribute to the program. It is a place to:

- access and [download program administrative documents](#) such as pre-departure forms and documents, expense report templates, participant consent forms, VPDO instructions and information, etc.;
- [submit Highlights](#) and impact stories to share details about unique events or activities you conducted during and after your project;
- share resources, ideas, best practices, photos, events, and experiences from projects around the world;
- connect with other EL Specialists, Fellows, GU/CIED staff members, and ECA regional program officers through discussions and COP messaging;
- stay up-to-date on the latest events and resources available on the English Language Programs and American English websites;
- post job announcements and/or search for employment 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).

## 4. Health Benefits

### Does the program provide any health benefits?

The EL Specialist Program provides a health benefit plan, Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE), for the duration of in-country activity periods and it is not provided for virtual-only EL Specialists. ASPE does not provide comprehensive insurance coverage and it does not cover pre-existing conditions or personal travel outside of the country of assignment. ASPE is intended only to serve as supplemental coverage while in your country of assignment. You can review ASPE coverage [here](#).

### Does ASPE satisfy the minimum essential health coverage of the ACA?

ASPE does not satisfy the minimum essential health coverage under the “individual shared responsibility” requirement of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). It is the EL



Specialist’s responsibility to comply with the requirements of the PPACA. For more information and a list of exemptions, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

It is strongly recommended, but not required, that you have or purchase comprehensive health insurance with international coverage during your project. Not all PPACA-compliant health insurance policies provide international coverage.

**What happens if I already have my own health care coverage?**

When you have health care coverage other than ASPE (except Medicare or Medicaid), your other coverage is the primary provider. It is your responsibility to inform your primary provider about your ASPE plan, and likewise to inform ASPE about your primary provider. It is not the responsibility of any provider to advise another provider regarding your policy. It is your responsibility to know if you are covered in your country of assignment by any health care plans that you have.

**How can I access my ASPE benefits?**

Once your Health Verification Form (HVF) is cleared (for in-country projects of more than 45 days) and you have signed your EL Specialist Agreement, GU/CIED will enroll you in ASPE. You will be notified of this enrollment via email, at which time you will be able to access your ASPE benefits through an online portal called My Plan [here](#).

MyPlan is designed to allow secure access to your benefit plan and claim information. You will need to first register using your ASPE ID number and your Date of Birth. Once you have logged in, you can view your plan information, email ASPE administrator, Seven Corners, view eligibility dates, etc. This is where you can also download and print your ASPE ID card before you depart for the in-country portion of your project or at any time during your in-country project, should you lose your card.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the EL Specialist Agreement and your [ASPE Guide to Health Care Coverage](#).*

**How do I contact ASPE?**

There are many ways you can contact ASPE. You can always do so through MyPlan portal. You can also reach ASPE customer service by phone, email, or mail as follows:

**Customer Service:**

- Toll free: 1-800-461-0430
- Collect Outside US: 1-317-818-2867
- Customer Service Fax: 1-317-815-5984
- Claims Fax: 1-317-575-6467
- Email: [usdosinfo@sevencorners.com](mailto:usdosinfo@sevencorners.com)

**Mailing Address:**

- ASPE Health Benefits
- P.O. Box 3724
- Carmel, IN 46082-3724

**5. Post-Arrival Orientation**

**Is there an orientation to my country of assignment after I arrive?**

In some cases, PAS/RELO may provide you with an orientation once you arrive in-country. This is called your post-arrival orientation.

**Are my expenses paid to attend this orientation?**

Yes. Certain types of temporary accommodation, meals and other expenses are paid for by the program through GU/CIED. If you are assigned outside the capital city where the U.S. Embassy is located and you need to travel to the capital for this orientation, this travel is also eligible for reimbursement. Your daily



meal expenses must remain within the expense limits of the U.S. government travel regulations and your total reimbursement cannot exceed the amount stated in your EL Specialist Agreement for post-arrival orientation.

How do I get reimbursed?

To receive your reimbursement, you will need to submit an expense report to GU/CIED and either provide original receipts or their scans for all expenses, except for meals. You must submit the report within 30 days of arriving in your country of assignment. Detailed instructions about completing expense reports are provided in the VPDO and are also available on the COP.

If you choose to mail your expense report with original receipts instead of sending the report scan, make sure to photocopy the expense report. If the original expense report gets lost in the mail, GU/CIED will not be able to reimburse you without receiving its copy.

Further information: Terms and Conditions of the EL Specialist Agreement.

6. Safety and Security

Will I be safe while I am in my country of assignment?

Your personal safety and security is the program’s top priority. Any suspicious activity, as well as perceived or actual threats regarding your well-being, will be taken seriously.

Who should I contact regarding safety concerns while I am in my country of assignment?

Before you leave for your country of assignment, you should register with STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program), a service of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, a service of the Bureau of Consular Affairs. By enrolling in the program, you will receive important safety information about your country of assignment and allow the U.S. Embassy to contact you in emergency situations.

You should also confirm contact details – local phone numbers and emails – for your primary and secondary in-country contacts (most likely, these will be staff members of the PAS section of the U.S. Embassy in your country of assignment) and RELO. GU/CIED will provide emails for your PAS/RELO contacts in your Acceptance Letter; however, you should also request local phone numbers prior to departure.

Keep relevant contact information (email and local phone numbers) handy at all times throughout your project and keep your in-country contacts and GU/CIED closely informed as to any and all security concerns regarding your well-being.

An emergency contact card template (see below) is available on the COP, which you can use to keep emergency information on you at all times in the event of an urgent situation. Adding information in a local language is highly recommended.

Emergency contact card template with fields for Name, Date of Birth, Blood Type, Allergies, Medications, and Citizenship. Includes instructions for emergency contact.



**REFERENCE TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Emergency Services: 999                      Hospital: 9999999999  
 Fire: 999    Ambulance: 999  
 Police: 999

GU/CIED Emergency #: +1 800-806-1726  
 ASPE Toll free:+ 1-800-461-0430  
 ASPE Collect Outside US: +1-317-818-2867  
 ASPE ID #: 9999999999

U.S. Embassy: 9999999999

**So what happens in case of emergency?**

In the case of an emergency during the in-country portion of your project, contact both your partnering organization and your PAS/RELO. If you contact them by email, cc your GU/CIED program coordinator.

