

Louisiana

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER PROGRAM



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DEPARTMENT of
EDUCATION
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CONTENTS

WHY DOES LOUISIANA HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER PROGRAM?	3	Transfers	14
WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER PROGRAM?	4	Sponsor to Sponsor Transfers	14
What is an International Associate Teacher?	4	Program Site Transfers	14
IAT Quick Facts	4	Extensions	15
When can an International Associate Teacher be hired to fill a position?	5	Early (3-year) Program End.....	15
What is the role of IAT Visa Sponsor versus IAT Host Employer?.....	5	Emergency Removal of an IAT.....	16
IAT Visa Sponsor (LDOE/CODOFIL).....	5	Allowances Beyond Program	16
IAT Host School/Employer (LEA or School) .	5	Payroll and Benefits Department.....	16
HOW IS THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED?	6	Supplemental MFP Allocations.....	16
IAT Visa Program.....	6	IAT Salary Schedules/Salaries.....	17
IAT Recruitment	6	Stipends.....	17
Recruitment Timeline	6	Withholdings	18
LDOE/CODOFIL Message at Recruitment	7	Income Tax Liabilities and Withholding for IATs.....	18
Spontaneous Applications for IAT Program..	8	Medicare Withholdings	18
Shared Responsibilities of Welcoming a New IAT ..	8	Social Security	19
State-led Onboarding and Ongoing Support ..	9	Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL).....	19
Post-Recruitment Responsibilities and Communication.....	9	Insurance	19
State Orientation Summit.....	9	Returning Home - Payroll Information.....	20
State-led Support	9	IRS Required Documentation.....	20
School System-led Onboarding and Ongoing Support	10	TRSL Reimbursement	20
School System IAT Contact Timeline.....	10	WHAT ADDITIONAL FEDERAL GUIDELINES ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE A MEANINGFUL PROGRAM FOR IATS?	21
School System Hosting Responsibilities	10	Cultural Exchange Project	21
IAT Scheduling Considerations.....	11	IAT Professional Development	21
WHAT ROLE DO HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL DEPARTMENTS PLAY?	12	HOW CAN LEAS AND THE STATE OF LOUISIANA HELP ENSURE A MEANINGFUL PROGRAM?	22
Human Resources Department.....	12	IAT Tuition Exemption Program.....	22
IAT Certification	12	Welcoming Diplomats	22
IAT Evaluations.....	13	CONCLUSION	22
Incident Reporting	13		
Changes to an IAT's Program	14		

On behalf of the State of Louisiana, thank you for hosting an exchange teacher participating in the Louisiana International Associate Teacher Program. The Teacher Exchange Program is one way foreign nationals participate in people-to-people exchange programs in the United States. People-to-people exchanges are a valuable tool of foreign policy. Through this program you will join thousands of American educational institutions and professionals who serve as citizen ambassadors of the United States. Teacher exchange programs have been a part of U.S. public diplomacy efforts since 1949 and Louisiana has welcomed International Associate Teachers as a part of this program since 1972. The Teacher Exchange program serves as an educational and cultural program and is not meant to satisfy teacher shortages. The State of Louisiana and the U.S. Department of State are deeply appreciative of your part in ensuring this program reaches its maximum potential as a quality educational and cultural exchange experience.

DOCUMENT MISSION:

This document provides multiple layers of guidance regarding the successful implementation and sustainability of the International Associate Teacher Program as well as guidelines for hosting and advising international teachers recruited by the State of Louisiana. This guidance document is considered a “living” document as administrators and other educators will find ways to improve the document as they use it. Please send feedback to Language.Acquisition@la.gov.

The International Associate Teacher Program, formerly known as the Foreign Associate Teacher Program, is a project made possible through a grant awarded by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education from the Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund – 8(g).

In 1986 Louisiana voters chose to establish a trust fund for education using money awarded from a lawsuit versus the federal government regarding offshore development of the continental shelf. This fund, the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund, through BESE’s 8(g) Grant Program allows the interest of the fund to be spent for education purposes and projects.

A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.

~ Mahatma Gandhi



WHY DOES LOUISIANA HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER PROGRAM?

In 1972, in an effort to preserve and promote Louisiana's rich linguistic and cultural diversity, the International Associate Teacher Program was born, and its first international teachers arrived in Louisiana.

As the program grew, its academic and social benefits were evident. Recognizing these benefits and the importance of early access to World Language, in 1984 the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) mandated ([Bulletin 741](#)) that World Language be taught in grades four through eight, making World Language education more accessible to Louisiana's students, thus increasing the need for qualified World Language teachers.

Since the program's inception, thousands of international teachers have chosen to come to Louisiana to share their language and culture with our students and, in doing so, have helped to make Louisiana's vision for its students a reality.

With equitable access to attain proficiency in World Languages, students will achieve academically, communicate with cultural understanding, and succeed in a global community.





WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER PROGRAM?

Louisiana's International Associate Teacher Program is multifaceted and requires the cooperation of numerous district, state, national, and international government partners working together in different capacities to provide instructional programming to World Language students and to support participating international teachers.

WHAT IS AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER?

International Associate Teachers (IATs) are teachers directly recruited internationally by the Louisiana Department of Education's World Language Specialists in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State (DOS), the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), and international government partners.

For this project, the State of Louisiana has entered into agreements with the following countries and foreign states/provinces: France; Spain; the French-speaking Community of Belgium; the State of Hidalgo, Mexico; La Escuela Normal Superior de Yucatán, Yucatán, Mexico; and the Provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick, Canada. The purpose of these agreements is to offer international teachers the opportunity to teach their native languages in Louisiana schools. After completion of the program, these exchange teachers return to their home countries to share their experiences with the general public thus becoming ambassadors for Louisiana.

