

# IES ABROAD POLICIES

## ACADEMIC GUIDELINES

### (Excerpted from IES Abroad Academic Policy Guidelines)

The mission of IES Abroad is to provide American colleges and universities and U.S. students premier study abroad programs world-wide that deliver the highest academic quality as well as enhance the development of intercultural competency skills. Since IES Abroad does not grant degrees, IES Abroad is not an “accredited institution in the U.S.” In order that students who attend IES Abroad programs may earn credit toward their degrees through their home institutions, the IES Abroad Board of Trustees has endowed the consortium with the power to set academic policy for IES Abroad and all of its programs. This power is exercised primarily through the elected Academic Council, which in turn has delegated supervision of the IES Abroad curriculum and courses to an appointed Curriculum Committee comprised of representatives from the consortium. The Academic Council of IES Abroad has thus established the following guidelines and requirements for academic programs of study offered under the auspices of IES Abroad. Some of these requirements apply to all IES Abroad programs; others apply only to IES Abroad courses, that is, courses submitted to and approved by the Curriculum Committee of the Academic Council.

### I. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL IES ABROAD PROGRAMS OF STUDY

IES Abroad students in fully integrated programs and IES Abroad students enrolled in individual courses at outside institutions are subject to the academic guidelines and regulations of those institutions. In such instances, IES Abroad policy is to be applied in so far as it does not contravene policy of the host institution.

- A. ACADEMIC STANDING:** All students entering IES Abroad programs must be in and maintain good academic standing throughout the period of study with IES Abroad. IES Abroad reserves the right to withdraw admission from any student who has a grade point average of less than 2.0 or the equivalent in the semester prior to anticipated study at an IES Abroad Center.

A student may be dismissed from the program at any time for unsatisfactory class preparation, attendance or performance.

In addition, full-year students may be dismissed at the end of the first semester for failure to complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of academic work in the first semester or failure to attain a grade point average for the first semester of at least 2.0 out of 4.0.

In cases of dismissal for academic reasons, students are entitled to the same refund they would receive if they had voluntarily withdrawn from the program at the time of their dismissal.

- B. COURSE LOAD REQUIREMENTS:** Each IES Abroad Center has a minimum and maximum course load limit.

Semester and Full-Year Students: Students are required to register for a minimum of 15 but no more than 19 credits during each semester of attendance, depending on the Center. A student whose home college has approved independent study may include up to four of these credits in

the required 15 credits. Students must register for at least 15 credits before the end of the IES Abroad or university Drop/Add period, whichever is later.

You may reduce your course load to 12 credits with 1) a valid academic reason for requesting a reduced course load; 2) approval of the Center Director or designated Center academic advisor; and 3) written home school authorization. Valid reasons include alternative academic activities that will not be transcribed such as private music lessons for a performance major or independent research projects that will be evaluated by the home institution. The student's intention not to transfer academic credit to the home institution does not qualify as a valid academic reason. You may not reduce your course load to less than 12 transcribed credits per semester.

Summer Students: Summer students are required to carry the number of credits stipulated in the IES Abroad catalog and on the IES Abroad website for the specific program.

- C. DROP/ADD PERIOD:** Each IES Abroad Center Director shall establish an appropriate deadline for a Drop/Add period. The Drop/Add period should last no longer than two weeks following the beginning of classes in the fall and spring semesters and three days following the beginning of classes in the summer session. At Centers where students may enroll for IES Abroad and/or university courses, there may be separate Drop/Add deadlines for IES Abroad and university courses.

Courses which are dropped within the Drop/Add period do not appear on the IES Abroad transcript. Students must, however, maintain the appropriate minimum course load (see Section B).

- D. WITHDRAWALS:** Each IES Abroad Center Director shall establish an appropriate deadline for withdrawing from a course. The deadline for withdrawals should be no later than one month before the beginning of final examinations in the fall and spring semesters and two weeks before the beginning of final examinations in the summer session. At Centers where students may enroll for IES Abroad and/or university courses, there may be separate withdrawal deadlines for IES Abroad and university courses. Course withdrawal requires: 1) a valid academic reason for requesting a reduced course load; 2) approval of the Center Director or designated Center academic advisor; and 3) written home school authorization. The student's intention not to transfer academic credit to the home institution does not qualify as a valid reason. In all cases, you must complete a minimum of 12 credits during each semester of enrollment [See Section B] .

