



ECU®

GLOBAL AFFAIRS



ECU Language Academy Student Handbook

OFFICE OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

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CONTACT INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE AND MAILING ADDRESS:

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<https://global-affairs.ecu.edu/intensive-english-program/>

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Instagram @globalecula

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IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency

Ambulance/Fire/Police

911

Non-Emergency

ECU Police

252-328-6787

On-Campus Emergency Hotline

252-328-0062

Greenville City Police

252-830-3937

Health Science Campus Emergency Hotline

252-744-5080

ECU Student Health Center

252-328-6841

Counseling Center

252-328-6661

Disability Support Services

252-737-1016

THE ECU CREED

As an East Carolinian:



- I will carry out personal and academic integrity.
- I will respect and appreciate the diversity of our people, ideas, and opinions.
- I will be thoughtful and responsible in my words and actions.
- I will engage in purposeful citizenship by serving as a positive role model.

ECU MISSION STATEMENT

To be a national model for student success, public service, and regional transformation, East Carolina University:

- Uses innovative learning strategies and delivery methods to maximize access;
- Prepares students with the knowledge, skills, and values to succeed in a global, multicultural society;
- Develops tomorrow's leaders to serve and inspire positive change;
- Discovers new knowledge and innovations to support a thriving future to eastern North Carolina and beyond;
- Transforms health care, promotes wellness, and reduces health disparities; and
- Improves quality of life through cultural enrichment, academics, the arts, and athletics.

We accomplish our mission through education, research, creative activities, and service while being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

ECULA MISSION STATEMENT

The East Carolina University Language Academy (ECULA) advances the University's internationalization, diversity, and inclusion goals through the provision of

- High-quality intensive English training to non-native speakers;
- Short-term and other specialized programming focusing on English training and/or American culture to non-native speakers; and
- Language and cultural training for members of the ECU and Greenville communities.

Through these programs and training, participants are able to achieve the linguistic proficiency and/or cultural competency required to attain their academic, professional, and personal goals. Continuous evaluation of ECULA courses and programming assure the program's compliance with established national and international standards.

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR!



Welcome to the ECU Language Academy! I am so happy that you have chosen to study English here at ECU. I am sure that you will find both East Carolina University and the city of Greenville to be warm and welcoming as you settle into your new life here.

The staff of the Language Academy and that of our home office, Global Affairs, has extensive experience in living and working abroad. This means that we understand better than most people some of the things that you may be experiencing, especially during the first few weeks of your stay. Please know that we are available to help you with any issues or questions you may have during this exciting time of discovery and change.

As the Program Director, I want you to know that your choice to come to ECULA is not one that I take lightly. You have chosen us above other options, and we are honored to be your choice. If there is anything that I or any of our team can do to help you make your transition here easier, please reach out. It is my sincere hope that you will look back upon your time spent here as among the best moments in your life.

Your ECULA courses will challenge you, engage you, and perhaps even sometimes frustrate you. One thing is certain: they will ultimately transform you. We look forward to helping you achieve success!

As you have probably noticed by now, pirates are very popular around here. Pirates are known for many things; among them is the quality of resiliency—this means that they know how to be strong and persevere. You, too, are resilient, and as we embark on this voyage of learning and discovery together, know that we can accomplish great things as proud members of the ECU Pirate Nation.

As ECU's Fight Song proclaims, we know we're the finest! Onward to victory!

Go Pirates!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole I. Ianieri". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicole I. Ianieri, ECULA Director

ARRIVING IN GREENVILLE

Many questions you may have about life in Greenville will be answered in the International Students' Survival Guide that you received at International Student Orientation. Here is some information specific to ECULA students.

Housing

You have two main options for housing:

- Off-campus housing such as an apartment or room rental
- On-campus housing in the dorms

Off-campus housing in an apartment is the most popular housing choice among ECULA students. You can either rent an apartment alone or share expenses with a roommate. Renting an apartment includes signing a contract that may be difficult to break; each apartment complex has its own rules concerning contracts. Please note that you will need local bank account in order to rent an apartment. For more information about local apartment complexes, please see the Survival Guide (page 17).

On-campus housing in the dorms is convenient but expensive. You will also need to purchase a meal plan in addition to your housing costs. In most cases, you will share a room with another person; bathrooms and living spaces are communal. Once you commit to living in a dorm, you will not be able to break your contract, so this is not a good option for students who want some flexibility in their living arrangements. If you do not pay your housing fees in a timely manner, you will be locked out of your room, so please pay close attention to deadlines. If you choose to live in the dorms, be sure to check your email for updates from Campus Living.

