



# FAQs

## APPLICATION

**1 I am currently 26 and would be turning 27 during my time in Argentina. In the programme description it says that exceptions can be made with the age limit. Should I still apply or will this be a problem?**

We have applicants ask us before they apply so as to make sure they are suitable for the position. The age limit is due to the fact that when people are about / above 30 it gets difficult to find them a family and /or a placement. However, when the applicant's qualifications satisfactorily meet the requirements, somehow we can be flexible. So, your age is fine.

**2 I just graduated in December and am not a current student. Do you need to be a student to partake in this**

The programme is open to both university students and graduates from English-speaking countries.

**3 Since I have already graduated I will not be going through a university. Do I still have to get a letter from the university backing my application?**

Concerning references we suggest that one at least comes from a former teacher or tutor so that we can have an idea of your academic performance.

**4 What type of references would be appropriate for me to forward on?**

One at least we recommend comes from the academic field. You can get the other reference from an employer.

**5 Should reference letters be sent separately from my application packet directly from the reference**

Reference letters can be sent along with the rest of your application papers - via email either directly from the referee or scanned. When possible, we suggest avoiding regular mail as it takes much longer and it frequently proves inefficient

**6 Should I send my application and essays once I have completed them and send letters of recommendation once I get them, or would you prefer to get them all at the same time?**

Start sending the material as you have it. Reference letters sometimes take a while until they are all collected so you should ideally start the application process by sending the application forms.

**7 When does the Programme officially start and finish?**

Official start and finish dates are 10th March to 15th July and 25th July.to 15th December.

**8 Is it possible to arrive after the programme has officially started?**

Yes, but beware that the minimum placement lasts for 3 months and can only take place within the school term. Besides, you would be missing the TEFL Survey Course which takes place right before the official start dates.

**9 Can I choose my own date of arrival?**

If you are thinking of arriving after the programme has started, please refer to Question 8. If you are thinking of arriving before 10th March or 25th July, you should consider that CII offers full board since the day previous to the official start date and that all expenses prior to that date are on the student. However, CII can organise airport pickup and help you find accommodation should you decide to arrive any earlier

**10 Considering I will be arriving a few days after the programme official start date, would I have the opportunity to get an orientation?**

All applicants, no matter when they arrive, receive Orientation upon arrival.

**11 Now that I have sent in my application, I am wondering what is the next step in the application process. Is there any more paperwork or anything else that need to be getting together to send in?**

- >Applicant submits complete Application Forms A and B
- >CII considers application and formally confirms your acceptance into the programme.
- >CII sends an invoice for the 50% of the total fee which is due within 10 days.
- >Applicant informs CII of details of the money transfer.
- >CII sends instructions on how to write your Personal Profile.
- >As soon as the Profile is received, CII starts working on the placement
- >Applicant sends details of International Medical Insurance
- >Our TEFL Trainer starts contact and online orientation with those attending the course
- >CII sends information on the Spanish Immersion Programme
- >CII sends instructions for the Spanish Immersion Programme
- >45 days prior to the programme start, CII sends invoice to pay off the balance
- >Applicant informs of details of the money transfer
- >Applicant sends travel arrangements and flight details so that CII can organise airport pickup
- >CII sends further information on the programme
- >CII starts confirming the placements that have already been finalised

**12 When will I know if my application has been accepted?**

CII will inform you when we have received your complete application - Application Forms A and B and the materials requested on the Checklist in Application Form B - and have checked that you are a suitable candidate.