IAT Quick Facts

- Louisiana's IAT program is an exchange program which falls under the U.S. Department of State's J-1 Exchange Teacher category for legal immigration.
- LDOE works collaboratively with CODOFIL, College Board, and NCSSFL to recruit native speakers to teach in grades PK-12 Immersion and K-8 Early World Language.
- IATs are not beginning teachers. They are certified, highly qualified teachers in their home countries with a minimum of three (3) years teaching experience.
- Prior to being admitted into the Louisiana International Associate Teacher Program, applicants undergo background checks by their home governments.
- State and district representatives work closely to ensure the professional and personal welfare of IATs and to implement uniform, statewide guidelines.

“The Teacher category of the EVP promotes the exchange of foreign teachers to U.S. host schools and enhances mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries. Exchange teachers sharpen their professional skills and are required to participate in cross-cultural activities in U.S. schools and communities. They return home to share their experiences and increased knowledge of the United States and its educational system, culture, and society [22 CFR 62.24(a)]. Qualified foreign teachers teach full-time in accredited academic public and private U.S. primary and secondary schools (K-12) [22 CFR 62.24(a)(c)(1)]. Exchange teachers may also teach at the pre-kindergarten level but only in language immersion programs at accredited schools for at least fifty percent of the school day where regular courses of study are in a language not native to the majority of the student population [22 CFR 62.24(c)(6)].”

~From the DOS guidance

WHEN CAN AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER BE HIRED TO FILL A POSITION?

IATs can only be hired to fill full-time PK-12 Immersion or K-8 Early World Language positions. BESE policy requires that a local school system employ qualified Louisiana-certified teachers in its elementary World Language programs before employing IATs in available positions. School systems with multiple elementary World Language positions are encouraged to establish an articulated plan regarding the percentage of locally recruited teachers and internationally recruited teachers.

“A full-time teaching position requires a minimum of 32 hours per week of teaching or teaching-related administrative activities [22 CFR 62.24(c)(2)] such as lesson planning, curriculum development, grading, and field trip planning for students. A full-time exchange teacher must be a teacher of record, not a teacher’s assistant/aide, substitute teacher, or someone holding a non-instructional position. Sponsors must not place exchange teachers in positions not allowed by the regulations, specifically principal, assistant principal, school director, guidance counselor, librarian, and teacher trainer.”

~From the DOS guidance

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF IAT VISA SPONSOR VERSUS IAT HOST EMPLOYER?

IAT Visa Sponsors and IAT Host Employers have distinct and important roles in the Louisiana International Associate Teacher Program.

IAT Visa Sponsor (LDOE/CODOFIL)

The US Department of State (DOS) defines an exchange sponsor as “a legal entity designated by the Secretary of State to conduct an exchange visitor program (22 CFR Part 62.2).” A major role of the Visa Sponsor is to provide meaningful exchanges by selecting, screening, and placing exchange visitors in host schools that facilitate culturally enriching opportunities. Sponsors must also create, issue, and maintain documentation related to IATs that are needed for legal employment in the US.

~From the DOS guidance

IAT Host School/Employer (LEA or School)

*Each year, thousands of families, schools, and communities across the United States welcome international students and visitors into their homes, schools, and businesses. That person-to-person interaction, **exemplifying citizen diplomacy**, ensures that Americans and international visitors learn about each other’s culture and way of life.*

~From the DOS guidance

DOS defines a Host School as “the U.S.-accredited primary or secondary school in which a sponsor places an exchange teacher pursuant to the exchange teacher’s written acceptance of the placement [22 CFR 62.24.(c)(4)].”

Host Schools/Employers understand that this program is not structured to fill job shortages. Employers should provide a positive teaching environment that facilitates meaningful teacher-to-student and student-to-student exchange opportunities and multiple opportunities for the IAT to share their home culture with Louisiana students while also learning about the American and Louisiana educational systems.

It is the responsibility of both parties (Sponsor and Host) to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the exchange visitor at all times.



HOW IS THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATE TEACHER PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED?

Implementation of the IAT program is a continuous, year-long endeavor which consists of annual IAT recruitment, IAT placement, IAT onboarding, and ongoing support.

IAT VISA PROGRAM

To be employed in Louisiana, IATs are required to have a J-1 work visa. Sponsorship of visa authority is granted by the U.S. Department of State to LDOE and CODOFIL on a bi-annual basis and is subject to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 22, Part 62. The issuance of these work visas is initiated through the LDOE for teachers of Spanish and through CODOFIL for teachers of French. Louisiana partners with College Board and the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Language (NCSSFL) who secure J-1 visas for teachers of Mandarin Chinese.

In accordance with federal regulations, a J-1 visa is granted for a three-year period with an opportunity to extend for an additional two years. An IAT's contract is renewable on a yearly basis within this visa period. At the conclusion of their J-1 status, IATs return home. Teachers returning home must meet the two-year home residency rule before re-applying for the Louisiana International Associate Teacher Program.

IAT RECRUITMENT

Annual recruitment of IATs is based on written submissions of anticipated staffing needs by school systems beginning in January of each year. The school system's official "Signing Statement" guaranteed by the LEA Superintendent or Charter school CEO is a binding commitment to employ an international recruit.

Recruitment and placement of IATs is based on the specific profile requests sent to the LDOE. Placement decisions are made by a committee of representatives from Louisiana and the partner government. Participating school systems understand that the Louisiana International Associate Teacher program is not a self-placed program where placements are arranged directly between the school and the teacher. "Within the framework of this partnership with LDOE/CODOFIL, each school system recognizes and understands that it does not have the authority to select which of the recruited IATs will be placed and/or retained in its schools."

~From the Louisiana Cooperative Framework and Agreement

Recruitment Timeline

The annual IAT recruitment window begins in November with the required postings of potential jobs available for the following school year and ends promptly on May 31. **New IATs will not be interviewed for recruitment after this window has closed.**

"22 CFR 62.24 (f)(2) states that sponsors must ensure that "[p]rogram dates coincide with the U.S. academic year cycle to ensure a smooth transition as exchange teachers arrive and depart."

