

Life and Cultural Interaction

in Vienna University of Economics and Business

Once registered at Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), a student card would be granted after the welcome session at the university. There are two welcome sessions arranged; one for students who arrive early and also enroll for pre-semester courses, which are not mandatory, and another one for students who arrive only before the semester starts. I personally enroll for all the offered pre-semester programs which are the German Language Course and the Orientation and Cultural Program. Both programs would take around two weeks at the same weekdays. The German Language Course would be in the morning and the Orientation and Cultural Program in the afternoon. As for German Language Course, everyone could take a placement test before the course starts. There are around 20 students in one class. If you are interested in German Language, I recommend you take this class because it only costs 40 Euro including the class materials such as a textbook. It is considered very cheap comparing to studying German Language with native speakers in Asia. As for the Orientation and Cultural Program, you will be assigned to a group of 25 people. The local student will be a head of your group and is responsible for your attendance confirmation for every trip. Different groups would be provided with different field trips such as City Walk & Austrian National Library, Brewery Tour with Beer Testing, and etc. It is a program to get to know the country better and to make new friends from all over the world. This program costs 260 Euro which is considered a reasonable price. If you would like to visit well-known attractions and other highlights in and beyond Vienna, you should join this program since group tickets are cheaper than individual tickets. But you should check the sample list of programs to make sure you would like to join most of the activities. Do not worry if you cannot join, you still can make new friends later when the semester starts.

In terms of housing, I choose to stay in the accommodation recommended by the university. OeAD-Guesthouse offers accommodation in many districts of Vienna. I choose to stay at Gaspasse because it is just a few-minute walk to the famous shopping street Mariahilferstrasse and just one-minute walk to U-Bahn Westbahnhof Station (subway). After I have arrived, I just found out that I do not even need to go to the shopping street if I would like to buy something. There are already a wide range of stores at the Westbahnhof Station such as household items, stationary, supermarket and etc. I live in type A+ room category which is a single room in living community (private bathroom/toilet, but shared kitchen with other two persons) It costs 540 Euro per month excluding 90 Euro booking fee, 55 Euro final cleaning fee, and 950 Euro deposit. There is a weekly cleaning of kitchen and bathroom and also a biweekly cleaning of room (open space) by OeAD cleaning staffs. You are responsible for residents' duties such as washing the dishes, waste disposal, and washing/changing the bedclothes. After you register online with OeAD, you will receive documents regarding your stay including Offer for an accommodation, Residence Contract, Information Sheet, House Rules and General Terms and Conditions. Please find further detail information there.

Regarding the transportation, if you are an exchange student and under the age of 26. You should bring the Registration of Residence and the nomination letter from WU to buy student U-bahn ticket at the Ö BB Office in Praterstern station. But if you are over 26, you should buy monthly ticket or yearly ticket instead. According to the fact that I choose to live in Gasgasse so it is not very close to the university. I would take around 20 minutes from my place to the university in the morning but around 40 minutes at other times since there are lesser train times. The university is in between Messe-Prater Station and Krieu Station. Thus, the walking distance would take more than a few minutes depending on how fast you walk.

Apart from orientation emails from the university, you would also receive an email for joining the WU Erasmus Buddy Network (EBN) program. After you have registered, you would be matched with a WU local student. You could contact your buddy before your arrival. My buddy comes to pick me up at the airport and help me to deal with many important matters on my first day in Vienna. We went to pick up the housing key before going to my place. Please be noticed that the address of the key pick-up and the accommodation are different. After that, we went to the registration office to get the Registration of Residence. On the first day at the WU welcome session, you would receive a package of key information about the university and life in Vienna. Apart from that, you would also find the EBN booklet with the schedule of trips, events, and weekly parties, and, most importantly, all the discounts for joining those events. All these events are for socializing with other exchange students. Every Monday, exchange students would join Erasmus Party Night at Travel Shack bar. Every Wednesday, they would join Erasmus Karaoke Night at Loco Club bar. I think it is part of European culture to hang out and meet friends at the bar and to go to parties. You would be able to join a party everyday if you live in Gasgasse. In terms of trips, you would get a discount for every trip after you applied for EBN card. Some trips are quite expensive so that you might want to go there by yourself. In addition, EBN also offers you a free SIM card with cheaper price package from Educom. But I heard that the connection is not that stable. Therefore, I bought my own SIM card with A1.

