UCEAP Thailand Advising Notes

Objective

This document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad advisor to review program specific details that may impact a student’s decision to apply for an UCEAP 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. The best source of detailed program information are the [UCEAP webpages for Thailand](https://www.berkeley.edu/study-abroad/). If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website or this Advising Notes document, please contact the [BSA Advisor](https://www.berkeley.edu/study-abroad/ advisors) for this program.

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COVID-19 Information

The COVID19 pandemic continues to present challenges related to health concerns and international travel. Please check UCEAP’s Pandemic Updates page for the most up-to-date information about UCEAP program cancellations for the 2023-24 academic year and additional resources and information. Updated 08/2022

Quick Links

Below is a summary of the 2023-2024 UCEAP Thailand programs available to Berkeley students:

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Video & Blog Resources

There are a number of resources provided by UCEAP to help students learn about their study abroad options. Here are some you can check out:

- 3-minute Travel Guide – Bangkok, Thailand
- 2021: Study Abroad in Asia and Oceania | UCEAP Open House
- 2020: Study Abroad in Korea, Singapore, and Thailand | UCEAP Study Abroad Fair
- 2016: UCEAP Thailand
Here are some videos made by a UC Student about her experience on the Public Health program in Summer 2018:

- Arriving in Thailand
- Exploring Bangkok: Chatuchak Market & Grand Palace
- Thai Cultural Introduction
- Day in my Life at Thammasat University
- My Life in Thailand, Finals & Food
- Traveling to Mae Sot

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 U.S. citizenship or making any legal name changes are not eligible to apply unless the changes will be completed before application to the UCEAP program. There are no exceptions to this.

For all UCEAP Thailand programs, students cannot be accepted to a Thai university without a valid passport. Your UCEAP application will state how long your passport must be valid after the end date of the program and when a photocopy of it will be due. If you do not have a passport or need a renewal, please review the Passport Information section of the COVID-19 Information for Berkeley Study Abroad Students page, and take action immediately.

Financial Considerations

Semester and year UCEAP 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 UCEAP is based on the cost of the UCEAP program rather than the cost of attendance at Berkeley. Contact a financial aid counselor with any questions about study abroad and financial aid at travelaid@berkeley.edu.
Impacted Programs

All summer programs in Thailand have a limited number of spaces available due to field trip or internship placement logistics. Qualified students who apply for a Thailand summer program will be nominated on a first-come, first-served basis based on their UCEAP application submission date/time. The application will open on November 1 at 9AM (PT) and students are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. To be considered, you must submit a Berkeley Study Abroad and UCEAP application for your chosen program.

Thailand summer applicants are encouraged to consider other summer programs as a back-up in the event you are not nominated. If you are seeking an application to a back-up program, you will need to choose a non-impacted program (which means you cannot apply to two programs in Thailand for the same term). Contact the BSA Adviser for the relevant program of interest to inquire if it is considered impacted or not before submitting an application.

Program Considerations – Summer

**Summer Internship, Bangkok**
The Summer Internship, Bangkok program, hosted by Thammasat University, is scheduled to run for the first time in Summer 2023. Since this is a new option, some details are still unknown, but all currently available information is on the UCEAP website.

**Public Health**
The Public Health program 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**
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 field trip to another Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member country (location varies each year).
Program Considerations – Semester & Year

UCEAP students can select from a variety of courses taught in English through the 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 UCEAP students.

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

Alumni recommend that students study Thai language, 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 UCEAP 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 interests in political science might be placed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or NGOs. Other opportunities include Philips Electronics Thailand, public health organizations, hospitals, and more.

Thammasat students placed in the business department will have the 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.
Traveling before the UCEAP program

Students on a summer program enter Thailand on a 60-day tourist visa, which must be obtained prior to departure from the U.S. 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 semester or year programs must apply for a student visa prior to departure for the UCEAP 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 student 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.

Health Considerations

Bangkok has heavy smog levels, so it is recommended that students with asthma or other respiratory health issues discuss participation in UCEAP 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 Transfer Students

Transfer students should review BSA’s I am a Transfer Student webpage for an overview of considerations. As a general rule, transfer students are eligible to apply for study abroad programs that take place after the student has completed one term at UC Berkeley (i.e., if their first term at Berkeley is Spring 2022, the earliest they could study abroad is Summer 2022. If their first term at Berkeley is Fall 2022, the earliest they could study abroad is Spring 2023). This applies for all UCEAP Programs in Thailand.

Considerations for LGBTIQA+ Students

Taiwan is included on UCEAP’s list of LGBTIQ-tolerant countries, which was compiled using information from the Spartacus Gay Travel Index. Information from the U.S. Department of State’s 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices is as follows:

No law criminalizes expression of sexual orientation or consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.

The LGBTI community reported that police treated LGBTI victims of crime the same as other persons except in the case of sexual crimes, where there was a tendency to downplay sexual abuse or not to take harassment seriously.

The law does not permit transgender persons to change their gender on identification documents, which, coupled with societal discrimination, limited their employment opportunities.

The UN Development Program (UNDP) and NGOs reported that LGBTI persons experienced discrimination, particularly in rural areas. The UNDP also reported media represented LGBTI persons in stereotypical and harmful ways resulting in discrimination.

Legislation mandating gender equality prohibits discrimination “due to the fact that the person is male or female or of a different appearance from his or her own sex by birth” and protects transgender students from discrimination. The country’s Fourth National Human Rights Plan, covering the period 2019-22, was approved by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board in March and by the cabinet in June. The plan includes LGBTI persons as one of 12 groups in its action plan.

NGOs and the United Nations reported transgender persons faced discrimination in various sectors, including in the military conscription process, while in detention, and because of strict policies in place at most schools and universities that require students to wear uniforms that align with their biological gender. Some universities relaxed dress codes during the year, partly in response to student-led protests that called for reforms in the educational system. In June, Thammasat University announced it would allow students to wear uniforms that match their chosen sexual identity while also outlining a
code of conduct that prohibits bullying, insulting, discriminating, or intimidating behavior by faculty or students towards LGBTI students.

In May 2019 the Ministry of Education introduced a new curriculum incorporating discussion of sexual orientation and gender diversity for grades one to 12; this followed two years of advocacy by the LGBTI community. NGOs continued to encourage the Ministry of Education to make the curriculum compulsory, and continued to work with the ministry on curriculum development and to organize training courses to prepare teachers to teach it effectively.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

If you receive accommodations at UC Berkeley and would like to know if they are also available in the program abroad that interests you, it is a good idea to email your BSA adviser to inquire about your specific needs. That way, if your needs cannot be accommodated in that program, you can investigate other programs that might.

For the Thammasat University program, an exchange student needs to take at least 9 TU credits (=15 UC quarter units) to be considered a full time student and qualified for an Education Visa.

Considerations for Graduating Seniors

Graduating seniors participating in a spring semester 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 UCEAP 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.

Diversity Abroad Resources

BSA recognizes that there are many nuances to exploring your identities abroad, and these articles may not be representative of all identities and experiences. Diversity Abroad’s resources, however, are a great starting place for your exploration. You can find a variety of articles to help you prepare for your study abroad experience as well as a Thailand Destination Guide.