~From the DOS guidance

RECRUITMENT CALENDAR	
November 1	School systems publish potential job openings. International partners announce recruitment campaigns.
December 15	IAT Projected Needs forms sent from LDOE to school systems
January 15	IAT Projected Needs forms DUE
January - April	International recruitment
February 28	IAT Projected Needs Update forms DUE
March 15	Superintendent's signing statement DUE
March 31	School site IAT agreement DUE
On or before May 10	Districts notified of staffing outcomes.
May 31	Recruitment cycle ends.

Strict adherence to the above timeline is crucial to ensuring a successful recruitment process for all parties involved throughout the state and internationally.

“Sponsors may not issue a Form DS-2019 until a teacher applicant has received and accepted a written offer of a full-time teaching position from the accredited primary or secondary schools at which she or he will teach. It is against program regulations for offers to be general (e.g., from a school district) or for teachers to be subject to interviews or other requirements upon arrival in the United States in order to secure a specific teaching position [22 CFR § 62.24(f)(1)].”

~From the DOS Guidance

LDOE/CODOFIL Message at Recruitment

During recruitment presentations, prospective candidates are presented an accurate, candid, and informative picture of Louisiana. Throughout annual recruitment, presentation topics include:

- General information regarding personal and professional life in Louisiana,
- Louisiana’s World Languages programming types and levels,
- Structure of Louisiana’s school systems, i.e., decentralization and district autonomy,
- LouisianaBelieves website information, i.e., [International Associate Teacher Guide to Living and Working in Louisiana](#), sample scope and sequences,
- IAT salary schedule and anticipated expenses,
- J-1 visa program requirements,
 - » J-1 cross cultural projects, and
 - » J-2 visa guidelines.

LDOE/CODOFIL does not address:

- specific school system/school related information or policies,
- curriculum or related supports,
- classroom management strategies, or
- location of requested positions.

Spontaneous Applications for IAT Program

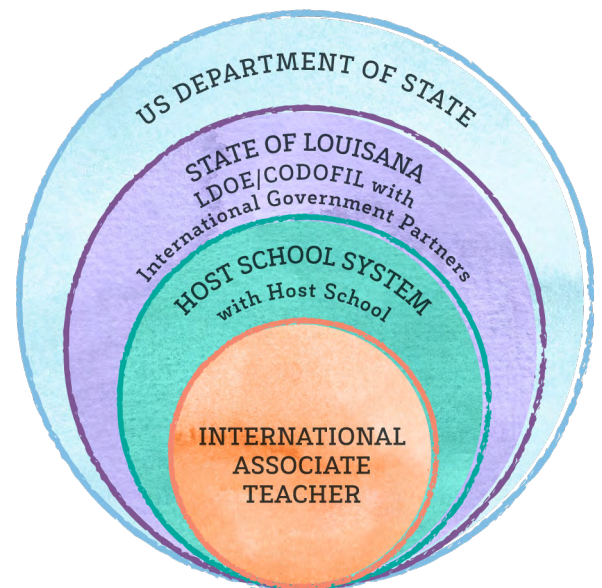
From time to time, LEAs will receive requests for information or applications from persons interested in Louisiana's IAT program who have not participated in the formal recruitment cycle. When this happens, interested applicants should be directed to the World Language Specialists at LDOE or email Language.Acquisition@la.gov for more information on completing the [International Associate Teacher Program Application](#) packet.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES OF WELCOMING A NEW IAT

Recruiting, training, and supporting Louisiana's International Associate Teachers takes a combined effort of multiple agencies working together in a collaborative effort to ensure that each IAT is well supported and has a successful experience in Louisiana.

“The Department of State considers host schools, school districts, overseas partners, and any other organization involved with implementing any part of an exchange teacher’s program to be third parties pursuant to EVP regulations. Regulatory non-compliance by a third party acting on a sponsor’s behalf will be imputed to the sponsor. Accordingly, sponsors must ensure that contracts or agreements between third parties and exchange teachers adhere to all EVP regulations [22 CFR 62.2 Third party].”

~from DOS guidance



LEAs employing International Associate Teachers are obligated to follow the scheduling requirements and the administration guidelines listed in the *Cooperative Framework* and signed by principals, supervisors, and superintendents. Additionally, LEAs must submit sample contracts to LDOE/CODOFIL.

LEAs, along with the LDOE, CODOFIL, and international government partners are responsible for the well-being of all international associate teachers. For this reason, all of these entities will regularly be in contact with the teachers throughout the school year.

State-led Onboarding and Ongoing Support

In addition to the recruitment process, LDOE and CODOFIL share responsibilities related to the initial onboarding of all IATs. These first steps help to ensure a smooth transition from the IAT's home country to Louisiana and ultimately to his/her school system of employment.

Support of IATs by LDOE and CODOFIL does not end after their first days in Louisiana. Representatives of these agencies maintain contact with all IATs throughout their time in Louisiana, providing additional support and guidance as needed.

Post-Recruitment Responsibilities and Communication

At the conclusion of the recruitment window, each chosen applicant is personally contacted by LDOE/CODOFIL regarding the next course of action.

Post-Recruitment Timeline:

- Recruit is sent an official offer letter from LDOE/CODOFIL citing position and location of placement and has 10 days to respond to the offer letter.
- At the end of the appropriate waiting period, LDOE and CODOFIL complete the necessary steps for all confirmed/accepted positions and mails to the applicant via FedEx Intention to Hire letter, SEVIS paperwork, and instructions.
- "Next steps" information and an arrival questionnaire are then sent by LDOE/CODOFIL.
- LDOE and CODOFIL remain in contact with recruits throughout summer months.

State Orientation Summit

Each year LDOE, in partnership with CODOFIL and international government partners, hosts a New IAT Orientation Summit for all incoming IATs. This four-day orientation is held the last full week of July in Baton Rouge and is a SEVIS requirement. During this orientation, IATs participate in team-building exercises, learn about basic work-related responsibilities, and discover what life is like in Louisiana while establishing new personal and professional networks.

Examples of topics addressed during the New IAT Orientation Summit include, but are not limited to:

- contract signing,
- Social Security,
- review of immigration guidelines for work under the J-1 visa,
- J-2 guidelines and work permissions,
- DMV letters and guidance, and
- teacher and family permissions to leave the country.

