

Language Assistants in Colombia  
2022-23 Programme

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# ELA in Colombia: The Guide

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# Contents: Quick guide

[Section 1](#) provides an overview of Colombia and key country information

[Section 2](#) indicates key contacts for your assistantship and their roles

[Section 3](#) provides detail regarding the assistantship role and what this involves

[Section 4](#) and [5](#) helps you to prepare the essentials before you arrive in Colombia

[Section 5](#) to [9](#) covers all core aspects and documents you will need once you arrive in Colombia

[Section 10](#) is for you to consider at the end of your placement.

Please ensure you have read through this document and carried out research yourself before contacting the language assistants team with any questions. Save this document somewhere you can access anytime during your assistantship.

**Disclaimer:** Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in these notes. However, the British Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors which may exist or for any subsequent changes. This guide should be used as a starting point for your own research.

Date checked: 28/06/2022

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# Country Overview

## 1. Spotlight on Colombia

Did you know that the British Council Language Assistants Programme first began back in 1905 with English masters heading over to France?

You are joining the next generation of this legacy strengthening educational and cultural links between the UK and Colombia through the British Council and our partners ICETEX.

By this point, you should have a fair knowledge about Colombia. Here are our key points to consider.

### 1.1 Contacts

#### 1.1.1 Emergency

In any emergency: call **123**

Medical assistance: call **125**

Fire Brigade: call **119**

Police call: **112**

Tourist police call: **(1) 3374413**

General enquiries to the British Embassy: **(1)337 4413**

British Consular Emergency Service for any emergency queries at any time of any day. Leave a message and someone will normally get back to you within one hour of your call.

#### 1.1.2 General Info

Country code for Colombia is +57.

To phone abroad from Colombia the code is 00 followed by the country code.

If you set up a phone line or internet connection, past assistants have warned to check phone subscription charges with Colombia Telecom first. You may be charged for a full year's subscription even if you end your phone contract earlier than this. Former assistants often recommend getting a pay as you go mobile rather than one on contract

International calls can be expensive – use Skype, WhatsApp, Teams, or other online platforms where possible

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### 1.1.3 British embassy and consulate

For up-to-date British Embassy and consulate contact details in Colombia please refer to: <https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies>. Please take note of the address of the [British Embassy in Colombia](#) below in case of emergency or loss of your passport. Assistants who do not hold British citizenship should check with their own Consulates/Embassies in Colombia.

#### **British Embassy Bogotá**

Carrera 9, No 76-49, Piso 8  
Edificio ING Barings  
Bogotá  
Colombia

- Tel: +57 601 326 8300 / +44 1908 51 6666 (selecting the option for consular services for British nationals)
- Fax: 326 8309/02
- Email: [embajadabritanica.bogota@fco.gov.uk](mailto:embajadabritanica.bogota@fco.gov.uk)

The British Embassy is currently operating remotely during regular office hours (Office Hours: Monday to Thursday: 8:30 to 11:30 Friday: 8:30 to 10:30) however, UK Consular Services are available 24/7.

British Consulates-General are also provided in Bogotá.

## 1.2 Life in Colombia

Some general information around life Colombia or your region can be found on sites like these:

[Public Holidays Calendar](#)

[Rough Guide to Colombia](#)

[Lonely Planet Colombia](#)

[BBC's Colombia Profile](#)

### 1.2.1 Personal safety and Travel

Your personal safety is of paramount importance while living overseas and we strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website.

After arriving in Colombia we recommend that you speak regularly to your mentor teacher and other fellow teachers to get a feel for the locality in terms of safety and risk. Try to travel around

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with other trusted people as much as possible until you have more of an idea of how safe certain places are.

As mentioned in section 4.2 of this document, ensure you regularly check the [Colombia travel advice page](#) which we recommend reading in advance of travelling.

## 1.3 Local laws and customs

### Laws

As you would in your own country, always abide by the local laws. You should not assume that all laws and punishments will be similar to the UK, so it is important to carry out research in advance:

[Gov site for Colombian laws and customs.](#)

Regardless of your own politics, we would recommend avoiding all local political disputes or activities. As a visitor you are unlikely to understand the full scope of local issues and you don't know what level of punishment will occur for participating.

