

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة



International Students Entry Survey Evaluation Report Fall 2020

The Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness

Table of Contents

Introduction & Methodology.....	3
Administrative Summary.....	3
Report Structure	3
Section One: Respondent Demographics.....	4
Study Programs.....	4
Home Universities.....	4
Section Two: Respondents' Awareness of PPOC.....	5
Awareness of the Existence of PPOC.....	5
Source of Information on PPOC	5
Section Three: Decision to Study at AUC.....	6
Knowledge of AUC.....	6
Reason for Studying at AUC.....	8
Other Middle Eastern Universities in Comparison with AUC.....	9
Section Four: Satisfaction with AUC Experiences Before/Upon Arrival.....	11
Overall Satisfaction	11
Concerns Prior to Arrival.....	12
Usefulness of IPO & Websites Pre-Arrival	13
Interventions that would have smoothed Respondents' Transition to AUC.....	14
Section Five: Satisfaction with AUC Academic Experiences	15
Courses Registered.....	15
Advising & Registration	16
Section Six: Student-based Recommendations	20

Introduction & Methodology

The AUC administration is rigorously pursuing means to achieve one of its main strategic objectives: “Internationalizing the campus through diversity and global exposure.” The survey seeks international students’ feedback on the pre-arrival services and communications received up to their arrival. The feedback and recommendations collected from this survey will be used to enhance the pre-arrival services and communications given to international students in the future. This survey was developed by the International Program Office (IPO) in collaboration with the Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness (SMIE).

Administrative Summary

The survey invitation was sent to 148 newly-admitted international students at AUC on September 30th, 2020, followed by a reminder email on October 11th, 2020. Of the survey invitees, 56 international students responded, yielding a response rate of 38%.¹ This is higher than last year’s response rate, which was 25% (for Fall 2019).

Report Structure

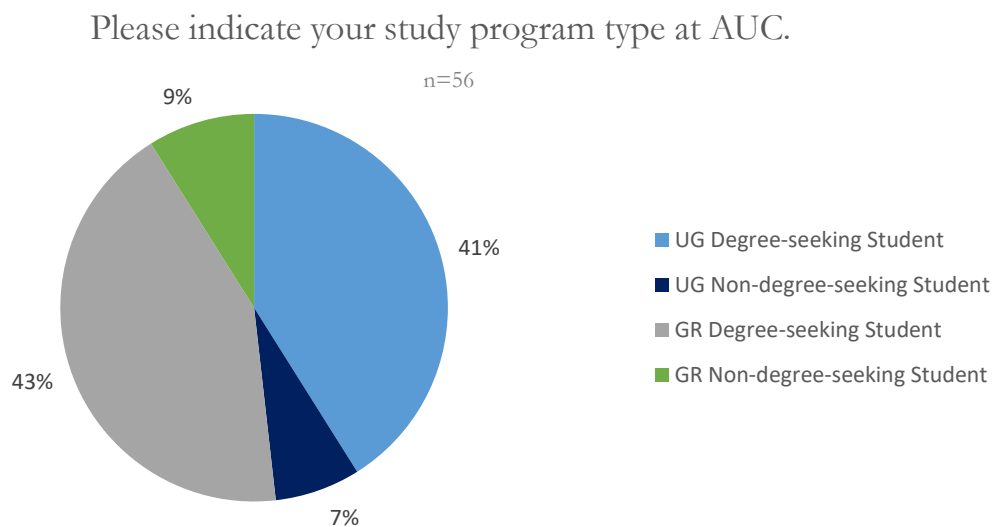
This report is divided into six main sections; the first presents the demographic overview of the incoming international students, followed by their awareness of the ‘principle point of contact’ (PPOC). The third section then evaluates the main decisions for international students to study at AUC, while the fourth assesses the respondents’ satisfaction with their overall AUC experiences. The fifth section discusses the respondents’ academic experiences as AUC students, in terms of advising, registration, and so on. Finally, the report ends with a recommendations section that draws on the most prominent suggestions highlighted by the respondents.

¹ This and the figures hereafter are rounded up to the nearest digit.

Section One: Respondent Demographics

Study Programs

The highest percentage of incoming international students are graduate degree-seeking students, who represent 43% of the respondent population, closely followed by undergraduate degree-seeking students at 41%. As such, 84% of incoming international students are degree-seeking students. Meanwhile, 16% of survey respondents are non-degree-seeking students, with a slightly higher percentage of graduate (9%) than undergraduate (7%) students).



