



**PHILADELPHIA ENGLISH
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE**

PELI



ACADEMIC HANDBOOK

Intensive English Program (IEP)

2025



IEP Academic Handbook

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1. A Message from the Program Director

Dear students,

I would like to personally welcome you to the Philadelphia English Language Institute.

As Executive Program Director of this school, it is my mission to provide visionary leadership and manifest our shared school goals. This responsibility is rewarding to me because it truly pleases me to see our students develop and grow as individuals while they are learning English.

I began my career in the ESL field as a teacher in 2003, and today I am confident that as a director who understands the teacher experience and students' needs I have much to offer. I have devoted much time and energy to solidify my vision of a school that continually improves its quality and furthers students' maturity and development as new citizens.

This school is a very special place for our community. It is a place where people come from many countries to learn, practice, and advance their English skills in a comfortable and friendly setting.

I invite you to actively participate in all the activities the school offers our students. Many students who complete our courses often find better job opportunities and some even continue their studies at the post-secondary level in colleges and universities. I hope that as you complete this and other courses you will gain confidence communicating in a variety of different situations. I am very proud of our history supporting students at PELI. As Program Director, I am personally invested in choosing the most dedicated and experienced instructors to guide you along your learning path.

Our school is a vital asset to the Philadelphia community and as a student here you now belong to this community and help make it a better place for future generations.

Make the best of your time here. Daily persistence brings future rewards!

Yours sincerely,

Arian Fernandes Pereira
Executive Program Director

Contact Us

7708 Castor Ave

<i>Monday</i>	<i>8am - 10pm</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>8am - 10pm</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>8am - 10pm</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>8am - 10pm</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>by appointment only</i>
<i>Saturday</i>	<i>8am - 12:30pm</i>



2. Mission and Values

Philadelphia English Language Institute (PELI) is a post-secondary, independent language school. PELI offers courses suitable for both working adults and those looking for intensive programs. It provides a variety of services and programs to assist students in reaching their full potential. Within an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality, the staff and faculty encourage educational growth, personal development, and language learning.

PELI has been a vital part of the immigrant community of Northeast Philadelphia since 2007. In 2015, Arian Fernandes Pereira and Leonardo Francisco de Jesus Ribeiro, the current owners, began implementing new English programs and expanding the school services. In 2023, PELI achieved accreditation from CEA (Commission on English Language Program Accreditation) and in 2024 began offering intensive English courses to international students.

Our Mission

PELI is committed to the social and economic wellbeing of our students, community, and staff. We continually strive to:

- adapt to and be cognizant of students' language needs
- responsibly offer high-quality language learning courses
- maintain a high academic level of teaching staff
- offer immigration guidance and cultural assistance to student communities
- help our students become better citizens to enrich our community
- remain an integral part of our city and state

Our Values

- Warmth, friendliness, and compassion towards all
- Integrity
- Open communication and feedback
- Passion for teaching
- Continuous improvement



3. Intensive English Program (IEP)

Our Intensive English Program serves international and domestic students with varying levels of English proficiency. IEP will help students meet their academic, professional, and personal goals. More specifically, the program:

1. Provides students with integrated instruction in grammar, reading, writing, and speaking.
2. Focuses on English for high-level daily communication and academic study.
3. Facilitates students' accommodation in the college culture in the USA.

Our six-level program, ranging from beginner (A1) to advanced (C1), is student-centered and integrates all language skills with contextualized practice at each level. Courses offer immersive, relevant speaking and listening to build confidence and give students the opportunity to learn and work collaboratively with others.

Alongside integrated English language courses at six levels, the program also offers elective classes which include Conversation, Pronunciation, and American Culture. All intensive English courses require a minimum of 18 hours of study per week. Therefore, students enrolled in intensive English courses may be required to attend specific elective classes to meet the minimum hour class requirements.

At PELI, students will learn with our experienced and professional instructors among a diverse range of learners. Our school is prepared to offer a safe and comfortable environment for learning, practicing, and building fluency in English.

PELI does not offer Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 students.

Accreditation

The Philadelphia English Language Institute is accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation for the period December 2022 through December 2027 and agrees to uphold the CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions. CEA is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency for English language programs and institutions in the U.S. For further information about this accreditation, please contact CEA, 1001 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 630, Alexandria, VA 22314, (703) 665-3400, www.cea-accredit.org.

The Philadelphia English Language Institute is authorized under Federal Law to enroll nonimmigrant alien students. [School Search](#) | [Study in the States \(dhs.gov\)](#).





4. Student Services

Tutoring Services

The Philadelphia English Language Institute offers one-on-one English language tutoring with a focus on grammar, pronunciation, conversation, and vocabulary development.

We offer private classes between 11:30am - 7pm, Mondays through Thursdays. The price for tutoring is \$50/hour. Tutoring is offered based on teacher availability.

Student Advising

We offer academic and personal advising to students. Current students can sign up for a 30-minute appointment with an academic advisor. During the initial advising appointment, the advisor will complete intake with the student. Advisors also complete case notes after each meeting to track the students' progress and goals.

1. **Academic advising** provides resources and information regarding the academic expectations of the students' course. We strive to prepare students for the American standard of higher education, starting with their current courses. Students and Advisors can work together to set educational goals and discuss the students' progress towards the next course level. Advisors can assist students with issues relating to placement, attendance, advancing or repeating levels, and dismissal. Academic Advising is also where students can exchange feedback and suggestions about the program or course.

