



AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

STUDY ABROAD AND EXCHANGE STUDENT HANDBOOK

CONGRATS!

Congratulations on enrolling in a study abroad program! Your international experience will contribute to your development as a person, a scholar, and a global citizen. We have compiled this handbook to provide you with the information you will need to prepare for your semester or year abroad. Although 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 and routines. Your academic advisor and classmates will be your most valuable resources, and flexibility and resourcefulness will be 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 local students do. If you face difficulties or have questions, let us know. Our office is always ready to help.

Most importantly, have a great time abroad!

The Office of International Programs (OIP) Team



TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT TO DO AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT? 6

AUB COURSE APPROVAL
COURSE LOAD REQUIREMENTS
TRANSFERRING CREDITS BACK TO AUB
FINAL CLEARANCE FORM

FINANCES AT AUB 8

EXCHANGE STUDENTS
UNDERGRADUATE
GRADUATE
FINANCIAL AID
WITHDRAWAL POLICY

TRAVEL PREPARATIONS 10

A) PRE-DEPARTURE RESEARCH
B) WHAT TO DO WHILE ABROAD?

CONTACT INFORMATION 21



WHAT TO DO AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT?

AUB COURSE APPROVAL

- **Step 1:** Apply for course approval. You must obtain pre-approval from the appropriate AUB chairperson, the Faculty Curriculum Committee, and your academic advisor for each course you plan to take abroad by submitting “study abroad” petitions on the [*Online Petition and Forms*](#).
- **Step 2:** As exchange or study abroad students, you are not permitted to register at more than one university at the same time. You must be registered only at your host university during your exchange period.

All courses must be in-person. Online courses are not accepted.

Graduate students: You are not allowed to register for comprehensive exams at AUB while you are abroad.

COURSE LOAD REQUIREMENTS

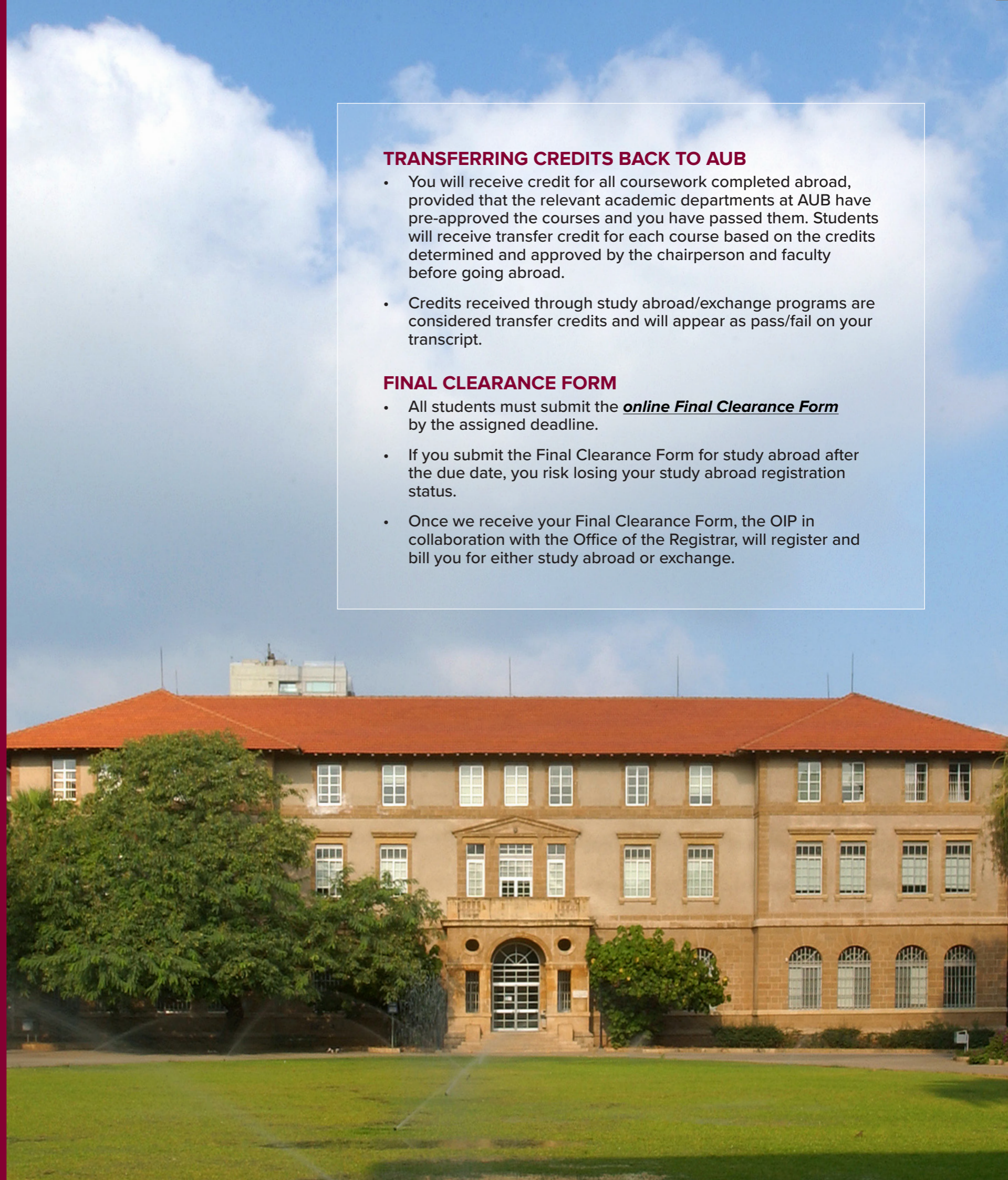
- The maximum academic load for undergraduate students during a regular semester abroad is equivalent to 17 credits, while the minimum is 12.
- Students who opt to take more than 17 or fewer than 12 credits must submit a petition to their faculty and provide OIP with proof of approval prior to going abroad. The same policy applies to graduate students, but they should first consult with their faculty regarding the minimum and maximum number of credits they are eligible to take abroad.

