



# STUDENT HANDBOOK

(Updated August 31, 2019)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Aquincum Institute of Technology provides a unique study abroad experience for North American undergraduates majoring in computer science, software engineering, and related disciplines. AIT's curriculum integrates design, entrepreneurship, and foundational courses in computer science, which all have a focus on interactivity and creativity. In addition, humanities courses related to Hungary's rich cultural heritage are offered. The program at AIT is small and friendly; enrolling around 70-90 U.S. and 10-15 Hungarian students each semester, with approximately 5 to 25 students in a typical class. The campus and all student apartments are located in the thriving metropolis of Budapest. Students will have many opportunities to engage in Hungarian culture and various activities outside of class.

### **Arrival Process**

If you provide the time, date, and location of your arrival to the airport or railway station, an AIT representative will meet you upon arrival. The AIT representative will take you directly to your apartment in Budapest, will meet with you and your landlord to help you sign the lease agreements, and will provide you with an orientation of your neighborhood.

The "official" AIT orientation will take place the weekend before classes begin. At the orientation, students get to know one another, become familiar with the city center of Budapest, check out the AIT campus, and learn about all of the academic course offerings for the semester, as well as be provided with practical information needed to have a safe and enjoyable stay in Budapest.

### **AIT Campus**

#### **Facilities**

The AIT campus is located in Aquincum, the old Roman town of Budapest, on the banks of a beautiful branch of the Danube River. AIT's building is located in a state-of-the-art business park whose tenants include many IT and R&D companies, such as Microsoft, SAP, Servier, Canon, Sybase, and Graphisoft. In the park, you will find three cafeterias that are perfect for lunch and several snack bars. In addition, the AIT building has a big kitchen, student lounge, computer lab, design studio and complimentary Wi-Fi. There is also a large grocery store within walking distance. It takes about 30-50 minutes from the AIT campus to reach city center by public transportation.

#### **Address**

Záhony utca 7.  
1031 Budapest  
Hungary

#### **Getting to AIT**

AIT can be conveniently reached by the HÉV suburban railway and by several municipal bus lines; all connect to the city's Metro (subway) system. During the morning and early evenings, there are also shuttle buses that run to and from Graphisoft Park and the Árpád híd metro station.

Bus lines 34, 106, and 134 connect to the Metro blue line at Árpád híd station. Get off at Záhony utca stop.

HÉV suburban railway, Békásmegyer/Szentendre line connects to the Metro red line at Batthyany tér station. Get off at Kaszásdűlő station.

Shuttle Bus. In the morning the buses circle between Kaszásdűlő and Graphisoft Park from 7:30am to 9:30am. In the afternoon, from 4:10pm to 7:30pm, buses run every ten minutes between Graphisoft Park and Árpád híd metro station. These buses also stop at Kaszásdűlő (Suburban Railway station) and Raktár utca.

### **AIT STAFF**

The AIT staff is available in their office during the week from 8:30am-6:00pm to assist with any questions or concerns students may have. When you urgently need help, the staff can also be reached by phone after hours. When you have questions related to Budapest and Hungary, the staff is happy to help in any way possible but do remember that your Hungarian classmates are great resources as well.

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## **LIVING IN BUDAPEST**

### **Culture**

Budapest embodies a rich mixture of traditions and cultures deriving from various historical periods. Óbuda (where AIT is located) finds its roots in ancient times when Aquincum was established by the Roman Empire as part of the flourishing province of Pannonia. Buda and the Castle District thrived in the late Middle Ages under the great renaissance leader King Matthias, while the architecture of bourgeois Pest is a reminder of the spectacular late 19<sup>th</sup> century modernization, which made Budapest one of the great cities of Central Europe.

For four decades starting in 1949, Hungary was under a Soviet controlled socialist regime. In 1989 Hungary became an independent country and formed a democratic parliamentary republic, while later in 2004 it became a member of the European Union.

Today Budapest is a pulsing international center with great cultural life and unique neighborhoods. There are many interesting museums, lively concerts and festivals, and stunning architecture throughout the city. With over 15 universities in Budapest, it is a great place to study and offers the opportunity to meet many other students from Hungary and around the world.

## **Climate**

Budapest experiences four distinct seasons. Fall and spring tend to be mild and pleasant, with rain showers on occasion. Winter is rather cold and gray, with a modest amount of snow, and the average temperature from December-February hovers around freezing. Summers can get very hot (but typically not humid), with temperatures often reaching over 85 degrees Fahrenheit in July and August. Come prepared with proper winter gear, including a good winter coat, hat, gloves, scarf and durable shoes/boots. It is also advisable to have a water resistant jacket for the spring and fall.

## **Language**

The Hungarian language ('magyar') belongs to the Finno-Ugric language group although the similarities between Finnish and Hungarian are quite distant. Once the Hungarian's settled in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the language came into contact with other speech communities (Slavic, German and Turkic) and one can see the borrowing of words from these language groups. Hungarian uses the Latin alphabet, and has 44 distinct letters.

Hungarian is said to be one of the most challenging languages to learn, but don't get discouraged. You will have great Hungarian language instructors at AIT, and Hungarians are appreciative when non-native speakers at least try to use their language (even if it is not perfect). You should not have trouble finding people who speak English around Budapest though. It is very likely to find services downtown where people speak English, and it is fairly common for the younger generation to speak English.

## **Social Life**

AIT organizes many afternoon and weekend extracurricular activities for current students. Some of these activities (like Orientation Weekend and the Tea with the Team) are offered as a courtesy of AIT, while others are optional (like cultural and sport programs, and excursions within Hungary) and will be provided for additional fees. You will also have several opportunities to arrange your own trips to surrounding cities and countries on the weekends and during breaks. In order that AIT staff could reach you in case of an emergency and when you wish to travel outside the city, your itinerary and travel companion contact information needs to be provided (preferably by filling the travel form) to the AIT office staff before your departure. In semesters past, events such as a weekend trip to Lake Balaton, hiking in the Buda Hills, and an evening at the State Opera House were planned.

