



University of Belize

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INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS ACCEPTED FOR THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM (ESL) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BELIZE (UB)

The University of Belize ESL Scholarship Program

The University of Belize offers an Intensive English as a Second Language Program for ten months from August to May yearly. The University offers this program on behalf of the Government of Belize who remains the sponsor of the scholarship program. The government of Belize pays for all the tuition, fees, books and a monthly stipend to defray the cost of housing and university expenses. It is important that recipients of the scholarship recognize that while the university does everything in its capacity to make their stay as comfortable and their studies as fruitful as possible; we are not the sponsors and cannot offer any services or undergo any expenses not listed in this document. Scholarship students will prevent much frustration if they do not make any requests of the university outside of its expressed means. Having clarified this important point, the university is very happy to host these students and has a long history of providing them with individualized services and a learning environment that maximizes their chances for cultural immersion, language practice and personal development. This information document will list several of these services and programs that scholarship students will have access to.

The ESL Program at the RLC

The University of Belize is proud to house Belize's Regional Language Center (RLC) in the Garden City Belmopan. RLC is Belize's mechanism for bridging the language barrier between the Caribbean and Central America. The RLC offers many specialized second language courses in English and other languages to meet the needs of our national and international clients. The ten (10) month English as a Second Language Program is designed to advance the English competency of those who enter the program regardless of their current proficiency. Students study in homogenous groups that are very close to each other's competency

levels. All students are given a placement test upon arrival to determine in which group they will study. The scholarship students join private students from all over the world who also study at the Regional Language Center. It is typical for a class to be comprised of scholarship students from Cuba, Panama, Columbia and Mexico along with private students from Mainland China /Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Russia, countries in Africa, and countries in Central and South America. The ten-month immersion program focuses on strengthening students' proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in English. The faculty members emphasize practice and design the coursework to encourage practical application of knowledge.

During the first week of courses all new students will be given a detailed orientation of the expectations and methodology of the new curriculum for the course. Each student will have an academic advisor. At the end of the ten-month program, students will receive a certificate upon successful completion. Successfully completing a language internship is also a program requirement for eligible students.

Though the Government of Belize pays for the scholarship students' tuition, fees, and books and contributes towards housing, **there are some financial responsibilities that the students will have to cover themselves.** You will each be required to have an English dictionary and it is recommended to have a translator /translation dictionary and recording devices, headphones and laptop.

Arrival

Arriving in any foreign country alone may seem like a difficult task. Belize is a small country with friendly people who are used to helping out foreigners. It should be easy to get around Belize and to get to Belmopan without any problems. Most taxi drivers are very helpful.

Be sure to ask the prices of the taxis before getting in the cars. Speak with officials in charge of the bus, the terminal, the taxi or the hotel. Don't attract too much attention to yourselves. If you carry yourselves with confidence you will be treated that way and should get to your destination smoothly. At the University, your contact person is:

Lic. Sharon Palacio
Coordinator of Student Services
University of Belize
Tel. 822-3680/81, 822-1000 or cell 620- 0572
spalacio@ub.edu.bz

If you have an emergency, call 620-0572.

You can buy a phone card at the terminal or the airport to use the public phones. The University does not provide airport pickups. The University receives students at the Belmopan Campus and places them in

accommodations upon arrival; thereafter, the student will be able to select their choice of housing options.

Kindly inform Sharon Palacio, Coordinator of Student Services, about your arrival date. The students must bring along monies to supplement stipend for the first month (transportation costs, food and housing).

A recommended amount to bring along is US\$500.00 minimum. \$1 US Dollar is equivalent to \$2.00 Belize.

Getting to Belize City

Most students will arrive via the International Airport in Belize City or the Northern Border in Corozal. Some students will arrive via the Western border with Guatemala.

Students arriving at the International Airport can catch a taxicab for US\$30.00 into Belize City (a distance of 9 miles). Students entering at Northern border can catch a bus from Chetumal to Belize City. There are two service areas where you can catch the bus: one is the ADO bus station where you can take an express bus directly to Belize City and the other one is at the new market in Chetumal. The bus fare from Chetumal to Belize City on ADO is USD \$15.00 (express) and on a 'Belize Bus' USD \$7.00 (regular) and USD \$10.00 (express). Most buses take you only into Belize City. In Belize City you catch another bus to Belmopan. The cost to Belmopan is US \$2.00. The American currency is accepted in Belize.