Students' Program of Study	Count	Percentage
GR Degree-seeking Student	24	43%
UG Degree-seeking Student	23	41%
GR Non-degree-seeking Student	5	9%
UG Non-degree-seeking Student	4	7%
Total	56	100%

Home Universities

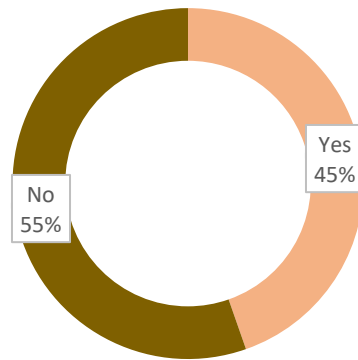
Eight students chose to respond to this question, with one student indicating 'N/A,' hence seven responses were recorded. Of these seven responses, four students came to AUC from universities in Germany, while two students have home universities in the United States, and one student's home university is located in Spain.

Section Two: Respondents' Awareness of PPOC

Awareness of the Existence of PPOC

When asked about their awareness of the fact that every international student has a principle point of contact (PPOC), 55% of respondents indicated that they were unaware of this fact.

Did you know that every international student has a Principle Point of Contact (PPOC)?
n=56



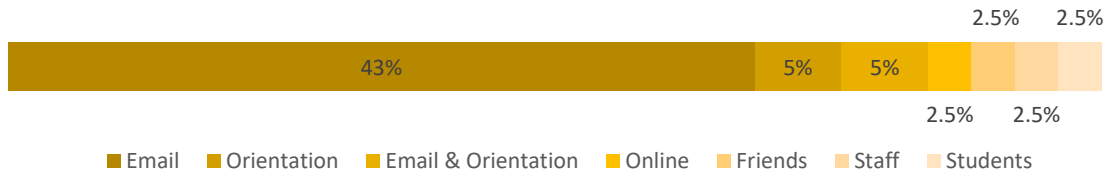
Awareness of PPOC	Count	Percentage
Yes	25	45%
No	31	55%
Total	56	100%

Source of Information on PPOC

The main source of information on the Principle Point of Contact was email, through which more than 40% of survey respondents were aware of the PPOC. Furthermore, 5% became familiar with it during the orientation while another 5% acknowledged hearing about the PPOC through both email and orientation. Knowing about PPOC from friends, students, and staff represented 7.5% of information sources to respondents.

How were you informed of the PPOC?

n=40



Source of Information	Count	Percentage
Email	17	43%
Orientation	2	5%
Email & Orientation	2	5%
Online	1	2.5%
Friends	1	2.5%
Staff	1	2.5%
Students	1	2.5%
Not Informed	13	32.5%
N/A	2	5%

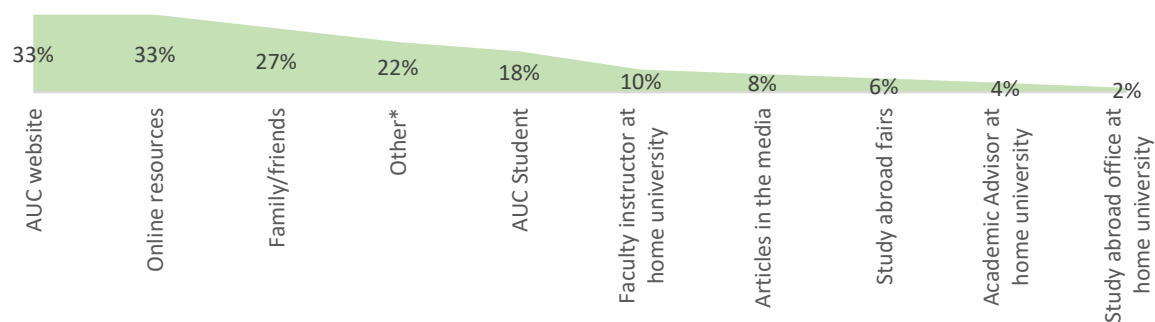
Section Three: Decision to Study at AUC

Knowledge of AUC

Over 65% of respondents heard about AUC through online methods, whether the AUC website (33%) or online resources (33%). Another 27% became aware of AUC through friends and family, while 18% heard about it via university students. On the other side of the spectrum, the least-common communication channels regarding AUC were students' home university advisors and study abroad officers, through whom 6% of respondents heard of AUC. Finally, no incoming international student respondents heard about AUC through university recruiters.

How did you hear about AUC?

