The American Baccalaureate School

Frequently Asked Questions for Overseas Hires

How long has the school been open?

The American Baccalaureate School was opened in September of 2006.

Is there an age limit for applicants?

Yes. Applicants over the age of 59 are considered on a case by case basis.

What is the average length of a teaching contract?

The standard contract length is two years. Applicants who wish to sign for only one year will be responsible for payment of all residency fees (Residency fees = Kuwait work visa fees) regardless of whether or not they sign up for a subsequent year of teaching.

What are the benefits for overseas hires?

- Tax-free competitive salary based on qualifications and experience.
- Economy air fare from point to point origin – Reimbursed.
- Paid summer leave for approximately 65 consecutive days.
- Excursion air fare to and from point of origin for summer leave.
- Housing Options: KD 250 per month housing allowance for faculty, up to KD 400 for administrators, or furnished housing*
- Paid utilities (except telephone) when in ABS housing.
- Transportation to and from the school for 6 weeks from first official day of work for new overseas employees – usually starting at the end of August. Employees who arrive late will receive 2 weeks of transport. This applies only applies to staff who reside in ABS housing.

  Assistance with finding permanent personal transport will be provided.
- Baggage and shipping allowance of $200 US (with receipts).

The American Baccalaureate School

- Group Life, Personal Accident and Workmen's compensation insurance.
- Paid private health insurance.
- Assistance with processing work visa, residency, and driving license.
- Kuwaiti visa expense (for 2+ year contracts only) reimbursable in the January of your second academic year.
- Opportunities for after school tutoring to earn extra wages.
- Professional development workshops.
- Up to 2 days leave for attending a recruiting fair for non-returning faculty (with prior approval of the administration).
- 2 personal days annually (must be pre-approved).
- Tuition discount for up to 2 dependent children.
- Sick leave provision:

    6 days - full pay
    6 days - 75% of full pay
    6 days - 50% of full pay
    6 days - 25% of full pay

- End of service award as per Kuwait's Labor Law to be disbursed in June with summer salary

Monthly Salary _____X _____ =

(0.5 month's salary year 1-5)

(1.0 month's salary years 6+)

In which currency will I receive my salary?

Salaries are paid in Kuwaiti Dinars. For currency conversion, see www.oanda.com/convert/classic in order to see the Kuwaiti Dinar equivalent of your U.S. Dollar salary.

The American Baccalaureate School

What is the approximate cost of a work visa/residency fee?

The work visa/residency fee is approximately KD 280 for the 1st year and 75 KD every year afterwards. ABS do not pay for direct or indirect degree translation, authentication fees and residency. These fees will be reimbursed in the January of your second academic year only for employees who sign a 2-year contract; they will not be reimbursed if the employee's service is terminated.

What type of private health insurance is provided?

We use Warba Insurance Plan.

Would I have my own apartment?

Yes. All Apartments are 1-bedroom and assigned to an individual teacher, or couple.

ABS Administrator (Principal) accommodations are 2-bedroom apartments subject to availability at the time of hire/arrival in Kuwait. ABS can give consideration to prospective administrators with a maximum of two dependent school-age children.

ABS housing is handed over to you on arrival cleaned and ready for you to move in to, this same standard is expected on checkout, particular areas are listed below:

- Kitchen and bathroom thoroughly cleaned and odor free.
- Floors swept and mopped thoroughly.
- All bedding and towels laundered and folded neatly.
- All dishes and utensils must be cleaned and put away neatly in the cabinets.
- The interior and exterior of the washer and dryer must cleaned.
- The stove and microwave are to be clean and free from food residue and grease.
- The refrigerator is to be clean inside and out and be odor free.
- All bins are to be emptied and refuge removed from the apartment.

An Apartment Cleaning Fee of KD 60 for teachers and KD 150 for administrators will be deducted from salary if your apartment does not meet the appropriate standard on check-out.

What is the distance between the teacher housing and the school?

On average, it takes between 15-20 minutes by car. It is not possible to walk or bike to school.

The American Baccalaureate School

What credentials are required to be employed at ABS?

The teaching requirements for the American Baccalaureate School are a Bachelor's degree and valid teaching certification.

What are the nationalities of the students?

As with most American Schools in Kuwait, the majority of the student body is comprised of Kuwaiti nationals whose parents desire an American education for their children.

What is the Student/Teacher Ratio?

The maximum number of students in a classroom is 25. Furthermore, pre-K to second grade teachers have a teacher's assistant.

How many classrooms are on the campus?

We have over 100 classrooms for grades preK-12.

What kind of facilities does ABS have?

