

**KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER
RIYADH**



THE APPLICANT'S HANDBOOK

Revised on March 8, 2009

Dear applicant:

The decision to accept a job in a foreign country requires a lot of thought. It is a decision that should be based on reliable information about various aspects of the job itself and its environment.

Consequently, the IPA has prepared this handbook in the hope that it will be interesting and useful to all prospective instructors. It gives an overview of the Institute and particularly of the English Language Center.

This handbook may not answer all your questions. Feel free, therefore, to write us with any inquiry you may have about the job or the English Language Center.

With best wishes,

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THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) was founded by a royal decree on April 10, 1961, and is an autonomous body of the Government of Saudi Arabia with its principal facilities near the center of Riyadh. The Institute is funded entirely through allocations and grants from the Government of Saudi Arabia and charges no fees or tuition for its services. A board of directors whose chairman is the Minister of Civil Service governs the Institute, and its chief executive and academic officer is the Director General, who is of ministerial rank. The Director General is assisted by two deputy director-generals and the directors of several departments. These administrative and academic divisions include, of course, the English Language Center.

THE INSTITUTE'S BRANCHES

In order to serve the government agencies located in the western and eastern provinces of the Kingdom, the Institute maintains branches in Jeddah and Dammam. These branches have a nucleus staff, which is supplemented as needed from the headquarters in Riyadh. The branches do not have the elaborate departmental structure of the main branch, but do have program coordinators who help a director of programs administer the academic programs. In general, the activities of these branches are confined to the middle management, clerical and supervisory training programs and to the consultation services.

In 1984, the Institute opened the Women's Branch in Riyadh. It is now located in completely remodeled facilities in the Malaz Area close to the main IPA buildings. The branch is operated exclusively by women for the training of women. The academic staff at the Women's Branch is multi-national, though it is predominantly Saudi. The students attending the Women's Branch are pursuing programs similar to those offered in other branches of the Institute.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER

The aim of the English Language Center (ELC) is to develop the language proficiency of students enrolled in its courses. Enrollees in a twenty-four-hour-a-week intensive program must achieve a level of competency sufficient for them to continue in courses which have English as the medium of instruction. Eventually, these students must be prepared for placement in government service or in the private sector where skill in English is essential. The ELC may also cooperate

with other departments in providing non-intensive English instruction of four to sixteen hours per week in fields where the medium of instruction is usually Arabic. In addition to the ELC in Riyadh, the branches in Jeddah and Dammam as well as the Women's Branch in Riyadh also offer English language instruction for various training programs. Though the English programs in the branches are on a smaller scale than those at the headquarters, the same basic curriculum is followed and most of the same facilities are at their disposal.

ELC PROGRAMS

Much of the instruction in the upper 2 levels (out of 4) offered by the ELC is now English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The students working intensively are candidates for different programs, such as Hotel Service and Management, Marketing, Finance & Investment, Sales, Commercial Accounting, Banking, Hospital Administration, Secretarial Studies, Travel & Tourism, Information Management, and Supplies Management. The enrollment in the intensive programs ranges in the hundreds, and thus most of the teachers are assigned to these programs.

In order to help organize work at the ELC, the administration has created several administrative positions. Each of the sections in the intensive programs is headed by a class coordinator who handles minor administrative matters. There are also two general coordinators, one for programs in Computer Studies and one for the other programs. In addition to teaching duties, a general coordinator is responsible for overseeing all aspects of his program and acting as a liaison between the Director and the ELC teaching staff. The testing coordinator manages the details of assigning and preparing midterm and final exams in a timely and efficient manner. The placement test coordinator supervises the administration of weekly placement tests for employees from other government bodies. The curriculum coordinator suggests and updates changes to the content of the teaching materials. The CALL lab coordinator makes sure the labs run with no technical problems. The recruiting coordinator helps with recruiting new teachers. Finally, the AV coordinator fills the audiovisual needs of the ELC.

All programs utilize the talents and experience of the teachers fully. This is true, of course, in the classroom, but also in the areas of curriculum and materials development. The staff and administration constantly work to improve the quality of the English language training provided by the ELC.

A teacher's assignment can be entirely in teaching with a mixture of any skill areas, levels or programs. Under normal circumstances, a teacher's preferences are followed. However, it is sometimes the case that a teacher must have a timetable varied in level, skill and programs.

