



Agape English Language Institute for Internationals

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# STUDENT HANDBOOK AND ACADEMIC CATALOG

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***Welcome to  
Agape English Language Institute!***

*If you are an Agape student, this handbook will help you to understand what you can expect from Agape and also what Agape expects from you. This handbook explains Agape's rules and procedures about things like:*

*how you will be placed in class,  
attendance requirements for class,  
how you will be graded,  
how to get a refund,  
when and how to register for classes,  
what to do if you have a complaint,  
who to talk to if you need advice,  
and much more!*

*Read this handbook carefully,  
and let us know if you have any questions.  
We are here to help!*

## **School Description**

Agape English Language Institute for Internationals, or Agape, is a South Carolina company offering English as a second language services to individuals and businesses. It is owned and operated by Dr. Rajarathnam (Raj) Aluri and his wife Kathy Aluri. Agape's main office is located at 610 Pickens Street, Columbia, SC 29201, with classroom facilities for the Columbia campus across the street at Park Circle. A branch campus and office is located at 3-D Cleveland Court, Greenville, SC 29607. To contact Agape, contact the main office at 803-799-3452 or 803-799-7716 or (toll-free) 877-476-2354.

## **Purpose and Mission**

### **Agape's Mission:**

Agape is dedicated to providing high-quality English language instruction at an affordable cost and in a friendly, supportive atmosphere.

### **Agape's Goals:**

In order to accomplish its mission, Agape seeks to:

Offer a comprehensive curriculum which equips students with the necessary English language and cultural skills to reach the students' own academic and professional goals;

Help students, both in and out of the classroom, to engage in true communication that is free from the common obstacles that hinder language learning;

Provide an environment which seeks to meet the needs of the student as a whole person. Agape believes this may be achieved through caring and qualified teachers, administrators, staff, and volunteers who hold to traditional Judeo-Christian values and show respect for students' cultures.

## **An Introduction to Agape's Services**

The Agape curriculum includes training in:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Grammar
- Writing
- Vocabulary
- Reading
- Pronunciation
- Idioms and slang
- TOEFL preparation

Agape is committed to small classes. There are generally no more than ten students in a class, and usually classes are smaller than this.

In addition to its English training, Agape provides:

- Housing arrangements (including the option of homestay with an American family)
- Hospitality
- Extracurricular activities such as picnics, parties, and field trips to museums, parks, and other local places of interest
- Opportunities for students to participate in recreational tours (through agencies such as International Friendship Ministries)
- Personal counseling
- Academic advice
- Help with college and university admissions
- Social and emotional support.

### **Admission Requirements and Application Procedures**

Please see the appendices at the end of this handbook for information concerning making application and being admitted to studies at Agape.

### **Agape Academic Policies**

#### Session Length and Course Load

##### *Full Session:*

A regular, full session at Agape is nine weeks long. There are five full sessions per year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall 1, Fall 2). Most new Agape students and all returning students enroll for full 9-week sessions of study.

##### *Short Session:*

Students coming to study for **only one session** at Agape may enroll either for a regular 9-week session or for a *short session* to better suit their travel plans. All short sessions begin on the **first week** of the regular session (i.e., the student enrolled in a short session begins classes at the same time along with other students but completes the session earlier).

Given sufficient notice, Agape may arrange special short sessions for groups of five or more students arriving in the U.S. for a single session of study outside of the normal session schedule. Contact Agape's main office for details.

Enrolling for short sessions is **not** the same as late registration. For information about the restrictions on late registration see the section below entitled "Registration and Payment."

### *Full-Time Study:*

Students studying with F-1 visas are required by the U.S. government to study full-time (at least 18 hours per week). Agape generally requires its F-1 students to enroll for 21 hours of classes per week (including Friday classes). The total tuition for 18-21 hours of study per week is the same.

A student with an F-1 visa may be exempted from Friday classes only for serious reasons and with written permission from the local or General Director. Students seeking such permission should make this request to their local director **before the local office closes on the Friday of the first full week of classes.**

### *Part-Time Study:*

Holders of non-F-1 visa types generally may study at Agape on a full-time or part-time basis, though holders of some visa types (e.g., B-visas or dependent visas) may face restrictions on their study by the U.S. government. Students may consult designated Agape staff or an immigration attorney for details.\*

A student may **not** enroll for only part of a course (e.g., for 5 hours of a 6-hour per week course). Students must pay tuition for the full number of hours for each course for which they register, and their attendance will be counted in reference to the full number of hours per week for that course.

See the “Schedule of Fees” in the appendices at the end of this handbook for the prices of individual courses.

(\*Though qualified Agape staff may give immigration advice to students according to their best understanding of current U.S. immigration policy, **each student is ultimately responsible** to ensure that his or her travel and study decisions are not in violation of U.S. immigration law. AELI’s interpretations of immigration law are not recognized as authoritative or binding by the U.S. government, and satisfaction of AELI policies does not necessarily equal satisfaction of U.S. immigration law.)

### Placement and Level Progression

Agape distinguishes **seven levels of proficiency** for students in each of the three core course areas (Communication Skills, Grammar & Writing, Reading & Vocabulary). These levels of proficiency correlate to the **six course levels** offered at AELI in each of these course/skill areas, though the number of levels offered in a particular session may depend on student enrollment. Generally, at least five students must be enrolled (on average) for each class level offered. (Note: The first proficiency level characterizes students who have *not yet achieved* the objectives of course level one; the seventh proficiency level characterizes those students who have successfully *completed* AELI’s highest course level six). The three proficiency scales used at AELI along with a brief written description of each level are provided in the appendices below.

At the beginning of each session, all **new students** are normally given placement tests on the Friday before the first week of the session. These tests determine the students' English proficiency level and placement in Agape classes.

There are three placement tests given to new Agape students: an **oral interview**, a **writing sample**, and the **Michigan English Placement Test (MEPT)**. The oral interview involves two interviewers who ask the student a variety of questions to determine the student's English oral and listening ability. The writing sample involves a 30-minute composition by the student on either one of two assigned topics. The MEPT is a widely recognized standardized test that measures the students' listening comprehension, knowledge of grammar, knowledge of vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Placement of new students into levels for the various AELI courses is based on the scores for the various instruments as follows:

<b>AELI Course</b>	<b>Instrument(s) On Which Initial Student Placement is Based</b>
<b>Communication Skills</b> <i>(including the optional Cross-Cultural Skills and the Basic Business English: Communication Skills courses)</i>	Oral Interview + Listening portion of MEPT <i>(with emphasis being placed on the Oral Interview)</i>
<b>Grammar/Writing</b> <i>(including the Basic Business English: Writing Skills course)</i>	Writing Sample + Grammar portion of MEPT
<b>Reading/Vocabulary</b>	Vocabulary portion of MEPT + Reading portion of MEPT
<b>Any Pronunciation Courses</b>	Oral Interview + Overall MEPT score
<b>TOEFL Preparation</b>	Overall MEPT score (minimum 67)
<b>Integrated Skills (Evening Class)</b>	Writing Sample Overall MEPT score

Evaluators of the oral interview directly recommend placement of a student at any one of Agape’s seven proficiency levels based on that student’s ability to perform certain tasks or answer certain questions during the interview. Scores on the MEPT and writing sample correlate to specific proficiency levels at Agape. The following scales are used **as a guide** when placing students into each of the core Agape classes:

<i>AELI Level</i>	<i>Listening (MEPT)</i>	<i>Grammar (MEPT)</i>	<i>Vocabulary (MEPT)</i>	<i>Reading (MEPT)</i>	<i>(Writing Sample)</i>
Level 1	0-5	0-9	0-9	0-5	34-53
Level 2	6-8	10-14	10-14	6-8	54-64
Level 3	9-11	15-18	15-18	9-11	65-71
Level 4	12-13	19-21	19-21	12-13	72-77
Level 5	14-16	22-25	22-25	14-16	78-84
Level 6	17-18	26-28	26-28	17-18	85-94
(Level 7)	19-20	29-30	29-30	19-20	95-100

Even though there will not normally be a separate class for every level, students will be taught at or near their level of English.

A regular session of the Agape program is nine weeks. Agape expects every student who actively participates in class to gain in English proficiency according to their ability during this time. However, advancement to a higher level in the Agape curriculum cannot be guaranteed in nine weeks. From experience, Agape believes that progression to the next level may take longer. Level progression is dependent on many factors, including the level of English of the student at the beginning of a session.