When a student withdraws from a course after the Drop/Add deadline, but before the withdrawal deadline, the title of the course appears on the transcript with the appropriate number of credits and the grade of W.

When a student withdraws from a course after the withdrawal deadline, the title of the course appears on the transcript with the appropriate number of credits and the grade of F.

When a student withdraws from a program after the program has started, a transcript will still be issued with grades of W or F according to the deadlines outlined above.

- E. INCOMPLETES:** You must complete all course and program requirements before leaving the program site, unless you have petitioned for and have been granted an official 'Incomplete' through the IES Abroad Center.

Only those students who have completed at least 75% of the total number of weeks of instruction for a given term and have a documented medical or family emergency that necessitates their departure from the program site and/or prevents them from completing work by the end of the term are eligible to request and be granted Incompletes for their courses.

You may petition for Incompletes only for IES Abroad courses, not for outside courses. In the case of outside courses, you receive an automatic Withdrawal (W). You must secure from each IES Abroad professor precise instructions on what work still needs to be done to finish all course requirements, and the dates by which all coursework is to be completed.

Incompletes are granted only for full course credit, i.e. you must complete all course requirements for full credit, take an F for the course, or petition the Center Director for a retroactive Withdrawal.

Petitions for an Incomplete are reviewed by a committee consisting of the IES Abroad Center Director in consultation with the faculty member, the IES Abroad Program Dean, the IES Abroad Registrar, and the IES Abroad Dean of Students.

*A Petition for an Incomplete Grade*, available on request from IES Abroad Centers or the Chicago office, must be submitted with the required signatures and approved by the Director no later than one week before the end of the term. The time limit for completing the course shall in no case extend beyond six months of the final examination for the course. Thereafter, the grade becomes F.

- F. GENERAL GRADING POLICY:** A common IES Abroad grading policy applies to all IES Abroad programs and Centers and is communicated to students at the beginning of each semester of attendance. The IES Abroad policy utilizes a standard readily recognized by U.S. institutions.

The following define the IES Abroad use of letter grades:

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| (A) | — | Excellent performance  |
| (B) | — | Good performance   |
| (C) | — | Adequate performance   |
| (D) | — | Unsatisfactory performance and/or comprehension of the subject matter                            |
| (F) | — | Failure to complete course requirements or wholly inadequate comprehension of the subject matter |

The ranges between the letter grades can be expressed by plus or minus signs. Hence, the grading system recognized by IES Abroad is A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F. The plus sign is not used with the A grade and plus and minus signs are not used with the D and F grades.

Grades received for courses at outside institutions will be converted into grades on the above scale according to an approved conversion system.

- G. PASS/FAIL GRADING:** With written permission from the home school

presented at the time of registration, you may register for no more than one course and no more than four credits per semester on a Pass/Fail basis. Under IES Abroad Academic Guidelines, letter grades of A through C = Pass; C- through F = Fail. IES Abroad policy may be at variance with your home school policy regarding Pass/Fail options.

The Pass/Fail option does not apply to courses which are mandatory for a specific program, courses in the student's major, and summer program courses.

- H. AUDITS:** You are permitted to sit in on IES Abroad courses with the permission of the instructor. You may also audit courses at outside institutions, subject to the requirements or restrictions for each individual course and/or institution. Audits will not be recorded on the transcript and do not count toward fulfillment of course load requirements.
- I. GRADE APPEALS:** Students who wish formally to appeal a grade received for a course must complete a *Petition for a Grade Appeal* (available at [www.IESabroad.org](http://www.IESabroad.org)) and submit it to IES Abroad Chicago within 60 days of the release of grades online by the Chicago office. The Program Dean determines the validity of the argument that is the basis of the appeal. If the Dean judges that the argument is not logical, it is returned to the student with an invitation to revise and resubmit it.

IES Abroad courses: If the Dean judges the argument to be logical, it is forwarded to the Center Director, who will give a copy of the appeal to the instructor involved and discuss the particulars of the case.

