Notes for English Language Assistants Appointed in CHILE in 2016-17

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.
Notes for English Language Assistants appointed to Chile 2016-17

Congratulations on your recent allocation to a post as an English Language Assistant in Chile.

This document contains important information and advice regarding a variety of practical and administrative matters affecting UK assistants in Chile. They should be read carefully, retained for reference and considered in conjunction with any papers issued by the Chilean authorities. It is important that you take this information with you whilst doing your year abroad in order to be able to consult it at all times when problems/questions arise.

If your permanent (UK) home address, personal e-mail or phone number should change at any time from now on, please inform us immediately by sending an e-mail to languageassistants.uk@britishcouncil.org. We may need to contact you during the year with updates to these notes, invitations or urgent messages.

We hope that you find the following information useful and that you enjoy the year ahead.

Best wishes,

Language Assistants Team, British Council
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The Basics

1. Co-operating Partner

The Language Assistants Programme in Chile is administered by the British Council in Santiago, Chile.

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British Council Chile
Ricardo Lyon 222 Of. 2001,
Providencia
Santiago, Chile

Ivonne Muller and Deborah Sepulveda are specifically in charge of British Council ELAs:

Ivonne Muller:
Tel: (00)56 (2) 2410 6906
Mobile: 56 9 82001611
Email: ivonne.muller@britishcouncil.cl

Deborah Sepulveda
Tel: (00)56 (2) 410 69 18
Email: deborah.sepulveda@britishcouncil.cl

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2. Role of the Language Assistant

The role of a language assistant is a very important one, and one that we hope you will enjoy. 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: www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistants-your-role.htm

As a language assistant you are also an ambassador for the UK and its culture. The way you behave will influence how those around you view the UK and you should endeavour to be a positive example. If you set a bad example, you could damage the reputation of the programme and adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is an excellent resource and you should draw on this during your lessons. We provide a lot of advice to help you incorporate cultural content into your lessons.

It is important to be resourceful and use your initiative. If you do not think that you are being used sufficiently in class, make suggestions of topics that you could discuss with the students, activities you could do
3. **Period of Appointment**

The period of appointment for UK assistants in Chile this year will be for from either the end of July 2016 until the end of June 2017 or from the end of August 2016 until the end of June 2017. In general, the number of hours of the assistantship will be between 18-20 hours per week, but please check your agreement carefully to find out the exact number you will be expected to work at your institution. Please check whether or not you will receive additional allowance for any extra hours worked, as many assistants report doing extra hours in their main or other institutions to supplement their allowance.

Remember that the academic calendar in the UK and Chile is different (Chile runs from March - December) so you will probably teach two sets of students. All ELAs are entitled to a holiday during the month of February and you will receive your payment during this time. **Please note that this can also vary from institution to institution and should be agreed in writing upon arrival.**

Some months before your appointment starts, you will receive an email from the British Council in Chile asking you to confirm whether or not you will be accepting your position as a Language Assistant. It is very important that you reply as soon as possible with the information requested because the earlier you do so, the earlier you will receive a response regarding your post and contact details of your local education coordinator.

You should also ask them for some information about the school(s) that you will be working in. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils, the facilities available, and if you should bring any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information.

4. **Predecessors**

Contact details of assistants appointed to Chile in 2015-16 are also being sent to you. It should be noted that schools do not necessarily receive assistants from the same Anglophone country each year, and the British Council holds records of assistants from the UK only. Past assistants have emphasised how useful it is to contact former assistants in their area and have described their advice as invaluable.
**Pre-departure and arrival**

5. Chilean Embassy and Consulate in the UK

Before leaving the UK you must be in possession of a passport, valid until at least six months after the end of your assistantship.

You will have to apply for a student visa at the Chilean Consulate. Whether you are a current student or not, you should still apply for a student visa. If you are not a student, you do not need to be concerned about this; the reason that you are asked to apply for a student visa is because there is not a suitable alternative visa for Language Assistants.

Visa application link:


In order to be able to apply for a visa you will need:

- **A photocopy of your passport**
  
  All pages, except those that are blank

- **Evidence of financial support**

  Whether you are graduating or not, you will be required to show evidence of financial support for the time that you will be in Chile.

  *If your parents or guardians will support you financially*, you will need to evidence this by asking your parents or guardians to complete the deed of covenant signed and sealed by a Public Notary of Solicitor. The minimum sum stated should be £1000.