Do not take other people's word/advice as an indication of laws/punishments. Do not be encouraged into things you are not fully aware of. It is always best to be cautious and use your own common sense backed up with research.

### LGBTQ+

We recommend carrying out some research into local customs and laws around LGBTQ+ issues before travelling.

[FCDO guide for LGBT travellers](#)

## 1.4 The British Council office in Colombia

Please note: The British Council in Colombia is not responsible for the administration of the Language Assistant programme in Colombia - this is the role of ICETEX. They are also different staff and departments to the UK British Council team. We will notify the country director of your arrival before the programme begins but they have little involvement in the running of the programme.

The British Council develops and participates in many different projects themed around society, science, education so you may want to see if they have other programmes which you can get involved in via their website and get in touch with the team:

<https://www.britishcouncil.co/en>

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# Language Assistants Programme Overview

## 2 Programme organisations

### 2.1 UK British Council Language Assistants team

The Language Assistants programme has a dedicated team to provide support during the application and pre-departure process for each destination. Please note the British Council is not the employer of participants of the Language Assistants programme while abroad.

### 2.2 Overseas Partner Organisation

ICETEX administers the Language Assistants Programme in Colombia. We work with them to provide placements and then to allocate applicants to placements. They will contact you before the placement begins with key information and will also provide an initial induction on arrival before work begins. They will remain a key contact with the host institutions throughout the year.

### 2.3 Host Institutions

Following the departure procedures and inductions, the host institution will be responsible for your contract. Your host institution are your employers during your assistantship and any changes to your contract should be liaised with them, and you should inform ICETEX and the British Council of any changes.

### 2.4 Mentor Teacher

Your host school should identify a mentor teacher for you on or before arrival. This mentor should provide pastoral care and support during your time in Colombia. It is in your interest to establish and build a good relationship as soon as you are introduced. The exact dynamics/responsibilities of this role may differ from institution to institution so it is good to establish early on what support you can expect to receive. You will still be required to communicate independently with HR and school administration on certain matters.

If a mentor teacher is not identified at the start of your placement, you should enquire with the institution or ICETEX.

- **Application**

- **Allocation**

- **Pre-Departure**

- **Arrival**

- **Assistantship**

- **In School**

### **Sending organisation: British Council**

· **Mark Foster**, Consultant

· **Susan Armstrong**, Assistant Consultant

languageassistant.uk@britishcouncil.org

Responsible for: application and pre-departure processes

### **Partner organisation: ICETEX**

- **Andrés Felipe Salamanca Gaitán**,

relacionesinternacionales@icetex.gov.co

Responsible for: arrival and assistantship; relationship with host institutions

### **Employer: Host institution**

Responsible for: assistantship in school

### **Support: Mentor Teacher**

Responsible for: in school support and first contact

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## 3 The English Language Assistant role

As a Language Assistant, please remember that you are a paid member of staff with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails.

Please refer to our website for more information on your role as an English Language Assistant: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-workabroad/outside-uk/english-languageassistants> .

As a language assistant you are also an ambassador for the UK and your actions will influence how those around you view the UK. Your behaviour will also impact the experiences of future assistants who go to work in the same communities.

### 3.1 Posting information

Post allocation for Colombia is usually carried out May-early June. ICETEX will issue a formal letter of invite with details on your host institution. You should contact your host institution as soon as you receive these details and introduce yourself. It may be useful to find out specifics such as the age range of pupils; average class size; facilities available and if you should prepare any specific materials in advance. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and information around the school code of conduct.

### 3.2 Period of Appointment

The period of appointment for UK assistants in Colombia will be late July 2022 until May 2023. Assistants are expected to work 12-18 hours a week. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host institution of your posting however this information will most likely not be available until you arrive in Colombia.

### 3.3 Holidays and Sick Leave

Assistants are entitled to the same school holidays as per regular staff. The [Colombia Government's Education website](#) has further details regarding the school calendar. You should not be absent on other occasions without prior permission. The induction course is not part of your work hours and does not give assistants the right to take leave at a later date.



