



AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

STUDY ABROAD & 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 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

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 course pre-approval from the appropriate AUB chairperson, 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:** “Course Equivalence” petitions are submitted upon return from the host university by students who miss the deadline or end up registering for courses other than the ones they had pre-approved.

COURSE LOAD REQUIREMENTS

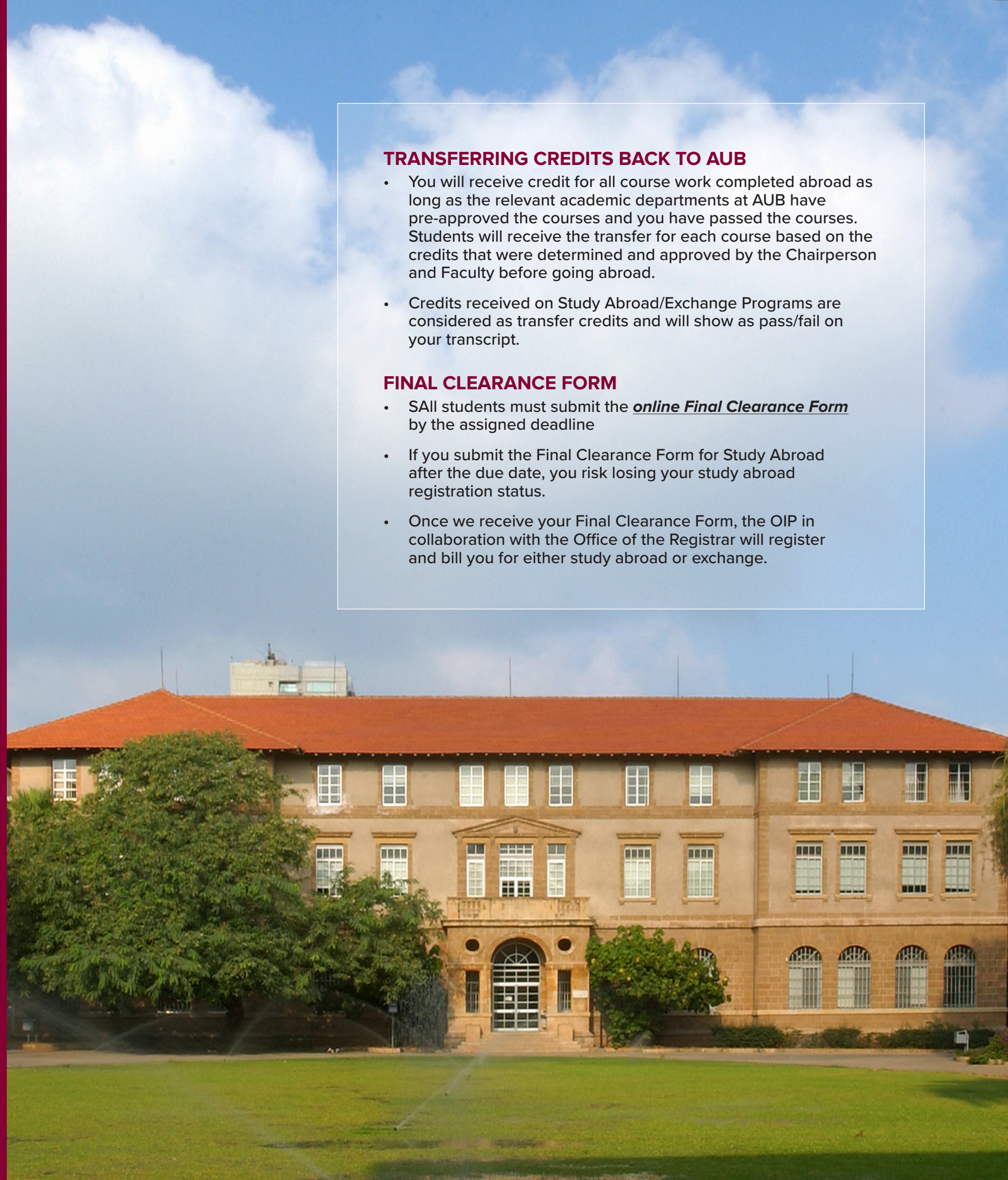
- The maximum academic load for undergraduate students during a regular semester abroad is equivalent to 17 AUB credits while the minimum is 12.
- Students who opt to take more than 17 or less than 12 AUB credits must submit a petition to their Faculty and provide OIP with proof of approval prior to 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.

