

Thailand

UCEAP Advising Notes

Objective of the Advising Notes Document

This document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad adviser to review program specific details that may impact a student's *decision to apply* for an EAP program. The document is *not* a summary of eligibility requirements, academic, housing, application and other logistical details freely available to students on the UCEAP and BSA website, and reviewed by a student in the Program Self-Assessment. The best source of detailed program information is always the [UCEAP Program Guide](#) from the prior academic cycle. If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website, in the Program Guide or the Advising Notes document, please contact the BSA adviser for this program.

Advisor Contact Information

For BSA Adviser name, email and drop-in advising hours, visit <http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/advising>

Citizenship and Passport Considerations:

Non-U.S citizens must contact the Royal Thai Consulate General in Los Angeles to determine visa requirements prior to application for the program. The visa process may require additional documents and longer processing time for non-U.S. citizens. In addition, make sure that your passport and U.S. re-entry permit will be valid for the entire length of time you will be abroad. If necessary, contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Students who are in the process of applying for US citizenship or making any legal name changes are not eligible to apply unless the changes will be completed before application to the EAP program.

A valid passport is required to apply to all host universities. If you do not have a valid passport, or if your passport will expire less than six months after the end of your program, please apply immediately.

Financial Considerations

Semester and year EAP programs in Thailand cost **less** than a semester or year at UC Berkeley (including the airfare to/from Thailand!), so are highly recommended for students on a tight budget. However, students receiving financial aid need to be aware that financial aid while on EAP is based on the cost of the EAP program rather than the cost of attendance at Berkeley. As your student budget decreases, your aid decreases, too. Contact a financial aid counselor with any questions about study abroad and financial aid. Counselors from the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office during drop-in advising hours in 160 Stephens Hall. Prior to your visit, please call +1 510 642-1356 to confirm counselor availability.

The **Interdisciplinary Thai Studies summer program** has a set curriculum. Students take the following three courses, and participate in three cultural field trips in Thailand:

1. Society and Culture of Thailand, 3.3 upper division semester units
2. Thai Buddhism, 3.3 upper division semester units
3. Thai Language and Culture, 1.33 lower division semester units

This program offers a strong academic program, and it should be taken seriously. Attendance and participation are mandatory and factored into grades. Students who would like to see syllabi from the prior summer are encouraged to email the BSA Thailand adviser.

[Check out a video](#) made by the Summer 2013 participants to get a feel for the experience! And watch [this video](#) from the Summer 2016 program!

The **Public Health summer program** also has a set curriculum. Students take the following three courses, and participate in weeklong field trips:

1. Health Realities in Border Populations, 3.3 upper division semester units
2. Mobility & Border Health, 3.3 upper division semester units
3. Thai Language and Culture, 1.33 lower division semester units

Students should be prepared for an intensive fieldwork experience at rural border sites of Thailand and Myanmar.

This program is based at the Rangsit Campus of Thammasat University, which is outside about 45 minutes outside of central Bangkok.

Academic Considerations, Semester and Year Programs

During the regular semesters, EAP students can select from a variety of courses taught in English through Thammasat University's International Programs in areas including business administration, economics, development studies, politics, international relations with an Asian focus, literature, history, Thai language, religion, and cultural studies. These faculties are located on the Tha Prachan campus in central Bangkok.

Courses in departments other than the ones listed above are taught in Thai and operate on a different academic calendar, so are not available to EAP students.

Students in the Thai studies courses are mostly international, while the students in Economics, Business Administration, British and American Studies and Politics and International Relations courses are mostly Thai.

Alumni have recommend that students study Thai language while there as it will help them learn more about the culture and will delight locals daily conversations, such as when ordering food.

When researching courses on the Thammasat website, keep in mind that first-year courses (numbered 100s at Thammasat) are not recommended for EAP students and are transferred back as lower-division UC credit.

Both extracurricular and academic internships are available on the Thailand semester programs. Students during the academic year have the option of replacing one course with an internship arranged after arrival. Opportunities are coordinated with the EAP Liaison officer at Thammasat. For example, a student in economics might be placed at a corporate, public, governmental, or private organization such as the Bank of Thailand or other finance and brokerage firms. Students with interests in media might be placed at the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT) or National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission. Students with interest in political science might be placed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or NGOs. Other opportunities include the Philips Electronics Thailand, public health organizations, hospitals, and more.

During the semester, the study center does not take students on field trips (assuming they will travel enough on their own) and instead takes them out for monthly dinners, which the alumni enjoyed these opportunities to eat at nice places together.

There are differences between the Thai academic system and the US academic system and students are encouraged to research the Thai academic culture. You may receive less feedback on academic performance during the term than you are accustomed to at Berkeley.

[Watch a video here](#) to see what the UCEAP Thailand experience is like (made by UCEAP alumna, Nayeli Garcia-Zermeño)

Health Considerations

Bangkok has heavy smog levels, so it is recommended that students with asthma or other respiratory health issues discuss participation in EAP Thailand with their physician prior to application. Even if you are healthy, you may experience temporary symptoms, such as irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat; coughing; phlegm; chest tightness; and shortness of breath.

Traveling before the EAP program

Students on the summer program enter Thailand on a 60-day tourist visa which must be obtained *prior to departure* from the US. Students who enter Thailand earlier than the official program dates in order to travel (pushing their stay over 60 days) will have to apply for a 30-day visa extension in Thailand.

Students on the fall, year and spring programs must apply for a student visa prior to departure for the EAP program. One requirement of the student visa application is an official letter of acceptance from Thammasat University. Acceptance letters are anticipated in mid to late June for the fall and year program, and in mid to late December for the Spring program. After you have received your letter of acceptance, you may apply in-person or via USPS to the Thai Consulate in Los Angeles for your students visa. It takes approximately 7-10 business days to process your visa when applying via USPS, or 2-3 business days if applying in-person. Please note the Thai Royal Consulate is closed on both US and Thai holidays. Students planning pre-program travel must be aware that they cannot depart the US without their Thai student visa and plan their travel dates accordingly.

Considerations for LGBT Students

No laws criminalize sexual orientation or consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.

In September 2011 Bangkok's Central Administrative Court ordered the Ministry of Defense to stop classifying transgender persons as disabled in conscription records. The law does not permit transgender individuals to change their gender on identification documents. In addition, in 2012, voters elected to the Nan Provincial Administration the country's first transgender provincial council member, sparking public debate about identification policy due to civil service dress code requirements.

Recently, university rectors permitted five transgender students to participate in a commencement ceremony for Thammasat University while wearing gender-specific uniforms of their choice. This decision set a precedent followed by several other educational institutions during the year. Such permissions remained voluntary for each school.

As in many countries, including the U.S., tolerance levels vary by region and cities. There are areas where members of the LGBTIQ community continue to encounter discrimination.

You can review the [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016](#) from the U.S. Department of State for more information.