Bangkok, Thailand
Thammasat University
IAP Program Handbook

Your study abroad program is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in conjunction with Thammasat University. This IAP Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from Thammasat University, as well as the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and MyStudyAbroad account. It is essential to also review the information contained your IAP Study Abroad Handbook and MyStudyAbroad account.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with your host university or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to International Academic Programs at UW-Madison.

On-Site Contact Information
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Exchange Student Admission Coordinator
International Student & Staff Services Division
Office of International Affairs
Thammasat University, 2 Prachan Rd., Bangkok 10200, THAILAND
Tel. 662 613-2047-8 Fax. 662 623-5289
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Embassy Registration
All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at https://travelregistration.state.gov. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country’s embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in Thailand
American Citizen Services (ACS)
95 Wireless Road
Bangkok 10330, Thailand
Tel: [66] (2) 205-4049
Email: acsbkk@state.gov
ACS Homepage: http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/service.html
U.S. Embassy Homepage: http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/

Emergency Contact Information
In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number (608) 265-6329 between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at (608) 516-9440.
Handling Money Abroad

The official currency of Thailand is the Baht (THB). You should bring some money with you in cash for incidental purchases as well as for bus and train fares. It is possible to convert almost any currency into Baht at the airport when you arrive. You will generally receive 1000-Baht bills when exchanging money, but be sure to ask for small bills at the airport so you can pay for a taxi without needing too much change. Otherwise, taxi drivers may not have enough change or may take advantage of you and claim they do not have any change.

ATM/Debit Cards

ATM machines dispensing Thai baht are to be found at most bank locations, in airports, and in many shopping malls in urban centers of Thailand. Cards issued by U.S. banks and credit unions work at all ATM machines that are operated by a member of the same network as that of the issuing bank or credit union. Thai ATM machines all use the official government exchange rate. Check with your bank prior to departure to make sure you will be able to access your funds from abroad with an ATM card.

Traveler’s Checks

For those who prefer to use traveler’s checks, exchange counters that are operated by Thai banks are open 24 hours per day in the Bangkok airport. A passport is required so that the signature can be verified. There is a small service fee for each check cashed, but the banks all charge the same fee and all also follow the official exchange rate. Mini vans operated by the larger banks provide mobile exchange services in busy areas that tourists frequent around the city. With exchange services so readily available, it is not necessary to carry large amounts of cash. Larger denominations of traveler’s checks get a somewhat better exchange rate, so either $100 or $500 checks are the most convenient for those who prefer to use checks. Thai banks usually ask to see the bill of sale for $500 checks.

Packing

Pack light. Remember that Bangkok is a modern city and you can buy almost anything that you need there. Some items are more difficult for an average American to buy in Thailand, due to the small size of Thai people or unavailability. These items include: feminine hygiene products, shoes and undergarments. Also, most lotion/aloe and sunscreen in Thailand have whitening components in them. Other items to remember are insect repellent with DEET, a journal, malaria pills, and sheets.

Due to the hot temperatures and humidity, you will want to bring lightweight clothes. Thammasat students tend to dress nice for school - you will never see anyone wear clothes that could be pajamas like you see here! Women wear skirts or jeans (not shorts!) with casual yet nice shirts; men wear pants or shorts with nicer shirts. Remember that it is disrespectful to show too much skin at school. Depending on the time of year you are abroad, you may need slightly warmer clothes for cool nights during the cool season or travel to the mountainous northern region. Don’t bring too many warm clothes - a light jacket and long sleeve shirt is enough.
Again, it is very hot and humid in Thailand, so you do not need to bring many pairs of jeans with you. Think lightweight material, and remember that textiles are a major industry in Thailand – you can buy clothes at low prices when you get there!

**Electronics**

Power in Thailand runs on 220V (volts), 50Hz (cycles) AC and use both the “europlug” with two round pins and plugs with two flat blades are used. Plugs with a grounding pin or with different-sized blades such as those found in United States are not compatible with sockets in Thailand. If you plan on bringing any appliances from the United States, keep in mind that they will require adapters/converters which you should purchase before departure. It would also be wise to check to be sure that charging units for electric razors, PDAs, cameras, etc. are compatible with 220V, 50Hz power.

**Travel and Arrival Information**

Once you fax back your arrival information to Thammasat University, you will be assigned a “buddy” who will meet you upon arrival in Bangkok airport. Travel and arrival information will be provided in more detail in your Thammasat acceptance packet.

**The Academic Program**

**Thammasat University**

Thammasat University is the second oldest university in Thailand. It is located on Rattanakosin, an inner-city riverside island that houses world renowned palaces and temples, with the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha at the heart of the old city. When Thammasat’s Tha Prachan campus opened in 1934, it was an open institution with a focus on teaching law and politics. Since then, the major fields of study expanded to 4 in 1949 and to 15 today, including Political Science, Economics, Engineering, Medicine, Dentistry, Journalism and Mass Communication, and more. Thammasat was the first university in Thailand to offer classes in the Liberal Arts.