During the New IAT Orientation Summit the following topics **are not** addressed:

- school system/school specific policy and/or guidelines,
- school record and attendance keeping practices, or
- school system/school specific curriculum implementation and/or related training

State-led Support

LDOE/CODOFIL will provide the following support to IATs during the school year:

- planning and hosting of annual mandatory September J-1 Professional Development Day,
- year-long professional development opportunities,
- onsite teacher observations and feedback, and
- technical support and contact via email, phone, etc.

School System-led Onboarding and Ongoing Support

Preparing new IATs for life in Louisiana is a partnered endeavor between LDOE/CODOFIL and local school systems/schools. With this in mind, LDOE has put in place a set of onboarding guidelines for school systems/schools hosting IATs. Following these guidelines will help ensure that all IATs have a smooth transition to life in Louisiana.

School System IAT Contact Timeline

Timely and consistent contact with new IATs is an important step in the school systems's/school's onboarding process. LDOE asks that districts and schools hosting IATs have **early and maintained** contact throughout the summer months prior to arrival in Louisiana. The following calendar is a recommended **minimum** timeline for contact with IATs.

On or before May 10	School systems notified of staffing outcomes and contact information.
By May 15	School systems and principals send welcome messages to new IATs. When appropriate, and with permission, schools may send contact information of the person exiting the position. SAMPLE Welcome Message
By May 31	School systems send "Needs Assessment Inventory" to IATs. SAMPLE Needs Assessment Inventory
By June 15	School systems send "Arrival Information Questionnaire" to IATs. SAMPLE Arrival Information Questionnaire
By July 1	Each school system and principal sends information regarding the IAT's mentor teacher (including contact information), teaching schedule, and information regarding the first days of school.
Thursday of annual July Orientation	School systems attend IAT Orientation Luncheon to meet IATs. IATs are brought back to school systems.

School System Hosting Responsibilities

The State of Louisiana requires that LEAs have a Designated Officer/Supervisor who will serve as a direct contact to LDOE/CODOFIL in matters concerning the LEA's International Associate Teachers.

Upon the completion of the New Teacher Orientation, the LEAs shall

- provide IAT's transportation from the Baton Rouge orientation session to the school system,
- provide IAT with temporary housing upon arrival in the LEA/NPS for a span of 10 days,
- assist IAT in such matters as, but not limited to, obtaining a Social Security card, finding permanent housing, opening a bank account, obtaining a driver's license, and buying a car,
- provide IAT with a mentor teacher,
- provide IAT with a school orientation,
- explain school policies, procedures, and discipline plan to IAT,
- secure local contracts as applicable for all IATs and inform them of available benefits and district policies (school calendar, sick leave, etc.),
- ensure the fair and equal workplace treatment of the IAT in comparison to his/her American counterparts. This includes insurance, workload, and disciplinary issues. Salary is determined by MFP,
- and ensure the teacher's general health, safety, and well-being while in Louisiana.

LEAs may:

- provide a welcome package,
- give assistance with setting up teacher's classroom,
- provide a personal security orientation with the LEA's security officer,
- give a personal tour of the school, and/or
- supply a list of scheduled observations.

For more information and a complete list of requirements, please see the following samples available upon request:

“Cooperative Framework and Agreement for Recruiting and Placement of Francophone Foreign Associate Teachers in Louisiana”

OR

“Cooperative Framework and Agreement for Recruiting and Placement of Hispanophone Foreign Associate Teachers in Louisiana”

For more guidance regarding hosting new IATs, see [Preparing to Host an International Associate Teacher](#).

IAT Scheduling Considerations

When planning an IAT's teaching schedule and related duties, school systems/schools should take into consideration the unique and sometimes challenging experiences IATs face in integrating and adjusting to living and teaching in Louisiana. At minimum an IAT's teaching schedule shall follow the elementary minimum time requirements outlined in [Bulletin 741](#). The State of Louisiana recommends the following:

Teacher Schedule:

- 1 period for planning equal to that of American teachers
- 1 period for exchange purposes, i.e., observation of American classrooms or school personnel, translation to contribute to the body of work available to Louisiana immersion teachers, work to improve English skills, and/or work with mentor/mentee

Duty:

- **Year 1** should be considered a year of transition with a duty schedule that allows teachers the most opportunity to observe the American system.
- **Year 2 and beyond** should be equal to American expectations.



WHAT ROLE DO HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL DEPARTMENTS PLAY?

The State of Louisiana recognizes that hosting IATs is a collaborative effort that extends into various different departments within a school and district. The guidance developed in this section should be used to aid human resources and payroll departments in performing their duties.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

The following guidance is intended to answer human resources related questions. For questions not covered here, please contact LDOE's World Languages Specialists at Language.Acquisition@la.gov.

IAT Certification

International Associate Teachers are certified to teach in Louisiana using the [World Language Certificate \(WLC\)](#). Additionally, IATs are governed by international accords which require that they **do not** teach outside their area of certification.

WLC Quick Facts:

- The WLC is reserved **ONLY** for International Associate Teachers recruited directly by the State of Louisiana (LDOE/CODOFIL).
- There is no application fee associated with the initial WLC application or with its renewal.
- Applicants **DO NOT** need to have their diplomas and transcripts translated or evaluated by an outside source for the issuance of the WLC, although translation of transcripts may be needed for additional certification transactions.
- The WLC certificate may be renewed by successfully meeting the standards of effectiveness for at least three years during the six-year initial or renewal period pursuant to state law and [Bulletin 130](#).
- The WLC **DOES NOT** allow for add-on certifications such as, administration, ESL, etc.
- Teachers wishing to remain in Louisiana beyond the J-1 exchange should consider applying for a Louisiana Out of State License via the [Out of State Application Packet](#).

School System Certification Steps:

- School systems should help first year IATs complete this application during their onboarding process. Detailed WLC Application instructions can be found in the document [WLC Steps](#).
- School systems should upload WLC applications into the [Teach LA Live!](#) portal by mid-September or upon receipt of the new teacher's Social Security number.

