Profile of INTERLINK International Institutes

INTERLINK Faculty & Staff at Al Yamamah University

Online and In-person Intensive English Courses

Conversation and Reading Clubs

Academic Preparation

Cultural Orientation

Accredited by Commission on English Language Program Accreditation
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INTERLINK International Institutes                                      1
INTERLINK offers online and in-person intensive English language training, academic preparation, and cultural orientation programs on the campuses of American and Saudi Arabian universities. All programs are designed for international students, scholars, and professionals who plan to learn English for academic, professional, or personal purposes. INTERLINK helps participants: increase language proficiency; prepare for academic studies or career advancement; raise cross-cultural awareness; and develop skills that enhance critical & analytical thinking.

Since 1980, thousands of students from over 50 countries have received INTERLINK’s intensive training to prepare for academic achievement, personal growth, and professional development. Academically bound students have been very successful in taking advantage of our Conditional Admission arrangements with several universities.

A distinctive feature of learning at INTERLINK is a participatory process in which students play a central role. For maximum student learning, INTERLINK emphasizes: active student participation; close supervision by and assistance from the instructor; and collaboration among fellow learners. Together, these elements promote autonomous learning skills that transfer readily from language learning to other educational and professional realms such as future careers; business transactions/negotiations; and cross-cultural encounters.

Listen to her testimonials in: Arabic and English
Vision, Mission, and Values

The INTERLINK vision and mission statements, and core values reflect its founders' commitment to cross-cultural awareness and understanding; enhanced communication among diverse, cultural groups; and international education. As trainers in the US Peace Corps, they recognized the importance of making a difference in the lives of others and of being of service in an ever-shrinking, interdependent world.

Our Vision

INTERLINK strives for a world in which humility, respect, and sensitivity prevail, and communication contributes to enhanced understanding among diverse groups.

Our Mission

Committed to transformative language education, we provide online and in-person English instruction, academic preparation, and cross-cultural training. In doing so, we empower students to become engaged students, independent learners, and critical thinkers. With standards of quality and fairness as our guides, we promote enhanced learning, grounded in an ethos of service. See INTERLINK’s Extended Mission Statement.

Our Values

Our most precious assets are our students. All our actions stem from a single focus – attention to student needs, satisfaction, and success. To that end, our faculty embody the highest standards of professionalism manifested with care, concern, and commitment. Our administrators are clear that they lead best by serving and serve best by meeting student needs.
Distinctive Features of the INTERLINK Programs

The INTERLINK online and in-person programs are fully aligned; that is, both programs offer courses with the same goals and skills focus. Completion of either program qualifies academically bound students for acceptance at our partner universities without the need for presenting TOEFL or IELTS test scores.

Both programs are distinctive from other IEP’s by virtue of these distinctive features.

1. In INTERLINK's **holistic, learner-centered approach**, students are the central characters in the learning process. INTERLINK’s “subordination of teaching to learning” emphasizes the importance of social, cultural, and psychological factors in students’ development and expects their full and active participation in their own learning.

2. INTERLINK’s **project-based curriculum** involves cooperation, experiential learning, and discovery, which promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and responsible, autonomous learning. Students’ curiosity, interests and backgrounds drive class activities. Experimentation, workshops, and discussions are central to the instructional program. Utilizing the students’ abilities and experiences, class discussions become a central part of the instructional program.

3. **Experiential learning** activities play a major role in all aspects of the learning cycle. Students have out-of-class assignments which form the basis for further investigation of the language structures and cultural connections discussed and practiced in the formal setting of the classroom.

4. **Reflective learning** plays a key role in INTERLINK’s instructional approach. Short language experiences, followed by detailed reflection on and discussion of the experience, helps students to review, retain, and integrate their learning. This process of learning about how learning occurs enables students to be able to discover their own strengths and weaknesses, and to develop strategies for improvement.
5. **Academic preparation** involves doing research, making presentations, thinking critically and analytically, developing assertiveness, and using strategies necessary for success at universities. Projects require advanced reading, writing critically about challenging concepts, and using appropriate academic language and writing conventions.

6. **Cultural awareness**, incorporated into projects in every level of the program, involves the identification and discussion of cultural aspects and cultural differences that naturally and inevitably emerge in discussions. Increasing their intercultural knowledge and sensitivity, students become more effective communicators.

7. **INTERLINK’s faculty** are a select group of professionals. All are educated in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, hold Master’s degrees in Linguistics, TESOL, or related fields, and have extensive teaching and cross-cultural background.

8. **Accreditation** by the Commission on English Language Programs Accreditation (CEA) is a coveted status, which INTERLINK has earned through the hard work and adherence of its faculty and staff to high standards.

9. **High expectations** help students achieve goals more rapidly. Every course includes rigorous assignments, near-perfect attendance, active class participation, and continuous assessment, resulting in rapid student progress.

10. **Holistic, formative assessment and feedback** is a daily, continuous, process. Each student’s skills are evaluated from cumulative portfolios of their work, not midterm or final exams. Instructors provide prescriptive feedback to help students know what and how to improve. By the end of a term, from their class discussions and many writing assignments, students must demonstrate that their language production consistently reflects the target skills.

