In Honor of St. Patrick’s Day: Learn About Pittsburgh’s Strong Irish Ties

Each year, the city of Pittsburgh celebrates St. Patrick’s Day with a large celebration and parade in the streets of downtown Pittsburgh. This year, St. Patrick’s Day takes place on Saturday, March 17th. About 25,000 people march in the parade! Irish dance schools, high school bands, and local dignitaries and others will participate in the parade. And the parade can bring up to 350,000 spectators who watch! The Pittsburgh St. Patrick’s Day Parade will take place on Saturday, March 17 at 10:00 am on Grant Street downtown.

Why do Pittsburghers honor St. Patrick’s Day with a large celebration? There are strong Irish roots dating far back in Pittsburgh’s history. During the Industrial Revolution in the United States (1760-1830), immigrants moved to Western Pennsylvania. About one million Irish people were a part of that immigrant population. They were driven out of Ireland because of the famine. Irish people became apart of the Pittsburgh culture, and began taking jobs as coal miners, steel workers, politicians, and religious leaders. Today, some parts of Pittsburgh are known as the Irish sections of town, due to this history of Irish men and women settling in different neighborhoods. If you are familiar with Lawrenceville, the South Side, or the neighborhoods of Carrick, Castle Shannon or O’Hara, then you should know Irish roots run deep in these communities.

What’s all the Madness About?

Have you heard any of your friends talking about which team they are going to choose to win their brackets this year? Maybe you have turned on the news channel lately and noticed the sports reporters talking about “rankings” and “seeds”, “upsets”, or “Cinderella stories”. In the United States, students have the opportunity to go to school, and to play sports as athletes for their college or university as a part of the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association). Each March, the NCAA Division I Men and Women’s team participate in a basketball tournament that showcases the top teams in the country. March Madness is a single-elimination tournament featuring 68 college basketball teams to determine the national championship. It has become one of the most famous annual sporting events in the U.S.

Did You Know? The PPG Paints Arena in Pittsburgh will be hosting two rounds of the NCAA tournament. If you are interested in experiencing March Madness this weekend, visit their website to purchase tickets! www.ppgpaintsarena.com

Statement of Purpose Information Session

When you apply to academic programs in the US, most universities ask for a statement of purpose. Many people believe that the statement of purpose is the most important piece of a college application. Your statement of purpose is your chance to tell the admissions committee who you really are. Do you know what to include in your statement? Just as important, do you know what not to include?

If you would like tips on how to write an effective and clear statement of purpose, come to the statement of purpose session on Tuesday, March 20 from 1:00-1:45 pm in Room M15. You may bring your lunch. You must sign up for this presentation before 4:00 pm on Monday, March 19. See Stacy in room M22 or email her at sar72@pitt.edu to reserve your space. Hope to see you there!

Short Class Schedule for April 12

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<tr>
<th>Classes beginning at…</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
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<td>12:00 noon</td>
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<td>3:00 pm</td>
<td>12:15-12:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing Ceremony</td>
<td>1:00-3:00 pm</td>
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Transfer Process

Students with F1 visas who want to transfer to a new school must see Stacy to complete the transfer. You must bring a copy of the acceptance letter and the transfer form from the new school. You may transfer at any time during the term, but you must complete this process to remain in legal status. Remember that if you complete your final term of study at level 6 at the ELI, you have a 60-day grace period. During that time, you may stay in the U.S. without studying, and you may request a transfer at any time during that 60-day period. If you do not complete level 6, you have a 2-week grace period, and you must request a transfer within that time.

If you do not request a transfer during the grace period, you will be out of status at the end of your grace period, and it will be too late to transfer your SEVIS record. Please see Stacy if you have any questions about this process.

What’s Happening Around Pitt’s Campus?

As a student at the ELI, you have the opportunity to participate in various student affairs events throughout the Pitt campus. Consider attending any of the below events this week or next with a fellow ELI student or to make a new friend! For questions email elipitt@pitt.edu or visit the student affairs master event calendar at www.events.pitt.edu.

Be A Good Neighbor Day Deadline
Sign-up by March 17 to participate on March 24 for this all-day volunteer event, hosted by the Office of Pitserves.

Dhirana 2018 National Dance Competition
Date: March 17th from 5 to 9:00 pm
Location: Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, 4141 Fifth Avenue.
Tickets are $10

Pittsburgh Jazz Composers Concert
Date: March 18th from 2 to 4:00 pm
Location: Bellefield Hall Auditorium

ELI Writing Contest

The ELI is holding a competition for students in all writing classes. There will be one winner in each level (2,3,4,5,6), and the winners will be announced at the ELI Closing Ceremony.

If you have written a good composition in your writing class this semester, you should tell your writing teacher that you would like to enter it in the writing contest. Your teacher will then submit your paper for you. Your entry will be read anonymously by judges (your name will be removed from the paper, so they will not know who you are). The judges will choose the best composition from each level.