Certification of International Teachers OUTSIDE of the IAT Program:

- Any international teacher recruited locally or internationally, but through a different recruitment process, must apply for Out of State Certification via the [Out of State Application Packet](#) and have their foreign credentials translated and evaluated.
- A dean of education at a regionally accredited institution in the United States or credentialing agency that follows the standards of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (ACCRRRO) may evaluate foreign credentials (diplomas, transcripts, and teaching certifications).

IAT Evaluations

IATs must be observed in accordance with [Bulletin 130](#) at least twice during the school year by school administration using an observation tool that aligns with the *Louisiana Components of Effective Teaching*. However, school principals and district supervisors should evaluate their teachers on a regular basis. The LDOE has developed [teacher evaluation forms](#) to aid in this process.

Feedback from [first semester evaluations](#) for all **first year** IATs informs LDOE of teachers needing assistance or those who are not performing satisfactorily. This allows LDOE to provide assistance as soon as possible so that teachers can complete the school year successfully.

The [IAT Evaluation Form](#) should be completed annually in February for **all IATs** and is used as a primary document when the Louisiana team and foreign governments make decisions as to whether or not a foreign teacher will stay in the program the following year. The school systems designated supervisor has the responsibility of reviewing all principal evaluations and confirming teacher performance.

The end of program [exit evaluation](#) should be completed by administrators annually for each IAT exiting the program. This evaluation provides a snapshot of the teacher's work in Louisiana as well as his or her professional growth and development while participating in the program.

Incident Reporting

LDOE/CODOFIL and partnering school systems/schools share responsibility in the physical and emotional health of all IATs. School systems/schools shall establish a protocol for IATs to report incidents to supervisors. As a requirement of U.S. Immigration, school systems should notify LDOE/CODOFIL **within 24 hours** in the event of, but not limited to the following:

- sexually-related abuse (e.g., sexual exploitation, harassment),
- incident involving the criminal justice system (e.g., arrest, charges, DUI/DWI, theft),
- death of IAT,
- deportation of IAT,
- IAT is missing (e.g., unresponsive to communication from the sponsor or host school),
- unsuitable working conditions (e.g., hostile work environment, workplace bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination),
- employment and contract issues (e.g., host school out of compliance with employment contract, working less than 32 hours, certification and salary issues, unauthorized work),
- serious mental health concerns (e.g., depression-related issues, suicide attempt),
- substance abuse (e.g., drugs and alcohol),
- exchange visitor serious illness or injury (e.g., hospitalized),
- foreign government or embassy intervention,
- other situations impacting teacher safety (e.g., natural disasters, civil unrest), and/or
- other reports (e.g., fraud, waste, abuse, malfeasance).

School systems should complete the [International Associate Teacher Incident Report](#) and return to LDOE/CODOFIL within 24 hours of learning of the event. LDOE/CODOFIL will then alert U.S. Immigration of the incident.

Important Note: *International Associate Teachers working in Louisiana schools as exchange teachers have the right to and are encouraged to contact the United States Department of State any time they feel that they “are mistreated and/or their rights are violated, and their sponsor is not providing the help they need.”*

~from DOS guidance

Changes to an IAT's Program

During an IAT's exchange program experience, it may be necessary to make changes to the IAT's program. Program changes include, but are not limited to, transfers, extensions, and program exits.

Transfers

In this section, two types of transfers will be addressed: Sponsor to Sponsor Transfers and Placement Site Transfers.

• Sponsor to Sponsor Transfers

Due to the contractual relationship between the exchange teacher and sponsor, LDOE/CODOFIL does not contemplate the transfer of teachers from other designated sponsors to Louisiana. Accordingly, LDOE/CODOFIL does not permit exchange teachers to transfer from Louisiana to other designated sponsors. Exceptions may be made in compelling circumstances, i.e., national or statewide emergencies, natural disasters, etc.

• Program Site Transfers

Exchange Visitor Program regulations allow for the transfer of an exchange teacher to a different school in the same or different school system, when warranted. **Program site transfers can only be initiated by IAT request or by LDOE/CODOFIL.**

At a minimum, changes to the site of activity will be considered when circumstances at the current site of activity may significantly affect the health, safety, and/or welfare of the exchange teacher. Situations where the transfer of an exchange teacher may be warranted include, but are not limited to,

- a host school's inability to continue compensating the exchange teacher according to the terms of the employment contract,
- unsuitable conditions that are beyond the exchange visitor's control, e.g., a geographic area that is unsafe or too expensive or a hostile work environment, and
- a host school's loss of accreditation.

TRANSFER REQUEST TIMELINE	
January 6	LDOE/CODOFIL sends Letter of Intent to IATs. IATs may ask for transfers at this time.
February 1	Letter of Intent due to LDOE/CODOFIL.
February 10	LDOE/CODOFIL Transfer Commission; teachers notified of results.
February 15	Schools informed of transfers.

***Dates are approximate and may change annually or without notice.**

Extensions

As of 2016, new rules govern the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program – Teacher Category which allow J-1 visa teachers to request an extension of their visas for two years. Requests for extensions must be approved by:

- the teacher's government and/or home school, if applicable,
- the principal of Louisiana host school,
- the school system department of Human Resources
- LDOE/CODOFIL, and
- by the U.S. Department of State (DOS).

Requests should be made no later than March 1.

Teachers wishing to extend their visa for a fourth and fifth year must have their principal send LDOE/CODOFIL a reference letter by mail. The letter should

- describe the exchange teacher's performance during his/her three years at the host school,
- document that the school has a particular need for the teacher to remain,
- recommended the teacher based on his/her professional performance at the host school,
- show that the school has benefitted by the presence of the exchange teacher, and
- indicate how the exchange teacher has engaged students in the host school, school system, or community in ways that generally support the cross-cultural mission of the teacher exchange program.

The reference letter should be written on official school letterhead and should include the telephone number and email address of the principal.

Teachers who have already submitted an application for an H-1B visa to the U.S. government and as well as current H1 visas are not eligible for the extension.

