

The American International School of Muscat



New Staff Booklet



Welcome to the TAISM staff! We are excited to have you as a part of our diverse and energetic faculty. We know that moving to a new country creates lots of questions, whether this is your first move overseas or your tenth. We look forward to meeting you or communicating with you via email in the near future. We hope that the following information will provide some answers to your basic questions. We'll see you soon!

Items TAISM will need to process your work visa:

- 1) Police clearance: This is issued by your local police station certifying that you have no criminal records. A sample of this form will be emailed to you after hiring has been completed. If you are living outside of the USA or Canada and receive this clearance letter from a local police station, you must have the letter attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then the Omani Embassy in that country. Or, if it is difficult to get a police clearance in a country outside of the USA or Canada, you can get a letter from the Regional Security Officer at the US Embassy in the country where you reside (sample will be emailed to you after hiring completion). There is no need to get this letter attested, as the school will get this done at the US Embassy, Muscat.

For Canadians living abroad, you might need to obtain a police clearance letter from the RCMP office in Ottawa. You need to take a paper from the RCMP to a local police authority for your fingerprints, then send that form to Ottawa. The clearance letter may take some time, so start early.

If you have a question concerning the procedure for obtaining a police clearance, please contact Kevin Schafer, TAISM Director, or Hemant Dutia, TAISM Business Manager.

- 2) A photocopy of your passport as well as your dependents' passports. The page(s) copied should clearly show passport number, your picture, name, permanent address or place of birth, date of issue, date of expiry, and place of issue.
- 3) Photocopy of your educational certificates including diplomas or official transcripts indicating degrees/diplomas earned. Also, please send a copy of your education credentials/certification.
- 4) Twelve photographs (size 5 cm x 3.5 cm) with a light BLUE solid background. Send 12 copies to TAISM, and you will want to get extra copies to bring for later use, as you will need some for buying a car, joining a gym, getting a visa to other countries, etc. Children also need 12 photographs.
- 5) Permanent address and mailing address if different from permanent address.
- 6) For married couples, a photocopy of your marriage certificate is required. If you were married in the USA or Canada, we will get the copy attested at the US Embassy, Muscat. If you were married outside the USA, a copy of the marriage certificate must

be attested first by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then by the Omani Embassy in the country where you were married.

- 7) Other information needed: Parents' names for you and all of your dependents
Your religion
All countries visited in the last six months
- 8) Please arrange to send us the above information and documents by March 1 or earlier. The documents should be sent by courier (Fed Ex, DHL, etc.) to the following address:
Hemant Dutia
Business Manager
The American International School of Muscat
Building B/86, Way 6305
Ghala Street
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: (968) 2459-5180

The visa process takes about two and a half months to complete. Ideally, we would like to send you copies of your visas before June 1. A copy is sent to you, and the original visa will be waiting for you with the visa officials upon arrival in the immigration area at the Muscat airport. There you will exchange the copy for the original before passing through immigration and customs.

Please keep receipts for any costs incurred in completing the process listed above and the school will reimburse you for the costs once you are in Muscat.

- ** Please note: There are certain medical conditions (e.g., communicable diseases) that may be cause for the Government of Oman to disallow a work visa. For more information on this, please contact Kevin.

Other information needed by the school prior to starting work in August:

Physical Examination

As part of the requirements for pre-employment, each new teacher is required to receive a physical examination prior to arrival in Muscat. However, because of the issues that we have encountered previously with our insurance company in covering the costs, we are clarifying how this should be done.

If you are able to have the examination ("Annual Physical Examination" form will be mailed to you after hiring completion) covered in full by your current insurance company, then we encourage you to complete the process prior to leaving your home-of-record. Otherwise, if you are not covered for a full physical (as described on our form) under your present insurance company, we ask that you wait until you are in Muscat to have the "Annual Physical Examination" completed. We have made arrangements with Muscat Private Hospital to administer a full physical examination once you settle in at the school in August, and this will be covered by our Aetna insurance.