Progression to higher levels in the AELI curriculum is based primarily on student attainment of the course objectives listed in the course syllabi. AELI teachers use various ways to test whether their students have attained the course objectives. Generally speaking, **returning students** who are able to perform **two-thirds or more of the course objectives** for a particular course at least **two-thirds of the time** will be recommended by the teacher for advancement to a higher level of that course in the following session. See the appendix below entitled “**Proficiency Scales**” for a description of the typical student at the time of placement into each level of Agape’s core courses. The local director makes all final decisions regarding student advancement. Note that progression to higher levels of the AELI curriculum is *not* based directly on course grades (see below for more information about course grades). Course grades reflect how well and how faithfully a student has carried out the required course assignments. However, a “good” student who carries out the assigned tasks will not necessarily have attained the course objectives, and may therefore not necessarily advance to the next class level.

Agape reserves the right to refuse admission or continued enrollment to any student whose English proficiency is so high that Agape may reasonably expect little benefit to the student from (continued) study at Agape. This decision rests with the local director based on the student’s placement scores and past academic performance in the classroom.

### Change of Class Assignment

In general, students must study in the classes at the levels which they are assigned by the local director at the beginning of the term. However, in exceptional cases a change of class assignment may be needed. Normally, a student must attend a class for **at least three days** before requesting a change to another class. If after three or more days of attending a particular class a student feels strongly that a change of class assignment is needed, he should make his request directly to the **local director**. Students may **not** visit another class (that is, a class to which the student has not been assigned) without **prior permission** from the local director. If the local director approves the student's request to try out or move to a different class level, the local director will give the student a **written permission slip**. *The student must present this permission slip to the teacher of the new class in order to attend the new class; otherwise, the student will not be allowed to enter the class.*

Normally, requests for class changes must be made **before the local office closes on Monday of the **second week of classes****. Generally, the local director will not approve a class change without the agreement of both teachers involved (the teacher of the class to which the student is currently assigned and the teacher of the class to which the student is requesting to move).

### Who May Take the TOEFL Preparation Class

The TOEFL Preparation class is offered to students who are at the high-intermediate level or above (at least 67 on the Michigan English Placement Test). We need three eligible students to offer this class.

### Guided Independent Study

Agape offers the opportunity for guided independent study (independent laboratory) to students who meet certain criteria, when faculty are available to oversee such study. The eligibility requirements and guidelines for guided independent study are found in the appendices below.

### Optional MTELP Proficiency Exam

Agape makes available an optional Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) to students who are completing their final term at Agape or who anticipate only one more term at Agape. The MTELP is an objective measure of English language proficiency used to determine whether a student's English is adequate for full-time academic work, similar in design to the TOEFL exam. Some schools to which Agape graduates have applied in the past have requested such a measure of our graduates' proficiency. The MTELP may also be given to non-F-1 students seeking to obtain a certificate of recommendation from Agape for extracurricular practical training (see below). The MTELP is administered on the same day as other end-of-term testing (usually the Thursday of the last week of classes) to those students who request it. Students must make their requests to the local director **no later than the Friday of the eighth week of the term**. An **extra fee of \$25** is required to take the MTELP. The MTELP may be administered by Agape to the same student a maximum of three times.

## Attendance

All students are expected to attend all classes for which they are registered and to be on time for the class meeting. Students are responsible for keeping aware of their own attendance record in each class.

Any student who has **unexcused absences** for more than **20% of Monday-Thursday classes** (normally, more than 7 classes) for a given course or more than **25% of Friday classes** (normally, more than 2 classes) for a given course will receive an automatic **grade of F** in that course. (Attendance for a particular student is counted beginning from the first day of classes on or after that student's registration.)

Any student who has **total absences (both excused and unexcused)** for more than **40% of Monday-Thursday classes** (normally, more than 14 classes) for a given course or more than **50% of Friday classes** (normally, more than 4 classes) for a given course will receive an automatic **grade of F** in that course. (Attendance for a particular student is counted beginning from the first day of classes on or after that student's registration.)

An absence may be **excused** for any of the following reasons: (1) *serious* illness (a written, signed doctor's excuse is required, stating that the student is/was unable to attend class during the days absent), (2) death or serious illness of student's immediate family member, (3) illness of student's child when the student is the sole available caregiver for the child. Mild illnesses such as common colds are **not** considered excused absences. Students should expect that they may be absent for several days of class due to mild illnesses in any given term/session; therefore, they should plan to use their allowed 20% (for Monday-Thursday classes) or 25% (for Friday classes) of ***unexcused*** absences for this purpose.

Students who are **more than 5 minutes late** for class will be recorded as tardy (late) for that class period. If a student is **tardy/late 3 times**, he will be given an **absence** equal to one class day. Tardies are generally **not** excused except in exceptional circumstances. This includes lateness to class due to unexpected traffic delays: This is generally **not** excusable, except in exceptional cases. Students who are **more than 45 minutes late** for class will be counted as **absent** for that class period. Students who leave a class early will also be marked for early departure. A student who **departs class early 3 times** will be given an **absence** equal to one class day.

Students who fail a Monday-Thursday course (a 6- hour per week course) due to excessive absences in one term/session will be put on academic **probation** for the following term. If the student again fails a course due to excessive absences during that following probationary term, the student **will not be allowed to re-enroll** for classes at Agape in the next term (the student will be forced to sit out one session). **NOTE: For students with an F-1 student visa, this means that the student would need to leave the U.S. immediately or else be out of status (in the U.S. illegally).**

**Any student with an F-1 visa who stops attending class (or withdraws from classes) without permission from Agape may be immediately reported by Agape to SEVIS (the U. S. government's Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) as an inactive student, in which case the student risks immediate deportation or other penalties from U. S. immigration officials.**

## Course Grades

The academic standing of a student studying in any of the Agape courses is indicated as follows:

<b>Passing Grades</b>	<b>Percentage Value</b>	<b>Grade Value</b>	<b>Description of Student Achievement</b>
A	90-100	4	Excellent
B	80- 89	3	Good
C	70- 79	2	Fair/Okay
D	60- 69	1	Not Good; Meets Only Minimum Requirements
P	N/A	N/A	Passing

  

<b>Non Passing Grades (No Certificate Given)</b>			
F	0-59	0	Failing
I	N/A	N/A	Incomplete

A grade of "I" requires that the student make up any missed work by the end of the next grading period. If the work is not made up, the student's grade will be changed to "F".

Students' grades reflect how well and how faithfully the students have participated in class and carried out the required course assignments. As noted earlier, it is important to understand that advancement from level to level at Agape is **not** based directly on course grades. As described earlier, advancement is instead based primarily on whether the teacher evaluates the student as being able to perform/attain roughly two-thirds of the course objectives, two-thirds of the time. Therefore, it is possible for a student how receives a passing course grade to still not advance to the next level, if the teacher believes that the student has not yet sufficiently attained the course objectives.

A student must make reasonable progress toward completing his studies at Agape. Agape reserves the right to request the temporary or permanent withdrawal of a student who fails, in the judgment of Agape, to take reasonable advantage of the opportunity presented by the Agape course offerings.

## Grade Appeal Process

If a student disagrees with a grade, he should first discuss the matter with the instructor. Further appeals must then follow this order: Local Director, then General Director. When making an appeal to an Agape director, it may be helpful to summarize your reasons for the appeal in writing.

## Academic Probation and Dismissal

A student must keep a 1.5 grade average to continue in good standing at Agape.

A student who fails to do so will be placed on academic probation during the next grading period. If the student **again** does not achieve a 1.5 grade average or above during that next grading period, he will **not be allowed to re-enroll** the following term/session (the student will be forced to sit out one session). **NOTE: For students studying with an F-1 student visa, this means that the student would need to leave the U.S. immediately or else be out of status (in the U.S. illegally).**

Similarly, a student who has **unexcused** absences for more than 20% of classes in a Monday-Thursday course during a single session will receive a grade of “F” for that course and be automatically placed on academic probation during the following session. (See earlier section on “Attendance” for details.) If in that following session the student **again** has more absences than allowed under the AELI attendance policy, he will **not be allowed to re-enroll** for the subsequent term/session (the student will be forced to sit out one session). **NOTE: For students studying with an F-1 student visa, this means that the student would need to leave the U.S. immediately or else be out of status (in the U.S. illegally).**

Students who have **excused** absences totaling more than 40% of classes in a Monday-Thursday course during a single session will receive a grade of “F” for that course but will **not** be placed on academic probation. There are special government regulations that apply in such cases for students holding F-1 visas (contact Agape’s Associate Director or General Director for details).

## Transcripts and Certificates

Students will receive a transcript of their grades for each course and a Certification of Completion from Agape at the end of each session. Agape does not provide academic credit that is transferable to a school of higher education in the United States. The transcript is limited to showing the student’s achievement in Agape classes.

## Academic or Job Placement

Agape’s goal is to assist its students in reaching their own academic and professional aims. Completion of the Agape program, or an Agape session, is not a guarantee of placement in an U.S. college or university, or a guarantee of employment.

Agape will be happy to assist students who are applying to colleges or universities with paperwork related to the application. Agape does not assist students in finding employment.