TRANSFERRING CREDITS BACK TO AUB

- You will receive credit for all course work completed abroad as long as the relevant academic departments at AUB have pre-approved the courses and you have passed the courses. Students will receive the transfer for each course based on the credits that were determined and approved by the Chairperson and Faculty before going abroad.
- Credits received on Study Abroad/Exchange Programs are considered as transfer credits and will show as pass/fail on your transcript.

FINAL CLEARANCE FORM

- SAll 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 imposed, to all Exchange and Study Abroad students. Thus, students need to abide by the deadline given and pay their fees accordingly.

UNDERGRADUATE

- Students will continue to pay the usual AUB tuition rate appropriate to a 15-credit course load including the miscellaneous fees. 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 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 students' AUB emails.

GRADUATE

- Students will continue to pay the usual AUB tuition rate appropriate to a 9-credit course load including the miscellaneous fees. 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 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 students' AUB emails.

FINANCIAL AID

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. Students must make sure they sort out their Financial aid, scholarship or GA by providing the relevant office or department with all the 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 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.





TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

A) PRE-DEPARTURE RESEARCH

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVERYONE

- Research your host country policies on travel and residence using the Internet, travel books, newspapers, magazines, and international news programs.
- Look up extra courses in case you felt like replacing the ones you chose during drop and add.
- Look up accommodation prices and neighborhood reviews.
- 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.

MANAGE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

- Make sure to travel to the host country with an open mind.
- Host country experiences are not similar to those in the movies or even as others describe it to be.
- Different people have different exposure.
- Making friends abroad is important but it may not be as easy as different countries have different socialization cultures.
- Check if there are any Facebook groups you can get involved with 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 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. 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. As soon as you get 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 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
- Passport size pictures (as many as possible)
- Travel insurance
- Covid vaccine (not necessarily)

Documents to scan and keep electronically

- Copy of passport and visa
- 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
- Passport size picture
- 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
- <https://www.greyhound.com>
- <https://www.fliix.com>

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 duration of 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.
- Research your insurance options thoroughly prior to leaving Lebanon.
- Study abroad students will be registered for zero credits at AUB and thus will not be eligible for HIP.

b) Students with Disabilities

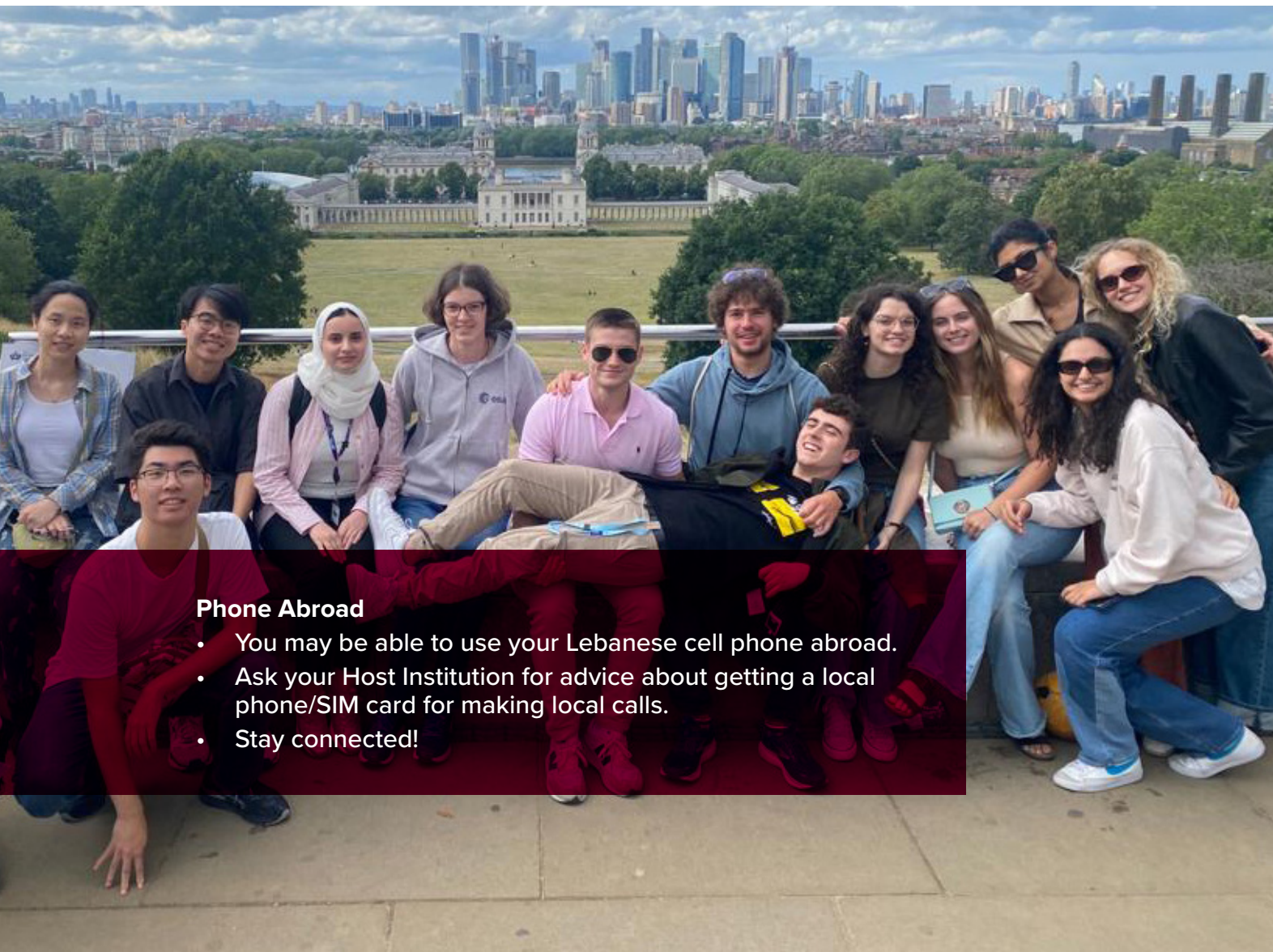
- If you have a documented disability or condition affecting your academic performance, contact the Accessible Education Office (AEO) to discuss your needs and ensure accommodations at AUB are in place before departure.
- For students already registered for accommodations through the AEO, schedule an appointment to update your accessibility file.
- Coordinate with the disability offices 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 **phones 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/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 of the countries, you can only rely on using credit cards so be aware!
- 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 for your arrival.
- Take US currency which can be exchanged in an emergency.
- However, 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 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.
- Prepare a budget – check out this e-book: [and article](#) & Evaluate your program's cost and plan accordingly.
- Make sure the One Time Password is not only sent to your Lebanese number. Otherwise, you might not be able to get it when needed.