If you are unable to reach anyone at your partnering organization or your PAS/RELO, you can contact GU/CIED:

- During normal business hours of 8:30am to 5pm EST, contact your GU/CIED program coordinator.
- Outside of normal business hours and on weekends, email [elf@georgetown.edu](mailto:elf@georgetown.edu) or call +1 800-806-1726. If you are directed to voice mail, leave detailed information about who you are, where you are, how you can be reached, and the nature of the emergency.

**Who should I contact regarding concerns while I am en route to my country of assignment?**

If you encounter travel issues during normal business hours (8:30am – 5pm EST, Monday-Friday), email your GU/CIED program coordinator for assistance as listed in the “Before You Go” section above.

If you encounter issues while traveling to your in-country assignment after normal business hours, call GU/CIED at +1 800-806-1726. If you are directed to voice mail, leave detailed information about who you are, where you are, how you can be reached, and the nature of the situation. Make sure to also email [elf@georgetown.edu](mailto:elf@georgetown.edu), copying your in-country contacts. This email account is monitored continuously and your message will be forwarded to the appropriate staff member for assistance.

**7. Duration of EL Specialist Agreement**

**How long is my project?**

Your Agreement Period is listed on page one of your EL Specialist Agreement and may include in-country, virtual, or a combination of both activities. The Agreement Period on page one reflects the first and last work days of your EL Specialist project; travel and rest days en route to your project will be reflected in Appendix A.

Appendix A of your Agreement details further information regarding your project, such as a general schedule and description of your scope of work. Note that the schedule is provided to guide your preparations, but is always subject to change. Contact your partnering organization and the PAS/RELO in charge of your project to discuss the details of your schedule.

In most cases, travel days are not included in your Agreement until after your travel is booked, at which point you will receive an Agreement amendment from GU/CIED reflecting your travel days and any necessary adjustment to your allowances.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the EL Specialist Agreement*



**What happens if I cannot arrive in my country of assignment as scheduled?**

If you delay your arrival in your country of assignment due to personal reasons, your EL Specialist Agreement Period will be amended and your benefits will be adjusted.

**Do I get any breaks?**

See section 12: Leave, Absences, and Extensions.

**What if I leave my project early?**

You are expected to stay on your project and carry out your duties until the end date specified in your EL Specialist Agreement. If you leave your project early, your Agreement Period will be amended and your benefits will be adjusted.

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

## 8. Housing

**How do I find accommodation for my in-country assignment?**

In most cases, lodging is pre-arranged for EL Specialists by the partnering organization or PAS/RELO staff. Exceptions to this are managed on a case-by-case basis. Contact your PAS/RELO and partnering organization for details on your specific housing arrangements. Lodging expenses will either be paid for directly by your PAS/RELO or partnering organization or you will receive an allowance to cover those costs through your EL Specialist Agreement through GU/CIED.

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

**What if I want to move during my project?**

You may be able to do so, but not without the written approval of your PAS/RELO, due to security reasons. PAS/RELO will then notify ECA, the partnering organization, and GU/CIED. If you do move without approval, you may be subject to increased safety concerns or expenses that you will have to pay out-of-pocket. If you decide to move and the new accommodation is less expensive than what is stated on your EL Specialist Agreement, GU/CIED may amend your Agreement to reflect this. As such, your living allowance may be decreased, or you may be asked to refund the difference in costs. Alternately, if you move into more expensive accommodation, you may be asked to pay the difference yourself from your stipend or other personal funds.

The U.S. Embassy or your partnering organization may also ask you to move under some circumstances. In such cases, any increase in cost associated with the new lodging will be covered by the program.

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

**What about guests coming to visit me?**

You may not have strangers stay in lodging provided to you during your project. This includes persons that you may meet through social media sites such as Facebook, CouchSurfing, AirBnB, etc. This condition applies to any kind of lodging that you may have during your project.

You may invite family and friends to stay in your housing, if allowed by those providing your housing. However, you may not accept any payment in exchange for allowing such person(s) to stay with you.

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



## 9. Remuneration from Other Sources

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

As many EL Specialists accept a project while on leave from their primary place of employment, we understand that in most cases, you will continue to receive your salary while you are on leave for your EL Specialist project. However, such work must not interfere with the full-time commitment to your project during the Agreement Period, nor violate the laws of the country of assignment.

If you have a coinciding contract with or are employed by another U.S. government agency, you are required to either waive the Stipend portion of your EL Specialist Agreement; or take an unpaid leave of absence from the other U.S. government agency. You must provide GU/CIED with documentation indicating which of those two options has been agreed upon in advance of the start of your Agreement Period.

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

### Can I accept invitations to visit programs in other countries or attend professional development activities during my project?

In most cases, given the intensive, short-term nature of EL Specialist projects, this is not permitted.

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

## 10. In-Country Debts

### Who is responsible for debts incurred in the country of assignment?

You are responsible for paying all expenses and debts for yourself and any accompanying persons. . You must ensure that all these expenses are paid in full and there are no outstanding debts by the time you leave your country of assignment.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the EL 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 received from GU/CIED will be reported both to you and to the IRS on Form 1099 in Box 7. These fees are called “non-employee compensation” and they are considered taxable income. Taxable income and benefits received from GU/CIED include, but are not limited to:

- stipend;
- living allowance (if applicable); and
- one-time costs allowance (if applicable).

You should consult your tax advisor or the IRS for guidance. GU/CIED and ECA/DOS cannot provide any tax guidance. Filing and paying your taxes are solely your own 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 task, Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance Program (OASDI), state disability insurance tax, Social Security, and Medicare.





## 12. Leave, Absences, and Extensions

### **Do I get any breaks during in-country activities?**

Unless otherwise specified in the project description and schedule (Appendix A) of your EL Specialist Agreement, you will have at least one rest day per week. You can only take leave days beyond the rest days and non-work days defined in Appendix A with prior written approval from your PAS/RELO and the partnering organization. You are also provided with one full rest day upon arrival in the country of assignment.

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

### **What if I have a personal emergency while I am in-country or completing virtual activities and I need to cease working?**

It is your responsibility to complete the full Agreement Period as listed on page one of your EL Specialist Agreement. If you have to depart your country of assignment or stop performing virtual activities before the end of the Agreement Period, you must promptly notify all parties – your partnering organization, your PAS/RELO, and GU/CIED – in writing. The Agreement will either be terminated as of that date or amended to reflect your new project dates. You may be responsible for repaying portions of the stipend and living allowance, all of which will be detailed in your official termination letter or Agreement amendment from GU/CIED.