### Practical Training for Non-F-1 Students

Agape may recommend eligible non-F-1 students for further practical training in any field in which the student will have extensive opportunity to use and improve their English (e.g., the student's field of academic study or area of previous employment experience). Agape does not itself provide such practical training outside of its regular curriculum, but at the student's request may issue a written statement certifying the student's readiness to undertake such training. Eligibility to receive such a recommendation depends on several criteria:

- (a) The student must attain a minimum score of 65 on the Michigan Test of English Language Placement (MTELP)
- (b) The student's local director must give approval for the recommendation.

Students interested in obtaining such a certificate of recommendation from Agape should contact the Associate Director. F-1 students (with student visas) are **not** allowed to engage in extracurricular practical training while holding a student visa, according to U.S. government regulations.

### Complaints

Agape wants everyone to have a pleasant and quality experience in the classroom. Agape understands, however, that its students may not always agree with its approach. Agape's faculty members are readily available to discuss any concerns a student may have. Agape uses the most modern and accepted methods to teach English as second language and seeks to present a high-quality program. If a student is not satisfied with his learning experience, he should first discuss the matter with his **teacher**. If the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, he should discuss his situation with the **local director**. If the student is still not satisfied, he may contact the **General Director** at the Main office. Students should make every effort to resolve complaints in this manner.

Forms for a student to submit a **written complaint** are available at the school building or may be requested from the local director. Written complaints should be given to the local director. AELI will record steps taken to resolve the complaint and give a written response to the student.

### Cancellation of Classes (Holidays, Bad Weather, Etc.)

Agape observes certain holidays throughout the year. Standard school holidays include **Good Friday, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving** (Christmas and New Year's Day already fall during a session break). At these times classes will be canceled for the entire day. Such holidays are infrequent (normally no more than one day per session) and, in keeping with the practice of other schools, the classes cancelled on these days will not be made up.

Infrequently, classes must be cancelled due to bad weather (e.g., snow, ice, severe thunderstorms), a loss of electrical power to the school facilities, or similar circumstances beyond Agape's control. Agape's policy for its Columbia program is generally to cancel classes whenever Richland County District One schools are cancelled. Likewise, classes in the Greenville program are normally cancelled whenever classes are cancelled at Greenville Technical College. (Similarly, when these institutions announce a 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. delayed start, Agape will normally delay starting until the 10:45 a.m.

class period.) Unless students are notified otherwise, on days with bad weather students may listen for an announcement regarding Richland County District One or Greenville Technical College in the list of school closings on local TV or radio channels to determine whether Agape will cancel classes. Agape does not make up classes missed due to bad weather or similar circumstances beyond Agape's control.

If a teacher must be absent from class for some reason, Agape will attempt to provide a qualified substitute teacher. In the unlikely event that a substitute cannot be found (e.g., in the event of a medical emergency), Agape will reschedule any missed classes without additional charge at a time that is convenient for both the students and the teacher.

### Copyright

The U.S. Copyright Act of 1976 protects authors in giving them for a limited time exclusive rights to their writings. Thus, they have the right to control the copying of their work. Teachers and students are allowed to photocopy published works only in limited cases, when the purpose and character of the work is educational in nature, previously published, not a substantial part of the entire work, and if the marketability of the work (ability for the publisher to sell the work) is not hurt by the use. AELI teachers may use photocopies within these guidelines. However, students are not allowed to provide photocopies for their own or other students' use in class when such photocopies knowingly violate copyright law. For example, one student may not provide photocopies of a textbook for another student to use instead of the latter student purchasing the text.

## **Agape Registration, Payment, and Refund Policies**

### Registration and Payment

Students must pay **all** charges **on or before** registration day. Agape does not offer scholarships or installment payments, though a limited number of **work-study positions** may be available for students with demonstrated financial need (an application for a work-study position and a copy of the "Guidelines for Student Work-Study" may be requested from the Associate Director).

A list of current fees is included in the appendices below. Generally, students who have not paid their fees in full will not be allowed to attend class. Registration deadlines are as follows:

- a) *New homestay students* must pay **all homestay fees by wire transfer or Western Union before they arrive in Columbia**. If Agape does not receive a new homestay student's full payment of homestay fees before the student arrives, the student will not be allowed to enter the homestay until all homestay fees have been paid.

- b) *New students (both homestay and non-homestay)* may pay **all other fees** (tuition, materials fee, insurance, etc.) by check, cash, credit card, travelers check, or wire transfer/Western Union. If a student pays these other fees by **wire transfer or Western Union**, the student **must** make sure the full payment is wired and received by Agape **before the student registers for classes at Agape**. If the student uses **some other method (cash, check, travelers check, or credit card)** to pay tuition and other fees, the student may pay these fees **on registration day**. (For homestay fees see above.) **No student will be allowed to begin classes until all fees have been paid!**
- c) *Returning homestay students* must register and pay all fees before the local office closes on **the last day of the preceding term** (i.e., generally, the **Friday** when certificates and grades are issued for the preceding term).
- d) *Returning students* who are *not* in the homestay program and all *new students* must register and pay all charges before the local office closes on **the Friday before the new term begins** (i.e., the Friday during off-week).

### Books

Agape will provide all textbooks required for each class. During the first week of class students will be given a textbook list that shows the names and prices of each textbook required for the courses offered that session. The price for each book includes a 25% shipping and handling charge. In order to receive their texts, students should mark on the lists each text that they do not already own (see below) for the classes they will take, then submit this list with full payment to the local Agape office. Agape must receive full payment for texts before the texts can be given to the student.

If a student already owns a copy of a textbook or workbook that is required for a class, the student may re-use the book only if it is **not written in or marked up** to the point that it would hinder the student's ability to make good use of the book in the new session. If there is any doubt, Agape staff (director or teacher) will decide if a book is "clean" enough to use again. Workbooks generally cannot be reused.

AELI usually does **not** buy back texts from students who have completed a course, even if the text is in good condition. (AELI will buy back unused texts from students who withdraw early from a course, if the text is in a condition allowing resale; see the AELI "Withdrawal and Refund Policy").

### Late registration

There is a **\$100 fee for any late registration** (refer to the above registration deadlines). Any registration **after the end of the second week** of a normal 9-week session or 8-week short session, or after the end of the **first week** of a 4-week short session, requires **written approval** by the local director or General Director. Students who register late for classes are advised that they may encounter extra difficulty in adjusting to the classroom environment.

Late registrants and other students who enroll with the intention of attending only part of a session do **not** receive a prorated reduction of tuition, application, book fees, or most other fees. Unused homestay and transportation may be prorated accordingly.

## Refunds

Agape hires staff and obtains other resources based on our projected enrollment. One of the ways we project this enrollment is through the applications we receive. Since we must assure that Agape has operating funds available to meet the needs of the program and its students, Agape maintains a withdrawal and refund policy that it believes is fair to both students and the program. *Please refer to Agape's withdrawal and refund policy in the appendices below or in the Agape Enrollment Agreement for further information concerning this policy.*

## Health Insurance

Because hospital and medical costs are very expensive in the United States, it is important that students have enough health insurance. Students who do not have health insurance may face large bills if they become ill or have an accident. This may make it difficult for the student to pay school tuition and fees, and the student may not be able to maintain full-time student status as the U.S. government requires for F-1 students. This may endanger the student's visa-status and threaten the student's ability to stay in the U.S.

Students must present proof of health insurance that covers them in the United States when they register. If a student does not possess health insurance, he **must** purchase the health insurance provided by Agape. The current price for one session of health insurance for students may be found in the "Schedule of Fees" in the appendices below. One session of health insurance covers the student from the beginning of an Agape session until the first day of the next session. At that time, a returning student must purchase a renewal of the policy.

## **Immigration**

### Advice

Agape's Associate Director and General Director are available to advise students with F-1 student visas on the rules related to this type of visa. We also can assist any student who wants to learn about the process of changing their visa status to an F-1 student visa.

All students are responsible for maintaining their eligibility to remain in the United States. Those students who do not have an F-1 student visa should contact the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regarding any questions they may have. The official USCIS website may be found at <http://uscis.gov> and the toll-free USCIS customer service phone number is **1-800-375-5283**.

### Work

Generally, F-1 students are not allowed to work in the United States while on a student visa.

### Break from Studies

USCIS allows students to take a break from studies after a full academic year. In the Agape program,

this means students may take a (nine-week) session break **after completing four consecutive nine-week sessions.**

### Leaving the USA and Returning

Any F-1 student who plans to leave the United States for a short period and then return to Agape should inform his local director beforehand. Agape will update the student's I-20 form so that the student may reenter the United States.

### Completion of Studies at Agape and Grace Periods

F-1 students who **complete** their course of studies at Agape (after studying four consecutive sessions; or after the completion date listed on the student's I-20, if the student's intended length of study was less than four consecutive sessions and it was stated so on the student's application form) generally have **60 days** in order to depart the U.S., transfer to another institution, or file for change of status.

