

**AUA**

American University  
of Armenia

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AUA PARAMAZ AVEDISIAN BUILDING

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**WELCOME  
MANUAL *for*  
NEW EMPLOYEES**

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is a privilege to welcome you to the American University of Armenia (AUA). AUA was founded in 1991, nearly three years after the devastating Spitak earthquake of December 7, 1988. It was conceived as a constructive response to the immense human and economic loss suffered as a result of the earthquake. The University's initial years coincided with economic turmoil and political conflict. Nevertheless, the University persevered and rapidly grew to become one of the finest institutions of higher learning in Armenia and the region. AUA is accredited by the

WASC Senior College and University Commission and is affiliated with the University of California.

It is my honor to lead the University in its mission to provide teaching and research programs in a setting that values and develops academic excellence, free inquiry, integrity, leadership, and service to society. Armenia is an ancient land with a rich culture and a strong tradition of excellence in education. AUA builds on this foundation by adding American ideals of academic freedom, shared governance, social responsibility, interdisciplinary studies, and critical thinking. Imbued with these qualities, our graduates go on to assume leadership positions in society and serve as catalysts of positive change and advancement.

AUA offers bachelor's degree programs in Business, Computer Science, Data Science, Engineering Science, English and Communication, Environmental and Sustainability Sciences, Nursing, and Politics and Governance. The University's graduate programs offer master's degrees in Business Administration, Economics, Management, Computer and Information Science, Industrial Engineering and Systems Management, International Relations and Diplomacy, Human Rights and Social Justice, Law, Public Affairs, Public Health, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The University also operates a number of research and development centers, where faculty and students work together on a variety of research projects. All these activities are housed in state-of-the-art facilities on our campus in the heart of Yerevan. AUA also conducts the Turpanjian Rural Development Program and the Entrepreneurs in Health Program, which aims at facilitating the development of small businesses and entrepreneurship throughout rural Armenia. Furthermore, the Open Education program enrolls thousands of students annually in certificate courses in Yerevan, Gyumri, Dilijan, Vanadzor, Yeghegnadzor, Goris, Kapan, and Stepanakert.

AUA is home to diverse faculty representing many different nationalities and cultures. Although a strong majority of the students are from Armenia, an increasing number come from abroad, including many diasporan Armenians. For non-Armenian students, AUA offers the opportunity to experience learning in a fascinating and historically important center of world civilization. Interaction among local, diasporan, and international students enriches their lives and fosters life-long friendships. Of our over 6,500 alumni, many pursue international careers, including further studies at universities abroad, and over 70% work in Armenia.

Like other private universities, AUA depends on outside sources of funding, as tuition covers just a fraction of the cost of educating each student. Furthermore, we offer financial aid to all admitted students who otherwise cannot attend due to economic circumstances. While AUA has received support from the governments of Armenia and the United States, it depends in large part on philanthropy, primarily from Armenian organizations and individuals in the diaspora. We are grateful to all those who recognize the important mission of AUA and make it the focus of their investment in Armenia.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bruce Boghosian  
President

## **1.0 General Provisions**

This Welcome Manual for New Employees has the main objective to provide you with details of your working conditions, benefits, and relevant AUA policies. The information contained within should give you, the basic guidance and foundation to understand AUA's aims and goals.

### **1.1. The AUA Mission**

The American University of Armenia aims to have an impact on students and the community as a center of academic excellence, innovation, inquiry, and diversity that contributes to the further development and advancement of Armenia, the region, and the world through teaching and scholarship, fostering creativity, integrity, and community service.

### **1.2. The AUA Vision**

Through its world-class academic programs, research centers, student services, and community outreach, the American University of Armenia will have a transformative impact on people's social, economic, political, and intellectual capacities to meet the challenges of a globalized world. Our faculty and staff will inspire students to advance knowledge and become responsible citizens and leaders in innovation and entrepreneurship.

### **1.3. History of the University**

On December 7, 1988, an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale rolled through the former Soviet Republic of Armenia, killing 25,000 people and leaving another 500,000 homeless. The human tragedy and economic devastation shocked the world and opened the Republic to unprecedented international humanitarian and technical assistance.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, many Western specialists in the field of earthquake engineering visited Armenia and had the opportunity to interact with their Armenian counterparts. It was during one such meeting in 1989 that the idea of an American style technical university in Armenia was proposed by Yuri Sarkissian, then rector of the Yerevan Polytechnic Institute, to Armen Der Kiureghian, Professor of Civil Engineering of the University of California at Berkeley, as a way to establish a new foundation for education and training in Armenia.