If you will be waiting until you arrive in Muscat to have your physical exam completed, the only test that we require you have administered prior to your departure from your home-of-record is for HIV. The reason for this test being completed prior to your arrival in Oman is that a "HIV positive" result would preclude you from acquiring a resident card in Oman, thus canceling your work visa. Please note that after your arrival in Muscat, you must repeat this HIV test at the government health clinic, as it is one of two health conditions

that is monitored each time you apply for a resident card in Oman (we usually do this every two years). The other test is for TB, but there is no prescribed procedure for this test (most of the time they only ask laborers from the Indian subcontinent to have this checked).

Please check with your local health authorities on how the HIV test can be administered, have this test completed, and send the report with all other documents by March 1, including receipts for costs, by email to Hemant Dutia (DutiaH@taism.edu.om) with a copy to Kevin Schafer (SchaferK@taism.edu.om). The test results remain confidential.

If you have any questions regarding this procedure, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Dutia or Mr. Schafer.

Current Mailing Address

Please send Hemant Dutia (dutiah@taism.edu.om) your mailing address. Please indicate a street address (not Post Office box), in case we need to send a DHL or FedEx shipment.

Application Process for enrolling your children at TAISM

Please visit the school's website, www.taism.com, and look for Admissions Procedures. You will find links to all the documents we will require to begin the admissions process. Documents can be emailed, faxed or mailed. Mailing address for the school:

Admissions Coordinator/Registrar
The American International School of Muscat
P.O. Box 584
Postal Code 130
Azaiba
Sultanate of Oman

Please contact the Admissions Coordinator at jayaramn@taism.edu.om if you have any questions.

Pets

The Omani government allows pets to be brought in from other countries. A veterinarian will need to verify the health of your pet in your home country. A form will be emailed to you after hiring has been completed. Fax, or scan and email this form back to Hemant, and he will apply for your pet's visa in Oman. Once the visa is issued, animals must arrive in the country within a month, so he will apply for this visa in July or early August. You are responsible for all costs incurred, and the amount owed will be taken from your first paycheck in August.

Pet food is available here, although it is limited in selection and is more expensive than in most countries. There are vets in Oman. However, the quality of care is not quite up to the level of Western countries. If you have specific questions about pets, please let someone know and we will put you in touch with a pet owner on staff. While we understand that pets become members of your family, getting a pet into the country (especially with the extreme heat of summer) and finding adequate care for it while you are away from Muscat can be difficult. We are not advising against bringing a pet, but want you to be aware of the costs and procedures involved.

Shipping

The school gives you a cash allowance for shipping costs as mentioned in your contract, which is non-accountable. This way, you are free to choose your own method of shipping (airfreight/sea container) and you do not need to keep track of receipts. Think carefully (or email your "host") about what you want to ship, because almost everything you need is

available here. You do not need to send a shipment, and you can use your shipping allowance to purchase new items instead of sending things.

If you are looking for a recommendation from the school, our new teachers have used the following two companies which have been competitive in terms of rates and service. Once you contact them, they will quote you and if you approve the quote, they will put you in touch with their agent in USA. This is a recommendation only, and you are free to use any other company if rates quoted are competitive for you.

- (1) Blue Eagle Shipping Agency
P. O. Box 19, Muttrah
Postal Code 114
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: (968) 9244-3146 / (968) 2476-5679
Fax: (968) 2470-2959
Contact person: Mr. Saurabh Pare
Email: saurabh@khimjiramdasllc.com
Please copy your mail to:
Mr. Ram Kumar, Email: ramkumar@khimjiramdas.com

- (2) Inchcape Shipping Services
Packing and Removals
P.O. Box 36, Ruwi
Postal Code 112
Sultanate of Oman
Tel : (968) 2456-7010 / (968) 2456-7050
Fax: (968) 2456-7101
Contact person: Mr. Manoj Kumar
E-mail: manoj.kumar@iss-shipping.com
Website: www.iss-shipping.com

If you are sending your consignment to arrive in Muscat before your arrival, please send it in the name of:

Kevin Schafer, Director
The American International School of Muscat
P.O. Box 584, Azaiba
Postal Code 130
Sultanate of Oman
Tel: (968) 2459-5180

Your mailing address will be the same as above, obviously substituting your name for Kevin's. Even if you live off-campus, your mail and shipments will be sent to the school.