F-1 students who have been authorized by an International Student Official (e.g., the Associate Director) to **withdraw** from classes have **15 days** to depart the U.S.

F-1 students who withdraw from their course of study **without** obtaining prior approval from an International Student Official (e.g., the Associate Director) **are not eligible for any grace period.**

## **Student Life**

### Advice and Counseling

All Agape staff (teachers and administrative staff) are available to assist students with **personal matters** or problems in adjusting to life in the United States. Agape's staff and teachers are generally not trained or licensed counselors. However, Agape seeks to hire only caring professionals with demonstrated sensitivity to the needs of international students. Most of our staff have considerable experience working in cross-cultural contexts or with international students studying in the United States. All Agape teachers and directors are available to counsel students about their **academic** progress.

Questions about **homestay** situations should be made to the Associate Director or local homestay coordinator. Students should consult designated Agape staff (usually a local director, the Assistant Director for Administration, or the General Director) on all **immigration- or visa-related** matters.

### Special Programs and Opportunities

Agape coordinates with International Friendship Ministries (IFM), a local nonprofit organization serving internationals in the U.S., to provide students with **sightseeing opportunities** in the U.S. and Canada. Students should check with their local director for information about tours.

Agape students in Columbia are also encouraged to participate in programs hosted locally by IFM and other service organizations such as HIS International for international students at the University of

South Carolina and other area educational institutes. These programs provide opportunities for Agape students to meet Americans and other internationals already living in the area. One such example is the international dinner held by IFM in Columbia on Friday nights throughout the regular school year, only a few blocks from the Agape school. Similarly, special events and parties for internationals are held in Greenville on a frequent basis by members of the Agape staff and/or members of local churches.

### Homestay

Agape offers homestay arrangements for full-time students enrolled for a complete session (full or short session) who are studying on an F-1 visa. This unique opportunity gives students the chance to improve their conversational and listening skills at a faster rate, and at the same time learn about American culture. Agape chooses only caring, friendly hosts or host families to give students the best possible experience in an American home. Interested students must apply to the Agape main office for a homestay arrangement (contact the local Agape office for an application form). Once a suitable host family is located, the student must pay all relevant fees and sign a “Homestay Student Agreement Form.” Agape provides handbooks to both the homestay student and the homestay family explaining the rights and responsibilities of each in the homestay arrangement.

Only students who are currently enrolled at Agape may participate in homestay arrangements. Returning students may remain in their homestay locations during session breaks, but non-returning students must vacate the homestay location by the **end of the final week** of the academic session.

Students may remain in a current homestay during their **vacation session** (after having completed four regular sessions of study), but only with the consent of the host family and only if the student intends to return to study at Agape the following session. In this case, the student must prepay the homestay fee for one full additional session at the same time he pays the homestay fee for the vacation session. This prepaid amount will *not* be refundable if the student fails to re-enroll after the vacation session.

The maximum refund of the homestay fee after a student has signed the enrollment agreement is \$500, and only then if a written request for a refund is made within the first two weeks of classes. Refer to AELI’s “Withdrawal and Refund Policy” in the appendices below for details.

Refer to Agape’s “Homestay Student Handbook” (available from the Agape office) for more information about homestay arrangements.

### Safety

To ensure the safety of Agape students, Agape requires that the drivers of vehicles transporting Agape students at official Agape functions (e.g., field trips, tours) be members of the Agape staff. **Students are not allowed to carry other students as passengers in their cars to or from Agape-sponsored extracurricular activities.** Agape assumes no liability for students who travel in vehicles driven by person who are not employees of Agape (e.g., by students) against Agape’s rules, and student drivers and/or passengers in such cases agree to release Agape English Language Institute from any liability in the event of an accident, injury, or death.

### Attire (Clothes)

Students are expected to dress appropriately for the classroom environment. Informal clothing that does not distract or otherwise hinder students from learning English is appropriate.

### Student Conduct

Agape wants to ensure that its students can study English and learn about American culture in a caring environment. Therefore, it reserves the right to define and enforce acceptable standards of conduct. The following rules are meant to help everyone who studies at Agape accomplish their goals for the program. In addition to the more severe violations of Agape or government policy listed in the section below “Disciplinary Probation and Dismissal,” students should:

- Be considerate to other students and Agape staff;
- Conduct themselves honestly in all academic matters;
- Not bring alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs to Agape facilities or be under the influence of any such substances while on Agape grounds;
- Not bring weapons to Agape facilities;
- Avoid smoking inside Agape buildings. Those who wish to smoke may do so outside when class is not in session;
- Turn off cell phones during class;
- Maintain accepted standards of personal hygiene.

### Disciplinary Probation and Dismissal

Students may face disciplinary probation or dismissal for any of the following reasons:

- 1) flagrant or persistent disregard for the Agape policies and rules in this Student Handbook
- 2) violation of federal, state, or local laws
- 3) dishonesty in academic matters (cheating)
- 4) verbal or physical abuse of other students or of Agape staff
- 5) engaging in obscene or immoral behavior while at Agape

Violations of federal, state and local law will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Every effort is made to assist students who have problems. However, persistent violations of policies will not be tolerated. Students are normally placed on probation for one 9-week session or the remainder of the current session. At the end of this period, the probation will be lifted (removed) if the student has made significant progress toward remedying the problem; otherwise, the student will be dismissed from Agape. In the case of F-1 students, dismissal from the program means that the student will be “out of status” and will have to leave the U.S. immediately.

### Appeal of Discipline

Students who disagree with penalties may contact the General Director. When penalties are appealed, the General Director will make final decisions on all matters related to student discipline. It is always

helpful for the student to submit a written letter explaining the reasons for the appeal.

A student who is dismissed may request reentry to Agape after being away from Agape for one session. A student who has been dismissed twice may not reenter the Agape program.

### Confidentiality of Student Records

Agape English Language Institute (Agape) will:

1. Collect, use, and keep only that information about a student which is needed for academic or legal reasons, or to help bring about a positive living and learning experience for the student during his or her studies at Agape,
2. Limit access within Agape to this student information only to those Agape employees who need to know the information for the reasons given in (1) above,
3. Release a student's information to a person or agency outside of Agape only with the student's permission, except in the following cases or to meet legitimate investigatory or legal requirements:
  - a) when student information is shared with the student's own agent or personal representative,
  - b) when information related to the quality of a student's homestay arrangement is shared with the student's homestay family while arranging the homestay or while mediating disputes between the student and the homestay family,
  - c) when basic student information is shared with an insurance company for the purpose of obtaining or maintaining insurance for the student,
  - d) when student information is given to another school for the purpose of transferring the student to that school, or
  - e) when student information is reported to a government agency (for example, to maintain the student's visa status).
4. All student records are the property of Agape English Language Institute and are kept in secure files at Agape's office. Students may make requests to the Associate Director to review their file information by appointment.

## **AELI STUDENT HANDBOOK**

# **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1: STUDENT ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

APPENDIX 2: PROFICIENCY SCALES

APPENDIX 3: GUIDELINES FOR GUIDED INDEPENDENT STUDY AT AELI

APPENDIX 4: SCHEDULE OF FEES

APPENDIX 5: WITHDRAWAL AND REFUND POLICY

APPENDIX 6: STUDENT VISA STATUS (F-1) INFORMATION SHEET

AELI STUDENT HANDBOOK  
APPENDIX 1

**STUDENT ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS  
AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES**  
(FOR DISTRIBUTION TO STUDENT)

Agape English Language Institute (Agape, or AELI) is a program for individuals for whom English is a second language. Students in Agape's regular sessions must be at least sixteen years old at the time of their enrollment and have at least a basic literacy in one or more languages. (Applicants to Agape's regular session who will be fourteen or fifteen years old at the time of their enrollment may be considered for admission for a single session of study if the applicant will reside locally with a parent or legal guardian during his complete session of study. Different age requirements may apply to Agape's special short summer programs.) Students will only be admitted for study at Agape who meet the **visa-related requirements** of the U.S. government for their particular status. Students whose English proficiency is determined by Agape during initial testing to be **too advanced** (= Agape proficiency level 7) in all of Agape's core course areas are not eligible for further study at Agape.

Overseas Students Applying to Agape (With F-1 Student Visa)

Students should contact the Agape main office by telephone (803-799-7716 or toll-free 877-476-2354), fax (803-252-5500) or E-mail ([info@aeliusa.com](mailto:info@aeliusa.com)) to be sent application materials, or review the Agape website ([www.aeliusa.com](http://www.aeliusa.com)) and apply online.