While all teachers will do at least some teaching, some may teach less than the contractual load of twenty-two hours per week so that they may perform other duties, academic or administrative. The most important of the academic duties is the preparation of instructional materials.

Within the intensive programs of the ELC, there are four possible levels: Preparatory, Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced. At each level, five subject areas are taught: Grammar, Writing, Reading, Oral, and Listening. CALL material has also been integrated into the syllabi. The language proficiency of students on entry does vary both within and between groups, thus an entrance test is utilized to try to produce a homogeneous level of ability in each group. Most students who enter the courses are, however, false-beginners.

The ELC's academic year is divided into four eight-week sessions. For most programs, the first two sessions are of a general character at the Preparatory and Elementary levels. The second two sessions involve a lot of ESP material tailored to the needs of that program for which the group is preparing. Thus, the group preparing for the Hospital Administration Program would be presented with materials to prepare them for the courses they would pursue in that field.

For most subject areas or skills, a mid-term and a final examination are given in each session, and students are required to attain an overall passing mark of 60% before proceeding to the next level.

NON-INTENSIVE PROGRAMS

Non-intensive English programs also constitute an important part of the responsibilities of the Center. Instructors at the ELC actually teach the English language courses of programs for other IPA departments such as typing, data entry, computer operations, and other fields. As is normal with such courses, the instructors must be ready to respond to a range of levels and needs in a class and program and, therefore, they must be ready to tailor a course to the particular characteristics of the students. Classes can be at the beginning level, in which case the course is a general English course. Other classes may be at an advanced level, in which case the material could consist of books in the particular field rather than ESL materials. For example, data entry

operators are taught alphabet and number recognition and basic English, while computer operators use computer manuals as texts in their courses.

ENGLISH INSTRUCTION AT THE WOMEN'S BRANCH

There are usually 10 to 12 English teachers in the ELC at the Women's Branch. They provide English instruction as part of pre-service, in-service and certain special training courses. The contractual teaching load is twenty-two contact hours a week. The office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The students entering programs come from a variety of educational backgrounds. Program prerequisites depend on the nature and complexity of the program they are following or the field they are in. In any given English class, the abilities of the students can vary.

Initially, students study general English. This is followed by ESP courses, geared to the students' individual work requirements. Teachers follow prescribed texts and are required to supplement these with independently produced worksheets and examinations.

YOUR COLLEAGUES

Most of the teachers employed in the ELC are currently from the United States, though there are also instructors from the UK, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. Teaching staff either speak English as a native language or have the fluency of a native speaker. They all have at least a master's degree in TESL or applied linguistics or other closely related fields. All instructors are very experienced.

SOCIAL COMMITTEES

The Headquarters of the Institute and the branches in Jeddah and Dammam have social committees which organize picnics, outings, and dinners periodically during the year. The social committees also maintain a fund so that the staff can take loans if sufficient funds are available. Any loan that is granted is paid back, without interest, within the period of the staff member's contract. All staff at the above branches are members and a monthly fee of SR 30 (\$8.00) is deducted from their salaries.

SOME IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

If the IPA offers you employment and you accept the offer, you will be asked to sign and return a copy of a binder called the “Offer of Employment,” which summarizes the most important points of the contract. The contract, which is signed in Saudi Arabia and governed by provisions of a university employment law, will be the legal document determining the conditions of your employment.

This contract, which is to be signed after the teacher’s arrival in the Kingdom, is of a one-year duration, and it may be renewed by mutual agreement of the instructor and the IPA. In any case, each party must notify the other (in writing) of the intention either to renew the contract or to allow it to lapse at least two months before the end of the current contract. With no written notification from either party, the contract is automatically renewed for another year. The premature termination of the contract by either party may involve financial penalties including the payment of an amount equal to two months salary to the other party.

The contractual teaching load is twenty-two contact hours a week plus regular office hours. The contact hours are normally within the regularly scheduled hours of work. You may be asked to teach hours additional to that load, in which case you would be paid an additional SR 123 (\$32.53) for each hour of teaching over the contractual load.

The contract entitles you to 60 days annual paid leave. This leave must be taken during the summer break. In addition, at the end of Ramadan and during the month of Pilgrimage there are vacations that vary in length, usually around two weeks. There are also two weeks off for teachers: a mid-year break and a spring break.