When completing your documents with your shipping company, please indicate the following agent for clearing the shipment in Muscat (customs, receipt of shipment at the port). It is best to make certain that the cost you agree upon with your shipping company includes customs clearance and to-door service in Muscat, and that it **states this clearly on the document you receive**. Please use one of the following as your clearing agent:

- (1) Inchcape Shipping Services
Packing and Removals
P.O. Box 36, Ruwi
Postal Code 112
Sultanate of Oman

Tel : (968) 2456-7010 / (968) 2456-7050
Fax: (968) 2456-7101
Contact person: Mr. Manoj Kumar
E-mail: manoj.kumar@iss-shipping.com
Website: www.iss-shipping.com

- (2) Eagle Global Logistics
P.O. Box 77, Central Post Office
Postal Code 111
Sultanate of Oman
Tel: (968) 2449-5417 Fax: (968) 2449-5380
Contact email: sales.muscat@eaglegl.com
Website: www.eaglegl.com

If you have a choice, please ask for Company (1).

Any shipment may be opened for customs. So if you have trunks with locks, please make sure to send the keys to the school ahead of time. Most books, CDs and videos will be held for review by the customs authorities, so consider packing these items separately to avoid delays in your entire shipment. Basically regarding books, CDs and videos, the authorities are “censors” and are looking for illegal things such as sexually explicit material (swimsuit calendars included!).

If you aren't sending a large shipment, send items via Federal Express or DHL. Items should arrive within a week.

If you are shipping essential professional items that you will need to run your classroom, please first check with your Principal to see if these items can be acquired in Muscat. If not, any additional shipment would need to be approved by the Director.

Another option is to pay for excess baggage and bring important items that you will need right away with you on the plane. When bringing luggage with you to Muscat, you may be charged for excess baggage (per kilo) if you change airlines at some point in your trip. Check before you leave as to how much weight/volume each airline you are flying with (KLM, BA, Oman Air, Gulf Air, etc.) allows for each part of your journey. You could also send bags as unaccompanied freight. Check with your local airport, as costs and regulations vary by country and airline.

*Special Note: If you are planning on taking a layover in Europe on your way to Oman, please note that when you continue your journey from Europe to Oman, the European baggage restrictions are in effect. These allow much less weight than when traveling directly from the US or Canada to Oman. For most airlines (and please check to be sure), you are allowed two pieces of luggage per passenger, weighing no more than 50 pounds each when traveling to or from North America. When traveling from anywhere else in the world, you are only allowed a total of 50 pounds per person, total, for ALL of your checked luggage. For this reason, make sure your bags are checked all the way through to Muscat (MCT) when you check-in in North America. If they have to retag your luggage in Europe, you will also get charged. **Please ensure that you follow the latest baggage rules as noted on the website of the airline you are traveling on.***

We will arrange one-way economy class plane tickets from your home of record to Muscat so that you will arrive after August 1, but still have enough time to take care of necessary procedures before New Staff In-service. After your first year of service, the school will purchase round trip tickets to your home of record.

Checklist of things to send to our Business Office **BEFORE MARCH 1:**

- Police clearance
- Photocopies of passports for all family members
- Photocopies of educational certificates
- Twelve 5cm x 3.5cm photographs with BLUE background
- Permanent address
- Photocopy of marriage certificate
- Parents' names for you and all dependents, religion, countries visited in past 6 months
- Your preferred travel dates and departure city
- Physical examination form or HIV results (as clarified on page 2 under "Physical Examination")

Checklist of things to send **AFTER JULY 1:**

- Veterinarian's authorization of pet's health, if applicable

Please note: The information contained in the remainder of this document is for informational purposes only, to help your transition to Muscat and TAISM be as smooth as possible. If you have any further questions about anything contained in this document, please do not hesitate to contact us.

When you arrive in Oman...

At the Muscat International airport, you exit the plane down steps, then take a shuttle bus to the terminal. Even if you arrive late at night, it will be very warm (dressing in layers is always good with cool airplanes and airports, then hot outdoors and shuttle buses).

