Congratulations on enrolling in a study abroad program! Your international experience is sure to contribute to your development as a person, a scholar, and a global citizen.

We have compiled this handbook to provide you with information that you will need to prepare for your semester or year abroad. Even though you will receive information directly from your Host University, please review this handbook now and share this information with your parents.

Your biggest challenge while abroad will be to adapt your habits. Your academic advisor and classmates will be your most valuable resources, and flexibility and resourcefulness your most valuable tools. While the prospect of working in a different academic setting may seem daunting, the benefits of this type of experience for intellectual and personal growth can be enormous. Take advantage of the strengths of the Host University and community and try to live as the local students live.

If you face difficulties or experience confusion, let us know. Our office is always ready to help. Most importantly, have a great time abroad!

The OIP Team
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST** (Page 3)

- **TRAVEL PREPARATIONS** (Page 4)
  - Pre-departure Research (Page 4)
  - Travel Documents (Page 5)
  - Travel Arrangements (Page 6)
  - Packing (Page 6)
  - Financial Considerations (Page 7)
  - Health Preparations (Page 7)
  - Housing (Page 8)
  - Phones Abroad (Page 9)

- **AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT** (Page 9)
  - AUB Course Approval (Page 9)
  - Final Confirmation and Clearance Form (Page 10)
  - Finances at AUB (Page 10)

- **WHILE ABROAD** (Page 11)
  - AUB Communication (Page 11)
  - Cultural Adjustment (Page 11)
  - Academics (Page 12)

- **SAFETY & STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT** (Page 13)

- **EMERGENCIES ABROAD** (Page 14)

- **OIP CONTACT INFORMATION** (Page 15)
PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to stay on track as you prepare to study abroad. Keep reading for more detailed information!

✓ TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

☐ Make sure that your passport is valid for a **minimum of 12 months**.
☐ Begin the **visa application process** as soon as you have your acceptance letter / and or your I-20/ DS-2019 if you are travelling to the US.
☐ Make your travel plans.
☐ Verify your **health insurance policy** and visit your doctor.
☐ Secure housing for the duration of your stay.
☐ Pay all fees due to the host university by its deadlines.

✓ AT AUB

☐ Complete your **AUB Study Abroad Application Form** including all course approval forms and turn them in to the Office of International Programs (West Hall-322).
☐ Complete the Final Confirmation and Clearance Form and submit it to OIP by the published deadline.
☐ **DO NOT REGISTER FOR CLASSES AT AUB**.
☐ Pay all fees due to AUB by the deadline (keep reading for further details).
☐ **Request** to join the “**AUB Study Abroad Community**” Facebook group and get in touch with past and current study abroad participants.
☐ Attend a mandatory **Pre-Departure** meeting with OIP.

✓ ON SITE- SAFETY PLANNING

☐ Set your **AUB e-mail address** to forward to your e-mail abroad.
☐ Read health, safety and travel recommendations for your destination.
☐ Talk to your bank about your travel plans (see more below).
☐ Make copies of all your important documents (e.g. passport, visa, insurance).
☐ Keep your friends and family informed of your activities.

CONTACT OIP WITH QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK
Recommendations for Everyone

- Research your host country using the Internet, travel books, newspapers, magazines, and international news programs.
- Talk with study abroad returnees, AUB staff, faculty, and international or exchange students who have studied or lived abroad.
- Be informed and capable of discussing current affairs in Lebanon while abroad.

Countries/Cultures

- [www.onlinenewspapers.com](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com) (international newspapers)
- [www.countrywatch.com](http://www.countrywatch.com)
- [www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com)
- [www.culturecrossing.net](http://www.culturecrossing.net)

Recommended Guides

- Rough Guides series ([www.roughguides.com](http://www.roughguides.com))
- Let’s Go Series ([www.letsgo.com](http://www.letsgo.com))
- Lonely Planet series ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))
- Frommer’s series ([www.frommers.com](http://www.frommers.com))
- **Maximizing Study Abroad: A student's Guide to strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use** (R. Michael Paige et al., 2002)
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Keep copies of all passport and visa application documents you submit!

You are responsible for being in full compliance with immigration regulations in your host country. To study abroad, your passport must be valid for at least 12 months beyond your intended period of stay. The OIP does not provide visa assistance for students going abroad; you must read your host country’s visa requirements and procedures and consult with the international office at your host university. If you experience difficulties obtaining a visa, we encourage you to contact your OIP Study Abroad Advisor for further assistance. Make sure you obtain your visa ahead of time, since the application procedure may take time.

