Study Abroad

Graz, Austria
2020

Program Guide
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Congratulations on being accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) exchange program with Universität Graz (UG) in Austria. Living and studying in a new culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

- Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field
- Increasing understanding of different cultures
- Enhancing personal development
- Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture
- Gaining self-confidence and independence
- Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in your BlugoldsAbroad account. While this guide contains the information available at the time of publication, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email information throughout the semester, and we encourage you to do your own research, also, using the web resources listed towards the end of this guide, as well as others that you find. Contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff or your peer advisor with your specific questions.

Questions only you can answer include:
1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge yourself in a new environment?

2) How can you best prepare to meet your goals within the context of this program? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Austrian culture, yet you will go through orientation with other international students, how can you insure that you do not spend all of your time with other new arrivals?

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.
ACADEMICS

Additional information on topics such as maintaining program eligibility, registration at UW-Eau Claire, class attendance, course equivalencies, grades, transcripts and service learning is in the Academics section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Pre-departure Planning
Please see the UWEC-Graz Academics page for details on how to plan your courses at UG.

Pre-Semester Intensive German Course
All UW-Eau Claire students are required to take the pre-semester German Intensive Course offered through the UG language institute, Treffpunkt Sprachen. This course runs in September for fall and February for spring, and doubles as an intensive orientation program.

You will register for this online. Registration opens 2-3 months prior to the beginning of the course, and the course sometimes fills before the final registration date, so register early. Find details here.

Cost for the course in 2019-2020 is €170. This cost is NOT included in fees you pay to UW-Eau Claire; you will pay it directly to UG.

Credits and Course Load
You must enroll in a minimum of 12 UWEC credits and can take a maximum of 18. UG uses the European Credit Transfer System, or ECTS. The conversion of ECTS credits to UWEC credits is simple: Two ECTS credits equal one UWEC credit. Therefore, you need to register for at least 24 ECTS credits to be full time.

The pre-semester intensive German class is worth 6 ECTS credits. Therefore, you will need to register for at least an additional 18 ECTS credits during the regular semester. UG classes may carry anywhere from 2 to 12 ECTS credits, so the actual number of classes you will take can vary a great deal.

Keep in mind:
- The credits you earn abroad are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits.
- The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation.
- Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and must be approved in advance by the CIE and UG.
- In addition, if you take fewer than 12 credits/semester while in Graz, and you received a Graz Viennese Ball scholarship from UWEC, you will be required to pay back a portion of the scholarship.

Registration in Graz
You will list courses you are potentially interested in taking on your UG online application form, but actual registration takes place after arrival.

The registration process will be explained during the pre-semester orientation class in Graz, and you will be able to meet with academic advisors at that time. Be sure to know how to access your degree audit, possible equivalencies, and a list of all classes you hope to take while in Graz.

Past students recommend that you find seven or eight classes that you are interested in and attend all of them for the first two to three weeks of the semester. Then you can decide which classes you like the most, which ones are at an appropriate level, and which professors are most understanding of exchange students.
**Reporting Your Registration**

As soon as you confirm your final registration at UG, log in to your UW-Eau Claire online study abroad account and complete the Course Descriptions questionnaire. You will find it at https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.Home. Choose LOGIN from the top toolbar and login with your UWEC username and password.

If a course you are taking is not already in the UW-Eau Claire Transfer Wizard, you will need to provide the following information:

- course title
- course number
- course description
- number of credits
- name of the department you would like credit in

Once equivalencies have been established by all department chairs involved, the courses will be posted to the Transfer Credit Wizard, and you will be able to see them there.

**Equivalency timeline:** The process of determining an equivalency can take four to six weeks or more. In other words, you will most likely not be able to ask to have equivalencies established for three or four courses so that you can choose which one you wish to take.

**Syllabi and Academic Work**

Because you will register for your classes after arrival in Austria, keep your syllabi and the work that you have done while abroad for review by relevant UW - Eau Claire department chairs, in case you want to petition to have a course substituted for a specific requirement. The German faculty are sometimes reluctant to assign course equivalencies until they see examples of work you have done in the class.

