

PIA Schools Association

Student Handbook

2009



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WELCOME TO PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

We are very happy that you have decided to join our family. Pacific International Academy (PIA) has been serving international students since 1997 and is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET). PIA has three goals: 1) to uphold the highest academic standards in helping you acquire English as a second language; 2) to provide you with excellent opportunities to learn about American culture through school and community projects, events, outings, and trips; and 3) to provide a warm, caring environment in which you will truly feel like a part of our family.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the overarching intent of Pacific International Academy to help students achieve their personal goals in English by facilitating the acquisition of language proficiency required in daily communication, in higher learning, and for operating in the professional world.

PIA provides instruction of English as a Second Language to non-native speakers of English who bring to the program a broad array of interests and backgrounds. Throughout their experience at PIA, students are encouraged to seek intellectual and academic growth at Marylhurst University as well as in the surrounding community.

Every PIA class is a safe learning environment with a student-to-teacher ratio of approximately 8 to 1. The curriculum is structured to promote basic communication skills in students at lower ability levels, and more complex academic skills in students at higher levels. Key grammatical forms are emphasized and integrated across five levels of performance-based classes. In the areas of grammar, reading, writing, speaking and listening, students learn to apply specific linguistic rules that are presented through holistic and communicative instruction.

Students in this immersion program are encouraged to be active learners. While academic English tends to be a focus, significant energy is devoted to coaching students in learning the cultural norms and expectations of their new social environment. Themes of this nature are necessarily folded into each class session. Further support in cultural adaptation and language acquisition is provided through conversation partnering and tutoring.

The PIA Program:

1. Serves students for whom English is a non-native language
2. Places students through TOEFL and Michigan Language Assessment
3. Offers a 10-week course each Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer term
4. Offers custom short-term programs per agreement
5. Provides classes for college credit to registered students at Marylhurst
6. Prepares students for academic course work
7. Provides GED training
8. Provides a housing referral program

OVERVIEW OF COURSES

Core Classes:

PIA has five core levels of ESL classes. In each level, students will attend classes in reading, writing, grammar and speaking/listening. Classes are held Monday through Friday with a total of 20 hours of class per week. Within these classes, students will not only improve their English but also have a chance to study cultural topics, computer skills, and other points of special interest. Students in levels 3, 4 and 5 are eligible for 1.5 Marylhurst credit per class.

Undergraduate Foundations:

These 3-credit courses are integrated with Marylhurst Literature and Human Studies courses, totaling 6 credits per term. They are primarily intended for international students with conditional admission to Marylhurst University. Students will focus on composition and revision of various essay forms. Writing projects will be directly linked to material covered in the Marylhurst University courses.

Graduate Foundations (Pathways to Success):

These two 3-credit classes are integrated with Marylhurst University Business courses. They are primarily intended for international students with conditional admission to the MBA program at Marylhurst University. Students will focus on methods of inquiry, forms of communication in the work place, and a term paper.

GED Preparation:

For students who have not completed high school, PIA offers GED preparation classes to help students study for and pass the high school equivalency examinations. The GED class meets for up to four hours per week.

PLACEMENT

Placement and Orientation:

At the beginning of each term there is a placement test and orientation for all new students. Students are placed in the appropriate level on the basis of a battery of tests, which include the Michigan English Placement Test (EPT), the Test of Written English (TWE), and an oral interview. During the first week in class, placement may be adjusted on the basis of a student's ability to meet at least 90 percent of the performance objectives for the class.

If you leave PIA for more than one term, you must be re-tested prior to registration.

Placement for Students Arriving Late

Students arriving later than two weeks after the start of the term will be placed into one level below the placement as indicated by the English Placement Test

(EPT). For example, a late-arriving student testing into Level 3 would begin their studies in Level 2 for the remainder of the term of late arrival.

Advancement:

There are three ways for you to advance to a higher level:

1. receive a grade of C (75%) or better in current classes
2. repeat a class and be assessed by your teacher
3. take a challenge test only on the placement testing day.