After exiting the bus and entering the terminal, go straight ahead to the counter marked "Visas". They should have your visa on file, and they will give it to you in exchange for the copy sent to you by the school. If for some reason, the school was not able to get your visa, Hemant Dutia will inform you. In this case you will need to go to the counter for purchasing a tourist visa. To pay for the short-term tourist visa, you will need to exchange some money at the bank counter in the same hall -- save your receipt because TAISM will reimburse you. The school will sort things out later and get you your proper work visa in the next few days.

After going through immigration and customs, you will enter the waiting area, where Kevin or someone from TAISM will be waiting for you. This can be a loud and chaotic room so just find an out-of-the-way spot to wait and we will find you. If you want to take a second to stop and change money, you can, but you won't need any that night, and someone can take you to an ATM or bank the next day. You should be able to find an ATM that will debit your checking account in the States (Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, etc.). If you bring cash or travelers checks, someone can take you to a bank to change them.

Speaking of banks, they are only open in the mornings, usually from 8-2, Sunday through Thursday. Hemant Dutia can help you get your account set up, after you get settled. If you're bringing money from the States (or elsewhere), bring cash or travelers checks as a check from a foreign bank will not be accepted. Otherwise, use a debit card to withdraw Omani Rials from an ATM in Oman. You can withdraw up to RO 500 = US\$ 1300 per day from an ATM. The Omani Rial is tied to the American dollar, so the exchange rate is always 1 Rial = US\$2.60. Payday is the last Wednesday of each month, and you will receive your first paycheck at the end of August.

After you arrive in your new home, the first thing you'll probably want to do is freshen up with a hot shower. All the homes in Oman have water tanks on the roof. So in the summer, when it's nice and hot, we can turn off our hot water heaters and let the sun do the work. But this makes for an interesting phenomenon, because the taps actually get reversed. The "cold water" tap is the water coming directly from the tank which is, in fact, hot. And the "hot water" tap is the water that has been sitting in the hot water heater (which has been turned off) and is actually cool. So until it cools off, you actually don't want to turn on your water heater, because then all you will have is hot water, and especially during the afternoon - VERY hot water.

To call back to the States or Canada from your house, you dial 001 and then the number (obviously with the area code, etc.). It is best to call overseas from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m., Saturday through Thursday or all day on Friday, as calls are half price then. If you are living on campus, your phone should be set up and ready to go when you arrive. For off-campus people, it will be insh'allah (Arabic for "if God wills it" - a common phrase in Oman). For

people in the States to call here, they need to dial 011-968-your number. (The school's number would be 011-968-2459-5180.) Phone numbers here are 8 digits for landlines, and GSM numbers (cell phones) are 8 digits starting with a 9. The school provides all homes with land lines, but GSMs are to be purchased at your own expense, if you desire one.

Welcome Kits:

Our New Staff Coordinator has put together Welcome Kits that will provide you with basic items until your shipment arrives or until you can purchase them. They should be returned to the New Staff Coordinator by October 15. Welcome Kits include:

- Sheets, pillows and comforters for each bed in your housing unit
- Pot and frying pan
- 20 piece set of dishes and silverware for four
- Small juice cups
- Basic kitchen utensils and dish towels
- Bath and hand towels
- Shower curtain and rod

They will also provide basic food supplies to use until you can get to a grocery store.

Once you get here...

There are several things you will need to do after arriving in Oman. Our Public Relations Officer (P.R.O.) and our New Staff Orientation Coordinator will assist you in steps 1-4.

1. HIV blood test - You will need to go to a clinic (someone will take you) to get a blood sample taken. This is in addition to the HIV test you have already taken for your physical and is required by the Omani government yearly.
2. Resident Card - This certifies that you have a sponsor (TAISM) that will provide your income while in Oman. Our P.R.O. will do this, but it's something that needs to be taken care of right away.

Once we've determined when everyone will arrive, the New Staff Orientation Coordinator will send you a schedule of when you will complete all of these items. Every attempt will be made to finish these before inservice days begin. We will provide day care for those families that have not hired a nanny.