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# Preparation before you go

## 4 Read before you go

### 4.1 Costs to prepare

You should prepare for the following costs:

- £75 ICPC
- Administrative costs: visa (if applicable).
- Travel costs including additional requirements due to the coronavirus
- Accommodation costs
- Insurance costs
- Please note that the British Council is not liable for any refunds.

### 4.2 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) advice

During a crisis, official advice for British nationals will be published on the [travel advice website](#) and regularly updated. For your safety and to stay well-informed, we **strongly recommend** you [subscribe to receive FCDO email updates](#) for Colombia so that you are immediately notified of any important changes to the FCDO's advice.

The FCDO have published a comprehensive guide for [Living in Colombia](#). The guide sets out essential information for British nationals residing in Colombia, including advice on health, education, residence requirements and more. We recommend you read this guide thoroughly.

You can also contact the British embassy for advice in event of an emergency.

### 4.3 Passports and visas

You must meet the passport requirements for Colombia before leaving the UK – instructions will be sent to you directly by ICETEX during the departure process.

Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online: <http://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports>.

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This process requires your own investment of time and money. The British Council UK team will provide step-by-step guidance on this process when the time comes to apply.

Assistants are expected to cover the costs of this, which can include sourcing documentation, attending visa appointments and paying service fees as required.

## 4.4 Travel to and around Colombia

You are responsible for the upfront cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year.

The British Council strongly advises against booking your travel until you have received your visa and are certain that you will be able to travel on your chosen date. The British Council is not responsible for arranging your travel.

Past teachers have advised that you check the baggage allowance for both outbound and return journeys when travelling by plane.

## 4.5 Travel Insurance: Information on travel insurance

The British Council is unable to advise on insurance packages; you are recommended to consult professional advice, or to check whether you are covered by any existing family policy. Booking insurance should be carried out before any travel.

Undergraduate assistants should consult with their university to check what cover is provided for it is important to check the small print of your policy.

Personal Accident Travel insurance is recommended to cover medical expenses, air ambulance, repatriation, personal accident & civil liability, luggage & valuable items, and cancellation in extreme cases.

Personal Accident Travel policies are readily available on price comparison websites, or by using a search engine to search for 'travel insurance'. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth website offers additional advice on taking out Travel Insurance: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travelinsurance](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travelinsurance).

# 5 Health and wellbeing

## Before you go

### Planning

In advance of your trip, check the latest Colombia-specific health advice from the [National Travel Health Network and Centre \(NaTHNaC\)](#) on the TravelHealthPro website.

Guidance is also available from NHS (Scotland) on the [FitForTravel](#) website.

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General information on travel vaccinations and a travel health checklist is available on the NHS website.

Make sure you have comprehensive travel and medical insurance covering healthcare and medical evacuation and repatriation for the duration of your stay.

## Medication

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in the UK can be different in Colombia. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of Colombia or territory you're travelling to.

If you're on prescription medication, make sure you either bring enough with you or have access to a supply once in Colombia. Certain medicines may not be available in Colombia (including major brands readily available in the UK), and you may be prohibited from bringing some medicines into Colombia. For more information and advice, check with your GP and the Embassy of Colombia before travelling.

## 5.1 EHIC/GHIC

UK-issued European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs) are still valid and offer the same cover as GHICs in the EU. Once your EHIC has expired, you'll be able to replace it with a GHIC.

The Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) gives you the right to access state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in the European Union (EU). The GHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance but gives you access to healthcare which becomes medically necessary during your stay, and you cannot reasonably wait until you're back in the UK to get it.

You can find out more online about the free [UK Global Health Insurance Card from the NHS](#).

# In Country

## Medication

If your medicine is available from suppliers in Colombia, doctors may first want to conduct their own diagnosis before repeating a prescription issued elsewhere. It is also important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital are as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

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## 5.2 Colombia health service

We recommend that you carry out some research on the Colombian health system in advance of your stay. In general, the quality of service can vary based on location, so be sure to look into your local services as well as at the national level. The FCDO website is a good place to start:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/colombia/health>

If you require urgent medical attention in Colombia dial 123 to ask for assistance in Spanish.