The idea soon evolved into the specific goal of founding a graduate university based on the American model. What followed was a period of steadfast effort led by two earthquake engineering professors, Mihran Agbabian of the University of Southern California and Armen Der Kiureghian of the University of California at Berkeley. The vision of an American graduate university in Armenia soon became a goal to which other academics in the USA and Armenia lent their support. The late Professor Stepan Karamardian, formerly Dean of the Graduate School of Management at the University of California at Riverside, soon joined the Agbabian and Der Kiureghian team early on. The team then approached the Armenian government and several organizations seeking support for the achievement of the stated goal.

The American University of Armenia became a reality thanks to the steadfast support of the Armenian and United States governments and two major institutions in the United States: the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) and the University of California (UC). From the very beginning, the government of Armenia and specifically the Ministry of Higher Education and Sciences (now the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport) provided logistical and financial support for the establishment of the University. Despite the significant political and economic difficulties occurring in Armenia during the period from 1989 to 1991, the Ministry delivered its unwavering assistance in facilitating steps and removing hurdles. The United States government has generously supported the University through the granting of a precedent-setting Congressional allocation through USAID as an endowment for AUA, and multiple annual grants through USAID's Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA).

AGBU agreed early on to underwrite a major share of the operational funding necessary to launch the University. From the outset, AUA also benefited from a vital working relationship with the University of California. When approached for its technical assistance, David P. Gardener, then President of the University of California, responded by appointing a task force, chaired by then Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs William R. Frazer, to explore the feasibility of UC's participation in this undertaking. The task force visited Armenia in July 1990. A year later, the Regents of the University of California unanimously agreed to an affiliation with the University. Based on this affiliation, UC lends valuable technical support and educational experience to the growth of the American University of Armenia, collaborating in the preparation of a cadre of faculty and participating in the development of a program of exchange and cooperation.

On September 21, 1991, Armenia declared its independence. On the same day, AUA began instruction with 101 students enrolled. In a phenomenally short time, the vision had become a reality. Today the American University of Armenia (AUA) operates as an independent, private, non-profit institution of higher education in Armenia.

By providing teaching, research, and public service, AUA seeks to serve Armenia and the region and to provide a positive model in the transition to a market economy and democratic style of government. The University aims to prepare graduates who will play a constructive role in the social and economic development of Armenia and the region. The use of English as the language of instruction is intended to facilitate communication between graduates of AUA and their colleagues throughout the world and to attract an international faculty cadre and student body.

#### **1.4. Employee Philosophy**

The role of the staff is crucial in providing support to the work of the University and helping it fulfill its educational mission. The students and the faculty are the heart of the University. The staff members are important participants in maintaining a University environment in which the teaching, research and service missions of the faculty, as well as the learning by the students can flourish.

The University values its staff since each individual within his or her role is expected to fully contribute to the advancement of the University's mission. The University values excellence and individual motivation. Differences among individuals are natural and enriching. Staff members are urged to be respectful of individual differences and to strive for a working relationship with their colleagues, faculty and students, that is based on mutual trust, support and group consensus. Employees are encouraged to share information and resources to the maximum extent possible in working jointly for the University.

#### **1.5. Employee Responsibilities**

The specific responsibilities of each employee will be listed in the employee's job description and contract. In fulfilling their specific responsibilities, all employees are expected to work to the best of their ability to provide excellent service to all members of the University community. Employees must understand that change and flexibility are necessary for the efficient operation of AUA and must be willing to think and work creatively. Employees must strive for a working relationship with their supervisors and colleagues that is open, collaborative and based on mutual trust and respect.

Employees shall coordinate their work and cooperate with others who are affected by their decisions and actions. They are expected to apply University policies and procedures accurately and in an ethical manner. Employees with supervisory responsibilities are expected to create and maintain a working environment, which encourages commitment, respect for differences and professional development.

### **2.0 Employment Policies**

#### **2.1. Non-Discrimination in Employment**

No person employed by or seeking employment with the University shall be discriminated against because of race, religion, national origin, age, gender, marital status, medical condition, or disability.

