



GINSBURG-INGERMAN
**OVERSEAS STUDENT
PROGRAM**

BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV, ISRAEL

**Student Handbook
2011-2012**



Dear Student,

This Student Handbook has been compiled by the Overseas Student Program office in New York in order to help you prepare for your upcoming semester at Ben-Gurion University. It is intended to answer questions that arise in the weeks prior to your departure; much of it based on the experiences of the many students who have previously studied at BGU through the Ginsburg-Ingerman Overseas Student Program (OSP).

Please read the contents of this handbook carefully as it contains important information on safety, health, pre-departure planning, and policies of the Overseas Student Program. Please be sure to share the relevant information that is contained in this handbook with your family.

The OSP office in New York is available to help you in your preparations as you get ready to embark on this incredible experience. Please feel free to contact us at anytime prior to your departure. Should your families have any questions while you are in Israel, they will continue to serve as the liaison to the University in Israel.

Once you arrive in Israel, the OSP staff will be available to ensure your smooth transition into life in Israel. You will find enclosed the cell phone numbers of the director and “madrichim” (counselors) of the OSP in Israel, should you or your families need to reach them for any reason.

We are confident that you will have an unforgettable academic, cultural and social journey while you are there, and want to do as much as we can to ensure you enjoy the best possible experience.

We wish you a safe and pleasant trip to Israel, and a wonderful experience at BGU!

Andi Meiseles



Director, North American Office for
International Academic Affairs

Elise Wiedre



Admissions and Recruitment Manager

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There are differences between BGU's general academic calendar and the OSP's academic calendar. Fall semester of the two programs are slightly different while the spring semester dates coincide. All OSP dates are subject to adjustment due to changes in BGU's academic calendar.

Summer Ulpan 2011:

August 3	Group flight from NYC
August 4	Arrival in Israel
August 5-6	Orientation Weekend
August 7	Summer Ulpan begins
September 1	End of Short Ulpan (4 weeks)
September 14	End of Regular Ulpan (6 weeks)
September 15	Last day to check out of dorms

Fall Semester 2011:

September 18	OSP fall semester begins
September 29-30	Rosh Hashanah holiday
October 13-20	Sukkot Holiday
October 30	Beginning of BGU/MAPMES fall semester
December 20	OSP fall semester ends
December 21-23	Exam period
December 24	All final papers due
December 25	Channukah holiday
December 26	Last day to check out of dorms

Winter Ulpan 2012:

January 4	Group flight from NYC
January 5	Arrival in Israel
January 6-7	Orientation Weekend
January 8	Winter Ulpan begins
February 2	End of Short Ulpan (4 weeks)
February 15	End of Regular Ulpan (6 weeks)
February 16	Last day to check out of dorms

Spring Semester 2012:

March 11	OSP/BGU spring semester begins
April 8-13	Passover vacation
April 25-26	Memorial Day and Independence Day vacation
May 27	Shavuot holiday
June 22	End of OSP/BGU spring semester
June 24-26	Exam period*
June 28	All final papers due*
July 1	Last day to check out of dorms

*Students who choose to enroll in regular university (non OSP) courses may have final exams scheduled through August 3, 2012

Contact Information

Israel Office:

Address: (You may use this as a mailing address to receive mail)

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Overseas Student Program

P.O. Box 653

Beer Sheva, 84105 ISRAEL

Telephone: (08) 646-1144, Fax: (08) 647-2948

*The office is closed from Thursday afternoon - Sunday morning. Messages to students should be left on the machine by Wednesday night for students to receive them on Thursday.

Administrative Director of the Overseas Student Program:

Einat Noy: enoy@bgu.ac.il

Tel: 972-8-646-1104

Fax: 972-8-647-2948

Director of Marketing & Development of the Office of International Academic Affairs:

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Main Office:

osp@bgu.ac.il.

T: 011.972.8.6461144. F: 011.972.8.647.2948

Madrachim (Student Counselors):

Main Student Counselor

Cell phone: 052-6042850.

Student Resident Advisor

Cell phone: 052-579 1818.

In Case of Emergency:

The Madrichim and Director of the OSP carry cell phones at all times. Please see above for their phone numbers.

New York Office

Address:

The Overseas Student Program

Office of Student Services

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

1430 Broadway, 8th floor

New York, NY 10018

Telephone: (212) 687-7721 or (646) 452-3682

E-Mail: osp@bgustudyabroad.org

Andi Meiseles

Director, North American Office for
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646.452.3681

Elise Wiedre

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646.452.3682

Travel to Israel

Group Flight

The OSP organizes a group flight with El Al Airlines (the Israeli national carrier) for those students participating in the Summer Ulpan and Fall Semester. The flight is arranged and coordinated through an outside travel agency. For the sake of convenience and cost, we strongly suggest that students participate in the Group Flight. The flights leave prior to the beginning of each academic term from JFK airport. Representatives from the New York office will meet students at the airport prior to their departure and one of the staff members will accompany the group to Israel.

Upon arrival in Israel, the group will be met by a BGU representative and will be transported by private charter bus to the University in Beer Sheva. The transfer bus is for Group Flight participants only. Questions regarding flight arrangements should be directed to Felix at 'Isram Travel' at 1-800-843-9728.

Be sure to bring a copy of your acceptance letter to the airport, as you may be asked by airport security in NY and in Israel for proof of your long-term stay and the reason why you are traveling to Israel.

Baggage Information

For questions on baggage regulations for the group flight, please call Isram travel.

For Individual flights: Students traveling independently (not on the group flight) are generally only permitted two pieces of luggage. Please consult with your airline or travel agent for more information on baggage allowances.

We advise you to pack lightly since there is a limited amount of space in your dormitory rooms. (A good rule to go by is: pack your bags with what you think you'll need, and then take out half!). Please remember you will be responsible for carrying your own luggage.