  *If your parents/ guardians will not be supporting you*, you will need to show some evidence of how you will support yourself financially – for example, if you will have a Student Loan or Grant – a copy of a letter confirming this with a bank statement, or if you are saving money, copies of your bank statements. Please note that you will also have a letter from the British Council confirming that you have a placement for which you will be paid an allowance of a minimum of $ 398.000 - CLP per month.

- **ACPRO Police Certificate**

- **Letter from your University stating that you are taking a course in Chile**
If you are a student and will not be graduating this year, you will need to include this letter. It should state that you are at X University, commenced your course in a particular academic year (e.g. 2012-13), that you will be undertaking a compulsory year abroad in 2016-17 and that you have been accepted on the British Council’s Language Assistants programme, allocated to Chile.

If you are a graduate or will be graduating this year, you do not need a letter from your University.

- Health Report

This can be completed in any country, but it should be completed in English.

- Passport photo

- Medical insurance

Although the Consulate has not specified particular medical insurance, you must ensure that you take out a policy which includes emergency repatriation to the UK.

- Letter from the British Council confirming your placement as an assistant

This will be given directly to the Consulate by the British Council.

Please bear in mind that visa procedures may vary from year to year. The British Council tries to obtain the latest information on your visa requirements but we are unable to accept any liability if the information provided here differs from what the Consulate requires from you.

7. Documents to take

We recommend you scan your birth certificate before leaving the UK and email it to yourself so that you have access to it while you are away (and therefore do not need to take the original with you). You should take your passport, visa and driving license (if intending to drive) with you, but we would also recommend that you scan and email to yourself copies of the photo page of your passport, visa and driving license in case of an emergency. Whilst in Chile, you should carry a photocopy of the photo page of your passport rather than the original and always have this with you as a means of ID.

8. Vaccinations

The British Council is unable to pay for your vaccines but we recommend strongly that you get information on the vaccinations needed for Chile before you travel. The National Travel Health Network and Centre will be a good starting point: http://www.nathnac.org/ds/c_pages/country_page_EC.htm
9. Articles to take

Based on previous assistants’ advice, the following articles have been suggested as being required. Please remember that this is only a basic list and you should by no means feel obliged to take any of the articles listed below:

- First aid kit
- Ear plugs: the Latin American culture is a very noisy one, even at night.
- Guidebook(s)
- Neck pillows for long bus journeys
- Plug adapter(s).
- Map(s).
- Torch.
- Waterproofs for the rainy season.
- Sun lotion/block: make sure you use a high factor as the sun is stronger closer to the equator.
- Mosquito repellent.
- If you are on the pill you might not be able to find your prescription easily.

10. Foreign Commonwealth Office Information

Before travelling to Chile you should ensure that you check the FCO’s travel advice pages: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice and ensure that you have subscribed to updates so that you receive any important changes to the FCO’s advice. During a crisis, advice for British nationals will be published on the travel advice website and updated regularly, so by subscribing you will ensure that you are aware of any updates. You can register for emails using this link: https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKGOVUK/subscriber/new

We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for Travellers' documentation provided by the FCO, which can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-british-nationals-overseas/supporting-pages/advice-for-travellers

11. Arrival

You will arrange with your institution directly to be met at the airport/ bus terminal. If you will be arriving in Santiago, pick-up from the airport may be available, so you should check with British Council Chile and send them your flight details before you leave (this also includes pick-up from the airport to the bus terminal for those that will be continuing their trip by bus from Santiago to their final destinations).

The date of your first teaching day depends on your host institution and should be specified in your agreement once you are in contact with your school.
12. Accommodation

You should contact your mentor to ask about temporary accommodation for the first two weeks of your assistantship; accommodation for these two weeks may be paid by your host institution. They may also be able provide advice about longer-term accommodation. Please check this with your mentor teacher, who should be able to tell you what to expect and give advice and help. You may also wish to ask advice from the language assistant who was in your institution last year, if there was one.

When looking for accommodation please follow the advice given in our Personal Safety leaflet. When you have found some-place 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.

Money Matters

13. Monthly Allowance

All assistant’s experiences will be different, and you should check the terms with your host institution. All participating institutions are independent bodies which means that the allowance varies from institution to institution, and should be confirmed in your contract. This year the average is 398,000 Chilean pesos. It will provide a reasonable basic standard of living for one person. Try not to react negatively if you receive less money than another assistant. Please check whether or not you will receive more for any extra hours worked, as many assistants report doing extra hours in their main or other institutions to supplement their allowance.