- One teacher computer per classroom
- Interactive White Boards in most classrooms
- Software for grading, attendance, progress reports, and class WebPages
- Semi-Olympic size swimming pool
- Kindergarten wading pool
- 4 Computer labs
- Library
- Separate girls' and boys' campuses for grades 6-12

What are the school's expectations regarding technology usage in the classroom?

All staff and teachers are required to undergo training on both PowerSchool and Rubicon Atlas software which is used by ABS to manage grades, take attendance, lesson plan, and communicate with parents/students. Ongoing training throughout the academic year may be required for some staff members.

The American Baccalaureate School

Teachers must be committed to becoming proficient in the daily use of Promethean ActivBoards and all other required software. Moreover, we have an in-house IT team that offers ongoing support and training to all staff members.

What are the working hours?

The work week is from Sunday to Thursday, and working hours are from 7:10 a.m. to 3:30 pm Sunday to Wednesday and 3:00 pm on a Thursday. The weekend is Friday and Saturday.

What are the school holidays?

The American Baccalaureate School Academic Calendar can be located on our website within the school calendar link. ABS recognize most American holidays and all Kuwaiti and Islamic holidays.

How many periods will I teach per week?

Elementary - There are eight 40-minute periods per day of which faculty are expected to teach six. On average you will teach 30 periods in a week. Teachers who are required to teach more than 30 periods per week will receive an overload stipend.

MS/HS - There are seven 46-minute periods per day of which faculty are expected to teach five. On average you will teach 25 periods in a week. Teachers who are required to teach more than 25 periods per week will receive an overload stipend.

Can I bring a dependent with me to Kuwait, or transfer their residency onto my ABS residency?

We do not recommend bringing any dependents with you to Kuwait until after you have obtained residency. ABS is not responsible for obtaining residency for any dependent family members. We will not be held responsible for any late fees, fines, or other expenses related to delays in obtaining residency for the ABS employee. All such fees must be borne by the employee. ABS do not provide any assistance to employees in obtaining residency for dependents. We can only provide information on procedures and paperwork requirements.

Can I apply to ABS if I have dependent children?

ABS do not typically offer employment to teachers with children. This is primarily because our teacher accommodations are 1-bedroom apartments. They are not built for accommodating the needs of families with children.

The American Baccalaureate School

What are the postal facilities like in Kuwait?

Unlike the United States, Canada, UK and most of Europe, Kuwait does not have a reliable postal service. You are strongly advised to use a courier service to send or receive documents or important mail and always use the school address.

What is the Staff dress code?

Teachers are permitted to follow the "business casual" dress code as long as it is modest and presentable.
Jeans are permitted as long as there are no holes or excessive wear.

Do I have the personality and outlook to be successful in an overseas teaching position?

We have found that the following personal attributes are truly necessary in order for a teacher to be happy in an overseas position:

• Be able to tolerate a certain level of ambiguity

• Be flexible

• Understand that Kuwait is not America, Canada, or the UK. Many things that can get done quickly back home, require time and patience overseas

• Have a sense of humor

• Have personal stability

What is it like living in Kuwait?

Kuwait is a very modern, multi-cultural country. There is access to many western grocery stores, shopping centers, restaurants, and recreational facilities. The Kuwait expatriate community includes British, Canadians, Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, Europeans, and other Asian nationalities. It is a very safe environment for families and/or single persons.

Can I bring pets with me?

Yes, you may, however, ABS does not advise bringing pets along for several reasons.

• ABS do not allow cats, dogs, rabbits etc. in staff accommodations. We do allow small pets like fish and birds.

The American Baccalaureate School

• Most airlines have imposed restrictions (restrictions vary by country and airline) on traveling with pets in the summer months and/or traveling while the temperature is above a certain temperature to limit potential risks to pets. The times when you will be traveling to/from Kuwait will be during times of extreme heat, especially in Kuwait where ground temperatures can reach into the 130s. Therefore, it may not be possible to even bring your pet during the times you wish to travel.

• Veterinary care is limited to a few clinics, is extremely expensive, and is sometimes not up to western standards.

• Importing you pet can be very costly.

• Should the items listed above not deter you, ABS can assist prospective overseas staff with obtaining the needed Kuwaiti documents at a fee of KD 100 per pet. Please note - All animals entering Kuwait require a current rabies vaccination, an import document, and a Health Certificate. For additional information concerning necessary documents please see the PAWS Kuwait website, www.pawskuwait.org

What is the process for being reimbursed for my flight to Kuwait?