### **What if I become ill and need to leave quickly or have a medical condition that I prefer to be treated back home?**

For medical emergencies involving evacuation see Section 13: Evacuation from the Country of Assignment. If you wish to return to your home base to take care of a medical condition, you must promptly notify your partnering organization, PAS/RELO, and GU/CIED. PAS/RELO will determine if your project can be continued or if it should be cancelled, resulting in termination of your EL Specialist Agreement.

### **If I have to take a leave of absence for any reason, is it possible to return to my project?**

If you are away from your project for any reason, PAS/RELO will determine if the project can be continued or if it should be cancelled, resulting in termination of your EL Specialist Agreement.

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

## 13. Evacuation from the Country of Assignment

There have been volatile situations throughout the world that have created a need for the urgent departure or evacuation of American citizens. These have included political and economic unrest, natural disasters, and terrorist attacks. While abroad, you should be prepared to depart a country quickly, if necessary. As health care quality differs in countries, you may also need to evacuate to properly address medical issues that develop while in your country of assignment.

### **How can I be ready for emergencies or for an emergency evacuation?**

DOS places the highest priority on the safety and security of Americans living overseas. DOS routinely provides standard advice to ensure you will be prepared in emergency situations. This and other advice on crisis preparedness is available on the DOS travel [website](#).

Here is a list of things you can do to better prepare yourself and your accompanying persons in the case of an emergency:





- Be sure to make copies of your passport, visa, and departure documents. Keep one set of copies in a safe place that is accessible to you and another with a relative or close friend living in the U.S.
- Ensure that your passport and all necessary visas are valid. Before you leave for your country of assignment, register with STEP ([Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)). On your arrival, visit ACS at the U.S. Embassy to familiarize yourself with their services. If you need to obtain a new passport, do so at the U.S. Embassy as soon as possible. Be sure you understand how getting a new passport will affect your visa.
- Tell your accompanying persons to keep their passports, U.S. visas, or U.S. status current (if applicable). It can take a long time to get visa documents, so they should apply well in advance of planned travel dates. U.S. Embassies/Consulates are not authorized to issue visitor visas (B1/B2) to non-U.S. citizen spouses, domestic partners or relatives who accompany you, even in the event of an emergency or if you are evacuated.
- Ask if you can make arrangements with the RSO to have a hiding place in your lodging where you will leave written information that U.S. security personnel can retrieve. This will detail an alternative safe place where you may have relocated in the event of an emergency. .

### **How will I know if there is an evacuation in my country of assignment?**

Depending on circumstance, there are two types of DOS political evacuations: “ordered” and “authorized voluntary”. When either of these occur, GU/CIED and the U.S. Embassy in your country of assignment will work with you to ensure your safety or your timely departure. In case of an evacuation, you will be notified through the STEP system and by your PAS/RELO.

### **How will I be evacuated if an evacuation is defined as “ordered”?**

If an evacuation is ordered, therefore not voluntary, you may be evacuated to a different city in your country of assignment. You may even be asked to finish your project in this new city or another location that is safe. This is addressed on a case-by-case basis. In most instances, due to the short term nature of EL Specialist projects, you will be evacuated directly to your home base and the EL Specialist Agreement will be terminated. If possible, GU/CIED will provide you with an economy class airline ticket on the most direct route available.

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

### **What about accompanying persons or others staying with me?**

You are responsible for making and paying for their travel arrangements (including pets).

### **Do I have to leave my country of assignment if an evacuation is defined as “ordered”?**

No, but it is highly recommended. If you decide to remain in your country of assignment while an evacuation order has been issued, it will be at your own risk and expense and your ASPE coverage will be discontinued. Your EL Specialist Agreement will be immediately terminated, you will forfeit your return ticket, and all conditions of termination will apply. You will be then considered to be a private U.S. citizen abroad. You should change your status in STEP and inform the U.S. Embassy’s ACS of your decision and change in status.

### **What do I do if the evacuation is defined as “authorized voluntary”?**

If the evacuation is defined as “authorized voluntary”, you do not have to leave your country of assignment immediately. However, you should remain in close contact with your PAS/RELO for advice, guidance, and updates.



If you decide to leave your country of assignment, you need to inform your partnering organization, PAS/RELO, and GU/CIED immediately. Your PAS/RELO will then work with ECA/DOS and GU/CIED to terminate your EL Specialist Agreement and, if possible, provide you with a direct route, economy class airline ticket to your home base.

If no PAS staff remains in your country of assignment to provide support and guidance, the situation will be treated like an ordered evacuation.

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

### **Medical Evacuation**

#### **What happens if I have an accident or I become too ill to continue my project?**

You must inform your PAS/RELO if you seek emergency medical attention for any reason.

EL Specialists sometimes experience unexpected medical conditions (illness or injury) requiring medical evacuation either to the United States or to another country for proper treatment. Familiarize yourself with the processes and procedures that are in place to help you in such cases. See Section 4: Health Benefits.

Whether you have your own coverage or whether ASPE is your only health benefit plan, the first thing you should do when you arrive in your country of assignment is identify a key contact person who can liaise with your insurance company or with Seven Corners (ASPE's health benefits administrator) in case you are incapacitated. This should be someone who you consider to be reliable, possibly a colleague or friend at your partnering organization. For ASPE, this person will be responsible for obtaining pre-approval from ASPE to evacuate you if necessary. Be sure this person knows your ASPE policy number and has ASPE's phone numbers. Add contact information for your emergency contacts on your post arrival questionnaire. You should also include information for your medical advocate located outside of your country of assignment.

Unless you have your own personal coverage, the need for medical evacuation will be determined by Seven Corners and ECA.

#### **Does a medical evacuation under ASPE need to be approved?**

**Yes.** Unless you have your own coverage, before you make any medical evacuation plans, or one is made for you, you need pre-approval for it to be covered by ASPE. Once notified of the medical emergency, ASPE administrator, Seven Corners will determine whether your condition is so severe that it requires a level of care not available in the country of assignment, or is clearly life threatening. Seven Corners will confer with ECA about the need for evacuation. Keep your partnering organization, PAS/RELO, and GU/CIED informed throughout.

- You need pre-approval from ASPE's administrator Seven Corners before any evacuation plans are made.
- Call Seven Corners collect at +1 317-818-2867 to get approval.

#### **How do I contact Seven Corners/ASPE for pre-approval?**

You, your appointed advocate, or a medical provider needs to contact Seven Corners to explain the need for your evacuation. Place a collect call to Seven Corners Customer Service through the operator at +1 317-818-2867. After the evacuation has been approved, Seven Corners/ASPE will contact you or your liaison, as well as your PAS/RELO in your country of assignment to help make your evacuation arrangements.





