What a Freshman Needs to Know
Dear Students,

Welcome to AUC.

At last you made it to the American University in Cairo after all the hard work and effort you exerted in school. Because we know that transitioning can sometimes be challenging, the Academic Advising Center (AAC) facilitates this phase of your life. The AAC assists by organizing the academic plan of your first semester at AUC and work on guiding you along the way until your graduation. One of AAC’s main objectives is to work on matching your aspirations with what you intend to study. This starts with the help we offer in planning your courses, but you will also find that your advisor is interested in knowing you as a person and accordingly will be able to refer you to other relevant resources on campus.

AUC is a University with many resources. This guide includes references to offices and centers on campus that you might want to explore, especially as an undeclared student. This brochure attempts to bring together all the necessary information, especially for your freshman year. It is advisable that you keep it as a reference even after your declaration because you will certainly need it in the future.

Always remember that the first years at AUC matter the most. Use them wisely to work towards your goals. Stretch your limits, as this is how you will stand out in the job market. Make use of AUC’s social life, activities, liberal arts education and state-of-the-art facilities, for these will help you become a well-rounded person.

Finally, and on behalf of all of the AAC’s team members, I wish you a wonderful and fruitful journey at AUC.

Good Luck,

Noha Saada

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**Mission**

The AAC aspires to facilitate the academic transition of newly admitted and undeclared students from high school to University.

The main purpose of the AAC is to assist undeclared students in developing and implementing an academic plan of study for attaining their educational goals. The center also serves as an information hub and referral source for freshman students.
About the Office

The AAC is a unit under the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (ODUS). Being a part of the ODUS family, along with other units such as the First Year Experience (FYE), Peer Advising Leaders (PAL), Common Reading Program, Freshman Program and Core Curriculum, to name a few, makes us part of an integrated effort to give students a comprehensive undergraduate experience. With all its programs, ODUS strives to support and assist students, from the day they enter AUC through their declaration of a major and beyond. In a nutshell, ODUS serves as an advocate for undergraduate studies and students at the University. If you need to know more information about services provided by ODUS, please refer to the “Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies Brochure.”

Who We Are

Academic advisors are responsible for the academic progress of freshman students and will advise them each semester until they officially declare their desired majors. We are here to help and support you in making the right academic decisions to excel in your field of interest.

What will your advisor do?

- Advise and register undeclared students in courses during their first semester
- Inform students of the requirements and prerequisites for each major
- Guide students academically towards their preferred major
- Ensure that each freshman, regardless of his or her background, makes the best possible use of the University's academic resources
- Empower students to make their own decisions by exploring their options
- Assist students to maximize educational opportunities by making the correct choices
- Help freshman students select courses in terms of personal abilities, interests and goals
- Provide students with the help they need to be off probation
- Familiarize students with the freshman program and the entire Core Curriculum
Journey of Undeclared Students

- Receive acceptance letter
- Schedule a follow up one-on-one session with your academic advisor
- Attend workshops to learn how to register online
- Attend group orientation
- Book online advising sessions each semester (summer/fall) (winter/spring)
- Make your schedule and register courses with your academic advisor
- Book advising appointment
- Register your courses online

Note:
Ideally, students are expected to declare a major by their third semester. At this point, a faculty member in the student’s department of major will perform the task of advising.

However, as long as a student is still undeclared, his or her academic advising will be conducted through the Academic Advising Center.

Remember:
If you are facing any academic problems, questions or concerns, be sure to visit the Progressive Advising At-Risk Unit at any time during the semester.
**Liberal Arts Education**

**Meaning of Liberal Arts**

The meaning and goal of the word “liberal” in liberal arts education is freedom: the freedom to think one’s own thoughts and develop one’s own point of view. This involves the ability to analyze personal opinions and assumptions, as well as those of others. It means becoming more aware of one’s roots in the past, while also being open to new ways of thinking. With liberal arts education, the emphasis is not on the “spoon-feeding learning techniques” or mere memorization of facts, but on critical thinking and a creative approach to problem solving. The knowledge and techniques learned today are often outdated tomorrow. The skills acquired at AUC will enable students to evaluate and develop new ideas, to find the information they need in this rapidly changing world and to see connections and understand the broader picture behind events. The University’s goal is to teach students how to learn so that they would be prepared to tackle the challenges ahead.

**Where to find it?**

The heart of a liberal arts education is to be found in traditional liberal arts courses, such as literature, philosophy, mathematics and science. At AUC, every student is assured of a basic liberal arts education through the general education requirements built into the Core Curriculum. Through these courses, students should expect to participate in discussions and actively question their instructors, rather than sit passively listening to lectures. It also means that, as much as possible, all classes should emphasize reading, writing and critical thinking skills.

