

TESOL Program Western Washington University

TESOL Practicum in one of Bellingham's sister cities: Punta Arenas (Chile)

Teaching in Chile is an excellent option for independent and responsible TESOL students who wish to experience another culture while completing their practicum. Placement is by recommendation of the TESOL director and the Bellingham Sister Cities program. TESOL and the Bellingham Sister Cities program have established this opportunity in Bellingham's sister city of Punta Arenas, the capital of the Magallanes region, at the southern tip of Chile. Students live with host families, volunteer in a local school, and live with the rhythm of a Bellingham-sized city by the water in Patagonia.

✦ Program Overview for practicum in Punta Arenas, Chile.

In Punta Arenas you will be working in "Miguel de Cervantes" school, which is private and religious-oriented. It comprises 2 buildings, one for Elementary and Middle School, and the other one for High School. Practicum students work with Chilean teachers of English. Students of Colegio "Miguel de Cervantes" have between 4 to 6 hours of English a week, therefore a wide range of possibilities is available for students to choose from. Class size is 20 to 25 students per class, ranging in age from 4 to 14. Because Punta Arenas is one of Bellingham's sister cities, TESOL students will be hosted by a Chilean family for free. Students will have the possibility to visit the local university (Universidad de Magallanes) and language schools for adults as well.

The City of Punta Arenas

The southernmost city in the world, Punta Arenas stands as the capital of "Patagonia" in South America. Started by pioneers mostly from Europe, the city still exhibits a testimony of the golden era of the late 19th Century. It has a population of about 130,000 and in 1996 signed a Sister Cities program with Bellingham. Punta Arenas sits by the Straits of Magellan in latitude 53° S and is surrounded by spectacular landscapes and nature still untouched by man, with glaciers, mountains, forests, rivers and a rich diversity of fauna, which includes humpbacked whales, foxes, rheas and penguins during summer.

For more information about Punta Arenas or the sister cities program, visit <http://www.bsca.org>.

Accommodations

Home-stays, assistance, welfare and activities apart from the practicum itself will be arranged by the Chilean sister cities representatives. TESOL students are not expected to pay the host families, as they volunteer to host the students; however they might be asked to teach some English to the members of the family, if required. Proficiency in Spanish is not mandatory, but a basic knowledge is important to get the most from your experience.

✦ Insurance, Passports and Visas

VISA

No visa is necessary when you travel to Chile, only a valid passport. When entering Chile (by

boat, vehicle or plane), at customs, you'll need to fill out a tourist card that allows visitors to stay for up to 90 days. You'll need to show this tourist card to customs when leaving the country as well, so be sure you don't lose it. For more information on other type of Visa, check the Embassy of Chile's website (<http://www.chile-usa.org/visas.htm>)

PASSPORT:

You should carry a **valid passport** any time you travel to another country, even if it is not required. For passport information and application / renewal forms, go to the main post office in Bellingham or to the State Department website at http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html. **Obtaining or renewing a passport takes about two weeks for expedited processing (at extra cost) or at least six weeks for regular processing, so plan ahead.** Passports are normally valid for ten years; be sure that your passport is valid for at least six months beyond the date of your intended return from Chile.

COUNTRY ENTRY FEE:

There is a reciprocity fee of \$100 to be paid in cash (U.S. dollars) or credit card but only to tourists entering by plane, and the one-time charge is good for the life of your passport.

INSURANCE:

Personal medical and emergency insurance is required as part of participation in this program. In many cases, you can use your U.S. medical insurance while in Chile. **You should check with your insurance company carefully to verify the policy's out-of-country coverage,** for both medical insurance and emergency medical evacuation services. The International Programs and Exchanges Office at WWU (650-3298) has information on overseas insurance options that are available either for complete coverage or to supplement your existing medical insurance policy. **It is very important for you to understand clearly the terms of coverage available through your insurance carrier, as neither WWU nor the Sister cities organizations will take responsibility for providing medical or other emergency assistance.**

✦ Student Criteria

Personality traits needed: responsible, tolerant, mentally and emotionally stable (intensive cross-cultural experiences lay down an extra level of stress). A willingness to act as an ambassador and representative of the Sister Cities program of Bellingham and a willingness to adapt to the expectations of the culture and educational settings are required. For example, teachers in Chile dress more formally than in many western US settings--no jeans or visible piercing allowed in school settings. Upon return to the U.S., students are expected to share their experience with the TESOL and Sister Cities programs.

✦ The Practicum Experience (TESOL 430)

Practicum student's work as teaching assistants, with teaching responsibilities added gradually until they teach a full week of classes on their own. The Punta Arenas opportunity offers practicum experience with elementary and middle school English students. The regular professional classroom teacher acts as a mentor, enabling practicum students to teach under supervision and to discuss class progress and activities. An experienced teacher in Punta

Arenas will act as your supervisor and will visit the class, observe you teach, and provide supportive feedback. Practicum students usually work with two different instructors in classes at different proficiency levels, averaging 12-15 hours per week.