Below is a sneak peak at what Budapest has to offer:

### **Music and Performing Arts**

Hungary has a proud musical history, encompassing both classical and folk music. At the State Opera House and the Palace of Arts you can see and hear world-class operas, ballets and concerts performed. There are also many smaller theaters and venues where you can experience folk and contemporary music and dance. Festivals are also a great place to experience the thriving music and performance arts scene that Hungary possesses.

## **Parks and Leisure**

There are many green spaces scattered throughout Budapest that allow for a quiet respite away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Margitsziget (Margaret Island) and Városliget (City Park) are the biggest and most popular parks in Budapest. Margitsziget is a 1.6-mile-long island in the middle of the Danube that is a great place to go for a picnic, or for a jog around their running track which circles the entire island. Városliget houses a variety of monuments and attractions, including Vajdahunyad Castle, Hősök tere (Heroes Square), Széchenyi baths, the zoo, and an outdoor ice skating rink during the winter months.

## **Sports and Recreation**

Whether you are a competitive athlete, or just like to be active and stay in shape, there are many opportunities available in Budapest. There are gyms throughout the city that students can join, as well as studios which offer yoga, dance and cardio classes (in English). Students can choose to join rec leagues within the city for sports such as soccer, volleyball or basketball. There are also swimming pools, tennis courts and golf courses within Budapest, and activities such as kayaking on the Danube. If you have a particular sport or recreational activity that you want to get involved with, AIT staff can help you find what you are looking for.

## **Festivals**

There is always some type of festival happening in Budapest, ranging from the well-known Sziget Music Festival to the Christmas market at Vörösmarty tér. Some festivals require an entrance fee, while others are free. Check out this website to keep up to date with festivals happening in and around Budapest: <http://visitbudapest.travel/budapest-events/>

## **Restaurants, Cafes and Bars**

The city of Budapest is sprinkled with restaurants that house cuisine from all over the world, and range in style and price. While Budapest is familiar with food allergies and many restaurants and grocery stores can accommodate gluten-free, peanut-free, lactose intolerance, kosher foods, vegan and vegetarian needs, the AIT staff and Hungarian classmates can be a great source of direction to the best places to eat and shop. There are also many trendy cafes and bars that can allow for a relaxing afternoon or a fun night out. One thing that is quite unique to the Budapest bar scene is the “ruin pub.” They are built within old tenement housing or factories, and typically have a large outside area and a quirky retro vibe. These are not to be missed, especially when the weather is good!

## **Transportation**

### **Public Transportation**

Budapest is very well connected by public transportation, much more so than most U.S. and European cities. There are underground metro lines, a suburban railway line (the HÉV), trams, and bus routes, which can get you to every part of the city. The 4/6 tram runs 24 hours around the Körút (Ring Road), and there are also many night buses that run after midnight. BKK is the Budapest transportation company, and you can refer to the following website for

routes and timetables: <https://bkk.hu/en/news/> or download the official app for [iOS](#), [Android](#) or [Windows Phone](#).

A monthly transportation pass is recommended and allows you unlimited access to all forms of public transportation in Budapest, and will only cost you 3,450HUF (approx. \$13 USD) as a student. You can buy your monthly pass in most metro stations using cash or credit card. Ask for the student pass (Diák = Student) and have your student ID with you. Always have your pass and student ID with you, and be prepared to show them to the controllers on the vehicles or at the top of the escalators when riding the metro.

## **Cabs**

Taking a cab is always safe with major cab companies. Avoid cabs not displaying the logo of the known companies listed below because some drivers have been reported to overcharge foreigners.

The rates of taxis are regulated, and the starting cost when you enter a cab is 700HUF. The fee per kilometer is 300HUF. There is no longer a flat fee going to and from the airport, so your fare will depend on the meter. If you would like to call to arrange a ride, you can specifically ask for an English-speaking driver.

The following companies are reliable:

TAXI4 (+36 1 444 4444)

City Taxi (+36 1 211 1111)

FőTaxi (+36 1 222 2222)

Airport Shuttle (+36 1 296 8555) – You have to order it at least a day before departure. It picks you up at the requested address and takes you to the airport. It's normally cheaper than taking a regular cab if you are traveling alone. Fares: from 3,000 HUF to 6,000 HUF/person (approximately \$11-22 USD).

## **Housing**

AIT helps students find reasonable accommodation in the center of Budapest for the duration of their stay, but AIT does not charge nor handle any fees associated with living arrangements. AIT only helps in arranging and negotiating the lease. Students are welcome to arrange their own housing or homestay, but arrangements must be completed one month prior to the beginning of the semester and information provided to AIT staff.

Following acceptance to AIT, students should complete the [Room Match Form](#) electronically on the website to submit preferences regarding apartments and roommates. AIT makes a concerted effort to accommodate all preferences, but it is not always possible to fulfill all requests. By filling the room match form students agree to participate in AIT's housing program and abide by its rules including the conditions for changing apartments.

Apartments arranged by AIT are equipped with internet connection, linens, towels, washing machine (dryers are rarely used in Hungary), an equipped kitchen and a monthly cleaning service. These amenities are all included in the rental fee. The housing lease is between you (the student) and the landlord. If you encounter any problems with your housing, you can speak directly to your landlord. After contacting your landlord, if the problem is not being solved, then please come and speak to AIT staff about it.