**What if I handle the travel arrangements myself or another person does so on my behalf without pre-approval?**

Unless you have your own coverage, any medical evacuation travel services arranged without pre-approval from Seven Corners/ASPE will not be covered.

**Will I always be evacuated to the United States?**

No. If your evacuation is approved through ASPE, Seven Corners/ASPE will pay for your evacuation to the nearest suitable medical facility, which may be in another country.

**Can I return to my project after a medical evacuation?**

Your project is contingent upon having PAS/RELO approval and you being covered by the ASPE health benefit plan. If following your evacuation, ASPE terminates your coverage, you cannot return to your country of assignment unless your ASPE health plan is reinstated. If your ASPE health plan is not reinstated, your EL Specialist Agreement will be terminated. Also, if your PAS/RELO does not approve your return to the country of assignment, your Agreement will be terminated.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the EL Specialist Agreement and the [ASPE Guide](#).*

## 14. Termination

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

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

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

**What is the implementation of my EL Specialist Agreement contingent upon?**

It is contingent upon your ability to obtain a passport and any necessary visa(s) that your country of assignment requires, as well as upon appropriate conditions that exist prior to and during your EL Specialist project in your country of assignment. “Appropriate conditions” typically refer to issues around political, social, and economic stability in the region. They are determined by your PAS/RELO in consultation with ECA/DOS.

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

**What if things beyond my control end my project?**

If there are conditions beyond your control in your country of assignment that prohibit your participation in the project, in most cases, your EL Specialist Agreement will be terminated, and all termination conditions outlined in your Agreement will apply. If you have not yet left for your project, and no appropriate re-assignment can be arranged, the Agreement may be terminated before you leave.

In the event that your project is cancelled within twenty one (21) days of the project’s start date, you will be paid for two Planning Days at a rate of \$250/day for in-country activities and virtual activities of eighty (80) or more total hours; or will be paid for one Planning Day at a rate of \$250/day for virtual activities of less than eighty (80) total hours.

If your project is cancelled before that time, no payment of any kind or amount will be made to you.





**What if my partnering organization or PAS/RELO terminates my assigned project?**

PAS/RELO, or the partnering organization, may terminate the project to which you are assigned, either while you are there or before you leave. In either case, this will terminate your EL Specialist Agreement.

**What if I have to leave my project because of a health issue?**

If you must leave your EL Specialist project due to an illness or accident, you must notify your partnering organization, PAS/RELO, and GU/CIED as soon as possible. At that point, your project will be cancelled, resulting in termination of your EL Specialist Agreement.

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

**What happens if I decide to leave my project for personal reasons?**

If you decide to leave your EL Specialist project for personal reasons, your EL Specialist Agreement is terminated and all conditions outlined in this section will apply. Inform your partnering organization, PAS/RELO, and GU/CIED of your decision before you leave your country of assignment. GU/CIED arranges your return airfare and issues you an official termination letter electronically.

**Can I keep the ASPE coverage until I return home?**

No. If your EL Specialist Agreement is terminated, ASPE coverage is canceled on the day of termination.

**Are there any other reasons a project might be terminated?**

Yes. Your PAS/RELO can direct GU/CIED to terminate your EL Specialist Agreement at any time during your Agreement Period or prior to your departure. Here are some reasons why a termination might occur:

- If your EL Specialist project fails to achieve the goals of the program.
- If your project is terminated by your partnering organization or your PAS/RELO.
- If you abandon your duties before the end of your EL Specialist Agreement.
- If you are not performing your duties in a satisfactory manner.
- If you are unable to perform your duties for medical reasons.
- If you breach professional ethics.
- If you break the law(s) of either your country of assignment or the U.S.
- If you violate any rule or policy of your partnering organization.
- If you fail to observe the social norms of your country of assignment.
- If you do not communicate in a timely manner with GU/CIED or PAS/RELO when requested.
- If you refuse to follow directions or guidance from PAS/RELO.
- If you engage in any act likely to give offense to the United States or the country of assignment that is contrary to the spirit of mutual understanding.
- If you engage in unauthorized income-producing opportunities.
- If you misrepresent yourself in any way on your EL Specialist application.
- If your behavior or conduct brings ECA/DOS, PAS/RELO, GU/CIED, and/or the partnering organization(s) into disrepute.
- If you knowingly put yourself or others in danger or inappropriate situations.
- If your ASPE coverage has been canceled.
- If your visa documents expire or are revoked.
- If there are unforeseen acts of war or natural disasters in your country of assignment.
- If you fail to comply with the EL Specialist Agreement you signed and the attached terms and conditions.

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

**How will I know I have been officially terminated?**

GU/CIED sends you an official termination letter via email. This letter provides the date on which your EL Specialist Agreement was terminated (in other words, it 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 refund to GU/CIED.

**Will I receive the rest of my stipend and living allowance?**

When your EL Specialist Agreement is terminated, GU/CIED will review all payments made to you up to your termination date. The total amount of your stipend and living allowance, if applicable, will be reduced by a prorated amount, calculated by number of days stated in the amended Agreement Period and final accounting of the stipend and living allowance, if applicable, will be adjusted to reflect the amended Agreement Period.

If, as a result of this recalculation, you owe money to the program, having received advance payment for days outside of the amended EL Specialist Agreement period, this owed amount must be refunded to GU/CIED within thirty (30) days of the termination date. GU/CIED must receive your refund no later than December 15 of the same tax year in order for it to be reflected on your 1099-MISC. Your 1099-MISC will not be adjusted for refunds made after December 15 and in the subsequent tax years.

If, as a result of this recalculation, GU/CIED owes you money, a final payment of the pro-rated amount will be made to your bank account.

**What other conditions should I be aware of if my EL Specialist Agreement is terminated?**

- You shall cease performing your duties as of the date stated in your EL Specialist Agreement termination letter.
- You must leave the country of assignment on the date of your termination unless otherwise specified by PAS/RELO. If your departure and travel does not take place on this date or the date established by PAS/RELO, you will forfeit any right to a return ticket provided by GU/CIED.
- The duration of the ASPE health benefit plan will be amended so that it is the same as the amended Agreement Period for your in-country activities.
- You are responsible for making and covering travel arrangements for any accompanying person, and/or pet.
- You will be liable for all debts you may have accumulated while in your country of assignment.
- You must submit within thirty (30) days of termination expense reports to reconcile any advances or to claim any reimbursement for PAA and/or international travel-related expenses.