n=51



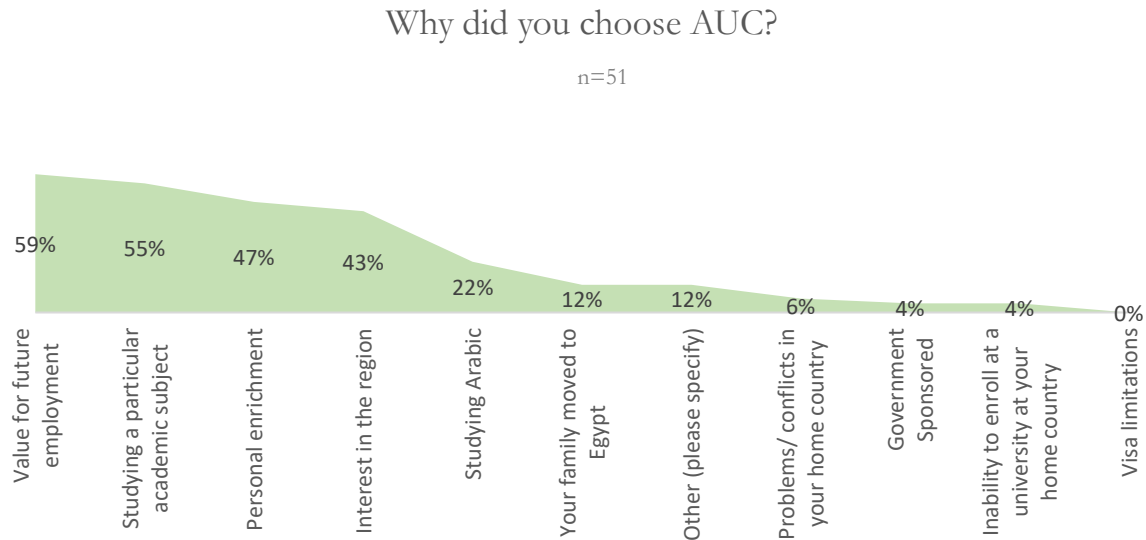
Source of Information	Count	Percentage
AUC website	17	33%
Online resources	17	33%
Family/friends	14	27%
Other*	11	22%
AUC Student	9	18%
Faculty instructor at home university	5	10%
Articles in the media	4	8%
Study abroad fairs	3	6%
Academic Advisor at home university	2	4%
Study abroad office at home university	1	2%
AUC recruiter	0	0%

*Other responses

Theme	Count	Percentage
<i>Scholarship</i>	4	36%
<i>Study</i>	2	18%
<i>Work</i>	2	18%
<i>Reputation</i>	1	9%
<i>Lived in Egypt</i>	1	9%
<i>Google search</i>	1	9%
<i>Total</i>	11	100%

Reason for Studying at AUC

Almost 60% of respondents chose to study at AUC because of its anticipated value for employment, with a close 55% identifying AUC because of their interests in studying particular subjects. Additionally, 47% selected AUC for their personal enrichment and 43% because of their regional interests. Meanwhile, 22% of respondents were interested in enrolling at AUC to study Arabic. However, the least-influential reasons for choosing to study at AUC are home-country conflicts (6%), governmental sponsorship (4%), inability to enroll at a home institution (4%), and visa limitations (0%).



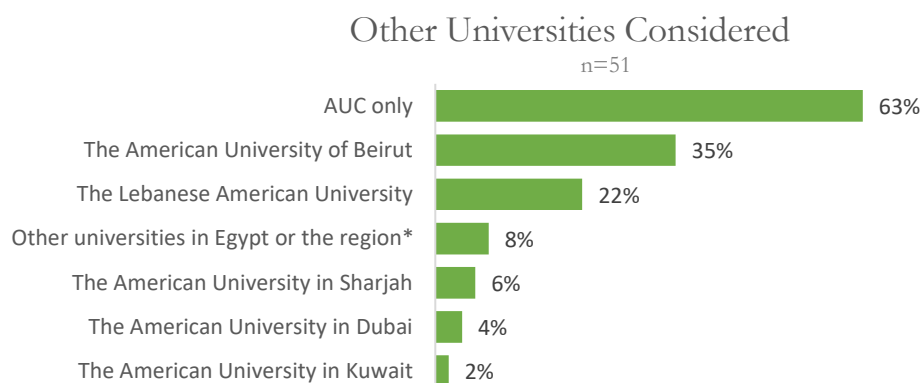
Reasons for Choosing AUC	Count	Percentage
Value for future employment	30	59%
Studying a particular academic subject	28	55%
Personal enrichment	24	47%
Interest in the region	22	43%
Studying Arabic	11	22%
Your family moved to Egypt	6	12%
Other (please specify)*	6	12%
Problems/ conflicts in your home country	3	6%
Government Sponsored	2	4%
Inability to enroll at a university at your home country	2	4%
Visa limitations	0	0%

*Other responses

<i>Theme</i>	Count	Percentage
<i>Scholarship</i>	3	50%
<i>AUC Reputation</i>	1	17%
<i>Currently live in Cairo</i>	1	17%
<i>To learn Arabic</i>	1	17%
<i>Total</i>	6	100%

Other Middle Eastern Universities in Comparison with AUC

When deciding to come to AUC, 63% of respondents were only interested in AUC, while others were considering other institutions in the Middle East. For example, 35% considered enrolling at AUB and the Lebanese American University interested 22% of respondents. Less popular were AUS, AUD, and the American University in Kuwait, at 6%, 4%, and 2% of choices respectively. Another 4% of respondents were interested in Egyptian universities, namely the British University in Egypt or Future University, alongside 2% interested in the King Fahd University in Saudi Arabia and another 2% who considered the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.