The deadline for entries is Tuesday, April 3 at 4:00 pm.

If you are in level 4, 5, or 6, your entry must be an essay that you wrote in class this semester. If you are in level 2 or 3, your entry can be a shorter composition, even a single paragraph. Each student can enter only one composition.

Good luck!

ELI Pre-registration Summer 2018

If you plan to study at the ELI next term, you must pre-register with Stacy in room M22. If you do not pre-register with Stacy, the ELI cannot guarantee your place for the next term. If you plan to take a vacation term, you must see Stacy to register for that, too. The ELI will then electronically register you with the University of Pittsburgh. You will need to check the ELI News later in the term for information on how and when to pay your tuition.

ELI Activity:

Language Music Club Final Week!

Next Monday is the last week of the Language Music Club! Join us on Monday, March 19 from 1:00-1:50 pm in Room M15!

ELI Activity:

ELI NIGHT Sign Up!

Get ready for one of the most highly anticipated activities in the ELI! ELI Night will be held this Saturday, March 17, from 5-8 pm in the basement hall of the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh at 159 North Bellefield Ave.

ELI Night is a potluck dinner for ELI students and teachers, Talk Time leaders, conversation partners, and their families and friends. At a potluck dinner, everyone brings a dish to share. The dish should be enough to feed you and your guests and approximately 6-8 others. There is always a diverse selection of delicious food to select from. You will not leave hungry!

Please let us know if you are planning to attend. You can do this online at https://tinyurl.com/ENSpring2018. Let us know if you are coming and how many guests (family members, conversation partners, Talk Time leaders, friends) will be coming with you. We want to make sure that we have enough tables and chairs for everyone!

You should plan to arrive at the church at 5 pm. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm. If you arrive after this time, you will miss out on a great deal of delicious food! If you have any questions, please contact Ece at ecu4l@pitt.edu.

Follow Us on Twitter!
Follow us on Twitter at @ELI Pitt_ELI
Income Tax Information

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the department of the U.S. government that is responsible for collecting taxes. If you lived in the U.S. during 2017, you must send the IRS some information. All international students who are not residents of the U.S. must file IRS Form 8843. Your spouses and children must also file this form. You may have to file other forms, as well. You can find form 8843 online at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8843.pdf.

You must send your forms to the IRS before April 15, 2018. If you need help filling out the IRS forms or have questions about taxes, there are many resources that can help you.

Some of you will receive a 2017 Tuition Statement from the University of Pittsburgh. Students use this statement when they need to pay taxes. If you did not work in the U.S. during 2017, you do not need to pay taxes, and you don’t need to use this statement. If you did not work, you must still file form 8843, though.

You can find more information about filing taxes and tax resources at https://ois.pitt.edu/resources/taxes/tax-assistance/.

Please note: The ELI does not have any tax professionals on staff. If you have more questions about filing taxes, please contact the IRS or a tax professional.

March

Mark Your Calendars!
Upcoming ELI Activities

Saturday, March 17: ELI Night
Monday, March 19: Language Music Club
Saturday, March 24: Up and Away
Saturday, April 7: Pirates Game

F1 Students and End-of-Term Grace Period

The Department of Homeland Security requires students to complete all levels of the ELI program in order to receive the 60-day grace period following the completion of study. This means that if you complete level 6 at the ELI, you will have 60 days after your last day of study to remain in the U.S or request a transfer to a new program.

If you end your study at the ELI before completing level 6, you will have a two-week grace period after your final day of class. This means that you will need to request a transfer to a new program or leave the U.S. within 2 weeks of your last day of study if you do not complete level 6.

If you transfer to a new program at any time, you must begin study at the first available term for the new program. If you transfer within your grace period, you are permitted to be out of school for up to 5 months before beginning the first available term of your new program. Please see Stacy if you have questions about these policies.

ELI Final Exam Schedule Spring 2018

The ELI gives final exams at the end of the term. These exams are worth 30% of the final grade for each class. There are no excused absences for finals. The ELI does not give early final exams or makeup exams. Please note the following schedule and plan to be present for the finals.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friday, April 6</th>
<th>Monday, April 9</th>
<th>Tuesday, April 10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing final</td>
<td>Grammar final</td>
<td>Reading final</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>10:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>10:00am-12:00pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking final</td>
<td>Listening final</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00pm-3:00pm</td>
<td>2:00pm-4:00pm</td>
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F1 Students and Part Time Study

Students with F1 visas have the benefit of taking a vacation term for part time study. If you have studied full time at the ELI for two semesters, you can choose to take a break next semester or to study part time. You may only take one vacation term during your study at the ELI.

Please remember that you must pre-register for this benefit. You cannot change to a vacation term after the term starts. There are no exceptions to this rule. The deadline for choosing a vacation term or part time study for F1 students is April 9, 2018.