It is our duty to support students so that they make satisfactory progress. If a teacher identifies a student who is struggling or not making satisfactory progress, they should refer the student to Academic Advising. Similarly, any student who is in danger of failing or losing status should be referred to Academic Advising. Teachers may also refer any student who they think will benefit from advising. Any student may choose to receive advising if they want additional support, regardless of their progress in the course.

2. **Personal advising** helps students map out career goals, access public services and benefits, clarify documents, and find relevant tools or resources for the individual. Advisors will refer students to the appropriate resources given the particular needs of the student. This service also supports students who may experience culture shock or require explanations of American academic, occupational, or social culture.

Students should contact their DSO to schedule an appointment.



5. Program Costs

Course Tuition

1 TRIMESTER (4 months)

Total cost: \$3,550

APPLICATION FEES - BEFORE ACCEPTANCE paid before receiving I-20*; non-refundable		ENROLLMENT FEES - AFTER ACCEPTANCE Paid upon arrival and re-enrollment; subject to refund policy	
I-20 Fee	\$350 + \$70 per dependent	Enrollment Fee	\$305 per trimester Includes textbooks and orientation materials
Program Commitment Fee	\$345	Tuition	\$2550 per trimester 3 payments of \$850
<p><u>Change of Status / Transfer Applicants</u>: must pay I-20 Fee and Program Commitment Fee at one time with application (\$695 total)</p> <p><u>Initial Applicants</u>: may pay fees separately. I-20 Fee due with application and Program Commitment Fee due after visa acceptance</p>			

Verification

Applicants are required to demonstrate ability to pay for educational and living expenses while they are studying. All applicants must show the ability to pay no less than \$15,000. There will be an additional \$1,990 fee per dependent.

Documents Required:

- Recent bank statement (less than 90 days old)
- **OR** signed letter from the student's bank stating the account balance (on official bank letterhead)

After Acceptance

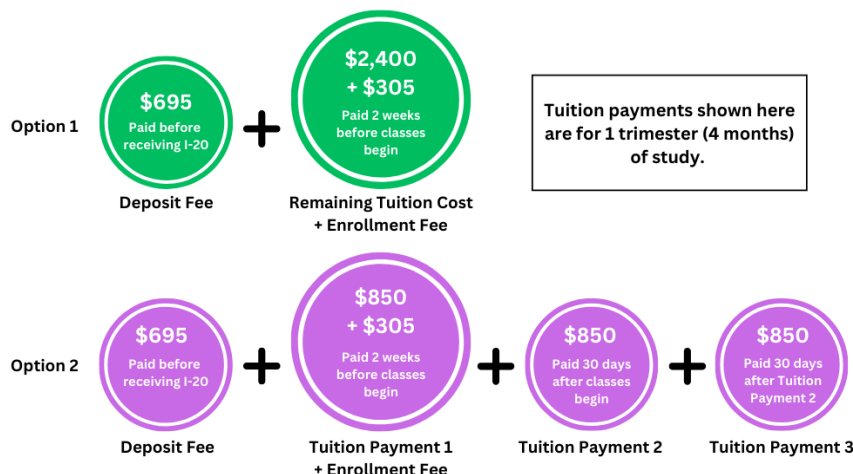
After receiving the I-20, students should make the payments shown below. These fees are non-refundable. SEVIS Fee can be paid by visiting www.fmjfee.com.

U.S. GOVERNMENT FEES (paid after receiving I-20; fees are non-refundable)	
SEVIS Fee - Paid to SEVIS, for all new F-1 / change of status applicants	\$350
DS-160 Fee - Paid to USCIS, for new F-1 applicants only	\$185
I-539 Fee - Paid to USCIS, for change of visa only	\$420 (online) / \$470 (on paper)



Payment Plan

Students can choose between paying the full tuition after acceptance (\$150 discount) or making multiple payments. The payment schedule for 1 trimester is shown here:



Other Fees

Applicants may be subject to pay these fees. These fees are non-refundable.

Returned Checks, Money Orders, or Rejected Transaction Fee	\$40
Reduced Medical Course Load Fee	\$50 per occurrence
Early Withdrawal Fee	\$300
Late Payment Fee	\$50 per week late
Credit Card Fee	4% per transaction
Wire Transfer Fee (in/out)	\$50
Duplicate Document Fee	\$30

Re-enrolling for a Subsequent Semester

RE-ENROLLMENT FEES Total: \$3550	
Re-enrollment Fee	\$250 per trimester Includes textbooks, paid at re-enrollment
Tuition	\$3300 per trimester 4 payments of \$825



Payment Obligation

You agree to pay the tuition by signing the Student Payment Agreement, or by providing Sponsor's Affidavit of Support. Whether or not you attend the regularly scheduled class sessions, you still must pay your tuition according to the payment cycle.

Payments that are more than 30 days late will result in the immediate cancellation of student's I-20. Students will be given a warning the third week after the missed payment. The full amount of the payment must be made in order to avoid the I-20 cancellation. Students will be out of status if their I-20 is canceled.

Payment Processing

When PELI makes payments through Classe365 or other payment processing system, the payments are processed by our third-party payment processors Square, Venmo, Zelle, or banks handling wire transfers (the "Payment Processors"). The Payment Processors are solely responsible for handling organizations' payments. You agree not to hold PELI liable for fees that do not reach us because you have quoted incorrect payment information, or the Payment Processors refused the payment for any other reason. Please note that the Payment Processors may collect personal data, which allows them to process the payments (e.g., credit card details). The Payment Processors handle all the steps in the payment process on their websites, including data collection and data processing. Payments made through Square are subject to a 4% non-refundable processing fee. Wire transfers incur a \$50 processing fee.