The University is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to an active non-discrimination program within the institution. All recruitment, hiring, placements, transfers, and promotions will be on the basis of individual qualifications and not on race, religion, national origin, age, gender, marital status, medical condition, or disability. All other personnel actions such as compensation, benefits, layoffs, return from layoffs, termination, training, social and recreational programs shall be administered regardless of race, religion, national origin, age, gender, marital status, medical condition, or disability.

### **3.0 Staff Conduct**

#### **3.1. Employee Code of Conduct**

At all times, during the performance of their duties, AUA employees shall strictly adhere to and comply with this Manual and AUA's rules and regulations governing employee conduct, now in effect or subsequently modified.

Regardless of their individual functions, duties, their employee status, and job classification, employees are expected to use the highest standard of competence, professionalism, and ethics in performing their work at AUA.

Employees shall refrain from any act, behavior or appearance, whether it is during the course of their work at AUA or outside such work, which may be interpreted to reflect, or may reflect adversely upon the reputation of AUA. Employees are expected to exercise discretion in their outside behavior, and demonstrate respect for customary social decorum.

During normal business hours, employees are expected to devote their full attention toward the fulfillment of their duties at AUA. Employees may not use the time that is expected to be devoted to their work at AUA for personal, political, or any other work or the inurement of any personal benefit.

When AUA employees speak or act as private persons outside AUA, they must avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for the University.

Personal visits to AUA and personal telephone calls must be kept to a strict minimum. When the employee makes a personal telephone call to a cellular phone number or outside Yerevan from one of AUA's general numbers, he/she bears responsibility for paying the cost of such calls.

All University equipment, material and facilities such as computers, printers, copiers, paper and other supplies are made available for University use alone. Unauthorized use of University resources or facilities for personal, commercial, political, religious or any other purposes are strictly prohibited.

AUA employees are expected to refrain from any activity or association that is to the detriment of or in conflict with the interest of the University. A conflict of interest may result when employees are prevented from exercising care, skill and judgment on behalf of the University, which is in the best interest of the University, when performing their assigned duties.

AUA employees have a duty of loyalty to the University. They are expected to bring to the University educational and financial opportunities, which may result or develop from the employee's outside activities or contacts, which are not in the nature of personal opportunities and which fall within the scope of activities undertaken at the University.

Subject to limitations provided in this Manual, AUA employees are not prohibited to engage in outside employment or other professional activities provided these do not interfere with the employee's performance of his or her duties at AUA. Employees are expected, however, to inform AUA of any additional employment they may hold outside their working hours at the University. Such employment must not hamper their availability at AUA, their flexibility for overtime work, compromise their loyalty to the University or create a conflict of interest with their AUA employment.

*Procurement Policies* - AUA has a centralized purchasing process coordinated by the Purchasing Office, which has primary responsibility for carrying out the procurement of goods and services or channeling purchasing requests to the appropriate procurement committee. All procurements are fulfilled in an open, competitive, fair, and transparent process that ensures equal opportunity for vendors and the best value for the University.

No officer, employee, or agent of the American University of Armenia shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract where, to that individual's knowledge, the individual or the individual's immediate family, partners or organization has a financial interest or with whom that individual is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment. AUA's officers, employees or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from actual or potential contractors or vendors.

*Acceptance of Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment* - The University prohibits employees from accepting personal gifts or gratuities from students, other employees, outside organizations, or other entities, which provide or are seeking to provide goods or services to the University.

### **3.2. Personal Integrity**

Employees may be disciplined when they violate ethical or legal standards in such a way that they seriously harm the reputation of the University or compromise the ability of another employee to function effectively in the workplace. Such violations shall include but are not limited to: conviction of a felony under Armenian law, acts of dishonesty, violence, serious breach of University regulations, threatening physical harm to another, and public scandal.

### **3.3. Confidentiality**

During the course of their employment at AUA, employees may have access to and acquire knowledge regarding students, clients, donors, firms, data systems, and other information with respect to AUA or other employees at AUA, which may not be accessible or known to the general public. Any such knowledge acquired by an AUA employee within the scope of his or her employment at AUA shall be kept strictly confidential and may not be published or divulged without first having obtained the written permission of AUA. Failure to maintain the confidentiality of such information could result in legal actions or disciplinary actions leading to dismissal.

### **3.4. Personal Appearance**

Discretion on the part of employees in the style of dress and personal appearance is essential to the image of the University. Employees are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to their work environment and to the type of work performed. Specifically, employees working in offices are expected to dress in professional business attire. Some departments may have a specific dress policy or dress code appropriate to the nature of the work done within that department. Employees should consult with their supervisor regarding any dress code requirement specific to their department.