F-1 students arriving from overseas must fulfill the following requirements when they apply to be admitted to Agape English Language Institute:

1. A Completed Application form sent to Agape's main office (or application made online):

Agape English Language Institute  
610 Pickens St., PO Box 12504  
Columbia, SC 29211-2504 USA

2. Official financial documentation (such as a bank statement) showing that the student (or sponsor—see below) has at least \$3,377.00 for each nine-week session of study for which the student intends to enroll (or \$16,885.00 per year). This bank statement should be sent by mail or fax to Agape's main office.
3. If the bank statement belongs to a **sponsor who is outside the student's immediate family**, and this sponsor will be supporting the student during the student's studies here in the U.S., then Agape will need a **letter** from the sponsor giving his/her name, address, phone number and a statement that he/she will support the student during the student's entire studies in the U.S.

4. If the bank statement belongs to a sponsor or relative **who resides in the U.S.**, then the sponsor or relative must **prepay two full sessions of tuition** (i.e., \$3,200.00) before an I-20 can be issued by Agape, *unless* the student holds a passport from a country that participates in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program. (The countries participating in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program [as of 1/2/2006] are as follows: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.)
5. Students applying through an **agency** do not need to pay the application fee for admission until the time of registration at Agape.
6. Students applying for homestay must pay the **homestay application fee** (\$100) at the time of application.
7. Certain other fees must be paid **before** a student arrives at Agape:
  - a) All other **homestay-related fees** must be received by Agape by wire transfer or Western Union **before the student's arrival in South Carolina** to enter the homestay; otherwise, the student will not be allowed to enter the homestay and will be financially responsible for his own housing arrangements (e.g., hotel) until the money is received.
  - b) Similarly, any other fees paid by **wire transfer or Western Union** must be received by Agape **before registration**; otherwise, the student will not be allowed to begin classes until payment is received.
8. Any DHL/FedEx mailing fees (for sending the I-20, when express service is requested by the applicant or his agent, or when mailing the I-20 to certain countries with problematic postal systems) must be paid at the time of application for admission, before the I-20 can be issued to the applicant.

Once the application has been accepted and appropriate fees have been paid according to the above guidelines, Agape will issue an I-20 form to the student. The student should submit the I-20 form to their U.S. Embassy or a U.S. consulate to apply for a student visa. If for any reason the student postpones study to a session later than what is listed on the I-20, then the student must pay a **\$100.00 Reprocessing Fee** and **return the first I-20** *before* a new I-20 can be issued for study in the later session. If a student postpones study in this way (after being issued an I-20) more than once, the student must pay a new \$100 Reprocessing Fee *each* time such postponement of study occurs.

Students who want to enter the United States with a student (F-1) visa must remember to pay the SEVIS fee (\$200 USD) at least three business days before going to the U.S. embassy or consulate for their visa interview. Information on the SEVIS fee can be found at the following website: <http://www.ice.gov/graphics/sevis/index.htm> The SEVIS fee can be paid online with a credit card at the following site: [www.FMJfee.com](http://www.FMJfee.com) Each student must pay the SEVIS fee directly to SEVIS. Agape will not accept any money from students for the SEVIS fee.

## F-1 Visa Students Transferring to Agape

Students should contact the main office by telephone (803-799-7716 or toll-free 877-476-2354), fax (803-252-5500) or e-mail ([info@aeliusa.com](mailto:info@aeliusa.com)) concerning their desire to transfer to Agape and to request application materials, or apply online at [www.aeliusa.com](http://www.aeliusa.com) and indicate in their application that they are a transfer student. A student should sign a transfer clearance form (available from Agape) in order for the program to contact the student's previous school regarding their eligibility to transfer.

Transfer students do **not** need to pay the \$75 application fee for admission until they arrive at Agape for registration. Transfer student must submit with their application official financial documentation (for example, a bank statement) which shows that the student (or sponsor) has \$3,377.00 (USD) available for each nine-week session for which the student intends to enroll, or \$16,885.00 per year. In addition, the student should submit a copy of his/her previous school's I-20 form. If the student meets Agape's application requirements, Agape will issue a temporary "transfer pending" I-20 to the student.

If for any reason the student postpones study to a session later than what is listed on the I-20 issued by Agape, then the student must pay a **\$100.00 Reprocessing Fee** and **return the first I-20** issued by Agape *before* a new I-20 can be issued for study in the later session. If a student postpones study in this way (after being issued an I-20 by Agape) more than once, the student must pay a new \$100 Reprocessing Fee *each* time such postponement of study occurs.

If the transfer student requests a homestay arrangement, the student should pay the \$100 **homestay application fee** at the time of application. Certain other fees must also be paid before a transfer student arrives at Agape:

- a) All other **homestay-related fees** must be received by Agape by wire transfer or Western Union *before* the student's arrival in South Carolina to enter the homestay; otherwise, the student will not be allowed to enter the homestay and will be financially responsible for his own housing arrangements (e.g., hotel) until the money is received.
- b) Similarly, any other fees paid by **wire transfer or Western Union** must be received by Agape *before* registration; otherwise, the student will not be allowed to begin classes until payment is received.

After all fees have been paid and the student has reported for study at Agape, Agape will then issue a final I-20 form to the student within 15 days after they begin study at Agape.

## Students Changing Status from non-F-1 Visa to F-1 Visa

Students should contact the main office by telephone (803-799-7716 or toll-free 877-476-2354), fax (803-252-5500) or e-mail ([info@aeliusa.com](mailto:info@aeliusa.com)) concerning their desire to apply to Agape and change visa status to an F-1 visa.

Agape English Language Institute requires that a student requesting an I-20 form for a change of status pay for two sessions of tuition (\$3,200.00) at the time of application (*exception: B-1, B-2, or F-2 students seeking to change to F-1 status and who are prohibited from starting study at AELI until their request for change of status is approved do not need to prepay tuition*). This is because of the time required for the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to process a change of status request (currently about four to six months). In addition to submitting the application for admission form, \$75 application fee, \$100 homestay application fee (if applicable), and two sessions of tuition (\$3,200—if applicable), there is some paperwork related to the change of status the student must submit to AELI at the time of application for admission:

- Official financial documentation (for example, a bank statement) which shows that the student (or sponsor) has \$3,377.00 (USD) available for each nine-week session for which the student intends to enroll, or \$16,885.00 per year.
- An I-539 form (<http://www.immigration.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/i-539.htm>), which is the application for change of status, and proof of payment of SEVIS fee.
- A photocopy of the student's I-94 departure record.
- A check in the amount of \$300 for the USCIS application fee (make the check payable to USCIS).
- A letter to USCIS which explains the reason for the decision to apply for this change of status, indicating why this was not done while the student was still in their home country.
- If the student requesting a change of status to F-1 visa has dependents (e.g., children) who will also request a change of visa status, further documentation is required. See Agape for details.

**Agape has no ability to approve a change of status. The decision belongs entirely to the USCIS.**

**“An applicant for change of nonimmigrant status to F-1 may start attending school even before the application has been submitted or approved, except for the following, who must wait until their change of status application is *approved* by USCIS:**

- Nonimmigrants changing to F-1 from B-1 or B-2 status; and**
- Nonimmigrants changing to F-1 from F-2 dependent status (except in the case of F-2 minors studying at the primary or secondary level)”**

(NAFSA Adviser's Manual, 2004 release, NAFSA Publications, Sewickley, PA, ISBN 0-912207-63-9, p. 3-58)

A change of status request usually should be submitted at least 45 days before an I-94 expires, but it is considered filed on time if done before an I-94 expires. It is *not* permissible to change status after the date on an I-94 has expired.

Agape will file the change of status materials to USCIS for students once all fees and materials are submitted. USCIS will respond directly to the student.

If for any reason the student postpones study to a session later than what is listed on the I-20 issued by Agape, then the student must pay a **\$100.00 Reprocessing Fee** and **return the first I-20** issued by Agape *before* a new I-20 can be issued for study in the later session. If a student postpones study in this way (after being issued an I-20 by Agape) more than once, the student must pay a new \$100 Reprocessing Fee *each* time such postponement of study occurs.

### Non-F-1 Students Wanting to Study at Agape

Students who do not need an I-20 form should contact the main office by telephone (803-799-7716 or toll-free 877-476-2354), fax (803-252-5500) or e-mail ([info@aeliusa.com](mailto:info@aeliusa.com)) to request application materials, or apply online at [www.aeliusa.com](http://www.aeliusa.com).

A \$25 application fee should be submitted with the application.

Note that students holding a visitor's visa (B-1 or B-2) or who have entered the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program may enroll for classes on a full-time basis for **no more than 50%** of the duration (in weeks) of the student's (intended) stay in the U.S., due to U.S. government regulations preventing such individuals from pursuing a "course of study." Students holding a dependent visa (F-2, J-2, M-2) may study for **no more than 15 hours per week**, due to U.S. government regulations preventing such individuals from studying "full-time."