**Grades**

The UG transcript will list both an Austrian number grade and the U.S. letter grade equivalent. Grades are on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Excellent, 2 being Good, 3 being Satisfactory, 4 being Pass, and 5 being Fail.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>UG Grade</th>
<th>UWEC Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sehr Gut (1)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gut (2)</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Befriedigend (3)</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuegend (4)</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicht genuegend (5)</td>
<td>F</td>
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Note: UWEC students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail. Grades from UG are figured into your UWEC GPA and posted to your UWEC transcript. No exceptions will be made.

**UG & UWEC Transcripts**

Please see the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for important information if you are graduating, transferring or applying for a competitive major such as Nursing or Education at the end of your term abroad.

To ensure the accuracy of your transcript, you must report which courses you took to Christa Grassauer, your coordinator at the UG Office of International Relations, including any courses you failed. If the UWEC Admissions Office suspects that failed courses have been left off a transcript (e.g., not enough courses reported on the transcript to be considered full-time) you will be required to order another transcript or explain in writing the lower number of credits reported.

A UG transcript with Austrian grades will be electronically available roughly two months after the end of the UG semester. Because this is later than the end of the UW-Eau Claire semester, your MyBlugold CampS account will
initially indicate “NR” (not reported). This will be changed once the transcript arrives.

Transcripts are electronically signed via UNIGRAZonline. Thus, according to Austrian law, a printed transcript is no longer necessary, and UG does not provide them.

Once your UG grades are available, you must
1) access and download the electronically signed transcript through your UNIGRAZonline account
2) forward it to Cheryl Lochner-Wright, your UWEC study abroad coordinator. The Admissions Office will then verify the transcript through the following link: https://www.signatur.rtr.at/en/vd/Pruefung

Download a copy for your own records, also. This can be very important if you decide to go to graduate school, because graduate schools often require original copies of transcripts from each university you have attended.

If you take classes through the arrangement Uni Graz has with other universities in Graz, you must request those transcripts separately. It can take several months to get them.

Austrian Academic System
Traditional higher education in Austria is different from that in the U.S. Professors lecture on topics of expertise. Students learn independently and often work together outside of class to understand or expand upon the materials presented. Short quizzes and daily or weekly assignments are uncommon. Grades are based on class participation, along with one major exam, paper, or oral report (Referat) at the end.

Types of Classes: The type of classes you take generally determines the type of assessment that will be used. Here’s a list of the possibilities:

- Treffpunktsprachen: "Deutsch als Fremdsprache" courses designed specifically with the exchange student in mind. You attend with visiting students from around the world, and the course language is German. There is an additional charge for these courses.

- VO: Vorlesung. The professor lectures and you take notes; there is very little discussion or Q&A. Your grade is typically based on a final exam or paper. You may have reading to do throughout the semester, but most likely little to no homework. Early exams are not allowed for Vorlesungen.

- VU: Vorlesung mit Uebung. Another lecture class but may have a second portion with group discussions or a group project. A little more engagement in the class than there is in a VO.

- PS: Proseminar. PS’s require class participation. Class discussion, group work, weekly readings/short assignments, and a final exam or paper will all be the basis for your grade.

- S: Seminar. A step above the PS. This is similar to upper level coursework (say a 300 level or so class at UWEC). UG students usually take these in the second half of their university studies, so the course is more challenging. Some S’s have prerequisites that you may or may not have to take. You will have to spend more time out of class studying for an S.

- KO: These usually require hands-on learning during class. They are less common at UG than the other types.

A past student commented: "I mostly took VO’s and VU’s. I wasn’t very comfortable with the lecture format at first, but I got used to it and
the content was definitely fascinating. I also took some K’s and an S. Both are similar to our classes, but they demand more of you. Exams are not fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice, no scantron bubbles there! They are generally essay format. For a couple courses I also had to write papers in lieu of a final exam.

In most classes, the final exam is the only grade you will get all semester – so study for it! Also, if you have to write papers, have a native speaker or two or three, read over it. Some professors may take into consideration that you are a non-native speaker, but my Germanistik professors didn’t."