In addition to the above official obligations, you will want to complete as many of the tasks shown below as soon as possible.

3. Driver's license - In order to own a car in Oman, you must have a valid Omani driver's license. For most Western country citizens, no test is involved in obtaining this license if you can show a current license from your home country. **If you have renewed your license within the last year, bring an expired license or a copy of the license that proves you have driving experience.** You will go down to the licensing center, or someone will take you. Cost – RO 20. Alternatively, you can purchase an International Drivers License at AAA in the U.S. for a nominal fee. This license can be used in Oman in lieu of the Omani driver's license.
4. Liquor license - To buy liquor in Oman, you need a license. You will need a letter from TAISM, stating your monthly salary, because you are only allowed a license of up to 10%

of your salary per month (you can get less). Cost - 60% of the amount of your monthly allotment and two passport pictures.

5. Buy/rent a vehicle - The most common method of obtaining transportation is to rent a car for the first month in Oman, and then look for one to buy. The school will provide a suitably sized rental car, free of charge, for the first two weeks. Continuing to rent for a month costs around RO 170, or about US\$ 450. While renting, you may use your valid US or Canadian driver's license. There are plenty of used vehicles for sale by the owners. Most often they are advertised on various bulletin boards at grocery stores and in malls, but it takes time and effort to find them. Cars and four-wheel-drive vehicles are generally cheaper than in the US, and you can get a loan through a bank or through the dealership (if you buy new) to help finance it.
6. Hire a nanny or maid (household help) – Most of these workers are expatriates from India, Philippines, or Sri Lanka. Salaries for full-time help range from RO 120-160 per month. There is housing for maids of staff living on campus. Off-campus staff will need to provide housing for their household help. You will need to pay for their visa and medical and life insurance, approximately RO 260 annually. The school's P.R.O. will assist with the paperwork. Part-time maids earn between RO 40-50 per month (or 1.5 rials per hour), and you will not be responsible for their visa. We don't recommend that you hire a nanny "over the internet" as it's very important to feel a rapport with the person taking care of your children. It may be possible to obtain a recommendation from teachers who are moving away from TAISM whose housemaids/nannies are looking for a new family to work for.
7. Enroll your children at TAISM - You will need school records for the previous 2 years, health and immunization records, 1 passport photo, copy of passport and birth certificate and a physical. You can have the physical completed in Oman or in your home country. Please contact Nimmi Jayaram, our school admissions coordinator, at jayaramn@taism.edu.om to obtain the proper forms or find them online at www.taism.com.

Settling In

Housing

There are staff housing units on the TAISM campus, but as our staff grows, the school also rents accommodations away from the school (within 10-15 minutes). The on-campus staff housing is described here, with off-campus comparable.

There are two types of housing – single and family. Single apartments are one-bedroom, with a large living and dining area, full kitchen (electric stove, refrigerator, microwave, clothes washing machine provided) and one bathroom. Family houses have three bedrooms, three bathrooms (two upstairs and one down), kitchen similar to single units with an open living and dining area. Family units also have a small private garden in back. All housing has ADSL internet service.

TAISM has security guards around the clock. Oman is a very safe country, and the safety of students and staff is extremely important. We also have regular patrols by the US Embassy security, as well as the Royal Oman Police coming by, to ensure the safety of everyone at our school.

The school provides most hard furnishings needed for you/your family. If you wish to purchase additional furniture, it is readily available in nearby stores.

The voltage in Oman is 220 volts, so many appliances from Canada and the US will not be able to handle the higher voltage. If you plan to bring your computer, please check to make sure that it can handle 220 volts. Some items you may want to purchase in Oman are: a clothes dryer (although clothes dry very quickly when hung outside), a water cooler (tap water doesn't taste good to drink; most people have water service), TV, DVD Player, computer, stereo, etc. You can usually purchase any of these items second-hand by checking the bulletin boards around Muscat, or buy them new at prices comparable to North America and Europe.