Shipping Luggage

Students are strongly advised **NOT** to ship trunks or other luggage to Israel. Experience has shown that it is best to take your belongings with you and check them on the flight. Shipping can be just as expensive, if not more expensive than bringing an extra bag on the plane. Incoming goods, even if they are your own and even if they are used, may be taxed if they are shipped into Israel. Additionally, there is no way to know when shipments will arrive.

Students Arriving Independently

Students arriving independently, whether attending the Ulpan or not, are required to contact the Office in NY before departure to Israel in order to coordinate an appropriate time for moving into the dormitory. **All students should arrive at the university on Thursday, August 4th between 10am and 5pm**, unless special permission has been granted for exceptional circumstances. Requests must be made in writing to the OSP office in New York.

Getting to Beer Sheva:

Students who choose not to take the group flight must make their own transportation arrangements from Ben-Gurion Airport to Beer Sheva. We recommend getting to Beer Sheva from the airport via train.

A private taxi will take about 90 minutes, yet it will be more expensive and cost approximately \$120. A Private taxi can take you directly to the campus or dormitories. Make sure that you request the “Gimel dormitories”, ‘Me’onot Gimel’ of Ben-Gurion University, opposite the University Sports Center, “Merkaz Hasport”.

If you travel by train, there is a train station at the airport with trains running all day north (To Tel-Aviv/Haifa etc.) and south (to Beer Sheva).

There is no direct train from the airport to Beer – Sheva, so as you purchase a ticket (about 25 NIS = \$7), ask where you need to change trains the ride should take about 2 hours long.

There are 2 stops in Beer-Sheva. You want to get off the 1st stop, called: “Be’er Sheva North / University”.

Most of the people getting off that stop are BGU students and will be able to assist you if you need help.

The station is literally a 5 minute walk to the dorms and the campus. As you get out the station you can go straight to campus through the bridge (turn right as you exit the station) or go to the dorms (turn right on the main street, after 5 minutes you will see the dorms on your left hand).

For more information - Israel railway’s website is: <http://www.israrail.org.il/english/>

Once you arrive at the dorms, ‘Meonot Gimmel’, please contact your dorms advisor at: 052.579.1818. If you have trouble finding the madrich, please call the main office (8.646.1144) to let them know you have arrived.



Required Travel Documents



Passport

A valid passport is required to leave the United States and enter Israel. It must be valid for at least six months *after* your return to the U.S..

If you do not have a passport, or it is expiring or won't be valid for six months after your return date, it is recommended that you apply for one or renew it immediately.

Information on obtaining/renewing a U.S. passport can be found at your local post office, a U.S. Passport Agency or visit: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Israeli Visa Requirements

The OSP STRONGLY recommends that you obtain a student visa PRIOR to departure.

A brief explanation of visa requirements is provided below. Additional material will be included in the pre-departure information that is distributed to admitted students.

We also recommend that you speak directly to the nearest Israeli Consulate for full and updated information: www.israelfm.org/

Tourist Visa

Students who are American-born or naturalized U.S. citizens may enter Israel on a tourist visa. This visa does not require any prior paperwork before departure. It is issued at Ben-Gurion Airport, at no charge, upon arrival in the country and is valid for three months.

After three months, a tourist visa must be extended for another three-month period at a district office of the Ministry of the Interior in Israel. You may extend your visa every three months for up to one year. A small fee is charged for each extension.

Student Visa (A-2)

It is recommended that students participating in programs of a semester or longer secure a student visa before departure to Israel. A student visa is valid for one year and is obtained through local offices of the [Consulate of Israel](#).

You will likely be asked to provide:

- Passport valid for at least two years
- Letter of acceptance to the OSP program
- Visa application form (2 copies)
- Photographs (2)
- Visa fee

Should the consulate request any other information pertaining to the program, please contact the New York OSP [link to contact us] office and we will do our best to assist you.

The visa process can take time. Please be sure to contact your local Consulate as soon as you are accepted to the program in order to begin the process.

Returning Israelis

Students born in Israel and holding Israeli passports should contact the nearest Israeli Consulate for updated information. Guidelines and regulations regarding this population change frequently.

Below we have provided the contact phone numbers for the Israeli Consulates in the United States, along with the areas of jurisdiction for each office. Please contact the appropriate office for more information on obtaining a Student Visa.

Atlanta:	(404) 487-6500	Jurisdiction: GA, AL, NC, SC, TN, MS
Boston:	(617) 535-0200	Jurisdiction: MA, ME, NH, RI, VT
Chicago:	(312) 297-4800	Jurisdiction: IL, ND, SD, IN, WI, MI, IA, KS, NB, MN, MO
Houston:	(713) 627-3780	Jurisdiction: TX, AR, LA, OK, NM
Los Angeles:	(323) 852-5500	Jurisdiction: Southern CA, AZ, CO, HI, UT, NV, WY
Miami:	(305) 925-9400	Jurisdiction: FL, Puerto Rico
New York:	(212) 499-5400	Jurisdiction: NY, CT, NJ, USVI
Philadelphia:	(215) 546-5556	Jurisdiction: PA, DE, OH, KY, WV
San Francisco:	(415) 844-7500	Jurisdiction: Northern CA, AK, ID, MT, OR, WA
Wash. D.C.:	(202) 364-5527	Jurisdiction: Washington D.C., MD, VA

Health Care Information

Health Regulations

Current World Health Organization regulations do not require any additional vaccinations for travel to Israel from the United States.

