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GUIDELINES

Trust the Study Abroad Professionals



Signature Book

FELCA–GAELA Guidelines for Quality International Education

FELCA, the Federation of Associations of Education and Language Consultants and **GAELA**, the Global Alliance of Education and Language Associations, have drafted and shared the sector's professional guidelines for their member organisations, defining the roles and responsibilities of agents and schools in order to strengthen transparency, trust and accountability within the field of international education.

By organising key points into practical categories for agents and schools, these Guidelines provide a common framework for selecting partners, advising students, safeguarding them, maintaining constant communication between schools and agencies.

The purpose of these guidelines is to safeguard students' wellbeing, enhance the overall study abroad experience and foster collaboration between FELCA, GAELA and their members.

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The fourteen points of these Guidelines may vary depending on the age of the students, the destination country and the type/duration of the chosen course. These guidelines are recognized as best practices by quality schools and agents and should be applied proportionately, taking into account the relevant national regulations.

1. Written agreement

For Agents and Schools

Work with your partners under a written agreement.

This helps to clarify mutual understanding, protection and responsibility for maintaining quality services.

2. Partner selection

For Agents and Schools

Choose partners after meeting a key decision-maker (in person or online); the partner should be reliable and accredited or affiliated with relevant institutions or authorities, for credibility and clarity in different markets.

Agents should preferably collaborate with schools affiliated with a recognised national or international association of the GAELA alliance, while schools should preferably collaborate with agents affiliated with a national FELCA association.

This builds trust and confirms reliability, preventing miscommunication and poor-quality partnerships.

3. Student needs

For Agents

Choose the right school based on the student's needs and profile.

This personalises the student's experience to maximize learning outcomes and satisfaction.

For Schools

Inform agents about the mix of nationalities, average age and availability of class level before confirming a booking or with regular updates.

This helps agents to advise students appropriately and choose the suitable course placements.

4. Inform and prepare students for the experience abroad

For Agents

Inform the students about the destination country, key cultural differences, expected behaviour, how to behave while living in the chosen accommodation, offer emotional support or refer them to support services if the student feels anxious or overwhelmed before or during the program.

For Schools

Provide in depth orientation upon arrival on school rules, support services, local customs and cultural norms. Provide clear guidance on how to behave respectfully in a new culture, how to behave while living in the chosen accommodation. Schools should also provide and maintain accessible welfare and counseling services for students who need extra emotional or social support.

This shared preparation and ongoing support are essential for the student's well-being, helping them to adapt more quickly, avoid misunderstandings, feel more confident in everyday life, and reap the maximum benefit from the academic, cultural, and personal growth opportunities offered by their international experience.

5. Student's information

For Agents

Sharing as soon as possible with the school essential personal information about students such as passport or ID number, contact details such as mobile phone number and email address, parental consents, disabilities or medical conditions, prescribed medications (with copies of prescriptions), and travel insurance policy details. Forms should also allow students to specify their gender and preferred name.

For Schools

Inform agents of all required information needed to complete a student's application and records.

This information enables schools and agents to communicate quickly, provide personalised support, maintain safety and meet legal requirements while the student is abroad.

6. Emergency contacts

For Schools

Provide agents with the 24/7 emergency phone numbers for the school and, when possible, transfer service company. School emergency contact numbers should appear on all relevant documents.

For Agents

Pass to the student the 24/7 emergency phone numbers of the school and transfer service company - if the service has been booked - along with the agency's 24/7 emergency number.

The agent's emergency contact numbers should be listed on all relevant documents.

Inform the school as soon as possible of any flight delays or cancellations.

This guarantees student safety and rapid response in case of emergency, creating trust and security.

7. Transport from and to airport

For Schools

Arrange transfers from and to the airport if required. Recommended for junior students.

Provide agents and students the mobile phone number of the driver and transport company when possible. Provide directions on how to reach the accommodation, or the school if a student does not book the transfer.

This facilitates student arrival and departure logistics, reducing stress and improving the overall experience.

8. Travel Insurance

For Agents

Advise students to take out a travel insurance, encourage students to choose a policy that covers cancellation fees, and provide the school with the insurance policy and number as soon as possible.

This protects students financially and medically in case of unforeseen events abroad.

9. Satisfaction checks

For Agents

Check that the student is satisfied with course and accommodation during the first week and, subsequently, at least monthly after and at the end of the course. Report any problem to the school promptly.

For Schools

Schools should inform agencies if a student does not show up for school on the first day or if significant problems arise. Schools might send a brief monthly update to the agency, if necessary.

This proactively addresses issues early on, enhancing student well-being and preventing dissatisfaction.

10. Academic progress

For Schools

Monitor weekly progress in class and move students to appropriate levels as needed.

This ensures academic growth and appropriate challenges to optimize learning.

11. Teachers' qualification

For Schools

It is essential to hire accredited and qualified teachers, although qualification requirements may vary from country to country. Schools should align themselves with national regulations and recognised sector standards to maintain flexibility while upholding quality expectations. Institutions holding a quality label must also ensure that teachers have
the appropriate qualification.

This maintains high teaching standards, supporting the consistent delivery of quality education.

12. Accommodation

For Agents

Assist students in choosing the accommodation that best suits their needs, from homestays (police-checked for minors), residences, shared/private flats, etc...

For Schools

Select good quality accommodation options, such as homestays (police-checked for minors), residences, shared/private flats, etc., and assist students in the event of objective problems relating to accommodation.

This provides safe and comfortable living environments, which are essential for the well-being of the student.

13. After class activities

For Agents and Schools

Recognise that well-organized after-school activities are an integral of the learning experience.

This supports language practice and cultural immersion outside the classroom, enhancing the overall experience.

14. Feedback

For Agents and Schools

Send a feedback questionnaire at the end of the course and share the relevant responses with the partner school/agent.

For Schools

Have a complaints procedure and also a mediator, if mandatory in the country where the school is located.

This gathers valuable feedback for continuous improvement and measurement of student satisfaction, and helps students who encounter difficulties.

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CAPS-I

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ELSAC

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English Australia

Groupement FLE

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IALC

English New Zealand

IHWO

English South Africa

Italian in Italy

English UK

Languages Canada

English USA

Quality English

London, 4 September 2026

The world of language courses abroad and international education has been built on a deep sense of mutual respect and trust between schools and agencies intended to provide the best possible experience and support for the students. With this aim in mind, the FELCA GAELA Guidelines were created: a common document for schools and agencies accredited by their respective national and international associations, which offers students a clear picture of how they will be supported, consistently, throughout their entire experience, from the moment they leave until they return home. The FELCA GAELA Guidelines have the potential to become an effective marketing tool based on a simple truth: the care that quality agencies and schools put into advising and supporting their students' journey.

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PAOLO BARILARI
President of FELCA

The relationship between quality schools and professional agents is one of the most powerful forces in international education. When it works well, students thrive. GAELA exists to represent the school associations that hold that relationship to the highest standard, and to work with partners like FELCA to make that standard consistent and visible across markets. The FELCA GAELA Guidelines are the product of that partnership. They represent a shared commitment across schools and agencies, across countries and continents, to putting students first at every stage of their journey. These guidelines set out what good practice looks like and give students the confidence that quality-accredited providers are working in their interest. We are proud to have been part of developing these guidelines. They are a signal to the world that our sector means what it says about quality.

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FELCA GAELA
Guidelines