Challenge Testing:

If you are a returning student, you may choose to take a challenge test to achieve a higher level in a particular class. Each challenge test is a different form of the placement test you took when you arrived at PIA. You may take a challenge test only on the day of placement testing. Ask the Academic Coordinator to give you a challenge test for a specific skill area. Then, you must be present at PIA on the day and time that is scheduled for PIA Orientation and Placement. It will not be possible to take a challenge test after this time.

1. Only returning students may take a challenge test.
2. A challenge test for a particular skill area may be taken only once while at PIA.
3. A challenge test may be taken only on the day of PIA Orientation and Placement. A recent TOEFL score will also be considered at this time.
4. Beginning on the first day of class, only individual instructors may recommend advancement in level. Please see the level confirmation information below.
5. No recommendations for level changes are possible after the first week of classes.

Level Confirmation:

During the first week of the term, teachers will assess students' skill level through a brief Level Confirmation Exam. If a student scores 90% or better in this quiz, he or she may be considered for advancement to the next level in that class.

Note: under rare circumstances the Academic Coordinator may consider exceptions to any part of this policy.

Exit Testing:

All students are required take an exit exam upon leaving the program. Students leaving Levels 1 through 4 take another form of the English Placement Exam that they took upon admission. The score from this exam has no effect on any grades achieved at PIA.

Students graduating from Level 5 are required to take the Michigan English Language Institute College English Test (MELICET) near or at the close of their final term with PIA. The score from this exam has no effect on grades achieved at PIA and are used a) as an indicator for the student of a MELAB score, and b) as anonymous data for ongoing program assessment.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Attendance:

The following attendance policy is also published in each syllabus:

95% attendance is required to avoid a reduction in grade. Exams and quizzes missed due to an unexcused absence can only be made up at the discretion of the instructor.

Exams and quizzes missed due to an unexcused absence can only be made up at the discretion of the instructor. If you are going to miss school, please inform the PIA office (503-699-6310) when you can be expected back in class and the reason for your absence. Excused absences are such things as illness, snow closure, or unforeseen emergencies.

Note: Shopping trips, visits with friends, trips to the DMV or Social Security office, and oversleeping are examples of absences that are not excused. If students do not contact the PIA office to explain an absence, it will be marked as unexcused. Habitual tardiness and absences will be handled in the following manner:

- 10 minutes late = 1 tardy
- 3 tardies = 1 absence
- 3 unexcused absences = 1 grade down on the final grade (a C will change to C-)

Grading for Students Leaving Early

Students must attend at least 80% of the term in order to be considered for a grade. Students missing more than two weeks will be given a grade of N/A and asked to repeat the course. An instructor can choose to give a grade for someone if they show a strong mastery of the subject matter and can meet course objectives.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific and proper acknowledgment. Examples: misrepresenting another's work (paper, lab report, article, or computer work) as one's own original creation and submitting it

for an assignment; using someone else's ideas without attribution; failing to cite a reference or to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating and plagiarism are very serious offenses in American academics and may result in failing classes or being expelled from school. PIA follows Marylhurst University policies in regards to plagiarism. Please refer to the Marylhurst Student Handbook for more information on academic honesty.

Grading:

In each class, a students' grade will be based on a combination of attendance, participation, and class work, which will consist of in-class assignments, homework, quizzes, and tests. Based on completion of class requirements, the following grades are given.

A - 90 - 100%	Excellent
B - 80 - 89%	Above Average
C - 75 - 79%	Average
D - 60 - 74%	Below Average – Repeat the class
F - below 60%	Fail – Repeat the class

If you receive a grade of C- or lower (below 75%), you will need to repeat the course.