There may also be periods of time between some teaching sessions that can be utilized for in-service training programs or the like. For example, while in the process of integrating CALL, experts came in to familiarize us with the software, etc.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The Institute operates on the governmental schedule of seven hours a day, five days a week, Saturday through Wednesday. (The weekend in Saudi Arabia is Thursday and Friday.) The normal working hours are 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The IPA is open in the evening, and some departments offer evening classes.

The IPA is a research, documentation and training institution serving the government of Saudi Arabia. As such, all staff are expected to behave in a professional and even exemplary fashion. This means, among other aspects, the staff keep regular government office hours whether classes are in session or not. It also means that you are expected to come on time and not to leave early.

Dress is another aspect of professional behavior. While male teachers need not wear a coat and tie, they must, at least, wear shirts with collars, slacks and shoes. At the Women's Branch, all women are expected to dress in an acceptable manner, with ankle-length skirts and blouses which cover the elbow. On the way to and from work, women must also wear a thin dark cloak called an *abaya* as well as a head scarf.

Smoking is not permitted in the men's or women's branches: the general government regulations against smoking in public offices and buildings are strictly enforced.

To show that you are a legal resident in the Kingdom, you must carry with you at all times an *iqama*, which can be considered a residence permit. To obtain your *iqama*, you will have to give the Personnel Department your passport, the passports of your family members, photographs, and the appropriate fee which currently is SR500. Do not take any special effort to bring photographs for this purpose as there are various requirements as to the size and composition of which only local photographers would be aware. When you leave the Kingdom for any period of time – for example, during the Ramadan or Hajj vacations, you must obtain, well in advance and at your own expense, the necessary exit/re-entry visa through the Institute's Personnel Department. During all leaves, the transportation allowance is not paid.

If you leave the Kingdom during one of the Ramadan or Hajj vacations, you will have to leave with the IPA a sum of money equal to two months' salary, or obtain from one of your co-workers a guarantee for a similar amount, which goes to the IPA if you fail to return. This amount is to satisfy the part of the contract laying out a penalty for an unjustified termination of the contract. This deposit is not required for your annual leave.

Staff are normally paid before the end of each Hijri (lunar) month for work in that month. It should also be noted that there are twelve and one third Hijri months in one solar, i.e., Gregorian, year. Thus, the monthly salary offered you by the Institute should be multiplied by twelve and one third to calculate your true yearly salary for a 365-day year.

In the "Offer of Employment" mentioned above and in the various stages of correspondence, the Institute conducts with candidates for employment, copies of certain types of

documents are requested. At a later stage, you will be asked to produce either the originals of the documents or authenticated copies. The most important, naturally, are those of your academic credentials. If you wish to submit copies of your academic credentials, they can be authenticated by the Saudi Cultural Mission in your country. Otherwise, you may bring the originals with you to Riyadh to show to an official in the IPA Personnel Office.

The second most important copies are those of documents certifying your relevant teaching experience. These certifying documents should be official letters from the personnel offices of the place(s) where you worked previously or should be letters from a supervisor *on official stationary and stamped with an institutional seal if possible*. Letters of recommendation from colleagues or friends are not sufficient to satisfy this requirement. The originals of the required proofs of your experience must be produced in Riyadh and shown to an official of the Personnel Office of the Institute.

Failure to produce original documents or authenticated copies can result in a salary lower than that in the Offer of Employment or even a revocation of the Offer.

FACILITIES

The Institute's headquarters consists of several adjacent buildings. The main building contains all of the administrative offices and support departments as well as most classrooms and staff offices. The other building houses the ELC, the offices for its staff, and most of the ELC's classrooms, as well as some classrooms and offices of other departments of the Institute.

To assist teachers in the performance of their duties, a number of facilities are available. Within the ELC, there is a computer in each office with intranet and internet capabilities.. In other departments of the Institute, there are more computers, servers, photocopy machines, and audio-visual equipment, all of which are available for use by the staff of the Institute. Each instructor has an office with adequate furniture and supplies. All other office supplies are available from the ELC secretary. In the main building is the A-V Center, which stores and distributes video and audio cassettes and machines, provides a fast-copy service for audio cassettes, and assists teachers needing other audio-visual facilities. Also in the main building are several CALL labs and the main library. The main photocopy center has recently been moved to a new building on the campus. There is also a subsidized cafeteria providing full meals, snacks, and beverages, which is open from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

In the building where the English Language Center itself is situated, there is a branch of the photocopy section, a microfiche/microfilm center as well as classrooms and offices. All classrooms have multimedia capability. This building surrounds a delightful, small, formal garden treasured by the students, administration and the staff of the Institute.