Your first allowance payment may not arrive until you have been in Chile for around six to eight weeks. Your allowance will cover basic living costs, but travelling will be an extra expenditure. Based on advice from previous assistants, it is advisable to leave the UK with approximately £1000 to cover expenses for the first few weeks.

If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition in English, you should ensure that this tuition does not interfere with your timetable at your host institution. You are strongly advised not to advertise in local papers or public places. (Please read the relevant sections of our Personal Safety leaflet). 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.
14. Currency and Banks

You are advised to wait until you arrive in Chile before seeking advice about opening a bank account. This will allow you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and choose what will be most convenient for the rest of the year. Your mentor teacher should be able to advise you about opening a bank account. Please bring your UK bank details and debit/credit cards. It is recommended that you have access to your UK bank account throughout the year, making sure that you have sufficient funds in case of delays to your salary payment.

ATMs are the best way to get money in Chile. Credit cards are widely accepted, but when using one please keep in mind that some businesses add a surcharge or recargo of 5-10% onto your purchases. The actual amount you will have to pay is also dependent on the exchange rate. We recommend checking with your local co-ordinator to find out the best way for you to access your money during the first few weeks.

Be aware that you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad. You may wish to check what your bank will charge you to use this service. Your monthly allowance is adequate to survive on but you will need more if you intend to travel.

One UK pound is the equivalent of about 1000 Chilean pesos (at the time of writing). You can find bank notes of 1000, 2000, 5000, 10,000 and 20,000 pesos and coins of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 pesos.

15. Insurance

You are required to take out comprehensive insurance to cover you during your time in Chile. It is important to cover medical and other expenses, personal accident and personal liability, including repatriation, luggage and personal possessions and cancellation charges.

You will be asked to sign a declaration for the British Council in the UK to certify that you will be taking out insurance. It is advisable to leave copies of insurance documents with a contact in the UK.

In addition to health insurance, it would be wise to consider insuring your personal possessions. You should also check your parents’ household insurance as this sometimes covers possessions away from home. Furthermore, cover for personal liability is often overlooked, but it is extremely important. If you were the cause of an accident of any kind – e.g. cycling on the road – the resulting costs, practical and legal, could be prohibitively high.
The British Council is unable to advise on private insurance packages, so you are recommended to consult an insurance broker for professional advice and to check whether you are covered by your parents’ insurance policy. Undergraduate assistants may find that a "study abroad" policy purchased online is an option. Please be aware that some insurance policies, usually ‘backpackers’ insurance, do not allow for trips home during the year and it is important to check the small print of your policy to make sure that you are covered. We recommended you research the various options available and consult other/ former assistants before purchasing a suitable policy. However, any insurance you purchase should include cover for emergency treatment and repatriation. Please note that no insurance company will cover you in the event of a natural disaster or the outbreak of war.

If you do fall ill make sure you keep copies of all medical bills, receipts or other documents. You will then need these to make a claim.

Please see the FCO website for more information regarding healthcare in Chile: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/chile/health

If you take regular medication, please ensure that you have a sufficient supply before you leave and that this is labelled clearly. It is also important to find out where you nearest doctor, dentist and hospital as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and always advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

Administrative Matters

16. Absence from your institution

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by your institution. The programme allows for an amount of paid leave (holiday), giving you the time to travel and see what the rest of the country has to offer. **Any holiday time taken must be established with the host institution in writing prior to departure.**

If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your institution(s) and local education authority (if applicable) immediately by telephone. You may be asked to provide a letter from a doctor. This should cover the entire duration of the absence and must be sent to the school and, if applicable, local authority as soon as it is issued. Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to your host institution 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.

17. Solving Problems

Conditions in Chile differ from those in this country. Any difficulties should be discussed with your mentor teacher and/or the teacher of the class concerned in the first instance. If the problem cannot be solved in this way, then you should get in touch with the British Council in Chile. Satisfactory solutions can usually be found through such consultations. The British Council in the UK will be happy to offer advice, but should only be contacted when all other attempts to solve the issue have been made. Problems are dealt with most quickly and effectively locally, and if contacted the British Council will instruct you to take the steps mentioned above. Please see the provided ‘Who to Contact’ document for your line of referral.

