

Table of Contents

ESL CURRICULUM INFORMATION	2
2026-2027 ESL ACADEMIC CALENDAR	3
2026-2027 FEE SCHEDULE	4
PAYMENT POLICY	5
WITHDRAWAL POLICY	6
REFUNDS	6
LATE ARRIVAL POLICY	7
ATTENDANCE POLICY	8
ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY	9
ADVANCEMENT POLICY	10
GRADE POINT AVERAGE POLICY	11-12
EXIT REQUIREMENTS	13
PROGRESS, FLOATER, & PARTNER UNIVERSITY STUDENT POLICIES	14
MURRAY STATE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS	15
GRADUATE PROGRAMS' REQUIRED PBT TOEFL SCORES	16
MEAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS	17
USING THE TELEPHONE	18
FERPA - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	18
M NUMBERS, myGATE, NETWORK & RACERMAIL	19
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS	20
MSU ID CARD	20
DRIVER'S LICENSE	21
PUBLIC SAFETY INFORMATION	21
F-1 STATUS INFORMATION	22-24
MSU HEALTH SERVICES	25
HEALTH INSURANCE	26-27
HOUSING INFORMATION	28-29
EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN	30
TRAVELING INFORMATION	31
ESL CONVERSATION PARTNERS PROGRAM	32

**The information in this handbook is the most up to date at the time of printing and is subject to change.

ESL CURRICULUM INFORMATION

The Murray State ESL Program is an academically oriented intensive English program in the Institute for International Studies, offering ESL courses of 20+ hours a week to college bound or English only students in nine different skill and knowledge areas, including applied grammar, computer assisted composition, academic reading, listening comprehension, conversation, speech development, oral skills workshop, error analysis, and TOEFL preparation, at six different proficiency levels, preparing them for degree studies at Murray State or any other higher learning institutions in North America or elsewhere.

After you arrive on the Murray State campus and before you take any ESL classes, you will take a placement test, which consists of three parts, an oral interview with one of the ESL instructors, an essay writing exam, and an Institutional TOEFL that the Murray State ESL program is authorized to administer regularly, and you will be placed accordingly in a level where you can progress the most. The ESL Program also offers the ESL students a university transition class, orienting new students like you to campus life and providing you with information that you may need for a successful experience at Murray State.

ESL classes start and end at the same time as do university classes for both fall and spring semesters, but we divide both semesters in the middle to make two ESL terms, so plus the summer ESL term, we have five 8-week ESL terms in a calendar year. Typically, classes are offered every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, from 8:30am to 2:50pm. New students will also have a Transitions class on Wednesday afternoon.

In addition to the regular ESL curriculum, you will also have the opportunity to participate in our Conversation Partners Program to further improve your English and learn more about American culture by interacting with an American student outside the classroom. This has been a well-received program by both ESL students and participating American students. You are encouraged to join the program and you can find more information about this program at the end of this handbook or go to our website at:
www.murraystate.edu/students/International/ESLMain/ESLConversationPartners.aspx

We also want you to know that all instructors in our program are professionally trained. Most of them have a Master's degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) or a related academic field. They know how to help you improve your language skills and adjust to the new environment and are willing to work hard to help you become more proficient in the shortest time possible. We know you will be working hard too. We are so glad that you have come from afar to join our program, and we will do our best to make sure you will have as good an education at Murray State as you can expect of any quality ESL program in the United States.

Welcome to our ESL Program in the Institute for International Studies at Murray State!

2026-2027 ESL Academic Calendar

DATE	DAY	ACTIVITY
Aug. 14-15, 2026	Fri.-Sat.	Airport Shuttle
Aug. 18, 2026	Tues.	Placement Test for New Students, Fall 2026 First Term
Aug. 19-20	Wed.-Thurs.	Orientation for New Students & Registration for All Students
Aug-21	Fri.	First Day of Fall 2026 First Term Classes
Sep-7	Mon.	Labor Day; No Classes
Oct. 8-9	Thurs.-Fri.	Fall Break; No Classes
Oct-13	Tues.	Last Day of Fall 2026 First Term Classes
Oct. 14-16	Wed.-Fri.	Final Examinations
Oct-16	Fri.	Airport Shuttle
Oct. 20, 2026	Tues.	Placement Test for New Students, Fall 2026 Second Term
Oct. 21-22	Wed.-Thurs.	Orientation for New Students & Registration for All Students
Oct-23	Fri.	First Day of Fall 2026 Second Term Classes
Nov. 25-27	Wed.-Fri.	Thanksgiving Break; No Classes
Dec-8	Tues.	Last Day of Fall 2026 Second Term Classes
Dec. 9-11	Wed.-Fri.	Final Examinations
Jan. 8, 2027	Fri.	Airport Shuttle
Jan. 12, 2027	Tues.	Placement Test for New Students, Spring 2027 First Term
Jan. 13-14	Wed.-Thurs.	Orientation for New Students & Registration for All Students
Jan-15	Fri.	First Day of Spring 2027 First Term Classes
Jan-18	Mon.	Martin Luther King Day; No Classes
Mar-9	Tues.	Last Day of Spring 2027 First Term Classes
Mar. 10-12	Wed.-Fri.	Final Examinations
Mar. 15-19	Mon.-Fri.	Spring Break; No Classes
Mar-21	Sun.	Airport Shuttle
Mar. 23, 2027	Tues.	Placement Test for New Students, Spring 2027 Second Term
Mar. 24	Wed.	Orientation for New Students & Registration for All Students
Mar-25	Thurs.	First Day of Spring 2027 Second Term Classes
May-4	Tues.	Last Day of Spring 2027 Second Term Classes
May 5-7	Wed.-Fri.	Final Examinations
Jun-4	Fri.	Airport Shuttle
Jun. 7, 2027	Mon.	Placement Test for New Students, Summer 2027 Term
Jun. 8-9	Tues.-Wed.	Orientation for New Students & Registration for All Students
Jun-10	Thurs.	First Day of Summer 2027 Term Classes
Jun. 18 & Jul. 5	Fri. & Mon.	Juneteenth Day Observed & Independence Day Observed, Respectively ; No Classes
Jul-27	Tues.	Last Day of Summer 2027 Term Classes
Jul. 28-30	Wed.-Fri.	Final Examinations