The university ended its open status in 1960 and began requiring competitive entrance examinations. Even with entrance examinations, demand for education at Thammasat was high; in 1986 the university opened a second campus at Rangsit. Thammasat University is currently expanding outside of Bangkok, to different regions of the country. A third campus is located in Pattaya, in the eastern region, and a fourth campus recently opened in Lampang, in the northern region. Currently, Thammasat University is one of Thailand’s leading institutions of higher education, with over 18,000 undergraduate and 5,000 graduate students.

The riverside campus provides a unique mix of bustling city life and calm riverside getaways. Campus is small, about a 5 minute walk from one end to the other. Thammasat is near the backpackers’ district (Khao San Road) and within walking distance of several cultural centers, government agencies and international organizations, including the Grand Palace, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, and the National Museum.

**The Exchange Program**
Services are available to international students from any program through the International Student Services (ISS) office, located in the Dome Building. The ISS office arranges trips for international students, including an overnight “homestay,” holds dinners, and organizes sporting competitions between the international programs.

Course Information
This program is held in Thammasat University and offered through the Thai Studies program. The Thai Studies program offers students the opportunity to take courses in Thai language, Thai society and culture, and Thai civilization. At least 50% of courses must be through Thai Studies. The remaining courses may be taken in any of the four international programs: Faculty of Economics, Business Administration, Political Science, Liberal Arts, and British and American Studies. These international programs are for Thai students as well; thus, your classes will be a mix of Thai students and international students from all over the world.

Class Schedules
Most classes are typically held two days a week for an hour and a half, while a few classes are only one day a week for three hours. Classes are offered Monday through Saturday, but the majority of classes are scheduled for Tuesday through Friday. The hour-and-a-half blocks run from 8:00 am continuously through 5:00 pm.

Classes Available
Course offerings depend on the semester you are abroad. A more complete listing can be found on the Thai Programs website: http://www.pbic.tu.ac.th/main/home It may be possible for students to take program outside the Thai Studies program, especially if you are interested in a course at Thammasat that are relevant to your major at Madison. Please contact onsite staff at Thammasat for more information. Courses available can be found here: Courses in English are taught at the Tha Prachan campus. Students with sufficient Thai language skills may be able to take courses in Thai at the Rangsit campus.

Classroom Culture
Class sizes are much smaller; the majority of courses have 20 to 40 students enrolled. PowerPoint presentations are common, and overhead projectors and videos are other teaching methods used in the classroom. Classroom culture at Thammasat University is very different from that at UW-Madison.
• Both students and professors tend to be 10 to 15 minutes late for class every day, and are sometimes 45 minutes to an hour late. Classes rarely start at their scheduled time due to the lack of passing time between classes and the general feeling in Thailand that relationships are more important than time.
• Students will answer their cell phones during class, and try to hide it by putting their hands over their mouths; professors also occasionally answer their cell phones during class.
• Group projects are very popular in Thailand.
• Course difficulty and expectations vary from one professor to another, just like at the UW-Madison.

School Uniforms
School uniforms are required at Thammasat University. However, how often and when you have to wear them depends on the faculty teaching your courses. For example, for classes in the Faculty of Economics, uniforms are required only during exams; Business Administration classes require you wear your uniform to all your classes; Thai Studies classes never require a uniform.

Men’s Uniforms
- White button-down shirt, tucked in
- Black or navy blue pants
- Belt buckle with university logo
- Black shoes with socks

Women’s Uniforms
- White button-down shirt, tucked in
- University logo buttons and pin on left side of collar
- Black or navy blue skirt
- Belt buckle with university logo
- Black shoes with heel strap

The university logo buttons, pins, and belt buckles are available at Thammasat’s book store. You can easily buy the shirts and bottoms near the University (near Khao San Road) for a reasonable price (about $5). Although we are not used to wearing school uniforms here at UW-Madison, it is beneficial for you to wear them early in the semester in Thailand. You will quickly earn local people’s respect and friendship because they will recognize you as a Thammasat student rather than just another tourist.

Registration
Students will complete registration after arrival in Bangkok, prior to the start of classes. More information on the registration process will be given at the orientation in Bangkok.

Credits
Most credits at Thammasat are equivalent to UW-Madison; so three credits at Thammasat will be equivalent to 3 credits at UW-Madison. There may be exceptions depending on the department in which the course is taken. In general, one class hour per week for a 15 week semester equals approximately one credit. Exchange students are required to be enrolled as full-time students under the terms of their student visa. A minimal full-time enrollment is 12 credits per semester.