11. **Small classes** allow for more individualized instruction. Classes are limited to a maximum of twelve students in reading and writing (ten hours per week) and fifteen students in communication skills classes (ten hours per week). The average class size is nine or ten students. At Al Yamamah University, the average is 15, not to exceed 18-20 students per class.

12. **Progress reports and certificates**, provided to each student, indicate the levels of study they have successfully completed. Each progress report includes the name of the course, the
grade for each course, and an explanation of the grade along with an assessment of the student's performance and progress. A copy of the report can also be sent to their sponsors.

13. **Conditional Admission and TOEFL Waiver** from INTERLINK’s partner universities and institutional affiliates for academically qualified students remove test anxiety/preparation and allows students to focus on learning rather than on preparation for a test. Upon successful completion of either program -- online or in-person -- students may begin their academic studies without having to take the TOEFL or IELTS exam.

14. INTERLINK’s institutional **partners** and **affiliates** offer students a vast array of options based on their academic interests, personal preferences for geographic regions, type of institutions -- public or private -- fields of study, etc. After reaching level five in their online training, students have the option to finish the program online or transfer to the in-person program at one of INTERLINK’s partner universities.

15. Students have the option to choose the friendliness and safety of a smaller town or the pace of a larger city with high tech industries and more social and cultural events.
INTERLINK Online Programs

Similar in design and instructional approach to the programs in-person programs, INTERLINK Online is for university-bound students, professionals, or anyone seeking proficiency in English. University-bound students can begin their studies online and later transition to on-campus classes at INTERLINK’s partner universities. Academically qualified students may receive conditional admission to our partner universities while enrolled in the online program.

INTERLINK’s partner universities and affiliates accept students’ successful completion of the online program for enrollment in regular, academic classes. For a complete description, please see INTERLINK Online.

We encourage students to begin their studies online, then transition to on-campus classes to complete the final levels of the program. Interested students can apply online and be guided by INTERLINK staff through their application and admission process. Further, their participation in the online program provides cross-cultural discussions which prepare them for easy transition to their new U.S. cultural environment during their studies in the online program.

Why Study at INTERLINK?
Instructional Program

The instructional program focuses on improving students’ reading comprehension, writing ability, and communication skills. Grammatical accuracy, vocabulary development, formal and informal use of language, pronunciation, and other elements also receive attention in both classes.

Students have several options for the online programs:

Intensive English Program

Both online and in-person courses focus on Listening and Speaking Skills and Reading and Writing Skills, in blocks of two hours per day, Monday through Friday. Students may enroll full-time, taking two classes (4 hours per day), or enroll part-time, taking one class (2 hours per day). Progress reports on students’ strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement along with certificates of attendance and program completion are available for students and sponsors. (For course description, see below.)

Online English Clubs

INTERLINK’s online English Clubs are open to people interested in meeting others from around the world who want to practice their English communication skills. Recent participants are from Brazil, Mexico, Japan, Thailand, Switzerland, Uzbekistan, and other countries, and range in level from intermediate to advanced. Clubs meet twice a week, for 1½ hours. For current days and times, please check our website.

In Conversation Club, participants choose topics that interest them, such as art, travel, sports, health, holidays, careers, fashion, entertainment, etc. Participants discuss in breakout rooms and as a whole group. In addition, the facilitator provides some structured time to work on accuracy, with feedback and practice in areas of grammar, vocabulary, and/or pronunciation.

Similarly, in Reading Club, participants choose topics and readings that interest them. Time is given for independent reading, breakout room discussion, and whole group sharing. Additionally, time is given for practice with specific reading sub-skills, such as guessing meaning from context, inference, and critical reading.
Communication Skills

Speaking and listening are integrated. Participants strategically increase their listening comprehension by engaging with increasingly sophisticated content (films, presentations, news casts, etc.) that informs their discussions. Helping participants discover accurate language usage, the class focuses on developing participants’ listening, speaking, and grammatical accuracy, enabling them to communicate ideas with confidence, prepare and deliver oral reports, and make formal presentations. The planning and collaboration involved in class projects also provide important opportunities for participants to communicate and converse authentically.

Reading and Writing

Being interdependent, reading and writing skills are basic to student success. The Reading/Writing class concentrates on the development of critical thinking skills, reading comprehension, speed reading, and styles and rhetorical modes. Students demonstrate their comprehension of materials through writing and class discussion. Texts become increasingly sophisticated and challenging in content as levels get higher. At the end of the instructional session, students emerge from the class with a collection of their work, illustrating their development and improvement in the comprehension of reading materials and accurate expression of their ideas in writing.

Orientation - INTERLINK 101

Developing students’ skills in this area is a crucial aspect of developing broad linguistic and cross-cultural competencies. The goal of the cultural orientation course is to help participants adjust in a positive and productive way to their new educational and cultural environment. The program makes a special effort to affirm the students’ own value systems while fostering respect and appreciation for cultural diversity.
Student Admissions Process

Admission for Online Programs

For a student to begin their online studies, the following steps must be completed:

- Submit INTERLINK application form
- Pay the $100 non-refundable application fee for intensive or semi-intensive programs
- Submit a copy of their passport or government issued ID
- Schedule a placement test after the first three steps are completed

After fulfilling the above application requirements, students will be sent acceptance documents. They will be scheduled for a placement test to determine their proficiency level. Once tested, they will be informed of their proficiency levels, payment procedures, and method of accessing their classes.