2026-2027 FEE SCHEDULE		AMOUNT (IN USD)
ESL FEES:		
Application Fee (paid online during application process)		100.00
Airport Pick-Up Fee: the nearest international airport is 2 hours from campus; it is necessary for you to request airport pick-up if you need our staff to pick you up; you will be billed this amount after your arrival; please note that taxi service would cost much more and may not be reliable; the airport pick-up charge is non-refundable unless you cancel at least 48 hours prior to your original arrival time ; airport pick-up is not guaranteed, so please communicate with the ESL Office regarding your individual travel details		100.00 (if arriving during shuttle service) 150.00 (if arriving at any other time)
Tuition (one 8-week term)		1,550.00
Administrative Fee (one 8-week term)		150.00
Technology Fee (one 8-week term)		15.00
Institutional TOEFL Placement Test (one-time fee upon enrollment; students are required to take a placement test regardless of any past TOEFL scores - any additional tests are charged when taken)		30.00
OTHER FEES:		
Campus Wellness Center Fee (per semester)		36.00
Student Identification Card (one-time fee)		20.00
Books (approximate cost per 8-week term)		300.00
Health Insurance (health insurance is required for international students; you can purchase health insurance in your country & bring proof of coverage, or you can purchase it after you arrive; the approximate cost is per one 8-week term)		78.00 - 206.00

HOUSING AND MEAL PLANS

Housing/Food Services (campus housing and all access meal plan is required for students who are under 21; requirement can be waived for students who have junior status or are living off-campus with spouse)		
Application Fee and Deposit for Campus Housing (Housing deposit is refundable if you follow proper check-out procedures and have no damages to room)		\$50.00 and \$100.00
Housing: For housing rates and details, please refer to: http://www.murraystate.edu/campus/Housing/housingrates.aspx		
Meal plans: For meal plan rates and details, please refer to: https://www.murraystate.edu/campus/dining/		

Please note: all fees are subject to change without notice and there is a \$20.00 service charge on all returned checks.

Campus housing and meals will be billed on a weekly pro-rated basis for students who stay less than the full university semester (less than 16 weeks).

PAYMENT POLICY

After you register for classes, you will be able to see the amount you owe for ESL tuition and fees in myGate. ESL students must pay all of their fees, including housing, tuition, and meals by the payment due date, which will be provided on registration day (usually the Tuesday after classes begin). Students have the choice of setting up a payment plan (\$30 fee plus interest charges) on myGate that will allow the balance to be paid in two payments. **If you have not paid or set up an official payment plan by the payment due date, you will be dropped from classes and will be considered as no longer enrolled, and need to return to your home country within two weeks.** If you have any financial holds on your account, you cannot receive your grades or register for classes. Late payments are subject to late fees.

You can pay your tuition and housing fees the following ways:

1. Pay online through myGate with an electronic check*, debit/credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Discover or American Express - a 2.95% transaction fee or \$3 minimum fee will be added to the payment made with a US debit/credit card while a 4.25% transaction fee or \$3 minimum fee will be added to the total if paid with an international credit card). * If possible, we recommend paying using the electronic check option to avoid additional fees.
2. Purchase a bank check or use traveler's checks. Enclose payment in a Bursar's envelope (available in our office) and drop this in the Cashier's box on the sidewalk at Sparks Hall. You must include your name and M# with the payment. Change cannot be given for traveler's checks, so you may need to combine them with another form of payment to avoid overpaying.
3. Pay online through FlyWire wire transfer from myGate. Please note that there is an additional fee charged by FlyWire. The fee depends on the amount, the exchange rate, and other factors. Also, if you make an overpayment, the refund must be issued back through Flywire and a refund fee will be charged. Instructions to use FlyWire can be found here:

murraystate.edu/Admissions/BursarsOffice/InternationalStudentPayments.aspx

If you are here longer than eight weeks, we suggest that you open a bank account in Murray so you can pay using the electronic check option.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A student who registers for ESL classes and then wishes to withdraw from the program or drop one or more classes must notify the ESL staff and complete the official withdrawal form. Students are still required to pay tuition and fees in accordance with the following scale.* Adjustments apply only to ESL Tuition, ESL Computer Lab Fee, and Wellness Center Fee. Other fees are non-refundable. Any Housing or Meal Plan adjustments will be determined by Auxiliary Services. Students are required to pay any fees owed at the time of withdrawal. If payment was already made, refunds will be processed by the university Bursar's Office (see Refunds section below).

Withdraws on the first day of classes	No penalty (full refund of fees)
Withdraws within 2-10 days*	20% penalty owed
Withdraws within 11-23 days*	50% penalty owed
Withdraws on or after 24 days*	No refund (total owed)

Please note: If you withdraw from school, you must abide by the immigration regulations regarding exiting the U.S. and the campus rules regarding moving out of campus housing (see the advisor for details).

