

Dear NACADA 2016 Attendee

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the NACADA MENA Regional Conference, with the theme of “Aspire, Connect, Empower (ACE)” hosted by Zayed University.

We realize that this may be the first time that many of you have been to the Middle East so we have prepared a brief guide to help orientate you to Dubai. Please read carefully the information below. It has been written to help make your stay in the UAE enjoyable.

About the UAE

The United Arab Emirates was formed 2 December 1971 and consists of seven Emirates, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah and Umm Al Quwain. Abu Dhabi is the largest of the Emirates, and is the seat of the government. Dubai is the second largest Emirate but the most populated.

The working week is slightly different from what you may be used to. Sunday through Thursday are weekdays with Friday and Saturday being the weekend.

The UAE is a conservative Muslim country and Islam is central to all aspects of life. While the UAE is a very tolerant society visitors are expected to respect the culture and customs of the country. ***Please do not take photographs of people without asking their permission.*** Although women are not required to cover their hair, or wear an abaya, they should, in public areas such as shopping malls etc. dress conservatively ensuring that shoulders and knees are covered and their neckline is not too revealing. It is also very important to refrain from public displays of affection towards members of the opposite sex.

While the drinking of alcohol is permitted ***it is strictly forbidden to consume alcohol outside of licensed hotels and restaurants.*** It is against the law to consume alcohol in public places such as the beach. Possession of alcohol and other illegal substances carries an immediate prison sentence. Please also note that the UAE has a zero-tolerance policy to drink-driving and doing so also carries a prison sentence. It is important that if you are on prescribed drugs that you carry the prescription with you as certain drugs are prohibited. Please check *here* for more information on what is allowed and ensure that you bring any prescribed medication in their original containers with your prescription and an extra copy just in case.

Prayer timing

There are several prayer times throughout the day. Some shops will close during these times and you may find that traffic slows down slightly, but overall it is simply a sacred tradition that we respect by not playing loud music or interrupting the prayer, and business goes on as usual.

Weather

The weather in the UAE is cool at nights but warm during the day down. Everywhere is air-conditioned so it is advisable to carry a shawl or light jacket with you.

Airport

Upon arrival, you will travel through the airport and arrive at passport control, where there are designated lines for GCC residents, as well as international travelers.

Visit Visa Applications

If you have requested to receive an entry visit visa for Dubai, please ensure that you receive successful confirmation of visa application before your travel date. If you need a visa you should arrange before travelling with your hotel or the UAE Embassy in your country. Please note that if you are collecting your visa at the airport, you will be subject to an eye scan before processing.

Many passport holders do not need a visa in advance and can receive it on arrival. Please check the list on our NACADA website by clicking *here*.

Currency exchange

We highly recommend that you exchange your currency to the AED (Emirati Dirham), the UAE's local currency.

Common exchange rates as of today:

- 1 USD = AED 3.67
- 1 EUR = AED 4.68
- 1AUD = AED 3.21
- 1 CAD = AED 3.25

Though several locations such as hotels will accept your foreign currency, smaller places like local restaurants and supermarkets, petrol stations, etc. will not have the adequate change or be able to accept currency other than AED. As in most countries, the local currency will also tend to stretch your funds further.

Transport

Airport Transfers

There are several options for you to arrange to get from the airport to your hotel:

1. Airport Transfer arranged through Hotel- If you would like to arrange an airport transfer, please contact your hotel directly to arrange your transfer.
2. Taxi - If you have not requested hotel airport pick-up, there are plenty of YELLOW taxis just outside the airport that will transport you to your hotel. Taxi charges will vary depending on the location of your hotel but the fare starts from AED 20.

Please note there are private taxi companies operating at the airport. They are likely to be more expensive than the Dubai Transport taxis (yellow).

During your stay

Taxis

To order a taxi to anywhere in Dubai, you can call the local number (0)4 208 0808 (if dialing from an international line, call 00971 4 208 0808) and they will take between 20 to 40 minutes to arrive – please plan accordingly. Hotels typically have taxis on standby outside the main entrance, or will be able to call a taxi for you.

Conference and Event Transport

Zayed University will provide all delegates complimentary transport to and from the designated conference hotels. If you miss the scheduled transportation, or wish to use other means of travel, you will bear the extra expenses. If you selected to not stay in one of the recommended conference hotels and wish to take the transport you must make your way to the conference hotel, spaces on these buses will be on a first come first served basis. Please check the website for the scheduled locations and bus schedule

Public Transport

Buses

Buses run on regular routes throughout the day to and from various locations in the Emirates. A single bus trip can cost between AED2 – AED6 depending on the class you pay for and the length of your journey. Please visit http://bus.rtaprojects.me/rta_bus_eng/ for Dubai routes

Metro

The Dubai Metro runs daily between 06:00 – 00:00 on weekdays, and 13:00 – 02:00 on weekends.

Metro routes and information can be found *here*.

Please note that you must have a 'Nol' card in order to travel on buses or the metro system in Dubai. You can buy a Nol card and recharge at any metro station or large supermarket. Please visit the bus or metro websites for information about more locations to purchase or top up your Nol card.

Telecommunications

The UAE has two major telecommunication companies, Etisalat and Du. Please note that you can buy a visitor sim card upon arrival at Dubai airport in order to use your mobile locally. Please look out for the stands or shops in the airport Arrivals Hall.

The standard documents required to acquire a sim card include:

- Passport
- UAE visa page

It will cost approximately AED 50 and usually includes a recharge card.

Hotels

You will likely have already arranged for your accommodation in Dubai. A few common charges that are charged by hotels in the UAE:

- Service charge
- Municipality charge
- Tourism Dirham (this amount will not be more than AED 30)

At the time of check-in at your hotel, you will be required to make a refundable deposit in cash or provide your credit card as guarantee for all charges.

Emergency details

Please observe the following numbers (dialed from a local number) in the case of emergency:

999 Police

998 Ambulance

997 Fire Department (Civil Defense)

Emergency NACADA numbers

056-2162219: registration, hotel and general enquires

056-2169647: for exhibition, academic symposium, workshop enquiries

056-2166413: for general enquires or emergency situations

The above phones will be manned from 5pm XXXXXX until 8am XXXXXXXXXX

The Conference will take place at Zayed University, Dubai Campus

Zayed University has a campus in Dubai and another in Abu Dhabi. Both are very modern campuses and architecturally very interesting. The structure of each campus reflects an aspect of each city's heritage. Photographing the campus is permitted (but not of the students).

Please be aware that both campuses are outside of the main areas of the city. It is advisable to take the NACADA transport provided. A taxi fare is likely to cost close to 100 AED each way.

The conference and opening reception will take place at Zayed University in Academic City, Dubai.

Please note it is a non-smoking campus.

The forthcoming NACADA Conference will be both instructive and fun, and we look forward to welcoming you, both to Dubai and the United Arab Emirates.

NACADA Conference Committee