**How you stand out?**

When it comes to the job market, the most important asset that makes AUC students stand out among others is their well-rounded personalities, which have been shaped by the liberal arts education offered at AUC. An AUC education provides students with the breadth and depth of knowledge needed to understand and help address the many challenges facing Egypt and the world today. This involves sensitivity to values, history and the power of language, in addition to an understanding of the facts and technical issues involved. This kind of education offered by AUC enables students to express ideas clearly and convincingly through an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge. Its goal is nothing less than to build better human beings and better citizens.

The practical benefits of a liberal arts education are equally significant. Employers today do not want narrow-minded specialists. They seek intelligent young people who have the ability to communicate, interpret and think effectively. It is the liberal arts education background, language skills and exposure to a variety of cultural traditions that give AUC students a competitive advantage with employers. In short, a good liberal arts education will help students find satisfying and rewarding jobs after graduation, and will also help them excel and adapt successfully as their careers progress through the changing times ahead.
AUC is dedicated to the ideals of American liberal arts and professional education. The University provides students with a wide range of majors from which they can choose. Within those majors, AUC allows students to take numerous courses that suit their personal interests and needs. In addition to having this freedom, students also follow a course of study that promotes their learning of subjects such as classical literature, Arab history, and philosophical and scientific thinking. This part of the educational system at AUC is known as the Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum is designed to ensure that every AUC graduate is broadly educated and well-trained in specific fields. In addition, one of the primary purposes of the Core Curriculum is to supplement the secondary-school training of incoming freshmen by providing them with the linguistic, analytical and study skills necessary for serious, productive University-level work. The Core Curriculum is designed to acquaint students with humanities, social sciences and the natural sciences. It also exposes them to some of the most influential books and ideas that helped shape human history.

Elective Courses and Minors

Every major at AUC has a number of credits that students must fulfill in any area outside their major. Electives exist so that students may explore freely the variety of courses offered by departments within the University. Sometimes these credits may be collectively used by students to form smaller specializations, in addition to the majors they have chosen. This is known as a minor. At AUC, students may select one or two areas of minor specialization while earning their degrees. If students take the courses designed to fulfill a minor, they will go much deeper into a field than if they took just one or two introductory classes. However, this does not equate with having a major in this field. In many cases, the minor plays an important role for student employment opportunities, whether by adding an area of expertise or showing the breadth of their interests and abilities. Having a minor can help students, making them more noticeable to an employer and adding to their overall experience at AUC.
In order to graduate, there are different course categories that students must fulfill: major and collateral courses in the desired major, electives/minor courses and Core Curriculum courses. These three categories make up the total credit hours required to earn a bachelor’s degree.

Secrets to Success

- Come prepared to your first advising session. You are expected to have an idea of what you would like to study. You may visit AUC’s online catalogue at http://catalog.aucegypt.edu to learn more about the offered majors.

- Use advising sessions effectively, and make appointments during advising week and as needed.

- Make use of the drop-and-add week. Read syllabi and course descriptions.

- Balance your schedule with major, minor and Core Curriculum courses.

- Each class matters. Attendance and participation in class are essential for your educational experience; moreover, this composes a big part of your grade.

- Use the GPA calculator to keep track of your academic performance at http://my.aucegypt.edu/GPACal.html.

- If you are deciding between a science and non-science major, always start with the science major, as you will be allowed to take more courses and will be able to judge sooner whether you have the ability to meet what is expected of you in science majors.

- Use your repeat forms wisely.

- Make use of AUC facilities, such as the Career Center and the Office of Student Support.
Staying on Track

In order for you to be on the right track at AUC, you must always make sure you have accurate information when it comes to academic decisions and milestones. The AAC, among other offices, should be one of your main providers of information on campus. Always make sure that you consult your advisor before making any critical decision. During your semesters as an undeclared student, you may have several questions. Here are some examples:

What happens after my first advising session? Am I on my own now?

After your first advising session, you should be getting yourself ready for the semester. During the first week of the semester, which is called the drop-and-add week, you may come see your advisor if you wish to make any changes in your schedule. If you have any questions about any academic matter, you should go to the AAC for assistance. And no, you are not left on your own. By the middle of the each semester, you need to schedule an appointment with your advisor to plan your next academic semester.

After registering for a course, I attended a class and I do not like the content. If I change my mind about taking it, what do I do?

It’s not a problem to drop and add a course as long as it’s still during the first week of the semester. The first week is called the drop/add period, where students attend classes to find out more about them and determine what courses they want to continue taking. You have a total of five days to change sections and courses through your academic advisor if it’s your first semester or through Banner Self-Service if you are a returning student. If you went beyond the first week of drop/add, you may only drop the course without adding another course to replace it. This will be further discussed in another section.

What are credit hours?

Credit hours are the designated load that you are allowed to take in the semesters. In other words, course work is counted in credit hours. In general, a credit hour represents a one-hour class period that requires at least two hours of individual study each week for one semester. Thus, a course of three credit hours would meet for three hours a week and the student would be expected to study for six hours outside of class. Laboratory courses involve less outside work, so usually one hour of credit is granted for a three-hour session. Hence, most courses at AUC are worth three credit hours.
There are two regular semesters and two irregular ones at AUC. The regular ones are the fall and spring semesters, and the irregular ones are the summer and winter sessions.