Academic Warnings

Instructors or staff will issue an academic warning if a student repeatedly violates school policies, does not perform at a passing level academically, or otherwise behaves in a way necessitating a warning. The academic warning should indicate what the problem is, as well as provide steps to correct the problem. Academic warnings should be given early enough to allow the student time to correct the problem. One copy of the warning will be given to the student; another will be signed by both the instructor and student and filed in their academic file. Students who do not show academic improvement may be at risk of probation. The Director will make subsequent arrangements for students receiving warnings for behavioral or policy related issues.

Probation:

Students are expected to make progress in their coursework. It is also expected that, due to linguistic or other factors, students may need more than 10 weeks to meet the objectives of the class. In cases where a student puts in a reasonable effort but needs more time to develop the skills needed to progress to the next level, the instructor will give them a non-passing grade and note on their grade record that more time is needed to develop the language skills necessary for advancement.

Students are expected to master the skills needed to advance in no more than two subsequent terms. Students who fail the same two or more classes for two

consecutive terms will be put on probation and issued an academic warning form. At this point, they will have one more term to pass the classes in question. If they are not able to pass these classes, they will be asked to leave the school.

Proficiency Examinations:

In-house achievement examinations are in the form of midterm and final tests. These are held in class within a two-hour duration and are given significant weight in the grading criteria stated in each syllabus.

Certificate of Completion:

When students complete Level 5 in good academic standing, they will receive a Certificate of Completion from PIA.

PIA Referral:

If students are interested in moving into a Marylhurst academic program, they must discuss their plans with two parties:

1. PIA Administration
2. The MU International Student Admissions Specialist

Late Arrivals and Early Departures:

Students must attend at least 80% of the term in order to be considered for a grade. Students missing more than two weeks will be given a grade of N/A and asked to repeat the course. An instructor can choose to give a grade for someone if they show strong mastery of the subject matter and can meet course objectives.

Students who have communicated that they will arrive later than two weeks after the start of the term will be placed into one level below their placement as indicated by the English Placement Test (EPT). Thus, a late-arriving student testing into level 3 would actually begin their studies in level 2 for the remainder of the term of late arrival. At the start of the subsequent term, students will begin their studies at the level that they were placed through the EPT.

Electronics in the classroom

Cell phones and MP3 players shall be turned off, while limitations on lap-top and electronic dictionaries shall remain at the discretion of the instructor.

Inclement Weather Class Cancellation:

In the winter there may be snowy or icy weather. If road conditions are considered unsafe, classes will be cancelled for all or part of the day. PIA will follow the same snow cancellation policy as Marylhurst University. If it snows heavily at night there are several ways to find out if classes are cancelled. Morning news stations on TV and radio report school closures. The radio station KGW, 620 AM, is a good choice. Also, Marylhurst University has a Weather Line

– **(503) 636-8140**. Call this number to find information about class cancellation, or call the PIA office, (503) 699-6310.

University Credit:

If a student is registered at Marylhurst University, they can earn up to 18 university credits as they complete PIA levels 3, 4, and 5. Each PIA course starting in level 3 carries 1.5 undergraduate credits.

Textbooks:

Students are responsible for purchasing the required textbooks every term. Failure to do so may result in probationary action. Textbooks are available at the Marylhurst University Bookstore. Students are required to have the textbooks on the first day of class. Students coming to class without the proper materials may be asked to leave by the instructor. Used books are available at the Marylhurst bookstore. Please keep in mind that used books often contain work from the previous owner. The instructor may ask the class to erase all of the writing from any used books that are in use. The instructor can determine if a used book with excessive writing in it is unusable and ask the student to get a clean copy of the text.

Student Records:

A file is maintained for each student attending PIA. All necessary admissions, immigration and academic documents such as I-20s, proof of financial resources and records of academic performance are kept in these files. All information contained in these files is confidential and available only to authorized personnel such as the director, DSOs and the academic coordinator. With adequate notice, a student may review the information in his/her file in the presence of the director. Requests for copies of any document in the file must be made in writing and submitted to the director.

STUDENT HEALTH

Health Insurance:

As the cost of health care in the United States can be quite high, health insurance is recommended for all students, Marylhurst University offers a comprehensive plan through HTH Worldwide. The cost per term is \$210.