Other Middle Eastern Universities Considered	Count	Percentage
AUC Only	32	63%
The American University of Beirut	18	35%
The Lebanese American University	11	22%
For other universities in Egypt or the region (please specify)	4	8%
The American University in Sharjah	3	6%
The American University in Dubai	2	4%

The American University in Kuwait	1	2%
--	---	----

*For other universities in Egypt or the region (please specify)

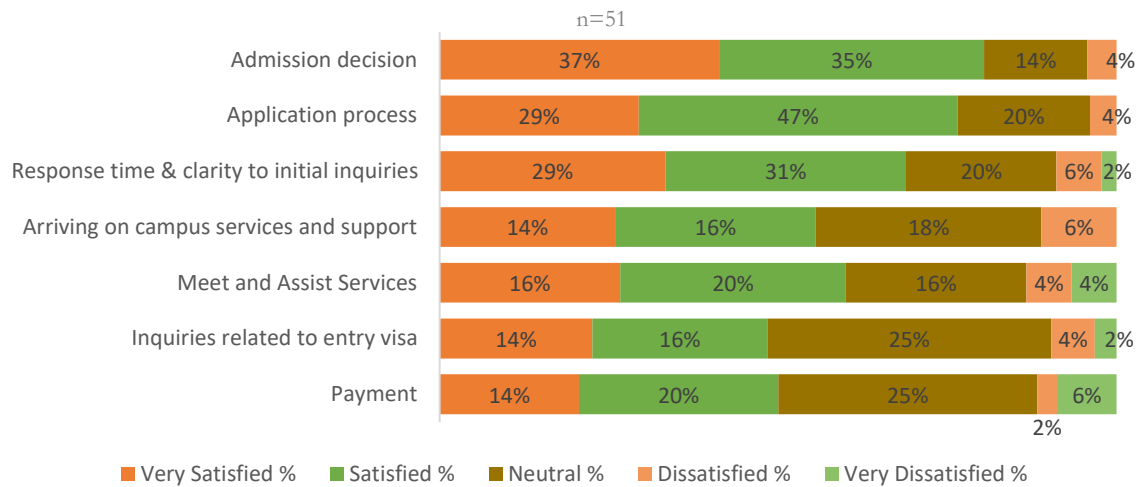
<i>University</i>	Count	Percentage
<i>King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals</i>	1	25%
<i>Hebrew University in Jerusalem</i>	1	25%
<i>British University in Egypt</i>	1	25%
<i>Future university</i>	1	25%
<i>Total</i>	4	100%

Section Four: Satisfaction with AUC Experiences Before/Upon Arrival

Overall Satisfaction

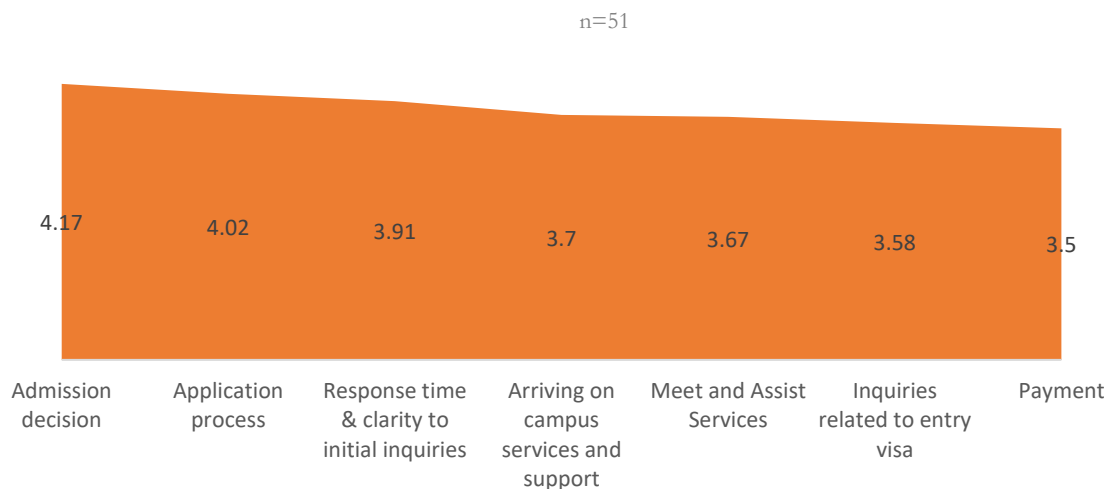
Respondents are mostly satisfied with the application process, which received an overall satisfaction rate of 76%,² and the admissions decision (72%), followed by the response rate and clarity to applicants' original inquiries (60% satisfaction). On the other hand, the least-satisfactory areas are the meet and assist services as well as the visa entry inquiries, both of which received 30% satisfaction rates.

Satisfaction with AUC Experiences Before/Upon Arrival



In terms of weighted averages, both the admissions and applications processes received weighted averages above 4.0 (4.17 and 4.02 respectively), whereas the remaining elements scored below it. It is interesting to note that the least-satisfactory area in terms of weighted average was payment, which scored 3.5 on a 5.0 scale.