Grade Scale
The grade conversion scale for this program is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Thammasat University</th>
<th>UW-Madison Equivalent</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>AB</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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University Facilities

Libraries
Thammasat’s main library, Pridi Banomyong Library, is located on three floors below the riverside courtyard. Amongst thousands of books in Thai, there is a collection of books written in English. Although the collection is relatively small, it is sufficient for papers and group projects you will do for class.

_Pridi Banomyong Library hours:_
Monday-Friday 8:00 am - 8:00 pm  
Saturday 9:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Sundays & holidays Closed

Be sure to dress respectfully when you go to the library; you will be denied entrance if you wear shorts or a tank top. Backpacks are not allowed in the library. Lockers are available to rent with your student ID. You also need your student ID to enter the library and check out books. You will get a student ID from the BE International Office, but it may take a while to get.

University Bookstore
The University Bookstore is located near the Tha Prachan gate. You can buy your textbooks for class, as well as notebooks, pens, binders, and other office supplies at the bookstore. The buttons and belt buckles required for your school uniform and other university merchandise can also be purchased here.

_Booksore hours:_
Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 7:00 pm  
Saturday 9:30 am - 3:30 pm  
Sunday & holidays Closed

Cafeteria
The cafeteria is open-air and located along the riverbank. Food there is quite good and very cheap. A plate of food costs on average 20 Baht. There are vegetarian options in the cafeteria as well. Private food stalls can be found on and very near campus; several good restaurants are also nearby.

Living Abroad

Thailand
Thailand sits in the heart of mainland Southeast Asia, surrounded by Myanmar to the west, Laos to the North/Northeast, Cambodia to the Southeast, and Malaysia to the South. Thailand’s population is about 65.5 million people. Thailand has four distinct regions: the mountainous North, the dry, poor Northeast, the fertile Central Plains, and the limestone-encrusted rainforest-covered tropical South. Thailand is hot and humid year-round. Tropical monsoons dictate three seasons throughout the year: hot (March-May), rainy (June-October), and cool (November-
February). Average temperatures, depending on the region and time of year, range from 75-95 degrees Fahrenheit. Very little rain falls during the hot and cool seasons.

Thailand has been run under a constitutional monarchy since 1932. The government is controlled by the nationally-elected House of Representatives and prime minister. The King appoints all judges who sit on the Supreme Court, acts as a figurehead for the nation, and is revered by Thailand’s citizens.

About half of Thailand’s labor force is in the agricultural sector, while the same sector contributes less than 10% of the nation’s GDP. Tourism has been a growing industry since the late 1980s and has been a significant contributor to the nation’s economic growth. Three-fourths of Thailand’s population is ethnically Thai, while about 14% are Chinese. The national language is Thai and English is a very common second language, especially among the elite.

Thai people enjoy their food - food is a huge part of their culture. Thai food is renowned for its combinations of flavors, particularly spicy, sweet and sour. Tropical fruits are abundant and flavorful. Familiar fruits, such as pineapple, bananas, melons and oranges, as well as unfamiliar fruits, such as lomyay, monkut, lychee, rambutan and more, are popular throughout the country.

Meals in Thailand are leisurely and social and can last about 2 hours. It is common for groups of students to go out to dinner together after classes. The “Thai style” of going out to dinner is ordering many plates of all different dishes and sharing with everyone at the table. You eat with a spoon in your right hand and fork in your left, and use the fork to push food onto your spoon. Except in nice restaurants, it is not part of Thai culture to tip.

The wai is a greeting as well as a gesture of respect. Respecting one’s elders is very important in Thai society, and greeting them with a wai is a way to show respect. To wai, you place your hands together - women, in front of your chest, men in front of your chin - and bow your head a little bit. You should wai to your professors when you see them, as well as any other people who are older or of higher status than you.

Over 95% of the population in Thailand practices Theravada Buddhism. Almost 4% of the population, primarily in the southern peninsula, are Muslim, and less than 1% of the population practices Christianity. Buddhism is an integral part of Thai people’s daily actions and lives. It is very common to see people give offerings of food, flowers, or water to monks in the mornings. This is a common Buddhist practice to “make merit.”

Socially, Thai men are expected to become a monk for some period during their lifetime. Males of any age can become a monk; even young boys can enter the monkhood as novices. Monks live and study in the temple complexes and live by very strict rules - there are 227 monastic rules that dictate how a monk can live his life. For example, monks can only eat twice a day and both meals must be eaten before noon. They can only eat the food that is offered to them in their bowl.

NOTE for women travelers: Monks are not allowed to touch women, so be aware of who you are passing in crowded places!
Bangkok
The city of Bangkok is the capital, largest urban area and primary city of Thailand. In the span of over two hundred years, Bangkok has grown to become the political, social and economic center of not only Thailand but for Indochina and South East Asia. Its influence in the arts, politics, fashion, education and entertainment as well as being a business, financial and cultural center of Asia has given Bangkok the status of a global city.