Please note that ECU has a year-long on-campus living requirement in place for degree-seeking students. This requirement is waived if you are over 21 or married. If you live in the dorms during your time at ECULA, this may count towards meeting the requirement.

Homestay options (where you live with a local family) *may* be available but are not guaranteed; if you are interested in homestay, please let the ECULA Director know at least three months in advance. You will be required to pay a non-refundable placement fee, so you should be very certain that this is your choice before proceeding.

It is very important to note that all of the above housing options are NOT included in ECULA tuition.

Banking

You should set up a bank account soon after you arrive. If you need transportation to a local bank, please talk to the Program Director.

ECULA does not endorse any particular bank, although many students seem to prefer Bank of America. To open a bank account, you will need to have some money ready to deposit in your new account.

For more information about banking in the United States, please see the Survival Guide (page 9).

Cell Phones/Internet/Email

Asking other international students about what has worked for them regarding cell phones and SIM cards is the best place for you to start. There are many shops in Greenville where you can purchase a SIM card/American phone number. We recommend that you do this as soon as possible. ECULA uses ECU email to communicate with students. You will also be able to sign up for ECU alerts and other notifications as well as check your ECU email with your cell phone.

You will be able to access the internet on campus using your Pirate ID and log-in information. Some apartment complexes include Wi-Fi in the rent. You may have to purchase an internet plan through your cell phone provider.

Your ECU email is the official means of communication of ECU/ECULA with you, so as part of orientation you will check to make sure that you can log on to your account. You should check your ECU email at least twice a day. While other messages may be sent out via apps, chat groups, and/or other methods, this is a courtesy and does not negate the need for you to check your email on a daily basis. For more information about ECU email, please see the Survival Guide (page 33).

Pirate/Banner ID

You will be given your Pirate ID and Banner ID when you are admitted to ECULA. You will need them to get your 1 Card (campus ID card). If you are living on campus and/or have a meal plan, you can also use this information, via Pirate Port, to access your accounts to see what you owe to the university. If you are not sure of this information, please ask the Program Director.

Transportation

Most ECULA students use the ECU bus system or walk to class. However, if you would like to drive to campus, you need to buy a parking permit.

ECULA students are eligible for C passes which is what most ECU students use. With this parking pass, you must park near the football stadium and take the bus to campus.

If you park in anything other than a C lot, you will get a ticket and must pay a fine (an amount of money).

You may also park in the parking garage near the New Student Center. The rate is \$1.00 per hour. You may also purchase a pass for the garage, but these are very expensive. However, if you purchase a G pass (for the garage), you will also be able to park in B and C lots.

If you are interested in purchasing a parking pass, please let the Program Director know. She will send your information to ECU Parking Services so that you can purchase your pass.

More information about transportation options can be found in the Survival Guide (page 23).

ABOUT ECULA

What kind of program is ECULA?

Founded in 2011, ECULA is an accredited, academically-oriented intensive English program which adheres to the communicative approach to language learning. As a student here, you will be in classes for at least 20 hours a week—sometimes more. Our program is aligned with the Common European Framework for language usage (CEFR) which is an internationally accepted way of classifying language proficiency.

Paying for ECULA

If you haven't paid your tuition before your arrival, you need to do so as soon as possible; ideally, you will pay your tuition before you arrive. You can pay online, by check, by wire transfer, or by cash (paper money).

If you wish you pay by wire transfer, please let the Program Director know. She will send you the necessary information to process the transfer. If you plan to pay with paper money, please let the Program Director know in advance so that you are not carrying a large amount of money with you for an extended period of time. Carrying large amounts of money around with you is not advised in any case.

IMPORTANT: You must pay your tuition in full (or, for embassy-sponsored students, provide a current financial guarantee letter) within 10 days from the first day of class. You will not be able to take a placement test or attend class until you pay your tuition. This may cause serious problems with your immigration record.

Sponsored Students

If you are sponsored by your country's government, your job, or another group, you still need to make sure that you pay your tuition on time. **It is your responsibility to contact your sponsor about ECULA payment.**

For those students sponsored by the government of Saudi Arabia, you must provide the Program Director with your financial guarantee letter **by the end of the first week of classes.**

Sponsored students whose sponsors do not pay by the end of the first month of classes are financially responsible to ECULA and will have to submit payment on your own; you will be reimbursed by ECULA once your sponsor pays your debt.

Tuition/Refunds

Paying your tuition on time is very important. Unfortunately, ECULA cannot sponsor you if you lose access to your funds. Remember, your I-20 was granted to you on the basis that you provided sufficient funds to pay for your studies and living expenses.