Grocery shopping and personal items

Muscat has almost everything you would enjoy at home, although brand names may be different. You may find grocery shopping a little more expensive than in the US or Canada, especially if you continue to buy American products (Kraft Mac and Cheese is more expensive here, but worth it!). Some things are hard to find, like chocolate chips, and other things just aren't the same, such as marshmallows or cottage cheese. But for the most part, it's very easy to find what you need. The same goes for personal items, like shampoo, deodorant, and toothpaste. We do have a Carrefour (which is similar to a Super-Walmart) that has almost everything. But again, you may not be able to find the exact brand you always use. Email your host person if you have a specific need for a particular brand.

Note: You also will want to bring a supply of any prescription drugs, as some brands may not be available here. Email someone here if you would like to be sure of availability.

Household goods

You can buy most of the things you'll need for your home, with a few exceptions. Good quality bed sheets are difficult to find, so you might want to bring those along. Most mattresses are quite thick and not exactly a "queen" size, so the best is to bring a king-size flat sheet for the bottom to tuck in, and a queen-size flat sheet for on top. Some spices that you may want that are not always available include onion flakes (minced onion), garlic salt (although we have garlic powder), lemon pepper or garlic pepper. Ask your host person for any other suggestions of things you'll want to bring along.

School / Teaching Supplies

There is not a teacher supply store here (e.g., bulletin board cut-outs, stencils, posters, supplemental activities, etc.). Many of our teachers have found it very important to include their essential classroom supplies in their shipments. However, items such as staplers, paper, tape, pens, etc. are furnished by the school or readily available in the stores. The only exception may be 3-hole binders, paper, and 3-hole punches. Two-hole binders and paper are available everywhere. Books are expensive in Oman.

The school provides the essential teaching supplies through an order to the U.S. and U.K. each spring. If you have a question concerning supplies, please contact the Principal.

The school provides reimbursement of up to RO 40 (US\$ 100) for purchase of supplies you may want in addition to those supplied by the school. Please save your receipts for reimbursement.

Dress at school

Most staff dress in professional western clothing, observing local custom by not wearing sleeveless shirts (should be at least to the shoulder) or skirts above the knee (although you may notice some outside at nightclubs, etc.). Jeans are not permissible for normal school days. Men wear slacks and shirts (short or long-sleeve), and a few teachers wear ties. Pants and capris are acceptable for women. Shoes are required. There will be times and places when shorts are appropriate for both men and women outside of school. Swimming suits can be worn in most areas that westerners frequent.

Weather will be very hot when you arrive in August. Light, natural fabrics (like cotton) are generally coolest. Everything is air conditioned, so you might want to bring some cardigans to throw on indoors. In the winter, temperatures get into the 60s (16°C). You will want sweatshirts and jeans for casual evenings, and maybe even a few sweaters or a light jacket. These also come in handy when travelling to the desert in the evening. There are several events such as the TAISM Winter Ball and the Marine Corps Ball where dressy clothes and even formals can be worn.

Time

Muscat is four hours ahead of Greenwich Standard Time. This is 9 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time or 8 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time. Oman does not observe Daylight Savings Time.

Hairstylist

Muscat has several Western-style full service salons, with prices comparable to the US.

Hospitals, Doctors, and Dentists

There are a number of private hospitals utilized by expatriates in Oman. Muscat Private Hospital is the hospital most commonly used by our staff. Expatriate doctors from Western countries, the Middle East and the Subcontinent staff this hospital. Muscat Private Hospital is only 10 minutes from the school campus. All emergency services are provided either at the private hospital or at the Omani government hospitals (which are quite good as well). Oman is rated in the top 10 worldwide for healthcare services. The school's insurance plan covers treatment at all of the hospitals in Oman and abroad. In-patient services at Muscat Private Hospital are billed directly to our insurance company, Aetna. Please note that there is limited ambulance service in Oman.

You can get any immunization you may need (to travel to other countries such as Kenya or Tanzania) in Oman, but the clinic is only open during school hours. If you know you will need inoculations, it may be easier to get them at home.

Dentists are available in Muscat at reasonable prices. Dentists receive training outside of Oman, mostly in Western countries.

Newspapers

There are three daily English language papers published in Oman, as well as newspapers from the United Arab Emirates, the UK and the US. The UK and US papers arrive 3 or 4 days later than their publication dates.