Personal Credit and Collections

PELI reserves the right to collect payment in full before guaranteeing a space. The ability to enroll in a payment plan is a privilege offered by our school regardless of personal credit. We act in accordance with the Federal Equal Credit Opportunity Act, which prohibits creditors from discrimination against credit applications concerning any aspect of a credit transaction based on race, color, religion, national birth, sex or marital status or age (provided the applicant can enter into a contract). The agency that administers compliance with this law is the Federal Trade Commission, Equal Credit Opportunity, and Washington, D.C. 20580.



6. Refund Policies

The following refund policies apply to all students enrolled in our program:

Section A: Refunds for program cancelation or denials

If PELI cancels a student's program, denies a student's application, or if a student's visa or change of status is denied, PELI will refund all tuition paid (not including non-refundable fees). Students must provide proof of the visa denial before refund can be given.

Section B: Refunds for withdrawals or terminations

If the student formally cancels their registration (through a written request submitted to the Administration Office) before entering the country on an I-20, they are eligible for a tuition refund (not including non-refundable fees).

Students are not eligible for any refund after completing their enrollment. For new students, this refers to reporting to PELI for the assigned program start date. For continuing students, this refers to the date of re-enrollment. If the student has prepaid for a subsequent trimester, they will be eligible for a tuition refund for the second trimester only.

If a student is terminated due to failing to adhere to PELI policies (attendance, student conduct, academic, or missing payments), student will not be eligible for a tuition refund for the current trimester. If the student has prepaid for a subsequent trimester, they will be eligible for a tuition refund for the second trimester only.

Purchased student books are refundable only if they have not been used. Used books are non-refundable. Placement Test fees are non-refundable.

Section C: Refund Processing

Refunds are made by check or wire transfer to the sponsor or student who paid for the program.

Refund requests are processed within 30 calendar days of the date of the withdrawal request or within 30 calendar days of the date of the termination decision.



7. Program Admission and Enrollment

Admission Criteria

All applicants must submit:

- Copy of passport
- Signed Forms (found on PELI website)
 - Student Agreement Form
 - Payment Agreement Form
 - Sponsor's Affidavit of Support (if using a sponsor)

If applying with dependents:

- Copy of marriage certificate (for spouse)
- Copy of birth certificates (for children)

Transfer and Change of Status applicants have additional requirements. See pages 12 and 13.

Financial Documentation

Applicants are required to demonstrate ability to pay for educational and living expenses while they are studying. All applicants must show the ability to pay no less than \$15,000.

Documents Required:

- Recent bank statement (less than 90 days old)
- **Or** signed letter from the student's bank stating the account balance (on official bank letterhead)

Application Process

The following are the steps students can take to get admission to the Intensive English Program:

1. Complete online application and send required documents
2. Pay Application Fees (\$695) to PELI
3. Receive Letter of Acceptance and I-20
4. Pay SEVIS Fee: <https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html>

After students have been accepted, students should apply for a visa at an American Embassy.

Enrollment

Students can arrive up to 30 days before the start of class. However, students must report to the school by the date indicated on their acceptance letter. Students may be enrolled up to 2 weeks after the start of the trimester. After 2 weeks, all new applicants (including transfer students and change of status students) will have to wait for the following trimester to begin class.

Upon arrival to Philadelphia, students must report to PELI and:

- Attend new student orientation
- Take English placement test
- Make any required enrollment payments

The placement test for IEP is a 70-item, multiple choice test. It consists of a listening/functional language section, a reading section, and a language use section focusing on grammar and vocabulary.



The test takes about 60 minutes to complete. Placement test results inform student level placement. Students will be notified of their level by email a few days before the new term starts.

After receiving their level placement results, students will select their elective courses. However, PELI retains the right to choose which elective courses students enroll in based on availability and demand.

Requesting Level Change

If a student wishes to change their designated level after starting their course (either because it is too advanced or too basic for their actual English level), students should meet with the Academic Coordinator to formally request a level change. Level changes can only be made during the first 2 weeks of class. All requests are subject to the Academic Coordinator's discretion.

Teachers may also request a level change for a student if they notice a student may have been misplaced either above or below their academic level.

Maintaining Status

Students must maintain their F-1 visa status with respect to the regulations of US Customs and Immigration Service (USCIS) for the duration of their studies at PELI. Students must:

1. Attend student orientation prior to the start of classes. If you are unable to attend the scheduled orientation, you must arrange for a make-up orientation with the Program Director.
2. Register for a full course of study (at least 18 hours per week).
3. Abide by PELI's Academic Policy and Attendance Policy.
4. Report changes to any of these items to the DSO within 15 days of the change occurring: local address, legal name, source of funding, new passport, or visa. This includes changes to the dependents in addition to the F-1 student.
5. Abide by the PELI Student Code of Conduct. A violation of PELI's Student Code of Conduct may result in a warning, probation, or termination. If a student is terminated due to a violation of PELI's Student Code of Conduct, and the student is not granted an appeal of the termination, the student's status will be terminated in SEVIS.
6. Be current with all tuition payments.
7. Do not engage in unlawful employment. Rules for F-1 nonimmigrant employment can be found on the Study in the States website.
8. Request a transfer to another SEVP-authorized school prior to stopping your attendance at PELI or within 30 days (not graduating from the highest level offered at PELI) and 60 days of completing your program of study at PELI (graduating from the highest level of the program).

