

OUR STRATEGY TO 2025

seizing opportunities,
striving for success



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A young woman with long blonde hair is smiling broadly, looking off to the side. She is wearing a blue bucket hat and a black quilted jacket with orange drawstrings. The background is a beach at sunset, with a building visible in the distance. The lighting is warm and golden.

**UK ELT HELPS
PEOPLE FULFIL
THEIR DREAMS
AND CONNECT
ACROSS BORDERS
AND CONTINENTS.**

WELCOME

We're excited to share our vision for a UK English language teaching sector that transforms lives through learning and intercultural understanding.

The aims outlined here will form the foundation of our work over the next three years to 2025 – building a strong, welcoming, inclusive, responsible and sustainable industry into the second quarter of the 21st century.

And returning the UK to the number one destination for English language studies.

This strategy is being launched at a critical time for our industry and our members.

The UK has led the way on teaching English to international students. The world's first ELT school opened in London in 1912, and the industry grew steadily from the mid-20th century. In 2019, the UK was the world's most popular destination for English language students from around the world.

Then a series of domestic immigration changes led to increasing global competition, followed by the devastation of the pandemic and new post-EU travel restrictions.

English UK member centres lost over 80% of their business in 2020 and 2021.

It is crucial that we review our activities and refocus our efforts to: build a stronger and larger membership community; influence policy to create a more supportive operating environment in the UK; promote UK ELT and English UK to maximise recovery and growth; ensure UK ELT is a desirable and high quality career choice; and take strides towards sustainability in our sector.

WHY WE EXIST

English UK exists to support and represent the UK's accredited ELT centres, bringing diverse organisations together to help them thrive and transform the lives of language students through learning and intercultural understanding.

English UK has been at the heart of UK ELT for almost 20 years, succeeding two separate organisations for privately-owned and state-owned language centres.

UK ELT is varied and far reaching, with hundreds of organisations spread across the four nations of the United Kingdom with different audiences, offers and contexts.

They range from specialised teaching centres in world-famous universities to small, independent language schools; from multinational groups to micro businesses; from focusing on academic learners to welcoming groups of junior students; from hosting business executives to supporting teachers of English from around the world; from English with football to English for doctors and everything in between.

What these organisations have in common is their commitment to the highest standards in teaching, student experience and welfare, and their vision to transform the lives of English language students through learning and intercultural understanding.

We have found over the last two decades, and especially during the global pandemic, that these varied organisations do best when they are part of a community with a shared vision, values and ambitions.

The collective voice of UK ELT is louder, and the positive impact of action is amplified.

Our mission is to harness the collective energy of our membership in order to champion and advance UK ELT. We lead, represent and support our members to help our community achieve its full potential.

We work for and with our members – all of which are accredited teaching centres – to help them to be the best they can, to improve their operating environment and ensure they succeed in a global industry.

This strategy outlines the major ways in which we will seize opportunities and strive for success in the coming years.



In the UK, we:

- support members centres to aspire to and reach the highest quality of teaching and student experience and welfare
- work with educational, governmental and partner organisations and individuals to create operating conditions where ELT centres can thrive
- provide practical support for member centres, including offering a dynamic suite of market intelligence, staff training and qualifications, workshops and conferences.

Internationally, we:

- reassure and inform our international agents and partners, students and parents, and promote our offer
- explain how the UK can meet students' needs, transform their lives and help them follow their dreams.
- create opportunities for members to develop their international markets through partnerships and connections.

WHO WE ARE

English UK is at the centre of a large community of language teaching centres, international agents and partners, students and service providers.

We are the national membership association of accredited English language teaching centres in the UK.

We believe UK ELT is life changing. Many of our team have taught or learned another language and know first-hand how fun, mind-opening and beneficial language learning is.

Our member centres are at the heart of everything we do. Through our board of trustees, sub boards and advisory groups, and day-to-day contact with the English UK team, our members set the direction for the association.

We represent and work with the complete range of UK ELT providers, from the smallest family-run centres to summer schools, academic boarding, international chains and universities.

As well as providing services and support, we encourage members to work together informally and through our specialist, national and regional subgroups.

The pandemic reminded us that we are stronger together, and we will build on this for a strong future for UK ELT.