Health Insurance

The Overseas Student Program has selected the Harel-Insurance Company as our **mandatory** supplemental student health insurance provider. Israel's medical system is socialized, and thus it is mandated that all university students be covered under an official medical carrier recognized within the state of Israel. The Harel Insurance Company offers highly professional and personalized health services for the international student. Enrollment in the Harel Insurance Program eliminates the need for students to pay 'out-of pocket' or 'up front' for medical needs while in Israel, except for minimal fees that may be required for medications. BGU's Overseas Student Program has chosen the SHIRAUMS plan. This plan provides medical coverage at public clinics and hospitals, and also allows students to visit doctors in private practice as well.

You will find information on the SHIRAUMS-Harel Insurance Program in your pre-departure packet. Please complete the application form and return it to the NY office. Payment will be included as part of your OSP tuition. Specific questions related to this health insurance may be directed to Amos Gilboa, of Harel Insurance, at Tel.972 3-6386216, email: y_health@yedidim.co.il.

Weather and Packing Essentials

Weather

Beer Sheva summers are hot and dry (+90 degrees Fahrenheit), but the desert wind comes up in the afternoon and it cools off considerably in the evening. Only rarely is it hot at night. Casual warm weather clothing (shorts, light shirts and sandals) is highly recommended during the hot summer months, early fall and late spring. Spring and autumn evenings are cool (55-70 degrees Fahrenheit.)

The cold winter weather in Beer Sheva usually begins in December and lasts through March. During this winter weather, you will definitely need sweaters and a warm jacket - days are brisk and nights are cold and windy (40-65 degrees Fahrenheit.) In more northern parts of Israel such as Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, temperatures throughout the year will be a bit cooler and humidity levels will be higher. Winters throughout the country are often rainy and wet.

Packing Essentials

Clothing

Dress in Israel, especially among students, is very informal. However, students should keep in mind that in religiously observant areas modest clothing is required, and on certain occasions somewhat nicer clothing may be necessary. "Nice clothes" in Israel usually means just pants and a button-down shirt for men and a simple dress for women. All items of clothing are readily available in Israel. Please keep in mind that as in most dorms closet space is limited, so take only what you need. Women should bring modest dress (a simple, long skirt and shawl/long-sleeved shirt) for wear in religious settings.

The following is our recommended basic wardrobe list:

Hiking Boots	Sneakers
Sandals	Backpack (day pack)
Windbreaker	Socks
Sun protective Hat	Shorts
Short Sleeve Shirts	Long Sleeve Shirts
Jeans/Pants	Sweatshirt/Sweater
Sweatpants	Sleepwear
Bathrobe	Undergarments
Towels	
Sleeping bag (group trips)	

You may also consider bringing:

Backpack for overnight trips, favorite toiletries, laptop computer, water shoes, sunscreen, camera, alarm clock, batteries, and a flashlight. All these items can easily be purchased in Israel, but they will be more expensive.

The group tours that occur throughout the semester usually involve a day or two of hiking. Although the hikes are not extremely strenuous, it is advised to bring good hiking boots and a small backpack that can fit approximately 2 liters of water, food for one day and a camera or other items. For longer weekend trips, a larger backpack that can hold several days' worth of clothes will be useful.

Packing (Continued)

Bedding and Linens

The University does not provide any linens, blankets, towels or pillows. Beds are narrower and shorter than US twin beds. Usually students bring their own bedding or purchase it upon arriving (you will be given this opportunity the same day as you arrive). There is an option of ordering equipment in advance through an Israeli company we work with – who will deliver your order to the dorms (or the airport upon your arrival). **“Hope I get it”** is a company that provides students and program participants with essentials such as small electronics and sheets, towels etc. Please see the last page for more details on the company.

We do strongly recommend bringing a small down blanket & a sleeping bag to use during the winter, as well as on weekend trips.

Recommended Sundries

Most toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, feminine hygienic products, contact lens supplies, etc.) can be purchased in Israel but they are more expensive. It is suggested that a supply be purchased before your departure. Most brand-name toiletries as well as good Israeli brands are also available in Israel.

Electrical Equipment

The electric current in Israel is 220 Volts AC, single phase, 50 cycles. If you bring any electrical appliances with you, be sure that they are set on the 220 Volt setting or that they can be easily converted. You may be able to use a transformer for certain appliances, such as radios or portable computers, however appliances that generate heat such as hair-dryers often cannot be converted. Check with an electronics dealer because many students have ruined their expensive appliances.

Computers

We strongly recommend that students bring personal laptop computers. Most of the dorm rooms are equipped with internet connections. There are also WIFI connections located around campus. For students who do not wish to bring their laptops, the university is well-equipped with computers which contain access to the internet and e-mail. For more information on the University Computer System, see “Computer Facilities”. While having a laptop is not essential, our students regularly report that having their own laptop was most convenient (many use skype to keep in touch with their loved ones overseas). We strongly suggest bringing a computer lock if you do choose to bring your laptop.

Photographs

It is always a good idea to have extra ID photos on-hand, for emergencies (i.e. if you lose your passport), in addition to a copy of your passport.

Dormitories

Dormitory Deposit

Prior to departure, all students must submit a \$200 undated check or money order to the New York office as a security deposit for possible damage incurred to their dorm room or suite (you will include this in your pre-departure packet). The check should be made out to "AABGU." If no damage is incurred and if the check-out has been completed in an orderly fashion, as stipulated by the OSP office in Israel, the un-cashed checks will be destroyed.

Dormitory Rooms

Students attending the OSP will be assigned rooms in the dormitory apartments conveniently located one block from campus and just opposite the sports complex. Most of the dormitories are divided into apartments of either two or four bedrooms. Each apartment has a bathroom and a small kitchen equipped with refrigerator, hot plate, sink, storage cabinets and a dining area. Each bedroom contains a bed, desk/table, bookshelf, wardrobe/closet, chair and lamp for each student. Kitchenware and cooking equipment, as well as eating utensils are not provided. These can be easily purchased locally at reasonable prices. Often the Israeli roommates already have many items.

