

2012-2013

University Attended: Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU)

FEEDBACK 1

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

What did this involve, how long did it last, was it useful?

The introduction programme (OK programme) at WU is really useful and entertaining. It lasted 3 weeks in September and involved different activities: visiting museums and other historical places in Vienna, two city trips to Graz and Melk (Linz) and social events. I found it very useful, since I got easily orientated in Vienna and at WU. I also met most of my good friends while taking part in the OK programme, so in my opinion, it is the best way to socialise and get to know new people early in the semester. Before I attended the programme, I was afraid that it might not be worth the money, but in the end I can say it totally was.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Style of teaching, courses, ease of access to courses, methods of assessment, teaching support

When I came to WU, I had very low expectations for the academic part of the university, since previous exchange students told me that it was easy compared to MBS. In my opinion, it really depends on what subjects you choose. I know people who were busy all the time and people who took easy classes and had a lot of free time. As for the style of teaching and the classes, I can say it is quite different from what we are used to. The biggest classes I attended consisted of 26 students (I had classes even with only 11 people). Usually the classes could be either block-courses or regular ones. The block courses have only a few classes, which might last from 9am to 5pm but this is only for 4-5 sessions and then you are done with this class. They are very intensive and you are usually allowed to miss 1 session or maybe just a few hours. The regular sessions consist of classes every week maybe once or twice, around 3 hours, and they can last 2 months.

There are no examination periods. Usually there are mid-term tests, presentations, papers and in the end of the course "end-term exams or presentations". Another important part of examination is the participation in class. It might count from 10% up to 50% of your final grade so be careful when you choose your subjects. The lecturers are always willing to help. Their English is pretty good, so they do not experience any difficulties when they have to help the students with something. Lecturers are very friendly and can even allow you to do the exam on a different date, if you are travelling or have some better excuse why you cannot attend the exam.

On the whole, I think the level of education is good enough. I took a lot of Postgraduate classes (since you are allowed to) and I can say that classes here can be a lot more practical than those at MBS. Since the classes are so small, I had the opportunity to work on real life business problems, visit companies, present in front of managers. I really enjoyed most of my classes here.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Level of support, additional information that could have been useful

MBS International team is always very supportive. Whenever I had questions or I experienced any problems, the team was extremely helpful and understandable. I am happy with the information I received prior to my exchange.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

Any additional information that you feel could have been provided

The information provided was sufficient.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Level of support, additional information that could be useful for future students

The International Office at WU is very supportive, too. Every time I needed to go there, the office was working and the team was able to help me.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

Please include any information relating to the purchase of compulsory health insurance i.e. costs etc. or whether this was waived by having the University of Manchester Insurance Policy

No additional insurance needed. The Manchester Insurance Policy was enough.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

This should be information on any extra fees that the University charged but should not include accommodation, books, transport, visa etc.

There is a compulsory administration fee of 18 euro. You pay it when you register at the WU and also at the beginning of the second semester.

ACCOMMODATION

As much information as possible on what accommodation is recommended or not recommended.

You should definitely choose Haus Panorama! I admit I might be a bit subjective, but from my experience in Vienna, this is the best hall of residence. Haus Panorama is located just 15-20 minutes walking from WU or 10 minutes by public transport. Since Vienna offers the best public transport, it takes around 20 minutes to go to the city centre. Even if you go out during the night, there is a way of coming back without taking a taxi. Haus Panorama offers both single and double rooms. The flats can have two single rooms (sharing the bathroom/toilet) or one single and one double room where there is also a small kitchen (sink and shelves). People living in a single room have their own fridge, double room residents share with the roommate. There are two kitchens on each floor for all the people living on the floor (never overcrowded). In my opinion, Haus Panorama is the best place to live in Vienna, since there are 4 floors with only exchange students, so it is so easy to meet new people (most of them even study at WU), there are a lot of parties, social events. Even the other exchange students come here, since it is the party dormitory. For the people who do not like to party all the time, all the floors except for the exchange students floors, are quiet all the time.

It is also good to know that there are two companies providing accommodation in Haus Panorama: OEAD and WIHAST. WIHAST is cheaper, so I recommend it. I signed a contract with OEAD and just later during the semester I found out what the price difference was.

The other halls of residence where a lot of exchange students live are Base 19, Gasometer and Gassgasse. They are all nice from what I heard, but people still come to Haus Panorama to party with us on a regular basis.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Vienna is a very organised city. There are all means of transport available, everything arrives just on time. The city is also safe, I can come back at 3am on my own without any problem (of course being cautious is a good idea). Social life is amazing. There are a lot of clubs to go to, a lot of events organised every week.

As Vienna is in the centre of Europe, travelling is extremely easy. The neighbouring countries are also very cheap destinations, so even if you do not want to spend a lot of money on travelling, they are still easily affordable. As an exchange student it is quite difficult to integrate with local students, even though I can say that I have a few friends from the regular students. However, on the whole, they have a completely different daily life in Vienna so

it is hard to find the time to hang out with them. People are nice here, but not too nice, helpful, but not too helpful. Most of the Austrians speak English so it is easy to communicate with them.