Satisfaction with Initial Experiences (WA)



² Based on the combined percentages of 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' responses.

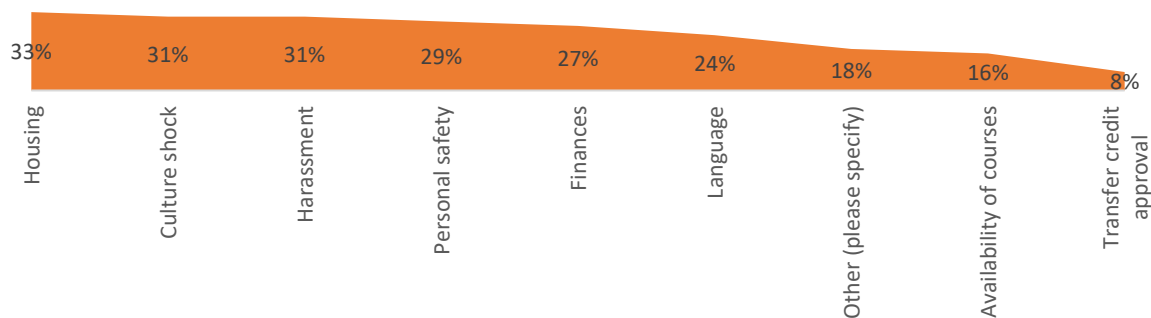
Satisfaction Elements	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		WA
	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	
Admission decision	19	37%	18	35%	7	14%	2	4%	0	0%	4.17
Application process	15	29%	24	47%	10	20%	2	4%	0	0%	4.02
Response time and clarity of responses to my academic and non-academic inquiries before I applied.	15	29%	16	31%	10	20%	3	6%	1	2%	3.91
Arriving on campus services and support	7	14%	8	16%	9	18%	3	6%	0	0%	3.7
Meet and Assist Services	8	16%	10	20%	8	16%	2	4%	2	4%	3.67
Inquiries related to entry visa	7	14%	8	16%	13	25%	2	4%	1	2%	3.58
Payment	7	14%	10	20%	13	25%	1	2%	3	6%	3.5

Concerns Prior to Arrival

The respondents' primary concern was housing, at 33%, followed by concerns of both culture shock (31%) and harassment (31%), as well as personal safety (29%) and finances (27%). The lowest concerns were course availability (16%) and credit transfer approvals (8%).

Main Concerns Prior to Arrival

n=51



Concern	Count	Percentage
Housing	17	33%
Culture shock	16	31%
Harassment	16	31%
Personal safety	15	29%
Finances	14	27%
Language	12	24%
Other (please specify)*	9	18%
Availability of courses	8	16%
Transfer credit approval	4	8%

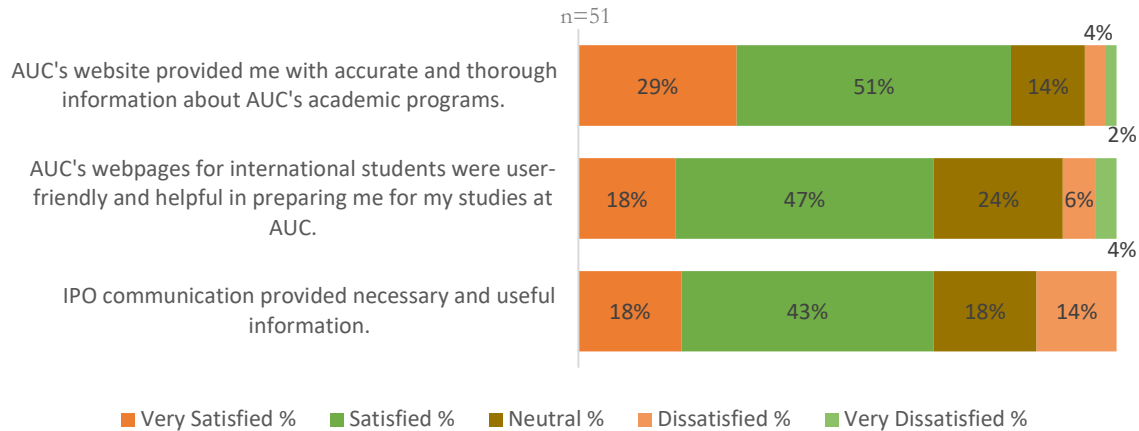
*Other Responses

Theme	Verbatim Concerns	Count	Percentage
<i>Cost of Tuition</i>	Cost of international student tuition	1	11%
<i>Health</i>	Coronavirus	1	11%
<i>Quality of Education</i>	Quality of courses	1	11%
<i>N/A</i>	Attending from the US/NA	1	67%
	Am still in Nigeria	1	
	NA	1	
	I was already In Egypt.	1	
	:(1	
	Nothing	1	

Usefulness of IPO & Websites Pre-Arrival

Overall, respondents are quite satisfied with the accuracy of information on academic programs available on the AUC webpage, with a satisfaction rate of 80%.³ They are less satisfied with how user-friendly the international student webpages were, with a 65% satisfaction rate, and even less satisfied with the extent of usefulness of IPO-communicated information, with an overall satisfaction rate of 60%.