## **Changing apartments**

While there never is a compromise on safety and quality, there may be differences between apartments regarding a number of factors, including but not limited to the proximity of supermarkets, food options, nearest metro station or different public transport

AIT staff members do acknowledge these differences and work to match students' preferences with the apartments available, hence the importance of filling out the room match forms carefully

Even with the most careful planning and consideration, there may be instances where a student may find an apartment assigned to them less to their liking. In these instances AIT staff will work to remedy any complaint - talking to the landlord to supply/remove furnishings and appliances, point out different points of interests in the neighborhood (restaurants, produce markets, etc.) - but generally there is very little room to accommodate requests for changing apartments based on personal preferences. This of course does not mean that if the safety and quality requirements are compromised, AIT would not take action. On the contrary, if an apartment becomes unsafe or the quality drops to an unacceptable level AIT will promptly identify alternatives and provide a solution without haste.

For this all students are encouraged to talk to the staff members about any issue they may see with their living situation so that AIT staff can provide support early on. We are asking the support of the student community as well to help sorting out any difficulties that their classmates may encounter. Part of this effort is to get to know your neighborhood and share knowledge with each other about the best places to eat, do groceries, shop, etc. and generally look after each other while living in Budapest. Please do understand that changing apartments is often extremely difficult or impossible because of the limited number of options available. Students wanting to change their accommodations for personal preference should also keep in mind that a binding and enforceable contract had been signed and submitted to immigration for approval, therefore it is their duty to notify the immigration authority about the change in their living arrangements and supply the necessary paperwork, and they may lose their deposit if the contract is terminated before its expiration. Please note that non-compliance with any element of the housing policy may pose a risk to the students' safety and well-being, therefore it is taken very seriously and may lead to disciplinary action. Non-compliance includes making false claims and misrepresentations about personal conditions in order to force other students and/or AIT staff to make unnecessary modifications to the living arrangements and will result in disciplinary action.

In summary, the apartments are all different in many ways, but none of them are below standard in safety and quality, and the AIT staff is there to help with any and all apartment related issues. The entire AIT staff remains dedicated to the safety and well-being of the student body and are there to help everyone who needs support in settling in to their new environment.

## **Payments**

It is the student's responsibility to pay the landlord directly for the security deposit, monthly rental fee, and monthly utilities. The security deposit, which can be paid in USD or HUF (cash only), should be paid upon arrival to the apartment for incidental damages and if there is no damage, it will be returned upon moving out. Utilities include internet, gas, electricity,



water and building fees, and will be split amongst those living in each apartment. Rent is due between the first and fifth of the month and must be paid in cash (HUF) to the landlord. Directly after arrival to Budapest, you will be given the opportunity to retrieve Hungarian Forints from an ATM or go to a money exchange office in order to make all necessary cash payments.

### **Roommates**

For those students living with roommates, please be considerate of their space and preferences. Even though there is a cleaning service that comes in to deep clean once each month, it is important that everyone keeps the apartment tidy so all parties feel comfortable in their living environment. Also, be considerate about noise for both the sake of your roommates and your neighbors. It is OK to have friends over to your apartment, but do consider going to a nearby café or restaurant if planning to have a large gathering of people. If you encounter problems with your roommate, try to speak directly to them to see if you can come up with a solution. If the problem persists, then you should come speak to AIT staff.

### **Guest Policy**

You may host house guests in your apartment for up to five days at a time, but you must notify your roommate(s) ahead of time and receive approval from them. Out of respect for others, please keep visits to a minimum of one or two per month. It would be best to arrange these visits with your roommate(s) ahead of time, in order to coordinate your schedule fairly.

### **Phone and Internet**

All students are required to have a working voice and data service on their phones and to provide a phone number to AIT staff upon arrival where they can be reached at all times throughout the duration of the program. It is the student's responsibility to maintain the voice and data service for the entire duration of the program and inform the AIT staff, should their contact details change. The simplest solution is to purchase a SIM-card-only package in Budapest if you have an unlocked cell phone, but you can also buy a phone if needed. There are three mobile companies in Hungary: Vodafone, Telenor, and T-Mobile (separate company from the U.S T-Mobile); you can buy a SIM card in any of their shops. You only need your passport to purchase a SIM-card and a phone.

#### **Calling Hungary from abroad:**

The country code for Hungary is 36 and the city code for Budapest is 1, then the seven-digit local number. For example, to call the AIT office from the US: +36 1 815 3450.

Carrier codes for the three mobile phone carriers are 20, 30 or 70 (and replace the city code used for landlines). For example, to call Dorka's cell from a US phone: +36 20 268 5097.

#### **Calling each other within Hungary:**

To call a Budapest landline number from a Hungarian cell phone: 06 1 815 3450  
(06 is used instead of +36, then 1 for the Budapest city code, then the 7-digit number)

To call a cell from a Hungarian cell: 06 20 268 5097  
(06 is used instead of +36, then comes the two-digit cell phone code, and then the 7-digit number)

### Calling a foreign country from Hungary:

The prefix of international calls is 00 or +. To dial internationally you put 00 then the country code (for instance, 00 1 for the US), then the area code and the local number.

You can buy prepaid calling cards in many internet cafés and post offices. International calls are much cheaper using prepaid calling cards or online services such as Skype or Google. Internet connection is available at AIT and the apartments, and you may find free hotspots around Budapest in many places.

### Cost of Living

The cost of living in Budapest is quite affordable for those coming from the US. The Hungarian currency is known as the Forint (HUF), and \$1 USD is currently around 280 HUF. Credit cards are accepted in some stores and restaurants, but definitely not all, so it is best to be in the habit of carrying cash. ATM's can be found all over Budapest and in smaller towns as well, and you typically get a better exchange rate at an ATM than at an exchange office.

