



ELI NEWS

English Language Institute • University of Pittsburgh
Parkvale Building, Room M13, 200 Meyran Ave • Pittsburgh PA 15260

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This Week Marks the First Day of Spring!



There may be snowflakes falling from the sky, but spring has indeed sprung in Pittsburgh. Tuesday, March 20 marked the first day of the spring season. The city of Pittsburgh has many indoor activities to offer so you can still enjoy the changing of the season (even if there is snow!)

- Take time to stop and smell the flowers at Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Gardens, located in Oakland.
- Visit Pittsburgh's contemporary art museum called the Mattress Factory in the North Side.
- Learn about the early days of Pittsburgh at the Heinz History Center in the Strip District neighborhood. Explore some of the many places to eat like Deluca's Diner or stop into Wholey's for a fish sandwich while you are in the area.
- Grab some friends and hang out at the Kickback Café in Lawrenceville. This is a unique coffee shop that also serves as a pinball arcade! Be sure to bring quarters with you to play some pinball.

Remember that admission to many museums, including the ones above, is free with your valid Pitt ID! These museum visits are not free in the summer, even if you are a student.

Therapy Dog Tuesdays in the Cathedral of Learning

On Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:00 pm, volunteers from an animal shelter in Pittsburgh called the Western Pennsylvania Human Society bring their dogs to visit students and members of the public who are on Pitt's campus. The visits are part of the College Canine Program. Feel free to stop by in the Cathedral of Learning to visit with the dogs.



I-20 Expiration Dates for F-1 Students

By Stacy Ranson

The end of the semester is coming soon! If you are an F-1 student, please check the expiration date on your I-20. On page 1 of your I-20, under #5, you will see a beginning date for your studies and a completion date for your studies. **Remember that it is your responsibility to make sure that your I-20 does not expire!** If your I-20 will expire at the end of this semester, you must see Stacy if you want to extend your time at the ELI. **It is too late to request an extension after your I-20 has expired**, so please take a moment to check now.

Stacy's Office Hours Term Break

I know that some of you may need to see me after the ELI term ends. Remember, if you are planning to leave the U.S. and return to the ELI next semester, I must sign your I-20 before you go. If you need me for this, or for any other reason, please note the following dates and times.

I will be available in my office (M22) during the hours below. I will not be available any other time during the break, and I will not write letters of recommendation or review statements of purpose over the break, so please plan carefully.

Monday, April 16	Tuesday, April 17	Wednesday, April 18
12:00-1:00 pm	12:00-1:00 pm	12:00-1:00 pm

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.



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FI Students and End-of-Term Grace Period

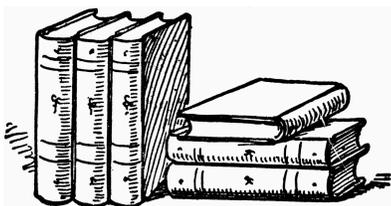
The Department of Homeland Security requires students to complete all levels of the ELI program in order to receive the 60-day grace period following the completion of study. This means that if you complete level 6 at the ELI, you will have 60 days after your last day of study to remain in the U.S.

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

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

ELI Spring Schedules and Book Swap

If you are continuing in the ELI next term, you may pick up your new schedule in the ELI main office any time after 12:00 pm on Thursday, May 10. Classes start Friday, May 11. The ELI will also make the Vault available to students on Thursday, May 10 from 12:00-2:00 pm for a textbook swap. If you would like to meet up with your classmates to sell or exchange textbooks for the new term, the ELI will provide updated book lists for classes and the space; the negotiations are all up to you!



ELI Activity:

Up and Away Reminder



If you bought a ticket for the musical Up and Away, please pick up your ticket from Ece in Room M02 on Friday, March 23, from 1:30-1:45 pm or from 4:00-4:15 pm.

On Saturday, March 24, we will leave from the ELI at 6:15 pm. The show begins at 7:30 pm, but there are other events that coincide with this performance, so there might be a significant amount of traffic. You can also meet us at the show, but please tell Ece when you pick up your ticket. The Cabaret at Theater Square is located downtown (655 Penn Ave; 15222).