Majority of the exchange students here are from America and Europe. Only around no more than 5% are from Asia. But most of them are nice and out-going. Austrian people are also very friendly and willing to help if you asked them to. Even though Austria is a German-speaking country, but most of them can speak English. Therefore, I have no trouble in my daily life at all. No wonder it is a very nice place to spend your exchange semester.

Notices and Advices for Future Student

In general, you would not face any troubles here. However, below are my advices to adjust to the new environment faster.

It is not mandatory to apply for EBN buddy Program. But I think it is so helpful to have a local buddy, especially, when you have a really nice one. Since he can speak German and he knows how the things work here, therefore, every matter is a lot easier and faster to be

done. If you happen to have questions or emergency situations, you also have someone to ask for help.

Even though I come here for Summer Semester, but actually the semester starts from winter and the weather will gradually get warmer until it ends in summer. Therefore, you should prepare at least one thick coat for the beginning of the semester and one thinner jacket for the middle of semester. It is also quite windy here so sunglasses can help protect you from dry eyes. Furthermore, the humidity here is quite low comparing to Taiwan and you would be most of the time in a closed room with heater. Thus, your skin would turn dry. This might be troublesome for people with sensitive skin. I personally got winter allergy. Therefore, you could prepare allergy medicine from Taiwan or you could buy it here. Two more tips from me to protect your body are to buy 'Urea' added lotion and to buy humidifier machine depending on the severity of dryness you get. Due to the dry weather, some of my friends have allergy, some have bleeding nose in the morning.

Regarding the laundry room at the accommodation, you need to prepare 2.50 Euro coins for a washing machine. You need to prepare exactly this amount since it would not give you a change. As for the dryer machine, you would be able to use it for free. However, because there are only four dryer machines and it takes 1 up to 4 hours to finish, so some people would not wait for you to come up to pick your clean clothes from the machine. They would pull your clothes out and place it over the machine which is not a clean surface. So please do timing. This is sometimes unavoidable if you happen to meet selfish people. I normally go get my clothes before the time it said it would finish, and I found out that some people just pulled my clothes out of the machine before the appointed time. Please be noticed that the dryer machine could not be locked and anyone could turn it off anytime he/she wants.

Since I stay in Gassgasse which is very close to MERKUR supermarket, therefore I normally go to buy food there. If you know you need to go there often, I suggest you to apply for a membership card called 'Friends of MURKER.' You would get 15% discount slip once a month and 25% discount on selected items. In addition, you would be able to get a MERKUR monthly magazine for free.

Introduction of School and Courses I take

My name is Sichol Boocha. I am currently an exchange student to Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) in Austria. According to QS World university ranking, the university was ranked 18th in Master's Management Program and ranked 38th in Business and Management Studies. It is the only triple AACSB-, EQUIS-, and AMBA-accredited university in Austria. It is also famous for being an international university with currently around 23,600 students in total from 110 countries. The ratio between local students and international students is 73:27. The university sees itself as an important hub for global exchange. Open-mindedness and diversity are among the university's key values. The university set goals to maintain a place among the world's leading institutions by offering a

wide range of English-taught master's programs and also by emphasizing its international research activities.

WU is proud of its new campus as a representation of the university's development and of its further step towards reaching the goal of improving its top position among European business schools. The central building, the Library & Learning Center (LC), is designed by internationally renowned Zana Hadid Architects, Hamburg. It is surrounded by eight buildings which would be the places where the class is held.