EXTENSION REQUEST TIMELINE	
January 6	LDOE/CODOFIL sends Letter of Intent to IATs. IATs may ask for extensions at this time.
February 1	Letter of Intent due to LDOE/CODOFIL.
March 1	Extension application, principal letter, and payment due.

***Dates are approximate and may change annually or without notice.**

Early (3-year) Program End

In order for an IAT to be terminated before his/her scheduled end of **(three-year)** program, i.e., visa program term, the following protocol should be observed:

- A minimum of three (3) documented citations is needed for early termination.
- LDOE/CODOFIL is sent an [IAT Incident Report](#) for each citation within 24 hours of occurrence.
- Upon the second citation, LDOE/CODOFIL will schedule a Human Resources team meeting with all involved partners (local, state, international) to establish and implement an intervention plan.
- Upon the third citation, LDOE/CODOFIL will schedule a meeting with all involved partners to review the teacher's case.
- The teacher is informed of the committee's decision and next steps.
- If the teacher's contract will not be renewed, the principal shall inform the teacher by mid-February.

In most cases, the teacher should be able to finish the school year with the understanding that his/her contract would not be renewed for another year.

Emergency Removal of an IAT

On rare occasions, it may prove necessary to remove an IAT from his/her teaching position prior to the end of the school year. Removal of an IAT involves several phases of international diplomacy. As a result, **emergency removal should only be an option in extreme cases**. LEAs should follow the following protocol:

- Offer IAT support services (mental health counseling, de-escalation training, etc.) with release time to attend sessions.
- Send [IAT Incident Report](#) to LDOE/CODOFIL within 24 hours.
- Record and maintain detailed documentation of event and subsequent information.

When an emergency removal is approved, the IAT:

- is removed from his/her teaching position and relinquishes all school/school system property,
- has his/her visa cancelled and is required to leave the US in 48 hours, and
- has a note of termination placed in his/her immigration file.

Allowances Beyond Program

The purpose of this program is an exchange, but in certain situations IATs may move from a J-1 visa and remain in the United States under a different immigration status, such as an H-1B, provided the teacher is not subject to the two-year home residency rule under [Section 212\(e\) of the Immigration and Nationality Act](#). This immigration status is not sponsored by the State of Louisiana. H-1B visa applications are the responsibility of the school system. In some cases, H-1B teachers sponsored by their school system may still be classified as a Louisiana International Associate Teacher.

PAYROLL AND BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

The following guidance is intended to answer payroll and benefits related questions. For questions not covered here, please contact LDOE's World Languages Specialists at Language.Acquisition@la.gov.

Supplemental MFP Allocations

The Minimum Foundation Program includes an "Enhancement Category" for the employment of international associate teachers (IATs). Qualifying local school systems employing international associate teachers shall receive a supplemental allocation from BESE of \$20,000 per international associate teacher. This supplemental allocation is based on the February 1 count of the previous school year. This prior year count is the basis for the allocation of funding. Schools benefit from this funding in the next school year. Please see [State of Louisiana Department of Education MOU](#).

“Calculate Foreign Language Associate Salary and Stipend Allocation Salary Allocation - Any city, parish, or other public school system or school employing a Foreign Language Associate or a graduate of the Escadrille Louisiane program shall receive a supplemental allocation from State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education of \$21,000 per teacher. The state shall maintain support of the Foreign Language Associate program at a maximum of 300 Foreign Language Associates employed in any given year. These teachers shall be paid by the employing city, parish, or other local public school system or school at least the state average classroom teacher salary (without PIP) by years of experience and degree beginning with year three. Of the \$21,000 allocation, \$20,000 shall be allocated to the school where the teacher is employed and the funds used to support the total cost of the teacher salary, and the remaining amount shall be associated with costs of VISA sponsorship pursuant to State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations.”

~From Minimum Foundation Program (MFP)

IAT Salary Schedules/Salaries

IAT salaries are set annually by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The salary schedule for international associate teachers may be obtained by contacting the World Language Specialists at the Louisiana Department of Education.

Federal regulations ([US Exchange Visitor Program](#)) require that all IATs receive a competitive salary. LDOE has developed a uniform salary schedule that is communicated to candidates during recruitment and that should be used as a **minimum** for all IATs. The uniform salary schedule is updated annually and available by contacting LDOE. This salary is made public to teachers during recruitment along with anticipated costs of immigration and installation in Louisiana.

If a school system's salary schedule is **higher** than the yearly IAT salary schedule, the school system may choose to use the school system salary schedule.

Teachers participating in the [Escadrille Louisiane Program](#) are paid according to the regular district pay schedule for teachers.

Stipends

“The State must maintain support of the Foreign Language Associate program at a maximum of 300 Foreign Language Associates employed in any given year. First year teachers will receive an installation stipend of an additional \$6,000; second and third year teachers will receive a retention stipend of an additional \$4,000. These amounts must be provided to each Foreign Associate Teacher or Escadrille Louisiane graduate by each school district or school in which they are employed.”

~From Minimum Foundation Program (MFP)

The payment schedule is as follows:

- All J-1 International Associate or Escadrille Louisiane first year teachers must receive \$6,000 by the last payroll run in September.
- All J-1 International Associate or Escadrille Louisiane second and third year teachers must receive \$4,000 by the end of May.
- Payments for the first year installation stipends will be paid by an electronic fund transfer (EFT) by September 30.
- Payments for the second and third year retention stipends will be paid the first week in May, based on an April 1 count.

If you have any questions regarding this information, contact MFP Staff via e-mail at LDOEMFPHelpdesk@la.gov. You may also call the Department's toll-free number at 1-877-453-2721.

Withholdings

School systems should be aware of the uniqueness of an IATs employment when it comes to the topic of salary withholdings.

