

General information

I'm Benoit Bailyu from Belgium and for my exchange I went to Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien (WU) in Vienna, Austria. My semester started the first of October 2015 and ended 31 of January 2016. There was a cultural program that started the first of September and from my peers there I heard it was good and most of the exchange students took part.

Preparation

The first thing I did when I got my acceptance letter from WU, was looking and booking my room in Vienna, because space is limited. The easiest way is booking with OEAD housing, which is an agency that has buildings all over Austria and Vienna. I stayed at Gassgasse, which is a little bit far from the university, but has a great atmosphere and has nice rooms. It is close to the city and has a supermarket that is open on Sunday, because all stores are closed on Sunday. In August I signed up for my courses, be prepared. Look in advance which courses you want to follow and also look for some other courses as a plan B, because some courses are full within a few seconds. Be aware of the time of each course because it is easy to have overlaps and you have to attend all lectures. The system in Austria is a little bit different and strange at first sight. Some courses are regular and some of them are block courses, the final exam or presentation is due on the last lecture of the course. The semester may end on the end of January but most courses already end in December, in my case and even for most of the exchange people I know there.

Arrival

Be aware if you book your room with OEAD you have to pick up your key first at their office in the city centre before going to your dorm. If you apply for an EBN buddy, he/she normally helps you with your arrival in Vienna. He/she picks you up at the airport and helps you getting your key. There are different options to go from the airport to the city, and all of them are easy, the only difference is the price and some of them are faster.

Courses

I took five different courses at WU and all of them were related to economics or management, be aware not all the courses have the same ECTS credits.

-European law and economics (5ECTS): this course was mostly based on the European union and how it works, how the development of new European laws and how they affect European countries as citizens, with focus on the economic aspect. There were also some interesting discussions with students from the US because the EU and US were often compared with each other.

-Corporate investment decisions and financial statement analysis (6ECTS), most of the content of this course I already knew but the good thing about this course was I got a deeper understanding of the concepts and knew 'why' things happen. I got a deeper understanding of the financial statements. Part of our final grade was a case study, and that showed that when you have to apply your knowledge in reality it isn't always easy and straightforward.

-Negotiation Management (6ECTS): this course was more given as a workshop, with a lot of short group works in class. It doesn't have a lot to do with economics but more with how to present you and how to discuss with your future boss or clients. It was interesting to know for later on when applying for a job or having one.

-Strategic Management (6ECTS) was more given by cases; the theory was though through cases. It was interesting as this way of teaching was completely new for me but really interesting also to see how companies achieve different goals by the decisions they made.

-The US and EU Financial Systems (Comparative Analysis) (6ECTS), this was a professor from the US and worked for the FED in San Francisco for more than 15 years. He talked a lot about the financial crisis and how it affected the EU and US economy differently. Which was really interesting to hear it from someone who had a lot of knowledge about all the different institutions.

Most of the professors were only part-time professors and had another job related to the field they teach. Therefore they had some interesting examples from their real life experience, and gave us some better insight in how the link the theory in reality.

Finances

Rent: 530 euro monthly

Public transport: 75 euro for the semester

Phone: 10euro monthly

Groceries: 75euro weekly

Boxing gym: 75 euro monthly

These are the basics, it could increase dependently on how much you go out for dinner or go to clubs.

Daily life

Daily life isn't really different than in another European city. But Vienna is a nice city with a lot of castles and museums, during the Christmas period there are a lot of cosy Christmas markets all around the city. A big advantage in Vienna is there good public transportation and on Friday and Saturday night the metro is open 24h. There isn't a lot of criminality, even with the refugee problems I never felt unsafe. For me it was an unforgettable experience.