Satisfaction with Webpages & IPO



Interventions that would have smoothed Respondents' Transition to AUC

When asked what would have made their transition to AUC easier, 20 respondents expressed their suggestions and thoughts, including three N/A responses. The remaining recommendations are categorized into the following themes based on the frequencies of mention, where the most common recommendation is for enhancing communication with students (35%), and providing them with more information on life in Cairo (18%), visa issuance procedures (12%), and academic accreditation (6%). There are also suggestions for assigning a local guide to help with the transition to Egypt (6%) as well as providing incoming students with a comprehensive handbook (6%).

³ Based on the combined percentages of 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' responses.

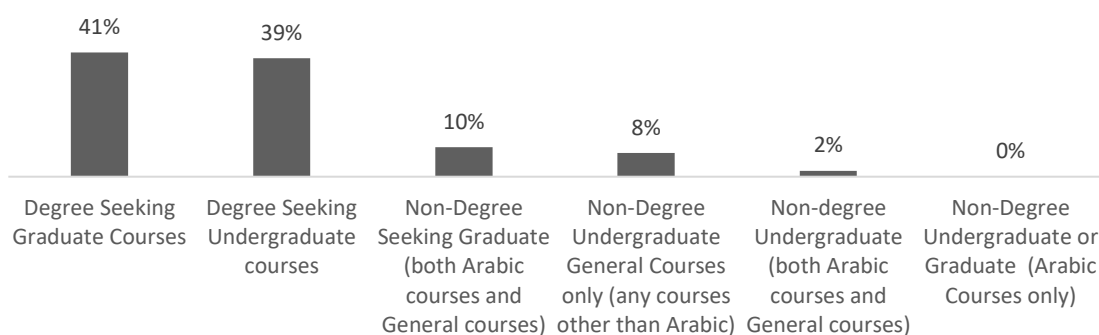
Section Five: Satisfaction with AUC Academic Experiences

Courses Registered

The highest percentage of respondents (41%) are registered for degree-seeking graduate courses during the current semester, closely followed by 39% who are registered for degree-seeking undergraduate courses. Additionally, 10% of responses are taking Arabic and general non-degree graduate courses, with another 8% registered for non-degree undergraduate courses other than Arabic. Finally, 2% of respondents are enrolled in undergraduate Arabic courses.

Which courses have you registered for this semester?

n=51

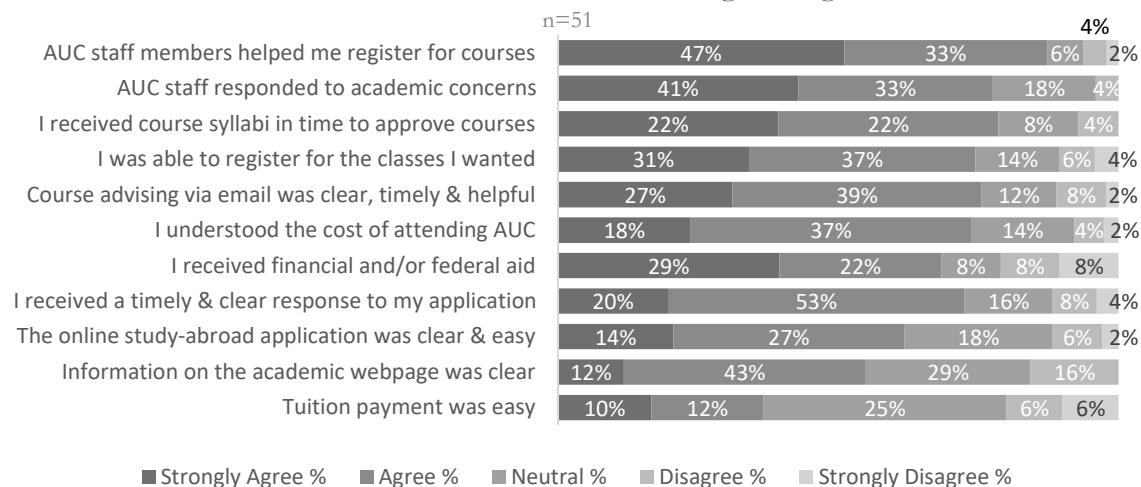


Courses Registered	Count	Percentage
Degree Seeking Graduate Courses	21	41%
Degree Seeking Undergraduate courses	20	39%
Non-Degree Seeking Graduate (both Arabic courses and General courses)	5	10%
Non-Degree Undergraduate General Courses only (any courses other than Arabic)	4	8%
Non-degree Undergraduate (both Arabic courses and General courses)	1	2%
Non-Degree Undergraduate or Graduate (Arabic Courses only)	0	0%