Grounds for Termination of Enrollment

Student's enrollment may be terminated for several reasons, which include:

- failure to comply with the school's rules and policies
- failure to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Academic Handbook
- failure to make scheduled payments when due
- failure to maintain required attendance rates
- unresolved Academic Probation

The school may terminate a student's enrollment at any time for such violations. The school further reserves the right to modify the rules and policies in the Academic Handbook, and any such revisions will be posted online at www.pelischool.org



Course Withdrawal

If a student decides to withdraw their enrollment, he/she must submit a written request. If a student is withdrawing enrollment after entering the US, the student can complete a "Course Withdrawal Form" and submit it to the Administrative Office. If withdrawing before entering the US, the student can submit a written request by email to admissions@pelischool.org. All withdrawals are subject to the school's refund policy.

Transferring into PELI

F-1 students wishing to transfer from a currently SEVIS-approved institution to PELI must provide an official transfer "IEP F-1 Transfer Form". In addition to the completed transfer request form, the student must provide the following:

1. Completed Application
2. Copy of passport
3. Copy of visa stamp
4. Copy of I-94 document (www.cbp.gov/I94)
5. Copy of current I-20 (and any other previous forms)
6. Grade reports/transcripts from the current SEVIS-approved institution if available
7. Financial documentation (same as is listed above under "Admission Criteria") and any other required documentation for dependents

Students transferring into PELI will also be required to pay the Application Fee. Once your documents are received, you will receive a letter informing you of whether the transfer has been approved. If approved, a Designated School Official or PDSO will notify the official at your current institution that your I-20 has been authorized for transfer and issue an acceptance letter to your current institution, if required.

Students may be enrolled up to 2 weeks after the start of the trimester. After 2 weeks, all students wishing to transfer in will have to wait for the following trimester to begin class.

Transferring out of PELI

F-1 students currently attending classes at PELI may request a transfer out to another SEVIS-approved institution at any time upon arrival with specific reporting requirements. To complete a transfer-out request, the student must do the following:

1. Provide a transfer request form from the SEVIS-approved institution in which you plan to attend to the PDSO/DSO at PELI. If no transfer form is made available to you, the PDSO/DSO at the center you plan to attend may send an email confirmation indicating that they do not use such forms in their acceptance process.
2. Provide an acceptance letter from the SEVIS-approved institution or ask that the PDSO/DSO at that institution send an email or other documentation to the DSO or PDSO at PELI.

Once these documents are provided to the Director at PELI, the Director and DSO will access your record in SEVIS and initiate the transfer. There is a transfer out fee (see below). Students should refer to the PELI's Refund policies for any charges that may apply to your registration and attendance at the center prior to transferring out. Any pending payments will also need to be made to PELI prior to obtaining approval to transfer out.



Early Transfer-Out Policy

To qualify for an early SEVIS transfer (before the end of your current session), you must:

- Be in valid F-1 visa status
- Provide a written transfer request and an official acceptance letter from the new school
- Pay the required Transfer-Out Fee (see table below)

Request Submission Date	Transfer-Out Fee
Week 1 or 2 of the session	\$400
Week 3 or 4 of the session	\$600
After Week 4	Full tuition is still owed

Application and registration fees are non-refundable. Students who are on monthly payment plans must still pay the Transfer-Out Fee in full before the SEVIS transfer can be processed. No tuition refunds will be issued. (*Refer to page 9 for Refund Policy*) If a student stops attending class before their SEVIS transfer is approved, their SEVIS record may be terminated.

Change of Status

Applicants who are in the US under a different visa designation and wish to change their visa status to F-1 should provide the following:

1. Completed Application
2. Copy of passport
3. Copy of visa stamp
4. Copy of I-94 document (www.cbp.gov/I94)
5. Copy of previously issued DS-2019 forms (for J-1 status only)
6. Financial documentation (same as is listed above under “Admission Criteria”) and any other required documentation for dependents (must be translated into English)

Applicants requesting a visa change of status will also be required to pay the Application Fees. After receiving PELI acceptance, applicants should file form I-539: <https://www.uscis.gov/i539online>

If the applicant’s status change request is granted within the first two weeks of a trimester, the student will be added to the trimester he or she originally applied for. If the status change is granted after the first two weeks of a trimester, the student will be enrolled in the next available trimester.

Application Expiration

Applications (including administrative fees paid to PELI) will remain valid for one year after submission if an I-20 has not been issued. If a student is unable to complete the application process at the time of submission, they will have up to a year before administrative fees expire.



Re-enrollment

Students who complete a trimester at PELI can re-enroll for another trimester (except students completing Level 6). Students should re-enroll by the Re-enrollment Date (2 weeks prior to the session start date) by making the first payment for the course. *Re-enrollment payment information can be found in Section 5 (Program Cost).*

Student Expectations and Program Integrity Statement

At PELI, we are proud to offer a high-quality Intensive English Program designed for serious students who are committed to improving their English skills. As a U.S. Department of Homeland Security–authorized institution, we are also responsible for upholding immigration regulations and protecting the integrity of the F-1 student visa program.

To maintain a fair and rigorous educational environment:

- Class schedules and levels are assigned by PELI based on placement testing and program needs. Students may not request or select their preferred class schedule or English level.
- We offer a two-day-per-week IEP program. Students will be assigned either a Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday schedule. This assignment is final and will be decided by PELI prior to the start of the session.
- Students who enroll in our program are expected to attend regularly, participate actively, and progress academically.
- F-1 visa holders are not permitted to work in the U.S. without proper authorization. Engaging in unauthorized work is a violation of immigration regulations and will result in the termination of your SEVIS record and I-20.

