GAP Handbook: Student Policies

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Gulf Arabic Programme

1.1 Programme Scope

The Gulf Arabic Programme (GAP) is an online language programme designed to equip students to:

1) function conversationally in the Gulf dialect of spoken Arabic, and
2) be competent in the fundamentals of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA).

The courses taught at GAP are not appropriate for those seeking to learn Arabic for the purposes of reading or memorising the Qur'an.

Dialect classes focus mainly on listening and speaking skills, although students will also learn to function in reading and writing tasks such as texting, which is one of the few contexts where dialect is written. These classes focus on grammar and vocabulary.

MSA classes emphasize reading and writing skills. Students will extend their vocabulary and focus on MSA-specific grammar.

The introductory levels of the program are appropriate for absolute beginners. If you have studied Arabic elsewhere, our staff will place you in the correct level.

1.2 Programme Goals

After completing all courses, a student at GAP can expect to communicate in Gulf Dialect and Standard Arabic at an intermediate level. However, each student is on a unique learning journey, and the level they reach will depend on how much time they spend in Arabic outside of class with their Gulf Arab friends, tutors and in private study.

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Chapter 2: Student Code of Conduct

By choosing to enroll in GAP classes, our students agree to abide by the following code of conduct:

2.1 Respect

The classroom culture of the Gulf differs markedly from that which many students will have previously experienced. The students must respect the teacher at all times. To contradict or disagree with a teacher is considered disrespectful. If the student does not like something that is being done in class or would like to make a suggestion, this should be discussed with the Operations Manager, *not* the teacher. During the course of language learning students may feel frustrated, annoyed, confused, etc. However, it is understood that students will not allow these emotions to result in any rudeness or other negative interaction with the teacher. The Operations Manager is available for those who wish to make suggestions or express frustration.

Students are also expected to be mature, considerate, and respectful in their interactions with one another. A friendly and encouraging atmosphere supports effective learning.

2.2 Sensitive Topics

Our teachers and students are from different cultures, and some conversational topics that may be normal for students might be uncomfortable for teachers, **especially when asked to share their personal views**. This is particularly true for topics like religion and politics. These topics are not completely off-limits, but there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to ask questions about these topics. For example:

Appropriate:

- What do you do at Eid?
- What do you do on Hajj?
- What phrases should I use at a funeral?

Inappropriate:

- What do you think of the government?
- Tell me about the different Islamic sects. What sect do you belong to?

2.3 Clothing

Our Gulf Arab teachers come from a culture that has certain expectations about how men and women should dress. Out of respect for them, we ask that female students wear tops that cover the chest and shoulders, with sleeves that come past at least the elbow. If at any time a students' full body will be in view during the online class we ask both genders to ensure that their skirt or trousers cover the leg down to the ankle.

2.4 Classroom Etiquette

During a live session, it is expected that students will remain seated in front of the camera. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their learning environment is not disruptive to their class or teacher (e.g. appropriate background noise levels, lighting, free from distractions). Students will

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ensure that their mobile phones are turned off or switched to silent, and will refrain from using phones during class or live sessions except for study purposes. Students will also refrain from eating during online sessions. During Ramadan, please refrain from both eating and drinking during live sessions.

2.5 Preparation

Students are expected to prepare thoroughly before online lessons with their GAP teachers.

- Study grammar handouts

Students should read and study the grammar handouts. They may want to print the handouts and take notes on them. If a student does not understand something, they should make a note to ask the teacher about it during the next lesson.

- Memorise required vocabulary

All vocabulary should be memorised and practiced before class. This can be done using Anki and/or Moodle. The student may want to print the vocabulary lists and take notes on them, as teachers will often comment on the pronunciation and usage of the words, or add synonyms during class.

- Gather any "props" required for the lesson ahead of time

Some lessons require physical props that the student can point to or touch. If a lesson has a list of these props, gather them ahead of time so class time is not wasted trying to locate them.

- Test technology and gather study materials

Students should test all technology before the lesson, and make sure they have a good internet connection, with a low level of background sound. Gather all study materials (notes, questions, documents, writing materials) before the session starts.

- Finish and submit all homework assignments from the previous section. Review corrected homework beforehand.

If a lesson goes poorly because you did not prepare, it is not the teacher's fault!

2.6 Self-motivated Learning

In a physical classroom, students are often motivated by their classmates to study or participate in discussions. Some students even enjoy a sense of "classroom competition" with their friends that pushes them forward. But in an online class, students are expected to be self-motivated learners. Students must challenge *themselves*, especially in self-guided or blended courses. Being a self-motivated student means taking responsibility for one's own learning journey. A student must find learning strategies that work for them and use them.

2.7 Time Commitment

If a student is taking the GAP online programme as a full-time two-year course, it is expected that they will devote the same amount of time to the courses as they would to a full-time job. This includes live sessions, interactions with Moodle materials, vocabulary study, independent study, sessions with language helpers, and time spent practicing Arabic with local friends.

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Chapter 3: Policies

3.1 Enrollment
Students who meet the language prerequisites for enrollment will be taken on a first come, first served basis. Priority will be given to full-time students over part-time students.

3.2 Attendance
Group Class Students
Students in group classes are required to attend all sessions so as not to disrupt the progress of the group. If you are unable to attend class due to illness or bereavement, please notify the teacher. It is your responsibility to arrange to catch up on any missed work and complete any homework before the next lesson. Students that miss a week or more of classes during the semester will be required to complete a brief oral interview with a teacher to demonstrate that they are capable of continuing with the semester without holding back their classmates.

Private Students
If you know that you are going to miss a registered session, please notify the Operations Manager as soon as possible, as other students may be waiting for a time slot.

3.3 Assessment
Spoken Gulf Dialect
Students' speaking and listening skills are assessed with a written test of listening skills and dialect grammar and a very brief oral exam at the end of each unit. The final exam will consist of an individual oral exam at the end of each semester. Students are required to pass this assessment before progressing to the next level.

Modern Standard Arabic
Student's reading and writing skills are assessed with written tests at the end of each unit. There is a final written exam at the end of the semester. 50% and above constitutes a pass in the end of semester exam. Students are required to pass this assessment before progressing to the next level.

3.4 Failed Classes
Students who fail a class will discuss options for further study with the Operations Manager. It may be suggested that they repeat the class or that they embark on a course of private tuition in order to catch up with their peers. Students who feel they are lagging significantly behind their peers are encouraged to seek advice and support early in the semester.

3.5 Payment
Students registering for the full-time program are required to pay their fees two weeks before the beginning of the semester.

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3.6 Refunds

Group Classes
Students who drop out of group classes during the first three weeks of the semester are eligible for a 50% refund. After the end of the third week, no refunds will be given.

Students will not be refunded for any missed group classes throughout the semester.

Private Classes
The class schedule for each week is set on the Thursday morning *prior* to that week. Private students who cancel a class after this time will be required to pay for it, unless another student can be found to fill their time slot.

3.7 Violations of Code of Conduct

In the case of a code of conduct violation, the Operations Manager will address the situation with the student. In most situations, this will be an opportunity for behavior change with no further action required. In the case of multiple violations or a severe violation, the administration reserves the right to remove students from the program without a refund.

3.8 Non-Discrimination Policy

The Gulf Arabic Program admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.