**Workload:** The overall work has been judged to be similar to what is expected at UWEC, but students have noted that work is left to student initiative. If you do not keep up with class reading and notes, exam periods will be very difficult.

**Professors:** Most courses at UG are taught by Austrian professors. Former UWEC students have found most professors happy to have them in class and understanding of their occasional struggles with the German language, but you need to make the effort to contact them with questions. In general, the professors are there to teach and do research, not to advise students. If you do have a question/problem, contact the professor to set up an appointment since many professors don’t hold office hours.

**Class Materials:** Many classes require the purchase of a “copy card” in order to make copies of all class materials, handouts, and readings. Textbooks are not commonly used in the classrooms.

**Student Services:** Apart from in the Office of International Relations, student services are a relatively unknown concept. The university is there to provide access to academic resources. It does not have the mission, common to most U.S. institutions, of "student development." University students are considered adults who will work their way through the system, asking questions when necessary. As a newcomer to the system and the culture, you may need to ask questions often!

**MONEY MATTERS**

**UWEC information about making payments, when they are due, withdrawal and refund deadlines, financial aid, general scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in the Money Matters section of your Study Abroad Handbook**

**Cost Estimate**

You can find the most current Cost Estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the CIE Graz website. Be sure you are looking at the correct term. Remember that the cost estimate includes what you pay to UW-Eau Claire, what you pay UG, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

**Exchange Explanation**

UWEC students go to UG as exchange students. On a tuition only exchange program, each participant pays the costs they would normally pay at their home school – so UWEC students pay UWEC tuition costs, and UG students cover tuition costs at UG, and they switch places. Students pay the host institution directly for their housing.

No money is exchanged between the schools, and there is no direct monetary correlation between what you pay in Eau Claire and what you receive in Graz.

What is exchanged is not actual payment, but rather benefits. You should receive the same benefits a typical UG student receives, and the UG student receives the benefits a typical UWEC student receives. This arrangement
allows students to participate in programs abroad at a cost similar to what they would pay to attend their home university.

**Housing Costs**

Monthly rent (at the time of printing): was between €300 and €600

Once you receive a housing offer, you must pay a room deposit (€380 – €750, depending on the dorm). Other fees, such as a cleaning or admin fee may also apply. **If you do not confirm your housing offer by making the deposit by the deadline indicated in the offer, your room will be assigned to another student. The deposit is usually due in July for fall semester and November for spring.**

The deposit will be refunded when you move out, provided that the room is in the same condition as when you moved in (OeAD – minus the end-cleaning fee). For deadlines of the relevant dorm providers, please check the relevant websites. Note that all dorms in Graz are co-ed.

Your full semester’s rent is due at the beginning of the semester. It must be paid in CASH. Please plan in advance how you will make this payment. For example, does your debit card have a daily withdrawal limit?

**Funds upon Arrival**

You will need to pay for your housing deposit/key rental, the pre-semester orientation course, AND your entire semester’s housing bill, IN CASH, within two weeks of arrival. In addition, you will need money for food and personal expenses. Be sure you know the daily withdrawal limit on your debit card so that you can plan to make withdrawals accordingly!

**Common Payment Methods**

Cash is the best way to pay for things in Graz. Although some shops do accept credit cards, many do not! You can withdraw cash from Bankautomaten (ATMs) located throughout the city. At the ATM, the screen will allow you to choose English if the German vocabulary is a bit confusing at first.

**Currency Exchange**

The currency of Austria is the Euro. One Euro has 100 cents. There are 8-euro coins, ranging in amount from 1 cent to 2 euros. Coins have different designs in the various countries that use the Euro. Bills range from €5 to €500 and have a standard design across countries. You can find current exchange rates at [http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/](http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/).

**Cost of Living**

For an idea of what everyday costs you may encounter, check out this website: [https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Graz](https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Graz)

**Scholarships**

In addition to the scholarships listed in your Study Abroad Handbook, the following may also apply:

**Austria/Viennese Ball Scholarships:** (4-5/year: up to $1500/semester)

Awarded annually to UW-Eau Claire students accepted to the Graz exchange program. Minimum sophomore standing with 3.0 resident GPA and proficiency in German. No separate application is required.