ECULA follows the ECU Refund and Withdrawal Policy. This is found at <https://financialservices.ecu.edu/refund-and-withdrawal-policy>. You have a limited amount of time to request a refund. After the dates posted on the website listed above, you will not be able to request a refund.

Benefits of ECULA

Accreditation

In addition to being regionally accredited under the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), ECULA also enjoys specialized accreditation under the Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA) and is a proud member of EnglishUSA.

English proficiency waiver

Students who pass the highest level of ECULA do not need to provide an IELTS or TOEFL score to ECU for either undergraduate or graduate admission. You still need to meet other admission requirements, however.

Conditional admission available

When you apply to ECULA, you may also wish to apply for conditional admission to a graduate program. This means that the program will look at your application and make an admission decision. If the department decides to admit you, you are guaranteed a seat in the program once you successfully complete ECULA.

Access

As an ECULA student, you have access to the ECU Recreation Center, the Health Center, the ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development, the Library, the Writing Center, and other campus facilities.

Advising Services

ECULA students have access to a variety of advising services.

Personal advising

As an ECULA student, you have access to the ECU Center for Counseling and Student Development (CCSD). If you are experiencing severe culture shock, depression, or any mental or emotional issue that requires professional assistance, please go directly to the CCSD, located in Umstead Hall, Room 137. For more information on the CCSD, please see page 14 of the Survival Guide.

Sometimes you may want to talk to someone about how you feel, but don't necessarily want formal counseling. The Program Director is available to talk to you during her drop-in office hours or by appointment. She has lived abroad herself and is happy to listen and provide assistance if requested. All meetings are confidential, with the exception of those meetings in which you may express the intent to harm yourself, harm others, or disclose abuse of yourself or others. Please know that such information cannot be kept confidential and will be brought to the attention of the appropriate people who can assist in the situation.

Immigration advising

You may have questions about your visa or other immigration-related questions related to your stay here. Please make an appointment with the Assistant Director of International Student Advisement by sending an email to mallettw@ecu.edu to discuss any immigration-related questions or concerns you may have. You should also make an appointment with the Assistant Director of International Student Advisement before you plan to travel abroad so you can get your I20 signed.

If you happen to be on a J visa, please email the Visiting Scholar Program Specialist at williamsjul@ecu.edu for any questions related to your status here.

Academic advising

If you have general questions about your ECULA grades, please ask your instructors first. For more involved questions about your academic progress in ECULA, please see the Program Director.

Speech lab

ECULA students are able to take targeted pronunciation courses on the Allied Health Campus thanks to an agreement we have with the Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic.

Community involvement

The city of Greenville is uniquely situated to offer international students the opportunity to become highly involved in local life. Many community events are within easy walking distance from campus.

ECULA students are also able to interact with members of the ECU/Greenville community through regularly-held conversation groups.

Activities

The Office of Global Affairs organizes many events each semester, including overnight trips to sites of local and national interest. ECU also offers many events, most of which are open to ECULA students. In addition, the Recreation and Wellness Center hosts activities and trips that are available at little or no cost to ECULA students.

How do I continue at ECU in a degree program after I complete ECULA?

We can help you apply to both undergraduate and graduate programs here at ECU.

For assistance in applying to undergraduate programs, please contact Sarabeth Trujillo at international@ecu.edu.

For assistance in applying to graduate programs, please contact Colleen Roland at rolandr@ecu.edu.

ECULA LEVELS

Level placement

New students will be placed into one of three levels at ECULA. You have two options for level placement:

- You can take a placement test once you arrive. (This is preferred.)
- You can submit recent TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo scores. (Unofficial copies are acceptable.)

For more information about the scores we consider in level placement and the general skills you are expected to know at each level, please read the below level descriptors.

Level descriptors

Level 1: Foundation/Beginner

Placement in this level is determined by a GSE score of 0-30 and is equivalent to the following:

Approximate CEFR level: Pre-A1 to A1/A2

GSE Placement: 0-30 (midterm-entry students who score below 15 will be given the option to repeat Level 1 in the next semester)

TOEFL iBT score: below 45

IELTS score: below 4

Duolingo score: below 75

Pre-Midterm

Students are able to:

- Recognize most letters and numbers used in English
- Understand and use simple, formulaic language/expressions
- Understand and use common, basic vocabulary pertaining to daily routine

Post-Midterm

Students are able to:

- Understand and use familiar expressions
- Understand and use very basic phrases
- Introduce themselves to others
- Ask and answer simple questions about themselves and others close to them
- Engage in simple interactions provided that the interlocuter speaks slowly and clearly