### Academic Load

**Fall/Spring:**
12 to 16 credit hours for undeclared students

**Summer session:**
Six-week session: Six credit hours
Accelerated three-week session: Three to four credit hours

**Winter session:**
Three to four credit hours

### Full-time vs Part-time Students

As a student, you are encouraged to take the full load, which is 12 to 15 credit hours. However, if you have any reason that prohibits you from doing so, you become a part-time student holding less than 12 credit hours. In this case, you will not receive any official certificate of enrollment or any financial aid from the University.

### What is major declaration?

Declaring a major happens when you fulfill the major requirements that the department demands. After you meet this criteria, you should apply for declaration, and when accepted you will be listed among the declared students of the department. Declaration of major requirements differ from one department to another and may include an interview, portfolio or prerequisite courses to be fulfilled, as well as a specific GPA. You may find your desired major declaration requirements at [http://catalog.aucegypt.edu](http://catalog.aucegypt.edu).

**Important Tip**

You have until your junior year or your third year to declare or change a major at AUC.
Sometimes as a student, you get overwhelmed by the courses you are taking, and you may not do well in some of your courses. On the other hand, you might change your mind about a certain major and want to switch to another. There are several options offered by AUC that can help you save your grade point average (GPA), such as:

**Dropping a course:** If, for any reason, you cannot attend a course after you have registered for it, you should fill in an online course drop form. Dropping from a course means that its credits are removed from your schedule and you will not be graded for it. This option is available during the first eight weeks of the semester.

Incomplete work: In very rare cases, undergraduate students who are unable to complete a course may be permitted to continue working in that course beyond the examination period. In such a case, a grade of I, for “incomplete,” is assigned. Students must make arrangements with the professor to complete the course within one month after the beginning of the new academic session, whether they are in school or not. Failure to complete the course within one month after the beginning of the new academic session causes the grade in that course to be recorded as IF, signifying failure.

**Repeat form:** If you do not do well in a course, you have the right to repeat it one time for the purpose of improving the grade. This policy is limited to a maximum of five courses during your entire undergraduate career and to courses taken at AUC within the previous two years. However, if an F grade is received for academic dishonesty, you will not have the privilege of removing the grade.

**Withdrawal from the University:** Students who are unable to complete a semester because of illness or other emergency may be given permission to withdraw. Withdrawal grades will be recorded for each course when the student receives permission to withdraw. The grades are either WP, meaning that the student was doing satisfactory work at the time of withdrawal, or WF, meaning that the student was not doing satisfactory work at the time of withdrawal. No academic credit is given for courses from which students withdraw.

Students who withdraw from the university and later wish to return must apply for readmission. Readmission is not granted automatically.

**Please make sure you use the previous privileges within their assigned deadlines and time limits.**

If I am not doing well, can something be done to save me? Is it too late?
When you fail to maintain an overall GPA of 2.0, you are placed on probation. This will limit your academic load to 12 to 13 credits per semester. You will have two semesters to clear the deficiency in your GPA and get off probation. Failure to achieve the required standard by the end of the probation period disqualifies you from further attendance at the University. However, there are several resources on campus that can help you improve your performance and remove your probation status:

Academic Advising Center: www.aucegypt.edu/academics/Advising
Office of Student Support: www.aucegypt.edu/studentlife/gethelp
Mohamed Taymour Writing Center: www.aucegypt.edu/academics/writing-center

I did not use any of those. I think my GPA may drop below 2.0; what happens now?
Where do I go if:

I’m having difficulty choosing the right academic path? Academic Advising Center

I didn’t submit my high school certificate? Office of Admissions

I want to know about different jobs? Career Center

I want to get a medical excuse? Office of Medical Services – Clinic

I have questions regarding the Core Curriculum? Office of the Core Curriculum/Academic Advising Center

I want to take the Arabic placement exam? Department of Arabic Language Instruction

I want to ask about the ENGL 0210 course? Department of English Language Instruction

I have an FYE hold? First-Year Experience and Leadership Institute

I want to ask about studying abroad? Office of International Students and Study Abroad

I’m having difficulty in math courses? Department of Mathematics and Actuarial Science, Mathematical Learning Center

I want to ask about withdrawal, dropping or academic probation? Office of the Registrar

I’m having difficulty in writing? Department of Rhetoric and Composition, Mohamed Taymour Writing Center

I have an outstanding balance hold? Office of Student Accounting

I want to join extracurricular activities? Office of Student Development

I want to ask about University fees? Office of Student Financial Affairs and Scholarships

I want to request a transcript or an enrollment certificate? Office of Recruitment and Student Service Center

I need mentoring, counseling or have a disability? Office of Student Support