TRANSFERRING CREDITS BACK TO AUB

- You will receive credit for all coursework completed abroad, provided that the relevant academic departments at AUB have pre-approved the courses and you have passed them. Students will receive transfer credit for each course based on the credits determined and approved by the chairperson and faculty before going abroad.
- Credits received through study abroad/exchange programs are considered transfer credits and will appear as pass/fail on your transcript.

FINAL CLEARANCE FORM

- All students must submit the [*online Final Clearance Form*](#) by the assigned deadline.
- If you submit the Final Clearance Form for study abroad after the due date, you risk losing your study abroad registration status.
- Once we receive your Final Clearance Form, 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

OIP usually grants a deadline extension, with no late payment fees, to all exchange and study abroad students. Students must abide by the deadline given and pay their fees accordingly.

UNDERGRADUATE

- Students will continue to pay the usual AUB tuition rate for a 15-credit course load, including miscellaneous fees. This also applies to Erasmus+ grantees.
- If you plan to enroll in more than 17 or fewer than 15 credits, you must inform OIP by completing the ***Credits Taken Abroad by Exchange Students*** form within one month after the start of the AUB semester; otherwise, you will be charged for 15 credits.
- All exchange students are given an extended deadline to settle their fees. OIP will communicate this via their AUB email accounts.

GRADUATE

- Students will continue to pay the usual AUB tuition rate for a 9-credit course load, including the miscellaneous fees. This also applies to Erasmus+ grantees.
- If you plan to enroll in more or fewer than 9 credits, you must inform OIP by completing the ***Credits Taken Abroad by Exchange Students*** form by the assigned deadline; otherwise, you will be charged for 9 credits.
- All exchange students are given an extended deadline to settle their fees. OIP will communicate this via their AUB email accounts.

FINANCIAL AID

Exchange students on financial aid, a scholarship or a graduate assistantship may continue to receive financial assistance from AUB. Consult with the Office of Financial Aid or the relevant faculty for more information. Students must ensure that their Financial aid, scholarship or GA is finalized by providing the relevant office or department with all required documents prior to going abroad.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

The AUB withdrawal policy applies and students should follow the same dates as mentioned in the AUB registration guide.

STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS

AUB study abroad students will not be charged AUB tuition but will still be required to pay the miscellaneous fees to maintain active student status. Please contact Nizar Younis at ny02@aub.edu.lb if you have any questions about payments at AUB. This policy does not apply to students going abroad during the summer semester.





TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

A) PRE-DEPARTURE RESEARCH

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVERYONE

- Research your host country’s policies on travel and residence using the Internet, travel books, newspapers, magazines, and international news programs..
- Look up additional courses in case you need to replace those you selected during the drop and add period..
- Look up accommodation prices and neighborhood reviews..
- Talk to 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.

MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

- Make sure to travel to the host country with an open mind.
- Host country experiences are not similar to those portrayed in movies or as others may describe them.
- Different people have different experiences.
- Making friends abroad is important, but it may not be easy, as social norms vary across countries.
- Check if there are any Facebook groups you can join that could ease in your transition once you arrive in the host country..