## 5.3 Mental health

Although working abroad can be enjoyable, it can also be challenging. Moving away from support networks, adapting to new routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations can intensify stress levels.

It is important to remember that culture shock affects everyone. There is no shame in admitting that you are having a difficult time. Colombia is a very culturally distinct place. If you do feel homesick or frustrated, please talk to your mentor teacher, and consider reaching out to fellow ELAs in Colombia.

Resources:

- [www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health)
- [www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-advice-for-people-with-mental-health-issues)
- [Mental Health Travelling Abroad](#)
- [Mental Health Travelling Abroad Checklist](#)
- [The NHS website](#)
- [International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers](#)

# 6 Outside of school: Arrival and settling in

## 6.1 Accommodation

### 6.1.1 General Advice

Booking accommodation is not the responsibility of the British Council, the overseas partner organisation, or the host institution. This responsibility lies with the language assistant and you will be required to carry out independent research and make a booking.

When contacted by your host institution it is worth asking them if they have any suggestions. It is possible in some cases that the school may even be able to offer you a place, or a guest room if another teacher offers to host you, although this should not be expected.

Finding a temporary short-term solution is advisable so that you can take a little time to get used to the area and not get stuck in the same place for the whole year if it turns out to be unsuitable. You may find some of the links below a useful place to start:

ACCOMODATION TYPE	USEFUL LINKS	
Temporary accommodation:	<a href="http://www.hihostels.com">www.hihostels.com</a> <a href="http://www.hostelbookers.com">www.hostelbookers.com</a>	<a href="http://www.hostelworld.com">www.hostelworld.com</a> <a href="http://www.airbnb.com">www.airbnb.com</a>

### 6.1.2 Before Signing an Agreement

- Always ask about additional fees such as Agency charges
- Landlords may ask for 1 month's rent as a deposit and 1 month's rent paid in advance.
- Get any agreements in writing, and obtain receipts for any transaction, keeping them secure.
- Confirm your period of notice you must give to move out – there will usually be a legal minimum requirement in the host country. You may also have to give this notice in writing
- Enquire about the possibility of including a 'diplomatic clause' in the rental agreement to allow for a shorter notice period in case of early termination of your placement.
- take photos capturing the condition of your room and the flat before moving in to prevent unfairly losing any of your security deposit
- check health and safety issues (temporary and long term) such as fire alarms and exits, gas leaks, electrics, water etc.

When you have found somewhere to live, even if it has been arranged for you, do not sign any agreement you are not comfortable with and make sure that there is a period of notice written in the contract to avoid problems, should you decide to change your accommodation during the year.

## 7 In school: arrival, settling in and support

### 7.1 Induction

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ICETEX will likely run an 'induction course' for English language assistants in the week before placements are due to begin. Induction meetings have been disrupted by the pandemic so the exact format and arrangement may differ from previous years.

Please note, the British Council has no involvement whatsoever in the organisation of these meetings. The purpose of the induction is to provide you with useful information about your placement directly from ICETEX, adapting to local life, important information about the education system, and is a great chance for you to meet other assistants in your region!

**Attendance is expected depending on travel arrangements. If you are unable to attend we recommend contacting fellow ELAs and catch up on what was missed.**

## 7.2 Observation Period

When you first arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks. It may not be offered to you automatically. Observation will allow you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience classroom management techniques as well as to get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English. Try to note the following:

- How the teacher starts and ends the lesson;
- How the teacher speaks to pupils;
- How the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity;
- What the teacher's attitude is to pupil errors and error correction; and
- How the teacher controls disruptive behaviour, lateness and lack of effort

This can also be a valuable opportunity to discuss with your mentor teacher about the following:

- How you are finding your experience and settling in
- If you have any additional requirements which may facilitate your placement.

### 7.2.1 Settling into school life

You can hear tips from former assistants in our [settling in podcast](#).