### **4.0. Safety at Workplace**

The University strives to create a safe working environment in order to eliminate or reduce conditions, which may result in personal injury and property loss to staff, faculty, students, and visitors.

AUA employees will be responsible for all material and equipment used during the course of their work. Thus, employees are expected to use care and precaution to avoid any misuse or abuse of equipment. At all times, employees should call on the computer department for the malfunction of computers or printers and call on the appropriate department at the University or the administration when other material or equipment need repair. At all times, employees must be mindful not to expose any equipment or premises to safety hazards.

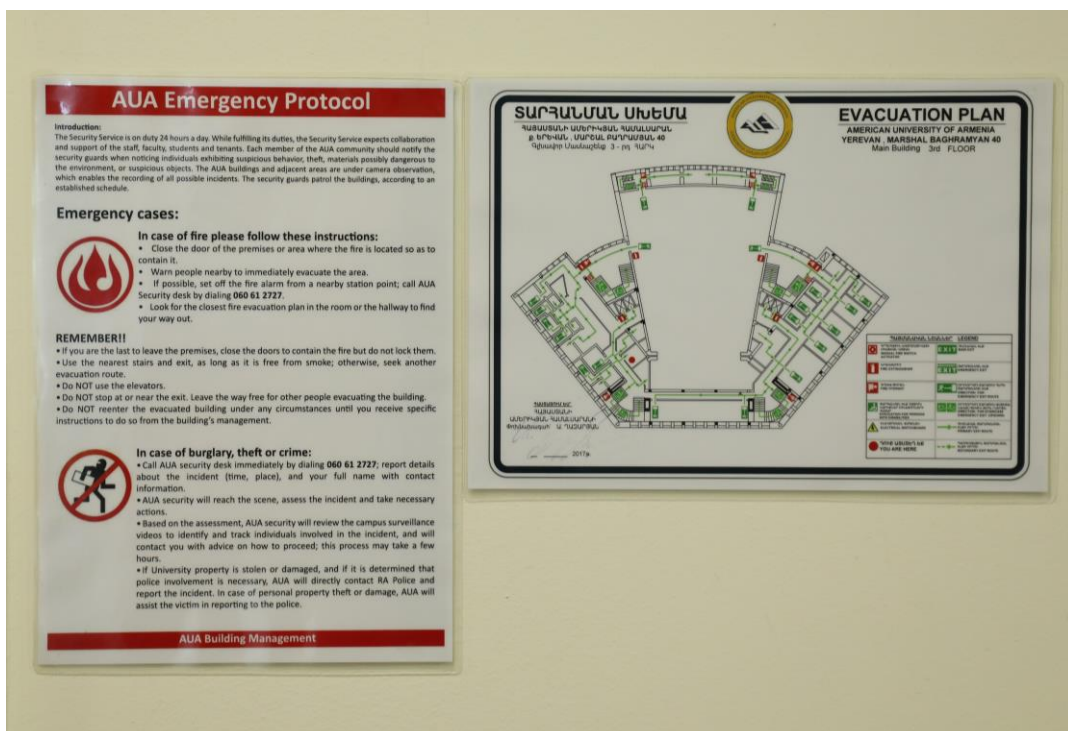
Employees are expected to exercise care and precaution not to expose themselves to safety hazards while performing their duties at AUA. Employees must seek assistance when the performance of any task can potentially expose them to risk hazards.



### AUA Follows Energy Efficient and Green Strategies in Building Operation

The Central building management system (BMS) allows to provide maximal thermal comfort in classrooms and offices.

The Building Evacuation Signs are on the walls of hallways and offices, as showed in the picture below:





## **5.0. Holidays**

AUA observes all Armenian national holidays and some American holidays. The University is closed on the following days:

• New Year*	January 1 & 2
• New Year's Holidays	January 3, 4, & 5
• Armenian Christmas*	January 6
• Army Day*	January 28
• Women's Day*	March 8
• Monday following the Easter	Dates vary annually
• Genocide Memorial Day*	April 24
• Labor Day*	May 1
• Victory and Peace Day*	May 9
• First Republic Day*	May 28
• American Independence Day	July 4
• RA Constitution Day*	July 5
• Armenian Independence Day*	September 21
• Thanksgiving Holidays	Fourth Thursday and Friday in November
• Christmas Day	December 25
• New Year's Eve*	December 31

The work day will be one hour shorter on the eve of RA holidays/Commemoration Day -- these days are asterisked above.