Teachers at the Women's Branch also have access to CALL labs, and all classrooms are currently equipped with multimedia capability. The A-V Center cooperates in the production of audio-visual materials, and will continue to be a key source of assistance as the Institute continues to update. The facilities of the Women's Branch are on a par with the facilities of all the IPA branches. .

LIVING IN RIYADH

WEATHER

Most people believe that Saudi Arabia is always hot and dry because it is a desert. But this is not the case. Riyadh and most of the inland areas are certainly a desert, but the winters can be quite cold. The overnight low temperatures can be as low as 0 to 5 degrees centigrade (32 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit). The cold weather can last from as early as October to as late as April. During the fall and spring, Riyadh can experience some rain and thunder storms. Usually the storms are over in a matter of hours, but occasionally they can go on for a day or two. There can be dust storms at any season of the year. Normally, Riyadh is dry, and the summer temperatures are often above 40 degrees centigrade (104 degrees Fahrenheit). So, with regard to clothing, it would be a good idea to come to Riyadh prepared for cold and even wet weather in the winter and hot, dry weather in the summer.

CLOTHING AND BEHAVIOR

When you are not working at the Institute, your clothing can be informal, but it should also be modest for both men and women. In public, men should avoid bare chests and shorts, which do not go down to the knee. Women should wear a head scarf and the *abaya* mentioned previously. At a minimum, they should wear loose non-revealing clothing, which covers the arms, legs and hair. You may see people in Riyadh who do not follow these guidelines. However, it is strongly suggested that by following the guidelines you can avoid unnecessary difficulties while, at the

same time, indicating respect for local customs.

Between Saudi Arabia and the West, there are some basic differences in social customs and behavior, which are useful to mention. The most important difference is that the sale and use of intoxicants, including alcohol, marijuana and hard drugs, are forbidden. Their use, despite this ban, can lead to serious consequences, most notably cancellation of your contract and deportation. Capital crimes include murder, rape and drug smuggling. Fornication, adultery and sodomy are also felonies and have hard punishments. Christian missionary work and western dating are also not allowed.

Housing

The Institute provides housing for all of its expatriate employees. Married staff are housed in individual villas in the Al-Yamama compound. The compound is located in the Sa'adah district of Riyadh which is approximately twenty minutes by car from the IPA. The villas vary in size and range from studios up to four-bedroom units. Single men and women are provided single-bedroom apartments in separate buildings in the Malaz district which is within walking distance of the Institute.

Married Housing

All the villas are modern, air-conditioned, curtained and furnished. The kitchens are equipped with electric refrigerators and electric cooking ranges. Employees buy their own kitchen utensils, linen, blankets, bedspreads and any supplementary furniture they may require. Both 110 and 220 volt outlets are available in the villa. The units also have a washer, dryer, dishwasher and are fitted with telephone points.

Although tap water is safe for drinking, some people prefer to buy bottled spring water from local stores and supermarkets.

As stated in the contract, housing is free, though all employees are required to pay a refundable damage/cleaning deposit of SR 2000 (\$533.00). The deposit is deducted in two equal installments of SR 1000 (\$266.00) each. The amount, less charges, is refundable at the end of your last one-year contract. While electricity and water are paid for by the instructor, the bills rarely exceed SR 80 (\$37.34) at single housing, and SR 375 (\$100) at married housing in the hottest summer months.

Single Men's IPA Housing

The single-status male IPA teachers live at the 'Adhel' apartment building. It is an older building situated about a 10-minute walk from the IPA. Two common landmarks near the Adhel apartment building is the Al Yamama Hotel and King Abdulaziz University Hospital.

The Adhel apartment building has six floors accessed by 2 elevators and a stair well. The main lobby has 24-hour security manned by Saudi IPA security guards. Each apartment consists of: a bedroom, a living room, a small kitchen, a hallway, and a bathroom. Most apartments have at least one balcony. Each apartment has individual air conditioning units in the living room and bedroom. The kitchen has an electric stove and fridge. The apartments are furnished with the basics such as living room furniture, a bed, an armoire, a desk, curtains, a table and chairs. However, each resident is responsible for his own bedding, kitchen utensils, dishes and cooking utensils as well as a TV, stereo, computer or other such electronic equipment. Residents pay their own electricity bill each month. A telephone extension line is provided, but the resident must purchase the phone itself to utilize the line. Local calls can be made by first dialling 9, then the number. Long distance is not possible from the extension lines. However, direct land lines can be requested and installed.