RECOMMENDED GUIDES

- Rough Guides Series: www.roughguides.com
- Lonely Planet series: www.lonelyplanet.com
- Frommer’s series: www.frommers.com | www.barnesandnoble.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 complying fully 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. OIP does not provide visa assistance for students going abroad; you must review 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, as the application process may take time. As soon as you receive your acceptance, submit your visa application.

Documents to Carry with you

- Passport and visa (if necessary)
- DS-2019/I-20 (if you are going to the US)
- Driver’s license (if applicable)/ ID
- Money (currency, credit cards)
- Medical insurance information
- Letter of acceptance from the host institution
- Copy of passport and visa
- Copy of tickets and itinerary
- Emergency contact information (name, telephone number, address) at the host institution and at home
- Passport size photos (as many as possible)
- Travel insurance

Documents to Scan and Keep Electronically

- Copy of passport and visa
- Copy of credit cards (front and back) and telephone numbers to contact the card companies
- Emergency contact information (name, telephone number, and address) at the host institution
- Copy of the acceptance letter
- Passport-size photo
- Travel insurance

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Travel Tips

- 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.

Helpful Websites for Traveling around Europe

- Expedia: www.expedia.com
- Ryanair: www.ryanair.com/ie/en
- Rail Europe: www.raileurope.com
- EasyJet: www.easyjet.com/en
- Kayak Flights: www.kayak.com/flights

Helpful Websites for Traveling around the US

- www.megabus.com
- www.greyhound.com
- www.flixbus.com/www.spirit.c

HEALTH PREPARATIONS

a) Medical Insurance

- The AUB Health Insurance Plan (HIP) does not cover you while you are abroad..
- Students are required to obtain medical insurance that covers them throughout the study abroad period.
- Exchange students who do not wish to be charged for the HIP are responsible for waiving it by the set deadline; otherwise, they will be charged for it.
- OIP suggests that you consult with the international office at the host university about available health insurance options..
- OIP suggests that you consult with the international office at the host university about available health insurance options.
- Study abroad students will be registered for zero credits at AUB and will therefore not be eligible for HIP.

b) Students with Disabilities

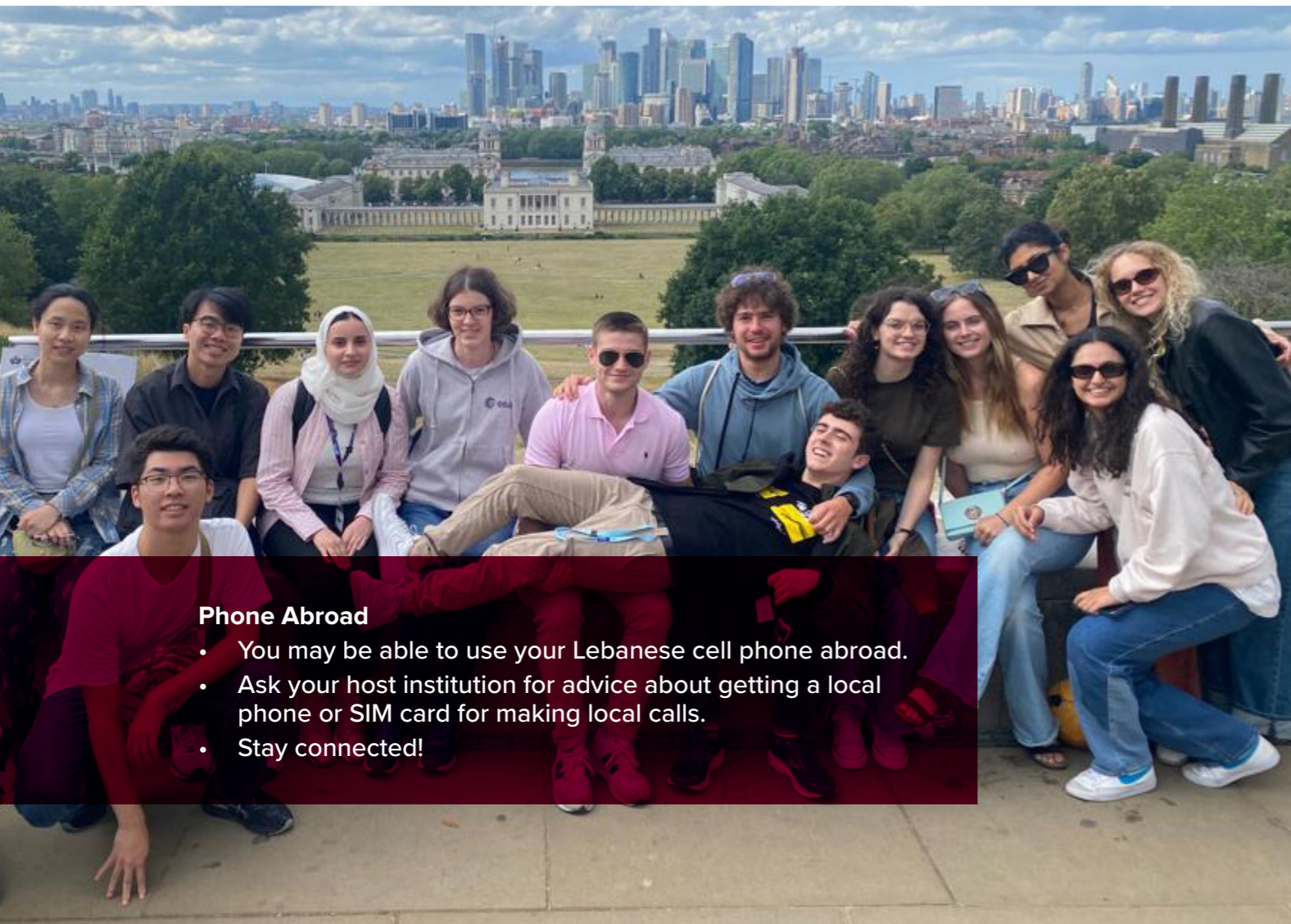
- If you have a documented disability or condition that affects your academic performance, contact the Accessible Education Office (AEO) to discuss your needs and ensure accommodations at AUB are in place before departure..
- Students already registered for accommodations through the AEO, schedule an appointment to update your accessibility file.
- Coordinate with the disability office at your host institution abroad and involve the AEO in communications to ensure seamless support..
- Ensure you complete registration with all necessary disability-related offices, including submitting your documentation to both the AEO and the relevant disability office abroad..