Level 2: High Beginner/Intermediate

Placement in this level is determined by a GSE score of 21-40 and is equivalent to the following:

Approximate CEFR level: A2 to B1/B2

GSE Placement: 31-59 (mid-term entry students who score lower than 45 will be placed in Level 1)

TOEFL iBT score: 45 - 54

IELTS score: 4.0 – 4.5

Duolingo score: 75 – 80

Pre-Midterm

Students are able to:

- Understand sentences and frequently used expressions
- Communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information
- Describe in simple terms aspects of their backgrounds, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need

Post-Midterm

Students are able to:

- Understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters
- Navigate most native-speaking situations
- Produce simple, connected text on familiar topics
- Describe experiences, events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions
- Briefly state their reasons and explanations for opinions and plans

Level 3: High Intermediate/Advanced

Placement in this level is determined by a GSE score of 60-77. Note: midterm-entry students who score in this range will be placed in 2B for the remainder of the term. This level is equivalent to the following:

Approximate CEFR level: B2 – C1/C2

GSE Placement: 60-77 (midterm-entry students who test in this range will be placed in Level 2)

TOEFL iBT score: 55 - 70

IELTS score: 4.5 – 6.0

Duolingo score: 85 - 90

Pre-Midterm

Students are able to:

- Understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including field-specific topics
- Interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity
- Produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects
- Explain a viewpoint on a topic and list the advantages and disadvantages thereof

Post-Midterm

Students are able to:

- Understand a wide range of demanding texts of longer lengths
- Recognize implicit meaning
- Express themselves fluently and spontaneously
- Use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes
- Produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects
- Show controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices

What if I don't feel comfortable in my level?

We ask that all new students wait at least a week before asking to change levels. Feeling nervous and out of place is a common reaction when you are in a completely new and different environment. However, if you still feel misplaced by the end of the week, these are the steps you should take:

- First, talk to your instructor about how you feel.
- If the instructor agrees that you are in the wrong level, he or she should send an email to the program director stating the reasons why you should be moved to a different level.
- If the director agrees with your request, you will meet with the director to talk about next steps.
- In the case of wanting to move down a level, there is nothing more to be done. Your request will be approved. You will be asked to sign an agreement stating that you understand that you are moving down a level and will not be able to request a level change a second time.
- In the case of wanting to move up a level, you will take a second placement test to see if your scores have increased. If you do not get the scores required to be placed in the desired level, you must remain in the original level. Borderline scores will be considered at the discretion of the director.

You are only able to request a change of level during your first semester of study in ECULA. All requests must be submitted before the midterm period (eight weeks for Fall/Spring; six weeks for Summer). You will not be able to request a level change after this period.

ECULA INSTRUCTORS

Are my instructors qualified?

All ECULA instructors have, at minimum, a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages or a closely related field. They also have experience in teaching students like you either here in the U.S. or in other countries.

What if I want to change my instructor?

One of the many advantages of ECULA is the smaller class sizes that enable students to learn more quickly. However, this also means that we usually don't offer more than one section of a course, so changing your instructor will likely not be a possibility.

It is normal that you might "click" with some instructors more than others due to different personalities and learning styles. This is not a reason to dislike an instructor. In your educational career, you will come across many different types of professors, each with his or her own personality. It's best to get used to this now.

There are many different approaches to instruction, and your instructor may use methods that you aren't familiar with. This doesn't mean that the approach is "bad". However, there are some behaviors that you **SHOULD NOT** experience in the classroom. Please let the Program Director know immediately if the following occur:

- Frequent lateness/unpreparedness on the part of the instructor
- Disrespect toward students or others
- Threats towards students or others
- Inappropriate touching or comments towards students or others
- Frequently using large portions of class time to talk about his or her personal life, problems, or other unrelated topics

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Overview

Some students have the misconception that their time in an intensive English program is a vacation or break for them. That is simply untrue—our program is called "intensive" for a reason. Most of your time each day will be dedicated to your classes or other ECULA activities. It is very important that you read the following expectations and policies carefully, understand them, and ask questions if you do not understand. By following these policies, you will make the most of your time at ECULA and avoid problems that could impact your ECULA grades, your immigration status, or even your ECU admission.

Attendance policy: Attend class every day unless you have a documented excuse

Attending all scheduled class periods is extremely important. Even missing just one day of class per week could seriously hurt your chances of passing the course. Not only is attending class important overall; if you are an F1 student, attending your English classes is the law!