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

General information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health & Insurance and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.
Centers for Disease Control
The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to Austria. Review the CDC site for Austria.

Due to an increasing measles and mumps cases in Europe, we strongly encourage all students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.

Austrian Student Health Insurance
In addition to the CISI insurance required by the UW-System, UG requires that year-long exchange students purchase Austrian Student Health Insurance. If you are going for one semester, proof of your CISI coverage is sufficient. You do not need to buy the Austrian Student Health Insurance.

The cost for the Austrian insurance was €59.38/month (2018.) It does not include the medical evacuation and repatriation insurance included with the CISI coverage. However, while in Austria, you do not need to worry about paying for medical services upfront, and the Austrian coverage includes vision, dental, and prescription coverage with a small co-pay.

Tick-Borne Encephalitis
If you will be in Austria for the Summer term, UG strongly advises that you get a tick vaccination upon arrival, since tick bites can cause encephalitis, among other things. For effective protection, you need two shots: the first one in early February and a booster 3–4 weeks later. These shots are not available in the U.S.

Medical & Counseling Services
Campus Medical Services: UG has a university hospital and clinic, or you can go to any other physician of your choice.

Medical/Counseling Services in the Community: The UG Office of International Relations will give you a list of English-speaking doctors and therapists during orientation. Be sure to bring your insurance cards with you to all appointments.

Medical Supplies/Medications: You can find basic medical supplies or medications in local pharmacies. They are plentiful and are identified by a green cross (universal symbol in all of Europe). They even sell personal hygiene items that you might not expect, like toothbrushes.

Services for Students with Disabilities
UG can also provide accommodations for students with a variety of specific requirements. Contact information is here: https://www.uni-graz.at/en/university/interdisciplinary-affairs/barrier-free-university/

It is also important to be aware of accessibility in Austria in general. To find more information on this topic, please see the “Laws and Special Circumstances” section of the U.S. State Department Austria Country Information page.

If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact your UWEC study abroad coordinator.

Safety in Austria
Information on crime, specific safety issues, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in Austria is included in the U.S. State Department's Austria-Country-Information-Pages
Specific safety in and around Graz will be discussed during orientation in Eau Claire and in Graz.

Emergency Contacts
General emergency procedures are described in the Safety Abroad section of the Study Abroad Handbook, and UG Office of International Relations staff are available for consultation if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card at Orientation 2; be
sure to keep it in your wallet. The information is also on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

**911 Equivalent in Austria**
If you are in an emergency situation in Graz, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line in Austria is 133 for the police; 144 for an ambulance, and 122 for a fire. However, you can also use the European wide emergency number which is 112. We suggest you save these numbers in your cell phone in case you need to use them quickly.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

Passport information is included in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the CIE for more information about the following topics.

**Visa/Residence Permit**
A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. It is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for the Austria, and if required, to apply for and receive a visa from an Austrian consulate or embassy in a timely manner.

Semester students: US citizens studying in Austria for one semester must apply for a student visa either in advance or within 90 days of arrival in Austria. As of 2019, there were three options for applying. See details in the Visa Information: Austria On Semester Learning Content in your BlugoldsAbroad account.

Academic year students: US citizens are allowed to apply for their residence permit AFTER arrival in Austria. However, you must complete a number of forms/gather a number of documents and bring them with you to Graz. See details in the Visa Information: Austria Full Year Learning Content in your BlugoldsAbroad account.

All students: Please check the websites listed in the materials for any updates before you actually apply for your visa or residence permit and also pay careful attention to any information that is provided by UG.

**Proof of housing:** As part of your visa application, you need proof of housing. **Apply for housing as soon as you receive information about it from UG, so that you have the required documentation.**

**Immigration Process After Arrival**

Semester students: if you did not apply for a visa in advance, you will need to complete the process within 90 days of arriving in Graz. UG organizes a bus trip to Ljubljana, Slovenia, early in each semester for students to apply there. You will need to bring with you to Austria the documents listed in the Visa Information Learning Content referenced previously.