Documents that you must carry with you when you travel:

- Passport and visa (if necessary)
- DS-2019/ I-20 (If you are going to the U.S)
- Driver’s license (if applicable)/ I.D.
- Money - currency, credit cards
- Medical insurance information
- Letter of acceptance from host institution
- Copy of passport and visa
- Copy of tickets and itinerary
- Emergency contact information (name, telephone number, address) at host institution and at home

Scan and keep electronically:

- Copy of passport and visa
- Copy of tickets and itinerary
- Copy of credit cards (front & back) and telephone numbers to reach the card companies
- Emergency contact information (name, telephone number & address) at host institution
- Copy of acceptance letter
- Copy of the pre-approved AUB Study Abroad Application
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

- You are responsible for your own travel arrangements. If you plan to arrive before the start of your classes, book accommodation for that time!
- Confirm the dates your housing is available before booking your plane ticket.
- Read all guidelines and restrictions before purchasing airline tickets and passes. Remember that most airlines charge fees if you change your travel dates after purchase.

Websites that may be useful as you make your travel arrangements:

http://www.expedia.com/
http://www.raileurope.com/index.html
http://www.hiusa.org/
http://www.kayak.com/flights
http://www.ryanair.com/

PACKING

- Governments, airports and airlines enforce strict regulations on the content and weight of baggage. Consult with the airline’s website for details.
- Use sturdy luggage and pack lightly. Be sure you can lift your own luggage. Remember to leave space for gifts you might purchase!
- Secure a luggage tag on each bag. Place your overseas and Lebanese contact information on each tag.
- Keep your passport, money and acceptance letters in your carry on bag.
- Not sure where to start? Check out Packing Dos and Don’ts and the ultimate Study Abroad Packing List.
- Watch this video for packing tips

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PACKING LIST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your host institution’s acceptance letter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact information for overseas staff and OIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layers for varied weather</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate clothing for culture and climate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical prescriptions for the duration of your program in their original containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapters and voltage converter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightweight backpack for regional traveling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of your passport, visa, medical prescriptions, and all bank cards.</td>
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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

☐ In most countries, you can use credit, ATM and debit cards. Your ATM card must have access to international networks but check your bank’s overseas fees before departure. Keep backup currency.

☐ Some banks have international partners that do not charge ATM fees or charge reduced fees. Ask your bank about their international partners.

☐ Take another ATM or credit card as a back-up. Leave copies of all bank cards in Lebanon.

☐ Take local currency with you for your arrival. Take US currency which can be exchanged in an emergency.

☐ Notify your credit and debit card banks before departure. Otherwise they may think your cards were stolen when you use them abroad. Take your bank customer service numbers abroad.

☐ Research what is needed to open an overseas bank account if appropriate. Check with the international office at your host university if they have any bank recommendations for international students.

☐ Evaluate your program’s cost. Prepare a budget – check out this e-book and article for budgeting advice.

HEALTH PREPARATIONS

Medical Insurance
The AUB Health Insurance Plan (HIP) does not cover you while you are abroad. If you have health insurance coverage, make sure it will cover you during your stay at the host country. OIP suggests that you consult with the international office at the Host University about available health insurance options. Research your insurance options thoroughly prior to leaving Lebanon. In order to obtain a Schengen visa, if traveling to Europe, you need to have a travel insurance that covers for the duration of your stay.

Students with Chronic Illness
☐ If you have a physical or psychological condition that requires long-term treatment, you must notify your OIP Study Abroad Advisor so that necessary assistance can be arranged. You must also consult your physician or counselor about your plan to go abroad. Seek their advice and discuss overseas medical care.

☐ Consider possible consequences of stress from cultural adjustment and different medical practices.

☐ You are strongly encouraged to inform the international office at your Host University about any medical condition for which you need special assistance, do this before you leave.
Check-ups, Vaccinations, Prescriptions

- Have medical and dental exams before departure.
- Check that all your vaccinations are current. Certain countries may also require or recommend vaccinations against specific diseases before departure. Visit the following website for details: [http://www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)
- Bring medications in their original bottles and copies of all written prescriptions.
- When feasible, bring medication that lasts for your entire stay abroad. It is not always possible to obtain all medications abroad.

HOUSING

Many universities offer housing options on and off campus. Check the website of your Host University and get in touch with their international office to explore these options. You can also join our Facebook group “[AUB Study Abroad Community](https://www.facebook.com/groups/AUBStudyAbroadCommunity)” and get in touch with students who traveled before you or who are still studying in the same country. Ask them about housing options and do an internet-based search prior to travelling.