Also, please remember that Saudi and Kuwaiti students who are sponsored by their governments are not allowed to study part time because of sponsor rules. If you are a sponsored student and would like to study part time, you must provide a letter of permission from your sponsor before April 9. This letter must be in English. The ELI does not make these requests for students; you must speak to your sponsor yourself.

Sponsored Students and Final Exams

Please note that if you are a sponsored student, and you miss your final exam for any reason, or if you fail the final exam, your sponsor will be notified immediately. Final exams in the ELI are worth 30% of the overall final grade, and both the ELI and your sponsors expect you to take the exams and to perform as well as you can on them. Remember, too, that satisfactory academic progress is a requirement of the F1 visa. If you fail courses, your F1 visa may be revoked. Please check the posted schedules for ELI final exams and plan your schedule accordingly.

www.facebook.com/PittELI

Visit the ELI NEWS online: www.eli.pitt.edu/eli-news
First Day of Summer 2018 Term

Please remember that if you are planning to study at the ELI next term, the first day of official attendance is Friday, May 11, 2018. If you arrive at the ELI after the first day of official attendance, you will be counted absent for each day that you miss. If you cannot arrive by Friday, May 18, you will need to wait until the next semester to attend the ELI. Please see Stacy if you cannot arrive by May 18.

Pitt Master of Laws for Foreign-Trained Lawyers Program (LLM)

The University of Pittsburgh offers a Master of Laws (LLM) degree that provides lawyers who have already completed a law degree outside the U.S. with training in common law legal tradition and the U.S. legal system. This is a one-year program with an average of 15 students each year. It is offered by the School of Law’s Center for International Legal Education. For acceptance to this program, TOEFL and IELTS scores are waived for students who have completed all classes at ELI Level 5 or 6 with at least 85% final grades in each class. Applicants must also have a recommendation from the ELI Student Advisor. See Stacy if you have questions, or find out more about getting your LLM at Pitt Law School by visiting the LLM program website at http://law.pitt.edu/llm, or call 412-648-7023.

Repeating Level 6 at the ELI

Many of you are making plans for your academic future here in the U.S. Please remember that ELI students are allowed to take only two semesters at level 6. After you complete two terms at level 6, you must transfer to another program if you want to stay in the U.S. The ELI cannot make exceptions to this rule, so please plan carefully.

Letters of Recommendation

Many of you will need to ask Stacy for a letter of recommendation if you are applying to other institutions. There are two important things to remember when making a request for a letter. The first factor is that letters of recommendation are based on your performance at the ELI. Stacy uses your grade reports as a resource for information about your performance. If you miss a lot of classes and don’t do your work, your letter of recommendation will not be very strong.

The second important factor is time. Please remember that it takes approximately one week to receive a letter of recommendation. Stacy has many letters to write, and she cannot provide them immediately when you ask for them. **This means that if you need a letter before the semester break in April, you should request it by Monday, April 9. If you request a letter after this date, or during the break, you will have to wait until after the next term begins.** Please plan ahead when making your requests.

Sponsorship Letters

If you have an official sponsorship letter from your government (SACM or CBIE, for example) you must submit it to the ELI Main Office. Students must give an updated sponsor letter to the ELI and to the Student Payment Center each term. If you have any questions about this, please visit the ELI Main Office.

All sponsored students must also complete an information sheet in the ELI Main Office. The ELI must contact sponsors throughout the term, and we require updated information about the student’s sponsor and advisor. Students must complete this form each semester and when their sponsor information changes.

Coffee Talk on Fridays!

4:00 – 6:00 pm at Panera
(3800 Forbes Ave.)

English in the Classroom

This is just a reminder that it is a huge benefit for your language learning if you speak English as much as possible. Some of you are still tempted to speak your native languages to your friends. This is understandable because it is much easier and more comfortable. Please remember, though, that when you are in an ELI classroom, your teachers and your classmates only want to hear your English, even if it isn’t quite accurate yet. Your teachers cannot be flexible with this requirement; they have to insist that you utilize your English.

Information for Sponsored Saudi Students

If you are a sponsored student, the ELI is required to report on your performance each term. Please note the following information from the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM).

SACM has reminded us that it has a 100% attendance policy for its sponsored students. SACM writes, “Students are expected to be in class at all times, and absences must be limited to sick leave authorized by a physician and/or an immigration situation that requires an absence to maintain legal standing.” Please be careful to attend all classes for the rest of the term unless you have an illness or an immigration issue that requires attention. The ELI is required each term to report on progress and excessive absences of sponsored students to SACM.

Please note: The ELI has its own attendance policy, as well. There are no excused absences in the ELI. If you miss class because of an illness or an immigration issue, it will be counted as an absence on your ELI record, even if SACM allows it. There are no exceptions to this rule. For details on the ELI attendance policy, see the online Student Handbook.

If you have any questions about these policies, please see Stacy.