Once a determination has been made (normally within 30 days of receipt of the appeal by the Director), either the instructor, Center Director or Dean shall send a written response to the student through the IES Abroad Chicago office. A copy of the appeal shall also be filed with the IES Abroad Chicago office.

The IES Abroad Chicago office will forward the response to the grade appeal to the student and to the home campus coordinator, when appropriate. The course instructor is the primary authority in matters of grading. The Center Director retains certain discretionary power in an extraordinary circumstance, such as the instructor's absence. In such a case, the Center Director may refer the case to an instructor in the same discipline to make a determination on the validity of the appeal.

University Courses: If the Dean judges the appeal to follow a logical argument, it is forwarded to the appropriate contact for review (IES Abroad staff or university staff). **Students who appeal a grade in a course taken at an outside institution will be subject to the appeal policy and procedure of the outside institution.** We will facilitate this process, for example, by arranging for students to re-take the final examination at the start of the next academic term. IES Abroad policy and procedure are to be applied in so far as they do not contravene the policy of the host institution. Each IES Abroad Center that enrolls students in courses at one or more outside institution will make available general academic policies for each institution as part of its student materials.

- J. TRANSCRIPTS:** The academic transcripts issued for each student who has participated in any IES Abroad program (semester, academic year, or summer) shall list all courses for which the student was registered

after the Drop/Add period. Credit and the appropriate notation shall be entered for each course listed, including those for which P/F, W, or I is given. The IES Abroad transcript will include no record of academic work not arranged and supervised through IES Abroad.

In the United States, final course grades are normally required to be received from instructors no later than two weeks after the completion of the final examination. Although the restrictions of time and distance will not permit this type of requirement for receipt of transcripts in the Chicago office, the importance of issuing transcripts in a timely manner should be stressed to IES Abroad faculty and staff. Delayed transcripts can lead to problems of home college registration and may result in loss of home college financial aid.

Although IES Abroad has no direct control over the reporting of grades from faculty at outside institutions, Directors should devise methods of informing university faculty about the urgency of receiving grades in a timely manner.

It should be noted that your home institution may, in certain circumstances, assign credit or grades which differ from those which appear on the IES Abroad transcript (e.g., conversion of credits from semester to quarter hours or assignment of Pass/Fail credit). In some cases the home institution may require a student to submit corrected examinations and/or papers for credit evaluation upon the student's return. Such documentation should be available, upon written request, for a period of at least one calendar year following completion of a course at IES Abroad. For courses taken outside IES Abroad, students should be informed at the beginning of the semester that it is their responsibility to arrange for such documentation with the individual instructor. It is the student's responsibility in all such cases to pay the costs of photocopying and mailing.

Students admitted to IES Abroad programs through the IES Abroad School of Record will receive a transcript of their academic work through the School of Record and not through IES Abroad.

**Note:** Transcripts are not released until all financial obligations are met.

- K. RESPONSIBILITY FOR WRITTEN WORK:** It is the responsibility of each student to insure that written work is submitted and received when due. You are expected to retain copies of all written work submitted; failure to do so will be interpreted as work never completed in cases where submission or receipt of written work cannot be documented.

## **II. GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO IES ABROAD COURSES**

- A. READINGS:** IES Abroad instructors are required to provide a syllabus with a list of required and recommended readings for each course. Additional or expanded reading lists may be made available according to the needs of the students for a given course or course assignments. Instructors are encouraged to use a syllabus as an occasion to familiarize students with available library resources and additional recommended readings.

In order to monitor student progress and adherence to reading assignments, IES Abroad instructors are urged to make use of discussion sessions, quizzes, etc.