5/17/2006

AELI STUDENT HANDBOOK  
APPENDIX 2

**AGAPE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONALS  
PROFICIENCY SCALES**

Agape utilizes **three separate proficiency scales** to describe a student's English proficiency. Each of these three scales is divided into **seven levels** of proficiency corresponding to the six levels of the course in question. Proficiency level 1 describes students who have *not yet achieved* the objectives of course level 1. Proficiency level 7 describes students who have successfully *completed* Agape's highest course level 6 (or who have proficiency equivalent to a student who has completed course level 6).

**SPEAKING & LISTENING (= COMMUNICATION SKILLS):**

- Level 1: Students at this proficiency level generally have little or no oral/aural communicative ability in English. They are unable to function effectively in most basic survival situations and have limited ability to convey essential self-identifying information. Their pronunciation of English sounds may be heavily influenced by their native-language.
- Level 2: Students at this proficiency level generally are able to function effectively in English in most basic survival situations and are able to convey essential self-identifying information. They are able to approximate the correct pronunciation of most basic sounds in English when modeled in context by a native speaker of English.
- Level 3: Students at this proficiency level generally are able to carry on simple conversations ("small talk") related to self and other (e.g., hobbies, personal interests, home environment) beyond basic self-identifying or survival information. They are able to engage in simple customary politeness routines.
- Level 4: Students at this proficiency level generally are able to narrate simple stories from personal experience; provide basic descriptions of their environment; express choices based on comparisons, preferences, and reasons; and engage in more complicated common politeness routines such as those involving telephone etiquette, the relative formality of different greetings, closings, giving directions, and asking for information. They are beginning to

develop the ability to sustain conversations using such strategies as conversation starters, turn-taking strategies, and conversation closing strategies. They are developing the ability to approximate the correct pronunciation of most English sounds, including most suprasegmental elements.

- Level 5: Students at this proficiency level generally are able to express basic opinions. They are developing the ability to use common modals, conditionals, tags, adverbs of probability/possibility, and hedging expressions to politely express and respond to requests, suggestions, advice, invitations, and apologies. They are able to converse on everyday topics (e.g., travel, past experiences, leisure activities) using appropriate questions and responses, circumlocution, rephrasing, and similar strategies.
- Level 6: Students at this proficiency level generally are developing the ability to express opinions on abstract topics and respond appropriately to the opinions of others; articulate problems and their solutions; initiate and sustain conversations on a variety of topics including past and present experiences, future plans, hypothetical situations in the past; and engage in more sophisticated politeness routines such as declining requests, making excuses, and apologizing with qualifications.
- Level 7: (= graduates of course level 6) Students at this proficiency level generally are able to express, support, and defend their opinions on abstract topics and to affirm, test, or challenge the opinions of others in culturally appropriate ways. They are able to initiate and sustain conversations on a wide variety of both concrete and abstract topics, including hypothesizing, expressing hopes and dreams, speculating about the future, and expressing regrets about the past. They are able to change the topic and style of conversation in situationally and culturally appropriate ways, including ways which follow from distinctions between formal or academic contexts and routine conversational contexts, male versus female speech, and so forth. They are able to approximate the correct pronunciation of all English sounds, including all suprasegmental elements.

## **GRAMMAR & WRITING:**

- Level 1: Students at this level of proficiency generally display limited or no productive ability in written English. Attempts to produce written English will be marked by heavy influence from the native language in terms of word order/grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and orthography.

- Level 2: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to write simple sentences that exhibit knowledge of correct English word order (essentially SVO) and the most elemental rules of capitalization and punctuation. In regard to verb tense usage, students at this level will often use primarily the simple present and present progressive tenses. Correctness of the simple past tense, if used at all, will normally be mixed at best.
- Level 3: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to form both simple and rudimentary compound sentences into a short paragraph with a recognizable topic and some supporting details. Student writing at this level normally exhibits knowledge of the basic rules of capitalization and punctuation appropriate to the above sentence types. Verb tenses used often include the simple present, present progressive, simple past, past progressive, simple future, and the present perfect. However, correct usage of the latter three tenses is often considerably less consistent.
- Level 4: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to form simple, compound, and (relatively basic) complex sentences into a longer paragraph with recognizable topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. Student writing at this level normally exhibits knowledge of the relevant rules of capitalization and punctuation appropriate to the above sentence types. At this level students will normally be able to produce the forms of all the verb tenses mentioned for level 3 above, with the addition of the present perfect progressive tense, though their ability to select the most appropriate tense from among these in a given context will still be limited at times.
- Level 5: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to write simple, compound, and complex sentences, including those involving a wider range of conjunctions (e.g., conjunctive adverbs such as *moreover*, *in addition*, and more sophisticated subordinating conjunctions such as *since*, *whereas*, *in case*, *unless*) and those involving reduced structures such as relative clauses, participial phrases, and prepositional phrases. At this level, students normally are able to produce a multi-paragraph composition with a recognizable introduction, body, and conclusion. In addition to the verb tenses mentioned above, students will normally have some demonstrable grasp of the past perfect, past perfect progressive, future progressive, and future perfect progressive, though their ability to select the most appropriate tense from among these in a given context may still be limited at times.

Level 6: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to write a wide variety of sentence types, including all those involving the reduced structures mentioned above, with relatively few mistakes in grammar and mechanics that do not significantly obscure the flow of thought. At this level, students will normally be able to form such sentences into multi-paragraph compositions that exhibit a marked increase in fluency, succinctness, coherence, and cohesiveness of ideas; clarity of sequencing and organization; and quality and extent of support for main ideas. Students will normally exhibit substantial control over the correct use of all the verb tenses except those tenses used least frequently in native English (e.g., past perfect progressive, future perfect progressive).

Level 7: (= graduates of course level 6) Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to produce substantive, well-organized compositions on a variety of topics with a minimum of errors in grammar or mechanics that would distinguish the student's writing from that of an educated native speaker.

### **READING & VOCABULARY:**

Level 1: Students at this level of proficiency generally exhibit little or no comprehension of written English. They may have some understanding of the English alphabet and may be able to sound out some words (especially if their native language shares some amount of orthography and/or cognate vocabulary), but they will not be able to effectively follow the flow of thought in even relatively simple written stories in English.

Level 2: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to recognize all of the letters and sounds of the English alphabet and will exhibit understanding of simple written stories in English (i.e., with a vocabulary of roughly 300 words or less).

Level 3: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to answer comprehension questions about and retell the main idea of a written English passage at a relatively basic level (i.e., with a vocabulary of roughly 700 words or less).

Level 4: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to answer comprehension questions about and determine the main idea of a paragraph or short reading in English at an intermediate level (with a vocabulary of roughly 1200 words or less), as well as paraphrase the sequence of ideas in the reading and draw inferences from the reading.

Level 5: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to comprehend and interact with a longer reading in English (with a vocabulary of roughly 2000 words or less) in the ways described above, as well as recognize facts, develop conclusions, and make judgments from the passage in question.

Level 6: Students at this level of proficiency generally are able comprehend and interact with passages of written English of a basic, generalized (nontechnical) academic nature. They will normally be able to exhibit understanding of both prose and nonprose texts.

Level 7: (= graduates of course level 6) Students at this level of proficiency generally are able to comprehend and interact with any passage of generalized (nontechnical) academic written English such as those commonly found in English news magazines, newspaper articles, current fiction and nonfiction, social studies, and the general sciences.

2/28/05

## **GUIDELINES FOR GUIDED INDEPENDENT STUDY AT AGAPE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE**

### **Student Eligibility for Independent Study**

Guided independent study may be available to an Agape student if the local director determines that *Agape's current course offerings are inadequate to meet the student's present learning needs*. The reasons that the current course offerings would be deemed inadequate tend to fall into two categories:

**1. Academic/Proficiency Reasons** – Most commonly, a student may qualify for guided independent study when the student has already completed the highest level course (e.g., the advanced Grammar/Writing course) in lieu of which an independent study is being requested. In such cases, the local director may determine that the student would be better served by a guided independent study than by repeating the course in question. (In such cases, the student must have completed the course in question with a recommendation for advancement from the teacher, indicating that the student showed satisfactory attainment of the course objectives.) In other cases a student may qualify for guided independent study when he or she “falls between the cracks” of the current course offerings; that is, the only course levels currently being offering in a given skill area (e.g., Grammar/Writing) are substantially too high or too low for the student. In general, guided independent study for academic/proficiency reasons is offered only to returning (i.e., not new) Agape students.