Leave big bags at home! No one will be admitted into the Cabaret theater with bags larger than 16" x 16" x 8" (inches). This is the size of a small backpack. Outside food or beverages and laptops/tablets are also prohibited. The show will finish around 9:45 pm. If you have any questions, please email Ece at ecu4@pitt.edu.

ELI Closing Ceremony

by Stacy Ranson

The ELI would like to invite you to the Closing Ceremony for this semester. The ceremony will be on April 12, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the Kurtzman Room of the William Pitt Union. We'll take pictures, have some refreshments, and hand out attendance certificates at the ceremony. You all have played a big role in making this semester great—we hope you'll come celebrate with us!

Paying Tuition Summer 2018

You will be able to pay your tuition starting April 2. You should pay your tuition for the summer 2018 term before May 17, 2018. If you pay after this date, you will be charged late fees. Check your account by logging in to my.pitt.edu and clicking PittPay. There are several ways to pay your tuition.

- **eCheck:** Free online transfer from a US bank account to your Pitt account.
- **Payment plan:** \$55 fee, see <http://payments.pitt.edu/payment-plans/>
- **Cash, check, or money order:** Visit the Student Payment Center in room G-7 Thackeray Hall.
- **Credit cards:** online **only** at my.pitt.edu—you may not use a credit card at Thackeray Hall. There is an additional 2.75% fee for using a credit card.

Salsa Lesson Night

The Pitt Salsa Club would like to extend an invitation to ELI students interested in joining their club for a night of salsa dancing and free food. The lesson will begin at 8:45 pm and will take place in the O'Hara Student Center Ballroom this Friday, March 23. There is no cost to attend this event and a partner is not required.

Pitt Night with the Pittsburgh Opera

This Friday, March 23, is Pitt Night with the Pittsburgh Opera to see Moby Dick (in English)! Private transportation on a yellow school bus and a dessert reception with other Pitt students before the performance are included in the price of your ticket. **This is NOT an ELI activity.**

To purchase tickets, visit <https://culturaldistrict.org/group-sales/pitt>, scroll to the very bottom of the page for the Pitt Night section, and click on Moby Dick on the right. Please note, transportation MUST be requested separately at: <https://culturaldistrict.org/group-sales/pittnight>.

Short Class Schedule for April 12

Classes beginning at...	meet...
10:00 am	10:35-10:50 am
11:00 am	10:55-11:10 am
12:00 noon	11:15-11:30 am
1:00 pm	11:35-11:50 am
2:00 pm	11:55-12:10 pm
3:00 pm	12:15-12:30 pm
Closing Ceremony	1:00-3:00 pm

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.

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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!

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.



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.

Mark your calendars! Upcoming ELI Activities

Saturday, March 24: Up and Away
Friday, March 30: Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, April 7: Pirates Game

Coffee Talk on Fridays!

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



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.

Friday, April 6	Monday, April 9	Tuesday, April 10
Writing final 10:00am-12:00pm	Grammar final 10:00am-12:00pm	Reading final 10:00am-12:00pm
Speaking final 1:00pm-3:00pm	Listening final 2:00pm-4:00pm	

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.

Concert: Riversong String Ensemble
The Riversong String Ensemble is a group of lighthearted and talented musicians who originally formed as part of the Pittsburgh Mandolin Society.
Date: March 25 from 3:00 to 4:00 pm
Location: Heinz Memorial Chapel

S.A.F.E Program Self-Defense Class
Through this program, Pitt Police will teach a variety of self-defense tactics and options to use if you are confronted by an attacker.
Date: March 26 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm
Registration: Email Officer Heather Camp at hlc33@pitt.edu to register.
Location: will be given upon registration

FI Students and Part Time Study

Students with FI 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 FI 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 FI visa. If you fail courses, your FI visa may be revoked. Please check the posted schedules for ELI final exams and plan your schedule accordingly.



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.

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