Admission for In-person Programs

For application to be considered complete, students must submit the following supporting:

- An INTERLINK application form
- A $100 non-refundable application fee
- A bank statement (as a financial guarantee/proof), sufficient funds to cover their studies
- If the bank statement is not in the student’s name, an Affidavit must be submitted, Click here for the form
- A copy of their passport

All admitted students are sent admission letters and pre-departure packets. These packets contain the following: I-20 for student (F-1) visa procurement, airport pickup and transportation information, and medical forms to be filled out prior to their arrival.

Student Arrival

Students should arrive at their institutes the week prior to the first day of class so that they have ample time to move into their new housing and get acclimated to a new time zone. Students are required to report to INTERLINK and participate in orientation starting the first day of the term. For specific start dates for each university, please visit https://interlink.edu/dates-fees.
Placement and Evaluations

Upon admission to the Intensive English Program, participants are given a battery of tests to determine their proficiency for placement at appropriate proficiency levels. Within the first week of instruction, appropriate adjustments are made, if needed, to ensure that participants are placed in the correct proficiency levels.

History, Partnerships and Affiliations

INTERLINK opened its doors to international students and scholars at its first location, Guilford College, in Greensboro, North Carolina (1980). With a growing reputation for quality and in response to international interest in diverse American graduate and undergraduate academic programs, INTERLINK established additional institutes on other campuses: Indiana State University (1987); Valparaiso University (1992); University of North Carolina at Greensboro (1997); Al-Yamamah University in Riyadh (2003); St. Ambrose University (2017); Seattle Pacific University (2017); and Montana State University (2017). In partnership with English Gate Academy in Saudi Arabia, INTERLINK also carried out a five-year contract with the Saudi government’s Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, offering intensive English language training on twenty-six campuses (2011-2016), preparing students for academic studies as well as for opportunities in the workforce. Most recently, INTERLINK has entered into agreements with certain universities that would accept the completion of INTERLINK by applicants in lieu of the TOEFL and IELTS exams.

ACU university representatives at the NAFSA annual conference 2017

American Consortium of Universities

The American Consortium of Universities (ACU) facilitates international student admission as well as conditional admission to a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs at its member institutions. It is a group of accredited institutions of higher education with superior programs and features. Assistance in achieving fluency in English and adjusting to the new academic and
cultural environment is provided by the INTERLINK institute located on each campus. TOEFL or IELTS requirements are waived for conditionally admitted students who successfully complete the INTERLINK program.

ACU promotes innovative international education programs and partnerships between ACU member institutions and collaborating institutions around the world. The primary goal of such partnerships is to provide meaningful and worthwhile cross-cultural, educational opportunities and experiences for international students.

Currently, INTERLINK operates programs on the campuses of the following universities:

**Montana State University**

Montana State University (MSU) is located in one of the most spectacular college settings in the U.S. It offers all the advantages of a larger university with the friendly community of a smaller campus. Founded as a comprehensive, public land-grant institution in 1893, MSU is among the 50 most technologically advanced universities in the world. Of its 16,440 students, 722 are international from 75 countries. MSU’s low student to faculty ratio of 19:1 makes professors accessible and provides hands-on learning opportunities. Students can explore their interests, gain new perspectives, and obtain the professional edge needed to build a dynamic future.

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s (UNCG) academic programs, research, and partnerships contribute to a common goal - to be a responsive, engaged university focused on solutions to the problems of our times. As a doctoral-granting university, UNCG is committed to teaching based on scholarship and advancing knowledge through research. UNCG offers challenging programs led by outstanding professors, including nationally and internationally recognized researchers. Its exemplary learning environment enables students to acquire knowledge, develop intellectual skills, and become more thoughtful and responsible members of a globalized world.
**Seattle Pacific University**

Students choose Seattle Pacific University (SPU) for its rigorous academics, supportive community, stellar Seattle location, and a vision to engage the culture and change the world. SPU has more than 4,000 graduate and undergraduate students from 39 countries and 45 states. SPU graduates are known for competence and character, bringing about positive change in communities around the globe.

**Al Yamamah University**

Authorized as an institution of higher learning in May 2001 by the Ministry of Higher Education, Al Yamamah University opened its doors to male students in September 2004 and to female students in September 2006. Since its inception, the University has established itself at the forefront of educational innovation and excellence in the Kingdom. The University’s ultra modern campus provides state-of-the-art facilities and innovative instructional designs and curricula offered by international faculty from around the world.

**Affiliated Institutions**

- University of Washington Continuum College – Seattle, Washington
- Montana State University Billing - Billings, Montana
- The Global Institute of IT Management (Online)
- Al Yamamah University - Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**Founders and Senior Staff**

- INTERLINK Senior Staff Profiles
- YU Staff Profiles

**Contact Us**

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