

Learning, Assessment and Academic Guide

For the Spring and Summer
Terms 2021

The AUB ‘No Disadvantage Plan’



1. Introduction

Our *No Disadvantage Plan* (NDP) supports your studies for the Spring and Summer terms 2021 and will be kept under constant revision.

In other universities it is sometimes called a ‘No Detriment Policy’ or a ‘Safety Net Policy’ but the NDP is bespoke to AUB.

Our guiding principle is: **Maximum Fairness: Maximum Flexibility.**

We have provided a glossary of terms used in this document at the end.

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Our guarantee:

- we will maintain the quality of your learning through online, blended and (as soon as the government allows us to do so) face-to-face activities
- we will commit additional resources to meet your needs in mental health and well-being, and we will maintain an accessible programme of on-campus COVID testing
- we will revise and may extend the academic calendar, term-dates and holiday periods to maximise your access to technical workshops, library, and studios (as soon as government allows us to open the campus to everyone)
- we will aim to open access for all but will prioritise those who have major final assessments, graduation events, and professional deadlines
- we will aim to Make Making Possible safely and for as many students as possible in the coming year.

Thank you:

- for being actively engaged in online and blended learning
- for keeping in touch with your tutors and with each other
- for maintaining the high quality of work expected of AUB students
- for helping keep the campus, halls and AUB premises safe and secure.

Read this document closely, because:

- it has essential details about how you apply for mitigations, extensions, and other extenuating circumstances
- it contains vital references to how AUB approaches standards and supports additional information that you will receive from your course and the units in it, and it will be regularly updated.

We know this is a stressful time for you, and therefore:

- the NDP offers you maximum fairness in how you are assessed, and shows how we have adjusted your assessment while ensuring we meet all the learning outcomes
- the NDP has been designed to give you maximum flexibility in how you study at AUB, and to ensure that your learning is a quality experience
- the NDP will ensure that you benefit from varied forms of academic delivery, and we are committed to giving you the skills and attributes that will enable you to achieve
- the NDP aims to set you up for a successful future
- the NDP has been devised with the help and support of the AUB Students' Union; thank you to Louise, Kamila and Katherine for supporting the achievement of all students
- the NDP embodies the commitment of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive; it was composed in January 2021 and will stay a live document during the course of the pandemic, subject to revision and updating, available online and through our social media with details specific to each course through the course team communications
- the NDP has the approval of Academic Board.

2. Assessment, Quality and Standards.

The NDP is established on two principles 1) assessment and standards and 2) academic delivery

It is designed to support you, and is tailored to support you wherever you are in your academic journey. It has the double security features of maximum fairness and maximum flexibility to ensure that as a group, collectively or individually, whether progressing or graduating this year, you can be reassured that your achievements are fairly assessed and standards are maintained.

13 | We are confident that our blended and online delivery will enable you to meet the learning outcomes. However, we are also making contingency plans to ensure that when we are allowed back onto campus for face-to-face teaching, and access to resources, that this will be provided to you by each course team who will determine the necessary access arrangements. This will be identified by each course but you can find the generic arrangements under the *Make Making Possible* section.

As a result of the third lockdown we may need to extend the academic year. The deadlines for assessment, marking and exam boards will be arranged to ensure students are not disadvantaged as a result of the need for access to on-campus resources. You will receive this information by each course and level as it will be specific to you.

We are also providing additional resources to help enhance your work, such as portfolio preparation, careers sessions and preparation for applying for employment which sit outside your assessable units. Please see the section on Enrichment for how this will operate.

If you need extra guidance about assessment, quality and standards you can ask your Academic Counsellors. Academic Counsellors are tutors who will be familiar to you, but they are able to provide extra guidance about quality and standards and how the regulations relate to your particular course, level and your individual circumstance.

Ensuring our quality and standards

We are proud of the standards of awards at AUB and it is important to us—and to you—that your degree maintains its value over time.

We will be flexible in how we enable you to demonstrate the

course outcomes; you will not be disadvantaged because of how you submit work for assessment.

We are committed to assessing you fairly. Work on your course will be reviewed by an External Examiner to confirm that standards have been maintained. The External Examiner is an academic peer from another university. They will be sent this NDP document and will have access to Wiseflow so they can take a random sample of work from across your course and your level for moderation.

If you believe that you will not be able to meet the Learning Outcomes to your best level, you should speak to your Course Leader about an extension (see below). This is separate from needing access to complete work for your portfolio (see page 7 below).

All of our Examination Boards, which determine your progression and your final award, are aware of the NDP, and will apply the academic regulations consistently and fairly.

| 4 | We will continue to meet national standards set out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and the steps set out in the NDP will reward you for your achievements.

We have also ensured our academic governance is secure by the approval of this document by the AUB Academic Board. Our Examination Boards may be delayed to ensure that all assessments are considered in a timely manner but the process and procedures for the Examination Boards will not change.

If you need mitigation, or need to apply for an extension

If you need an extension to an assessment deadline you should follow the usual process.

Your Course Leader can approve an extension of up to one week, you should request this using the online form available on e-Vision. If you need longer, you will need to make a formal application for mitigation by completing the mitigation form and emailing it to your Course Leader.

If the reason is related to COVID-19 (either because you have been unwell, or because your studies have been disrupted in some other way), you will not need to provide evidence (such as a medical certificate) but you will need to provide a short explanation why you are requesting additional time. This is in line with our NDP approach to Maximum Fairness so you are not disadvantaged by the global pandemic. This applies to all students on all courses at all levels.

3. Make making possible

We will aim to open access to the campus for all but will prioritise those who have major final assessments, graduation events, and professional deadlines in the first instance. We know many of you would like access to AUB physical resources. So, we are working with our technical teams to create flexible timetables and maximise access as soon as the law allows us to do so. The NDP documents contains all our contingency planning to date.

| 5 | When we are permitted we will make resources available through a system of course and level access as determined by group and by need. The individual course information will be provided by your course team.

