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 (USCIS) if you have questions about re-entering the U.S.

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 they 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, the total amount of 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 are available during drop-in advising hours in 160 Stephens Hall. Prior to your visit, please call +1 510 642-1356 to confirm counselor availability.

Academic Considerations: Summer Programs

Thai Studies (Summer)
The Thai Studies program has a set curriculum. Students take the following three courses, and participate in three cultural field trips in Thailand. The three courses are as follows:

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, 1.3 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.

Below are some videos from participants from the Thai Studies program:

- Summer 2013
- Summer 2016

Public Health (Summer)
The Public Health program also has a set curriculum. Students take the following three courses, and participate in 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, 1.3 lower division semester units

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

International Economics (Summer)
The International Economics program has a set curriculum. Students take the following two courses for a total of 6.6 semester units:

1. Topics in International Economics, 3.3 upper division semester units
2. Topics in Development Economics, 3.3 upper division semester units

Applicants for this program must be declared Economics majors, and they should be prepared for a strong academic program with project-based coursework. The program also includes a week-long fieldtrip to another Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member country (location varies each year).
Academic Considerations: Semester and Year Programs

During the Fall, Spring, or Year packages at Thammasat University, 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 they 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 in their daily conversations, such as when they are 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 they are transferred back as lower-division UC credit.

Both extracurricular and academic internships are available on all packages of the Thammasat University program. Students during the academic year have the option of replacing one course with an internship arranged after arrival. Opportunities are coordinated by Thammasat’s Department of Social Policy and Development. For example, a student in economics might be placed at a corporate, public, governmental, or private organization such as Global Tax or other finance and brokerage firms. Students with interests in media might be placed at Internews. 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.

Thammasat students placed in the business department will have option to pursue a summer business internship as an extension. The minimum requirements for the opportunity include junior or senior standing, a GPA of 2.85 or higher, and previous term (Spring) study in the School of Business Administration International Program at Thammasat. Internships will begin early June to late July (8 weeks), and students will intern full time (35-40 hours a week). Placements are with national and international businesses. The summer portion will be worth 6.6 semester units. Students will live in local apartments in Bangkok. If you are interested in this option, please email the BSA Thailand adviser.

During the semester, the study center takes students out for monthly dinners. Alumni really enjoyed this opportunity 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)
Traveling before the EAP program

Students on a 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, spring, and 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 LGBTIQA+ Students

Thailand is included on UCEAP’s list of tolerant destinations for LGBTIQA+ students. Nations on this list are included based on recognition of same-sex unions and the existence of human rights laws prohibiting discrimination against gay individuals. This resource considers potential risks as they specifically affect members of the LGBTIQA+ community, and not necessarily the overall threats posed to all students traveling and studying abroad. As in many countries, tolerance levels vary by region; major cities may be more accepting of the LGBTIQ community than rural areas. 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, Yollada "Nok" Suanyot, 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.

You can review the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018 from the U.S. Department of State for more information.

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.
Considerations for Graduating Seniors

Graduating seniors participating on a spring semesters program should ensure that they are on the Spring degree list. If they are not yet on this degree list, students should petition to move their graduation term with their UC Berkeley college. However, Spring package grades are often not reported to UCEAP until mid-August, so your grades will not arrive in time for your degree to be processed with the spring degree list (which occurs in mid-July). You will be automatically removed from the spring degree list and placed onto the summer degree list, which is processed in October. Thus, your diploma would display a summer graduation date rather than a spring graduation date. This policy is subject to change. For all students, after your EAP grades arrive and you are waiting for the next degree list to be processed, you can request a "Certificate of Completion" from the Berkeley Registrar that can serve as “proof” of graduation.