To avoid problems, it is a good idea to form a good working relationship with other members of staff. You should introduce yourself to all members of the English department. It is important to be patient and polite and to be aware of others’ work pressure. Please remember that it is not good practice to correct the teacher in front of students. You should always be punctual, responsible and prepare adequately for your lessons. Furthermore, meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to provide 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 will assume everything is OK. The authorities will not appreciate it if you suffer in silence and complain six months later. A lot of past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in Chile was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.

Settling In

18. Life in Latin America

In Latin America, there is often a culture of anti-formality which might give the impression of a lack of organisation and forward planning. Things tend to happen at the very last minute, and many assistants from the UK find it hard to adjust to what they consider to be a disorganised society. Usually what is lacking in forward planning is made up for in making newcomers feel welcome. However, you will need to prepare yourself for certain
frustrations, particularly at bureaucratic level, even prior to departure; especially when it comes to finding out specific details regarding your post and visa applications.

Showing an interest in Chilean culture will certainly endear you to the locals. We recommend you read up as much as possible before you go as this will help you make conversation and talk knowledgeably to people you meet in the first few weeks.

19. Life in Chile

If you are expecting rumba, salsa, constant tropical heat and the clamour and noise that distinguishes some of the very ‘Latin’ South American countries, then you will be surprised by what you find in Chile. Chile is not a stereotypical Latin country and in many ways has more in common with its European counterparts.

What this means is that you get an infrastructure that works, less poverty than is unfortunately characteristic of much of the continent, services, shops and bars of a standard equal to the UK, and far less crime, muggings or shootings than are a daily feature in much of Latin America. In this respect Chile is not as daunting or likely to produce such a tremendous culture shock as some of the ‘harder’, less developed countries on its doorstep.

This is testified by the quick recovery in the country after the earthquake in March 2010 that shook southern Chile. Assistants for 2009-10 stayed in post and report that life in Chile is almost back to how it was before the earthquake.

Physically, Chile is a stunning country with a number of great cities and its own specific charm; glaciers and lakes in the South, the Atacama Desert in the North, and all this combined with some of the friendliest people in the South American continent. During your assistantship year you will experience this first hand, and become familiar with both Chile as a country and the Chileans as a people.

20. Culture Shock

Even if you have travelled to non-European destinations before, you might feel slightly overwhelmed by your experience in the beginning. Some areas can be very poor and you might struggle to accept this. Latin America is also known for its alleged chaos. Be open to changes of plans (social and at work), lessons cancelled at the last minute etc. A different climate and location, feeling jet-lagged after the long flight and struggling with speaking Spanish all day long might lead to temporary disorientation, self-consciousness and exhaustion. This usually leads to feeling homesick but please be assured that this is a very common and normal feeling which usually disappears after a few weeks or even days.

There are some ways which might help you to overcome this initial culture shock. Try not to be too hard on yourself; yes, you have come to Chile to live and work there but that would...
does not mean that you have to be like one of the locals within a week. Give yourself time to get over the jet lag and to explore your area. Do not stay in contact only with UK assistants during your assistantship as this might lead to your feeling alienated for the whole time of your appointment. However, it is important that you contact them and your family and friends back home in the beginning to tell them about your experiences. Other assistants can be a great support as they are going through the same process. Once you have met local people and have tackled bureaucracy you will realise that life in Chile gets much easier and you will have an enjoyable time. Religion and family play an important role in everyday life so although you may at first feel like an outsider, once you have proved your interest in local people and their culture, you will be welcomed into these tight-knit groups.

The way you behave and represent the UK will shape the view of the UK of those Chileans with whom you are in contact. There are a number of frustrations that Language Assistants to Latin America frequently feel; attitudes towards timekeeping in Latin America can be somewhat lax, particularly in social settings (although you will be expected to be punctual to your classes). Machismo and general gender issues might be something with which female assistants in particular struggle to manage, and unwanted attention in the street should be expected by female assistants. Discourage this by dressing appropriately and trying to blend in. Bureaucracy can also be very tiresome. Do not get angry as this usually does not lead to any results – especially when dealing with people in authority. Ultimately, remember that you are an ambassador for the UK – do not criticise what you cannot change and above all, keep your sense of humour!

Politeness and respect are seen as important everywhere in Latin America. People generally shake hands when they meet each other and start a conversation with a formal greeting. If you are unsure always use the more formal usted and remember to use señor/señora particularly with older people.