PELI reserves the right to cancel the I-20 or deny future enrollment to students who demonstrate a lack of academic commitment or misuse their F-1 status.



8. Program Completion

Passing Requirements

Students must achieve an average of 75% to pass the course and advance to the next level. Students may take a level no more than 2 times. Students also must successfully complete all assignments and satisfy all financial obligations to the school.

At the end of each course, students will receive a copy of their report card. Upon successful completion of the course, students will receive a certificate. A request for a certificate may be denied by the school if a student does not meet the passing requirements.

Program End Date

Upon completion of their program, students must leave the country within 30 days in order to avoid overstaying their visa. However, if a student completes the highest level at PELI, the student will be allowed 60 days after the program end date.

Length of Program

IEP consists of six levels, and each level is typically completed over a trimester (approximately 14 to 16 weeks). The program is structured to be completed within 6 trimesters (approximately 2 years) if the student progresses through each level sequentially without repeating any levels. However, because students are permitted to repeat a level, the maximum time allowed for completion is 12 trimesters.

Exceptions

In certain cases, students who encounter extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical issues, personal emergencies) may request an extension beyond the maximum allowable time. Requests for extensions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and extensions may be granted at the discretion of the academic committee. See page 19 for more information.

Retention Of Academic Transcripts

PELI keeps records of academic performance and enrollment. The school will maintain access to academic performance transcripts for three years for immigration and DSO requirements.

No Guarantee Statement

The student understands and agrees that the completion of PELI courses and obtaining a certificate is not a guarantee of employment or admission to a four-year college, community college and/or a career college. PELI has not made any promise to you, express or implied, regarding any opportunities for you following completion of the school.

Family Educational Rights And Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA provides students who are 18 years of age or older certain rights with respect to their educational records. One of those rights is to deny others access to their educational records. This right remains in effect until a student provides written consent to disclose information in their educational records to others. As a result, if the student desires any school official to discuss the student's progress with someone other than the student, the student must first provide written consent.



9. Academic Policies

Learning to communicate in another language is hard work. Your program performance will be assessed through exams and speaking assignments. We monitor each student's progress very closely and you will regularly receive feedback and suggestions to improve your performance. Although students will not be given a grade for homework, students are expected to complete homework every day as it is an important part of the learning process.

The following achievement scales apply to the Intensive English Program core curriculum. Elective classes have course-specific assessments and grade breakdowns but follow the same grading scale.

Core Course Grade Breakdown:

Unit Quizzes <i>12 total, 70 points each</i>	65%
Speaking Evaluations <i>12 total, 20 points each</i>	15%
Midterm Exam <i>140 points</i>	10%
Final Exam <i>140 points</i>	10%
Total	100%

Overall Grade Calculation

At the end of each trimester, students' total grade for each class will be combined to form their overall grade. Core classes will be weighted as 75% of the overall score, and elective classes will be weighted as 25% of the overall score. Overall grades will be calculated by the following formula:

$$((\text{Core Percentage} \times 75) + (\text{Elective Percentage} \times 25)) / 100 = \text{Grade Average Percentage}$$

Grading:

A - Excellent	90-100%
B - Good	80-89%
C - Low	75*-79%
F - Failing	74% and below
<i>*75% is required to pass the course</i>	



Accessing Student Grades

Students will be given access to Classe365, which allows students to access their student profile and view their grades and attendance. If students have trouble accessing or need a new password, they should contact the Administrative Office.

Academic Probation & Termination

Students must make satisfactory academic progress in order to maintain their legal immigration status. The minimum standard acceptable grade for an IEP course at PELI is 75%. If a student's cumulative grade falls below a 75% at the end of a trimester, the student will be placed on Academic Probation for the following trimester and must repeat the level they failed. Students cannot repeat a level more than once. PELI expects that students will make every effort to improve their grades during this trimester of Academic Probation.

Students will receive a written warning if their average is below 75% at the midterm point. If the student's average is below 75% at the time of the final exam, the student will receive an official letter of Academic Probation.

If at the end of the Academic Probation the student has not met the minimum standard acceptable grade, the student will be dismissed on account of not making satisfactory academic progress.

Appeal of Academic Termination

Students have the right to appeal an academic dismissal if they feel that their situations merit individual attention due to unusual circumstances and contributed to their failure of the course(s). The students who wish to appeal must write to the Program Director stating the reason for the appeal prior to the start of the next course. The written appeal must be received within 3 business days of the notification of termination. The letter must state the following:

- The unusual circumstances the student feels caused the failure.
- What she or he has done or plans to do to alleviate the problems she or he had in academic performance.

The Program Director may request additional information or documentation in support of the student's appeal of the termination. The appeal will be reviewed by the Program Director, an Academic Coordinator, and the student's instructor. If the Violation Decision is upheld, an F-1 student will have fifteen (15) days from the date of notification to transfer to another institution or be terminated from PELI and in SEVIS.



10. Attendance Policies

Attendance

Attendance is defined as being present for the regularly scheduled class during the regularly scheduled hours. Attendance is not a component of course grades. However, the school expects students to attend all scheduled classes. Students will not be able to maintain their visa status if they have poor attendance and repeated lateness.

Attendance is closely monitored and is recorded daily. PELI requires all F-1 students to maintain a minimum of 80% attendance throughout the semester. Failure to do so will result in termination of F-1 visa.

Absences, Lateness and Early Departures

For 9-hour class days, attendance will be divided into 2 halves. If a student misses only half of the day, they will receive only 1 "Absent" mark. If a student is absent for the whole day, they will receive 2 "Absent" marks - one for each half. Halves are divided by the mid-day break.