It's important to point out, however, that while you need to attend class every day, we know that you will sometimes get sick or need to take care of a sick family member. There may be other emergency situations that arise that make it impossible for you to attend class. No one, including your instructor, wants you to attend class if you are truly ill. However, please keep the following rules in mind:

- You have up to six (6) unexcused absences per course per semester. For midterm entry students, you have three (3).
- Any absences over the above need an **official** note. An official note means that it was not written by you, was provided by a recognized office or business, and is directly related to your absence. For example, a note from a doctor for an appointment that took place on a weekend would NOT be an excused absence. Also note that scheduling an advising appointment at ECU during class time does NOT count as an excused absence.
- If you are late three (3) times, that counts as one (1) unexcused absence (unless you can provide an official note).
- If you have more than the number of unexcused absences listed above, your letter grade will go down as follows:
 - 7-8 (4-5 midterm) absences: Your final grade will be dropped one letter grade.
 - 9 absences (6 midterm): Your final grade will be dropped two letter grades.
 - 10+ absences (7+ midterm): You will fail the class.

Lateness policy: Be on time for class every day unless you have a documented excuse

In American culture, it is not acceptable to be late for your classes. Being late to class is a problem for many reasons. Being late is rude to your instructor and classmates. Even if you think you are being quiet when you enter, you are probably making more noise than you realize.

Being late also causes you to miss important class information and may also take away from the time you have to take tests and quizzes.

If you attend classes at the university, you will be expected to attend your classes on time. Therefore, it's a good idea to get used to being on time now.

Making up missed work

It is YOUR responsibility to talk with your instructors regarding any missed assignments, including tests and quizzes. If your instructor approves your request to make up missed work, you may need to come to campus outside of your regularly scheduled class time in order to do the

assignments, especially in the case of missed tests/quizzes. Make up tests and quizzes will be scheduled at the instructor's discretion. Missed work due to the unexpected closure of ECU due to severe weather or similar factors will be made up in class.

Please note that ECULA does NOT allow early midterms or finals. You may be able to make up your midterm exam at the discretion of the instructor. In the case of missed final exams due to travel plans, you will not be allowed to make them up and will take a zero for the exam (which may cause you to fail the course). Check the exam schedule before you make any travel plans.

Cell phones and electronic devices policy: Keep your cell phone and other electronic devices out of sight

Cell phones and other electronic devices are a lot of fun and can be useful. They are also very distracting, and, unfortunately, some people use them to cheat on tests. In class, you need to have these devices put away and out of sight so that they don't cause a problem.

Sometimes your instructor will give you permission to use your cell phone or other electronic device. If that's the case, then feel free to take out your phone. However, it is NEVER O.K. to use a cell phone or other electronic device during a test or exam. Keep these points in mind:

- Having a cell phone or electronic device out during a test or exam will result in a failing grade for that test or exam. No excuses.
- Almost all cell phones today have cameras. It is very rude to record someone without his/her permission. You should ALWAYS ask before taking a picture of or recording someone.
- It's always polite to let your instructor know if you plan on recording the class.
- You should always ask before using someone's picture or video on social media channels.
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for his/her cell phone/electronic device usage policy.

Academic integrity policy: Do your own work

It is expected that you will do your own work at all times unless you have been asked to take part in group work. "Plagiarism" is a term that you should become familiar with. It is a type of stealing that occurs when someone uses someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit.

Plagiarism is a serious offense that can get you kicked out of school.

You will learn more about plagiarism in your classes but remember: your instructor knows how you write. **If you copy another person's words or have someone else do your assignment, your instructor will know.**

Inappropriate behavior in testing situations

It is never O.K. to look at someone else's paper or to otherwise cheat during a quiz, test, exam, or other assessment. Even if you ask the other person for permission to cheat, it is still wrong.

You will receive a grade of zero—0—if you are caught cheating. It's not worth it; don't risk it. If you study a little bit each day, you will not have to study so hard at the last minute. There's no reason to cheat in order to do well on a test if you are prepared.

Talking is not allowed during testing situations. If you need something, raise your hand, and the instructor will come to you. Talking out of turn may result in a grade of zero.

Language policy: Use (mostly) English in class

While it's comforting to speak your native language with family and friends, most of your class time should be spent using English because that is the reason you are here. Occasionally, you may be working in a group where everyone speaks your first language, and so briefly clarifying a point in your first language may be appropriate. However, if even one person in the group doesn't understand, then it becomes unfair and should be avoided. Relying heavily on your first language to understand words and concepts in English will make learning English much harder.