From my experience, Vienna is an amazing city offering opportunities for everyone to have fun. There is always something happening- concerts, operas, parties in the City Hall, hiking, skiing, trips. I cannot think of anything that I did not enjoy during my exchange in Vienna.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

The best year in my life so far.

FEEDBACK 2

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

I did not manage to go to the orientation programme because it started much earlier in September. It is useful in terms of meeting other new exchange students and being shown around Vienna initially. You meet people and get familiar with the city during your whole stay anyway.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Courses at WU are usually in small seminar-size groups and are really interactive. Assessment is to a large extent based on your class participation. Very often there are “block courses” which are very intensive and take place in 1 week only. Not all courses have an exam as a method of assessment and in a lot of them we did presentations.

It is difficult to sign up for them because you have to build your own schedule and most courses overlap. So it really requires you to spend some time looking through them. Also, it is crucial to sign up at the exact time WU opens the system (they inform you when this is) because it is on a “first come first served” principle and spots are filled in unimaginably quickly. When I signed up for my courses in the winter semester, one of the choices I had was filled in the first 20 seconds after the system opened.

MBS INTERNATIONAL TEAM

The MBS International Team was very supportive and answered all my questions and needs very quickly. Several times I had the need to have certain documents from Manchester University and they sent them immediately.

MBS SECOND YEAR MEETINGS

The meetings were informative enough but it is always a challenge once you to your destination. So you need to do your own research as well.

HOST INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

I did not get that much in touch with the host international office. I had certain problems when signing up for subjects because of the lack of enough spots. They did provide some help but very often you have to deal with you problem on your own. However, I did not need to contact them for any other reason so I suppose they are supportive if you have issues in general.

INSURANCE, HEALTH COVER

I was provided with a medical assistance card from Manchester University. I, furthermore, had a European Health Insurance Card and a Life Insurance for the period of my stay in Vienna. The European Health Insurance Card is free and compulsory. My Life Insurance was done by my parents in my home country and it is not compulsory. Overall, I did not require any medical help so I am not sure to what extent you must have such insurances. Still, I think it is better to know that if some problems arise you secured.

INFORMATION ON ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

The University charges a compulsory tax of 17.50 Euros per semester. You need to pay it in order to get your student card validated. You pay it through a machine so you need to have a Maestro card to do it. I did not have such a card so I asked a regular WU student to pay for me and I gave him the money in cash. Next year WU is having a new building in another location so I am not sure what the payment process would be like there. Also, some of the courses at the university want to secure the number of people who signed up for them so they require you to leave a deposit of 20 Euros for each. Of course, they afterwards return you the money.

ACCOMMODATION

You apply for accommodation through OEAD. The best time to apply is as early as possible - around March or April. You choose 5 options for accommodation and pay 750 Euros just to apply. Then they send you a letter telling you where they have allocated you. You need to answer them, whether you would like the spot in this place or not, via e-mail.

When choosing accommodation it is not that crucial whether it is in the city centre or not. It is more important to have an underground stop nearby. I was allocated to a rather expensive dormitory- Haus Meidling. It is quite small but the people were incredible and you really feel like you are at home. We also had breakfast every morning, a gym, a TV Room and a Sauna.

If you want to go to dormitories where parties take place more often - try to apply for Haus Panorama. It is more difficult to get in there, though, because a lot of exchange students apply for it. Overall, even if you are in a dormitory different than where the other exchange students are, you can always go and visit them and stay for parties so it is not a problem.

DESTINATION INFORMATION AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Transport, travel, social life, integration with local students, student activity groups

Each semester you can buy a "Semester Ticket" with which you can travel with any kind of public transport within the city. It costs 75 Euros per semester. The transportation in Vienna is so good - you can reach any point quite quickly. It might look a bit confusing at the beginning but once you understand it, it is very easy. If you have a smart phone I would recommend downloading the "Scotty Mobile" application because it tells you how to reach any point at any time. Underground (called U-bahn) is 24 hours a day on Fridays and Saturdays. During the week there are Night Buses around the city so it is good to know from the beginning which Night Bus goes to your place. Finally, you might find it surprising but you can also travel with trains within the city and your "Semester Ticket" covers the trains as well.

During my stay I managed to socialize both with other exchange students and with regular students. There are a number of events organized weekly by the Erasmus Buddy Network (EBN) so if you attend them you will surely get to know the people. There are trips and parties all the time so you can always have fun. There are also organized sightseeing trips so you also get to know the city better.

Becoming friends with local students is harder, especially with Austrian people. However, I joined AIESEC (a student organization) from the first semester and I met hundreds of people from whole Austria. I think this is one of the reasons for me having such an incredible experience during my exchange year.

As a whole, Vienna offers so many opportunities and you can do different activities every single day. The key is to explore the city and not only its main attractions. You don't even need a map - what I did is just take a friend with me and randomly go to different parts of the city.

DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE YOUR YEAR ABROAD

One of the most unforgettable and enriching years of my life because I took all the opportunities it offers me