All students enrolled in TESOL 430 participate in a web-based component to discuss experiences, observations, materials, and teaching strategies. TESOL students in Punta Arenas usually make use of internet cafés for this purpose. Students can also make arrangements to create a portfolio for evaluation if the internet use is limited.

✦ Future Teaching Opportunities

After completing your practicum experience successfully, you may ask for a letter of recommendation from your supervisor that will be very helpful as you look for teaching opportunities elsewhere, particularly in Chile or other Spanish-speaking countries.

✦ Program Dates and Fees (you propose dates within these time frames)

June - September BUT there is a 3-week vacation from July 8th - August 1st

March 1st - July 8th

August - December 5th

Tuition for the TESL 430 course must be paid to WWU.

Homestay Fees:

- FREE
- One student per family
- Three meals included
- Home-stays facilitated by the Sister Cities representative, with screening of host families
- Expect to participate in typical family chores and celebrations
 - As a "family member", giving small gifts and/or occasional treats such as ice cream are expected.

Incidental Fees:

- Personal spending money
 - You will need to have spending money for entertainment, eating out plus additional funds to travel or tour.

Application Checklist

- Begin the application process at least four months ahead of time, and plan extra time if you do not have a valid passport.*
- Meet with the TESOL director (Trish Skillman) to discuss your plans, to interview, and then to make sure that preparations are proceeding.
- Apply for a passport as early as possible if you do not have one already or if yours either has expired or will expire soon (see instructions above). Expediting the processing costs more but is very important if you plan to travel within the next two months. Regular processing may take six to eight weeks, especially during busy travel seasons.
- For more specific information concerning life and customs in Chile, TESOL Director might direct you to a Chilean teacher of English in Punta Arenas.
- Contact the Miguel De Cervantes school representative, Marcelo Bravo at mbravo77@gmail.com, via email to **let them know that you are in WWU's TESOL Program and are interested in the practicum** (give preferred dates).
- Fill out the Introduction Application; send via email to Marcelo Bravo, mbravo77@gmail.com and cc Trish Skillman, trish.skillman@wwu.edu**
- Make sure that you have adequate medical and emergency assistance coverage for your stay in Chile. **Sister cities program does not provide insurance.** (See information above.)
- Complete the WWU Study Abroad/Exchange Application documents, **available from the TESOL office for participants.** Return to Holly Childs in the TESOL office, MH 251E.
- Take the WWU health form (from the above set of documents) to Student Health Services or your own physician for completion. Be sure to leave adequate time between your health exam and your departure date in order to take care of any medical needs you may have.
- Consult Student Health Services, your own physician or a travel clinic regarding immunizations. Plan ahead for immunizations; some are given in series that may take several months to complete. In addition to any required immunizations, you should make sure that hepatitis A and B, typhoid/diphtheria, measles, polio, and tetanus are up to date. Ask your physician about malaria medication and Japanese encephalitis immunizations if you plan to travel into high-risk areas. Also ask about other medications to take along, and be sure that you have up-to-date, adequate supplies of any needed prescription medications. **Not all prescriptions can be filled at pharmacies in Chile.** For further medical information and advice on staying healthy while living in other countries, consult the websites for the World Health Organization, www.who.int/en, and the Centers for Disease Control (U.S.), www.cdc.gov.
- Plan how to register for your TESOL 430 class (see Trish Skillman or Holly Childs for questions about registration).
- Make travel arrangements and send travel information / itinerary to the sister cities representative in Punta Arenas as well as to the TESOL office. Trip cancellation insurance (generally available through travel agencies) is highly recommended; neither the Sister Cities program nor WWU will take responsibility for costs incurred if you need to cancel or alter your travel plans.
- Meet with the TESOL director and the international advisor before you leave** to make sure that all expectations are understood and to make proper arrangements for the discussion component of the TESOL 430 course. **Have a wonderful, productive stay in Punta Arenas!**

TESOL Student: Email to Marcelo Bravo, mbravo77@gmail.com and cc Trish Skillman, trish.skillman@wwu.edu

Updated December 2006

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Western Washington University**

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Introduction Application

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____

E-mail address _____

Spanish Proficiency Level: _____

Hobbies and Interests:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Religious needs or interests: _____

Food allergies or limitations: _____

Smoker? _____ Ability to live in a non-smoking household? _____

Non- Smoker? _____ Ability to live in a smoking household? _____

✘ *Write a short autobiographical letter introducing yourself to the host family and school personnel.*