Communication policy: Communicate often with your instructors and other ECU/ECULA staff

Do you have a doctor's appointment scheduled and will miss class? Are you having a difficult time following the information your instructor is presenting in class? Are you wondering if you are in the right level? The first person you should come to with these questions and concerns in your instructor. By having open communication with your instructor and others at ECU/ECULA, you will have a much smoother experience here.

- Use your ECU email. Check it at least twice a day.
- If your instructor uses an app with the class, make sure you check that regularly.
- Ask your instructor if you don't understand something.

Respect and inclusion policy: Respect the other people in your environment

Coming to ECULA may be the first time you have ever left home. We know that this can be stressful and a difficult time. Some of you may come from countries where everyone is from the same culture or religion. The United States is a multicultural society, so you will definitely meet people with different backgrounds, beliefs, and lifestyles during your time here.

ECULA is proud to be an inclusive program which values every participant's unique background and characteristics. Disrespectful comments and/or behavior, insults, and/or threats will NOT be tolerated.

Examples of disrespectful and insulting comments include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Inappropriate comments, including jokes, about a person's culture or nationality
- Inappropriate comments, including jokes about a person's religion, spirituality, or lack thereof
- Inappropriate comments, including jokes, about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity
- Inappropriate comments, including jokes, about a person's political beliefs

- Inappropriate comments, including jokes, about a person's lifestyle choices and/or habits

In the case of such comments, **regardless of intention**, the following steps will be taken:

- First offense: You will receive a verbal warning from the instructor, and the program director will be notified.
- Second offense: You will receive a written warning and will meet with the program director.
- Third offense: You will receive a written warning and may be asked to leave the program.

Threatening language or acts are those which imply, directly or indirectly, harm to another individual. Such comments are always disrespectful and insulting, but they go a step beyond the above examples in that they cause another person to fear harm.

Examples of threatening language or acts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Threatening to hurt or kill someone for **any reason. This includes sexual violence.**
- Making menacing gestures to another person, such as pretending to shoot a gun at them or pretending to stab them with a knife
- Threatening to commit an act of violence on or off ECU property.
- Physically shoving or touching another person in a way that makes them uncomfortable and is unwanted.

The above comments/actions are serious offenses and may include the involvement of law enforcement officials and possible arrest. ECUA has a **zero-tolerance policy** towards threatening language and/or acts. **Any of the above actions will result in your dismissal from ECUA and could result in imprisonment.**

[Weapons policy](#)

A weapon is anything intended to harm another individual or one's self. Some common examples of weapons are guns and knives. **It is generally not allowed to bring weapons on campus. This is against the law and will result in both dismissal from ECUA and possible arrest.**

However, some individuals are allowed to possess weapons under certain limited conditions. **You must seek permission before bringing a weapon on campus.** If you feel that you have a case to legally bring a weapon on campus, please contact the ECU Police Department.

What if I am disrespected, insulted, and/or threatened?

If the incident happened in the classroom, let your instructor know immediately. The instructor will inform the Program Director. If you feel like your instructor disrespected, insulted, and/or threatened you, let the Program Director know immediately. The Program Director will contact you for next steps depending on the severity of the issue.

If you feel disrespected, insulted, or threatened off campus, you should let a person in authority (apartment or restaurant manager, police officer, etc.) know immediately.

If you feel like your life is in danger, call 911 immediately, even if you are in class.

Complaints

While we hope you will have an amazing time here, there may be situations which, for one reason or another, do not match your expectations. We want to know about these situations as soon as you experience them so that we can improve the situation.

ECULA recognizes two types of complaints: informal and formal.

If you have any questions about filing a complaint after reading the below information, please contact the Program Director.

Informal complaints

Informal complaints are usually characteristic of situations that can be quickly and easily resolved. They may be anonymous if desired.

Informal complaints may be submitted three ways:

- Verbally to an instructor or the Program Director
- Electronically via email to an instructor or the Program Director
- On paper delivered to an instructor or the Program Director

Informal complaints do not always require resolution; this is dependent on each complaint's context.

Formal complaints

Formal complaints are usually characteristic of elevated situations of a serious nature that require immediate action. Because of their serious nature, formal complaints are not usually submitted anonymously. However, if your complaint involves another person, all measures will be taken to protect your identity under the fullest extent of the law.

Formal complaints may only be submitted in writing, either electronically via email or on paper. They should be addressed to the Program Director. After receiving a formal complaint, the Program Director will contact you to discuss the situation in more detail and to determine next steps.

Formal complaints may require resolution at a higher level and may involve the intervention of non-ECU personnel. These complaints are documented and will be carefully monitored for resolution.