**15. Remaining in Country after EL Specialist Agreement Ends or is Terminated****My project has ended but I want to remain in my country of assignment. Is this possible?**

Yes, if you meet all of the visa requirements of your country of assignment, which is your responsibility to ensure. You must also abide by any limitations imposed by your country of assignment and you should change your status from “EL Specialist” to “American citizen in-country resident” with STEP and the U.S. Embassy’s ACS. You are no longer an EL Specialist after your project has ended. Your ASPE coverage will also end as of the last day of the in-country portion of the project.

**My EL Specialist Agreement has been terminated but I want to remain in my country of assignment. Is this possible?**

If your EL Specialist Agreement is terminated, you must leave your country of assignment on the date of your termination unless otherwise specified by PAS/RELO. If your departure and travel do not take place on this date or the date established by PAS/RELO, you will forfeit any right to a return ticket provided by



GU/CIED. As above, you are responsible for visa requirements, which may be affected by termination. Further, you should change your status from “EL Specialist” to “American citizen in-country resident” with STEP and the U.S. Embassy’s ACS. You are no longer an EL Specialist after your project has been terminated. Your ASPE coverage will also end as of the date of termination.

## 16. Travel Arrangements

### Who arranges my travel?

GU/CIED coordinates your travel for you, based on information provided in your Travel Request Form ([located on the COP](#)), as well as information received from the PAS/RELO in your country of assignment.

GU/CIED will provide you with a roundtrip Fly America Act (FAA) compliant ticket, to and from your project. This ticket will be issued as direct route, economy fare.

\*\*\*If you book your travel directly, you will not be reimbursed for the costs.

### What do I need to do before my airline ticket is issued?

You must ensure certain documents are in place before your airline ticket is issued. Use the EL Specialist checklist [on the COP](#) to be sure you are on track.

Once your visa is received (if applicable), your EL Specialist Agreement is signed, and your medical clearance is received (if applicable), GU/CIED will arrange your travel via our designated travel agency. An itinerary will be sent to you, as well as to the PAS/RELO in charge of your project, for approval. Once all parties approve, GU/CIED will issue your ticket and send you and PAS/RELO the final e-ticket information and itinerary via email.

In booking your travel we must adhere to the Fly America Act, which means that you must use a U.S. flag air carrier service for all air travel funded by the U.S. Government. If no U.S. flag air carrier provides service on a particular leg of the route, foreign air carrier service may be used, but only to or from the nearest interchange point on a usually traveled route to connect with the U.S. flag air carrier service.

*Further information: Terms and Conditions of the EL Specialist Agreement and [Fly America Act](#), 49 U.S.C. 40118, and applicable regulations, including 41 CFR 301 10.131 to 301 10.143.*

### Do I get to approve my airline ticket before it is issued?

You must approve your itinerary before any travel is issued. If the first itinerary does not suit you, you may request a second one. You are offered a maximum of three itineraries. You must choose from one of the three you are offered.

### What if I require a round-trip ticket before I can obtain a visa to my country of assignment?

Some countries of assignment may require you to hold a round-trip ticket as part of the application process for a visa. If so, you must inform GU/CIED right away and a “dummy” round-trip ticket will be issued to you for this purpose. It will appear to be a validly-issued round-trip ticket, but will be canceled shortly after it is issued, and therefore you cannot use it for travel purposes.

### Can I travel on a non-U.S. airline?

No, not unless it is permitted by applicable law and regulation. This includes, but is not limited to, the Fly America Act. You must travel on the tickets provided for you by the program.





**Can I change my travel plans to include a layover or to leave from a different city?**

For customized itineraries, i.e. any routing that is not directly to/from your country of assignment on the official project dates, contact your GU/CIED coordinator to discuss available options.

**What if my plans change after my ticket is issued?**

If the change is personal – not program related – you can change your flights, but you will be responsible for paying any change fees and/or price differences resulting from the change and you must ensure your new itinerary still meets the requirements of your project and is FAA compliant. Contact the airline directly to make any changes and communicate them to your PAS/RELO and GU/CIED.

If the change is required because of a project-related issue, then you will not have to pay for any changes.

**Can I upgrade my ticket?**

Yes, but only after your ticket has been issued. Wait one business day after your ticket has been issued. You can then contact the airline directly to discuss any upgrades to business or first class. You must also pay for any fees related to the upgrade.

GU/CIED is not responsible for issuing upgradeable economy class tickets.

**I have a disability and have special travel needs. Can you assist me?**

The program addresses peoples' special travel needs and reasonable accommodation travel requests on a case by case basis. Contact your GU/CIED program coordinator to discuss available options.

**Can GU/CIED help me with seat or meal selection or with arranging for oversized baggage?**

Once your ticket has been issued, you should contact the airline directly to make your seat and meal selection, to arrange for oversized baggage, or to make other standard travel requests.

**What about my baggage?**

You will need to contact all the airlines you will be flying on to find out their requirements and limitations for your baggage, including any fees for overweight baggage. GU/CIED and the travel agent are not responsible for providing you with this information. GU/CIED will reimburse baggage fees not to exceed two (2) 50lb bags for each leg of the trip.

**What if I am travelling through another country?**

If you are being routed through another country, other than the United States and your country of assignment, you need to research any and all immigration restrictions for this country or countries and then obtain any documentation you may need to transit through the country or countries. GU/CIED will reimburse any fees associated with transit visas.

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

**Who should I contact regarding concerns while I am en route to my country of assignment?**

If you encounter travel issues during normal business hours, email or call your GU/CIED program coordinator for assistance.

If you encounter issues while traveling to your in-country project after normal business hours (8am – 5pm EST, Monday-Friday), call GU/CIED at +1 800-806-1726. If you are directed to voice mail, leave detailed information about who you are, where you are, how you can be reached, and the nature of the situation. Also email [elf@georgetown.edu](mailto:elf@georgetown.edu), copying your in-country contacts. This email account is



monitored continuously, and your message will be forwarded to the appropriate staff member for assistance.

**Is the travel agency affiliated with GU/CIED and can they assist me with other travel needs?**

GU/CIED works with an independent travel agency to coordinate travel. Their only role in the program is to arrange flights to and from your country of assignment. The travel agent must comply with the Fly America Act and all other ECA/DOS guidelines.