PACKING

Packing reminders

- 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 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
- Contact information for overseas staff and OIP Cell phone (if it works abroad)
- Layers for varied weather
- Insurance card
- Appropriate clothing for 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'll be walking a lot!
- Lightweight backpack for regional traveling
- Camera and journal
- Copies of your passport, visa, medical prescriptions, and all bank cards
- An open mind!



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 post 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 payment, 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 **#AUBgoesabroad** and **tag OIP** when you post pictures on social media!
- Also, send us your pictures and ask for a takeover on our pages, in order 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 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.

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 should I do if I experience culture shock?

- 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!
- If you experience culture shock, remember that it happens to everyone and to take advantage of the resources available to you.

Suggestions for dealing with culture shock

- 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.
- If you're going to Europe, join the Erasmus Student Network. Want to learn more? Check out these resources - International students in the US & 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 in host country

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.

Pass/Fail

- Check your host university's grading system and consult with your faculty on what is considered a passing grade at AUB.
- Remember: Each faculty has a different policy; it is therefore the student's responsibility to find out what the policy is in his/her faculty. For example, OSB students must receive a B+ or better to receive credit.

Transcript

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. Refer to the “Returnees” page for more details.

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 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 just in case but make sure to drop them during the drop and add period. Make sure to inform us of your plans
- 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. Submit emergency contact information to OIP.
- 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.

Tel: +961 1 350 000, 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, 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 laying 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/ 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.

EMERGENCIES ABROAD

Steps to take in an emergency abroad

- Prior to traveling anywhere, register with your local embassy abroad.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 protection Office at: +961 1-350 000, Ext: 2400.
- Hit the “safe” button on Facebook to let friends and family know you are ok.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Beirut Office

BASMA ZEIDAN, DIRECTOR

Email: bz06@aub.edu.lb

Tel: +961 1-350 000, Ext: 3146

Mobile: +961 70 020 292

HISHAM EL DELBANI, EDUCATION ABROAD ADVISOR

Email: he103@aub.edu.lb

Tel: +961 1-350 000, Ext: 3176

OIP MAILING ADDRESS

American University of Beirut, Office of International Programs
West Hall, 3rd Floor, Room 322 Bliss Street, Hamra, Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: +961 1 374 374, Ext: 3176
Email: aubabroad@aub.edu.lb

US MAILING ADDRESS

American University of Beirut
3 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 8th Floor New York, NY 10017-2303 USA