Income Tax Liabilities and Withholding for IATs

International associate teachers employed under J-1 visas are generally subject to United States and Louisiana income tax withholdings. However, the United States currently holds tax treaties with several countries of which international associate teachers are citizens. [Publication 901 U.S. Tax Treaties](#) outlines countries with which the United States holds tax treaties. Currently French, Belgian, and Chinese (Peoples' Republic of China) citizens are exempt from state and federal taxation for a **two-year period** as stipulated in their respective tax treaties under Article 20. This exemption starts on the day the teacher arrives in the United States to begin work. In the majority of cases, IATs arrive in late July, which would give them an exemption for two full school years.

School systems that are not withholding taxes for these teachers need to file an [IRS Form 8233](#) with the IRS explaining why they are not doing so and report these teachers' income using the [IRS Form 1042-S](#) rather than the W2. When teachers meet the two year tax exemption, they should receive a 1042-S AND a W2 in the same year. Teachers from countries that do not have tax treaties with the United States are subject to tax withholding from the beginning of their employment as an international associate teacher. These teachers are taxed for the duration of the period of validity of their J-1 visas and should receive a W2.

Although it is the responsibility of international associate teachers to be aware of their income tax liabilities, please help them understand this situation. Being a non-resident with an exemption from paying taxes does not exempt an IAT from filing an [IRS Form 1040-NR \(instructions\)](#) or an [IRS Form 1040-NR EZ \(instructions\)](#). If an IAT does not file a return claiming the exemption, he/she may become retroactively responsible for back taxes.

IRS forms, instructions, and publications pertaining to the taxation of foreign persons are available at <http://www.irs.gov>. IATs who continue teaching in Louisiana after their J-1 visa cycle has ended are liable for all income tax withholdings.

Please see IRS Publications [515](#), [519](#), and [54](#), for additional information.

Taxpayers may submit an international tax questions in writing to the following address:

Internal Revenue Service
P. O. Box 920
Bensalem, PA 19020

Medicare Withholdings

As a rule of thumb, all international associate teachers who are first-time J-1 visa holders are considered “nonresident aliens,” temporarily present in the United States in non-immigrant status and are exempt from paying Medicare taxes for the **first three semesters** of their employment. Thus, in January of their third calendar year of employment, they must have Medicare withheld from their earnings. For example, IATs beginning their teaching assignment in the fall of 2020 would begin paying in January of 2022. However, IATs who have previously worked in the United States are liable for Medicare withholdings according to the length of their previous employment in the U.S. In general, unless they have not earned wages in the United States for the previous six (6) years, they must pay Medicare. **This difference between Medicare and taxes may create a situation where a teacher is still exempt from taxes yet must begin paying Medicare. This usually happens from January to May of the teacher's second school year of teaching.**

Social Security

International Associate Teachers working in Louisiana charter schools as nonresident aliens are exempt from Social Security on wages paid to them for services performed within the United States as long as such services are allowed by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for these nonimmigrant statuses and such services are performed to carry out the purposes for which they were admitted into the United States. As with the Medicare Withholdings exemption, this Social Security Withholdings exemption is lost if the individual in J-1 status becomes a resident under the residency tax rules. Please see [Aliens Employed in the U.S. - Social Security Taxes](#).

For more information, visit the [Social Security Administration](#) online or call 1-800-772-1213.

Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL)

J-1 International Associate Teachers meet the [LSA R.S. 11:703\(33\)](#) definition of "teacher." With this designation, all J-1 IATs should be enrolled as members of TRSL.

School/School system staff must evaluate each J-1 visa employee for membership eligibility as they would evaluate all other employees upon employment. Per status requirements, IATs must work more than 20 hours a week and not be classified as temporary or seasonal in accordance with IRS guidelines. See [LSA R.S. 11:162](#) for guidance on membership eligibility. LEAs are encouraged to seek legal advice to address unique factual scenarios that may arise when evaluating membership eligibility.

International Associate Teachers who hold H-1B visas must pay into TRSL.

Insurance

J-1 visa holders are required to carry repatriation of remains, medical evacuation, and health insurances. School systems are required to offer health insurance to IATs. School systems may follow the same procedures established for other district teachers or may choose to offer J-1 insurance provided the insurance meets the requirements listed below. The IAT has the option to decline the district benefits plan provided that they maintain their government-afforded coverage required in their home country. All International Associate Teachers will sign an Insurance Verification Form annually. This form will be kept on file at LDOE/CODOFIL.

Insurance shall cover [22 CFR 62.14]:

1. medical benefits of at least \$100,000 per person per accident or illness;
2. repatriation of remains in the amount of \$25,000; and
3. expenses associated with medical evacuation in the amount of \$50,000.

Note: Insurance shall not have a deductible that exceeds \$500 per accident or illness.

An insurance policy secured to meet the benefits requirements must be underwritten by an insurance corporation with an A.M. Best rating of "A-" or above, an Insurance Solvency International, Ltd. (ISI) rating of "A-I" or above, a Standard and Poor's Claims Paying Ability rating of "A-" or above, or a Weiss Research, Inc. rating of B+ or above. Alternatively, the sponsor may ascertain that the participant's policy is backed by the full faith and credit of the government of the exchange visitor's home country. For other options, see [22 CFR 62.14].

Willful failure on the teacher's part to maintain the required insurance throughout his/her stay in the United States will result in the termination of his/her exchange program by the US Department of State.

~from DOS guidance

Returning Home - Payroll Information

“Sponsors may not use the Teacher category to recruit and train foreign teachers for permanent employment in the United States. The Department expects every exchange teacher to return to his or her home country upon completion of the exchange programs. That teacher will be eligible to participate in another teacher exchange program provided that he or she has resided outside of the United States for at least two years following the successful completion of the original exchange program and continues to meet the eligibility requirements [22 CFR62.24(l)].”

~From the DOS guidance

In the case of most IAT exchange programs, the program results in the IAT returning home. As LEA payroll departments help IATs transition to going home, the following guidance should be used to make this transition as easy as possible.

IRS Required Documentation

IATs returning home should file [IRS Form 1040-C](#). Please see U.S. Departing Alien Income Tax Return [instructions](#) for information in regards to processing this form.