**2. Scheduling Problems** -- A second way that a student may qualify for guided independent study is due to scheduling problems. In some cases a student who needs to enroll for a certain number of hours (e.g., an F-1 student required to study full-time) may be available to attend only a portion of Agape's standard intensive day program during a given session because of scheduling conflicts with other essential activities or due to circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., the need to care for a family member with long-term illness; time restrictions imposed by commute from another city). In some such cases, guided independent study may serve as a feasible way to allow the student to engage in supervised study outside the normal classroom hours and so achieve the student's learning objectives (which may include fulfilling the study requirements of an F-1 student's visa status). Note that legitimate scheduling problems for the purposes of this policy do ***not*** include scheduling conflicts with business/work endeavors not authorized under a student's current visa status, or scheduling conflicts raised by any optional or nonessential activities such as tourist travel, etc.

The above two categories cover the most common reasons for guided independent study, but other reasons may arise which would justify such study. Guided independent study is possible in principle anytime the local director deems that an independent study format would better serve a student's present learning needs.

## **Procedure for Requesting Guided Independent Study**

Normally, a student must make a request for guided independent study from the local director **before the end of the student's first week of classes in the session for which guided independent study is requested.**

The local director must approve any request for guided independent study. The local director will consult with the local faculty to determine whether guided independent study best meets the needs of the student at this time. The local director will decide to approve or deny the student's request and will provide a written confirmation letter to the student **within three days** of the student's request. (If the session has already begun, the student must pay all fees and attend standard classes until arrangements are made for guided independent study.) If the request is granted, the local director will also designate in the confirmation letter a supervising teacher for the student's guided independent study.

The supervising teacher, in consultation with the student, will prepare a **written proposal of study**, outlining the objectives, content, schedule, materials/text(s), and criteria of evaluation for the guided independent study. This proposal will serve as the syllabus for the course. The proposal must be signed and dated by the teacher, the student, and the local director before guided independent study can begin.

## **Format of Guided Independent Study**

One course of guided independent study in lieu of a standard 6-hour per week course will include **5** hours per week of independent study (normally during the same class hours that the standard course being replaced is held, minus one hour) plus **2** additional hours per week of face-to-face tutorial sessions with the supervising teacher, for a total of 7 hours of guided independent study per week per course. The tutorial sessions with the supervising teacher will be scheduled by the supervising teacher in consultation with the student at the beginning of the term, normally as two one-hour sessions per week. These extra tutorial sessions allow time for the teacher to discuss with the student the student's ongoing work. The 7-hour total study time per course (instead of the normal 6 hours) allows the student to meet special U.S. government requirements regarding the amount of study hours required of students enrolled in independent study (see NAFSA Manual, 2003 version, pp. 3-77; 3-80, 81).

A timesheet will be maintained for the student at the Agape office, and a quiet study area will be provided (with a computer, if the supervising teacher and the student so agree). The student must record his starting and ending times on the timesheet for each day of independent study. The supervising teacher will keep attendance for the face-to-face tutorials. **The student must have unexcused absences totaling no more than 20% of the classes/tutorials for the entire term for each of these attendance records.** More than 20% unexcused absences brings an automatic grade of F for the course. That is, the student will automatically fail the course if he has unexcused absences for more than 20% of the independent study sessions **or** if he has unexcused absences for more than 20% of the tutorial sessions with the supervising teacher. (See the Student Handbook for details regarding excused and unexcused absences.)

### **Exemption from Friday Classes**

Students enrolled in **two or more** guided independent study courses are exempt from the normal Agape policy requiring full-time students to register for TOEFL-Prep or Pronunciation/Slang, or another similar Friday class.

### **Extra Fees for Guided Independent Study**

Because guided independent study involves an increased cost to Agape (due to the supervising teacher's additional tutorial hours), there is an **extra \$150 fee** for **each** course of guided independent study, **in addition to the normal course tuition** (for example, a full-time student who takes two of his three courses as guided independent study courses in a given term will pay \$300 in addition to the standard \$1,600 tuition for full-time study, thus totaling \$1900 for the term). The student enrolled in one or more guided independent study courses must pay the normal Materials Fee just as other students.

(4/7/2006)

AELI STUDENT HANDBOOK  
APPENDIX 4  
**SCHEDULE OF FEES\***

**Tuition for 9-Week Sessions**

	F-1 STUDENT	OTHER VISA HOLDERS (B,J,F-2,etc.)	LOCAL IMMIGRANT
<b>9-Week Session / Full-time</b> (18-21 hours/week)	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,400
<b>9-Week Session / Part-time</b> (individual courses)			
Communication Skills (6 hours/week)	–	\$625	\$325
Grammar & Writing (6 hours/week)	–	\$625	\$625
Reading & Vocabulary (6 hours/week)	–	\$625	\$625
TOEFL Prep or Pronunciation (8 class meetings – no meeting on ninth week; 3 hours/week)	–	\$325	\$325

**Tuition for Short Sessions – Full Time**

(Short sessions are only allowed for students studying at AELI for **only one session**.  
Late registration is not allowed. See AELI Student Handbook for more information.)

	F-1 STUDENT	OTHER VISA HOLDERS (B,J,F-2,ETC.)	LOCAL IMMIGRANT
<b>8-Week Short Session</b>	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,400
<b>7-Week Short Session</b>	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,300
<b>6-Week Short Session</b>	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,200
<b>5-Week Short Session</b>	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,100
<b>4-Week Short Session</b>	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$900
<b>3-Week Short Session</b>	–	\$800	\$750
<b>2-Week Short Session</b>	–	\$600	\$550
<b>1-Week Short Session</b>	–	\$350	\$325

### Tuition for Short Sessions – Part Time

	ALL STUDENTS
Communication Skills (6 hours/week)	\$115/week (\$625 max.)
Grammar/Writing (6 hours/week)	\$115/week (\$625 max.)
Reading/Vocabulary (6 hours/week)	\$115/week (\$625 max.)
TOEFL Prep or Pronunciation (3 hours/week)	\$65/week (\$325 max.)

### Tuition for Evening Classes

	F-1 STUDENT	OTHER VISA HOLDERS (B,J,F-2,ETC.)	LOCAL IMMIGRANT
Integrated Skills (5 hours/week)	–	\$475	\$325

### Homestay Fees

Homestay Application Fee	\$100	
Regular 9-week Session	\$1,100	
8-week Session	\$1,000	
4-week Session	\$750	
Additional Weeks (e.g., during break)	\$150/week	
Additional Days	\$25/day	
Homestay Transportation (if provided by host families)	\$270 per 9-week session (\$30/week)	

### Other Fees

	F-1 STUDENT	ALL OTHER STUDENTS
Application Fee	\$75	\$25
	ALL STUDENTS	
Textbooks	Per book (prices vary)	
Health Insurance	\$85.25 per session	
USPS/FedEx I-20 Mailing Fee	\$100	

Credit Card Fee	3% of credit card charge	
Wire Transfer Fee	\$25	
Reprocessing Fee for Postponement of Study (F-1 only)	\$100	
Late Registration Fee	\$100 (\$25 for part-time or evening course)	
Administrative Fee for Early Withdrawal (deducted from any tuition refund due to student)	\$500 (or \$100 per course, part-time)	

### Variable Fees\*\*

Tours with International Friendship Ministries	\$30-250 (depending on location)
Field trips or extracurricular activities (day students only; three or four trips are usually scheduled during each 9-week session)	Trips that are taken during regularly scheduled classes are required. Trips outside of regularly scheduled classes are optional. Required trips usually do not exceed \$25.00 per session.

\*Tuition and fees are subject to change without notice. Students must pay all balances due at the time of registration or before. Late registrants and other students who enroll with the intention of attending only part of a session do **not** receive a prorated reduction of tuition. Homestay and transportation fees may be prorated accordingly. Group discounts may be available (e.g., for state or community agencies involved in immigrant resettlement programs)

\*\*Most student services are provided free of charge, including airport pickup, orientation for new students, advising, conversation partners, help locating an apartment when needed, and help applying to college or university.

(8/10/2009)

## WITHDRAWAL AND REFUND POLICY

### BEFORE ENROLLMENT:

Applicants accepted by Agape but who are denied an F-1 (student) visa may submit a **written request** to Agape for a full refund of any prepaid tuition and/or homestay fee. Written proof of denial of student visa **must be submitted** along with the request for a refund. Students who obtain an F-1 visa but then choose not to enter the U.S. may also submit a **written request** for a refund. In every case, students who have already received an I-20 form from Agape **must return** the original I-20 form to Agape along with their written request in order to be eligible for a refund. Application fees (for enrollment and homestay, if applicable) and any mailing fees (if applicable) are **not** refundable. A **\$250 administrative fee** will be retained by Agape from the refund due to any student who has a U.S. sponsor and has been required to prepay tuition but who does not enter the U.S. If any student with an F-1 visa enters the U.S. but does **not** register for classes at Agape and pay all fees due for their initial session of study, Agape will **terminate** that student's record with the US government (SEVIS) and will **not** refund any prepaid tuition, homestay fee, or other fees and charges.