Pets are not allowed in the dormitory.

Dormitory Assignments

Room assignments will be made when students arrive on campus. All room assignments are made by the Housing Department on campus and not by the OSP office in New York. Students live in rooms and/or in suites with Israeli students. This is an ideal way for overseas students to integrate academically and socially into Israeli student life. Please note that the OSP does its best to minimize the number and frequency of room shifts. Any special requests will be considered, but none can be guaranteed.

Dormitory Responsibilities

Students are responsible for cleaning their apartments and bedrooms. Like their Israeli counterparts, all students share responsibility for dormitory cleanliness and decorum. Students are expected to keep their suites and common areas clean and to respect the rights of others in terms of quiet and privacy. No cleaning service is provided. As in any situation of sharing living space, we expect the students of the OSP to be considerate of their room mates needs and to respect reasonable levels of noise and activities in their respective rooms and to maintain an academic atmosphere conducive to cooperative cohabitation and mutual respect.

Facilities in the Dormitories

Food and Grocery Shopping

A mini-market in the dormitory complex carries a full line of fresh fruits & vegetables, packaged foods, meats, dairy products, beverages, breads & pastries, hygienic & cleaning supplies. Numerous larger supermarkets are located not from the dorms.



open

Laundromat

A coin-operated Laundromat is located in the dorm complex. It is self-service, and is 24 hours a day. Other laundry and dry-cleaning facilities are available in nearby shopping centers and around campus.

Custodian's Office

All repairs or complaints about the physical condition of the dorms can be handled through the Custodian's Office (Av HaBayit). Request for repairs are readily taken care of by the chief custodian and his staff. You will receive instructions on how to go about making a request in orientation.

Hair Cuts

There is a unisex barbershop/salon located right outside the dormitory complex. Many other salons and barbers are located nearby off-campus.

Additional Dormitory Facilities

Within the dorm complex, there is a café/pub, a music room, study-lounges, a 24-hour computer lab, and a lounge with a television and VCR player, on which movies are shown each week. Israelis and overseas students both frequent the night spot for food, drinks and lively company.

In addition to Me'onot Gimel, another university dorm known as 'Me'onot Daled' has similar facilities (including different pubs) which OSP students often visit with their Israeli friends for a different atmosphere.

Dining On and Off Campus

Meals

The Overseas Student Program **does not** have an inclusive meal plan (and neither do Israeli students). However, on campus there are several dairy and meat cafeterias, which serve meals at reasonable student prices. All cafeterias and cafés on campus are kosher. Many other cafés and restaurants are located off campus within easy reach. As previously mentioned, students may buy food at the mini-market in the dormitory complex or at nearby supermarkets, and they can prepare meals in the kitchenettes in their suites.

MENSA Cafeteria - located in the Student Union on the Ground Floor on the BGU Main Campus. Serves inexpensive meat and vegetarian meals.

Student Cafeterias - and snack bars may be found in several locations on the main campus. These are vegetarian and are open from 8:00 am - 5:00pm. They serve a wide variety of dishes; some that you would not believe were vegetarian! Plus, they offer the Israeli student necessities - falafel, hummus, salad, fresh fruit and more!

McDonalds (on campus!) - for those days when you are missing American fast-food, this could make a nice change from falafel! It is rather pricey relative to the other student dining options, but can make a nice, occasional treat! This branch is kosher.

Coffee-To-Go - little coffee stands are located in numerous strategic places around campus. They serve coffee, tea, cold drinks, cakes and sandwiches. The coffee is very good, and on the hotter days, the iced coffee is a must (it is more like a frappachino!)

Beer Sheva Dining Options

There are many restaurants and food chains to choose from in Beer Sheva. You have the choice of 'authentic' Israeli restaurants, where you can spend some time chatting with locals, improving your Hebrew, and hearing some stories, as well as enjoying some superb, and often inexpensive, meals. A lot of restaurants and cafés are in walking distance of campus, and there are many others in the center of the city or in the old city too. Your madrichim will quickly recommend their favorites to you. Here are just a few of the options within minutes of the dorms:

Gatero - right across the street from the dorms. Great options. Try their shakshukah!

Falafel Stands - There are so many of them, a lot without names, that it would take another handbook just to list them! But, students should know that Beer Sheva boasts the best falafel in Israel, and when you get there, you will see why!!! OSP students tend to make falafel their staple while in Israel. It is not only tasty but very cheap. For less than 12 shekels you can have a filling meal. Plus, the stands let you put in as much salad as you want...

Naffis - is close to campus and is open 24 hours a day, every day. Students say that they serve great Middle Eastern food, and that it is perfect for those late-night cravings! It is also a fun place to meet friends for a good dinner, relaxing coffee or special occasion! Food is reasonably priced.

Dominos Pizza - needs no explanation! They deliver...

Burger Ranch - Israel's version of Burger King. They also deliver...

Sports Facilities and Computer Facilities

Sports Facilities

The University Sports Center includes six tennis courts, two Olympic-sized swimming pools (one is closed in the winter), a weight room, basketball courts, a gym and cardiovascular exercise rooms. A bathing cap, which can be purchased at the pool, is required for those with long hair. There are over a dozen stair-master, treadmill and stationary bike machines, as well as an entire universal and free-weight circuit system. All facilities are conveniently located across from the dormitory complex and are available to OSP students at no charge upon presentation of a BGU student ID. Use of the weight and exercise rooms is available for a nominal fee per year.

Please note that students who neglect to send in their physician's report will not be admitted into the sports center.



On-campus Computer Facilities

In addition to the Computer labs in the dormitories, there are computer labs on campus, located throughout the University. Most of the computer labs are open 24 hours a day. The computers are equipped with word processing and spreadsheet programs and also allow for access to the Web through the University's main server. Printers are available at most on-campus labs. WIFI connections are available around campus for laptop use.