You will find that the cost of everyday things (groceries, entertainment, and transportation), are less expensive than in the United States. Keep in mind, in Hungary most salaries are comparably quite low to U.S. standards, and taxes are high. It is not uncommon for Hungarians to have more than one job to support their families. What may seem inexpensive to visitors (because of the exchange rate) is not necessarily inexpensive to Hungarians.

### **Estimated Student Costs**

Estimated Student Direct Costs (US Currency)	1 month (min. – max.)	4 months (min. – max.)
Rent (arranged by AIT, shared apartment, own bedroom)	\$370 - \$450	\$1,480 - \$1,800
Utilities (gas, electricity, water, etc.)	\$80 - \$140	\$320 - \$560
Optional DSL, mobile phone costs	\$25 - \$50	\$100 - \$200
Meals (eating out liberally)	\$360 - \$600	\$1,450 - \$2,400
Public transportation (\$13 monthly student pass)	\$13	\$52
Mandatory health insurance (covered for 6 months)	-	\$175
Residence permit fee (payable once)	-	\$70
Entertainment and others	\$125 - \$250	\$500 - \$1,000
Total direct students cost for the given period:	\$1,200 - \$1,700	\$4,100 - \$6,800

## Hungarian Price Index

Median prices in HUF (with conversion to USD)	HUF	USD
Milk (1l)	220	\$0.80
Fresh White Bread (1/2 kg)	180	\$0.65
Apples (1 KG)	400	\$1.45
Chicken Breasts (1 kg boneless, skinless)	1400	\$5.00
Domestic Beer (.5l – at a bar)	350	\$1.25
Cappuccino (in a café)	350	\$1.25
Movie Ticket	1,500	\$5.35

### Student Discounts

AIT students will receive a Hungarian student ID for the semester. You can use your ID card to receive discounts on your monthly transportation pass, domestic and international rail/bus travel, museums, cinemas, swimming pools, gyms, etc. Whenever you are buying some type of ticket or membership, always ask if they have a student rate. The discount is usually at least 50% off the adult price, and sometimes even more. You may also opt to buy an International Student Card (ISIC) when you arrive to Hungary, which is widely accepted throughout Europe for discounts on travel related purchases (transportation, museums, event tickets, etc.). You can purchase an ISIC card online (<https://isic.hu/en/>) and it normally costs around \$25.

### Visa and Residence Permit

Hungary belongs to the Schengen Area (Europe's passport free travel area) where U.S. citizens do not need a visa for a stay of less than 90 days. As your stay will be longer than 90 days, however, you should either apply for a visa from a Hungarian Embassy or Consulate (application may be submitted in person in Washington, DC; New York, NY, Chicago, IL or Los Angeles, CA), or apply for a residence permit upon arrival to Hungary.

The processing fee for a residence permit is 18,000 HUF (\$70).

In the latter case, as the residence permit will not have been issued prior to your travel, we recommend that you have a modifiable return ticket with a return date that is within 90 days of your initial arrival, as that information may be requested from you during the entry procedure into the Schengen Area that has recently been made more rigorous in some airports in Europe.

AIT staff will assist you in applying for your residence permit if you enter without a visa and answer your questions regarding entry rules and procedures.

More detailed information on immigration will follow in the info letter sent to you upon receiving your deposit and please check AIT's website for current information. If you have any question, please do not hesitate to contact us.

For our Summer Term participants who do not intend to stay in Hungary for longer than 90 days, no visa or residence permit will be required as long as their citizenship allows them to enter Hungary without a tourist visa (such as EU and US citizens).

If you are a non-North American citizen, please check with your home country consulate and the Hungarian Consulate General's Office about special documentation requirements before departure.

If you decide to extend the length of your stay for the summer (whether for an internship or personal reasons), it is your responsibility to gather the appropriate paperwork and apply for an extension to your residence permit.

### **Travel**

There is much to see in Hungary and Europe, and getting around is easy and affordable. Make sure to take some time on the weekends to explore areas outside of Budapest while you are here. When you plan a trip outside of Budapest, before your departure you are required to share your itinerary and contact information of your traveling companions with AIT staff (preferably electronically) so we have an idea about your whereabouts if an emergency arises.

### **Domestic**

Trains and buses service all parts of Hungary, and are an affordable way to travel. There are three main train stations in Budapest (Nyugati, Keleti, and Deli), so when planning for train travel, make sure you are aware which station the train departs from. MÁV Start is the Hungarian train company. You can find all routes and timetables online <https://www.mavcsoport.hu/en>. When buying tickets, ask for a student rate.

Buses are another good option for getting around Hungary, and there are several bus stations in Budapest. Volánbusz is the Hungarian bus company. You can find all routes and timetables online <http://www.volanbusz.hu/en>.

### **International**

Planes, buses and trains are all safe and reliable options for traveling outside of Hungary. It is best to compare the different modes of transportation for your desired travel location, as timetables, travel length and prices can vary greatly.

The budget airlines WizzAir and RyanAir service over 45 locations throughout Europe, departing from Budapest. You can take public transportation to the airport by going to Kőbánya-Kispest on the metro blue line, and from there taking the 200E bus to Liszt Ferenc Airport.

For international bus travel departing from Budapest you can go to the Volánbusz website. There is also a budget bus line called FlixBus, which makes trips to main cities in surrounding countries, such as Prague, Berlin, Munich, Bratislava, Vienna, and Krakow. The website for FlixBus is <https://www.flixbus.com/>.

The search for international train travel departing from Budapest can be done through MÁV Start on their website. Train tickets for international trips can even be purchased online, and then you simply need to print your tickets at a kiosk at the train station on the day of your trip.