Advising & Registration

Respondents are mostly satisfied with the staff-provided assistance in course registration, which received an overall satisfaction rate of 80%.⁴ They are also quite satisfied with AUC staff members' responses to students' raised academic concerns (75% satisfaction), the timeliness and clarity of AUC's response to their application status (73% satisfaction), and their ability to register for the classes they wanted to take (69%). On the other hand, the least-satisfactory aspect by far was the tuition payment process, with only a 22% satisfaction rate. Also, overall satisfaction rates for both the clarity of the online study abroad application in addition to the timely receipt of course syllabi to allow for home university approvals were below 50%.

Satisfaction with Admission, Advising & Registration

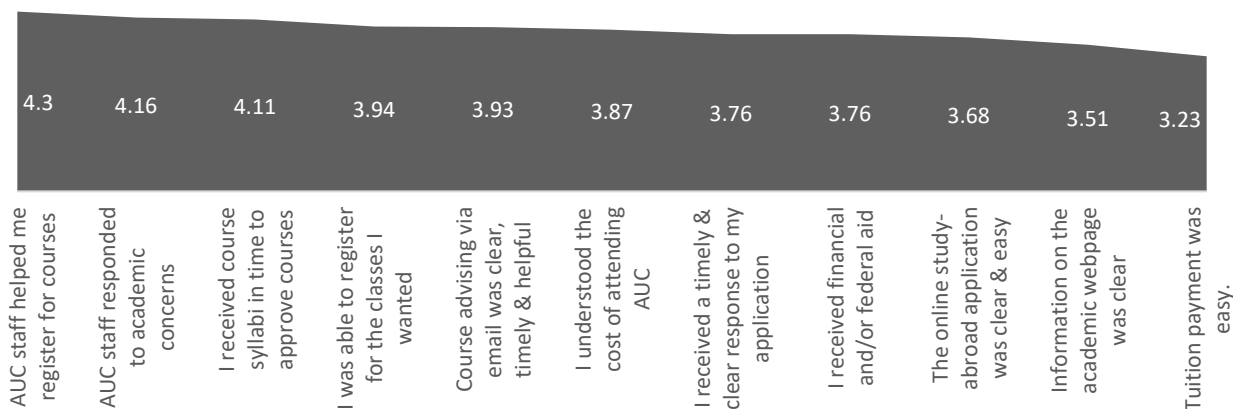


In terms of weighted averages, respondents were mostly satisfied with the assistance they received while registering for courses (4.30), followed by the staff's response to their academic concerns (4.16) and the timely receipt of course syllabi (4.11). The rest of the elements scored weighted averages below 4.0, starting with the respondents' abilities to register for their desired classes (3.94) and their satisfaction with course advising (3.93), leading to the ease of tuition payment processes, which scored the lowest weighted average of 3.23.

⁴ Based on the combined percentages of 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' responses.

Satisfaction with Admission, Advising & Registration (WA)