PHONES ABROAD

- You may be able to use your Lebanese cell phone abroad. Contact your provider for rates.
- Ask your Host Institution for advice about getting a local phone/SIM card for making local calls.
- Use Skype, Whatsapp, and Viber to communicate with home for free.
AUB COURSE APPROVAL

- You must obtain course approval from the appropriate AUB chairperson, Faculty Curriculum Committee and your academic advisor for each course you plan to take abroad.
- Submit the complete AUB Study Abroad Application to the OIP in Room 320 and keep a copy for yourself.
- You will receive credit for all course work completed abroad as long as the relevant academic departments at AUB have pre-approved the courses. Credits received on Study Abroad/Exchange Programs are considered as transfer credits, and will show as pass/fail on your transcript.
- Students who decide to change one or more of their pre-approved courses once they are at the host university must contact their department chair by email and petition for approval of the replacement or added course(s) within one month of the beginning of the semester at AUB. Otherwise they risk not being granted the course transfer upon return to AUB.
- The maximum academic load for undergraduate students during a regular semester abroad is equivalent to 17 AUB credits while the minimum is 12. Students who opt to take more than 17 or less than 12 AUB credits, must submit a petition to their Faculty and provide OIP with proof of approval prior to going abroad. The same policy applies to graduate students but students should first consult with their faculty regarding the minimum and maximum number of credits they are eligible to take abroad.
FINAL CONFIRMATION AND CLEARANCE FORM

☐ All students must complete the Final Confirmation and Clearance Form for Study Abroad by the due date.
☐ If you submit the Final Confirmation and Clearance Form for Study Abroad after the due date, you risk losing your study abroad placement. The form is available in OIP Room 320 and must be returned to the OIP.
☐ Once we receive your Final Confirmation and Clearance Form for Study Abroad, the OIP in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar will register and bill you for either study abroad or exchange.

FINANCES AT AUB

Exchange students
☐ AUB undergraduate exchange students will continue to pay the usual AUB tuition rate appropriate to a 15-credit course load. This also applies to Erasmus + grantees. If you plan to enroll in more than 17 or less than 15 credits, you must inform OIP by completing the below form within one month after the start of the AUB semester otherwise you will be charged for 15 credits.
☐ AUB graduate exchange students will continue to pay the usual AUB tuition rate appropriate to a 9-credit course load. This also applies to Erasmus + grantees. If you plan to enroll in more or less than 9 credits, you must inform OIP by completing the below form by the assigned deadline otherwise you will be charged for 9 credits.

Number of credits taken abroad : https://survey.aub.edu.lb/index.php/816771/lang-en

☐ Exchange students on financial aid, scholarship or graduate assistantship may continue to receive financial assistance from AUB. Consult with the Office of Financial Aid or the faculty concerned for more information.

NOTE: The AUB withdrawal policy applies and students should follow the same dates as mentioned in the AUB registration guide: www.aub.edu.lb/registrar/Pages/index.aspx

Study abroad students
AUB study abroad students will not be charged AUB tuition BUT will still be required to pay the Internet, computing & social activity fees to maintain an active student status. Please contact Mr. Nizar Younis at ny02@aub.edu.lb should you have any questions about payments at AUB. This policy does not apply to students going abroad during the summer semester.

*REMEMBER to pay the AUB fees by the deadline*
AUB COMMUNICATION

- It is very important that you send your international contact details to the OIP soon after arrival by completing the following survey: https://survey.aub.edu.lb/index.php/119111/lang-en
- AUB will communicate with you via your AUB email account. Be sure to check it while abroad or forward it to your preferred email address. Remember that you will receive email communication for important issues like course registration for the next semester and payment, so please check your AUB email regularly.
- Stay connected to the OIP on Social Media via:
  - Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/oip.aub
  - AUB Study Abroad Community: www.facebook.com/groups/267039283417183/
  - Twitter: https://twitter.com/OIP_AUB
  - Instagram: OIP_AUB

  Remember to #AUBGOESABROAD when you post pictures on social media!

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Once abroad, you may face an adjustment period referred to as “culture shock”. The degree of “shock” depends on such factors as length of study abroad, your flexibility, and tolerance for ambiguity, degree of difference between your home and host culture, prior experience abroad, and your expectations.