If you are sick:

You must call the PIA office at the beginning of the day or the night before and leave a message for your teachers- (503) 699-6310. If you do not call the office to explain your absence, it will be considered an unexcused absence, which can affect your grade. **In case of emergency call 911.**

Even if a student is absent, they will be responsible for knowing what happened in class and completing homework and assignments. If they are sick, they need to call a classmate or the PIA office to find out what work they have missed.

If you feel that you need to see a doctor, the following clinics are close to the school:

Readycare Clinic
Telephone: (503) 652-2844
17070 SE McLoughlin Blvd
Milwaukie, Oregon 97267

Willamette Falls Immediate Care
Telephone: (503) 654-8417
9775 SE Sunnyside
Clackamas, Oregon

FEES AND REFUNDS

Tuition and Fees

Application Fee	\$50 one time
Tuition – ESL	\$2200 per term
Tuition – GED	\$1200 per term
Housing Placement	\$250 one time
Homestay Fee	\$600 per month
Airport Transfer	\$50 per trip
Health Insurance	\$840 12 months

Tuition should be paid before or on the first day of classes. No fees other than the application fee will be collected before admission to the program.

Refunds:

For students who withdraw from their classes prior to the start of school, PIA will provide a full refund of any tuition paid.

First Term

For students who withdraw at any point in the first four weeks of the term, PIA will retain the charges applicable to the first four weeks of the term. For students who withdraw after the first four weeks but before or at the fifth week of the term, PIA will retain a prorated amount of tuition. No refund is available to students who withdraw from school after the fifth week of the term.

Subsequent Terms/Sessions

For students who withdraw after completing the first term but before or during the fifth week of any subsequent term, PIA will retain a prorated amount of tuition up to the fifth week. For students who withdraw after the fifth week of any subsequent session, PIA will retain all of the tuition for that term.

Prorated refunds will be calculated on a weekly basis. When determining the number of weeks, PIA will consider a partial week the same as if a whole week were completed, provided the student was present at least one day during the scheduled week.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Harassment:

PIA will not tolerate any form of harassment, including harassment on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. If you feel that another student or faculty member is harassing you, please contact the Director or another staff member immediately.

Student Conduct Code:

As a PIA student, you are expected to act in a responsible manner, respecting all other students, as well as following U.S., State, and local laws. PIA will follow the same Student Conduct Code as Marylhurst University. For more information on the Marylhurst University student conduct code, please refer to the Marylhurst University Student Handbook.

Drinking:

The possession or use of alcohol by students on campus is prohibited except when approved for a University- sponsored event. In such instances, the use of alcohol is limited to those of legal age. The legal age for drinking alcohol in the U.S. is 21. Students under the age of 21 found with alcohol may be subject to a reprimand or legal action such as a ticket or fine. For more information on drugs or alcohol, please refer to the Marylhurst University Student Handbook.

Smoking:

Smoking is not allowed in any building on the campus of Marylhurst University. There are designated areas on the campus where smoking is allowed. If you are a smoker, you should smoke only in these designated areas. Students are expected to follow the laws regarding smoking; be aware that it is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy or use tobacco.

Student Grievances:

Students who have a grievance or issue they would like to raise may contact the Director or Academic Coordinator at any time via appointment. This meeting can be kept confidential at the student's request. Furthermore, all students will have the opportunity to comment on and rate the courses and services, as well as instructors, at the end of the term through evaluation forms.

IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

The following summary of immigration rules and regulations is provided to give you basic information about your non-immigrant visa status. Please remember that it is your responsibility to know and follow the regulations under which you may study, work, or stay in the U.S. If you have any questions about your visa status, please speak with one of your advisors at PIA or Marylhurst University. Although your friends and family may be well intentioned, they may not be the

best source of information on matters relating to your status and rules governing your stay in the United States.