Late arrival, late return from breaks, and/or early departure all impact daily attendance and contribute to the attendance rate recorded by the instructor.

There is a grace period of 10 minutes for late arrivals. After 10 minutes, a student will be marked "Late". After 30 minutes, a student will be marked "Absent". If a student receives 4 "Late" marks, it is equivalent to an "Absent" mark and will contribute to the student's overall attendance rate. This policy also applies for early departures. (A student leaving 30 minutes early from class will also be marked as "Absent").

Because students have more than one class each school day, it is possible to receive more than one "Late" mark in one day. Students can only receive 2 "Absent" marks per day, one for each half.

Attendance Warning and Probation Procedures

If students fall below 80% attendance rate, they will be terminated from the course and will no longer be in status. Students will be given several written warnings before reaching an attendance rate that would result in termination. Students should speak to their DSO with questions about their attendance rates.

***Numbers shown below indicate a student who enrolled at the start of the semester. Numbers of allowed absences may change if a student enrolled after the program start date. The determining factor of attendance rates is 80%, not the exact number of absences.*

4 absences → **First Warning** (email and letter)
make-up opportunities made available (limited to recover 2 absences)

8 absences → **Second Warning and Probation** (email and letter)
make-up opportunities made available (limited to recover 4 absences)
meeting with advisor

12 absences → **Final Warning** (email and letter)
no further make-ups allowed
meeting with advisor

More than 12 absences* → **Termination from the program**



Additionally, if a student misses 5 consecutive class days without any notice to their instructor or to PELI administration, they will automatically be terminated from the program.

Make-Up Procedures

In the event of an absence, students should see their instructors for missed assignments. It is a student's responsibility to make up for all missed work. Students have up to a week from a missed test date to make up the grade or they will receive a 0. Students must meet with the teacher to schedule a time outside of class to make up the test.

If a student wants to make up for the class time they missed during an absence (and thereby improve their attendance rate), students can request private tutoring. Tutoring rates for make-up classes follow the same rate as specified (see page 6) and are offered based on teacher availability.

To recover one 1 absence, students must complete 2 hours of tutoring. Students are limited as to how many absences they can recover:

- After the first attendance warning, students are limited to recover 2 absences
- After the second attendance warning, students are limited to recover 4 absences
- After the final attendance warning, students are **not** eligible to recover any absences

Make-up classes can include working on missed assignments, missed exams (if made up within a week of test date), or extra assignments assigned by the teacher.

Absences Due to Medical Reasons

Some absences may be excused when a valid doctor's note is submitted. Doctor's notes will only be accepted in certain emergency situations. PELI reserves the right to make a final decision about whether an absence is excused or unexcused. Doctor's notes may be accepted no more than 3 times per semester.

Excused Absences: Students who are absent due to illness or injury can submit a doctor's note on official letterhead clearly stating the following:

- The date(s) the student is advised not to attend class
- The reason* for the recommendation (can be brief but must be medically valid)
- The doctor's name, signature, and office contact details

**We are not requesting personal medical records or diagnoses — rather, a confirmation from a licensed medical provider that a serious condition or emergency prevented your attendance on specific dates.*

Unexcused Absences: Students should avoid scheduling routine check-ups (for example: physicals, dental cleanings, or elective visits) on class days. These types of appointments will not be excused, even with a doctor's note. PELI holds classes only 2 days per week, and students are expected to prioritize their educational commitment during those days.

Medical Leave (Reduced Course Load)

A medical leave is a temporary break in study for documented medical purposes during which time an F-1 student remains in the United States and is continuously enrolled with a reduced course load, consistent with federal regulations. If an F-1 student experiences a medical emergency or an illness that interrupts their ability to maintain full-time status, including maternity leave, they may request a



reduced course load.

In order to be granted a reduced course load, students must provide medical documentation from a licensed doctor or clinical psychologist. The healthcare provider must include the recommended course load reduction (how many hours of study each week, if any), the duration of recommended reduction, and the medical reason for the reduction.

A reduced course load cannot exceed 12 months and can only be processed for one trimester at a time. Students must provide a new letter from a healthcare provider for subsequent trimesters. Students should meet with their DSO for reauthorization of reduced course load at the start of a new trimester.

In all cases of Medical Leave, students are required to pay full tuition for the session in which they are enrolled. This policy ensures the integrity of enrollment records and the financial sustainability of the school.

Appeal of Attendance Probation Procedures

Students have the right to appeal an attendance termination if they feel that their situations merit individual attention due to unusual circumstances and contributed to their attendance issues. appeals will be considered **only for documented extenuating circumstances**, such as medical emergencies (with a doctor's note), family emergencies (e.g., death of an immediate family member), and legal obligations (e.g., court dates).

The students who wish to appeal must write to the Program Director stating the reason for the appeal. The written appeal must be received within 5 business days of the final warning. The letter must include:

- Reason for absences
- Supporting documents
- Plan to prevent future absences

The Program Director may request additional information or documentation in support of the student's appeal of the termination. The appeal will be reviewed by the Program Director, an Academic Coordinator, and the student's instructor. If the Violation Decision is upheld, an F-1 student will have fifteen (15) days from the date of notification to transfer to another institution or be terminated from PELI and in SEVIS.

Leave Of Absence

A leave of absence (LOA) is a temporary break in study during which time an F student must be out of the United States, but she/he is continuously enrolled. PELI permits a student to request a leave of absence subject to the following conditions:

1. The student must submit a written request form.
 - a. Specify a reason for the leave.
 - b. Provide applicable documentation. Must be in English or translated into English.
 - c. The request must be submitted in advance of the beginning date of the leave of absence unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so.
 - d. If a student does not request a leave of absence prior to being absent for more than ten (10) consecutive class days, she/he shall be terminated from the program of study at PELI.