## **Travel Form Policy**

All students are required to fill a travel form once a week (preferably on Thursdays) to inform the staff about their travel plans for the weekend. Students must indicate if they stay in Budapest too. If they leave Budapest, they are requested to provide information about their plans (such as destination, duration of their trip, accommodation, means of transportation to the destination, etc.). The link to the travel form is shared with everyone during Orientation Weekend and students are regularly reminded to fill the form weekly.

Should a student repeatedly fail to fill out the travel form they may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include notifying the home school and dismissal from the program.

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

### **Academic Calendar**

AIT offers a fall and spring semester program, as well as a short-term intensive summer program. The entire academic calendar can be viewed on the AIT website: <https://www.ait-budapest.com/academics/academic-calendar>

#### **Fall**

The fall semester starts around the beginning of September, and has 14 weeks of classes, with a one-week break at the mid-semester point. Classes are held Monday-Friday between 9:00am - 6:00pm

#### **Spring**

The spring semester starts at the beginning of February, and has 14 weeks of classes, with a one week break at the mid-semester point. Classes are held Monday-Friday between 9:00am - 6:00pm.

#### **Summer**

The five-week summer term begins in early June and offers two classes, making up six credits. The classes meet Monday-Friday from 9:00am-3:00pm.

### **Course Credit**

FALL and SPRING full-time students are expected to select academic courses with an average load of 16-20 contact hours a week (approximately 4-5 classes). Academic courses will meet twice a week, for two hours per occasion. Therefore, 14-week courses typically correspond to 4 credits at most North American colleges and universities. There are no additional fees for taking on a heavier load, but those wishing to take more than 26 contact hours a week must first receive approval.

#### **Full-time student status at AIT requires 12 credits.**

SUMMER students are expected to take both courses offered, totaling six credit hours.

AIT is fully accredited by the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME). BME will provide credit transfer and an official transcript on behalf of AIT. BME is one of

the largest universities in Hungary, founded in 1782 as the first engineering institution at the university level in Europe.

Some American universities have already pre-approved AIT's curriculum for easy credit transfer. You should check with your academic advisor and/or your study abroad office to find out what's involved in transferring credits from AIT to your home school.

In addition to the official transcript issued by BME (which lists grades in the Hungarian grading scale), AIT also issues a certificate for each student which will list the courses taken and grades earned in the form of the American grading scale, in order to help home institutions better handle credit and grade transfers.

## **Academic Deadlines and Refunds**

### **Dropping Classes**

- Students can add or drop any courses within the first two weeks of the fall or spring semester.
- After the second week of the semester students can drop or switch a course to audit only with the consent of their home institutions by filling the Course Dropping Form (available at the AIT Office).
- The final deadline for dropping courses is the end of the second week after the mid-semester break.
- After the final deadline students will receive 'F' for unfinished courses and no credit will be awarded.
- Students can choose to switch a course to 'Audit' no later than the second week after the mid-semester break. If a student chooses to audit a course they will not receive a grade or course credit. Audited courses will not show up on your official transcript.
- If a student is considering auditing a course or has any issues with their classes they should speak with AIT's Academic Director, András Recski, either in person or via email ([arecski@ait-budapest.com](mailto:arecski@ait-budapest.com)).

### **Withdrawals and Refunds**

- If a student withdraws from the entire program within the first month of the semester, he/she will receive a 75% tuition refund.
- If a student withdraws from the entire program after the first month of the semester, he/she will not receive any type of tuition refund.
- Because the summer term is so short, if a student withdraws from the program after a week of participating, he/she will not receive any type of tuition refund.
- If a student withdraws due to serious medical reasons before the mid-term break, and health conditions are certified by a doctor, they will receive a 50% tuition refund.

## **Attendance**

AIT offers a rigorous academic program with the expectation of a high level of student participation. Class sizes are small to allow for discussion and group work, which increases the importance of attending all classes. If you cannot attend class due to illness or other

personal reasons you should email your professor and one of the staff members at AIT to let them know. If you miss three or more days of classes in a row due to illness, a note from a doctor is required (and should be presented to AIT staff upon your arrival back at school). Attendance dropping below 80% will severely affect your class grade.

It is expected that students arrive to class on time. Late arrival causes a disruption to everyone. Computer use should be kept to class related business only.

### **Grades and Assessment**

Assessment is ongoing throughout the semester. Particular forms of assessment for each course can be found in their respective syllabus. Any questions regarding the progress of your grade during the semester can be directed towards your professor.

Grades will be given by the professors in the standard American grading scale: A, B, C, D, F (including +/-), but these grades will only show up on your AIT issued certificate. The AIT issued certificate is not an official document; it serves as a guideline or “dictionary” to help interpret the official transcripts. The official transcripts issued by BME present grades according to the Hungarian grading system: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1; and no audits will be seen on this document. Below is a translation of the Hungarian grading system into the U.S. system:

5 = A    4 = B    3 = C    2 = D    1 = F

### **Course Evaluations**

At the end of every semester students are asked to fill out a course evaluation form that addresses all aspects of a given course. Candid feedback on evaluations allow AIT to improve the quality of lectures and the overall academic environment.

### **Summer Opportunities**

Directly following the completion of the spring semester, AIT students have several opportunities to stay in Budapest for the summer.

### **Internships**

In past years, AIT students have participated in summer internships at top Hungarian software companies, such as Prezi and LogMeIn. These internships proved to be a great opportunity for students to increase their practical software development knowledge in addition to experiencing a fun team environment at a successful company.

There is no single streamlined application process for students seeking a summer internship in Budapest. Spring semester students who are interested in an internship are encouraged to speak to AIT staff once they arrive in Budapest, so AIT can facilitate talks between the student and software companies that fit the students’ interests. AIT also arranges a networking event during the spring semester that brings students in contact with representatives from Hungarian software companies so students can learn about various companies, and the companies themselves can get to know AIT students.

