

Conversation Partner Program Guidelines

The IEI Conversation Partner Program is a great way for international students to practice their English, to make friends and to experience the USA at a deeper level than their classes can provide. It is also a great way for UM students to make friends and to get to know people of other cultures.

The goals for our IEI students are:

1. To provide them with opportunities to use English in real-life situations
2. To provide them with opportunities to socialize and form lasting friendships
3. To provide them with opportunities to experience American life and culture and to explore Memphis and the Mid-South Area

The goals for the UM students are:

1. To help them develop an appreciation for different cultures, ideas and ways of looking at the world
2. To increase their awareness of internationals around them on The University of Memphis campus
3. To provide them with opportunities for service and friendship

To be a conversation partner with an IEI student, as a UM student you should:

1. Be able to commit to meeting regularly with your conversation partner on the days and times you set up together. If you have to cancel or postpone, you should notify your partner as soon as possible.
2. Be able to speak English clearly and as it is used at the university level
3. Understand that the main purposes of this program are to help the IEI students practice English and to develop friendships with them

Steps for getting a conversation partner:

1. Fill out a Conversation Partner Application and return it to the IEI office.
2. Nina Clark will contact you about scheduling a face to face meeting with her if that has not already happened when you filled out the application.
3. Nina will email you and your conversation partner with contact information for each of you.
4. Contact your conversation partner to arrange a time to meet. Decide with your partner when and where you wish to meet on a regular basis.

5. If you have problems contacting your partner, let Nina know as soon as possible so that she can assist you in making this contact.
6. Nina will contact you periodically to check on your progress with your partner.
7. If for any reason you cannot continue meeting with your partner, please notify Nina as soon as possible so that she can make other arrangements for your partner.

Please note

Please be aware that due to the varying number of participants each session and other factors, completing an application does not guarantee that you will be placed with a partner. We will make every effort to try to place everyone, but each pairing must be a good “fit.” Conversely, you may be asked to take two conversation partners if there are not enough UM students to meet the demand. Also, please note that we pair men with men and women with women.

Planning time with your conversation partner

Be aware that your conversation partner may have certain restrictions placed on them because of age, culture, religion or program contracts. For instance, your conversation partner may not drink alcohol for one or more of these reasons. Please talk with your conversation partner about this when making plans together.