The travel agent cannot help you with any kind of travel when you arrive in your country of assignment. This includes, but is not limited to, ground transportation or travel to get to your post-arrival orientation. The travel agent does not have any information about hotel accommodation, per diem rates or schedules. They also do not have any information about the general EL Specialist program, such as your country of assignment, its visa requirements, project descriptions, information about your partnering organization, or EL Specialist Agreement and payments. Direct all of these enquiries to your PAS/RELO or GU/CIED directly.

**Am I still covered by ASPE if I stay longer in my country of assignment?**

No. You are only covered by ASPE during the in-country period of your project, as well as on travel and rest days immediately before and after your project, per your EL Specialist Agreement.

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

***Travel Arrangements for Accompanying Persons and Pets***

**I plan to travel with someone. How should I organize this?**

You are required to contact PAS/RELO in charge of the project to discuss whether it will be appropriate for accompanying persons to travel with you during your project. If this is approved, you should inform GU/CIED that you would like to travel with another person. GU/CIED staff will then inform the travel agent of this request and ask that they reserve an itinerary for that person on your flight(s). If this is possible, you will then be requested by GU/CIED to contact the travel agency and arrange to pay for the other person. GU/CIED will provide you with the contact information for the travel agent at that time.

You are responsible for paying all expenses for the other person's travel, and must provide the travel agent with your payment information at the time of booking. The travel agency will not process any tickets for persons other than a EL Specialist without first receiving payment. Anyone traveling with you whose travel is arranged by GU/CIED must abide by the Fly America Act, and this may mean more expensive travel than on other airlines.

**I would like my pet to travel with me as well. Is this possible?**

Due to the short-term and unpredictable nature of EL Specialist projects, traveling with pets is not recommended. If you decide to travel with your pet, neither GU/CIED, nor the travel agency can help you to arrange a pet's transport. Your EL Specialist project and travel itineraries cannot be accommodated to coordinate with your pet's needs. If the schedule that GU/CIED coordinates for you is not acceptable due to your pet's travel, you will be responsible for planning, organizing, and paying for your own ticket, as well as that of your pet, to your project. In such cases, you will forfeit your ticket to and from your project. You will also be fully responsible for ensuring that your pet's presence on your project does not interfere with required EL Specialist duties.



### ***Payment to GU/CIED for Additional Travel Fees and Costs***

Under certain circumstances, you may owe money back to the program. If that is the case, you are asked to fully cooperate with GU/CIED to arrange for this.

#### **What additional travel fees and costs am I responsible for?**

If other people accompany you to your country of assignment, you are responsible for paying all of their travel costs. Also, if you have any personal travel requests (e.g. routing, cancellations, date changes, upgrades, etc.), you are also responsible for paying these.

#### **How do I know how much I have to pay?**

GU/CIED will tell you how much you owe for these extra costs.

#### **How do I pay for these extra costs?**

Unless you remit payment for the cost of any personal changes directly to the travel agent, you must refund the program within two weeks of issuing your travel via ACH (Automated Clearing House) payment to GU/CIED, as follows:

Name of Bank: PNC Bank, N.A.  
Address: 808 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006  
ABA Number: 031000053  
Swift Code: PNCCUS33  
Account Name: Georgetown University General Fund  
Account Number: 5300384731  
Reference: CC2020, S0758

If you are unable to pay via ACH, you must send a check, also within two weeks of issuing your travel. Make the check payable to “Georgetown University” and mail it to:

Georgetown University/CIED  
English Language Fellow Program  
3300 Whitehaven St. NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, D.C. 20007  
U.S.A.

You must notify GU/CIED of the type of payment you have selected to make and the date on which it was sent.

#### **What happens if GU/CIED does not receive my payment within two weeks?**

If your ACH payment or your check does not arrive within two weeks of your airline ticket being issued, GU/CIED may withhold your future stipend payments until it arrives or the amount may be deducted from your next payment.

Additionally, if you still have not paid for these costs, you cannot make any future personal travel requests for your return trip.

## **17. International Travel-Related Costs**

#### **Will I receive an allowance for international travel-related costs?**

The EL Specialist program will reimburse you for international travel-related costs, including but not limited to:

- costs related to obtaining a visa, such as visa fees, visa service fees, photos, passport fees, mailing of visa related documents, and costs associated with travel to obtain a visa;





- costs related to completion of the HVF required for projects with in-country activities of 45 or more days, including travel, rest, and work days;
- vaccinations and medications required specifically for travel to the country of assignment (excluding standard vaccinations including MMR, DTP, chicken pox, polio, and flu);
- baggage fees not to exceed two 50lb pound bags for each leg of the trip;
- transportation to/from your home base to the airport;
- meals during international travel, not to exceed 75% of the [standard government per diem rates](#) for that month of travel in that city; and,
- costs related to a rest stop (if your flight time exceeds fourteen (14) hours, you are eligible for hotel and meals reimbursement during one stop-over, as long as the costs are within government per diem limits).

Review your EL Specialist Agreement for additional details on what can and cannot be reimbursed to you under this category. Save all receipts related to any expenses incurred and submit an expense report to GU/CIED for payment. Detailed instructions about completing expense reports are provided in the VPDO and are also available [on the COP](#).

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

## 18. Program Activities Allowance

### What is program activities allowance (PAA) and how can I use it?

The purpose of the PAA is to enhance the work you do during your project and provide additional benefit for participants. PAA purchases that impact only the EL Specialist will not be reimbursed.

PAA is a reimbursable allowance, which means you will need to pay out of pocket and then seek reimbursement.

To receive your reimbursement for PAA, you will need to submit an expense report to GU/CIED and either provide original receipts or their scans for all expenses. Detailed instructions about completing expense reports are provided in the VPDO and are also available [on the COP](#).

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

The following are some suggested uses for the PAA:

- Development, preparation, and facilitation of conferences, workshops, seminars, lectures, etc.;
- In-country and regional travel related to EL Specialist's Duties;
- Supporting local EFL teacher activities, in consultation with PAS/RELO;
- Purchase of commercial educational materials such as books, DVDs, visuals, educational software, magazines, newspapers, photocopies, etc., which will be donated in the Country(ies) of Assignment;
- Purchase of small equipment and office supplies, such as cell phone, SIM cards, computer, copier, memory storage, paper, toner, etc.;
- Funding of EL Specialist's Internet/email access;
- Establishing/enhancing resource centers, American Corners, teacher associations, etc.

EL Specialists are not required to receive advance approval for PAA purchases from their partnering organization or PAS/RELO; however, we highly encourage you to discuss the best use of these funds with your in-country contacts.