E-mail

Upon arrival, students each receive an E-mail account at BGU. E-mail serves as the main conduit of information between the OSP students, *madrichim*, faculty and OSP administration. It's also an inexpensive and convenient way to keep in touch with friends, family and professors at home. This service is free and will allow you access to WIFI and the computer labs all over campus.

If you would like to install internet access in your room, then there is a charge of 150 NIS (38.00 USD) per semester. You will receive instructions on how to go about hooking up to the internet in orientation.

Terminals are also found in several centers located around campus, as well as internet cafes are convenient and abundant around Be'er Sheva.

Living Expenses and Banking

Food & Living Expenses

You should plan on spending approximately \$450-\$500 a month on food, independent travel and individual expenses. This amount varies with individual lifestyles. Some students have been known to spend much less while others have spent more. Students may take advantage of the convenience of cheaper on-campus meals. Off-campus meals can be expensive, especially for meat meals. Dairy, fruit, and vegetables are a mainstay of Israeli diets and are very reasonably priced.

Additionally, you should set aside approximately \$150 per semester for books and school supplies.

Banking and Currency

The New Israeli Shekel (NIS) is the official currency in Israel. Bank notes circulate in denominations of 20, 50, 100 and 200 NIS. Plus there are coins in 1, 5 and 10 shekel denominations as well as 5, 10 and 50 agarots (100 agarot = 1 shekel).

There are approximately 3.44 shekels to a dollar (as of April 7 2011).

We recommend that all students travel to Israel with at least \$200 in cash and/or Travelers' Checks to provide an immediate source of funds, should the need arise. Students can change dollars to shekels at the university bank or at the Western Union in town, but please remember to bring your passport! You can also order shekels at your local bank before you leave. It usually takes at least a few days, or you can change money at the airport even using a credit card.

ATM Cards

Students find the most convenient option to access funds is an ATM card on the Cirrus or Plus system. Most ATM machines throughout Israel recognize these cards, including Bank Hapoalim's machines, which are located on campus. Check with your bank to make sure your accounts are compatible with Bank Hapoalim and other Israeli banks such as Bank Leumi, Bank Discount and Bank Mizrachi and for additional fees you may incur. Money can usually be withdrawn from a checking or credit card account if you have a cash withdrawal option. We strongly recommend that you include the name of a cosigner on your American bank account prior to your departure, in case a problem should arise with the account while you are in Israel.

If you plan on using an ATM card, be sure to bring cash or travelers checks with you for back-up. Some cards work at particular locations but not at others and, occasionally, an ATM card has been known to be mysteriously eaten by a machine.

Credit Cards

Money can be withdrawn on an American credit card with the use of a PIN number. Cash is distributed in shekels and the amount is automatically converted to dollars for billing purposes. To minimize service charges, it is suggested to send money to your credit card before you make advances, thus lowering the amount of interest the credit card company will charge you. Contact your credit card company for more information. MasterCard and Visa can be used for purchases in many stores. You may want to check with your credit card company for any additional fees, as well as to notify them that you will be traveling abroad.

Travelers' Checks, Cash, Israel Bonds

As previously mentioned, it is recommended that you bring some travelers' checks with you to Israel for back-up in case any of the above methods do not work for you. Some people choose to use Travelers' Checks as their main source of funds while abroad. Whichever method you choose, be sure to leave a copy of the numbers of the checks with someone at home. We recommend that you bring large denominations of travelers' checks, as a service fee is charged to cash each check, regardless of the amount. State of Israel Bonds may be cashed in Israel for Israeli currency. Information on this procedure is available at your local State of Israel Bonds office.

Israeli Bank Accounts

We **STRONGLY DO NOT** advise opening an Israeli bank account. Israeli banks charge high interest and have many service charges, and students often have difficulty withdrawing funds. Especially for students staying one semester it is easier to withdraw funds from an American bank account and avoid the hassle and expense of having an Israeli bank account.

However, if you wish to open an account, Bank Hapoalim, one of Israel's largest banks, maintains a full service branch on campus. Other major banks have conveniently located offices around town in many shopping areas. When you arrive at the University, you will be shown the location of the branch office so that you can open an account. Please do not open an Israeli account from America.

Both savings and checking accounts are available. It is advisable to keep your money in a "Dollar Account" and not in local currency, shekalim. You should also open a "Shekel Account." You will transfer money from your Dollar Account to your Shekel Account. The Dollar Account allows you to deposit, transfer, and withdraw U.S. dollars as necessary while benefiting from the rate of exchange for local currency on the day of the transaction. An automatic teller machine for Israeli shekel withdrawals and most other services are available when the branch is closed.

There are several ways of depositing money to your bank account:

1. Deposit cash and/or travelers' checks when you arrive.
2. Deposit personal checks, money orders, or certified checks, drawn on foreign banks. Deposits take at least three to four weeks to clear before they are credited to your account and clearing charges are deducted from the face value of the check. Please be sure to have enough cash on hand to wait until checks clear.
3. You can electronically transfer funds through either your home bank or the U.S. branch of your Israeli bank once your account is set up. The bank can advise you of the fastest method for such transfers. There will be charges involved, but this seems to be the quickest and most reliable way to get money from outside of Israel.

Wire Transfer

Money can always be wired to students using Western Union. There are Western Union offices throughout Israel. The local Beer Sheva branch is located downtown at the Central Post Office, conveniently located near the main shopping center. Please consult Western Union directly for questions relating to procedure and cost.