Check with your mentor teacher what the dress code is at your institution. Observe the local dress code and remember that shorts, flip flops and bikinis are for the beach only.

21. Creating Social Networks

Even if you have been to Chile before, it is possible that you will find some things strange at first and will need a little time to settle in. On arrival, the thought of making friends and mixing with the locals can seem like a daunting task, but as long as you are prepared to put yourself out there, it is a part of the experience which previous assistants have found the most enriching. Give yourself some time to adjust – you don’t need to feel like a local within a week and in the beginning you’ll have a lot of administrative matters to deal with.

The best way to start is with colleagues at school. Make sure you always seem positive, enthusiastic and willing to learn. Socialise as much as you can with colleagues and accept all invitations to events, dinner etc. Tell people what your interests are and ask them to let
you know what’s going on in the local area. Do keep in mind that teachers can be very busy, especially during exam periods.

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 parents’ evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people. 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.

It is also a good idea to get in touch with other people in the area before you leave. One useful way to do this is to get in contact with a previous assistant in your region and ask them to give you any e-mail addresses or numbers of contacts they made. Another excellent way to meet new people is to set up language exchanges with local people who want to practise their English. You could also enrol at a local language school, join Erasmus societies (at a local university), offer English lessons to colleagues/locals, join a club and join assistant groups on social networks such as Facebook. There are often Facebook groups for people who are new to the city/town, which organise different events to help people make new friends - just search for ‘new in “city name”’ Previous assistants have also suggested joining a local Couchsurfing group as they often organise social activities.

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are an ELA. 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 say on your wall 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. This is likely to be regarded as inappropriate behaviour. 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 also to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

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

- live with other students/native speakers
- enrol for an evening class, join a sports club, music group, choir etc.
- get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn’t join in the UK
• volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

Former assistants have recommended not spending all of your time with other assistants, as you won’t be able to integrate into your community and life in Chile. On the other hand, don’t feel that you must cut yourself off from them – assistants can provide a very good support network for each other, as you understand each other’s experiences. Don’t forget that there may be language assistants from other countries in your area. You may wish to ask your employer if they have contact details.

As a golden rule, try to say yes to every social opportunity presented to you that does not compromise your personal safety. Accept invitations to places and activities even if they do not sound interesting as you might meet other people there who do share your interests.

22. Travelling around Chile

Most international flights fly into Santiago. The national carrier is LAN, but most major European and North American airlines also fly into Chile regularly. It is up to you to carefully research and compare each airline before booking your flights. Other airlines that have been previously used include Swiss Air and Delta airlines.

Most cities and towns have a central bus terminal. A lot of Chileans travel long distances by bus and year on year assistants tell us that the bus system is fast, punctual and comfortable and the preferred method of travel. Fares are cheaper if booked in advance but vary depending by company and season. Ofertas are often promoted both on buses and flights with Sky often being cheaper than LAN. In the past, assistants have used www.turbus.cl/ to book bus travel around Chile and South America. Although they are hard to get hold of, having a student card may also entitle you to some good discounts. Ask at your institution.

If you intend to rent a car in Chile please keep in mind that you must have an International Driving Permit. You will also need to check the age requirements to rent a car in Chile. It might be worth checking locally which renting agencies are recommended. Please also make sure that you are adequately insured.

An International Students Card (ISIC) might also be helpful to get, for example, discounts on public transport and admissions to museums. Information can be found on www.isiccard.com

Santiago is the only city in Chile with an underground system (metro) but taking the bus is a much better way of getting to know the area to which you have been appointed. Buses should be clearly numbered and should also show their final destination. To travel by bus you now have to use a pre-paid public transport card, known as BIP. You can buy the card in any Metro station and charge it with the amount of money you need (cards can also be charged in BIP points in local stores). Please check this with your mentor teacher.
23. Personal Safety

It is very important to stick to the same health and safety rules as you would at home and always heed advice given by local people. Please see refer to the Personal Safety Leaflet which provides an emergency telephone number as well as essential guidelines on how to avoid potentially dangerous situations. Stay alert and take precautions to avoid becoming a victim. It is equally important to stay informed about local and countrywide events. Read local newspapers and check the internet, watch the news, listen to the radio and talk to people.

We strongly advise that you spend some time looking at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided. We also recommend that assistants read the ‘Advice for Travellers’ documentation which can be found here:

In the event of an emergency, you should contact the British Embassy in Chile or British Council in Chile. Getting help and information locally is usually more effective and quicker than contacting the British Council in the UK.