Transportation

The main mode of transportation in Belize is the bus. By Bus you can travel regularly on the country's four major highways: Northern, Western, Hummingbird and Southern Highways. Transportation in Belize is quite cheap; for a round trip ticket from Belize City to Belmopan (2.5 hours) you pay US \$4.00.

We recommend that you purchase a bicycle to get around the city, or you can get around Belmopan using the city vans. The cost of a bicycle ranges from US\$100.00 – US \$125.00; the fare for the city van is US\$ 1.00.

Housing

Three kinds of housing arrangements are available:

- Host-family: student lives with a Belizean family
- Renting an apartment: student rents an apartment and is responsible for food and all utilities
- Renting a house: student(s) rents an entire house and may share expenses with other university students.

Estimated Costs of Housing (all prices are quoted in US Dollars)

Host Families- US\$225.00 – US\$350.00 includes accommodation, meals, and access to amenities (cost may vary)

Host Families- US\$175.00 (excluding meals)

Apartments- US\$100.00 to US\$300.00

Renting a house U.S. \$225.00 – US\$550.00

The prices of the apartments and houses vary according to the number of rooms, location and amenities.

Housing Contracts

Students are responsible for entering into contracts with their landlords; therefore, they should carefully read the contracts before they sign them. The university is not responsible for any agreement or for any problems that may occur as a result of the contract that the student enters into. Students must pay a deposit of one-month rent and the first month's rent when entering into a rental contract. Students must give landlords a minimum of one month's notice before vacating a house or lose their deposit. The university will help students with information and recommendation for houses based on past recommendations of previous students.

Living in Belize

Students should bring money:

- to pay a deposit for housing options, bus, taxi, personal effects, and incidentals
- for food until the first disbursement of the monthly stipend
- to supplement the stipends every month to meet all the academic and social expenses the students will incur

During the year the students will have many opportunities to display the unique character and beauty of their countries and cultures. As such, they should each bring country flags, national dress, photo, brochures/pamphlets, and other souvenirs of their countries. In addition they need to bring clothes for cool/warm subtropical climate, rain gear and swim wear.

Remember to bring:

- any special medication you may need and some of your favorite personal hygiene or beauty products
- special condiments and ingredients from home that you can use to make your traditional dishes; you may be required to cook your traditional food for presentations
- souvenirs for cultural displays

Please visit these websites for more information on Belize.

www.travelbelize.org

www.belizeweb.com
www.toucantrail.com

Immigration

Student permits cost US \$50.00 and a multiple entry visa cost US \$100.00 upon registration at the university (rates are subject to change). All foreign students should receive a 30-day tourist visa upon entering Belize. If you are not issued a thirty (30-day visa), it is your responsibility to report this to the Office of Student Services immediately upon your arrival. If and when you travel outside of Belize, you must pay a departure fee of US\$19.99 as a departure tax. Please do not ask the University to help you waive this fee. This is a national law and the university cannot change it. Also, when you travel outside of Belize you have to pay US\$25 for an entry visa.

Permits are processed after registration at the University of Belize.

Stipend

Each scholarship student is paid a monthly stipend of \$600.00 BZ (US\$300.00) (In August students are paid US\$150.00 and June US \$150.00) to help defray the cost of living expenses. This stipend is a gift from the Government of Belize and is disbursed by the University of Belize to the students the first Wednesday of each month. The first stipend in August will be disbursed after registration. **Students who accept the scholarship must do so with the full responsibility of meeting all their living expenses. If they spend beyond the stipend,** the university is not able to make any additions on the students' monthly stipends or waive or reduce any university costs. This stipend is only for students coming from outside of Belize, recipients living in Belize are not eligible for the monthly stipend only tuition and textbook payment.

Expected Behavior

Students are expected to abide by the rules of the University and the country of Belize.

Closing ceremony and End of Academic Year

The academic year ends at the end of May and the closing ceremony is held around the middle of June. Students must take care of all university-related expenses not covered by the scholarship. For instance, students are advised that if they wish to have an apostille stamp on their certificates, a fee of US \$25.00 must be paid.

(Last revised on February 12, 2016)