WU students are required to use LPIS platform for course registration. Notice that all the popular courses would be full within seconds! Be prepared to log in and register as fast as possible to secure your preferred courses. The students are also required to check their personal WU student emails from Outlook Office regularly. All the communication between the student and the university would take place only on this platform, not your prior personal email account. In addition, WU students would also be provided with interactive studying platform 'Learn@WU.' The platform offers interactive lessons, learning materials with personal statistics, information regarding courses enrolled, and various communication tools.

For this exchange semester, I have taken three courses; Advanced Innovation Management, Strategic Alliances, and English Business Negotiation.

"Advanced Innovation Management"

Innovation has drawn attention of entrepreneurs from every industry since nineteenth century. Scholars have put effort in scientific research and empirical studies regarding this topic. In this course, students can learn many key theories from papers considered as fundamental knowledge of the field such as Patterns of Industrial Innovation (Abernathy & Utterback 1978), Technological discontinuities and organizational environments (Tushman & Anderson 1986), Architectural innovation: The reconfiguration of existing product technologies and the failure of established firms (Henderson & Clark 1990), Insights and new directions from demand-side approaches to technology innovation, entrepreneurship, and strategic management research (Priem, Li & Carr 2012).

Not only can students learn from a theoretical approach, but also a practical approach. Students can gain hands-on experience by working on a **real start-up project: launching a new product/service and attracting potential customers**. The students are required to create a mock-up website and video presentation to send out their products/services to their potential customers. The content of this course is really contemporary. It focuses more on 'new innovation management practices based on experimentation and rapid prototyping to create and capture value' rather than traditional innovation management methods guided by formal planning. At the end of the course, students are also asked to give feedback on theories and conceptual frameworks that are not discussed in the course which might contribute to a better understanding of new approaches to innovation management, and also on how they would integrate the knowledge obtained from this course in their future endeavors (e.g., working for a corporation, starting your own business, writing your thesis, etc.).

"Strategic Alliances"

Nowadays more and more companies are moving away from the traditional stand-alone approach to a more tightly coupled structure involving alliances with suppliers, buyers and even competitors. However, according to the statistics, the rate of alliance failure is still

very high. Therefore, scholars currently put a lot of effort contributed to many more scientific and empirical studies to find out what are key factors to achieve the strategic goal of alliances.

The structure of the course begins with an entrance exam, the theoretical input and the case studies discussion from a few different professors. Students are assigned to a group to work on applying the theories learnt to the real business case and presenting it in the last session of class. Furthermore, students are required to submit an individual research paper, dealing with a contemporary research issue in the field of strategic alliances. The students can choose the topic of the paper themselves.

After taking this course, students can gain a deeper understanding of strategic alliances, and will be able to explain why they are important in corporate strategy vehicles and why firms would enter into them. The students learn more about different modes of alliances, various governance mechanism, social networks effects, management of alliance portfolio, and also to the latest topic of strategic alliances ecosystem.

“English Business Negotiation”

The purpose of this course is to increase an awareness of the key strategic role that language and communication play in business negotiations and to better understand the mechanisms underlying the linguistic techniques employed in negotiations.

Each session of this course includes both a theoretical input and a practical skill practices. The theoretical part focuses on the structure of a negotiation, the language devices that can be used to direct a negotiation in the desired direction (i.e. questioning techniques, persuading, handling break-downs, etc.) and strategies which are commonly employed in negotiations (e.g. good cop-bad cop, slice the salami, message from God, last-minute demand, etc.). As for the practical part, case-study based simulations are partly held one-on-one or in teams. All negotiations are recorded and discussed. Students are asked to watch the recordings on learn@wu and analyze their performance as follow-up assignments so that they can contribute in class and also improve their performance consistently.

After taking this course, students will have attained the level C1 according to the Common European Framework. The negotiation skills of students will be immensely improved due to the chance to practice and reflect on their own performance.