Guidebooks

Oman has guidebooks for most of the popular tourist destinations (India, Kenya, Thailand) but if you're planning on visiting a place "off the beaten path", you should bring books from home.

Things to do in Oman

Camping - There are great beaches, amazing desert spots, and majestic mountain areas that are perfect for camping. You will want to bring any camping equipment that you presently own, plus something to put up for a shaded area. Camping equipment can be found in Oman, but it's often expensive and poorly made. In the winter you will want warm clothes for the evenings, and sleeping bags or warm bedding is a necessity.

Hiking - Oman has hundreds of beautiful places to explore on foot. Hiking in wadis will require lightweight, fast drying pants (or the kind that zip off into shorts) and water shoes (Teevas, Nike, or Champion-type sandals). There are some areas where you can hike in shorts, but you should also have light pants or a wrap-around skirt to cover up when necessary.

Scuba / Snorkelling - If you have equipment, bring it! Otherwise, equipment is readily available and scuba classes are offered all the time. You can also find good used equipment from people leaving Oman.

Organized Activities - There are lots of sports leagues in the capital area. However, the equipment for these activities is usually difficult (if not impossible) to find, and it's usually expensive and poor quality. Ice skates and hockey equipment are not available at all.

Activities for children include soccer, t-ball, softball, street hockey (with roller blades), ice hockey, ice skating, tennis, karate, dance and instrumental music lessons. Adult activities include ice hockey, softball, tennis, basketball, volleyball, soccer, squash, ultimate Frisbee, and choir.

Shopping - The souq in old Muscat has traditional silver and handicraft items as well as spices, fabrics, etc. There are many merchants that are willing to barter, while others have "fixed prices". Shopping is very plentiful in the Muscat area. From modern malls to traditional souqs, you can find just about anything you want. A recent expansion of the City Centre Mall includes the stores Gap, Zara, Forever 21, Home Centre, Banana Republic, and Borders bookstore.

Dining out - Muscat has plenty of options when choosing a restaurant. The many nationalities living in the capital area provide a wide range of ethnic foods. We have Chinese, Indian, Mexican, Thai, and American (McDonald's, Subway, KFC, Starbucks, Chili's and Pizza Hut) restaurants as well as the traditional shawarma stands, a Middle Eastern specialty.

Gyms / Health Clubs - Most of the area hotels have gyms that you can join. This is a great alternative when the weather is too warm to work out outside.

Movies - Muscat offers several theaters showing recent popular movies (sometimes showing at the same time as in the States, but usually 1-2 months after US openings). Video and DVD rentals are also available.

Staff celebrations - TAISM faculty values a strong sense of community. There are many opportunities for staff to get together on the weekends and during the week. Social committees plan activities that allow staff to get to know each other, as well as our spouses and families.

Book club - TAISM staff members have formed a book club that meets once a month in members' homes. We read popular new releases, as well as highly recommended regional works.

Places of Worship - There are Roman Catholic and Protestant churches near the school and other worship opportunities in the community.

Other cultural events include community theater productions, orchestra and ensemble concerts, and craft bazaars.

Questions?

If there are questions that are not answered in this booklet, here are the people you can contact:

<u>Questions about</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Email</u>
Visas	Hemant	dutiah@taism.edu.om
Shipping	Hemant	
Banking/Finances	Hemant	
Housing/Furnishings	Martijn	boersmam@taism.edu.om
Travel Arrangements	Hemant	
Contract	Kevin	schaferk@taism.edu.om
Calendar	Kevin	
Teaching Assignment	Building Principal	filen@taism.edu.om (High School) bonifacek@taism.edu.om (Middle School) hovlandd@taism.edu.om (Elementary)
Curriculum Details	Building Principal	
Admissions	Nimmi Jayaram	jayaramn@taism.edu.om
Any other information (or if you're not sure who to ask)	Julie Al Alawi Administrative Assistant to the Director	juliea@taism.edu.om

Note: Attachments A, B, C and the physical examination form will be emailed after hiring has been completed.

Revised January 2010