We aspire to make UK ELT an even better place to study and work – for everyone, both now and in the future.

In light of the global pandemic, protests against systematic and institutional racism and discrimination, and the deepening and devastating impact of climate change, we are taking a critical look at our organisation, association and sector.

We saw both how fundamental our long-held values were in guiding us through the last few years of crisis, and that there was a need to bring our values to the foreground.

Now is the right time to enshrine new and strengthened commitments to sustainability and a people-first sector, and re-affirm our commitment to our values in all our decision-making through sector recovery and growth.

The pandemic, which led to so much loss and suffering, and put international study on pause, has also given us the opportunity to improve English UK and the UK ELT sector as we rebuild.

The disruption we all experienced has shown us that change is both necessary and achievable.

OUR VALUES



Community We can do more together than we can alone. We celebrate and support each other.



Integrity We are accountable for our actions and inactions. We treat everyone with respect, honesty, professionalism and understanding.



Inclusivity Everybody belongs in UK ELT. We embrace diversity and value everyone's perspectives and contributions to our community.



Responsibility We prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff, colleagues, partners, peers and communities.



Sustainability We believe in turning UK ELT green to help protect our planet, build hope and secure our future.

WHY WE NEED CHANGE

The pandemic and the end of freedom of movement from Europe are unprecedented challenges for UK ELT. We must act to regain our position as the world's number one English language learning destination.

It is a testament to our members' resilience and determination that 85% survived the first two years of the pandemic with little or no income.

Rebuilding confidence in travel will take time, and our customer base – predominantly European teenagers and young adults – are looking at alternatives to UK study as a result of our post-EU border policies.

School groups and parties of teenagers who came for study holidays on their ID cards are now attracted to our competitors Malta and Ireland, where they can continue to enjoy passport-free travel.

Young adults, who used to practise their English and fund themselves by working while studying, are choosing shorter courses or are going elsewhere for their language studies.

It is not just student supply that has been affected by the pandemic and new immigration regulations, but staffing and homestay hosts too. Other factors, including the economy and cost of living crisis, are exacerbating the issue.

This capacity challenge is the major obstacle blocking the way forward for UK ELT sector recovery and growth.

These factors, coupled with continued uncertainty around international relations, mean that we and our members have to work hard to regain our position as the world's number one destination to learn English.

The challenges we face:

- restrictions on student mobility
- uncertainty about the ease of travel to the UK for students
- a capacity challenge driven by a shortage of ELT staff and homestay hosts
- inconsistent support from the UK government and poor understanding of UK ELT among policy makers
- a sector where some people face discrimination and feel they don't belong in our community
- a climate crisis that our sector contributes to and will be increasingly impacted by.



**WE MUST ACT TO
REGAIN OUR POSITION
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NUMBER ONE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE LEARNING
DESTINATION.**



OUR AMBITIONS TO 2025

We are seizing new opportunities and striving for success.

To be effective, we need to focus on specific key ambitions that will inspire and mobilise our leadership, our executive team, our members and our partners.

1. Build a strong, growing membership community
2. Influence UK policy for a better operating environment
3. Promote UK ELT to maximise sector recovery
4. Strengthen sector capacity to support recovery and growth
5. Take real strides towards sustainability.

#1 A STRONG, GROWING COMMUNITY

We will build a strong, growing and engaged community of English UK member centres.

English UK is an association run by its members. Our strength is in our numbers and the engagement of our community.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- promoting excellence in our community through Accreditation UK and the quality assurance we offer students with the Student Emergency Support scheme and our student complaints process
- communicating regularly and clearly with our members through digital and in-person, broadcast and 1:1 channels, informing, advising, supporting, engaging, listening to and learning from them
- reviewing our membership model, membership criteria and governance structures to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and aligned with our mission, vision and values
- supporting the English UK family of national, regional and special interest subgroups.

SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- a larger membership community, both through recruitment of new members and retention of current members
- growing member engagement, tracked through participation in our activities, survey responses and feedback
- a membership model that supports our strategic ambitions, aligns with our mission and vision, and reflects our values
- active subgroups with growing engagement.