c) Students with Chronic illness

- If you have a physical or psychological condition that requires long-term treatment, notify your OIP Study Abroad Advisor so that necessary assistance can be arranged.
- Consult your physician or counselor about your plan to go abroad for advice on overseas medical care..
- Consider possible consequences of stress from cultural adjustment and different medical practices..
- We strongly encourage you to inform the international office at your host university about any medical condition for which you need special assistance. Do this before you leave abroad.
- If your chronic illness affects your academic performance and you require specific accommodations, please refer to the “Students with Disabilities” section for further support and guidance.

d) 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: 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.



Phone Abroad

- You may be able to use your Lebanese cell phone abroad.
- Ask your host institution for advice about getting a local phone or SIM card for making local calls.
- Stay connected!

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Financial Tips

- In most countries, you can use credit, ATM, and debit cards. In some countries, you may need to rely on using credit cards only.
- Your ATM card must have access to international networks, but check your bank's overseas fees before departure..
- 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 backup.
- Leave copies of all bank cards in Lebanon. Take local currency with you upon arrival.
- Take US currency, which can be exchanged in an emergency.
- It is best to create a local bank account in the host country, as Lebanese cards may not be accepted or operational in some countries..

Things to Do Before You Go

- 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's customer service numbers abroad.
- Research the requirements for opening an overseas bank account, if applicable.
- Check with the international office at your host university if they have any bank recommendations for international students.
- Prepare a budget, evaluate your program's cost and plan accordingly.
- Make sure the one-time password (OTP) is not only sent to your Lebanese number, as you may not be able to receive it while abroad.

PACKING

Packing Reminders

- Governments, airports, and airlines enforce strict regulations on the content and weight of baggage. .
- Consult 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 with your overseas and Lebanese contact information..
- Keep your passport, money, and acceptance letters in your carry-on bag..
- Make sure not to pack any canned or boxed food.

Not Sure Where to Start? Check Out the Ultimate Study Abroad Packing List

- Your host institution's acceptance letter
- Laptop and USB drive
- Contact information for overseas staff and OIP; cell phone (if it works abroad)
- Layers for varied weather
- Insurance card; appropriate clothing for the culture and climate
- At least one formal/business outfit
- Medical prescriptions for the duration of your program in their original containers
- Extra eyeglasses, sunglasses, contact lenses and solution, and your prescription
- Adapters and voltage converter
- Sturdy walking shoes—you will be walking a lot
- Lightweight backpack for regional traveling
- Camera and journal
- Copies of your passport, visa, medical prescriptions, and all bank cards



B) WHAT TO DO WHILE ABROAD?