Culture shock is a normal part of study abroad. It shows that you are experiencing the differences between your culture and that of the host country. Symptoms of culture shock can include: homesickness; depression; feeling lost and out of place; frustration; irritability; and fatigue. If you experience culture shock, remember that it happens to everyone and to take advantage of the resources available to you. Talk to peers, your host Institution, or a counselor. Keep in touch with your family and friends at home, but remember to be present abroad and don’t spend all your time on your computer. Consider challenges as learning opportunities and remember to have a sense of humor!
Some suggestions for dealing with culture shock include:

- Embrace your host culture and embrace its differences.
- Keep an open mind. We all have preconceived ideas and beliefs that come into question while abroad.
- Get to know others at your host university: Do not isolate yourself!
- Learn as much as you can about your host culture.
- Find a “cultural informant”, such as a local person with whom you can discuss your frustrations and encounters with differences.
- Maintain a support structure with others, particularly those going through the same experience but do not retreat into a Lebanese “clique” as a means of avoiding the discomfort of culture shock.
- Keep a journal. Record your impressions of new experiences and the transformations that are occurring with you.
- Remember that insight results from sustained and direct contact with your host culture, not from observation at a safe distance.
- Want to learn more? Check out these resources – International students in the US, tips for study abroad.

**ACADEMICS**

**Course registration**

- Take a full course load at your host institution. If you wish to overload or underload courses abroad, contact your faculty and OIP before finalizing your course registration.
- After you enroll in courses at the host institution, submit your final registration to the OIP and make sure you get the approval of your faculty.

**Pass/Fail**

- Your classes will appear as pass/fail on your AUB transcript.
- Check your host university’s grading system and consult with your faculty on what is considered a passing grade at AUB. Note that each faculty has a different policy; it is therefore the student’s responsibility to find out what the policy is in his/her faculty.

**Transcripts**

- Make sure that you do not have any outstanding debt with your host university at the end of the semester.
- Request to have your transcript sent to OIP at the address below and be sure to have a copy of your own.

**OIP Mailing address:**
American University of Beirut
Office of International Programs
PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh 1107 2020
Beirut, Lebanon
SAFETY & STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

We expect you to become familiar with the code of conduct of your host university and respect and the host country’s local laws. Please always remember that you are representing AUB and Lebanon abroad!

Student Responsibilities
- Educate yourself about, and fully integrate yourself into, your host country’s culture; fully participate in host university-sponsored events and engage with the local community.
- Be an exemplary AUB ambassador to your host country and university by taking full responsibility for your personal conduct and academic performance.
- Consider host country culture, attitudes, and laws regarding personal relationships, sexuality, race, religion, gender, etc.
- Achieve your own study abroad goals by carefully reading all program materials and responding in a timely manner to communications from the OIP and host university staff.

Safeguarding your documents and valuables
- Keep your passport and visa in a secure place. Carry copies when not travelling.
- Be careful with bank card numbers, receipts and PINs. Exercise caution at ATM machines.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash or all of your money in one place. Do not count money in public.
- Do not leave valuables lying around.

Obeying Local laws
- You are subject to the laws and legal system of the state of your host country.
- Learn the local laws and obey them.
- Illegal or unacceptable behavior will result in a Dean’s warning from AUB. OIP and the host university can dismiss you from the program if necessary.

Street Smarts
- Be aware of your surroundings. Stay in populated, well-lit areas. Travel with friends at night.
- Get off your phone while walking – you are an easy target when you are not paying attention.
- Avoid checking your map on the street. Go into a café or shop.
- Act like a local. Take cues from your peers in terms of dress, language, and behavior.
- Know the local phone system and emergency numbers.
- Avoid demonstrations or large political gatherings.
Personal Safety

☐ Carry your medical insurance card at all times.

☐ Let relatives know your travel itinerary and contact them upon arrival. If you have a roommate/host family/international student coordinator, also let them know your plans.

☐ Pay attention to the local health, safety, and travel recommendations.

☐ You should not drive while overseas. Use caution when riding in vehicles. Driving behavior and laws vary by location.

☐ In some locations, exercise caution with water and dairy products. Avoid raw or undercooked food. Be wary of food available at street vendors.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

1. Prior to traveling anywhere, register with your local embassy abroad.

2. Take careful note of your host university’s emergency procedures. Pay close attention to instruction provided in the program orientation and materials. Always keep your program emergency contact information with you. This may include entering the primary contact’s cell phone number into your phone and keeping an emergency contact card in your wallet or purse.

3. For a medical emergency, go to the nearest hospital or clinic. Always keep your health insurance card with you and call them as soon as possible if you have a medical emergency. Alert the international office at your host university of an emergency so that they can notify AUB and your family to provide assistance as needed.

4. In a politically volatile situation or natural disaster, contact the international office staff immediately so they can take inventory of their students. Heed any instructions they provide. If necessary, contact your embassy for assistance.

5. Notify the OIP as soon as possible in the event of an emergency abroad. Contact information is located on the next page of this handbook.

6. In case of emergency outside of AUB office hours, call the AUB protection Office at +961 1-350000 Ext: 2400.

7. Hit the “safe” button on Facebook to let friends and family know you are ok.
OIP CONTACT INFORMATION

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