#2 INFLUENCE UK POLICY

We will influence policymakers, raise the UK ELT industry's profile and develop relationships to optimise the operating environment for our sector.

We are looking to access further government support to counter the devastation wrought by the pandemic while securing an operating environment that will maximise recovery.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- influencing government policies to create opportunities, with a focus on targeted business support for all and a supportive immigration system
- raising UK ELT's profile and promoting the English UK brand, prioritising inclusion in tourism recovery plans in all four nations, and striving for national and local media coverage
- growing our network of supportive parliamentarians
- collaborating, extending our network and nurturing existing relationships through work with our partners and stakeholders in Westminster, local authorities and the devolved administrations.

SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- clear changes in local and national government policy and practice that better support UK ELT
- a larger network of supportive parliamentarians taking positive action on our behalf
- wider reach of and more frequent national and local media coverage of our sector
- formation of a strong and durable coalition of national and local government and sector partners supporting UK ELT.



**WE NEED SUPPORT TO
COUNTER THE IMPACT
OF THE PANDEMIC
AND AN OPERATING
ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL
MAXIMISE RECOVERY.**

#3 SECTOR RECOVERY

We will promote English UK and learning English in the UK to increase student numbers and maximise sector recovery.

We recognise that rebuilding travel confidence will take time and student supply is threatened by new immigration regulations too.

But we also know we have a great story to tell, a network of trusted partners around the world and a legacy as the world's most popular destination to learn English.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- improving our market intelligence and student data, including capturing growth in low-emission areas such as online and blended teaching
- using insights to identify priority markets and define messaging
- ensuring StudyWorld is an accessible platform where members can develop productive partnerships and showcase the excellence of UK ELT
- promoting environmental action as another reason to choose UK ELT and English UK member centres
- celebrating diversity and inclusivity as a central promotional message for UK ELT
- collaborating with Department for Business & Trade, British Council and UK international education sector partners, and expanding the reach of the English with Confidence campaign.

SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- a return to, and growth beyond, pre-pandemic student volume
- high member engagement in and satisfaction with promotional activities and the English with Confidence campaign in market
- high member engagement in and positive feedback from market development events and activities
- formation of a new coalition of partners at a national level, working together to support the promotion of UK ELT.



**WE HAVE A GREAT
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POPULAR DESTINATION
TO LEARN ENGLISH.**



#4 SECTOR CAPACITY

We will significantly strengthen UK ELT sector capacity through supporting the recruitment and retention of capable staff and welcoming homestay hosts.

We are a people industry. Our staff and our homestay hosts are on the frontline of delivering the learning experience, of which UK ELT is rightly proud. They are our greatest assets.

It is therefore critical to our success that we are able to recruit and retain enough appropriately qualified staff and welcoming homestay hosts.

We will remove needless barriers and promote rewarding, inclusive and high quality working conditions for all, making UK ELT a desirable career path and meeting the demands of recovery and future growth.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- lobbying, engaging and working with our partners at the British Council, assessment bodies, TEFL qualification providers, and UK government departments to mitigate the impact of Brexit, remove obstacles and maximise opportunities for employment in UK ELT
- increasing the visibility of career prospects and benefits in our sector through digital campaigns and developing more effective recruitment channels, with a special focus on increasing diversity in the sector and challenging native speakerism, accentism and other barriers
- supporting members, offering professional development to staff, promoting people excellence and providing chances to network and share ideas
- ensuring English UK and the UK ELT sector has positive, fair and accountable relationships with people, from staff to supply chain
- becoming an anti-racist organisation and delivering our first antiracism action plan.

SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- improvements in policies and practice affecting ELT staff recruitment
- a strong, valued and diverse UK ELT workforce
- strong engagement with and broad reach of high quality English UK communications and content on opportunities in UK ELT
- positive member engagement with and feedback on our programme of professional development, training and networking activities
- higher engagement with inclusion and diversity monitoring
- greater diversity across English UK events, boards and teams, visuals and campaigns.

#5 STRIDES TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

We will put environmental responsibility on the agenda in our sector, raising awareness of action and reducing the association's emissions and negative impact.

English UK's mission is to champion UK ELT and create a sector that transforms lives through learning.