There are a variety of shops within walking distance such as grocery stores, restaurants, a laundromat, a barber shop, and a call cabin for phoning long distance. There are other larger shopping centers, malls, hotels and restaurants easily accessible by taxi. Locally taxis are referred to as limos (limousines).

SHOPPING AND COST OF LIVING

Shopping is the most popular pastime in Riyadh. One can find most of the things which are available in the West, with the exception of certain items banned by Saudi law, such as alcohol, pork, products which contain these things and pornographic materials. All household, electrical, and electronic goods are available often at prices less than in Europe and the USA. Computer equipment, too, is sold in a highly competitive market.

It is difficult to generalize about prices for food and other necessities, because where you shop and how you shop --- for example, whether or not you shop at places where prices are not fixed, and therefore subject to bargaining --- can affect the price you pay. The increasing number of large supermarkets has increased competition and has helped in keeping fixed prices at a reasonable level. It must be understood that the remarks above do not take into account the large

public markets and shopping districts or seasonal variations. If you want to buy in bulk and shop at the public markets, you can save a great deal of money.

The large supermarkets sell goods and food products from all over the world. *Safeway* of the USA has stores in the big cities. *The Euromarche Supermarket and Department Store* is also popular in Riyadh as well as *Carrefour* and *Geant*. There are many others from which to choose. The variety of imports offers a greater choice of products here than in an average European or North American city. There are also large, new shopping complexes which contain a wide variety of shops and department stores.

There are many restaurants all over the city which cater to a wide variety of tastes and prices. The big hotels in Riyadh have good restaurants, but they tend to be expensive. Other less expensive establishments include several Chinese, Indian, Italian, Thai, and Mexican restaurants, as well as fish and chips shops and American-style fast food restaurants.

All shops and businesses are closed for about half an hour during prayer times. The times for the beginning of prayers vary according to the season of the year, but they are published in the local English language newspapers and are posted in front of most of the supermarkets. Aside from prayer times, shops are open from 9 a.m. to 12 noon or 1 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. There are a few supermarkets, such as the Safeway and Panda chains, that are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The cost of living in Saudi Arabia is reasonable compared to Western countries and other Gulf states. Since housing and transportation are covered in the contract, an IPA employee can easily save up to 70% of his/her monthly income.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Recreational facilities are available to all at the married housing complex, among them a tennis court, a bowling alley, and a large outdoor swimming pool. There are also facilities for women which are scheduled at separate hours. For men, there is also a complete sports facility with a multi-use court, a weight room, a game room, a sauna and a swimming pool at the Riyadh headquarters building.

Women desiring recreational opportunities may alternatively join private sport or health clubs, the use of which is exclusive to them or which provide separate hours for them. The fees for these private facilities are comparable to those charged in the USA or Britain. Such private

facilities also exist for men.

Many expatriates have formed other groups such as football (soccer), volleyball, squash, tennis, and bowling leagues, as well as a "Road Runners Club." You can even join a scuba diving club, which makes frequent trips to Jeddah and Dammam. To participate, one usually has to contact someone already involved. Many people enjoy the desert, either camping or picnicking there or just taking an off-the-road vehicle to explore.

There is little in the way of public entertainment. Saudi social life centers around the home, family outings such as picnics, and visiting friends. Therefore, cinemas, theaters, some kinds of clubs, and discos do not exist. Other than sports, shopping is the main recreational activity, and most people find the local *souqs* (markets) quite fascinating. In and around Riyadh, there are specialized *souqs* for nearly every item one can think of: gold, silver, antiques, carpets, second-hand cars, etc.

There are many good book shops offering a wide selection of Western newspapers, magazines and books. Newspapers from the UK usually arrive the day after publication. Among US newspapers, the *International Herald Tribune* is sold everywhere and the *USA Today* can be found in many shops.

Two English-language newspapers are published in the Kingdom, the *Arab News* (www.arabnews.com) and the *Saudi Gazette* (www.saudigazette.com.sa). The cost is SR 2 (\$0.53) per copy.

