

Frequently asked questions about AIO

1) Who can attend AIO?

We welcome all students who have a strong desire to learn and who demonstrate an interest and aptitude in science as evidenced by their teacher recommendation. Due to the extensive work in the field and onboard boats however, students with severe emotional, physical or learning issues will have difficulty with the program. Though many students with ADD, ADHD and other mild learning disabilities have done very well at AIO, we are not equipped to appropriately handle more severe issues. Since we want to ensure a memorable experience, academically and personally for all students, we ask that you seriously consider what is best for your child before registering.

2) How do I get to Seal Harbor and when should I arrive and depart?

Students can be driven by a parent, take a bus into Bar Harbor or Bangor or fly into the Bar Harbor or Bangor Airports. We will pick students up from the bus stop or airport. **Arrival and departure days are those listed as the first and last days of each session.** Students should plan to arrive between noon and 5pm the first Sunday and depart on the last Friday between 9 am and noon. **Our staff needs extra time to deep clean between sessions so students will not be allowed to stay longer or for extra nights.**

3) What is a typical weekday daily schedule?

7 am	-students wake up for showers or morning lab
8 am	-breakfast
9-1pm	-morning activity (usually academic: boat trips, tide pool, etc)
2-5pm	-afternoon activity (recreational or academic)
5:15-5:45 pm	-mini-seminar on various topics offered or free time
6pm	-dinner
7-8pm	-recreation (i.e. volleyball, basketball, soccer, etc)
8-9pm	-evening lectures to prepare for the next morning activity

4) Can I attend if I have special food needs?

Yes. Students will receive two home cooked and well-balanced meals at breakfast and dinner each day. For lunch, students are given the choice of many different items to make their own sandwiches and we bring fruit, cookies, crackers, juice and water for a picnic lunch eaten near the end of the morning activity. At breakfast, we always offer cereals, fruit, bagels/toast, milk, juice, hot chocolate and a hot meal option.

If you have checked any box on the registration indicating a food allergy or restriction, we will purchase food for the session accordingly. For this reason, it is assumed the child will follow the menu created for their allergy. For example, if you have checked "peanut-free" then we assume they will eat the peanut-free meal prepared for them. It is very difficult to make last minute changes once the food is ordered for the program so please let us know no less than two weeks prior to the start of the session. Changes made after that time may require you to bring special meals for the participant.

Though we are able to accommodate food allergies and many food restrictions, you will need to discuss them with the Director prior to attendance. We are able to keep the cooking nut-free, if necessary, and we always offer vegetarian alternatives at meals. We cannot, however, control the food that is sent to students in care packages or the food they purchase while away from the building. We have also found that peanut butter is a staple food for many people, especially vegetarians so it is offered as an option for lunch. Still, we can and have successfully included students every summer in our program with life-threatening allergies to nuts by strictly controlling where the peanut butter is used and by separating the allergic student's lunch from others.

If the participant is choosing to limit gluten in their diet, please plan to bring two loaves of their favorite gluten-free bread and two weeks of snacks (such as cookies and crackers) that can be used in their picnic lunches. Since meals are made fresh each day, there will only be one hot gluten free option available at dinner. It is assumed that participants will make the best dietary choices for their health and choose to eat the gluten-free option offered. A gluten free cereal and fruit will be available at breakfast in case the hot meal isn't gluten free.

We are not a kosher facility and we are unable to accommodate a vegan diet.

"Picky eaters" are encouraged to try the food but if they choose not to, you will want to send some additional non-perishable snacks for their snack box and they may eat them after the meal.

5) Will I be in a session with students of all ages?

No. Our sessions are broken into introductory, intermediate and advanced. The introductory session is for students 10-12 years of age, the intermediate for students 12 to 15 while the advanced sessions are for students who have completed a minimum of freshman year in high school, typically 15 -19 years of age.

6) Can I bring a friend?

Yes, but most students come alone. If you are attending with a friend, let me know if you want to be in the same dorm by writing it on the application. Once the dorm arrangements and splits have been organized, it's impossible to change it without affecting several other students.

7) Are there any additional fees?

No, though some students may require additional services. Additional costs could include:

- Returned check \$35 per incident

8) May my parents or friends visit me during a session?

We ask that you do not have any visitors once the program has started to avoid potential contact of someone with the virus.

9) Can I bring my cell phone?

Cell phones and tablets have become a part of everyday life but they have also become a big distraction for many of our students during lessons and in the dorms at night. For this reason, we have instituted a **NO CELL PHONE or ELECTRONICS** policy. If you have a cell phone with you when you arrive, we'll keep it in a safe place until the end of the program. This includes: cell phones, Ipods, Kindles, video games, etc. Plan to bring an inexpensive camera for pictures. You will have access to a free landline (for calls in the US and Canada) and a computer to check email.

10) Tell me about the college credit option.

AIO offers rising juniors and seniors the option of taking the first advanced session of the summer as a 4-credit oceanography course (ENV 103) through the Early College Program at the University of Maine Machias. This is a graded course, based on the UMM grading system. The cost of the credits is \$553 over and above the AIO tuition and is due on May 1. The AIO tuition for that session includes a \$100 registration fee. You will receive a link to create an account at UMM prior to the start of the program. Beside participation in the existing AIO program, you will be expected to attend some additional labs, lectures and be given an end of session lab practical and final exam. You have until the end of the first day of the program to drop the course and monies paid for the credits will be refunded.

11) What is your refund policy?

- Withdrawal before May 1: full refund.
- Withdrawal starting May 1 until 14 days before start of session: credit towards 2022/ no refunds*

***Refunds will only be given after May 1, 2021 if the program is forced to close for reasons outside of AIO's control.**

- Withdrawal within 14 days of start of program: no refunds or credits.
- Full tuition must be received prior to beginning of the scheduled session or student will not be allowed to attend.

Participants are expected to report to all scheduled activities on time, to abide by all rules of conduct explained upon arrival at AIO, and to behave in a manner to bring credit upon AIO and themselves. This conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Following the rules given by the Director at the first night's orientation
- Treating staff and fellow students with proper respect
- Using appropriate language
- Refraining from improper relationships with other students or staff
- Not possessing tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol or any illegal substances
- Never leaving the property without a staff member
- Respecting the property of AIO and other students (you must replace property willfully destroyed).