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

Here are examples of expenses that are *not* covered under the PAA

- Expenses for companions, other EL Specialists, U.S. Government grantees (such as English Language Fellows or Fulbright scholars), Peace Corps volunteers, and ECA/DOS employees;
- E-books if downloaded to a personal e-reader;
- Alcohol, flowers, and gifts (regardless of whether these are culturally appropriate in your country of assignment);
- Any costs associated with the annual TESOL International Convention in the U.S.;
- Your TESOL International Association membership fees;
- Personal items for your housing;
- Expenses related to visas, residency, or immigration paperwork incurred after arriving in your country of assignment; and
- Local transportation in your city of assignment.

If you have any doubt as to whether your purchases will be reimbursed, ask your GU/CIED program coordinator in advance of the purchase.

### How much money do I get to spend on my PAA?

Your PAA ceiling is indicated in the Benefits section of your EL Specialist Agreement. You are responsible for keeping track of your PAA expenses, as you will not be reimbursed for any expenses which exceed the PAA ceiling listed in your Agreement.

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

It is possible but not recommended. Since the goal of the PAA is to augment and support your activities in the country of assignment, it is best to wait until after you arrive at your partnering organization, so that you can conduct a needs analysis and consult with your PAS/RELO on best ways to utilize your PAA. It is also important to remember that you cannot incur any PAA expenses prior to signing your EL Specialist Agreement.

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

Yes. You have up to 30 days following the end of your EL Specialist Agreement Period to incur and submit reimbursement request for your PAA expenses.

### What do I do with the materials that I purchased with my PAA?

Upon completion of your project, you will work with your PAS/RELO to make arrangements to leave or ship materials and capital equipment purchased with the PAA to your country of assignment either at PAS, the Partnering Organization, American Corner, local library, or other resource center.

## 19. 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:

- Program reports: These include the preliminary report (for projects of 60+days), due within 15 days of arrival in the country of assignment and the final report and highlight, due within 30 days of the end of your EL Specialist Agreement Period. You will also be asked to submit a post-arrival information form for in-country activities. Report templates are included in your EL Specialist Agreement and are available [on the COP](#).



EXCEPTION: EL Specialists working on AE E-teacher regional course needs assessment projects will submit their final report and highlight within 15 days of the end of their EL Specialist Agreement Period, along with the course needs assessment checklist.

- **Expense reports:** These must be submitted in order for you to get reimbursed for approved, reimbursable expenses. Detailed instructions about completing expense reports are available [on the COP](#).

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

You must submit two program reports (if applicable). Send them to GU/CIED, your PAS, and your RELO.

Preliminary report	For projects of 60+ days; due within 15 days of your arrival in the country of assignment.
Final report	Due within 30 days after the end date of your EL Specialist Agreement Period; the final report includes a required “highlight” <a href="#">submission via the COP</a> .

For AE E-teacher regional course needs assessment projects, you will submit:

Preliminary report	For projects of 60+ days; due within 15 days of your arrival in the country of assignment.
Final report	Due within 15 days after the end date of your EL Specialist Agreement Period; the final report includes AE E-Teacher regional course needs assessment checklist and a required “highlight” <a href="#">submission via the COP</a> .

For all in-country projects, you will also be asked to submit a post-arrival information form immediately after your arrival.

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

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

You do not need to submit expense reports for some allowances included in your EL Specialist Agreement. These include:

- stipend;
- living allowance (if applicable); and
- one-time costs allowance (if applicable).

These are all considered taxable benefits as outlined in Section 11: Taxes and Withholdings.

For other types of allowances and payments, you must submit an expense report to GU/CIED who will then process your claim for reimbursement. These include:

- program activities allowance (PAA);
- post-arrival orientation allowance (if applicable); and
- international travel related costs.

Detailed instructions about completing expense reports are available [on the COP](#).

You must submit expenses for reimbursement within 60 days of incurring the expense; any receipts received that are older than 60 days cannot be processed for payment.

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



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 your GU/CIED program coordinator with any questions. Here is a brief overview of what you need to do:

<p>Fill out an expense log.</p>	<p>You can find a blank expense log <a href="#">on the COP</a> or you can request this from GU/CIED if you do not have a copy. List every single expense on the log. Each line of the expense log should correspond to a receipt form and receipt in the back-up documentation.</p>
<p>Attach original receipts to the receipt form (<a href="#">one receipt per receipt form</a>).</p>	<p>You can find a blank receipt form <a href="#">on the COP</a> or you can request this from GU/CIED if you do not have a copy. Fill out the form completely for each receipt, and include as many details as possible, 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> <p>Attach only one receipt to each form and include the details of each individual expense. If you do not have a receipt for an expense, contact GU/CIED for instructions on what to do in this situation.</p> <p>Every expense you list on your expense log must have a corresponding receipt form. Be sure to reconcile your expense log with your receipt forms or it could delay the processing of your claim.</p>
<p>Include a copy of the exchange rate(s).</p>	<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> <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>.</p>
<p>Make a copy of your expense report for your records.</p>	<p>Make a copy of your complete expense report, including all receipts. This can either be a scanned copy or a photocopy.</p>
<p>Send completed expense report to GU/CIED.</p>	<p>Email a PDF scan of your completed expense report in one document to your GU/CIED program coordinator or mail the original expense report to:</p> <p>English Language Specialist Program Georgetown University 3300 Whitehaven Street NW, Suite 1000 Washington, DC 20007</p> <p>Expense report must be submitted within 60 days of incurring the expense. Expense reports which are received late will not be processed.</p>



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

No, for audit purposes, you must keep all the original receipts for 60 days after the end of your EL Specialist 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. Final requests for reimbursement must be submitted to GU/CIED no later than 30 days after the end of the EL Specialist 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:

- Expense report was submitted 60 days after the expense has occurred;
- Your PAA ceiling, as listed in the Benefits section of your EL Specialist 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;
- Submitting exact same expense more than once; and
- Amazon or other on-line vendor receipts without proof that the purchased items have been shipped and delivered.

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.

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



**I had to purchase local/regional flights to travel between my project cities. How do I handle getting reimbursed for these flights?**

Once you purchase your local/regional flights, you must submit to GU/CIED (on its own or as part of a larger expense report):

- Expense log;
- Receipt form;
- Completed “Travel Request and Fly America Act Exception” form;
- Boarding passes for all segments of your flight; and
- Receipt showing all flight details (dates and routing), as well as costs.