AIT cannot guarantee that a student wanting an internship will be placed, but many AIT students in the past who sought internships found a placement they were very pleased with. Most software companies in Hungary have expressed that they do not typically know their needs for the summer until early spring, and this is why it is very difficult to arrange for a



summer internship before the students arrive to AIT. Those students who are very serious about staying in Budapest for the summer are encouraged to book a flight that has a flexible return date.

If a student decides to stay in Budapest for a summer internship, their status as an AIT student terminates at the end of the academic semester. Students are responsible for extending their residence permit and arranging their own housing for the summer. AIT staff is happy to assist, but is not responsible for these services.

### **Summer Term**

Students can also apply to attend the five-week AIT summer term. Whether already a Spring student or a new Summer term student, a summer application needs to be completed online. For students who are also applying and/or accepted to the spring term, requesting an additional transcript and letters of recommendation are not necessary, unless specifically indicated after application submission.

## **HEALTH and SAFETY**

In order to participate in the AIT program, each student is required to sign the AIT Waiver Agreement. The Waiver Agreement will be emailed to all students upon acceptance, and needs to be signed and returned to AIT via fax or email before arriving. In addition, the original “wet ink” signed hard copy of the Waiver Agreement should be mailed to AIT NA PO Box 1244, Claremont, CA 91711 before arrival.

Students under 21 years of age are also required to have the agreement signed by at least one parent or guardian. The parent/guardian signature also needs to be original, and not a copy or electronic signature.

### **Health Insurance**

Immigration regulations require every student in the Hungarian higher education system to obtain health insurance from a Hungary-based insurer. To meet these requirements all international students will be enrolled in and billed for the AIT-sponsored *Studium* health insurance plan. The price of the insurance policy is about 47,500 HUF (approximately \$175) for one semester. You will have coverage for 5 months, from the date of registration. The insurance provides coverage to the insured for the cost of medical treatment (i.e. physical, visual, mental), procedures and care, 50% of the cost of medicine, and medical transport if necessary. You can find the full policy on the AIT website.

Please note that the AIT-sponsored health care plan covers students within Hungary and all European countries, but does not cover preexisting conditions. If you are planning to visit countries outside of Europe or have preexisting conditions that require treatment, we strongly suggest checking with your home insurance company for other coverage options during that time.



## **Health Center**

On orientation day, you will be taken to a health care center. The health insurance provides a 24/7 emergency telephone helpline and English-speaking doctors and nurses. Should you have health problems during your stay, you will be able to turn to them, and your insurance will be accepted there. You do not need to pay anything upfront, just provide your insurance card.

The emergency telephone helpline is: + **36 1 465-3784**

## **Medications and Pre-Existing Conditions**

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions, it is important that you come prepared with the necessary medications and appropriate medical records. It can be difficult to find the same exact medications in Hungary as in the United States, so it is preferable to bring enough medication for the entire time of your stay. If you do not have enough for the entire stay, you should make early inquiries about whether the medication is available in Hungary, and if it is not, then arrange with your home doctor to have some sent before you run out.

In order to have complete information on file during a medical emergency, it is required that students provide a written explanation of any pre-existing medical conditions to AIT staff. A medical info form will be sent to you prior to arriving in Hungary and should be filled out and returned to AIT staff (this does not need to be filled out by a doctor).

Relaying false information about my physical and mental health either through misrepresentation or omission in the medical form, is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program at AIT.

Pharmacies are called ‘gyógyszertár’ in Hungarian, and they are the only places where medication can be bought. Most items you’d find in a U.S. pharmacy can be found in so called “drogerias” such as DM or Rossmann.

## **Dietary Restrictions**

Markets and restaurants which meet different dietary restrictions can be found in Budapest, but will not necessarily be as readily available as in most U.S. cities. Students with specific dietary needs such as gluten-free, lactose-free, vegan/vegetarian, halal, and kosher can be helped by AIT staff to find food options that match their needs.

It is advised that those with food allergies or other dietary restrictions should carry a laminated card printed in Hungarian that explains to the restaurant or grocery store staff what foods they cannot eat or are allergic to, and how their food must be prepared. The AIT staff is happy to assist students in the production of this card.

## **Safety in Budapest**

Budapest is a safe city compared to many other capitals in Europe or urban centers in the United States, but caution is still advised. Petty theft and pick-pocketing can be a problem, especially on public transportation or in crowded squares or venues. One should use common sense such as keeping money and valuables either at home or in hidden view, and out of hand’s reach. To help reduce the chance of burglary, students are also advised to keep

apartment doors locked at all times, and not allow strangers into their building or apartment. Students should also consider being in groups when going out at night. The legal drinking age in Hungary is 18, but we advise students to use caution and moderation if choosing to drink.

Emergency Telephone Numbers: Provided in the welcome package upon arrival on a paper titled "Survival Guide".

Police: 107 Fire Department: 105 Ambulance: 104 Emergency Center: 112

AIT emergency number: Please call any AIT staff cell phone (listed in the AIT Staff section)

American Embassy: 06 1 475-4400 Address: 1054 Budapest, Szabadság tér 12

### **Safety While Traveling**

If planning to travel outside of Hungary during your semester at AIT, please fill an online travel plans form shared by AIT staff to inform the AIT office (as to the dates you will be gone, and where you plan to visit). This is important information for AIT to have in case some type of emergency arises.

Before traveling to another country, it is advised by the U.S. Department of State to register your trip online with STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program). By entering information about your upcoming trip, U.S. embassies abroad are able to contact you in case of an emergency in the United States or in the country you are visiting, and can offer you help when needed. It is free to register <https://step.state.gov/step/> You should also register your time in Hungary with STEP as well.