Telephone Service

Mobile Phones

Students are strongly encouraged to rent a mobile phone through 'IsraelPhones', a global cell phone rental company. This enables the OSP staff, as well as student's families, to reach students at all times. IsraelPhones provides free phone calls between students of the OSP and the staff. They will supply you with a mobile phone, phone number, charger, and carrying cases upon your arrival. The phone works throughout Israel and in Europe. Billing is taken care of back in the US and all bills are in US dollars. Please see your pre-departure packet for more details and a reservation form. Students may also purchase mobile phones from other Israeli companies once in Israel. **YOU MUST HAVE CELL PHONE WHILE ON THE OVERSEAS STUDENT PROGRAM AT BGU.**

Landlines

The OSP Office does not provide students with the means of receiving or placing personal phone calls. Parents may leave a message by calling the OSP office during office hours between 8:30 am and 4:00 PM Israel time, Sunday through Thursday, or by leaving a message on the answering machine at all other times. The office is closed Friday and Saturday.

The telephone number of the Overseas Student Program office is 011 972 8-646-1144. Collect calls will not be accepted. The office staff will take a message and advise the caller to return the call or expect a call.

Calling Israel

Israeli Area Codes and Phone Numbers

International Code (from U.S.) - 011

Israel Country Code - 972

Area Codes: (drop the "0" when calling from outside Israel)

Beer-Sheva	08
Tel Aviv	03
Jerusalem	02
Haifa	04
Galil	06
Netanya	09
Eilat	07
Ashdod	08

Example: To call the OSP office (08-646-1104) from the U.S. using the above codes, Dial 011-972-8-646-1144.

Cell phone Area Codes are according to the Service Provider and not by the dialing area as they are in the US and Europe. They are 050, 052, 054, and 057 and may change according to the individual providers.

Postal Services, Mailing Information

Mail / Telegrams / Package Deliveries

The Central Post Office in Beer Sheva is located across from the Central Bus Station on Hanessi'im Street. The services available include: stamps, telegrams, telecards, international calls, faxes, mailing and receiving parcels, Western Union, and cashing travelers' checks.

Hours of operation:

Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday: 7:45 am - 12:30 PM and 3:30 PM - 6:00 PM

Monday and Wednesday: 7:30 am- 2:00 PM.

There is also a Post Office branch conveniently located on campus.

Almost all services available at the Central post office are also available on Campus except international telephone calls, Western Union, and cashing travelers' checks.

Hours of operation:

Sunday 8:00 am - 1:00 PM and 4:00 - 7:00 PM;

Monday-Thursday: 8:00 am -3:00 PM;

Friday: 8:00 am - 1:00 PM.

Receiving Letters and Packages

Packages and letters may be sent to Israel by air mail through the US or Canadian Postal Service. Make sure that the sender writes "AIR MAIL" on the envelope to ensure fast and proper delivery. **In general, expect at least 10 days for an Air Mail letter to be arrive in Israel.** Please note that mail distribution can sometimes be erratic. **Packages may be subject to customs duty as determined by the rules of the Israeli Customs inspectors. If duty is assessed, this will have to be paid before the package is delivered. For more important information and some helpful hints in sending a package, please have your sender contact their nearest post office. FedEx, DHL, and UPS deliver packages to Israel as well; however, these companies have very stringent customs regulations and often hold up package delivery.** Regardless of the service you choose, please list contents on the customs form to hasten delivery.

Mailing Address

Mail should be addressed to:

Name of the Student
C/O Overseas Student Program
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
P.O. Box 653
84105 Beer-Sheva, ISRAEL



We encourage you to share this address with loved ones before you leave for Israel. Also, if there are issues with timely delivery please have the sender contact the Israel office, as the NY office has NO information regarding packages or the Israel postage system.

Touring and Travel

Touring and Group Activities

The OSP sponsors a full variety of tours and extracurricular activities each semester. Participation in many of these tours and activities is compulsory, and all are highly recommended as they are a vital feature of your stay in Israel. Schedules and details will be distributed upon your arrival at the University.

There are also numerous extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the BGU Student Association as well as the Dorm Residence Association. They organize various activities throughout the semester. You will find out more about these opportunities upon your arrival at BGU.

Public Transportation, and Personal Travel In Israel

In addition to the trips and excursions provided by the OSP, students are encouraged to explore Israel on their own. Our madrichim are happy to assist you in helping you plan your travel around the country. Please note that public transportation is not available over the Sabbath, from Friday at sundown through sundown, Saturday evening.

The following are modes of recommended transportation:

Within Beer Sheva:

Private Taxis:

There are many taxi companies in Beer Sheva which provide service 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can hail a taxi on the street, phone ahead, or go to a nearby taxi stand. There is a set price for most trips within Beer Sheva, around 20 shekels, or 5 -6 U.S. dollars.

Around Israel:

Train Service:

Excellent, modern train service is available between Beer Sheva and Tel Aviv, as well as destinations to the North, including the city of Haifa. The train is the most comfortable, quickest and safest way to travel within the country. The train station is located within a 5-minute walk from the dormitories. Trains run very often and cost 25 shekels to get to Tel Aviv.

Group Taxis (Moniyot Sherut):

Student can take group taxis, known as a *sherut*, in Hebrew, to destinations in Israel such as Jerusalem. Group taxis are like small buses, where the driver waits for the car to fill up, before leaving. They usually seat about 6 people and can be found at the Central Bus Station in Beer Sheva and at other major bus stations around the country. The *madrichim* can help arrange group taxis for students to anywhere in Israel.

Inter-City Buses:

These buses leave from the Central Bus Station of Beer Sheva and can take you anywhere in Israel. There are regular buses (every 15 minutes) to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, as well as to other destinations. Tickets are either purchased on the bus, or in the station (cash only).

Shopping in Beer Sheva

There are many supermarkets, clothes shops and markets in Beer Sheva.