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION


It is very important that you send your international contact details to the OIP soon after arrival by completing the Emergency Contact Information Abroad Survey. You should expect to receive the survey a few weeks after your arrival to the host country.

AUB COMMUNICATION

- 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 payments, so please check your AUB email regularly.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Stay connected to OIP on social media via:

 OIP's Facebook: [/oip.aub](https://www.facebook.com/oip.aub)
[Join AUB Study Abroad Community](#)

 OIP's Instagram: [oip_aub](https://www.instagram.com/oip_aub)

 OIP's Twitter: [@OIP_AUB](https://twitter.com/OIP_AUB)

- Remember to use **#AUBgoesabroad** and **tag OIP** when you post pictures on social media!
- Send us your pictures and request a takeover on our pages to share your experience with interested AUB students.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Once abroad, you may face an adjustment period referred to as “culture shock”.

The degree of “shock” depends on factors such as the length of your study abroad, your flexibility, and tolerance for ambiguity, the degree of difference between your home and host culture, prior experience abroad, and your expectations.

What is Culture Shock?

- 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.

What can I do to deal with culture shock?

- Talk to peers, your host institution, or a counselor, and maintain a support structure with others, particularly those going through a similar experience.
- Keep an open mind and recognize that challenges are part of the learning experience.
- Engage actively with your host environment—get to know others at host university and avoid isolating yourself.
- Embrace your host culture and learn as much as you can about it.
- Find a “cultural informant,” such as a local person with whom you can discuss your experiences and challenges.
- Keep a journal to record your impressions of new experiences and personal growth.
- Remember that culture shock is a normal experience, and take advantage of the resources available to you.
- Insight comes from sustained and direct contact with your host culture, not from observation at a distance.

Resources

- If you are going to Europe, join the Erasmus Student Network.
- To learn more, check the following resources for international students in the US and tips for studying abroad:
 - www.esn.org
 - www.internationalstudent.com/study_usa/way-of-life/culture-shock
 - www.gooverseas.com/blog/how-to-deal-with-culture-shock-while-studying-abroad

ACADEMICS

Change at the Host Institution

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 course transfer upon return to AUB.

Pass/Fail

- Check your host university's grading system and consult your faculty on what is considered a passing grade at AUB.
- Each faculty has a different policy; it is therefore the student's responsibility to find out what the policy is in their faculty. For example, Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) students must receive a B or better to receive credit.

Transcript

Make sure you do not have any outstanding debt with your host university at the end of the semester. Request that your transcript be sent to OIP. Refer to the [Returnees](#) page for more details.

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to stay on track as you prepare to study abroad.

Travel Preparations

- Make sure your passport is valid for at least 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 traveling 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 via the e-petition system.
- Complete the Final Clearance Form by the published deadline.
- Register for classes at AUB as a precaution, but make sure to drop them during the drop and add period. Inform OIP of your plans.
- Pay all fees due to AUB by the deadline (see below for further details).
- Request to join the “AUB Study Abroad Community” Facebook group and connect with past and current study abroad participants.
- Attend a mandatory Pre-Departure meeting with OIP.

On-site Safety Planning

- Set your AUB email address to forward to your email abroad.
- Submit your emergency contact information to OIP.
- Read health, safety, and travel recommendations for your destination.
- Talk to your bank about your travel plans.
- Make copies of all your important documents (e.g., passport, visa, insurance).
- Keep your friends and family informed of your activities.

Tel: +961 1 35 00 00, Ext: 3176 | Email: aubabroad@aub.edu.lb



SAFETY & STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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

Student Responsibilities

- Educate yourself about your host country's culture; 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 the host country's culture, attitudes, and laws regarding personal relationships, sexuality, race, religion, and gender.
- 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 traveling.
- 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.

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, or international student coordinator, also inform them of your plans.
- Pay attention to the local health, safety, and travel recommendations.
- 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.

EMERGENCIES ABROAD

Steps to Take in an Emergency Abroad

- Prior to traveling anywhere, register with your embassy abroad.
- Take careful note of your host university's emergency procedures.
- Pay close attention to instructions 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.
- For a medical emergency, go to the nearest hospital or clinic. Always keep your health insurance card with you and contact your insurance provider 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.
- In a politically volatile situation or natural disaster, contact your host university's international office staff immediately so they can take inventory of their students. Heed any instructions they provide. If necessary, contact your embassy for assistance.
- 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.
- In case of emergency outside of AUB office hours, call the AUB Office of Protection at: **+961 1 35 00 00, Ext: 2400.**
- Use the "Safe" feature on Facebook to let friends and family know you are safe.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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