• You will be required to book, pay for, confirm, and email us your e-ticket complete with all flight details to Kuwait within 10 (ten) days of scanning and emailing us your employment offer. We will reimburse you in cash for your air-ticket upon the presentation of the receipt or other voucher within 14 calendar days of starting work.

Flight requirements:

• Lowest class of economy airfare only, without exception.

• Must be most direct route to Kuwait, no stopovers of more than 24 hours.

• Claim may not exceed:

KD 400 for one-way, or KD 500 for round-trip for US/Canadian Nationalities.

• KD 200 for one-way, or KD 250 for round-trip for UK/Irish Nationalities.

The American Baccalaureate School

• You must arrive in Kuwait no earlier than 1 (one) week prior to your start date and no later than 48 hours prior to your start date.

• Teachers who purchase round-trip tickets will have 50% of the value reimbursed upon arrival, and the other 50% reimbursed in April payroll. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Important notes:

No refunds are provided for employees who miss a flight, for any reason. Travel insurance is highly recommended.

The airport code for Kuwait is: **KWI**

What is required during the application/hiring process?

Interview - If the candidate is not present in Kuwait, the interview will take place via phone. Standard questions related your experience and suitability for the position will be covered. In addition, you will be asked about your age, your marital status, your state of health, and height/weight. Such questions are customary for overseas positions.

If I am offered a position, will ABS contact my employer for a reference check?

Either before or after the offer of employment, we reserve the right to contact your current or past employer(s) in order to obtain a character and/or professional reference.

How long will it take to get my residency and work permit?

The ABS Human Resource department requires 4 months for new and transferred residencies after you successfully submit all the required documents. Once this process has commenced you are to consult with HR department prior to arranging any travel out of Kuwait.

Will I be required to undergo a Criminal Background Check?

American candidates, who have been offered employment, are required by Kuwaiti law to complete an FBI fingerprint background check, which will need to be authenticated by both the US department of State and the Kuwaiti embassy in Washington, DC.

The American Baccalaureate School

Therefore, applicants will be required to answer specific questions related to this during the interview process. It is important that applicants are entirely truthful during the interview process.

Applicants will also be asked if they have ever had their supervisory or teaching license suspended or revoked at any period in their career, or if they have ever been disciplined in any manner by their school board.

Candidates of all other nationalities will be required to undergo a criminal background check by the designated agency in their respective countries.

Click the link below for more details.

https://www.abs.edu.kw/fs/resource-manager/view/4bee9a34-f56b-4f1a-b374-f4ee89a02d22

All applicants will be required to provide a criminal background check prior to booking a flight to Kuwait. For American citizens, this check is to be at State level, as you will be required to provide an FBI check later in the process. https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/abroad/legal-matters/criminal-record-check.html

What is the Police Clearance Certificate and why do I need it for residency?

As of October 2009, the Government of Kuwait requires that all non-Kuwaiti citizens applying for Kuwaiti residency for the first time provide a police clearance certificate from their home country. Please note that this document must be authenticated by the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the country where the Police Clearance was issued.

Check list of US State Police Clearance Offices.

NOTE: Due to the coordination of all required documents, we are experiencing considerable delays in obtaining residency for newly arrived teachers and staff members.

Are there any agencies/companies that can perform the authentication paperwork for me?

Yes, there are many agencies/companies that perform authentication services. Though time consuming, most teachers are able to complete the lengthy authentication procedures without using an outside service. Below are three companies (of many) that offer authentication services at a fee. ABS do not endorse any particular agency.

www.usautcom
www.apostillepro.com
www.argentum-legal.comhentication.com
www.rocadc.com

The American Baccalaureate School

ABS Security Deposit Policy

ABS makes an investment in new employees of our time and resources. The security deposit is our assurance that you will return all materials loaned to you, and that you will observe the notice-period when and if you make the decision to leave employment with ABS. For those staff members that reside in ABS housing it also acts as a deposit to cover any potential loss or damage within the accommodation.

Security deposit policies:

• A deposit equal to 50% of the salary mentioned in your offer of employment will be retained as a security deposit. The deposit will be taken from your first monthly salary, if this is a part month then 50% of the salary earned will be taken and the remainder taken from your second monthly salary.

• If you should resign, even during the probationary period, you must give 2-8 weeks' notice (whatever is stipulated in your contract); otherwise security deposit is non-refundable.

• If your employment is terminated during the probationary period, it is fully refundable.

• The security deposit will be returned to you at the end of your employment with ABS as long as you have met the notice-period (Admin staff only). For teaching staff, it will be returned to you with your June salary after receiving school clearance of all school property and all academic responsibilities are completed as stipulated in the contract.