- B. SUPPLEMENTARY ASSIGNMENTS:** Each IES Abroad course should have required supplementary assignments appropriate to the individual course. Such assignments may be in the form of term papers, book reports, work journals, portfolios, essays, field study reports, oral presentations, individual or class projects, or the like. Special emphasis should be placed on consistent graded written assignments that further the development of students' writing skills.
- C. EXAMINATIONS:** A mid-term evaluation and normally a written final examination are required in each course. The results of the mid-term evaluation should be communicated to the students in a timely manner. The nature of a particular course may dictate a form of final evaluation and assessment other than a written exam. Final examinations are to be kept on file for one year.
- D. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** You must complete all components of the required work for each course according to the deadlines established for each component. Failure to complete a component of the course requirements as scheduled or when due may result in a grade of 'F' for the course.
- E. CLASS ATTENDANCE:** Since IES Abroad courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instructor and the lecture/discussion format is regarded as the primary mode of instruction, regular class attendance is mandatory.

Each IES Abroad Director, working with his/her faculty, shall establish and implement a policy designed to encourage and maintain regular class attendance as well as a policy which outlines how unexcused absences (ordinarily permitted only in cases of illness) will impact student course grades. Each Center shall communicate these policies to the students during orientation. Each instructor shall devise methods of recording class attendance and should notify the Director of students who are not attending regularly.

- F. INDEPENDENT STUDY:** Independent study is permitted under certain conditions. No student may take more than one independent study course per term. IES Abroad identifies three types of Independent Study.
1. IES Abroad course cancellation. In the event that we cancel a course that was listed in the online preregistration materials, the following guideline applies. We will offer the course as an independent study at no additional cost to a student who needs the credit from the course to stay on track in meeting graduation requirements either in the student's major field or in electives for which another course cannot be substituted. The student is required to provide written confirmation of this necessity from an advisor at the home institution. Such independent study will be listed on the transcript with the number and title of the originally scheduled course and will receive the same number of credits.
  2. Other IES Abroad directed independent study for IES Abroad credit. You may request an independent study for 3 or 4 credits in areas not covered by IES Abroad programs. Students requesting such an independent study for IES Abroad credit assume all costs associated with it and must prepare and sign a contract for Independent Study that should be countersigned by the supervising faculty member, either an IES Abroad faculty member or a faculty member at an accredited institution

of higher learning in the host country, and approved by the Director and the home school. Such an independent study constitutes part of the IES Abroad course load requirements. An independent study of this type will be listed on the transcript as course 399 in the appropriate department, and the grade will be recorded. An evaluation of the independent study project must be attached.

A sample listing:

XX399	Independent Study: (Title)	Credit	Grade
-------	----------------------------	--------	-------

3. Home school directed independent study. You may request an independent study which is guided and evaluated by a faculty member of the home school. Students requesting such an independent study assume all costs associated with it and must present authorization for the independent study from the home school at the time of registration. Such an independent study may be used to fulfill IES Abroad course load requirements. An independent study of this type will not be listed on the IES Abroad transcript.

- G. CREDIT CALCULATION:** IES Abroad semester credits are based on 15 academic contact hours plus two hours per week of preparation per credit for area studies courses. Semester credits for language courses are based on a minimum of 15 academic contact hours plus two hours per week of preparation per credit. An academic contact hour is generally understood to be 50 minutes.

Exceptions to the guideline are as follows:

- In locations where the university standard for 1 credit is 12 academic contact hours, student preparation time is 3 hours per credit for area studies courses (IES Abroad Dublin and IES Abroad London).
- In locations where the university culture defines an academic contact hour as 45 minutes, IES Abroad courses follow the cultural norm (IES Abroad Vienna and IES Abroad Freiburg).
- A research seminar with fewer than 45 contact hours but with a major research component must demonstrate that students are expected to spend a minimum of 4 hours/week in preparation.

- H. IES ABROAD COURSE NUMBERING:** IES Abroad assigns course numbers according to the following guidelines:

- \*100 Level: denotes introductory courses that assume no prior background such as foreign language and studio art.
- \*200 Level: denotes general interest or survey courses with no pre-requisites.
- \*300 Level: denotes courses that assume some background in the field and may have specific prerequisites.
- \*400 Level: denotes courses that assume a substantial background in the field, usually have specific prerequisites, may be restricted to majors in the field, or require permission of the instructor or Director to register. Examples here would include the upper division courses of language based programs, i.e. courses that would normally receive fourth year credit in a U.S. language department.