**13 How many of the Essay Questions on Application Form B do I have to answer?**

All of them

**14 For the doctor's note, do I need to type out a certain criteria for the doctor to verify?**

There is no need to send detailed reports or test results as we assume the doctor has based his recommendation on a previous check up. It is enough to send a note signed by the doctor stating that he/she has no reservations about recommending you to join the programme or to travel abroad. The note should include his/her email address and/or phone number in case we want to contact him

**15 When is the placement fee due?**

- >50% of the total fee (or the equivalent in the currency of your country) once you have been accepted into the programme
- >the balance is due 45 days prior to the programme start

**16 What is the preferred method of payment?**

Money transfer to the following account:

*Fernando Damián Carro*

*Current Account: 25558158*

*NSC: 904579*

*Bank of Ireland*

*Branch: University of Limerick*

*IBAN Number: IE96 BOFI 9043 0925 5581*

*SWIFT/BIC Number: BOFIE2D*

Please inform Mr Carro of details of the operation. [Fernando.Carro@ecolonias.com](mailto:Fernando.Carro@ecolonias.com)

### **17 Can I pay the balance after arrival in Argentina?**

No, Applicants must pay the balance 45 days prior to arrival in Argentina to ensure commitment. We start working on your placement as soon as you have been accepted into the programme and placed the downpayment. This means schools choose their candidates and start organising things long before you arrive; uncertainty in no way helps planning.

### **18 I would like to contact former participants. Could you provide some references?**

We can provide contact details upon request.

### **19 I am very interested in the programme but would like to contact some of the universities that have partaken in it before I finally decide to apply.**

Contact details can be provided upon request. For your reference, we have hosted exchange students and graduates from the following universities

(among others):

Ireland: University of Limerick

United Kingdom: University of Bristol, University of Aberdeen, University of Liverpool, Queen Mary University, University of Manchester, Durham University, University of St Andrews

United States: University of Colorado, Loyola Marymount-LA, Bates Collage, Gettysburg College, University of Arizona, UCSD, UCLA, UCSF, University of South Carolina, Saint Benedict-MN.

New Zealand: University of Otago

Australia: University of Queensland

## **PLACEMENT**

### **20 How are placements decided? Will location be determined mainly on wherever the need is?**

CII submits the candidate's profile to all the schools requesting Facilitators and after considering them they make their choice. CII gives them further information when requested and may orientate them or make suggestions but it is essential that all applicants understand that it is the schools that decide on the people they want to have assisting at their institution.

### **21 When will you start looking for a placement for me?**

As soon as you have been accepted into the programme, have placed your downpayment and have submitted your Profile.

### **22 Is there any chance that I would not get a placement?**

As there are more positions than candidates, all the applicants that have been accepted into the programme get a placement.

**23 When should we find out where our placement will be? How long does the process usually take once you**

CII is particularly careful with the placements and even the slightest details are taken into account at the time of negotiations with the schools. It is essential to make sure that all the placements fulfill everybody's expectations before we decide to finalise them. Many applicants are informed of their placement and even start contact with the schools before they depart to South America. Others, however, do not get details before their trip simply because their placements are being finalised.

In order to avoid anxiety or certain degrees of concern, it is worth mentioning here that apart from the time that finalising a placement naturally involves, there is one other factor that has to do with cultural differences.

Argentineans are much more laid-back than other people; they take their time to do things - from something simple like answering an e-mail to taking more important decisions.

Some schools take longer than others to choose a Facilitator, partly because of this relaxed tendency to carry out their duties in an unhurried manner and partly because they are very busy at this time of year.

**24 Are most of the schools located in Buenos Aires or around there?**

Schools and Language Institutes are located all around Argentina and Chile.

\*In Argentina: Córdoba, Río Negro, Province of Buenos Aires, Misiones, Santa Fé, Chubut, San Luis, Salta, Tierra del Fuego, Santa Cruz, Buenos Aires and Greater Buenos Aires.

\*In Chile: Concepción and Rancagua

**25 Will there be other people in the programme at my school or close by?**

The number of students assisting at the same school or location depends on how many Facilitators each institution requests and on how many schools there are in the same spot. However, most placements are in different locations.

**26 Typically what types of schools are they and what is the typical age of the students I would be working**

Facilitators assist in the English Department of a School (primary or secondary level), and at private English Institutes. A few of them assist at universities. Generally speaking ages range from children to teenagers, but there

**27 How many hours do I have to teach?**

Facilitators assist 25 hours a week at the institution. Sometimes additional time is required for planning.