2. A student must report to PELI by the scheduled return date noted on the Leave Request Form or request an extension (if applicable) of the Leave of Absence in writing. If the student does not report on the scheduled return date, the student will be marked absent.

When returning to the United States, students should communicate with their DSO to decide the best date to return. This date must be within 5 months of the students' departure and must coincide with the start of a new trimester. If a student remains outside of the United States for longer than 5 months, they will no longer be in status and will need a new I-20 and a new SEVIS ID before being able to return to the program.

If a student fails to return from a leave of absence (no-show), the student shall be terminated from his/her program of study.

Student Vacation

F-1 students must complete at least one full academic year (2 consecutive trimesters) to be eligible for annual vacation. A vacation is limited to the equivalent of one session (16 weeks) and cannot be extended. To be granted a vacation, an F-1 student must meet SEVIS requirements for a break in study.

Additionally, students must be enrolled for classes in the academic term immediately following their annual vacation. Before getting approval for vacation, PELI requires students to make the first payment of the trimester that follows their vacation term. Payment must be made before the student completes their second trimester of study.

If a student is placed on Academic Probation, he or she is not eligible to take a vacation.



11. Student Code of Conduct

Students are expected to follow school regulations and help maintain a professional learning environment through orderly, ethical, and respectful behavior. Any violation of regulations and/or disruptive behavior will be referred to the School Office. The Program Director may decide that the offender (1) be verbally warned, (2) receive a formal warning letter, or (3) be terminated from the school and have I-20 canceled with no refund given.

- A) The student agrees to use all media sources provided to you, including internet access following the Academic Handbook code of conduct. The student understands that abusing these privileges could lead to revocation of such rights and disciplinary action, which may include expulsion.
- B) The student understands and agrees that academic success is solely his or her responsibility and that he or she must make satisfactory progress as outlined in the course requirements and receive materials to advance to the next level and receive a certificate.
- C) The student fully understands that falsifying any information, insubordination, cheating, plagiarism, copying another person's work, having someone else do the student's homework, or taking credit for someone else's work may result in immediate dismissal.
- D) The student agrees to this program and level placement and the financial obligations which accompany it. The student agrees that it is his or her responsibility to abide by the policies defined by the school and answer to respect and to obey school directives issued by a supervisor or manager. A refusal to obey a supervisor's order or a lack of respect for a supervisor, teacher, or director will subject the student to the school's disciplinary action or dismissal.

Code of Conduct Violations

The following are examples of violations that would subject a student to dismissal:

- All types of dishonesty, including cheating*, plagiarism, knowingly furnishing false information to the school or about the school, forgery, alteration, or use of school documents with intent to defraud
 - *Cheating is defined as any intentional attempt by a student to misrepresent their academic achievement. Cheating includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - Possessing unauthorized information during a test or evaluation or using such information to answer questions
 - Copying information from another student during a test or evaluation
 - Communicating in any way with another student during a test
 - Deliberately giving student information during a test or using information provided by another student during a test to answer a question
 - Submitting work on which there has been collaboration with or which was prepared by another individual unless previously authorized by the instructor
 - Any deceptive practice by which students attempt to receive a passing grade in a course.
 - Any student caught cheating on a test or assignment will be given a grade of zero (0) on that test or assignment
 - Any student caught cheating a second time may be terminated from PELI
- The intentional disruption of teaching, administration, disciplinary proceedings, public meeting, and programs or other school activities
- Physical or verbal/written abuse of any person on school or school-sponsored premises
- Theft or damage of school property or the property of anyone on school premises
- Sexual harassment, which includes unwelcome requests for a physical, dating, or personal relationship with any other student or staff member



The following are examples of what is considered unacceptable behavior at the school:

- Students are expected to behave professionally at all times. Disrespectful conduct towards fellow students or staff will not be tolerated.
- Any behavior that infringes upon the rights of other students or staff will not be tolerated.
- Sexual harassment, unwanted gestures, jokes, offensive speech, physical advances, sexually suggestive pictures, gestures, touching of one's self or others, exposing one's private body parts or undergarments will not be tolerated. This type of behavior is in direct violation of the student code of conduct and basic human rights.
- Harassment or discrimination including hazing is unacceptable. PELI students and staff are entitled to a respectful learning environment. Being respected means being treated honestly and professionally, with your unique talents and perspectives valued. A respectful workplace is about more than compliance with the law. It is a working environment that is free of inappropriate behavior of all kinds and harassment because of age, disability, marital status, race or color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Engaging in such behaviors directly, condoning or encouraging others to do so, transmitting or initiating such conduct via online, email, on school grounds, in class or at school-sponsored events will not be tolerated.
- Students caught defacing or destroying school property will be required to pay restitution and face disciplinary actions including suspension or expulsion from the program.
- The use or possession of drugs on school property or during a school-sanctioned function will result in immediate expulsion.



12. Additional Policies

Non-Discrimination Policies

The Philadelphia English Language Institute will never deny admissions to anyone on the basis of (nor conduct activities with regard to) race, religion, age, creed, color, sex, physical challenge, veteran status, marital status, sexual preference, or national origin.