Before learning about the shops, it is important to know a few words in Hebrew:

A shopping mall in Israel is called a '*canyon*'

A market in Israel is called a '*shuk*'

A little convenience store is called a '*makolet*' or '*kiosk*'

Below are a few examples of places to shop in Beer Sheva, but you will see that there are many more options when you get there...

Canyon Ha Negev Shopping Mall

The *Canyon Ha Negev*, also called the Big Canyon, is the largest of three shopping malls in Beer Sheva. It has three levels and its shops sell everything: clothing, jewelry, sports gear, shoes, photography (and film developing places). Plus there is a large supermarket, a big pharmacy, and a bank with ATMs. Also, there is a large food court, and a few restaurants inside the mall.

Shaul HaMelech Canyon

This mall has many clothing stores, hardware shops, a post office, a drug store and some fast food Restaurants. Plus, it has a market each Monday (from 8am - 7pm) selling clothing and house wares.

'BIG' Shopping Plaza

This is the biggest American-style shopping plaza in Israel (with a lot of parking space!) It has a variety of stores, and products to choose from, including many well known brand names such as Office Depot, ACE hardware, Home Center, Toys 'R' Us, plus clothing, footwear and furniture stores. BIG is easily accessible by car, taxi or bus (and within a 20 minute walk from campus).

Daily Open - Air Shuk

This market is located near the Old City of Beer Sheva, and easily accessible by most buses. It sells a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, and you can find the best Israeli produce here. Food at the shuk is very cheap (its prices are usually lower than in the supermarket) but be sure to wash your purchases thoroughly!!! You can buy almost anything at this shuk, including household items, blankets, shoes and clothes. Plus there are great bakeries and jewelry shops there. Not only can you find some great deals here, but the atmosphere will give you a real flavor of Israel (and it is great practice for your Hebrew!!!)

Bedouin Shuk

This market is famous throughout Israel, and people often come to Beer Sheva just to go to this market. It is a traditional ancient market place, and it sells everything from clothing to small household items, as well as gifts and spices. It is only open on Thursdays, from early in the morning until mid-afternoon. You can find some cheap things here, but be ready to bargain...

Entertainment in Beer Sheva

You will be amazed by the range of events, activities, bars, clubs and theatres in Beer Sheva. The University itself boasts the best student life in Israel, and the city offers a wide variety of entertaining options. Here are just a few ideas of what you can do in the evenings; you will have to take off exploring to find some other ones...

Cinemas

There are numerous movie theaters in Beer Sheva, plus one on campus. The campus theater - NEGATIVE - is the most convenient as well as the cheapest! It is run by the Student Union and offers 2-3 movies almost every night. It shows the same things that are showing in the local cinemas, so the selection is relatively current. Plus, the NEGATIVE also organizes special events, classical movies with lectures; silent movies with piano; and film festivals.

Pubs and Clubs

There is at least one pub in each of the dorms (Me'onot Gimel and Me'onot Dalet). The music is usually loud, but there is always a laid back, relaxing atmosphere. In addition, there are many nice bars throughout Beer Sheva, in the center of town as well as in the Old City.

There are well known clubs in the center of town, but the nicest, and most popular one is Barak, in the old city, as well as Forum, which has been around for decades. All the clubs are an easy taxi-ride away.

The Israeli Sinfonietta

The Israeli Sinfonietta, based in Beer Sheva, has grown from a chamber orchestra into a small symphonic orchestra, acclaimed both in Israel and abroad. The Sinfonietta has permanent professional musicians of the highest caliber. Tickets may be purchased for individual performances or on a subscription basis. Student reductions are available on subscriptions.

Light Opera Group Of the Negev (LOGON)

This is an English language amateur musical troupe. Many of the international students audition and play parts in their productions. Their performances are usually in early spring and appear on major stages throughout Israel.

Volunteer Opportunities

In keeping with the goals of the OSP to integrate its students into the Israeli student body and the local community, the OSP can make arrangements to enable overseas students to do volunteer work at various locations in Beer-Sheva and the surrounding areas.

While the volunteer work is not obligatory, it is highly recommended as it will allow students to become integrated into Israeli society and culture. During the orientation and Ulpan, our *madrichim* will begin talking about volunteer opportunities. **Placements occur in the first few weeks of the semester once students have learned about all the options.** In the past, students have volunteered within the Ethiopian community, taught English in Bedouin schools, or have assisted at a Cancer Care Center. If you are not happy with your placement this would be a good time to pull out your newfound Israeli sass and request a change from the office.

Adopted Families

Beer Sheva and the BGU community are known for their warmth and friendly hospitality. After all, Beer Sheva is in the south of Israel! Many families are happy to ‘adopt’ an international student into their home to help them feel more at home in Beer Sheva. Students can choose to have Friday night dinner or monthly visits – whatever routine works for the family and the student. Becoming part of an “adopted” family is a great way for students to get a glimpse of family life in Israel as well as another opportunity to learn more about Israeli society. **Students should notify the OSP staff during the orientation or Ulpan period if they are interested in being assigned an adoptive family.**

Something to take note of:

It is important to note that some things in Israel take more time than the immediacy that we are used to here in the US. Please remember that during summer ulpan session Israeli students are in finals, visiting family or taking trips. Once they come back for the semester the campus will be full blown abuzz with excitement. If you want to volunteer, have an adopted family or join a team/club of some sort, we are here to help you do that you just have to tell us!!!

OSP Code of Conduct

All students enrolling in the OSP must read and sign the Agreement Letter enclosed in the Pre-departure Materials. Please review the following important points:

Personal Injury or Property Claims

Ben-Gurion University shall not be liable for personal injury or loss of life, property damage, loss or expense of any kind resulting from illness, accident, acts of war or civil disorder during the student's participation in the OSP.