GRADES, LEARNING OBJECTIVES, AND COURSE FAILURE

ECULA follows a standardized grading system that is similar to what many ECU departments follow. The ECULA grading system is as follows:

Final Grade	SLO Mastery Equivalent
A (90 – 100)	You have demonstrated superior mastery of all or most of the SLOs in the skill area and are able to progress to the next level of the program in a particular skill area.
B (80 – 89)	You have demonstrated satisfactory mastery of all or most of the SLOs in the skill area and are able to progress to the next level of the program in a particular skill area.
C (70 – 79)	You have demonstrated sufficient mastery of all or most of the SLOs in the skill area and are able to progress to the next level of the program in a particular skill area.
F (<70)	You have not demonstrated any mastery of the SLOs in the skill area and are unable to progress to the next level of the program in a particular skill area.

What are SLOs?

SLOs are Student Learning Objectives. These are the things you will learn in each course. At the beginning of the semester, your instructors will give you syllabi—documents which explain their expectations of you. These syllabi will tell you what the specific SLOs for each course are.

What happens if I fail a course?

Students who start to struggle in a course will be given every opportunity for assistance. If you start to have difficulty in a class, it is very important that you talk to your instructor immediately, even if your grades are good. Your instructor will direct you to resources that will help you. Midterm progress reports and conferences are another way that students who are in danger of failing are given a chance to improve before it is too late. However, failing a course can and does sometimes happen. You will NOT be asked to leave ECULA just because you fail a course. However, repeated failure is a cause for concern and may result in you being asked to leave the program.

At ECULA, there are two types of course failure:

- Failure due to frequent absences (see page 17).
- Failure due to poor grades (which is usually, but not always, related to frequent absences).

The following policy is in place concerning course failure due to poor grades:

- At the end of the **first** failing semester: You will be allowed to repeat the course or courses for a higher grade in the next semester. You will be able to proceed to the next level in the courses that you did pass.
- At the end of the **second** failing semester: If you fail the same courses a second time, you must submit a written appeal to the program director. This means that you should write the reasons why you think you should be allowed to try to pass the course one last time. You should also submit any supporting documentation that would support your appeal. Examples of such documentation include medical notes and other official correspondence. The director will review your appeal and let you know if your request has been approved.
 - Students whose appeal is approved will be allowed to repeat the course.
 - Students whose appeal is NOT approved will not be allowed to repeat the course.
- At the end of the **third** failing semester: You will not be allowed to repeat the course. In the case of repeated failure in all courses, you will be asked to leave the program.

How do I know if I'm failing?

If you are worried about your performance in any course, please see your instructor first. Don't wait—it is better to talk about your concerns while there is still a chance to fix any problems. If you wait too long to speak to someone, it may be too late.

After you take your midterm exams, your instructor will schedule an individual conference with you in which your grades are discussed along with any concerns. You will be given a mid-term progress report at that time.

If you fail a course, you will be alerted before the end-of-the-semester graduation ceremony.

How can I get a copy of my final grades?

All students will be sent an electronic copy of their final grades within two weeks of graduation. If you require hard copies or additional electronic copies to be sent to your sponsor, you must fill out an electronic Document Request form. This form is available from the Office Manager or the Director upon request.

An important note to sponsored students: In order for ECULA to send your sponsors a copy of your grades, you must fill out a Buckley Form in your Pirate Portal. Without this form, the Program Director does not have permission to share your grades with anyone.

Please see the Program Director if you have any questions about this.

MAINTAINING IMMIGRATION STATUS

F1 students

Most ECULA students come here on F1 student visas. It's very important to maintain your status as an F1 student. The easiest way to do this is to attend class every day. However, there are other things you need to keep in mind:

- By coming to the U.S. on a student visa, you have entered into an agreement with the U.S. government. You have promised them that your main intention in coming here is to be a student. Easy, right? However, many students find themselves in trouble because they don't pay attention to some simple guidelines surrounding their F1 status. Remember:
 - You must attend class full time as an F1 student (except in some very limited circumstances that will be discussed later on). **You are legally obligated to attend class.**
 - You cannot work on or off campus as an F1 student, even on a part-time basis. (This is true while you are in ECULA. When you move to a degree program, you will be allowed to work on campus in part-time positions if you wish.)
 - You need to report any change in address to the Assistant Director of International Student Advisement immediately.

Other visa statuses

F2 Visa (Student Dependent)

- You can only take classes part time (up to three ECULA courses).
- You are not legally required to attend classes.
- You cannot work on or off campus at any time.