*The official ESL calendar dates will be used. Weekends are included in the counting of days. This policy follows the MSU withdrawal schedule but with the days proportionally reduced since the ESL term is one-half the length of the university semester. Refer to the *MSU Official Schedule of Fees* for more information.

REFUNDS

To receive a refund, you must have a "permanent address" within the U.S. (entered in myGate "Academics" tab, "Self-Service Banner", and "Personal Information") OR you must have a bank account in the U.S. (entered in myGate "Money" tab as "Direct Deposit signup"). Housing refunds will not be issued until you check out of your room permanently. If your initial payment was made through Flywire, the refund will be issued by Flywire to the same bank account used to make the payment.

LATE ARRIVAL POLICY

The late placement testing for students who cannot arrive by the beginning of the term will take place on the first Friday of the term. If students arrive after that time, they will be temporarily placed in a level based on a speaking interview and writing test. At the end of that term, they will be given the TOEFL test and will be replaced based on the results. For example, if they were originally placed in Level 2, but their TOEFL score is a Level 3 score, they can go to Level 3 the following term. However, if their TOEFL score is Level 2, they may have to take Level 2 again. In addition, if a student who arrives late fails on attendance, he/she cannot move to a higher level.

Examples:

- 1) A student's start date is Monday, January 12, and ESL classes start on Thursday, January 15. He arrives in Murray on Friday, January 30, which is 10 days after classes started. He has a writing exam and an oral interview and based on those results is temporarily placed in Level 3. He takes the TOEFL at the end of the term and receives a 480. He will then be replaced in Level 5, or he may have to go to Level 2 if his score is 380.
- 2) A student's start date is Monday, March 23, and ESL classes start on Thursday, March 26. She arrives in Murray on Wednesday, March 25. She has a writing exam and oral interview and based on those results is placed in Level 4. On Friday, March 27, she takes the TOEFL test and makes 450. She will remain in Level 4.

The class days that a new student misses because of arriving late will not be used to lower their grades but will be counted toward the maximum absences (10) allowed for the term.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Student's Responsibility: When you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to 1) find out what assigned work was missed, 2) make up any work, and 3) explain to your teacher about unavoidable absences such as sickness, medical appointments, and accidents. *Please understand that an absence for any reason is still counted as an absence.*

For a four-hour class: After three excused/unexcused absences, you should request a consultation with the instructor. If you have five absences, your grade will be lowered one letter grade (10 points). If you have seven absences, your grade will be lowered by 50% and you will fail the course.

For a two-hour class: After two excused/unexcused absences, the student should request a meeting with the instructor. If you have three absences, your grade will be lowered one letter grade (10 points). If you have five absences, your grade will be lowered by 50% and you will fail the course.

Tardiness: If you have three tardies in one class, they will count as one absence for that class. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted absent. If you leave class for 15 minutes or more, you will be counted absent.

The numbers of absences for students participating in a less than eight-week program will be proportionate to the numbers above.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Murray State University takes seriously its moral and educational obligation to maintain high standards of academic honesty and ethical behavior. Instructors are expected to evaluate students' academic achievements accurately, as well as ascertain that work submitted by students is authentic, the result of their own efforts, and consistent with established academic standards. Students are obligated to respect and abide by the basic standards of personal and professional integrity.

Violations of Academic Honesty Include:

Cheating - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized information such as books, notes, study aids, or other electronic, online, or digital devices in any academic exercise; as well as unauthorized communication of information by any means to or from others during any academic exercise.

Fabrication and Falsification - Intentional alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves changing information whereas fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information.

Multiple Submission - The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work, including oral reports, for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor.

Plagiarism - Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, creative work, or data of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise, without due and proper acknowledgement.

If you plagiarize while in the ESL program, you will fail the assignment and have to complete an Academic Honesty Violation Form. If you plagiarize a second time, you will fail the course.

For more information, please refer to the [Policy on Academic Honesty](https://www.murraystate.edu/academics/RegistrarsOffice/catalog.aspx#/policy/ryL67vwMr?bc=true&bcCurrent=Policy%20on%20Academic%20Honesty&bcItem Type=policies) here:
<https://www.murraystate.edu/academics/RegistrarsOffice/catalog.aspx#/policy/ryL67vwMr?bc=true&bcCurrent=Policy%20on%20Academic%20Honesty&bcItem Type=policies>

ESL ADVANCEMENT POLICY

Skill level is determined by placement testing. Students who follow the requirements below can expect to advance to the next level and may be ready for full admission to the university in an anticipated amount of time.

BEGINNING	TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM
Level 6	one eight-week term
Level 5	two eight-week terms
Level 4	three eight-week terms
Level 3	four eight-week terms
Level 2	five eight-week terms
Level 1	six eight-week terms

1) You cannot go to the next level if you fail two or more classes OR if your GPA is below 2.0. Courses designated with a pass/fail (P or E) will not be calculated into the GPA.

2) If you have passed Level 6 classes but not met the TOEFL requirement, you must repeat Level 6 or maintain 18 hours of ESL classes from other levels.