Important Documents

Your Passport

Your passport is an international travel document issued to you by your government. It is required that you maintain a valid passport at all times. If your passport is due to expire within the next six months, see an advisor and plan to request an extension from your government's consulate or embassy in the United States.

If your U.S. visa is still valid and you are being issued a new passport, you should request the return of your expired passport. By keeping the passports together, the valid visa can be used for reentry to the United States. Otherwise you will need to apply for a new visa the next time you leave the country.

Your Visa

This is a stamp or seal placed in your passport by a U.S. Consular officer abroad. The visa notes the purpose of your visit, the last date you can enter the United States, and how many entries you will be allowed. The visa is a permit to enter the United States. The visa does not indicate how long you will be permitted to stay and a visa does not have to be valid in order for you to remain in the United States. For the most part, a visa can only be obtained at a U.S. consulate or embassy outside the United States.

Your I-94 (Arrival/Departure Card)

This small white piece of paper was given to you on the airplane or by the immigration office at the port of entry to the United States and is likely stapled inside your passport. It confirms that you were lawfully admitted to the U.S.

The I-94 shows how long you are permitted to stay in the United States. Your I-94 likely has the text "F-1 D/S" written on it. D/S stands for duration of status and operates in conjunction with your valid I-20. This means you are permitted to stay in the U.S. as long as you are maintaining your status as a student.

Holders of visas other than F,M or J will have a specific date written on their I-94. To remain in the United States past this date, one must file for an extension of stay or request an adjustment to their status. For more information about your I-94, please speak with one of your advisors at PIA or Marylhurst.

SEVIS I-20 Form for F-1 Students:

This "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status" is issued to students when they are accepted to a school. It is used to apply for an F-1 visa at the American Consulate or Embassy in your country and is then presented to the immigration officer at the port of entry when you arrive in the US. The officer will stamp the form and return it to you. Students transferring schools within the US

will not have the entry stamp on their I-20 form. Keep this form with your passport at all times. The duration of your status is linked directly to the program completion date on your I-20. If you are not able to complete your program of study before this expiration date, you must apply for an extension to your program.

Student Status

Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)

PIA and Marylhurst University are required to maintain records on their respective F-1 students and to report this information to the U.S. government at regular intervals. This information is communicated to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through a computer-based program called the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System or SEVIS.

Maintaining Your Student Status

Failure to maintain your non-immigrant visa status can result in serious immigration problems, which could lead to deportation from the US. Compliance with the law involves all of the following:

- Maintain the validity of your passport at all times.
- Attend the school that has issued your valid I-20
- Register for and complete a full-time course of study each term (see your advisor regarding any applicable vacation term)
- Do not accept unauthorized employment. All off-campus employment must be pre-authorized by the Department of Homeland Security.
- Report any change in your contact information, including physical address (the address where you actually live), email address, phone number, and home country address within 10 days to the PIA office.
- Keep your I-20 valid at all times.

Reduced Course Load

Students taking less than the required number of units are considered to be taking a reduced course load (RCL). SEVIS regulations allow a reduced course load under certain circumstances, and require that any reduced course load be pre-approved by the school's International Student Advisor. Be sure to discuss any questions about a future reduced course load with your advisor.

Travel Abroad

Visits To Mexico and Canada

Before leaving the U.S. to travel to Mexico or Canada, determine that you have the proper documents to travel in those countries, and the proper documents to return to the US. Necessary documents include a valid passport, I-94 form with D/S, and a SEVIS I-20 recently signed for travel on the 3rd page, by your advisor.

Traveling Home or Abroad

Students planning to return home or to visit another country should make sure their I-20 form is valid, has been recently signed on the third page by their advisor and that their visa is valid. If your visa is not valid, you will need to renew it at a US embassy or consulate abroad.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Conversation Partners:

Students wishing to get more opportunities to practice English conversation should contact the Academic Coordinator and ask to be put on the list for a conversation partner. Conversation partners are local community members who volunteer their time to have informal discussion with international students. The program is on a first come / first serve basis, and is free.