**28 I know I will be receiving a stipend each month. Is there an exact amount that I am given and am I given it**

The programme includes a monthly stipend - \$AR150 if your placement is in Buenos Aires or \$AR135 at any other location - paid by the schools for assisting 25 hours a week. Teaching hours that exceed this limit are paid overtime - approximately \$AR10 per hour - but the facilitator is free to choose whether to teach those classes or not. The stipend rises to U\$D 80 in Chile.

*This brings about a central issue:*

*The stipend is small and would buy here as much as the same figure (but in dollars, euros or pounds) would buy in your country. Schools mainly pay Culture & Language Facilitators by providing them with services, otherwise the programme wouldn't be possible. Homestay accommodation is one of the ways in which the schools pay for your work. And it is done this way because if schools had to pay wages that would be enough for you to provide your own accommodation, food and Spanish, that would mean more money than they pay their full time teachers. Exchange students get a small monthly stipend for their work (\$AR 135 in Argentina and U\$D 80 in Chile), but you would be getting things that are worth much more than a teacher's salary in Argentina could buy: homestay accommodation with full board and Spanish lessons. If you had to provide that yourself, it would cost over \$AR 1000 a month, which is more than a teacher here makes at a full time job.*

### **29 As for the lessons we'll have to teach can they be any sort of activity such as a game?**

The role of the C&L Facilitators is to assist qualified teachers in the classroom by bringing into it different aspects of their culture. These aspects are developed in Workshops that extend and consolidate what the students learn in the classroom through a more formal approach to the language and help them bridge the gap between what they learn with their teacher and actual exposure to authentic communication situations. It is from this point of view that facilitators become real assets when teaching a language, as they are highly motivating and stand as a real challenge to the students. Even though you will not be "formally" teaching the language, learning will be present at all times in the form of new vocabulary and expressions and in the development of strategies. Cooking a traditional dish or teaching a game or a song, for instance, can open a whole world of possibilities when designing a workshop.

Facilitators work hand in hand with teachers, planning workshops and making the necessary adjustments.

### **30 Will we know how to prepare ourselves to work as a C&L Facilitator before we depart?**

Candidates get a set of instructions on how to prepare themselves for the placement. Besides, in most cases, schools start early contact with the candidates and usually give them further preparation tips.

### **31 Could you please tell me what are the arrangements in place for getting people to their school? Am I responsible for organising my travel arrangements to my placement and do I have to buy my own ticket?**

Transfer to placement locations is one of the responsibilities of host schools. For practical reasons, exchange students usually purchase their tickets in Buenos Aires and are reimbursed by the school immediately after their arrival at the host community.

### **32 Where will we be living during our placement?**

With a host-family. Home-stays include full board

### **33 15-When does full board start?**

Full board starts when the programme starts.

CII provides accommodation starting on the day previous to the official start date.

The TEFL Survey Workshop and the Spanish Immersion Programme include full board.

If you are attending neither of these, CII will organise your early departure to your placement location or a homestay somewhere else. Some exchange students decide to travel to places when they have a gap, and this is also a possibility.

**34 I am not very enthusiastic about the idea of living with a family. I'd like to know whether the programme includes other options for accommodation such as hostels or flats as I'd rather live on my own.**

No. Families play an important role in the exchange as they offer the exchange students the opportunity to learn about the local customs and way of life and to learn and/or improve their Spanish.

They also provide support and help adapting to the host culture as they are a permanent source of social interaction.

**35 Are there any breaks during the school term?**

In Argentina and Chile the school calendar runs from early March until the first week of December. The 2-week Winter Vacation break takes place during the month of July. (This year it starts on 24th July and finishes on 4th August).

Summer Vacations - for those staying for more than 6 months - start on 15th December and run through the first week of March.

Besides, exchange students take a week off to renew their visas. This involves travelling to a neighbouring country and reentering the country of your placement. In this way to get your visa extended for another 3 months. This is also a chance to travel and meet again with the other exchange students.