Either option requires you to pass your classes every term. (See page 13 for more information)

3) If you are conditionally admitted, your ESL I-20 will end when you graduate from ESL, and you have 30 days after you graduate for your I-20 to be updated to the university level.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE POLICY

Final completion of the program and advancement to the next level is determined by grade point average (GPA) in addition to the TOEFL score and number of failing courses—no more than one E in all classes. A student cannot have less than a 2.00 GPA in order to graduate or advance to the next level. Courses designated as pass/fail (*P* or *E*) will not be calculated into the GPA. The following system of grades is used for the evaluation of course work, with a 4.00 grading scale used to determine the GPA:

Letter grade	Evaluation	Quality points for each credit
<i>A</i>	<i>Exceptionally high quality</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>E</i>	<i>Failure</i>	<i>0</i>

A quality point (QP) is a point earned per credit hour that is used to calculate a student's GPA. The number of points received for each course is determined by the grade earned and the grading scale used. Since Murray State uses the 4.00 grading system, each credit hour of A receives four QPs, each credit hour of B receives three, each credit hour of C receives two, and each credit hour of D receives one. For example, a student who earns an A in a four-hour course will receive 16 QPs. Notice that a grade of E affects a student's grade point average negatively because it earns zero (0) QP for the class. If you receive all Cs and Ds, you will not be able to pass the level, because your GPA will be below 2.00.

Examples for calculating a GPA:

Example One: This Level 6 student has a GPA of 3.44; therefore, he has the required GPA. As long as the student has the required TOEFL exam score for his program, he will be able to graduate from the ESL Program.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>QP</i>		<i>Hours</i>	<i>Total QPs</i>
Grammar	B	3	x	4	12
Writing	A	4	x	4	16
Oral Skills	A	4	x	4	16
Reading	B	3	x	2	6
Listening	B	3	x	2	6
Error Analysis	P	3	x	2	6
TOEFL Prep.	P	NA		NA	NA
Total				18	62

GPA: $62/18 = 3.44$

Example Two: This Level 5 student will not be able to go to Level 6 because he does not have the required GPA of 2.00 even though he did not fail any classes.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>QP</i>		<i>Hours</i>	<i>Total QPs</i>
Grammar	D	1	x	4	4
Writing	D	1	x	4	4
Oral Skills	A	4	x	4	16
Reading	D	1	x	4	4
Listening	D	1	x	2	2
Error Analysis	C	2	x	2	4
Total				20	34

GPA: $34/20 = 1.70$

NOTE: The grade point average of a student is defined as the ratio of the total number of quality points to the total number of hours attempted, truncated (not rounded) to the two decimal points. For example, a 3.99999 calculation would be stated as a 3.99 GPA.

EXIT REQUIREMENTS

For successful completion of the ESL Program:

1. Students are to complete all courses with a minimum GPA of 2.0, fail no more than 1 class in a term, and receive recommendations from their instructors.
2. Students must take an exit exam, the Institutional TOEFL*.
 - **Undergraduate students** must receive a TOEFL score of at least 475 (paper-based) or a required language score on any other language test accepted for admissions to Murray State University. Language requirements can be found [here](#). **Note:** MSU undergraduate admissions requirements must also be met. If you use an IBT TOEFL score or an IELTS score, an official copy of your score should be sent to MSU directly from the testing services, ETS or IELTS.
 - **Graduate students** must receive a TOEFL score of at least 475 (paper-based) to graduate from the ESL program. To be admitted to a graduate program, they must meet all the requirements, including specific TOEFL scores, of their graduate program (see Graduate Programs sheet). Please consult the MSU Graduate Bulletin for specific program admissions requirements for international students.

**** The Institutional TOEFL score alone will not meet the university's admissions requirements without recommendation or completion of the ESL Program. If you have already met the TOEFL requirement, you do not have to take it again. A TOEFL score is valid for a period of two years.***

PROGRESS, FLOATER, & PARTNER UNIVERSITY STUDENT POLICIES

1. Students cannot fail a level multiple times.

A student who fails to make progress in the ESL Program may have their I-20 terminated. Students who do the following things will be put on probation during their next term:

- 1) Fail all their classes, or
- 2) Fail (overall GPA less than 2.0) the same level two times.

If a student fails his/her probation term, the I-20 will be terminated. An I-20 end date will not be extended for any reason if the student has been on probation.

Note: Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission requires scholarship students to not repeat the same level more than twice.

2. Students may be “floaters” for a limited number of terms.

If students pass Level 6 but do not get their required TOEFL score, they may take 18 hours of ESL classes from different levels in order to maintain their full-time status the next term. This is called being a “floater” because you are taking classes from different levels. A student may be a floater for a maximum of 3 ESL terms. Floaters are expected to maintain a 2.0 GPA and not fail more than one class each term they are floating. If floaters fail two terms or fail all classes one term, they will not be allowed to continue taking ESL classes and they must either transfer to another university or leave the United States.

3. Changing Program Level from ESL to University or Transferring to Another University.

Due to the recent changes in immigration policies pertaining to international students, you are required to study in the ESL program for one academic year before having your level of education changed or transferring to another university.

4. Concurrent Group Student Policy

Given the recent changes in immigration policies, partner university students, if required by their home universities to take at least one academic course, will need to apply as a visiting student in order to take a concurrent university class. This means that those students are required to submit a minimum language score required for direct admissions to Murray State. If admitted, they will be allowed to take a combination of ESL and University classes to maintain their full time student status. This may mean that you will need to repeat some level 6 courses in the second term (you may not choose courses from other levels).

All students need to be in “good standing” with their ESL classes to be accepted to Murray State University.

MURRAY STATE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS*

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Test	Score
TOEIC	overall score of 790 or higher with 160 or higher speaking (700 with 140 or higher speaking for full admission with condition)
Internet-Based TOEFL	overall score of 71 (61 for full admission with condition)
IELTS	6.0 (5.5 for full admission with condition)
Duolingo	overall score of 100 or higher (90 for full admission with condition)

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Many graduate academic programs set standards for English proficiency requirements higher than the minimum listed for undergraduate students above. Students must meet the specific language requirements of their respective program as listed in the current academic bulletin.