Ben-Gurion University shall likewise have no liability for any loss or damage to your property. Therefore, it is recommended that you arrange in advance for adequate insurance coverage for theft, loss or damage to any personal belongings of material value, which you may bring to Israel.

Drug Use and Other Illegal Activities - Dismissal

The use, possession or sale of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited by the laws of the State of Israel, and by the bylaws of Ben-Gurion University. Any student found in violation of these laws will be subject to legal action and immediately expelled from the OSP at the student's cost.

Ben-Gurion University has the right to suspend, expel or to otherwise discipline a student at any time if the student does not abide by the rules and regulations of the University and of the State of Israel. Any student dismissed from the OSP is required to leave the University immediately. In such a case, Ben-Gurion University shall not be required to make any refund to the student. Any costs incurred by Ben-Gurion University in the course of or as a result of the dismissal will be charged to the student.

Withdrawal/Financial Penalties

Should you at any time need to withdraw from your academic program, any refunds or concessions shall be in accordance with the program's "Financial Terms."

Independent Travel

Students are encouraged to travel around the country on weekends, but are asked to inform the *madrichim* of their travel plans for security purposes. All students are required to report any travel outside of Israel to the OSP office in Beer Sheva. Students must also inform the office of their whereabouts during any extended holiday/vacation while in Israel. **Students are not permitted to leave the country while classes are in session, unless granted special permission by the Director of the OSP.**

OSP Academic Regulations

Withdrawal from Courses

Students are permitted to drop a course within the first two weeks of each semester. This course is not recorded on the student's transcript. A course dropped following this period is recorded on the final transcript as withdrawal (W). A course dropped within the final half of any semester will be recorded as withdrawal with failure (W/F) on the transcript. Students are not permitted to drop Hebrew language courses except in an exceptional case and only with the permission of the Director of the OSP.

Incomplete Courses

Students who do not complete all of a course's requirements, such as papers, exams, or presentations, during the regular semester will receive a grade of incomplete (INC) on their transcript. With the approval of the course instructor, a student may complete course requirements within an additional period of time set by the instructor. In no instance may this extension exceed the start of the next academic year or semester. If the course is completed within this extension period, the new grade replaces the incomplete; if not, the grade of failure (F) is automatically recorded.

Auditing Courses

Students may audit a course with the permission of the Director of the OSP, and with the express permission of the individual instructor. Audited courses will not appear on the transcript.

Cultural Awareness

In a short time from now, you will be living in a society very different from your own. Israel is a foreign country, just as any other, with its own unique manners and cultural mores. When visiting a new country it is often hard to understand or acclimate to these differences. The more you understand the host culture, the easier it is to feel comfortable in their society and to adjust smoothly. Your *madrichim* and the staff of the OSP will discuss important issues of cultural difference during your orientation period.

In the meantime, read through these seemingly amusing, yet quite accurate insights that a former International Student wrote after having spent a year in Israel. Some of these “perceptions” seem contradictory. However you will learn to understand the complexity of social interactions as your time abroad progresses. Remember that Israelis have to adjust to your manners just as you have to adjust to theirs.

AMERICAN VALUES

Friendliness
Politeness
Privacy
Clear-cut instructions
Openness about fears, anxieties, marital,
Psychological and sexual history
Planning and scheduling in advance

ISRAELI PERCEPTION

Superficiality
Artificiality
Unfriendliness; excessive formality; distancing
Rigidity; inability to improvise
unnecessary exposure
of private matters
Rigidity; excessive formality

ISRAELI VALUES

Directness; honesty
Assertiveness
Egalitarianism; informality

Pride; self-confidence
Warmth; connectedness
Spontaneity

AMERICAN PERCEPTION

Bluntness; rudeness; tactlessness
Aggressiveness
Lack of consideration for one’s host, guest,
boss, client, parent
Arrogance
Intrusiveness; invasion of privacy
Lack of restraint; lack of order

Hebrew Phrases

Shalom	Hello/Goodbye/Peace
Ahalan	Hello (slang)
Boker Tov	Good morning
Erev Tov	Good evening
Lilah Tov	Good night
Ma Nishma	How are you?
B'Seder	Okay
Yalla	Let's go!
Nu...	So...
Todah	Thanks
B'vakasha	Please
Chaver	Friend
Mayim	Water
Ken	Yes
Lo	No
Anee Rotzah (female)	I want...
Anee Rotzeh (male)	I want...
Anee Medeber Ivrit	I speak Hebrew...
Kama Ze Oleh?	How much is this?
Eifo ha sheiruteem?	Where is the bathroom?
Ma Zeh?	What is this?
Balagan	Mess, Chaos
Shtuyot	Nonsense
Mahgniv	Wonderful/awesome
L'hitraot	See you later

Nesiyah Tova (Bon Voyage)!

We wish you a productive and enjoyable semester at BGU!

Hope I Get

www.hopeiget.com



**STUDYING IN ISRAEL?
NO ROOM IN YOUR SUITCASE?
WORRIED ABOUT SHOPPING IN HEBREW?**

Let Hope I Get take care of it for you!

Hope I Get (www.hopeiget.com), Israel's first online gift registry, is now offering year abroad packages. We have all the essentials for your year in Israel: sheets, towels, small electronics, and more delivered directly to campus upon your arrival. You will feel at home as soon as you arrive!

Here's how it works:

- Go to www.hopeiget.com/year-abroad.html to view our selection of products hand-picked to suit students' needs.
- Select the products that you would like to purchase.
- Pay in US dollars over our secure server with your American credit card.
- Your pre-ordered products will be delivered directly to the Ben Gurion campus.

Questions? Contact us from the US/Canada at 1-866-682-8779 or in Israel at 052-540-8334 or email info@hopeiget.com.