As far as television is concerned, there is an English-language channel in addition to the Arabic channel. Present broadcasting is for 24 hours a day. Programs include children's shows, news, documentaries, comedies, dramas, and sports. A portion of the programs is locally produced and the other portions may be from the US, Britain, Australia, Germany, etc. In addition, there are many shops which sell or rent movies and foreign television programs on videos and DVDs. Most expatriates buy televisions and VCRs, which are available at reasonable prices. Satellite TV is now quite common also, with many free-to-air channels and the advent of Orbit and Showtime networks being broadcast in the region. Several options are available for satellite hook-up.

There are also English-language AM and FM radio broadcasts funded entirely by the Saudi government. Radio stations broadcast a variety of music, features, and news every day. Many expatriates obtain short-wave radio receivers for listening to the BBC or other foreign broadcast services.

SCHOOLS

English-speaking children can be educated under the British or American system. The Saudi Arabian International School (British Section) offers instruction for children from the ages of 5 to 11, while the Saudi Arabian International School (American Section) offers instruction from grades 1 to 10 (ages 6 to 15). They will be adding other grades at a later date. Both schools are located at some distance from the married housing compound, so it is necessary to arrange for transportation. Since spaces are limited, particularly in the British School, parents are advised to enroll their children as soon as possible. It is well to remember that the schools normally require prepayment of the tuition and fees. It is always possible, however, to work out an arrangement whereby the employee can obtain an advance from the IPA, or the school attended by the children may postpone payment for a short time.

In addition to the English-medium schools mentioned above, there is a French school, a German school, and some other private schools attached to embassies.

Many IPA families send their children to Manarat Al-Riyadh, a private Saudi school with separate English-medium facilities for boys and girls from grades K-12. There are usually openings in all classes and the tuition is considerably less than that of the International Schools. The curriculum includes Arabic and Islamic studies and some required subjects which are not taught at the International Schools.

A number of small but reportedly good pre-schools exist around the city. Also within the married staff residential compound, an inexpensive, day-care center is operated by IPA women.

For those wishing to bring children with them, we will gladly send more information upon request.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

IPA employees are entitled to free treatment and medicines in government medical facilities. However, in some instances, there may be restrictions or a low user fee, or a referral may be necessary.

For minor ailments most people choose to go to smaller public or private clinics and hospitals. Care is much quicker in such places, as the large public facilities are often crowded. The private facilities charge around a SR 100 (\$26.66) consultation fee, with laboratory and

specialists' fees and medicines being extra. Birth control is counseled and assisted at government clinics, but abortion is prohibited except in certain extreme cases. The clinics have separate facilities for women, which give very extensive pre-natal and post-natal care, and where women give birth when there are no complications.

At the main IPA, there is a good clinic with a physician and a laboratory technician. The clinic is open every day to men during office hours. This clinic has a modern laboratory. The services of the clinic and the drugs it provides are free of charge. The IPA medical personnel also staff a modern clinic at married housing on Saturday, Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. For any special problems diagnosed at either clinic, the physician will refer you to a specialist employed by the government. Such specialized treatment is also free of charge to you.

Dental care must be arranged with private dental clinics which are readily available and provide good service at rates comparable to such service in the States.

Medicines are available at the government clinics, hospitals and commercial pharmacies. Medicines obtained at pharmacies in government facilities are free, but if you go to a commercial pharmacy, you must purchase the medicines. The prices are usually lower than in the USA and the UK. There are many pharmacies in different sections of the city which remain open all night. The duty pharmacies are announced in the English-language papers daily. The shopping complex near the married housing includes a twenty-four-hour, seven-day-a-week pharmacy.

TRANSPORTATION

The cost of gasoline (petrol) is relatively inexpensive compared to what it is in the West -- about half the price in the USA and a quarter of the price in Europe. Car prices are also comparable to those in the USA and the UK, and most makes and models are sold and serviced. Loans are generally only available for new cars and for select used cars. However, if you wish to buy a less expensive used vehicle, you should bring cash with you or be prepared to wait until you can save enough to purchase suitable transportation. Original spare parts and servicing can be readily found throughout the city. A Saudi Driver's License is required since the International Driving Permit is not recognized, and your home country or state license is only valid for ninety days. The procedure for obtaining a local license is quite straightforward, and you must present your old license as proof of your ability to drive.