J1 Visa (Visiting Scholar)

- You may enroll in incidental (part-time) study if it does not interfere with accomplishing your J1 objective(s) stated in the Form DS-2019.
- You are not legally required to attend classes.
- You may only be employed by ECU and within the guidelines of the program as set forth in the Form DS-2019.

J2 Visa (Scholar Dependent)

- You are able to enroll in as many courses as your schedule permits.
- You are not legally required to attend classes.
- You may apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS in order to be employed in the U.S. You may begin employment only after receiving the EAD from USCIS.

B Visa (Tourist)

- You can only take classes part-time (up to three ECULA courses).
- You can only study at ECULA for a short time (incidental study).

- You are not legally required to attend classes.
- You cannot work on or off campus.

U.S. Citizen/Permanent Resident

- You are able to enroll in as many courses as your schedule permits.
- You are not legally required to attend classes.
- You may work on or off campus.

Reduced course load

If you are an F1 student, a reduced course load (taking classes on a part-time basis) is a possibility in two circumstances:

- In the case of documented illness or a medical condition such as pregnancy
- In the case of your final semester of study

Reduced course load due to illness or a medical condition

This is allowed if you have an ongoing condition that will cause you to miss a lot of classes. Taking one or two courses may help you to maintain passing grades and a good attendance record while you recover or seek help for your condition.

For students with severe conditions, you may want to consider a **medical leave of absence**. In this case, you are able to take a semester off without it negatively impacting your legal status.

If you are interested in asking for a reduced course load or a medical leave of absence, please do the following:

- Email the Assistant Director of International Student Advisement
- Copy the Program Director
- In the email, state your reasons for requesting a reduced course load or medical leave of absence.
- The Assistant Director of International Student Advisement will be in touch with next steps.

Reduced course load due to illness or medical leave of absence are not guaranteed and will not be granted for conditions such as the common cold, flu, or feeling tired. You must have a documented medical condition and must provide proof before such requests will be considered.

Reduced course load in last semester of study

This is allowed if it is your final semester of study in ECULA. This may happen in the case of students who failed courses in previous semesters or for other reasons. It is important to realize that if you ask for a reduced course load in your last semester of study, you will not be able to return to ECULA in the next semester. You will be asked to sign an agreement in which this condition is clarified.

Vacation policy

You must be enrolled for a full academic year before you request a vacation. ECULA considers a full academic year to be two consecutive semesters.

Please refer to the following table for guidance on when you can take your vacation:

Starting Semester	Eligible for Vacation
Fall	Summer
Spring	Fall (if Summer semester doesn't run, you will take your vacation in the summer and resume your courses in Fall)
Summer (this assumes that Summer semester is being offered)	Spring

There are also many break periods built into the ECU/ECULA schedule. While most of these breaks will not give you enough time to return to your home country, December and May generally offer longer breaks of at least three weeks or more.

You must see the Assistant Director of International Student Advisement to have your I-20 signed before you leave the country for any reason. You do NOT have to have your I-20 signed if you are traveling within the United States; however, you should still let the AD of International Student Advisement know of any travel plans.

Always check the exam schedule before making important travel arrangements. ECULA does not permit early final exams or retakes of final exams.

What if I want to stay at ECULA after my last semester?

Grade Replacement

You can't stay at ECULA after you have completed the program. However, ECULA does allow you to repeat a course, even if you haven't failed it, if you wish to try for a higher grade. (If you received an A in the course, you cannot attempt to replace that grade as it is the highest possible grade.) You are allowed to try for a higher grade once per course. However, you still have to maintain full-time status if you are an F1 student. You will be able to have a reduced course load in your final semester of study (see above).

Only students in good attendance standing will be granted the opportunity for grade replacement. Grade replacement is considered a privilege, not a right. Students with more than six unexcused absences will not be permitted to request grade replacement.

If you are a student in good attendance standing and wish to request grade replacement, please do the following:

- Email the Program Director with your request **as soon as possible**. Ideally, this will be the same day that you receive your grade report (or even before, if you already have a good idea of what your final grade in the course will be).
- The Program Director will notify the Assistant Director of International Student Advisement of your request.
- You will receive email notification from the Program Director informing you if your request has been approved or denied.

It is very important that you remain in communication with both the Program Director and the Assistant Director of International Student Advisement about your intended plans.

IN CONCLUSION

The above information is intended to cover classroom and immigration policies that pertain to you while you are an ECUA student. For more information about life in Greenville and other resources, please refer to the International Students' Survival Guide.

As always, if you have any questions, please ask us. We look forward to an amazing semester with you!