* This information is subject to change.

Please see MSU's Institute for International Studies website for more detailed information:
<https://www.murraystate.edu/admissions/international/Admissions/index.aspx>

GRADUATE PROGRAMS' REQUIRED TOEFL SCORES

College of Business and Public Affairs	Paper Based TOEFL
MBA	527
MPA	550
Organizational Communication	527
Mass Communication	527
College of Education	
Human Development & Leadership	527
Secondary Teacher Leader Education	527
Early Elementary Education/Teacher Leader	527
College of Health Science and Human Services	
Occupational Safety and & Health	527
Rec. & Leisure Services	527
College of Humanities & Fine Arts	
English	600
TESOL	550
History	600
Music Education	550
Psychology	600
College of Science, Eng. & Technology	
Biology	527
Chemistry	527
Earth and Environmental Science	527
Engineering Management	527
Mathematics	527
Watershed Science	527
College of Agriculture	
Agriculture	527

*Graduate programs are subject to change. Graduate language requirements can be found on the following link: murraystate.edu/students/International/graduate_requirements.aspx

MEAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

All students who live on campus are required to buy Murray State University Meal Plans, except students who are 21 or older or who have junior or senior status. Other students can buy a meal plan if they choose to do so.

The meal plans must be purchased at the beginning of each semester (excluding summer). You should pay for it at the same time you pay your other fees (tuition, housing charges, etc.). All students (except group students) who are required to purchase a meal plan will automatically be charged for the Racer Premium Plan. There are other meal plans at the same rate, Gold Access 19 and Blue Access 12. If you want to make changes to your meal plan, you must tell the Racer ID Card Office (1st Floor, Hart Hall) within the first week. Unused flex dollars will carry over from Fall semester to Spring semester, but at the end of the Spring semester, you cannot get a refund for Flex dollars that you have not used. The minimum plan option for non-exempt students from partner universities is the Copper Flex plan.

1) Racer Premium: Unlimited meal swipes at Winslow Dining Hall for the entire semester. Includes 10 Winslow guest meals for family/friends and \$100 Flex to spend at other campus dining venues. Also includes 6 meal exchanges per week (1 per day) at other campus dining locations and one to-go meal a day.

Cost: \$2,764

2) Flex Plans*: Various amounts can be placed on the ID card and are like cash that can be spent at any campus dining venue. The Copper Flex plan meets minimum requirements for partner university students (Cost: \$950 for \$1,000 flex dollars).

There are more meal plans available. Anyone can purchase a meal plan, and it will save you 6% taxes if you plan to eat on campus frequently. For more information, visit <https://www.murraystate.edu/campus/Dining/index.aspx> or go to the Racer ID Card Office on the first floor in Hart College.

****Flex Dollars** can be used like cash in all dining venues and are not subject to Kentucky sales tax. Six percent savings on everything!

USING THE TELEPHONE

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

ESL Office	270-809-3247	Weihong Gao	270-809-4103
ESL Admission Office	270-809-3265	Campus Security	270-809-2222

DIALING

All Murray State University campus phone numbers begin with the prefix “809” (809-XXXX). If you are using a campus phone to reach another campus phone, dial only the last four digits. If you are using your cellphone, you need to dial the area code “270” followed by the seven digit campus phone number.

Prefixes for phone calls in Murray are “226, 227, 753, 759, 762, 767 or 978.” The area code for the Murray region is “270.” If you are using a campus phone, dial “8” and then “270” to reach an outside line. For long distance calls, you will need a calling card to call long distance from a campus phone if you do not have a US cell phone. For a toll free number, dial 8-1-800-prefix-number. If you call home from an off campus phone or your cell phone, the international access code is “011.” You are allowed one free phone call home from the ESL Office immediately after you arrive (when offices are open) to call your family if you do not have other means to communicate with them.

FERPA - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Under this United States law, it is illegal for the Institute of International Studies (including ESL) to release a student’s grades (or TOEFL score) to anyone but the student. This includes family members and friends. If you would like your grades sent to your family or another school, you must fill out the release on your myGate, or you could request your grades and send them yourself.

Also under this law, it is legal for us to give out your phone number, house address, and e-mail address to anyone who requests this information. This is called directory information. If you would prefer that your addresses and phone number NOT be shared, you must sign a non-disclosure request form. You can fill out this form in the registrar’s office in Sparks Hall. **NEVER give anyone your social security number, date of birth, credit card or bank information, passwords, or other personal information.**

M NUMBERS, ID CARD, MYGATE, NETWORK and RACERMAIL

M Numbers

All Murray State students have an eight digit ID number called an M Number. This number is used only at Murray State University and can be found on your student ID card or on your myGate page.

MSU ID CARD

All Murray State students should have a Murray State ID card made at the Racer Card office on the first floor of Hart College. The cost for these cards is \$20.00 and can be paid along with the rest of your tuition and fees online. If you have a meal plan, Flex dollars, or print dollars, they will be accessed through this card. You also need it to get into the Wellness Center, check out items from the Murray State libraries, get into your Residential College if you live on campus, or attend on-campus sports or other recreational events. You may also use your card to get a discount from local businesses (restaurants, movie theater, etc.) if they offer an MSU student discount.