Tutoring:

Students who wish to have extra professional help in a specific area may request a tutor. Tutors are drawn from the PIA teaching staff as well as a qualified tutor list. Tutoring costs \$35 per hour. All appointments must be cancelled no later than 24 hours before the tutoring session or the student will still be charged the fee for arranging the tutor.

Apartments:

Students who wish to rent an apartment must take responsibility for making their own rental arrangements. PIA office staff may be consulted for referrals.

Host Families:

Many of our students wish to experience another aspect of the American lifestyle by choosing to live with a host family. Students living in a host family have the opportunity to participate in activities, learn, and make American friends outside of the classroom. Host families are usually located close to the university or on a major bus route for easy access to the school. If you wish to live with a host family, you should contact the PIA office to make the necessary arrangements.

MARYLHURST UNIVERSITY SERVICES

Bookstore:

The bookstore is located in the Clark Commons. In addition to supplying textbooks and school supplies, the bookstore offers a variety of refreshments, free Internet access, and a comfortable atmosphere for conversation.

Cafeteria:

The cafeteria in the Clark Commons is open daily. A salad bar, soup, sandwiches, desserts, and a variety of hot foods are available.

Library and Computer Labs:

The Shoen Library, located on the Marylhurst campus, is available for student use. Inside the library are several computer labs that are available for various student activities such as research, word processing, and email.

Writing Center

Located in the ground floor of the Library, the Writing Center is staffed with professionals in the area of academic writing. PIA Students in Levels 4 and 5 Writing classes are encouraged to make use of this resource.

Post Office:

There is a full service U.S. Post Office on the first floor of the Administration building. A mailbox is located just outside the post office. The Post Office is open 8-5 Monday through Friday, closed for lunch from 11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Lost and Found:

To inquire about missing items, please ask the receptionist in the lobby of the Administration building.

Counseling Center:

Students may request professional counseling services through the University Counseling center.

TRANSPORTATION SHOPPING AND BANKING

Marylhurst, Oregon is a beautiful town 15 minutes from downtown Portland. The University is located adjacent to a main avenue, which has many accessible bus stops. There are several shops, restaurants, and banks within a short distance of Marylhurst University, and are easily accessible by foot or by bus.

Students are responsible for arranging their own transportation for shopping, banking, medical appointments, etc. However, at the beginning of each term PIA staff will be available to assist students in setting up bank accounts, obtaining Oregon State identification cards and arrange for basic shopping needs. Please check in the office for more details.

Tri-Met (www.trimet.org) is the local bus system, which has regular routes between Marylhurst University, downtown Portland and other points of interest around the city. Student discounts are available. Monthly bus passes may be purchased at the University bookstore.

Riding Tri-Met towards Oregon City:

Bale's Supermarket: This is a large supermarket about five blocks from the University. Bale's is the center of a small shopping mall, which also contains various other shops, restaurants, and a bank. A quick, 15-minute walk from campus, Bale's is very close and convenient.

Bank of America: Bank of America is one of the largest national bank chains, with branches all over the country. Our local Bank of America branch has been very helpful in dealing with the financial needs of our students for several years. The closest Bank of America branch is located in the shopping area near Bale's supermarket, very close to the Marylhurst University campus.

Oregon City Transit Center: The Oregon City Transit Center is a major connection point for all of the local bus routes. Here students can find a bus that will take them to destinations all over the Greater Portland Area, including Clackamas Town Center – a large shopping mall, or to one of the medical clinics listed in this handbook.

Riding Tri-Met towards Portland:

Marylhurst University is located on Highway 43, a main avenue that leads North to Portland. There is a bus stop next to the Marylhurst campus where students can catch bus #35, which will take them to downtown Portland. Along the way is Albertson's. This is a large supermarket surrounded by many smaller shops and restaurants in the center of Lake Oswego, about 15 minutes from the University. If they continue on the bus, they will pass many other shopping areas and reach downtown Portland.