**36 Do Facilitators assist at the same school for as long as their stay lasts or do they change schools and/or**

Most placements last for a whole semester. However, some placements last for one or two months, in which case the exchange student can have a series of consecutive placements at different locations.

**37 Considering I will be staying for 6 months and will have to have my visa renewed during my time in Argentina, when and how will I do that?**

Visas are to be renewed after three months. Exchange students have a week off prior to expiry date to get their papers in order. Visas are renewed by means of a short trip to a neighbouring country - most students go to Uruguay but you can also visit Chile, Brazil or Paraguay. The cost of this trip is on the student's expense. Schools are informed with sufficient time so that they can reorganize their activities.

**38 What preparation is involved for the Camp Counsellor position prior to arrival in Argentina? Would I organize one programme and teach/present it repeatedly?**

At the Orientation meeting we discuss projects for the camps and agree on who attends which camp. We usually develop between 3 to 5 theme programmes per semester and each is used a couple of times with different groups. Exchange students are invited to develop projects for the camps. Since working as a Camp Counsellor is not mandatory, all exchange students are invited to join the camps at least once. Those people who express more interest and are ready to lend their ideas to the camps are more likely to be invited more often.

**39 Considering I will be staying for a year, what will I be doing in January and February?**

Between mid-December and the beginning of March you are free to travel on your own. CII can only provide one week of accommodation with a family as far as you accept any location available and that you tell us at least 3 months in advance. CII can organise a volunteer project work if there are at least 5 exchange students interested in taking part.

**40 I am staying in Argentina for a year and I would like to return home in January and February. What dates would I want to look at to return?**

The school year in Argentina runs between the beginning of March and 15th December. From then on you can choose whatever date suits you the best for your return home.

**41 Is it possible to stay longer? I have applied for six months but would like to know if the programme will authorise me to stay on at the same school or any other?**

If the same school wants you to stay on or there are other placements available, it is possible to extend a placement. You simply inform CII in good time and re-apply for as long as you are planning to stay. Participating schools and exchange students agree to only extend their stay in the placement through the CII International Exchange Programme. It is very important that you understand that your commitment to a school is only done through CII.

**42 When do the placements start and finish?**

They start and finish matching the school calendar: beginning of March to mid-July and beginning of August to mid-December.

## TEFL

**43 Does not doing the TEFL Course reduce my chances of a placement?**

TEFL Certification is required by most schools. You may gain certification before you come to Argentina - there are online courses for example - in which case CII will ask for a copy of the certificate or you may take our TEFL Survey Workshop after arrival

**44 If I got to Argentina in August and would need to participate in the TEFL Workshop, would that be**

The TEFL Survey Workshop is available only at the official dates in July and February.

**45 I can provide a reference of my performance as a TESOL teacher and can obtain a reference from a previous teacher of mine. Will this be an adequate substitute for the CII TEFL certification?**

Yes

**46 How much is the TEFL fee?**

It is €300

**47 Is TEFL certification mandatory?**

Yes, it is

## SPANISH IMMERSION PROGRAMME

**48 I was wondering what was covered in the programme, whether or not it is the basics, or how intensive it is, considering I will have a Spanish teacher each week for at least four hours.**

It is an intensive round-the-clock training designed on a task-based curricula. It provides intensive practice of social Spanish, introduces participants into the native culture and provides full time immersion, preparatory to real life situations.

Work is focused on different topics and each activity leads to a climax which usually takes place at the end of the day. Students carry out different tasks and face various linguistic challenges under the guidance of Spanish teachers; all of these lead to the evening activity and are therefore full of meaning, expectations and humour.

This is basically a hands-on programme. However there's formal teaching too as some reflection and debriefing is always necessary. Many of the activities carried out during the SIP might prove helpful when organizing your Workshops once in your placement.

#### **49 When is the Spanish Immersion Programme?**

The programme takes place after orientation

#### **50 Is the Spanish Immersion Camp required?**

No, it is optional.