Do not lose your card. If you do, check with the Lost and Found office in the Blackburn Science Building, Winslow, and the Racer Card office immediately. If you cannot find it, report it to the Racer Card office and request a new card. As mentioned above, each card costs \$20, and you will need to pay it in your myGate account.

myGate, Network, RacerMail, and Canvas

MyGate is the university's system that students use to see their class schedules, pay their bills, receive their grades, and much more. You need to remember your login and password. If you have trouble logging in to your myGate account, you need to call the Service Desk at 270-809-2346.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

A social security number is a nine digit number given to US citizens, permanent residents, and temporary (working) residents. You do not need a social security number unless you work on-campus. If you want to work on-campus and receive a social security number, you must:

- 1) Find a job on campus.
- 2) See your ESL advisor to get an application & social security eligibility letter. You must have your ESL advisor, your future employer, and the student employment office in Sparks Hall sign the eligibility letter.
- 3) You must submit your forms at the Social Security Office in Mayfield, KY (30 minutes away). When you submit your forms, you must take the following things: social security application, eligibility letter, passport, I-20, I-94 card, & copies of your passport, visa, I-20, and I-94 card. Please use this website at i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html to get your I-94 card if you did not print out a copy when you first arrived here.
- 4) Your card will be mailed to the IIS office two weeks after you apply. According to the Social Security Office, you cannot be given your card until you begin working or start working before you receive your card.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

To apply for your driver's license, go to www.murraystate.edu/esl, click Information for Current ESL Students on the left, and then Driver's License Application. Follow instructions, gather all the required documents, fill out the application, and give everything to your advisor. Your advisor will provide you with proof of status. With all the required documents, you can go to Paducah, KY (50 minutes away) to apply. After your application is approved, you will receive a letter in the mail giving you further instructions. After you receive the letter, you will need to schedule an appointment to take a driving test(s).

Non U.S. citizens may drive in the U.S. on their valid foreign license and International Permit for up to one year from the date of admission into the U.S. provided their home country is part of the Geneva Compact. Drivers from non-Geneva Compact countries must obtain a Kentucky license within 30 days of establishing residency in Kentucky. (Source: KYTC website)

PUBLIC SAFETY INFORMATION

Murray State University is considered a safe campus, but you still need to take precautions.

Please call Public Safety at 270-809-2222 if you would like an escort when walking on campus at night. Students should not walk alone at night and should always walk in well-lit areas.

If your cell phone receives text messages, please sign up in myGate for text alerts from the Public Safety office.

For a complete list of all public safety information, including different types of emergency situations, please visit the website at <https://www.murraystate.edu/about/Offices/police/index.aspx>.

F-1 STATUS INFORMATION

F-1 Student: 1) A person who is a nonimmigrant (not a U.S. citizen and is not planning to live in the U.S.A. permanently) and 2) He/she is taking a “**full course of study**” to reach a specific educational/professional goal at the school listed on the I-20 form. The F-1 student must be working toward the goal written on the I-20 form.

Maintaining Status or “In Status”: It is **extremely important** to maintain your status while you are in the U.S. If you fail to do this, you could be “deported” or sent back to your home country by DHS – Department of Homeland Security. Very briefly, here is what you need to remember as your responsibilities for maintaining your status (legal stay) as a non-immigrant student in the U.S. Immigration regulations can often be confusing and sometimes change without notice, so if you have any questions about immigration matters, see the ESL advisor.

1. Your passport must be kept valid **for at least** 6 months.
2. You must pursue a full course of study (18 hours per week in the ESL program, 12 hours undergraduate or 6 hours graduate).
3. You must complete one academic year of study (4 terms in ESL or 2 semesters of university) before you are eligible for a vacation or break (see examples on next page). The maximum length of study in an ESL program is 24 months, including breaks.
4. You may not transfer to a different field of study or continue on for a higher degree at Murray State University or elsewhere within the first year of your study without the approval from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Contact one of the ESL advisors or admissions.
5. Full-time students are authorized for on-campus employment only. The maximum work load is 20 hours per week. **Off-campus employment is prohibited.**
6. Students are required to notify the school within 10 days of changing addresses. Inform the ESL office of every address change you make & if you live off campus, you also need to update your address in myGate using the “self-service banner” link.
7. If you plan on leaving the U.S. for a vacation, remember to have your I-20 signed by an ESL advisor. Otherwise, you will not be able to come back to the United States.

F-1 Status information (continued)

Out-of-Status: It is violating the conditions of your F-1 Status. What can make you “out-of-status”?

- **Not pursuing a full course of study**
- **Unauthorized employment** - This means working both off or on-campus when you have not been allowed to do so.
- **Not following correct procedures to transfer to another school or to change to a different program or level in the same school**
- Accepting or signing up for any form of U.S. federal, state or local public assistance such as **Medicaid** (medical assistance) and **food stamps**.

What can happen to me if I am “out-of-status”?

- You will become an illegal .
- You can lose benefits such as scholarships.
- The DSO cannot by law sign your I-20 form should you want to transfer to another school or leave the country. You are ALWAYS free to leave the U.S., but if you want to return, you are likely to have difficulty getting back in.
- The DSO does not have to provide you with any services.

How do I get back “in-status” if I am now “out-of-status”?

- Procedures are complicated. You need to see your ESL student advisor to discuss your options if you become out of status.

Who determines if I am “out-of-status”?

- The DSO does because he/she is a designated school official who is given authority by the DHS in such matters.

When can I go home to my home country – when I want?

- You can leave and return to your home country whenever you want. However, if you are out of status, the DSO cannot sign your I-20. If you leave during a time you are taking classes, your I-20 will be terminated and will need to be made active again before you can return to the United States.

What is a “break” and when can I take one and STILL be “in-status”?