### AFTER ENROLLMENT:

**ALL STUDENTS:** Students who have signed the enrollment agreement with Agape and then withdraw will receive a **refund of tuition** for the current session if they submit a **written request** to Agape to withdraw **within the first three days** after the enrollment agreement is signed, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and school holidays. (Students with F-1 visas, see important information below.) However, an additional **administrative charge of up to \$500.00** will be deducted from the refund due to **any** full-time student who withdraws early from a session at **any** time after enrollment, regardless of the circumstances (the administrative charge for part-time students is \$100 per course withdrawn). The homestay fee is only partially refundable after the student enters the homestay (see below). Application or registration fees (for enrollment and homestay, if applicable), late fees, mailing fees, student insurance premiums, the 3% credit card fee and wire transfer fees are **not** refundable. Any tuition or other fees that have been prepaid for **future** sessions are fully refundable.

**STUDENTS WITH AN F-1 (STUDENT) VISA:** In order to qualify for a refund of tuition when withdrawing within the first three days after enrollment (see "All Students" above), students who transfer to another school must show written proof of transfer within three days after the transfer. Students with an F-1 visa who return to their home country must offer written proof of return to their country within the first week after withdrawing from the Agape program. **All refunds are subject to the \$500 administrative charge**

**described in the preceding section.** Students with an F-1 visa who request to withdraw **after** the first three days following the signing of the enrollment agreement will receive **no refund** of any unused tuition for the current session. Agape may retain up to two sessions of tuition paid by students who have enrolled at Agape while awaiting confirmation from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regarding a request to **change their visa to student (F-1) status** within the United States. This is due to the processing time required for USCIS to process a change of status request.

*STUDENTS WITHOUT A STUDENT VISA:* In addition to the availability of refund described in the section “All Students” above, students who are **not** on an student visa and who submit a **written request** to withdraw or transfer **after** the first three days following the signing of the enrollment agreement may be eligible to receive a **pro-rated refund** of any unused tuition for the current session **if** the written request is received by Agape **before 33% of the session is completed**, counting from the date of the student’s enrollment (normally, before the end of the *third* week of classes). The amount of refund will be calculated by dividing the total number of clock hours for which the student has paid into the number of clock hours remaining after the last recorded day of attendance by the student. **All refunds are subject to the \$500 administrative charge described above.** Students without a student visa who withdraw or transfer **after 33% of a session is complete** (counting from the date of the student’s enrollment) will receive **no refund** of any unused tuition for the current session.

#### EVENING CLASSES

Agape offers evening classes to non-F-1 students based on the availability of enough interested students to cover the costs to Agape, which include classroom costs and teachers’ salaries. Because evening classes typically have fewer students, the withdrawal of even one or a few students may mean that Agape will be unable to cover its costs. Therefore, *Agape does not generally give refunds of tuition or fees to students who choose to withdraw from evening classes after having signed the enrollment agreement* (fees for books and supplies may be refunded according to the policy below). One exception is when a student who has enrolled for an evening class scores significantly higher or lower on the Michigan English Placement Test than do other students in the same class. In such a case, if the local director believes that the student cannot be adequately taught in the mixed-level classroom with the other students, the student may be allowed to withdraw from the enrollment agreement with a full refund of tuition and fees (except for any student insurance premiums already paid).

#### MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND CANCELLATION OF COURSES BY AGAPE:

Students who are not eligible for a refund according to the above policy may be eligible for a pro-rated refund of tuition due to *mitigating circumstances*. Mitigating circumstances are those which are beyond the student’s control and which directly prohibit a student from pursuing their program of study. For refund purposes, mitigating circumstances are defined as *serious* illness of the student, death in the student’s

immediate family, or active duty military service, including active duty for training. The student must submit a **written request** stating the mitigating circumstances, with documentation attached (as applicable). An additional administrative charge of up to \$500.00 will be deducted from the refund due to any student who withdraws or transfers at any time after enrollment, regardless of the circumstances.

If Agape decides to cancel a course for which a student has already paid tuition (for example, because of low enrollment for an evening course), and if Agape cannot offer a suitable alternative course in place of the canceled course, then Agape will refund the full tuition for any remaining number of classes that will not be held for the canceled course. If the canceled course is the only Agape course in which a student is enrolled for that session, then Agape will refund **all** of the additional application and other fees (except for student insurance premiums) that were paid by the student for that session, **without** charging any administrative fee for withdrawal.

#### HOMESTAY FEE:

The homestay fee is fully refundable **only** for those students who withdraw or transfer from Agape **before entering (moving into) their homestay**. After entering the homestay, the student may receive a partial refund of the homestay fee if the student submits a **written request** for a refund to Agape **before 20% of the session is complete**, counting from the date of the student's enrollment (normally, this is by the end of the *second* week of classes, counting weekends). The amount of the refund will be calculated by dividing the total number of homestay days for which the student has paid into the number of homestay days remaining after the last day of residence by the student in the homestay location, up to a **maximum refund of \$500** for the current session (the amount of the maximum refund will be prorated accordingly for students who enroll late in the session). Generally, any additional homestay fees that have been prepaid for future sessions are fully refundable. However, if the student has prepaid the homestay fee for a session following a **vacation session** (as required in the AELI Student Handbook), this prepaid fee (for one session) will **not** be refundable if the student fails to re-enroll for classes as promised after the end of the vacation session.

#### MATERIALS:

All efforts will be made to issue refunds to withdrawing students for amounts they prepaid for books and materials, unless the student has used (for example, written in) or damaged those items such that they can no longer be used or sold to new students, or returned by Agape to the supplier as "new" merchandise. A student who already owns a required class text may choose not to receive that text at the beginning of the session under certain conditions (see "Books" in the Student Handbook). The Materials and Supplies Fee may be refunded on a prorated basis.

- ❖ Refunds due according to the above policies will be paid within **thirty days** of the date of the written request for a refund, when Agape is responsible for paying the refund. Refunds due to students who paid tuition and fees through an independent **agency** (usually in the student's home country) must be disbursed by the agency, not by Agape. Agape is not responsible for delays in refund payment caused by an independent agency.

(5/17/2006)

AELI STUDENT HANDBOOK  
APPENDIX 6

## STUDENT VISA STATUS (F-1) INFORMATION SHEET\*

As an F-1 visa student you must be enrolled full-time to maintain your student visa.

Enrollment in four consecutive 9-week sessions or the program ending date on your I-20 form, whichever is shorter, will be considered as completing the course of study at Agape.

You may take a break from studies for one 9-week session (or for 60-days) after attending four consecutive sessions, *if* you intend to register for studies at Agape after you return from your break.

If you want to transfer from Agape to another school in the United States, you must carefully follow the immigration procedures to maintain lawful student status.

### **In order to transfer to another school:**

You must have maintained full-time student status at Agape.

You must have **registered** at Agape and **paid all fees** for one session of study *before* you can request transfer to another school

You must enroll at the new school no later than the next available term after leaving Agape or in the first term following an authorized vacation (attendance of four consecutive sessions).

If you plan to transfer from Agape to another school in the U.S., you must apply and be accepted as a student at the new school, then notify the Agape office that you intend to transfer. You will need to complete the Agape Transfer-Out Form, indicating the school you intend to transfer to and your expected completion date at Agape. In most cases, the release date will be the last day of your last term at Agape. The International Student Official at Agape will update the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to indicate that you are transferring to the new school. Your new school cannot issue your I-20 until after the “release date,” at which point Agape will no longer have access to your SEVIS record.

If you are leaving the U.S., you must re-enter the U.S. with the I-20 of the new school you are transferring to. At that time, the immigration officer at the port of entry will process your transfer and no additional processing is required by your new school.

These transfer procedures described above can be followed only if you have pursued a full-time study at Agape and plan to do the same at the new school. If you have not been a full-time student at Agape, you are not eligible for a transfer of schools, but must apply for reinstatement to student status.

### **Grace Periods for Departing the United States:**

**60 Days:** A student who has *completed* a standard course of study at Agape (usually four consecutive sessions) has 60 days in order to depart the U.S., transfer to another school, or file for change of status.

**15 Days:** A student who has been *authorized* by Agape's International Student Official to withdraw from classes has 15 days to depart from the U.S.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Students who withdraw from study *without* obtaining prior approval from Agape's International Student Official are not eligible for any grace period and must leave the U.S. immediately.

(\*Though qualified Agape staff may give immigration advice to students according to their best understanding of current U.S. immigration policy, **each student is ultimately responsible** to ensure that his or her travel and study decisions are not in violation of U.S. immigration law. AELI's interpretations of immigration law are not recognized as authoritative or binding by the U.S. government, and satisfaction of AELI policies does not necessarily equal satisfaction of U.S. immigration law.)

5/18/2006