## **6.0. Job Classification and Compensation Policies**

### **6.1. Salary Ranges**

A monthly salary range is set by the AUA administration for each classification in accordance with fiscal budgetary limitations and on the basis of internal and external equity. Within each level of job classification, the administration shall set the minimum and maximum compensation amounts, as well as the natural midpoint. The employee's specific compensation amount within the given salary range will be determined on the basis of salary history, job performance, and any classification requirements specific to the position. Salary ranges are intended to provide flexibility to reward employees in accordance with their performance and provide them with certain financial advancement incentives.

### **6.2. Compensation Method**

With the exception of certain departments, as may be applicable by special policy, all University administrative staff employees shall be compensated on a fixed salary basis. Part-time employees will be compensated in proportion to actual hours worked.

Gross compensation is the total amount of compensation including the employee's income taxes, social security contributions and net pay after taxes. The University shall withhold and contribute income tax and social security payments from employee salaries as required by the Armenian legislation.

Salaries are paid in Armenian Drams, once a month during the first week of the month, for the work performed during the previous month. Salary can be transferred to an employee's bank account upon his/her request.

## **7.0. Vacation and Leaves**

### **7.1. General Policy**

The AUA recognizes the importance of vacations and strongly encourages all Employees to take an annual vacation.

The vacation length and payment policy are regulated by the RA Labor Code (minimal vacation of 20 working days).

Vacations can be taken in whole or in part. One part should not be less than 10 working days. Employees are also encouraged to take their full vacation during those months when the AUAF is in recess. Employees are encouraged to take their vacations initially accommodating the department's work schedule.

*Personal Paid Leave Days* – AUA provides four personal paid leave days per year that are in addition to the minimal annual paid vacation as prescribed by law.

*Military Leave* - Employees shall be excused from work and granted military leave when they enter active service in the armed forces of Armenia. Employees shall receive two weeks' pay upon leaving employment. The employee will be reinstated in his previous or equivalent position at AUA.

*Voting Leave* - If an employee is unable to vote outside of regularly scheduled work hours, he or she will be entitled to take up to two hours off from a regular work day to vote. Such time should be scheduled when least disruptive to the department's work. The employee must inform his or her immediate supervisor about this absence as soon as possible but no later than the morning of the voting day.

*Bereavement leave* - Employees may be excused from work for up to seven calendar days, without interruption in pay, in cases of death in the employee's immediate family. For purposes of this item, an immediate family member includes the employee's spouse, children, parents, siblings, parents' siblings, nieces, nephews, grandparents, grandchildren, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, and first cousins.

### **7.1. Business Trip**

The business trips are processed in accordance with procedures available online (<https://policies.aua.am/policy/172>).

## **8.0 Benefits and Special Services**

### **8.1. General Policy**

Subject to additional limitations listed in this section, AUA benefits are only applicable to regular status employees, whether they are full-time or part-time employees, provided they work a minimum of 50% time.

### **8.2. Tuition Discounts**

Tuition discounts on Open Education courses

- 100% discount on the course fee for Open Education courses, limited to one course per year per full-time employee having worked at AUA for at least 6 months if the course is job-related, and 50% discount on the course fee if it is not job-related.
- If the course is offered during normal work hours, employees must receive permission from their supervisor.

If the Open Education course takes place during the employee's working hours, those hours are considered working hours.

### **8.3. Tuition Remission Policy**

*Eligibility:* The following members of the AUA community are eligible for tuition remission, provided all terms and conditions are met:

- a. Full-time employees who have worked at AUA for a minimum of five consecutive years.
- b. Spouses of full-time employees who have worked at AUA for a minimum of five consecutive years.
- c. Dependent children under the age of 23 of full-time employees who have worked for AUA for a minimum of five consecutive years.

### *Range of Remission*

- a. Those eligible can apply for the tuition remission benefit for any bachelor degree, master degree, or graduate certificate.
- b. Full-time employees can use this benefit for more than one eligible family member.
- c. Applications for tuition remission for a second degree will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- d. Those eligible under this benefit must separately apply for, be admitted, and meet all admissions standards. This policy neither improves nor degrades one's chances of admission.