A “break” is taking ONE TERM OFF (not attending classes) and still staying in the U.S. The ESL Program has five terms – Fall 1, Fall 2, Spring 1, Spring 2, and Summer. In the ESL Program, you can have only **ONE BREAK** in one academic year. **This means you can have one break after you have completed FOUR CONSECUTIVE (back-to-back) terms.**

F-1 Status information (continued)

Examples:

1. If you attend ESL Fall 1, Fall 2, Spring 1 and Spring 2, then summer would be your normal break - like the degree seeking students at MSU.
2. If you attend Spring 1 and Spring 2, you will need to continue to enroll in the summer term and Fall 1 before taking a break. If you stay in the United States but do not enroll in the summer term, you will be out of status.
3. If you come for the summer term, you must attend summer classes, Fall 1, Fall 2 and Spring 1. Then, you can take Spring 2 off as a break if you choose to, but you will need to enroll in the summer term.

Every student's situation is different. They attend different terms and can take breaks at different times. Please see your advisor if you want to take a break.

Also, leaving the U.S. is not a break – you can leave to return home whenever you want. But if you are not on an approved break, you cannot just stay in the U.S.A. for 2 days, 2 weeks or 2 months to wait for a TOEFL score without taking classes. You have to make the decision and go home. Otherwise, you are out-of-status.

What is a DSO? A DSO is a designated school official at your university. The DHS designates MSU to designate certain people as officials:

1. To issue, prepare and sign I-20 forms.
2. To monitor F-1 students' status (and other nonimmigrants who are at the school).
3. To approve benefits for F-1 students and their family members.
4. To serve and inform international students of their rights and responsibilities.

Who are the DSO's in the Institute for International Studies at MSU?

1. Angie Wyatt, ESL Business Manager/Interim Admissions Assistant
2. Weihong Gao, ESL Director
3. Bill McKibben, Director of Student Services and Retention
4. Misty Brown-Lanham, Senior International Student Advisor

MSU HEALTH SERVICES

Murray State University's health services are provided by Murray Medical Associates, which is located on the first floor of Wells Hall.

Services available to the Murray State Student are:

Students will have the option of utilizing health insurance to cover the cost or pay a flat fee for services. All students will need student ID and insurance cards upon arrival to receive services along with co-pay payment if applicable.

Patients who visit the on-campus location and are in need of additional treatment or consultation will receive service at the in-town location (300 S. 8th St., Suite 380W, Murray, KY 42071) by presenting their Murray State RacerCard ID. It's off-campus phone number is (270) 753-0704.

Hours of Operation on Campus (subject to change):

Fall & Spring Semesters:

Monday - Friday 8:00am–4:30pm (closed between 12:30 and 1:30 pm for lunch)

Murray Medical Associates also provides walk-in service on Saturday morning.

For a list of physicians in the Murray area, please see the Health Services website: murraystate.edu/campus/healthServices.aspx

HEALTH INSURANCE

International students are required by the US Government to have adequate health insurance during their study in the United States. Murray State University requires that students' insurance policies meet the following requirements:

- 1) The policy must be written in English and rates must be in US dollars.
- 2) The policy must include in-patient and out-patient coverage for sickness and accidents.
- 3) The policy can have no more than a \$500 deductible per individual, accident, or illness.
- 4) Must state a maximum benefit of no less than \$100,000 per accident or illness (\$50,000 for J Visa holders).
- 5) Must have no less than \$10,000 provision for medical evacuation to the student's home country.
- 6) Must provide no less than \$7,500 for repatriation (after death, removal of remains to the student's home country).
- 7) Must clearly state beginning and ending coverage dates (must include the date from the first day of classes).
- 8) Students must provide proof of coverage before they are allowed to enroll in classes.

Students may purchase a policy from their home countries and bring it with them or they may purchase a plan in the United States. Following is some information about a few of the plans that are available to ESL students. We do not necessarily recommend any one over another but want to help students conserve financial resources and meet the minimum requirements of the university and the federal government.

International Student Organization offers two plans:

The Compass Silver plan from ISO meets MSU requirements and costs \$31/month* for students under age 25. ISO also offers an Enhanced plan and the monthly rate is \$49/month* for students under age 25, \$95/month* for students 25-29 and \$199/month* between 30 and 64. There is an annual \$16 application fee for each plan.

The website to purchase the insurance is www.isoa.org

There are other companies providing health insurance to international students, but ISO is the company most often used by our students. Please make certain that your plan meets the requirements specified on page 25.

Study USA: travelinsure.com

Compass Benefits: compassstudenthealthinsurance.com

* Insurance names and costs change periodically so please check each company's website for the most accurate information.

HOUSING INFORMATION

Murray State University has eight residential colleges (Regents, White, Hester, Elizabeth, Lee Clark, JH Richmond, Hart, and HC Franklin) and apartments called College Courts. **All ESL students under 21 years old on the ESL registration date are required to live on campus.** If you have junior or senior status at another school, you may get an exemption.

Here are some facts about the **Residential Colleges** that you need to know:

- 1) You must pay a \$50 housing application fee and a \$100 housing deposit when applying for housing online. The deposit will be refunded when you check out of your room permanently as long as there are no damages to your room.
- 2) If you have already applied for university housing and no longer need to live on campus, you must contact the housing office in writing before June 1 (for the fall) or December 1 (for the spring) in order to receive your \$100 deposit. If you do need to live on campus, you must sign a housing contract when you check into your room. This contract goes from the time you check-in during the fall semester until the end of the spring semester in May. Once you have checked into your room, signed your housing contract, and been given the key to your room, the housing contract becomes binding and you are responsible for payment of the full amount of housing charges for the entire contractual period (August-May). If you break your contract and move out early, you will lose your \$100 deposit and you will be responsible for paying housing costs. Please contact the housing office with any questions about the housing contract.
- 3) If you lose your room key and do not find it in 24 hours, you will have to pay a \$75 lock change fee.
- 4) Every floor of the Residential Colleges (RCs) has at least one Resident Advisor (RA) that can help you with any questions you have about housing. Every residential college (RC) has a Resident Director (RD), the building manager.