We will extend opening hours and a signing-in system for independent study during non-timetabled periods. Our aim is to stay open until 9pm every weekday evening to maximise your access and use of the facilities.

We will consider weekend access if it is appropriate to do so, however, we need to make sure that our staff and students have time to rest, recover, and relax.

On-Campus:

When we are able to come back on to campus for face-to-face teaching or access to resources we will still need to maintain a Covid secure campus and follow strict guidance to ensure the campus remains safe for students and staff.

Each course at AUB is bespoke and may have very different requirements from other courses. So, at AUB each course is planning how best to support each Level and we think this is appropriate to your studies.

As a result of our discussions for contingency planning and in consultation with academic tutors, we have identified which groups of students will have priority access to resources based on the curriculum need, campus facilities and resources.

Your access to campus will be timetabled and managed through your course teams to ensure we maximise fairness. We will give you as much notice as possible, but if you are unable to attend because of the impact of Covid you will not be disadvantaged in your assessments.

Off-Campus

Each course at AUB is different and teams have developed the right approach for your course to support students.

Some students have been supported through ‘making kits’ which have been sent direct to home addresses. This will continue for those students who are able to achieve in this way, or that their circumstances are such that this is a practical and pragmatic option.

We will be mindful of government advice for team work that needs to take place on location and follow specific guidance to ensure safety for students, staff and the community.

Bureau Services

We will offer students who find attendance difficult, or where we need to manage the access to certain facilities, additional support through a Bureau Service. This will allow digital files to be processed on campus for samples or small components to be posted back to you. While not every making process will be available via this service, we hope that this will provide another option for some students. We recognise that we may have to limit the complexity and size of this provision depending on the requests we receive.

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We will look to provide bureau services for the following resources. You should contact your course for how to access this resource.

- Digital workshops – 3D printing, Laser and Router
- Digital Fabric Printing
- 2D Printing

The Shop

The AUB Shop, Uniprint, will let students know when it reopens but can also provide discounted delivery on some stock items and printing. Please contact: Uniprint, info@uniprintuk.com - www.Uniprintuk.com for further information.

Loan Services

Students will be able to continue to pre-book specific specialist equipment, such as cameras, through SISO, when we are allowed to return to campus.

Library Access

When we are allowed back onto campus, we will create opportunities to access the library by creating bookable and walk-in study spaces; these can be booked via the library website and will be available as soon as we can safely return to campus.

We will continue to provide online support and programmes of library study skills. You can continue to gain advice and guidance from your Subject Librarian, who can help you explore the huge range of e-resources available.

4. Enrichment

We know that some students would like access to prepare a portfolio using campus resources or to complete collaborative works to enrich your studies, or as part of your next step towards your creative ambitions.

Therefore, we will provide 'NDP' or 'additional access' weeks, where possible at the end of the academic year, primarily for graduating students, and also at the beginning of next academic year for progressing students.

This access will be additional to that needed by students who have to be on campus to meet the learning outcomes for assessment purposes, and is negotiated at course level. Other enrichment activities are available to help you to continue to prepare for employment, progression, or further study.

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Access to resources to enhance your portfolio

As part of a series of events to support students we will be running portfolio reviews where graduating students will have the chance to gain feedback from industry professionals with tips on how to improve their portfolio.

Access to additional careers support

Our Careers and Employability team offer a wide range of events and workshops to help you prepare for employment or entrepreneurship, and can offer 1-1 careers coaching to help you prepare for your future career. The service is open to AUB graduates and alumni up to 3 years after graduation as well as current students. In March 2021 as part of AUB Creative Futures Fest we have arranged for a number of industry professionals from a range of professions to talk about their career journeys and share tips and advice on how best to break into industry. These sessions will be open to students and graduates.

The *AUB Advantage Hub* advertises job opportunities, events and provides access to previous careers webinars and resources for students and alumni and is available at: <https://aub.jobteaser.com>

Summer AUB Advantage activities

We will be running a series of summer activities for final year students, with additional training opportunities and workshops to boost your CV. Activities will include mental health training, leadership and management skills, and self-employment workshops, teaching qualification and first aid training (where possible). We will also offer the opportunity to become Adobe qualified in the Adobe package of your choice. The Adobe Associate certificate can then be added to your LinkedIn profile and CV.

5. Glossary

Academic Board	The most senior academic committee of the University, which makes final decisions about all academic matters. The SU President is a member.
Exam Boards	These are the committees which confirm your academic results, permit you to move to the next year of the course, and agree your final degree classification.
Academic Counsellors	These are tutors who will be able to provide extra guidance about how the regulations relate to your particular course and level of study. You should contact them with any questions you may have.
Students' Union	The representative body for all students at AUB. They sit on the main decision-making bodies of the University. You can contact them on studentunion@aub.ac.uk
External Examiners	These are experts in your discipline (they are often academics at other universities), who check that we have marked your work fairly and accurately. This means that you can be confident that your degree has the same value as all other degrees across the UK.
QAA	The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is the national body which sets national academic standards for higher education. In meeting these standards, we can be confident that your degree is of the same value as that of all other graduates in the UK.
Bureau service	You can send us digital files and we will process them, and send the physical work back to you.
Course	Your programme of study, from the point of enrolment to graduation, is called a course.
Level	Level indicates the complexity of your study, and the required assessment. First year undergraduates are Level 4; second year are Level 5; and third year Level 6. Master's students are at Level 7.
Academic governance	These are the arrangements we make to ensure that our assessment processes are fair and accurate, and meet national requirements as set by QAA.