Expense log, receipt form, and travel request form are all located [on the COP](#).

**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 EL Specialist Agreement. GU/CIED cannot reimburse you for amounts that exceed your PAA ceiling. Your PAA ceiling may be increased with advance approval from your PAS/RELO.

**What happens if I cannot provide a receipt because it was not available?**

Receipts are required for all expenses claimed in your reimbursement request. If a vendor in your country of assignment does not provide receipts (for example, taxi cab services in your country might not have receipts), you will need to provide detailed justification for the expense, including information about the vendor and confirming in writing that they do not provide receipts.

**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.

**I have received an email from Viewpost. Is this legitimate?**

Georgetown University has contracted a third party vendor called Viewpost for processing ACH payments. Every time an ACH payment is made, Viewpost sends its recipient a payment notification. If you have any questions about the notification, you can contact Viewpost via e-mail at [support@viewpost.com](mailto:support@viewpost.com) or by phone at 1-888-248-9190.

Note that Viewpost does not have any information regarding program related information about your payments such as breakdown of the amounts deposited or the status of your reimbursement requests. Contact your GU/CIED program coordinator with any specific questions or concerns regarding your scheduled fellowship payments or reimbursements.

**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 your GU/CIED program coordinator. They will answer your questions and provide you with helpful examples and tips to make these reports easier for you.



## 20. 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 EL Specialist application at <https://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?

You may participate in up to three EL Specialist projects per calendar year. A multi-phase project is considered as one project.

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 EL Specialist 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 following termination of your EL Specialist Agreement, you will not be eligible for additional projects until you have returned all owed funds to the program.

Although Specialists are eligible for a maximum of **three projects** per calendar year, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) strongly encourages the use of new EL 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 EL Specialist Program.

## 21. Digital Citizenship: Social Media and Blogging

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

No, but understand that U.S. freedom of speech guarantees may not be applicable in your country 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 your country of assignment. Be aware of this when you are posting comments on blogs, websites, or other social media platforms. Be aware of any local sensitivities while in your country 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 cancelation of your project.

Also, as these will be your personal views and not those of the DOS during the time of your project, 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 Program or the U.S. Department of State."*

### How do I share my EL 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 EL 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.

While in your country of assignment, make sure to check with your PAS/RELO about the safety and security protocols regarding social media posts.

## 22. Representing the EL Specialist Program

### **I have been asked to make a presentation. 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 EL Specialist Program in another way during your project. You should present yourself as an EL Specialist of the English Language Program, a program funded by the U.S. Department of State. Remember you are not an employee of your partnering organization, ECA/DOS, or GU/CIED.

## 23. Materials Developed During the EL Specialist Agreement Period

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

All materials created or developed by you in advance of and/or during the EL Specialist Agreement Period for the specific fulfillment of the project duties become the exclusive property of the EL 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 EL Specialist program to your 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 EL 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 EL Specialist project, note that the EL 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.

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

### **What does GU/CIED intend to do with these materials?**

GU/CIED 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, GU/CIED 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.



## 24. Accompanying Persons

### **Can I bring someone with me on my project?**

Consult with the PAS/RELO in charge of your project to determine whether it will be appropriate for accompanying persons to travel with you during your EL Specialist project.

### **What type of support do you offer for accompanying persons?**

EL Specialist Agreements are made with one-person and do not cover any expenses for accompanying persons, including, but not limited to, travel, insurance, visa, medical expenses, housing, food, or local transportation. If your PAS/RELO has approved accompanying persons on your project, all expenses and logistics for your accompanying persons are your sole responsibility.

### **Will my housing accommodate accompanying persons?**

The program is only required to identify housing suitable for one person.

### **Do accompanying persons need to be U.S. citizens?**

The program has no citizenship requirements for accompanying persons. It is your responsibility to ensure any accompanying persons have the correct visa and proper documentation to enter and exit your country of assignment. You must also make the U.S. Embassy in your country of assignment aware of the accompanying persons' citizenship. In the event of an evacuation, the U.S. Department of State can only help with the evacuation of U.S. citizens. Also, your non-U.S. citizen accompanying persons must keep their passports, U.S. visas, or U.S. residency status current (if applicable). U.S. Embassies are not authorized to issue visitor visas to non-U.S. citizen spouses, domestic partners or relatives who accompany you, even in the event of an emergency or if you are evacuated.

### **What about minor(s)?**

If you are traveling alone with a minor child, notarized permission to travel from the non-traveling parent or legal guardian (if applicable) must be obtained and submitted to GU/CIED prior to the minor's travel.

### **My dependent is a lawful permanent resident (LPR) of the United States and will be traveling with me.**

#### **Can the program assist with their re-entry permit application?**

The program does not provide any assistance with LPR paperwork for your dependent. It is your responsibility to ensure your LPR dependent has all the required documents needed to accompany you on your fellowship for ten months and to re-enter the U.S.

### **What will happen during an evacuation?**

In the event of any evacuation (political, medical, natural disaster, etc.), you are responsible for making travel arrangements for any accompanying persons, as well as for their travel costs. GU/CIED is not responsible for helping to evacuate accompanying persons. You should contact the U.S. Embassy for guidance in getting accompanying persons evacuated.

## 25. Pets

### **Can my pet accompany me on my project?**

It is not recommended. There are many barriers to traveling internationally with an animal. There may be restrictions about pets entering your country of assignment, such as quarantine or an outright ban. It is also very difficult to arrange both transportation and accommodations for animals.



The housing situation in your country of assignment may not allow pets. If that is the case, you would be responsible for finding, organizing, and paying for your housing from your own funds. The program will not pay for special housing arrangements to accommodate pets.

**Could I get any information or assistance from the program if I decide to bring my pet with me?**

No. If you decide to take your pet with you, the program will not help you with transportation, such as scheduling specific times or routes that would help accommodate the pet's travel. Your travel itinerary cannot be changed to coordinate with your pet's. If the schedule that the program coordinates for you is not acceptable due to your pet's travel, you will be responsible for planning, organizing, and paying for your own ticket, as well as that of your pet, to and/or from your project. In such cases, you will forfeit your ticket to and/or from your project.

In addition, when you arrive in your country of assignment, the U.S. Embassy will not help you find pet-friendly housing. All arrangements for your pet's travel and housing are your responsibility and at your expense. Additional expenses may include, but are not limited to, quarantine, documentation fees, pet care, and vet bills. All additional expenses are entirely your responsibility.