Starting any new job can be a daunting experience, no matter how confident a person you are. It's completely normal to be unsure of where to go, what to do or who to talk to at the beginning.

Remember – it is not good practice to correct another teacher in front of students.

Apart from your work in the classroom you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school, such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school 'open days' or parent evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people.

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Teachers who are proactive and take the initiative often settle into school life much faster. Being a self-starter is a great way to make a strong first impression. Teachers are often very busy and will certainly appreciate your efforts to help and try to make an impact.

## 7.3 Absence from school

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your school(s) and ICETEX (if applicable) immediately and within 48 hours by telephone.

Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to ICETEX and to the British Council. Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the head of the school(s) who is within his/her right to refuse it. You are reminded that if you are absent from school without prior authorisation, your allowance will be discontinued from the first day of your absence.

If it becomes necessary to resign from your post, you must give sufficient prior notice in writing of your intended departure to the school, ICETEX and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full. If you are an undergraduate you must also inform your university/college in the UK.

## 7.4 Social media

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are working as a teacher. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you post and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school. It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

## 7.5 Support networks

Give yourself some time to adjust –in the beginning, you will have a lot of administrative matters to deal with. While your programme peers can provide a very good support network for each other; former assistants have recommended that you don't spend all your free time with other programme participants, as you will not be able to integrate into your community and new surroundings.

Here are some other ways to meet people within the area:

- Enrol for an evening class, join a sports club, music group, choir etc.

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- Join or set up a language exchange
  - Join the local Erasmus society through the ESN network
  - Enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures
  - Get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn't join in the UK
  - Volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

## **Start at school**

- Showing that you are enthusiastic to get to know staff and your mentor
- Accept invites to social occasions or team meetings
- If you hear about something happening which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Don't wait to be invited as people may assume that you're not interested.

## **Rural Posts**

Past assistants based in rural or remote areas have had very positive experiences. While it can be more challenging to adapt it can be a very enriching experience on a personal development level and a real immersion in culture and language. You may also receive much more support from your school and integrate into the community quicker which can help with setting into life in Colombia.

## **7.6 Concerns and Queries:**

You may hear from past assistants that their assistantship was the best year of their life, not reflecting the reality that they had to work at it until the rewarding experiences could be appreciated. Be careful to reasonably set your expectations and do not be worried if you find your experience initially more challenging than you thought it would be.

The assistantship year is a wonderful opportunity to absorb the local language and culture and you will gain much in life experience and transferable skills. However, it is perfectly understandable that when abroad in a completely different environment there may be times when you feel homesick, have trouble with pupils or colleagues, or with your living situation and so on.

Meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues. Do tell people if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise, they may assume everything is fine.

The British Council has a zero-tolerance policy approach to discrimination of any kind. If a serious incident occurs and the who to contact sheet is not appropriate, please contact us.



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# 8 Money Matters

## 8.1 Bank Account

It is essential that you open a local bank account in order to receive your payments. We recommend waiting until you arrive in your town of appointment allowing you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and receive help from your school.

Things to consider:

- Assistants are usually entitled to open a standard account which provides a cheque book and cash card; some banks also offer a 'student account'
- Do not open a savings account as your school will not be able to pay your allowance into this.
- Check with local banks in advance to find out what kind of documents will be required

## 8.2 Tax

Assistants often ask our team questions around tax issues but unfortunately we are unable to assist in this area. We do not have the authority or passing knowledge of tax systems in the various countries we work with to answer any questions.

Enquiries regarding UK income tax should be addressed to a local Inspector of Taxes. Please check [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) for information about who to contact.

We do recommend looking into the Double Taxation Agreement between the UK and Colombia and you can find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/tax-foreign-income/taxed-twice>.

It is important to note that the agreement only covers teaching jobs.

## 8.3 Monthly Salary

Details on the estimated monthly allowance can be found on our destination pages on the [Language Assistants website](#). While we keep this information as up to date as possible, allowances listed can change each year so may vary.

Consider taking a Credit Card to cover initial costs and be aware that you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad.

The British Council does have any budget to help cover any costs or refunds.