Before traveling to a new country, it is important to research the local conditions, laws, political landscape, and culture. The Department of State website is a good place to start (<http://www.state.gov/>). They have information about all countries, including travel alerts and warnings.

Always remember that while in a foreign country, you are subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States. Other countries may not afford the protections available to an individual under U.S. law. For example, penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating the law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, fined, arrested, or imprisoned. If you are to find yourself in trouble with the law, immediately contact the local U.S. embassy or consulate to help assist you in the process. Therefore, you should research these numbers before you embark on travelling outside of Hungary.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **AIT Building Rules**

- Keep the **kitchen** clean, which means put dirty dishes into the dishwasher, clean up any spills, and clean out your old food from the fridge.
- Be honest and pay the 50 HUF if you have **coffee or tea**.
- If you have anything you would like to keep at school, you can use a **locker** at no charge.

- If you move any furniture in the student lounge, please put it back to how it originally was when you are done.
- Take responsibility for your **key card**. The first key card is free, but any additional cards will cost 5,000 HUF each.
- Students are able to use the AIT building **24 hours** a day, but if you are the last one to leave, you are responsible for making sure all windows are closed, lights are turned off and the door is locked behind you.
- Students can borrow any **course books** for the semester, but if you would like to write in the book then you will need to purchase it.
- **Laptops** can be borrowed for use in the AIT building at no charge.
- Students can use the **printer** in the AIT office for school related assignments at no charge, or for a fee of 10 HUF per page for non-school related printing.

## Student Code of Conduct

### **Respect for Others**

Respect for the rights, integrity and opinions of others is essential in fostering a healthy and open learning community. Each member of the AIT community should be free from harassment, intimidation and discrimination in the classroom, social, recreational, and residential environment. Abusive or harassing behavior, verbal or physical, which threatens or injures another because of personal characteristics or beliefs that include but are not limited to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, economic status or disability, will be regarded as a serious offense and handled as such. AIT values and encourages expression of individual opinions, but in expressing those opinions it is important to always exhibit sensitivity and mutual respect.

### **Notice of nondiscrimination and sexual misconduct policy**

AIT believes that students, faculty, staff and visitors, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, sexual preference have the right to be free from gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual violence. AIT further believes that students, faculty, staff and visitors have the right to be free from retaliation for reporting or participating in the investigation of alleged violations of this policy or in any related proceeding, including a criminal proceeding or a proceeding with a government agency.

AIT prohibits, and does not tolerate, gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or retaliation. Individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary and other remedial action under this policy. In addition to violating this Policy, such conduct also may violate certain civil and criminal laws. Even though AIT is an institution operating under the laws of Hungary and the European Union and it is not subject to U.S. federal laws in the matter, AIT chooses to voluntarily comply with U.S. federal regulations including but not limited to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to the extent it is permitted by national and EU laws and commits itself to act in the spirit of those laws whenever possible and when not directly against national or EU laws. AIT does not discriminate on the basis of gender in its education program and extracurricular activities so as to ensure the equal enjoyment of benefits, programs and aids provided by AIT.

AIT is committed to procedures that are equitable for everyone involved, including the reporting party the responding party. AIT strives to impartially and reliably investigate alleged violations of this Policy, and take prompt and appropriate action when violations are found to have occurred so as to prevent their recurrence and remedy their effects.

AIT requires faculty and staff (except those exempted as privileged confidential resources or confidential resources, identified below) to promptly report conduct that may violate this Policy to the director of student services or any other member of the student support staff.

AIT also strongly encourages students and visitors to promptly report conduct that may violate this policy. Even when a report is not made, AIT will promptly and appropriately address conduct of which it becomes aware that may violate this policy. Finally, AIT strongly encourages the prompt reporting of any conduct that may be criminal in nature to law enforcement.

### **Respect for Place and Property**

At AIT we want to create a close-knit community and a shared physical space where you feel comfortable and at home. By opening up ‘our home’ to you, we in turn ask for your concern and care for the space and people around you. Please take responsibility in cleaning up after yourself and avoiding disruptive behavior that could negatively affect others present at AIT. Acts of theft or property damage will be taken very seriously by AIT administration.

### **Academic Integrity**

AIT believes in an academic environment where there is respect for individual achievement, honor and fairness. Much of the responsibility in keeping a fair and intellectual environment lies with the students and their commitment to contribute academic work and ideas that are their own. Plagiarizing, cheating, lying and aiding in academic dishonesty directly threatens and devalues the academic culture, and will not be tolerated.

### **Misconduct Resolution Process**

The following outlines the policies, process and procedures governing the resolution of student misconduct occurring during a semester abroad at AIT. *The process outlined below has been modified from the misconduct resolution process developed by the University of Texas at Austin’s Study Abroad Office (and permission was given to do so).*

The disciplinary process below will be initiated when a student is suspected of violating any of the following rules, laws, or policies:

- AIT’s expectations for conduct as dictated in the Student Code of Conduct and Sexual Misconduct Policy;
- A provision included in the students’ home institutions Study Abroad Office’s Code of Conduct;
- Any municipal, regional, or country law and/or statute applicable to the program’s location.

For the purposes of this document, the terms “student” and “participant” include any individual enrolled at AIT.

## **Reporting Misconduct**

Any individual may report allegations of student misconduct to an AIT staff member. Upon receiving an allegation of student misconduct, an AIT staff member may initiate the disciplinary process as contained in this document.