n=51

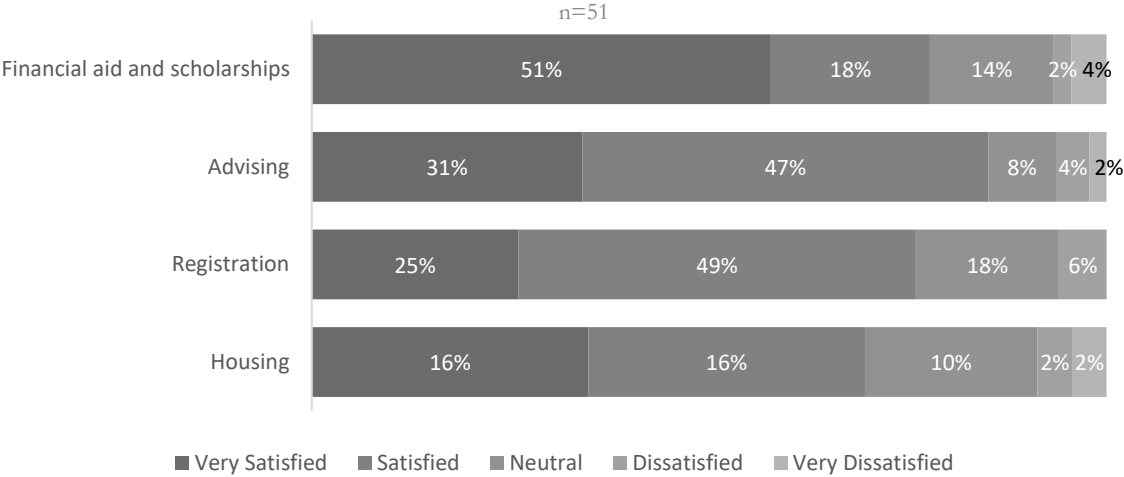


Satisfaction with Admission, Advising & Registration	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		WA
	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	
AUC staff members helped me register for courses.	24	47%	17	33%	3	6%	2	4%	1	2%	4.3
AUC staff members were courteous in responding to my academic concerns.	21	41%	17	33%	9	18%	2	4%	0	0%	4.16
I received syllabi for my courses (if requested) in time for my home university advisor to approve my courses.	11	22%	11	22%	4	8%	2	4%	0	0%	4.11
I was able to register for the classes I wanted.	16	31%	19	37%	7	14%	3	6%	2	4%	3.94
Course advising via email correspondence was clear, timely and helpful.	14	27%	20	39%	6	12%	4	8%	1	2%	3.93
I understood clearly the cost of attending AUC and how it worked with my own institution.	9	18%	19	37%	7	14%	2	4%	1	2%	3.87
I received a timely and clear response to my application.	10	20%	27	53%	8	16%	4	8%	2	4%	3.76
I received financial and/or federal aid.	15	29%	11	22%	4	8%	4	8%	4	8%	3.76
The online application for study-abroad was clear and easy to fill out.	7	14%	14	27%	9	18%	3	6%	1	2%	3.68

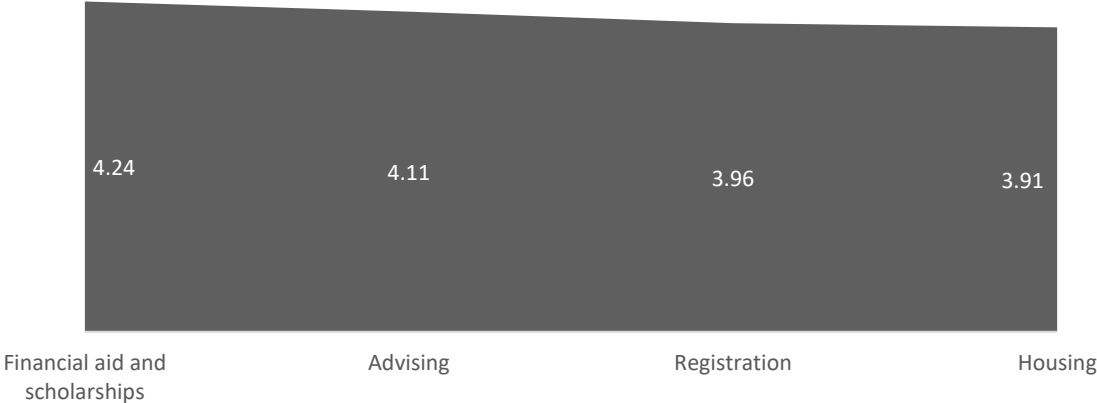
The information on the academic webpage was clear, with easy to follow steps.	6	12%	22	43%	15	29%	8	16%	0	0%	3.51
Tuition payment was easy.	5	10%	6	12%	13	25%	3	6%	3	6%	3.23

Furthermore, respondents were specifically asked to indicate their satisfaction with some aspects of their AUC experiences concurrent with their student experiences, including advising and registration, housing, and scholarships/financial aid.

Satisfaction with AUC Experiences After Arrival



Satisfaction with Experiences After Arrival (WA)



Satisfaction with AUC Experiences After Arrival	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		WA
	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	C	%	
Financial aid and scholarships	26	51%	9	18%	7	14%	1	2%	2	4%	4.24
Advising	16	31%	24	47%	4	8%	2	4%	1	2%	4.11
Registration	13	25%	25	49%	9	18%	3	6%	0	0%	3.96
Housing	8	16%	8	16%	5	10%	1	2%	1	2%	3.91

Section Six: Student-based Recommendations

There were 11 student-based comments to improve the pre-arrival experiences at AUC. Most of them (60%) suggest improving communication between staff and students, while 10% have recommendations concerning advising and another 10% have recommendations on credit transfers. Moreover, 10% of suggestions concern the meet and assist services while another 10% discuss the first-year program.

Aside from the student-initiated recommendations, there are other recommendations that emerge from the responses as follows:

- Increase awareness of the principle point of contact, as 55% of the respondents were unaware of the existence of PPOC.
- Capitalize on AUC outreach channels through recruiters, institutional advisors, and study abroad officers, as they are the least popular channels according to respondents (with 0% of international student respondents hearing about AUC through AUC recruiters, 4% via home institution advisors, and 2% through home institution study abroad offices respectively).
- Enhance the meet and assist services and visa entry inquiry process, as they are the least-satisfactory areas in respondents' initial encounters with AUC before and upon arrival, with 30% satisfaction rates.
- Facilitate housing for international students, as housing was the respondents' primary concern at 33%, followed by concerns of culture shock (31%) and harassment (31%).
- Improve the tuition-payment process, as only 22% of respondents were satisfied with it in the general admissions, advising, and registration journey.