Methodology, type of intellectual activity, and level of performance expectation are also determining factors in level designations, not merely number or type of pre-requisites.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE POLICY**

It is the policy of IES Abroad to make every reasonable effort to allow members of the IES Abroad community to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty in all IES Abroad-taught courses. IES Abroad staff will assist students in arranging with outside universities to observe their religious holidays. Arrangements with outside universities cannot be guaranteed.

Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve you from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. Students will not be penalized for class absences because of religious holidays.

It is the obligation of the students to provide faculty and the Center Director with reasonable notice in writing of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would constitute an unreasonable burden on the faculty.

Should disagreement arise over what constitutes an unreasonable burden or any aspect of this policy, parties should contact the Center Director, Program Dean, or Vice President for Academic Affairs.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

---

### **TRANSCRIPTS FOR CREDIT TRANSFER**

At the conclusion of the program, an official IES Abroad transcript will be sent to your home school. If you submitted a School of Record application, transcripts will be sent directly from the University of Rochester to the address you provide when you submit your School of Record request online. **Normally, IES Abroad mails transcripts approximately six weeks after the end of each program.** However, if you are taking courses at a local university, be prepared for some delay in receipt of transcripts due to the disparities in administrative procedures between overseas and U.S. institutions. Transcripts will not be released if there are any outstanding financial obligations.

### **SCHOOL OF RECORD**

If your school does not accept IES Abroad credit directly, you will need to obtain a School of Record from the University of Rochester to receive credit for participation in the IES Abroad program. The fee for a School of Record is \$375 and is non-refundable. You are required to check with your school if you are unsure which credit they accept. Instructions for submitting your School of Record Form are in your **MyIESabroad account** at **[www.IESabroad.org](http://www.IESabroad.org)**.

### **GRADE POSTING**

Your grades can be viewed online under My Resources found on your **MyIESabroad account** at **[www.IESabroad.org](http://www.IESabroad.org)**.

IES Abroad grades are typically posted within six weeks of the final day of the program. University grades may take longer. Non-reported "NR" grades indicate that your professor has not yet reported your grades. Once grades are submitted and approved, a transcript will be sent to your home school provided you have no outstanding financial obligations.

## **CHANGE OF STATUS**

A change of status can be a change from an academic year to a single semester status, a continuation on an IES Abroad program for an additional semester, or a transfer to another IES Abroad program. For example, an academic year student may choose to withdraw from the spring semester; a fall student may wish to continue through the spring; or a fall or academic year student may wish to transfer to a different IES Abroad program for the spring semester. Please be aware that the deadlines for the Change of Status are November 1st for Spring and May 1st for Fall.

In order to complete a change of status, you need to take the following steps:

1. Inform your current Center Director that you would like to continue for another term on a current IES Abroad program, change from academic year to single-semester, or transfer to another IES Abroad program.
2. Obtain a Change of Status (COS) Form from the Center Director and complete Part A of the form.
3. Request that the Center Director complete Part B of the form.
4. IES Abroad then sends the completed COS form to your home institution study abroad office for final approval.
5. Once the Study Abroad Coordinator at your home school approves the Change of Status, the IES Abroad Enrollment Management Department will update the status in its database.
6. You will be charged a \$100 fee for dropping to single-semester from academic-year, calendar-year, or split-year status.

## **IES ABROAD DISCOUNTS ON EXTENSIONS OF STUDY**

With permission from their home institution, students attending a semester-long program may choose to extend their study abroad with IES Abroad. Regardless of whether they want to continue on their current program or experience another location, we offer discounts to students who extend their study abroad experience with IES Abroad, according to the following:

- You will receive a 20% discount applied as a credit to the second consecutive semester's tuition in the same or a different program comprising an academic year.
- You must enroll by November 1st to get the discount for academic year study, after which the second term's tuition pricing will be based on the following spring term's tuition.
- You will receive a 20% discount applied as a credit to the second consecutive semester's tuition in the same or different program comprising a calendar year.
- You must enroll by May 1st to get the discount for calendar year study, after which the second term's tuition pricing will be based on the following fall term's tuition.
- You will receive a \$500 credit on summer tuition if a summer program is attended before or after a semester or academic year program.
- You will receive a \$300 credit on a January term tuition if a January term program is attended before or after a semester program.