## **Investigation and Misconduct Resolution Conference**

Following receipt of an alleged misconduct violation, an AIT staff member will investigate the situation. Typically, this investigation will involve the Student Adviser or Coordinator meeting with the student to discuss the allegation in a disciplinary conference. At this time an incident report will be filled out and signed by both the student in violation and the staff member meeting with the student. This will then be kept on file.

During the disciplinary conference, the AIT staff member should discuss the nature of the allegation, the regulations or policies allegedly violated, the disciplinary resolution process, and the student's response to the allegations. At his or her discretion, the AIT staff member may also choose to speak with any witnesses deemed relevant or review any written materials related to the misconduct allegation. If, following the investigation and disciplinary conference, the staff member determines that the greater weight of credible evidence supports a finding that the student violated the regulation or policy at issue, he/she may impose any of the disciplinary actions listed below.

## **Disciplinary Actions**

AIT staff may take the following actions:

Verbal Warning: AIT may issue a verbal warning if they observe or have determined that a student's behavior is not in accord with the rules, laws, or policies identified above. The staff member should have a frank discussion with the student regarding expectations and consequences. Upon determining that the student is in violation, the staff member may issue a verbal warning that includes the likelihood that more severe disciplinary action will be taken if further violations follow.

Written warning: Upon determining that the student is in violation, the AIT staff member may issue a written warning. While written warnings typically occur in situations where a student has engaged in misconduct following a verbal warning, they can be issued for first violations when deemed appropriate. Written warnings constitute notice that a student's behavior is unacceptable and that further violations will result in the student's dismissal from the program. If deemed necessary, AIT staff may restrict the activities of the student if such activities are directly related to the violation at issue.

A written warning should include:

- a. Date and time that written warning was communicated;
- b. Location;
- c. Detailed description of the undesired behavior, and why it was considered inappropriate;
- d. Clearly stated expectations and consequences (including restricted activities, if applicable) that will remain in effect for the duration of the program; and
- e. Indication that this is the final warning and any continuation of the undesirable behavior will result in immediate dismissal with possible financial penalties, including but not limited to loss of any program fees

Written Warnings, whenever possible, will be faxed, emailed or otherwise communicated to the SAO within 48 hours of the occurrence.

Dismissal from AIT: A participant may be dismissed from AIT's program if he/she either fails to meet the conditions of a prior Written Warning or commits a violation warranting immediate dismissal.

Behaviors which may lead to dismissal include, but are not limited to: academic misconduct, eviction from housing on grounds of inappropriate conduct, exceeding the number of unexcused absences from class allowed for the program, destruction of property, posing a safety hazard to oneself or others, abusive or harassing behavior, and/or criminal conduct.

If, after the investigation and disciplinary conference, the Program Representative believes that dismissal is appropriate, he/she will contact the SAO to discuss the situation and receive authorization to proceed. The student's home institution SAO may choose to conduct an independent investigation of the incident and may request additional information.

### **Dismissal Notice**

If a decision to dismiss the student from the program is made, AIT staff will issue a Dismissal Notice to the student. The Dismissal Notice should state the study abroad conduct violation(s) and notify the student that he/she is no longer considered a participant in the program and must leave the contracted housing by a designated date and time. AIT staff should have the student sign a statement indicating that he/she understands that he/she is no longer a participant in the AIT program.

If the student refuses to sign the statement, the AIT staff member should have a witness sign a statement indicating that the student has been verbally informed of the dismissal but refuses to sign the statement.

Sample acknowledgement statement:

*"I understand that due to my inappropriate behavior in violation of the AIT Code of Conduct, I am no longer eligible to participate in this program. I understand that effective immediately I am no longer an AIT participant under the sponsorship of my home institution and that my insurance coverage and all privileges will be terminated in three days."*

A fax or scan of the Dismissal Notice will be e-mailed to the SAO within 48 hours. The SAO will be responsible for informing any other appropriate campus offices or officials.

### **Appeal**

The accused student may appeal the misconduct resolution decision and/or sanction assessed by the AIT staff member by submitting a written appeal to AIT within 24 hours from the time the misconduct resolution was communicated. The written appeal must state the specific reasons for the appeal and must include any related argument, including relevant documents or witness statements. AIT may approve, reject, or modify the misconduct resolution decision or sanction(s) in question. Before making a decision on the appeal, the AIT Program Representative may at his/her discretion, communicate with the students' home institution SAO, the accused student, or any witnesses by phone.

The action of AIT will be communicated in writing to the accused student, and SAO within 24 hours of receiving the accused student's written appeal. AIT may take additional time in making a decision on the appeal if justified by the circumstances. If the accused student's

appeal is received over a weekend or school holiday, AIT's decision will be communicated by the close of business on the next full workday. The decision of AIT will be final.

In circumstances where a student is appealing AIT's decision to dismiss the student from the study abroad program, the staff member may, at his/her discretion, ban the student's presence from any premises directly affiliated with the AIT program until the appeal is resolved.

### **Consequences of Dismissal**

Upon issuance of a Dismissal Notice, the student's participation in the AIT program shall be concluded immediately. Dismissal of a student from the program shall not diminish or otherwise affect the student's obligation to make any and all payments to AIT and possibly his/her home institution. Dismissal from the program will result in grades of F being assigned to all coursework. Further action may be taken by the student's home institution.

In addition, the student will not be entitled to a refund of any fees, and is responsible for all non-recoverable costs incurred by AIT as well as all personal financial obligations, e.g., utility bills, rent, etc. A student's registration at their home institution may be blocked pending fulfillment of all such financial obligations and/or disciplinary action.

Once a student has been dismissed from the program, he/she shall be required to immediately leave all premises used by AIT and is expected to return within three days to the United States and at his or her own expense. Notice of the student's dismissal from AIT and expectation to leave the country will be given immediately to the Hungarian Consulate.