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The safety and security of the AU community at AU Centers Abroad is paramount priority, and the safeguards in this plan are designed to mitigate the risk to members of our community of contracting COVID-19 and transmitting it to others.

The following health and safety measures are in effect for Fall 2021 at AU Brussels Center:

COVID-19 Vaccination: All students, faculty, staff and members of homestay families over the age of 12 will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. AU is committed to promoting a vaccination environment that is safe and equitable for all students, faculty, and staff and has implemented an exemption process for individuals with medical conditions that prevent them from being vaccinated and for individuals with sincerely held religious beliefs that prohibit them from being vaccinated. Please refer to the Health and Safety Directive on Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination for further information.

Testing: AU strongly recommends that students obtain a negative PCR test 72 hours prior to departure for Belgium. All members of AU Brussels host families who are able to get tested per Belgian health guidelines will get a COVID-19 test prior to arrival of students. All students will be required to take a COVID test upon arrival in Brussels per Belgium’s entry requirements before the start of orientation. Once on-site, students, faculty, and staff who are not fully vaccinated will be required to be tested for COVID-19 twice a week at an AU Brussels Center designated testing location. Given COVID-19 variants, all fully vaccinated students, faculty, staff, and host families may be subject to periodic surveillance testing at the university’s discretion. Any person experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of vaccination status, must get a COVID-19 test. Please refer to the [Health and Safety Directive on COVID-19 Exposure, Positive Test, or Suspected Infection](#) for further information.

Health and Safety Pledge/Acknowledgment: All students will be required to sign a Health and Safety Pledge that they will abide by all health and safety regulations imposed by the university, the AU Brussels Center, and local government directives regarding COVID-19 restrictions, regulations, and isolation and quarantine procedures.

Daily Screening: To ensure they are not symptomatic, all students, faculty, and staff who are not fully vaccinated must complete the university’s online Daily Self-Screening Form. Fully vaccinated faculty, staff and students are expected to self-monitor for symptoms and seek medical care if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must get a COVID-19 test.

Medical Care: There are ample medical facilities within a short distance of the AU Brussels program center and UCL campus where the center is located. Students can receive medical care for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related medical needs at the general practitioner's office located close to the Saint-Luc UCL Clinic. If deemed necessary, the general practitioner will advise consultation at the hospital. The hospital [Saint-Luc UCL University Clinic](#) is within a short walk of the AU Brussels Center and has a wide range of specialized medical care and a 24/7 emergency care. AU Abroad recommends that students purchase supplemental international travel insurance to cover routine medical care.

Contact Tracing: Any student, faculty, staff, and host family member must report COVID-19 exposure/positive test result to the AU Brussels program staff. Belgium's National Contact Tracing identifies and does follow up of high-risk contacts.

Face Coverings: Students will wear face coverings according to the policies in force at UCL's Woluwe campus site. Face shields do not fulfill the face covering requirement. Students will also be expected to wear face coverings as required by local government health directives. When outdoors, all individuals must comply with the requirements as established by the UCL campus site and as required by Belgian and Brussels regulations. See: <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/faq/>. If the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) issues a Level 4 Travel Notice for Belgium, then face coverings will be required inside the AU Brussels Center and during all indoor program sponsored activities.

Personal Health Precautions: In addition to wearing face coverings as noted, members of the AU community are expected to exercise personal health precautions through practicing frequent hand washing and respiratory etiquette and seek medical care if symptoms warrant. These precautions not only reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection but also the spread of infectious disease in general. Students, faculty, and staff with signs or symptoms of infectious illness should stay home and seek medical care.

Positive Test Reporting and Self-Isolation: Students who test positive for COVID-19 must notify the university by submitting a [Self-Report Form](#) and by contacting the appropriate AU Brussels Center staff. The person who tests positive must isolate and follow the regulations as required by the government. The person can resume normal activities according to medical advice. AU Brussels staff will coordinate isolation for a student who tests positive.

Exposure to COVID-19: In Belgium, a person is considered a high-risk contact if they were in contact with an infected person for some time (more than 15 minutes) and in close proximity (within a distance of 1.5 meters). If a person is fully vaccinated and is exposed, they would need to get a PCR test and quarantine until a negative result is received. In case of a positive test result, the person would need to immediately inform AU Brussels staff, isolate and follow a doctor's advice. AU Brussels staff would coordinate isolation arrangements for the student.

Physical Distancing: It is advised to keep social distance as much as possible. Wear a mask if social distance cannot be maintained.

<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/faq/>

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Faculty, staff, and students are expected to bring their own face coverings. Disposable face coverings will be provided for individuals who forget or lose their face coverings.

Cleaning: The homestay family will clean the student's bedroom on a regular basis. The student is responsible for keeping the bedroom and the bathroom tidy. The AU Center facilities are disinfected every day the students are on site, especially the areas with the highest influx of students, professors, and staff. All frequently touched surfaces (door and window handles, light switches, bathrooms, handrails, desks, etc.) will be cleaned regularly.

Facility Air Quality/Water Quality: AU Brussels classrooms are equipped with a state-of-the-art ventilation system and with windows that can be opened. A CO2 meter is available for monitoring the air quality. Students should carry a personalized bottle of water (marked with their name).

Classrooms: All classrooms are spacious. Desks will be spaced according to the regulations of the host UCL campus where the AU Brussels Center is located.

Housing: AU Brussels students live in program arranged homestays. All individuals over the age of 12 who live in the home are vaccinated. In cases where a homestay family has children under the age of 12 who are unvaccinated, the AU student will have no contact indoors at the home with the children. Students and host families are not required to use a face covering in the homestay except in cases of suspected exposure or positive COVID-19 test result. Students will have their own bedroom and a bathroom separate from that of the homestay family. If a student is exposed or tests positive with COVID-19 and needs to isolate, AU Brussels staff have arranged separate student apartment facilities. If a homestay family member tests positive, then the AU student will be temporarily placed in the program-arranged student apartment or another host family during the family's isolation. The AU Brussels Homestay Coordinator will manage this process.

Internships: All sites are vetted for COVID-related protocol by the AU Brussels Internship Coordinator prior to placing any AU student at an internship. Policies related to COVID-19 have been added to the internship contract which is signed by the AU Brussels Director, the internship site's supervisor, and the student prior to starting the internship.

Excursions: Field trip locations for the AU Brussels program will be within Belgium and/or contiguous countries for Fall 2021. The AU Brussels office manager is a certified risk assessment officer and will conduct a thorough medical services review for all program sponsored field trip locations.

Independent Travel: Independent travel away from the program site will depend on several factors, including the state of the pandemic, local and international travel restrictions, and guidance from national, local, and U.S. authorities. Due to these uncertainties, AU strongly discourages students from engaging in any independent travel and reserves the right to restrict certain locations/countries as may be deemed necessary. AU cannot extend any support for independent travel. Students who choose to travel away from the program site on non-program travel will be responsible for any inconveniences or costs incurred resulting from local restrictions or requirements. Additionally, if students are prevented from returning to the program site while traveling independently due to transport delays, local restrictions or border closures, any missed classes or required program activities will be deemed unexcused absences and will result in negative consequences as per our academic policies.



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