24. Natural disasters/ emergencies

The FCO recommends that you use the following websites, subscribe to alerts and read advice about what to do in the event of a natural disaster/emergency as well as following local advice:
https://www.gov.uk/reduce-your-risk-from-terrorism-while-abroad
http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/tropicalcyclone/index.html
http://earthquake.usgs.gov/
https://www.gov.uk/tropical-cyclones
25. ISIC cards

International Student Identity Cards cost £9 and are available online and from student travel agents such as STA and BUNAC. They can be used to obtain cheap entry into certain museums, theatres, cinemas and art galleries. They may also entitle you to certain travel concessions. Please see www.isiccard.com for further information. Please note that in order to obtain an ISIC card you need to be a full time student.

For non-students who are under 26 there is the International Youth Travel Card (£9), which can be bought in the same way – see http://www.statravel.co.uk/youth-identity-card.htm for further information.

26. Practicalities

The electrical current in Chile is 220 Volts and they have the European-style plug. Your electrical items should function normally in Chile, but you will need adapters.

Chileans use the metric system for weights and measures. Distances are measured in km.

Chile is 4 hours behind GMT and observes daylight saving.

Country code 0056

Directory assistance 103

27. Phoning home & mobiles

Be aware that calls to the UK from a mobile can be expensive. Previous assistants have recommended using Skype and www.voipbuster.com as an alternative.

For most contract ‘phones you may have to have the line for a year. Make sure you don’t sign anything you don’t understand. Previous assistants have found pre-pay phones easier to manage and cheaper and have used ‘phone companies such as Claro, Movistar and Entel. Recently two new companies have also entered the market: VTR and Virgin Mobile. Ask your mentor teacher for advice on coverage, cost and popularity of each network in your area.

28. Useful websites

You can read case studies written by former assistants on our website: (click on the links under ‘Latin America’ on the menu on the right-hand-side of the page):

http://www.britishcouncil.org/language-assistants/become/latin-america

Year Abroad Advice: www.thirdyearabroad.com
Chile:
www.visit-chile.org  Tourism website for Chile
www.contactchile.cl  General info on Chile including accommodation
                      search engine
www.compartodepto.cl  Flat/room finding website for Chile
www.carretes.cl  Nightlife information on Chile including concerts
                    and other major events
www.mapcity.com  Maps of Santiago and Chile
www.santiagomagazine.cl  Cultural events in Santiago
www.meteochile.cl  Weather in Chile

Latin America:
http://www.latinnews.com/  Latin American Newsletter
www.pulsamerica.com  Latin American news to a global Anglophone
                      readership

Latin American Resource Centres:
http://www.canninghouse.org/  Canning House in London
http://lab.org.uk/  Latin America Bureau in London
http://www.latin-american.cam.ac.uk/  University of Cambridge: Centre of Latin American
                                      Studies

Teaching tips and resources

29. Classes in Chile
The size of the class can vary from approximately 25 - 50 students depending on the institution. The academic calendar in Chile runs from March - December so you will probably teach two sets of students.

30. Observation period
When you first arrive 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 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

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• 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
• how the teacher controls disruptive behaviour, lateness and lack of effort

31. British Council Teaching Resources

The British Council produces and co-produces a range of resources specifically for Language Assistants. Making use of these will help you greatly to deliver interesting and useful classroom activities and will support you in solving problems in the classroom.

Please note that many foreign schools are anxious to establish links with UK counterparts in order to share information and arrange pupil exchanges. Assistants are encouraged to help in whatever way possible in establishing such links and there is information and guidance on the British Council website: http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-ie-school-partnerships

You may also wish to find out if your school has any eTwinning projects or set up a project yourself: www.britishcouncil.org/etwinning.htm

32. Language Assistants Manual

‘Language Assistant’ by Clare Lavery is a resource book designed for language assistants and provides information on all aspects of the role. This can be downloaded here: www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/whole_manual.pdf. Please read this carefully as it is extremely useful in preparing you for your assistantship.

33. TeachingEnglish Website

TeachingEnglish.org is an online resource centre produced jointly by the British Council and the BBC has a specialised Language Assistants micro-site: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/language-assistant

On the site you will have access to:

• Teaching tips
• Essential UK: Seasonal lesson plans based around UK topics
• Primary tips: Help getting started with primary-level students
• Classroom games

33. LearnEnglish website

The British Council Learn English website is an excellent free online resource for students of English with lots of games, stories, listening activities and grammar exercises: http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/
This may be a useful tool for you to use for your teaching but also to pass on to your students for them to access from home.