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## 8.4 Additional Income

Please check that additional work is permitted under the terms of your visa and that it does not conflict with your school timetable. If you wish to supplement your income with extra work you such as by giving private tuition in English, you are strongly advised not to advertise in local papers or public places. In general pupils are easily found through school or private connections, i.e. by word-of-mouth. However, it is essential to check that the other English teachers in your school(s) do not mind, so that you are not perceived to be 'stealing' their private pupils.

## Useful Documents

Prepare copies and documents prior to leaving and keep safe and secure when abroad:

- Passport
- Photographs
- Insurance cover
- Certificate of appointment
- Another valid form of photographic ID
- Bank statements from your UK bank
- Birth Certificate
- Certificates of schools exams
- Passport sized photos
- Documents to set up bank account
- Proof of address
- Payslips
- Rental agreement

## 9 Language learning and studies

### 9.1 For language learning

- [BBC- Learn Spanish](#). Offers a wealth of resources for learning Spanish, including short guides, videos and the BBC World News service in Latin America. There is also a link to Colombian TV - <https://www.senalcolombia.tv/>

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- Memrise [www.memrise.com](http://www.memrise.com). A sophisticated platform for language learning, with a large online community. App also available.
  - Duolingo <https://www.duolingo.com/welcome>. A simplistic platform for language learning which is very easy to access. Bite-size lessons allow the user to practice for anywhere from 5 minutes a day. App also available.
  - [Anki](#): An online platform for learning, focusing on memory-recall. Packs for specific levels of Spanish are available.

## 10 End of your placement

### 10.1 Administrative matters

**Bank:** You are advised to keep your account open for a month or so after the contract with your school has ended to ensure that all outstanding payments have been received. Please do check on the conditions for transactions relating to your account. For example, it might be that you can only close your account in the same branch in which you opened it.

**Accommodation:** Please make sure that you leave a good impression with your landlord – a future assistant may be depending on this:

- Leave a forwarding address with your landlord so that they can forward any mail on to you.
- When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts, e.g. internet or utilities.
- Discuss with your landlord what you need to do for them to return your deposit and terminate your rental agreement, as well as arranging the return of your belongings if you have already left.
- If you rent your flat through a property agency, they may want to carry out an inspection before returning your deposit; if possible, you should make sure that you are present during the inspection to avoid any potential disagreements at a later date. Alternatively you may wish to take photos of your accommodation before leaving to document how it was left.

**Reference:** If you haven't already done so, please liaise with your host school to ask for a reference.

- This will be invaluable when it comes to an official record of your assistantship and for any future applications to be an ELA. This should ideally be on headed paper, stamped and comment on your performance as an assistant.

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- Please note that as the British Council is not the employer, we are unable to provide references for language assistants, only a certificate certifying participation upon request.

## 10.2 Staying a consecutive year

To stay for a consecutive year as a British Council language assistant in Colombia, please see [our website](#) for details on how to apply. ELAs applying for a consecutive year in Colombia are limited to 2 years in total. This rule is to ensure new applicants can enjoy the same benefits of the programme with there being limited posts available. If late posts do become available due to withdrawals we may contact you to offer an additional consecutive year.

## 10.3 Programme Ambassadors

Ambassadors play an essential active part in promoting the opportunity of being a Language Assistant. By representing a British Council programme, former assistants will be able to develop their creative, organisational and professional skills and network with the future generation of assistants. To have an opportunity to be involved with this, you must have filled out our end of year survey after which you may be invited to take part in the scheme.

## 10.4 Alumni network

We are currently establishing an alumni network to help former ELAs and MLAs stay in touch with the programme and each other. This is currently hosted on a LinkedIn group which you will be invited to after your placement is concluded.

## 10.5 Getting into Teaching

If you want to take your assistantship to the next level, find out more from the links below of how to get into teaching and inspire future linguists:

- England: <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/>
- Wales: <https://www.discoverteaching.wales/routes-into-teaching/>
- Scotland: <https://teachinscotland.scot/>
- Northern Ireland: <https://gtcni.org.uk/professional-space/professional-competence/getting-into-teaching>