#### **51 If I choose not to do the Spanish Immersion, will I have a week while others are in the immersion**

You can do some travelling on your own or CII may find you a host family.

#### **52 How much is the Spanish Immersion Programme fee?**

It is €350

#### **53 When is the Spanish Immersion fee due?**

It is payable along with the balance due 45 days prior to programme start

### **PREPARATIONS**

#### **54 I was just wondering what the weather is like over there at the moment. Could you just give me an idea of the type of clothes worn over there?**

In Argentina weather range is very wide: from low/freezing (-10°Celsius) in Southern Patagonia to high/boiling (+35°Celsius) towards the north of the country as from October.

Experience says that the lighter you travel the better. Consider you will be living in Argentina for quite some time and through different seasons. We suggest that you bring a back-pack rather than a suitcase. A sleeping bag would also be very handy, both for your placement with us and for your travelling when you take time off.

As for clothing, casual and outdoors. Jeans and a good assortment of T-shirts and sweaters are the most practical things to pack and to wear. Don't forget to include warm jackets and socks.

#### **55 What is the attire as a teacher? Are there strict rules for what I should wear?**

People in Argentina tend to be pretty informal. Considering your role as a Facilitator, common sense and observation of peer teachers will be the best advisors.

#### **56 Do we have to take any money for personal expenses?**

One of the responsibilities of the Exchange Student is to bring between USD50 and USD100 per month for personal expenses

#### **57 I am confused of whether or not I am paying for my flight to Argentina.**

It is also one of the responsibilities of the applicants to pay for round trip ticket

**58 I was wondering if it is possible to enter Argentina with a one-way ticket or do I have to have a round-trip**

As it is one of the responsibilities of the Exchange Student to pay for the trip to Argentina and back to their country of origin, CII suggests you buy a round-trip ticket, as a one-way ticket is more expensive

**59 Should I plan my return flight or wait until arriving in Argentina? Do you know the date that the**

The programme finishes at the end of the school year in Argentina, that is on 15th December. We suggest you buy a round-trip ticket

**60 Which airport should I fly into?**

Ministro Pistarini International Airport (Ezeiza) in Buenos Aires

**61 When would I need to arrive in Buenos Aires? Does any particular time do?**

We suggest you arrive one day prior to your programme start date.

**62 I am unfamiliar with the airport and I am not sure where I am supposed to meet you and how I will**

When you arrive at the airport, go straight to the Meeting Point where there will be a person from CII holding up a big sign with your name on it

**63 Do I need a work visa?**

Exchange Students enter Argentina on a 3-month tourist visa issued upon arrival. This is accepted because you are not undertaking paid work and you are leaving the country within a specified time frame.

After 3 months, visas are renewed for another 3 months; this is done by means of a short trip to a neighbouring country and costs about U\$D30 if you take a ferry to Uruguay. The cost of the trip is on the student's expense and is far cheaper than the amount you would have to pay for an exchange visa in the Argentine Consulate in your country. When you arrive in Argentina simply tell the customs officials you are here on an exchange programme.

**64 Should I get any kind of vaccinations before I travel?**

There are no endemic diseases in Argentina or Chile - therefore no vaccination is necessary

**55 I have to purchase Health Insurance. Do you have any advice on where to look, options I may have, etc?**

Most students take STA ([www.statravel.co.uk/insurance.asp](http://www.statravel.co.uk/insurance.asp)) or CISI ([www.culturalinsurance.com](http://www.culturalinsurance.com)).

**56 I contacted my medical insurance provider. They tell me that they do not have any contacts in Argentina or Chile and that if I needed medical help while there I would have to pay out of pocket and then be reimbursed when I return to the States. I am not sure if this would be acceptable health coverage for your program.**

Many students pay privately in emergency, urgent care, etc and then submit appropriate paperwork for reimbursement. Companies usually supply a number that you can contact within a certain frame of time to inform that you needed medical care so that they can pay you back later. It is worth mentioning that medical help and medicine are on the student's expense