34. Social Media pages

Our Study Work Create Facebook page provides an opportunity to discuss teaching ideas and share your experience with other assistants (we send approximately 3000 Language Assistants around the world each year).


Follow Language Assistants on Twitter @Languageasst

35. Teaching materials

One way of making language learning real for your pupils is bringing authentic materials from the UK into the classroom. Take the opportunity to collect a variety of resources while you are still at home.

Past assistants have found that the following materials worked well: photos of family and friends and your home town, lots of postcards, examples of UK coins and notes, train tickets and timetables, stamps, posters and tea towels to decorate walls, Christmas cards and crackers, posters and games, UK TV programmes and listings, magazines and local newspapers, CDs, photos of school uniforms, a school timetable and school report, flashcards, word searches, maps, tourist brochures, UK food (marmite, jelly, chocolate, custard, mince pies, gravy granules, etc), adverts, menus, cartoons, comic books, DVDs (e.g. Ready Steady Cook for catering students), simple recipes e.g. scones, recordings of the weather forecast, London tube map, tapes of friends’ accents and conversations, bingo, Taboo etc.

The more materials you can find the better. Think about what worked well for you as a language student and about which items you find interesting when you are abroad. You can also ask your host school(s) whether there is something specific they would like you to bring and to find out about topics you are likely to be asked to cover during your assistantship.

36. Useful teaching websites

| Teaching websites                      | www.onestopenglish.com
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<td><a href="http://www.englishclub.com">www.englishclub.com</a> *</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bogglesworldesl.com">www.bogglesworldesl.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cambridgeesol.org/teach">www.cambridgeesol.org/teach</a> *</td>
<td><a href="http://www.developingteachers.com">www.developingteachers.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/teachers">http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/teachers</a> *</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tes.co.uk">www.tes.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Miscellaneous

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for drug offences and for taking part in unlawful political demonstrations which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences. You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

Married students should note that the allowance is intended to provide for one person only. However, if an assistant’s spouse remains in the UK and is unemployed, he/she may be barred from income support or be required to refund whatever was received as such since the start of the assistantship. Enquiries should be made well in advance in order to prevent financial difficulties from arising during a married assistant’s period of appointment.

Please note the British Council is not the employer of UK assistants abroad and should not be given as a referee in future job applications. In general the head of the school would be the most appropriate referee.
Useful contacts

British Embassy in Chile

Please take note of the address of the Embassy below in case of emergency or loss of your passport.

The British Embassy
Avda. El Bosque Norte 0125
Las Condes, Santiago
Chile
Tel:(0056) (2) 370 4100
Email: embsan@britemb.cl
http://ukinchile.fco.gov.uk/en

Emergency services in Chile

Fire 132
Police 133
Ambulance 131

Book List

Dictionaries

BBC English Dictionary (BBC English/Harper Collins)
Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longman)
Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Oxford University Press)
Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (Longman)

Grammar Reference Books

Current English Grammar (S. Chalker, Phoenix)
Basic English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
Practical English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
Discover English (R. Bolitho & B. Tomlinson, Macmillan Heinemann)
English Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
Advanced Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
How English Works (Michael Swan and Catherine Walter, Oxford University Press)
Learner English (Michael Swan & Bernard Smith (eds.) Cambridge University Press)

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Basic Methodology Books

The Practice of English Language Teaching  J. Harmer  Longman
How to Teach English  J. Harmer  Longman
How to Teach Grammar  S. Thornbury  Longman
How to Use the Internet in ELT  D. Teeler & P. Gray Longman
One to One  Peter Wilberg  Language Teaching Publications

Also look out for the series of handbooks and source books for language teachers published by CUP, Longman, Macmillan and OUP.

Quotes

“As an assistant, I think you develop your confidence incredibly as you often have to deal with situations which push you out of your comfort zone. I think your independence improves as well as your communication skills. I also feel you learn how to be more tolerant. The advantages of an assistantship are that you have more experience of problem solving, a better knowledge of the world and an original experience which may make you sound more interesting. If you’re an open-minded and positive person, do the assistantship!”

Elizabeth, Assistant in Chile 2010-2011