### *Cost*

- a. Eligible members benefiting from Tuition Remission pay tuition fees priced at 25% of the full tuition costs.
- b. Eligible members pay any additional costs or fees for admission, registration, materials, textbooks, software, laboratory, or other charges.
- c. Eligible members pay 50% total fees for up to 4 (four) preparatory courses offered through AUA Open Education.

### *Terms and Conditions*

- a. If courses are offered during normal work hours, employees must receive permission from their supervisor.
- b. Tuition remission is available only as long as employees remain working full-time at AUA. Employees enrolled in an academic program that takes place during working hours will be required to move to part time working status. Those employees who move to part-time status because of the Working Hours of Employees Enrolled in an AUA Academic Program policy requirement can still benefit from the tuition remission policy.
- c. All entrance examinations, tests, and other required elements of admission are the responsibility of the applicants.
- d. The number of those eligible for this benefit each academic year may be limited due to space, financial or other restrictions, but will not be limited to less than two (2) for each program.
- e. These terms are subject to change with appropriate notification to all parties involved.

## **8.4. Opportunity to Audit Graduate Courses**

- Graduate course auditing with 100% discount on fees with the aim to improve the employee's performance. The benefit will be limited to one course per year per full-time employee having worked at the AUA for at least one year.
- The course instructor must approve the request.
- If the course is offered during normal work hours, employees must receive permission from their supervisor.
- If the course is offered during the employee's working hours, those hours will be considered working hours.

## **8.5. Additional Holidays**

In addition to the official RA holidays, there are 5 additional paid holidays per year: Easter Memorial Day (the Monday following Easter Sunday), U.S. Independence Day (July 4), Thanksgiving (2 days: the fourth Thursday in November and the following Friday) and Christmas Day (December 25).

## **8.6. Health Insurance Coverage**

The full package covers all in-patient and out-patient care, including eye and dental care with some limitations as indicated by the health insurance provider. All AUA employees having one-year or longer employment contracts are eligible to receive health insurance. Travel insurance (included in the contractual agreement for health insurance).

## **8.7. Other Benefits**

Bereavement allowance: Employees receive a bereavement allowance of 30,000 AMD in the case of death or serious illness of an immediate family member. For purposes of this item, an immediate family includes the employee's spouse, children, parents, and siblings.

## **8.8. Electronic Mail Communications**

AUA employees may have access to an electronic mail account.

## **8.9. Campus Tour**

All AUA new employees are provided with a campus tour by the HR department staff members in order to get acquainted with the facilities and services at the University during their first week of work at AUA.

## **8.10. Medical Clinic Services**

AUA employees are entitled to consult the AUA Nurse (060 61 25 95) for any personal health matters during regular business hours.

## **9.0. Security and Safety on AUA Premises**

### **9.1. General Policy**

The Security Service is on duty 24 hours a day. While fulfilling its duties, the Security Service expects collaboration and support from the staff, faculty, students, and tenants. Each member of the AUA community should notify the security guards when noticing individuals exhibiting suspicious behavior, theft, materials possibly dangerous to the environment, or suspicious objects. The AUA buildings and adjacent areas are under camera observation, which enables the recording of all possible incidents. The security guards patrol the buildings, according to an established schedule.

Employees must lock their doors after leaving their offices.

Employees assume personal responsibility and liability to compensate AUA in the event of any loss or damage to AUA or to someone's personal property, belongings, or equipment due to negligence in abiding by the aforementioned rules. In case of several employees sharing the same work premises, the person found to be in violation of the aforementioned points is held personally liable.

### **9.2. Lost and Found**

The found items will be stored by the Security Service. In order to retrieve the lost items, the Security Service Manager should be contacted with a description of the item. AUA is not responsible for lost items.

If you need help with facilities, please contact:

**AUA building management - 060 61 27 72**

For emergency cases, please contact:

**AUA security desk-060 61 27 27 for the Main Building, and 060 61 27 29 for the P.A. Building**

### **9.3. Employee ID Cards**

The primary purpose of the identification card (ID) system is to provide security to the AUA community (students, alumni, staff, faculty, participants of special classes, and visitors) and to regulate entrance to the

AUA buildings. All AUA new employees are provided with staff ID cards. For this, please send your electronic photo to AUA Recruitment and Contract Coordinator.

### **9.0. Link to All AUA Policies**

You will find all AUA policies at the following link on the AUA website:

<http://policies.aua.am/>