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Programme Studied: Undergraduate Management

Otago Semester 2 2017

## **WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business)**

**Accommodation:** I stayed in Haus Panorama during my semester. This student house is run by WIHAST and not the OEAD (which is one of the main providers recommended by the university). Haus Panorama is about 30mins away from the university and 10mins away from the U-Bahn, there are also bus stops right outside that take you within 5mins walk of the university. I chose Panorama as it is a lot cheaper (300€ per month) than the OEAD student housing which is closer to the university. For Panorama, you are also free to leave whenever you want whereas with the OEAD you have a fixed contract until at least January (which sucks if your courses finish in December).

You get your own room with a bed, desk, mini-fridge, closet etc. and share a bathroom with one other person. There is also a shared floor kitchen. My roommate was a chill postgraduate student from Bulgaria and helped show me around the Hall and district it's in. The hall has all the usual amenities laundry, gym, bar, cultural room, a reception for any problems, study rooms and a club. To be honest, if you want more of a social experience and don't mind about rent I would look at staying in the OEAD housing closer to the University (and town). I met a lot of students in Panorama who were on an exchange or local, but not a lot of the WU exchange students were at Panorama which was a negative when you wanted to go out. An OEAD house I would recommend is Molkereistrasse most of the exchange students living in OEAD housing thought it was the best for WU.

**Money Matters:** Living costs in Vienna are slightly lower than Dunedin. Rent is similar if you go with cheaper housing like I did. For food, I ate out most of the time either at the restaurants/canteens on campus or at cheaper places in town. I spent about 15€ - 25€ a day on food, I didn't use the kitchen in my hall so it would be possible to eat at a lower cost if you wanted. Transport for the whole semester around Vienna costed around 75€ with the student card. I also travelled by train to other countries which was cheaper than flying but not as cheap as using carpool apps or busing. Definitely open a student bank account as soon as you get there, I chose Erste bank and was able to get a card within a week of arriving for free.

**Academics/course load:** The system at WU is very different to Otago. You can choose semester courses which are like normal Otago courses that run with around 2hr of lectures a week for the whole semester. Or there are block courses and other courses that run for shorter than the semester but have more hours per week. I took Humanitarian Logistics, International Supply Chain Management and Strategic Management. ISCM and Strategic Management were both shorter courses and their workloads weren't that difficult. If you're picking the shorter course be prepared for 4hr lectures with tonnes of content, obviously the benefit to taking these is you get more time to travel. The courses were a similar

difficulty to Otago papers. I also chose to do the pre-semester German course which wasn't worth it for the price, you can find much better courses once you arrive at/or outside of the University that take place during the semester.

**Transportation:** The U-Bahn, tram and bus systems in Vienna are for the most part reliable and easy to use. You buy a semester student ticket for around 75€ and this gets you on everything. One thing I did find weird was the transport network operates on an honesty system and you don't have to pass any barriers to take the U-Bahn. Instead, if you're caught without a ticket (I was checked for a ticket a total of 3 times the whole semester) it's an instant 400€ fine. For transportation by train around Austria and to close-by countries using OBB is really easy, you can either buy tickets through a mobile app and get straight on the train or use their ticket machines. **BUY AN ÖBB Vorteils card Jugend** for only 20€ it gets you a 50% discount on OBB train tickets and is 100% worth it, I must've saved over 300€ at least with the card.

**Weather:** I arrived in Vienna early September where it was still around 22 degrees most days with clear skies. After 3 – 4 weeks the temperature started dropping every week until it was around 0 degrees when I left late December. The low temperatures aren't difficult to deal with if you have appropriate clothing, all buildings are well heated including the student accommodations.

**Eating:** On campus there are 4 options, a canteen which serves average food for cheap, the SPAR supermarket which has readymade wraps and sandwiches which aren't terrible, a small restaurant (my recommendation) with a daily curry or wok dish which you can get with soup/salad for 7€ or there is a more expensive campus restaurant which serves good food. Other cheap options are any Kebab place anywhere, Sausage stands or the Pastry shops in the U-Bahn. You can pretty much find any cuisine in the city with good quality for a reasonable price. I also used Lieferservice quite a lot which is a food delivery app in Austria. The traditional cafes are amazing they serve amazing cakes and you can stay in them for hours and no one cares.

**Things to do/Places to Visit:** There are tonnes of things to do in Vienna especially if you appreciate art or museums. I won't list all the major attractions but if you're going there during Christmas visit the Christmas markets in not only Vienna but the ones in Prague and Salzburg are also cool. I did the pre-semester orientation cultural programme which was good and took us to the main attractions in groups of exchange students. Also, I would recommend doing some of the trips offered by EBN like going to Oktoberfest or weekend city visits, these trips are usually much cheaper than if you were to do it yourself. Make sure you explore Austria, the countryside and little towns dotted around are really amazing and have a similar vibe to the west coast in NZ.

**Visa/Insurance:** Applying for an Austrian Visa is a little complicated, I got an Austrian type D visa which is for stays longer than 90 days and less than 180. The only way to get this visa (that I'm aware of) is applying through VFS global where once you get all the documents that are required they get you to come in person to Auckland to take fingerprints etc. and then send it to Canberra for approval. For insurance, I just got travel insurance from

Southern Cross which covered the few appointments I had in Vienna. My doctor in Austria recommended I get Austrian health insurance for the semester as it makes seeing doctors/going to hospitals much quicker and cheaper. I didn't look into it but it may be worth checking given there are student insurance plans.

**Tips:** Buy the OBB Vorteils card Jugend. Apply for a WU buddy, they will pick you up from the airport and help you out with lots of stuff in the first couple weeks. Don't confuse German with Austrian German, the greetings are very different. Supermarkets aren't open on Sundays and close earlier than NZ supermarkets on most days, be aware. Get an EBN card on campus for 5€ comes with a SIM you can use and gets you discounts/deals at clubs around Vienna, most phone network companies allow you to use your sim data over all of Europe which is amazing when travelling. If you get sick, there are doctors in each district that speak English and can be found through <http://www.praxisplan.at/>

Overall the exchange to WU was an amazing experience and I would strongly recommend you go on exchange here. Even if the exchange isn't to WU, meeting people from various countries was extremely interesting, hearing how their traditions, food and general culture differed from New Zealand helped influence me to now have a better global perspective. Putting yourself in a completely new environment outside of your comfort zone helps you develop as a person significantly. GO ON EXCHANGE.



One of the Christmas Markets



View over Vienna



St. Stephen's Cathedral