PELI is dedicated to diversity, inclusion, respect, and civility and to the highest standards of personal development and performance. We place the highest value on friendship, scholarship, integrity, and responsibility. We are committed to honoring the individual in our community, where members respect and celebrate the diversity of our students, families, faculty administration, and staff. Our policies and procedures have been established for safety, to support our learning and teaching environment, and to maintain the highest standards and behavior.

Whether or not discrimination or harassment exists depends on circumstances or facts surrounding an incident. For this reason, it is not possible to provide a complete list of conduct that constitutes discrimination or harassment. The following are examples of conduct that may be prohibited by this policy: unwelcome requests for a physical, dating, or personal relationship; offensive jokes, remarks, epithets, or taunts related to a protected characteristic; speech, or action, or the display of material that is demeaning, degrading, threatening, or shows hostility to an individual or group because of a protected characteristic mentioned above; and unwelcome physical contact, demand for sexual favors in exchange for favorable or preferential treatment.

If you believe you have been harassed or discriminated against, take one or more of the following actions as soon as possible:

1. Tell the offending person or people that you want the offending speech or actions stopped. Do not apologize. Speak directly. Give a clear message about how you feel.
2. If you do not feel comfortable confronting the person alone, take a friend along.
3. Tell a staff member or the Program Director.

You should not be afraid to make a complaint or report what you honestly consider to be discrimination or harassment because of fear of reprisal or getting another person in trouble. Retaliation or threats of retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or against anyone who participates in an investigation of any such complaint, is a violation of the PELI policy and may be a further cause of disciplinary action.

Information Privacy Policy

PELI will not sell your information to any outside entities. All students have the right to inspect and review their education records upon request. The school sets limits on data retention in compliance with SEVIS requirements.

All education records are directly related to a student and maintained by the school or its agent for all enrolled students. Education records may exist in any medium (e.g., electronic or digital files including email, paper documents, fax documents, oral conversations, etc.). Education records include such things as personal identifiers and bio-demographic data (such as SSN, ITIN, passport number, driver's license, date of birth, ethnicity, gender, relationship information) and also academic records (such as test scores, GPA, graded papers, exams, transcripts, advising notes, financial information).

PELI does not use data for target advertising. The school complies with privacy and accuracy



principles. The school will collect personal information and comply with State policies of proper handling and accuracy. It is the school's duty to protect and hold in strict confidence all information concerning students. Only authorized individuals have access to personal information.

Disclosure of information may be authorized by the student in order to comply with immigration requirements and will only apply to students who require the issuance of a Visa, I-20 or other immigration related forms. If not authorized by the student, the school will not disclose any sensitive or personal information.

The school only collects information needed on the student concerned, the student understands that the school uses lawful, fair and reasonable methods in collecting information. The school stores and transmits information securely through our server, and some third-party payment processor and web providers. The students have access to their personal information. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the student to address incorrect personal information.

The accuracy of information must be checked before use and the school will retain information for its purposes as a school. The school limits the disclosure of personal information to organizations required for State or Federal compliance. In case of a privacy concern, the student should contact the Program Director.

The school, prior to using the online educational services, may contain all the necessary legal provisions governing access, use and protection of data, and may be legally bound to the provider to terms that are consistent with direct control requirements agreed by the provider.

Photos and Videos

The student consents to the school taking photographs or video images while in classes or otherwise in the public premises of the School and as a result of this irrevocably grants the right to the student's image or likeness in such images or photographs in any advertising, promotion, or marketing materials including any social media, print media or on the website.

PELI will video record the class 2 or 3 times in the trimester to ensure high quality teaching. These videos are used only to evaluate teacher performance and will not be posted or shared.

Technology Use

Cell phone, laptop, or any other personal technology use during class is not permitted. Text messaging during class is not permitted. Avoid talking on your cell phone in the hallways during classes. Your conversation in the halls may be disruptive to teachers and students. Instructors can authorize the temporary use of electronic devices for academic reasons.

Right to File Complaint

All students have a right to file a formal complaint with the school staff. Students should either submit a complaint by email to complaints@pelischool.org, or speak with a member of the administrative staff or school director by appointment.



13. Health Care

Information about healthcare in the U.S.

US Healthcare is a combination of privately funded and publicly funded programs. In the US, medical care can be very expensive. If you don't have health insurance, you must pay for all medical expenses "out of pocket", which means you pay for everything yourself, with no help from the healthcare provider (i.e. hospital) or the government. Even if you do have health insurance, there will be out of pocket expenses that you must pay.

It is appropriate to ask your doctors questions, and even to get second opinions. If you don't understand something a doctor says, ask for it to be repeated or ask for an interpreter. It is always a good idea to keep copies of your medical reports.

Viable health coverage options for F-1 international students

- GeoBlue ([GeoBlueStudents.com](https://www.geobluestudents.com))
- ISO Student Health Insurance (www.iso.org)
- Compass Benefits Group (<https://www.studenthealthusa.com>)

Other resources for immigrants and international students

- National Immigration Law Center (<https://www.nilc.org/work/health-care>)
 - provides information about your healthcare rights as an immigrant
- National Health Law Program (<https://healthlaw.org/>)
 - protects and expands access to health rights for low-income individuals
- Community Legal Services (<https://clsphila.org/services/public-benefits>)
 - helps with cases involving public benefit denials and health care advocacy in Philadelphia

Philadelphia Area Health Centers

- Nazareth Hospital (2601 Holme Ave)
- Esperanza Health Center (4417 North 6th Street)
- Mazzoni Center for LGBTQ+ Health (1348 Bainbridge Street)
- Puentes De Salud (1700 South Street)
- City Health Centers (2230 Cottman Ave)
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (800 Spruce Street)