Bangkok has a variety of cultural performances and activities for the enjoyment of both tourists and locals alike. In your free time, attend a Thai puppet show or dance performance to learn traditional stories and see traditional dress, take a ride down the Chao Phraya River and connecting canals to view local river life, or visit one of the hundreds of Buddhist temples to learn more about Buddhism and observe religious traditions.

In Bangkok, food from street vendors is readily available at any time of the day. Many Thai people buy food off the street, because it is delicious, convenient and cheap. (Many apartments do not even have a kitchen for this reason – since Thai food requires so many ingredients, it can be cheaper to buy it from food vendors.) The Thai government has strict regulations that street vendors must follow, so buying food off the street is generally safe. Of course you must pay attention to and avoid meat that may have been in the heat too long, is undercooked, or otherwise looks unsafe.

Thai people enjoy shopping; you can shop at huge shopping centers, department stores, markets or vendors along the street - Thailand has it all and it is cheap! Thai boxing is a very popular sport in Thailand, to watch as well as participate in. Audiences are very lively because gambling at boxing matches is common. Although for many Thais it is too hot to participate in outdoor sports, many people enjoy playing soccer, basketball or tennis.

Sanam luang, or the “Royal Garden,” is a large open field near Thammasat. Vendors sell kites and people of all ages go there to fly kites in the afternoons and evenings. There is also a large park in downtown Bangkok, where you can find people exercising, reading, studying or hanging out.

Housing
Students are largely responsible for finding their own housing. Thammasat staff recommend arriving in Bangkok a few days early and stay in a nearby hotel or hostel while searching for housing. There are many options that are available to and appropriate for students. Every semester, few days after the orientation day, the program coordinator will also arrange the Apartment Hunting Day for students to go to check out the selected apartments in the area. Contact on-site Thammasat staff for more information about housing listings.

Safety
Although traffic in Bangkok is heavy, getting around the city is not difficult. There are several different modes of public transportation that will get you where ever you need to go, which include buses, taxis, river taxis, and the metro.

Safety in Transportation
The single most commonplace threat to good health for most visitors and residents in Thailand is probably traffic. Concepts of appropriate use of motor vehicles in Thailand are very different from those of the United States. This different attitude, combined with traffic flow being reversed in comparison to that of the United States, makes the roadways a source of real danger. Seat belts are found in only a few cars and not at all in buses; overcrowded vehicles is common. Participants are urged to use extra caution when traveling. Do not get onto overcrowded buses, and get off of the bus to wait for another one if it becomes dangerously overloaded. Students should be aware of traffic concerns and should not ride motorcycles, as there a many motorcycle taxis in Bangkok.

When taking a taxi, be sure it is a metered taxi. Some taxi drivers require that you bargain with them, and will charge you expensive flat rates. Be sure that the driver turns the meter on, and if he/she does not, get out of the taxi.

**HIV/AIDS**: It is commonly reported that the rate of HIV/AIDS infection in Thailand is very high, especially among sex workers. These reports are true, but the implication that the problem is worse in Thailand than it is in other countries of the region does not seem to be correct, since other countries seem purposely to under report the dimensions of the problem.

The situation in Thailand is a very serious one, and its true dimensions may not be known for many years. Thai authorities have acknowledged the seriousness of the threat to public health and are taking steps to address that problem. By government policy, medical practitioners are required to use disposable or sterilized needles, and program participants will be able to purchase disposable needles and syringes should they be needed. Although it is always wise to avoid unnecessary blood transfusions, Thai health regulations require that the blood supply be checked by modern methods and the authorities stand by its safety. Most participants will not have to face such worries, but everyone will have to take those precautions that are appropriate in the U.S. in order to avoid contact with blood or body fluids from others.

**Malaria and Dengue Fever**: According to the most recent findings of the US Center for Disease Control, there is little if any malaria to be found in urban Thailand, and even very little in rural areas, with the exception of the deeply forested border areas touching on Burma, Cambodia and Laos. The CDC advises that travelers going to Thailand are not at risk for contracting malaria unless plans specifically call for entering a malarial area. If you plan to travel to malarial areas, please speak with your health care provider about appropriate preventive medication. Additional precautions that are useful for those who will enter such areas include using insect repellent at dawn and dusk, which are the feeding times for the mosquito that carries malaria, wearing long pants and long sleeve shirts, and sleeping in treated mosquito nets. Even though malaria is not much of a problem, Dengue Fever is more common and is also a mosquito-borne illness. Therefore, mosquito repellent is important. The mosquitoes that transmit dengue viruses are found in and immediately around buildings and bite from dawn, through the day, until dusk, thus the risk may be higher in urban areas.