There is a city-wide bus system which is cheap and reliable, though service may be less erratic at times. The rate for a single journey to any part of the city is SR 2 (\$0.53).

Limousines, like Western taxis, are common. All limousines have meters, but a common flat rate for a single trip is SR 15 (\$4). If you call the dispatcher or start at a limousine stand, the price for the journey is fixed.

BANKS

The banking system and foreign exchange businesses are reliable and provide all the normal services of a bank in the West, including electronic banking. All banks are Saudi-owned, but several are affiliated with much larger banking groups. For example, the Saudi-British Bank is connected with HSBC, and the Saudi-American Bank (Samba) is affiliated with Citibank of New York.

Banks are normally open every weekday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. In addition, major branches are open Thursday mornings until noon. Money changers tend to have longer hours. Automatic teller machines are in use at many banks for banking outside normal banking hours.

There is no restriction on foreign exchange in the Kingdom. If you wish to exchange any cash for Saudi riyals upon your arrival in the Kingdom, you should bring only \$100 bills (or its equivalent in another major currency) for that purpose. The Saudi riyal is currently 3.75 to the US dollar and has been at that rate for many years.

Bank transfers abroad by telex cost SR 20 (\$5.33). Checks on a foreign bank when acquired with Saudi riyals are usually free. Travelers' checks are bought and sold throughout Saudi Arabia, and major credit cards, such as Visa, Master Card and American Express, are also widely used.

POSTAL SERVICE

The postal service is fairly reliable. A letter to or from the UK usually takes four days and to the USA around ten days. Mail coming from the USA can take more time. The cost for international airmail for twenty grams is SR 2 (\$0.53). Internal letters cost SR 1 (\$0.27). All employees receive their mail at the IPA, although personal post boxes can be rented at the Central Post Office.

The IPA address is:

**English Language Center
Institute of Public Administration
PO Box 205
Riyadh, 11141
Saudi Arabia**

There are post boxes at many locations around the city. You must purchase stamps at branch post offices, one of which is located close to the Institute's headquarters.

THE DAMMAM AND JEDDAH BRANCHES

Many of the comments about life in Riyadh apply to Dammam and Jeddah as well. However, there are a few specific differences which should be mentioned. The most obvious is the recreational potential of the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea. The climate of the coastal cities is also different. The winter is much shorter and the general climate is much more humid. Accommodation and transportation differ to a degree. The points are discussed below. The last point to note is that employment in Jeddah and Dammam is currently available only for men.

DAMMAM

The IPA apartments are large. Furniture is similar to that provided for staff in Riyadh. Transport to and from the Institute is normally provided by the teachers who have invested in a car. There is, however, a regular bus service operating in and around Dammam. It also links Dammam with the airport and nearby towns. Taxis are also available. There is a "shared taxi" route between Dammam and Khobar.

There is a branch of the Saudi Arabian International Schools in Dhahran, which is close to Dammam. It has both British and American sections. The tuition and fees are roughly the same as in Riyadh, although there is some difference. There is also a branch of the Manarat schools mentioned previously.

JEDDAH

The housing provided by the Institute consists of furnished apartments in a building with five floors and an elevator. There are about thirty apartments in the building. The apartments have several rooms and one and a half bathrooms.

The apartment building is located about twelve kilometers from the Institute in an area convenient to shopping, public transportation, and hospitals. For those without cars, the Institute and most other destinations can be reached by cheap and reliable public transportation.

There are four English-medium schools in Jeddah. The Saudi Arabian International School (American Section and British Section) is for children up to and including the age of fourteen. Jeddah Preparatory, which is run on British lines, is for children up to the age of twelve. The Continental School, which is run on British lines, is also for children up to the age of sixteen, and prepares its pupils for the IGCSE examination. Manarat schools also operate a complete branch in Jeddah, with English and Arabic sections from kindergarten to twelve.

IN CLOSING . . .

It may be difficult, but certainly rewarding to live and work in a foreign country. Most of our expatriate staff members have found working here challenging and exciting. At the outset, it was stated that the goal of this handbook is to provide you with the information you need to help you make a decision about coming to the English Language Center of the IPA. We hope that you have found the information useful. We are constantly making efforts to improve the quality of the information as well as to keep it up to date. So your questions and comments would be very useful.

To finish, we wish you a successful career whether or not you join us at the Institute.

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