An IAT whose country of citizenship holds a federal tax treaty (Belgium, France, and the People’s Republic of China) should file a [W-8BEN](#) Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for United States Tax Withholding and Reporting (Individuals) form. Completion of this form will determine the amount of % of taxes will be withheld from the IATs TRSL refund, if applicable.

TRSL Reimbursement

IATs have the option to withdraw (refund) all employee contributions at termination. To ensure IATs are aware of their rights in regards to monies contributed to TRSL while employed in Louisiana, LDOE/CODOFIL recommends that districts review the following:

Contribution Refund Information:

- Teachers may receive reimbursed refunds in one of two ways:
 - » Direct deposit (**ONLY** available to a U.S. bank or U.S. financial institution), or
 - » Paper check mailed to a foreign address - Correct address format is needed.
- **Unvested Employees (<5 years)** - LEAs should help the IAT complete TRSL’s [Form 7D - Refund of Contributions](#) to have contributions returned via direct deposit.
 - » Employee can complete and sign Member Sections 1 & 2 immediately at termination.
 - » Employer **must wait at least 90 days** after the employee’s termination date to complete the remainder of the form, sign Employer Section 3, and submit to TRSL [Statute: LSA R.S. 11:781(c)].
- **Vested Employees (5+ years)** - LEAs must carefully counsel the IAT of his/her options at the time of exiting the IAT program or refer them to a TRSL representative. If requesting the reimbursement of funds, vested members will be required to fill out additional forms [W-8BEN, Vested Member (Form 7E), etc.].

Resident aliens (meets the Substantial Presence Test) will complete the IRS Form W-9 (Resident Aliens). Because the TRSL contributions [8% of the employee’s gross pay (LSA R.S. 11:62(11))] were payroll deductions withheld each pay period on a tax-sheltered (pre-tax) basis, employees that meet the substantial presence test will have 20% withheld from their refund for taxes.



WHAT ADDITIONAL FEDERAL GUIDELINES ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE A MEANINGFUL PROGRAM FOR IATS?

In addition to the numerous guidelines outlined previously in this document, federal regulations also require that teachers complete and submit a Cultural Exchange Project and participate in mandatory sponsor delivered professional development **annually**.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROJECT

As a part of the IAT's exchange program, he/she is **required by SEVIS** to complete a Cultural Exchange Project annually. This project is comprised of two components:

- **Cultural Activity** - presentation of an overview or aspect of the visiting teacher's country/culture to the teacher's classroom, host school, district population, or the community at large.
- **Exchange Activity** - an activity that involves a dialogue between the visiting teacher's students in the US and school(s) and/or students in another country, preferably the teacher's home country.

Evidence of completion of the Cultural Exchange Project is submitted to LDOE/CODOFIL annually in March.

To facilitate cultural exchange, it is recommended that school systems provide opportunities for IATs to participate in local cultural experiences by offering them a district-wide pass to athletic and/or cultural events sponsored by the LEA and a calendar of local community events.

IAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Because IATs are unfamiliar with Louisiana's educational policies and curriculum, LEAs must provide IATs with early and consistent access to professional development opportunities that align and support Louisiana standards.

All IATs are required to attend the annual LDOE/CODOFIL September Professional Development Day held at the Claiborne Building in Baton Rouge. This one day summit, required by SEVIS, allows visiting teachers the opportunity to ask questions and seek peer-support. LDOE/CODOFIL coordinates professional development sessions and provides J-1 teachers an opportunity to develop their leadership and presentational skills. **Host districts are asked to help teachers with any transportation and/or lodging costs for the September Professional Development Day.**

In addition, LDOE in coordination with the Louisiana Consortium of Immersion Schools (LCIS) recruits national and international leaders in the fields of World Languages and Immersion to present annually at full-day symposiums that focus on the needs of our IATs. These dates are published on the annual World Languages Professional Development Calendar.



HOW CAN LEAS AND THE STATE OF LOUISIANA HELP ENSURE A MEANINGFUL PROGRAM?

The State of Louisiana recognizes that participation in the Louisiana IAT Program requires LEAs to focus their resources and attention in new and creative ways. In this section, LEAs can find important additional information to help them ensure that all IATs have the opportunity to participate in a meaningful program exchange.

IAT TUITION EXEMPTION PROGRAM

Since the 1970s, the Louisiana Department of Education in recognition of the valuable service that these international associate teachers render to Louisiana, the Louisiana Board of Trustees (now the Board of Supervisors) for State Colleges and Universities passed resolutions granting IATs a waiver of tuition and registration fees for all institutions governed by the Board, the University of Louisiana System, and the Louisiana State University System. These fee waivers enable teachers in the program to enroll in classes to enhance teaching skills, improve English language skills, or to prepare for advanced degrees. International Associate Teachers receive a Tuition Waiver letter annually which should be presented to the bursar's office of which the IAT intends to enroll.

Support documentation is on file with LDOE/CODOFIL and can be provided upon request.

WELCOMING DIPLOMATS

Due to the international nature of this exchange program, it is highly likely that schools will experience visits from governmental officials, diplomats, and/or other distinguished guests from our partnering nations. When hosting a diplomat, districts and schools should remember to:

- have the highest ranking administrator on campus welcome the delegation and meet with them for at least 10 mins,
- have someone available to provide a campus tour and answer questions,
- schedule observations of teachers from that country,
- take a photograph,
- offer a souvenir with the school logo,
- invite the local media,
- have students write thank you notes, and/or
- consider offering a coffee service with teachers or lunch in the cafeteria with students.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the Louisiana International Associate Teacher Program is to enhance student access to World Language learning opportunities while also increasing students' cultural competence and global awareness.

When correctly administered, this program can positively affect the lives of Louisiana's students, schools, and communities, as well as that of the international teacher and their home country. With this powerful tool of educational diplomacy, the State of Louisiana will make a lasting difference in the lives of its citizens.

Culture makes people understand each other better. And if they understand each other better in their soul, it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers. But first they have to understand that their neighbour is, in the end, just like them, with the same problems, the same questions.

~ Paulo Coelho