The calendar year, summer, and January term discounts will be applied to the IES Abroad invoice as billed to the student or school. Students should see their current Center director for a "Change or Status" form to continue studying at their current location or to attend a different IES Abroad program. Finally, please note that the above discounts are applied to the designated term or second semester of study tuition only.

### **IES ABROAD PAYMENT PLAN OPTION**

We offer semester, academic year, and split year students the option of paying in interest-free installments for a one-time fee of \$125 for semester students and \$250 for academic year and split year students. A down payment of \$3,500 plus the appropriate fee is due in the IES Abroad office upon receipt of the statement. The remaining balance due after the down payment is divided into three equal monthly payments for term students and six equal monthly payments for academic year and split year students. Contact the IES Abroad Chicago Accounting Department at **800.995.2300** for further information. There is no installment plan option for IES Abroad Summer, J-Term & Interterm programs.

### **STUDENT LOANS**

Although we do not offer our own loan program, there are many lending institutions to help you finance your study abroad experience. One such program is called Key Lend. Students can obtain more information on this program by calling **800.KEY.LEND** (students should mention that they will be attending a program through the Institute for the International Education of Students when applying for credit approval). The IES Abroad website can also provide additional financial aid resources at [www.IESabroad.org](http://www.IESabroad.org).

### **ARE TUITION FEES PAID TO IES ABROAD TAX-DEDUCTIBLE?**

Because IES Abroad is a non-accredited institution, it is precluded by federal law from issuing a 1098T. However, this does not mean that the tuition fees paid to IES Abroad are not tax-deductible. We recommend that you consult your tax advisor for the appropriate tax treatment.

## **RIGHTS OF IES ABROAD STUDENTS**

---

IES Abroad is an academic community in which all students, faculty, and staff share responsibility for both individual growth and the overall welfare of the community. As members of the IES Abroad community, students can reasonably expect to have the following rights:

1. To accurate and clearly stated information relating to maintenance of acceptable academic standing and individual course objectives and requirements. Students can expect instruction from faculty retained by IES Abroad at appointed class times, and to have reasonable access to those faculty members. IES Abroad will assist students in managing local university academic policies and expectations.
2. To express themselves freely in a culturally appropriate manner that is consistent with the IES Abroad Code of Student Conduct and the laws of the country where the student is studying.
3. To expect a reasonably safe learning environment that is supportive of the mission of IES Abroad and their own educational goals.
4. Not to be unlawfully discriminated against by any employee or agent of IES Abroad on the basis of age, creed, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability, marital status, political or social affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

5. To peaceably assemble in an orderly manner consistent with the local culture and to engage in peaceful protest or demonstration that does not disrupt the operations of IES Abroad or local host universities, threaten the health or safety of any person, violate the IES Code of Student Conduct, or violate applicable laws of the country in which the student is studying.
6. To exercise their religious beliefs and associate with religious or other organizations of their choice in designated IES Abroad managed facilities, provided they do so in a manner that respects the rights of other members of the IES Abroad community and complies with the IES Code of Student Conduct and applicable laws of the Country in which the student is studying.
7. To have their privacy rights reasonably protected on IES Abroad programs pursuant to the applicable laws of the country in which the student is studying and IES abroad policy.
8. To due process in the form notice of allegations and a right to be heard before formal disciplinary sanctions are imposed by IES Abroad for violations of the Code of Student Responsibility as published in the IES Abroad Student Handbook. Students have the right to notice and the opportunity for a hearing before any change in their status with IES Abroad occurs for disciplinary reasons unless a significant threat of harm to person(s) or property exists.

The exercise and preservation of these rights comes with a corresponding responsibility by all IES Abroad students to respect and preserve the rights of others in the IES Abroad community, learning environment, and host country. Students enrolling in an IES Abroad program assume an obligation to conduct themselves in a manner that is civil, respectful, and compatible with IES Abroad's goals, policies, aspirations and mission as an institution of higher education. IES Abroad has the authority and responsibility to maintain order and an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect within the IES Abroad community, and to exclude those who are disruptive of our educational process and goals from the learning environment.



**IES Abroad Buenos Aires students learn about the history of the city.**