HOUSING INFORMATION (continued)

- 5) When you check out of your room, you must turn in your key and have your room checked by an RA (Resident Advisor).
- 6) There are different prices for different residential colleges.
- 7) If you want to move to another room, switch roommates or move to another building, please visit the housing website to complete the request form, and talk to your RA or someone at the front desk.
- 8) For security purposes, you must show your MSU ID to the front desk worker each time you enter your RC. You can bring a guest to your room, but you must check them in and leave their ID at the front desk, stay with them at all times and escort them back to the front desk when they leave.
- 9) Your RA will have floor meetings sometimes throughout the semester to give you important information. Please go to the meetings.
- 10) The RCs close for four days during Thanksgiving break, about one month during Christmas break, and one week during Spring break. You can sign up for interim housing to stay on campus during the breaks (There is a separate charge for interim housing. Read emails from the Housing Office).
- 11) Smoking and alcohol are not allowed in the RCs.
- 12) There are many other housing rules. Please be sure to read your housing contract and other papers you received when you checked into your room and ask your ESL Advisor or RA if you have any questions or email the Housing Office at msu.housing@murraystate.edu.
- 13) It is very important that you read all the emails from the Housing Office.

For more information, please see the Housing office's website:
<https://www.murraystate.edu/campus/Housing/contactHousing.aspx>

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

This plan is to advise students on what to do if the university is shut down due to bad weather or other incidents.

Place to Go for Information

Students are encouraged to go to Public Safety (1511 Chestnut Street) if communications (i.e. cell phones, phone lines, etc.) are not operational. Staff members will be present to offer additional information concerning a list of available shelters and services provided by the university/community. Please tune into WKMS (91.3 FM) radio station or check the MSU website (murraystate.edu) for additional information.

Preparations

If the weather forecast predicts disastrous weather, here is a list of things that you might want to have available:

- Bottled drinking water
- Cash (in case ATM machines are not available)
- Flashlight
- Small radio (battery operated)
- Food that does not require refrigeration (bread, peanut butter, jelly, granola snacks, etc.)
- Extra batteries for radio and flashlight
- A pack with clothing, food, water for a couple of days
- Hand wipes/sanitizer
- If you own a vehicle, make sure you have a full tank of gas and ice scraper.

Precautions to take during severe weather

If you live off campus, please remember to do the following things:

- Turn off the water in your apartment (i.e. turn off water valves underneath the sinks and the toilets) to keep the pipes from freezing if the temperature is below freezing and you don't have heat.
- If the electricity is off, turn off appliances to avoid damage from power surges.
- Do not drink the water or use ice from the faucet or refrigerators that have water and ice making capabilities.
- Fill bath tubs or buckets to use to flush toilets.

TRAVELING INFORMATION

University Shuttle

The ESL Program provides a pick-up shuttle for our new students from Nashville in August, October, January, March, and June. There is also a return shuttle offered by the IIS Office in December and May. You will receive an email about the shuttles from the international student services office a month or so before the end of each semester. You must sign up for the return shuttle as soon as you can if you want to take it (with the IIS advisor) and pay \$100.

Taxis

Briz Taxi service: 270-753-BRIZ (2749)

Mama Nancy's Cabs: 270-227-4888

Sunshine Cabs: 270-978-9992

Car Rental

Enterprise Rent-A-Car: 270-753-3400

Address: 1900 N 12th St # E, Murray, KY

You must have a driver's license (KY/International) and be 21 years old to rent a car or 25 years old to rent a van. If you don't have car insurance, you must pay for insurance too.

Bus

There is a Greyhound bus station in Paducah, KY. You can find more information at Greyhound.com

Murray-Calloway Transit Authority has a local bus system in Murray. You can find more information at: <http://www.murraytransit.com/services-and-pricing/>

Train

There is a train station in Fulton, KY. More information can be found at amtrak.com

ESL CONVERSATION PARTNERS PROGRAM

The ESL Conversation Partners Program was designed to provide an additional opportunity for ESL students to practice their spoken English with a participating American student outside the classroom and learn more about American culture at the same time. We also see this as an opportunity to further promote intercultural understanding and awareness between American students and international students. This page will give you a brief introduction to the program. You may also go to our website at murraystate.edu/esl for more information.

Who can have a conversation partner?

The ESL Conversation Partners Program is voluntary. If you are interested in this program, you can apply by filling out the [Conversation Partners-ESL Student Application Form](#) on our website at MurrayState.edu/ESL and click [Conversation Partners](#) on the sidebar.

What do ESL students do with their conversation partners?

ESL students participating in this program meet with their American conversation partners at least one hour a week, having a conversation about what you and your conversation partner are both interested in—you'll see the recommended conversation topics on our website. Commitment to the program and mutual respect are expected of both parties. Once you are in the program, you are expected to attend the weekly meeting with your conversation partner as scheduled. In case you are not able to make it to the meeting because of an emergency, please inform your conversation partner in advance.

Who to contact?

If you need more information or have any questions about the program, please contact Weihong Gao at wgao@murraystate.edu or 4103 (campus phone) or visit her in her office at 453 Blackburn Building.