This is only possible if we live and work in balance with our environment, protecting our future and equipping students with the language and skills they need to face the greatest challenge of our time.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- measuring and reducing our emissions and the negative environmental impact from English UK activities and events
- taking steps towards measuring and reporting on the 'carbon footprint' of the UK ELT industry
- communicating our plans and actions clearly and persuasively, and leading the sector by example
- supporting and celebrating member climate action
- supporting and amplifying green UK ELT organisations and actors.

SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE:

- significantly reduced emissions from English UK activities
- growing awareness, interest and action across the membership
- divestment from fossil fuels at English UK and growing across the sector
- support and engagement with environmental projects across the UK
- strong engagement with regular environmental content and campaigning across English UK channels
- greater engagement with surveying and higher reports of action reported.



**BEING GREEN
MEANS TAKING OUR
ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT SERIOUSLY
AND SETTING NEW
STANDARDS FOR
OUR INDUSTRY.**



WHAT WE NEED IN PLACE

We will deliver this plan through thoughtful planning, strong processes, clear communication and by nurturing and developing both our team and our partnerships across the sector.

To achieve our ambitions, we will develop our organisation; we will make the most of our collaboration with key partners; we will communicate compelling insights and inspiring stories; and critically, we will build an association and UK ELT sector that is respectful, inclusive and fair.

We are seizing opportunities. We are striving for success.

COLLABORATION & PARTNERS

We will do more by collaborating with like-minded supporters and partners. We will:

- collaborate with governmental, non-governmental, education sector and corporate partners in the UK to amplify our voice and support our lobbying aims
- develop partnerships with governmental, non-governmental, education sector and corporate organisations to promote UK ELT globally
- leverage our relationships with organisations inside and outside UK ELT for the benefits they bring to English UK member centres.

PEOPLE & PROCESSES

We are a purpose-driven, value-led organisation. Our staff, trustees and members believe in the vision of a UK ELT sector that transforms lives through learning and intercultural understanding.

Since the pandemic, we are a smaller staff team. We will maximise our effectiveness through developing our staff, prioritising their wellbeing, expanding the involvement of members in our association, and committing resources to improving our systems and processes.

We will:

- develop a staff team that feels valued and in return is mission focused, responsible, adaptable, collaborative, cohesive, responsive to member needs and always learning
- strengthen the capacity of our boards and committees to support our decision-making by widening member participation
- review and streamline our processes and systems, thinking creatively and adopting technologies where beneficial

COMMUNICATION

We recognise that communication connects our team and our community. Strong, effective communication within the team, inside the association and across our sector is essential to achieve our goals.

We will:

- engage English UK members, students, study abroad agent partners and stakeholders in the UK and internationally via clear and relevant digital communications
- strengthen our brand, identity and voice to better echo our mission, vision and work, choosing language that is inclusive and reflective of our values
- strengthen our internal communications channels and practice to ensure our team can work confidently and efficiently
- be mindful of the accessibility of our communications.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

We have made inclusivity one of our core values for the first time. Everybody belongs in UK ELT. We embrace diversity and value everyone's perspectives and contributions to our community.

The global pandemic has given us the opportunity to improve English UK and the UK ELT sector as we rebuild. Together we can create a better, fairer, safer world and stand in solidarity with everyone experiencing discrimination, racism and inequity.

We will:

- create genuinely open and inclusive working culture, policy and practice, and events and services at English UK
- enshrine equality, diversity and inclusion in our membership rules and provide member centres with the tools they need to change their organisations
- work with stakeholders and other leaders across the UK ELT sector to build a profession that is respectful, inclusive and fair.

HOW WE WILL FUND THIS STRATEGY

To achieve our ambitions, we must manage our resources effectively.

We will:

- build a strong, growing community of members as a sustainable source of revenue from membership subscriptions
- efficiently manage our overheads and costs of delivery and meet revenue targets for income-generating events and services
- effectively manage our team to improve staff wellbeing, optimise performance and achieve our objectives
- leverage the support of our sponsors and partners to deliver our ambitions.



**LET'S SEIZE NEW
OPPORTUNITIES AND
STRIVE FOR THE SUCCESS
OF A UK ELT SECTOR THAT
POSITIVELY IMPACTS OUR
STUDENTS' LIVES.**



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