Academic year students: your will apply for your residence in Graz after arrival. UG will assist with the process. You will need to bring with you to Austria the documents listed in the Visa Information Learning Content referenced previously.

**Visas for Travel to Other Countries**
If you plan to travel outside of Austria while abroad, verify visa requirements for each country you will visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country, or your travel agency. Most Western European nations do not
require US citizens to have a visa for tourist travel of less than three months; many Eastern European countries do. You should always verify the requirement as entry requirements can change with little notice.

PACKING TIPS

There is general packing information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook, and you will get a suggested packing list for Graz at Orientation 2. In addition, you should know the following:

Weather
The climate in Graz is somewhat milder than the climate in Wisconsin, but you will still want clothing for all weather. Average temperatures in September and May are highs in the upper 60s and lows in the low 50s. January will see highs in the upper 30s and lows in the 20s.

Clothing
Dress at the university will be casual, with jeans and sweaters the primary clothing of choice. Bring warm clothes. Austrian buildings and residences are often not as warm as U.S. Americans are used to. Sweaters, jeans, and warm nightwear are recommended. You will also want a warm winter coat, gloves, and hat.

Converters & Adapters
The standard electric current in Europe is 220 volts. If you plan to bring a hair dryer, razor or other appliance from the US, you will need to buy both a voltage converter and a plug adapter. Another option is to buy the appliances after you arrive.

If you plan to bring your laptop abroad, check the power cord to see acceptable voltage inputs and outputs. If it includes 220 volts, you will only need to use a plug adapter, not a voltage converter.

If you have several US appliances you plan to use abroad, consider bringing a power strip, also. You will still need to have a voltage converter in order to plug it into the wall.

GETTING TO AUSTRIA

There is information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Travel Arrangements
It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Graz. See the "Arriving in Austria/Graz" section of the UG Welcome Guide for Incoming Students for details about arrival.

Important:
- you should not book your flight until your acceptance has been confirmed and the exact arrival date for the pre-semester orientation class has been confirmed by Uni Graz. However, this does not mean that you cannot look online and begin price comparisons.
- If you plan to apply for your visa in Slovenia after arrival, Austria MUST be your first entry point into the Schengen area. The Schengen area includes Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

So, for example, you can fly from the US to London to Vienna, because the UK does not belong to the Schengen
countries. But you cannot fly from the US to Berlin to Vienna, or the US to Madrid to Vienna, for example, because you will have to go through customs at your first point of entry to the Schengen countries.

- UG recommends that you try to arrive in Graz during the week and during the workday, in order to be able to get your keys and move into your room.

Past students have often flown to Vienna and taken a train to Graz. This involves transferring from airport to bus to train station with all of your luggage. A simpler option is to get a connecting flight from Vienna to Graz at the same time you buy your main ticket

**Buying a Changeable Ticket**

Because exam schedules are only published midway through the semester, you will not know exactly when you can return home.

In addition, fall semester technically runs from early September to the end of January, but some professors will allow exchange students to take exams early to return home for the holidays. Students need to arrange this individually with their professors. Be aware, however, that early exams are not allowed by:

- the College of Business and Economics
- the Department of American Studies.
- Also, early exams are not allowed for lecture courses (Vorlesungen), which encompasses most introductory level courses.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you buy a roundtrip ticket with a low change fee. Note that trip insurance does not cover flight changes if you buy a non-changeable, non-refundable ticket

**Getting to Uni Graz**

**The Buddy Program:** Past students, UG and the CIE strongly recommend that you sign up for the buddy program: [http://unigraz.esnaustria.org](http://unigraz.esnaustria.org) Registration for fall generally opens in June, for spring in November. This program will match you with a volunteer Austrian student interested in supporting international exchange students during their time in Graz.

If you register for the program and have provided UG with your travel plans at least three weeks in advance, your Austrian buddy will try to meet you at the train station or airport in Graz. (Most likely NOT in a car, but to help you figure out public transportation to your student residence.) If your arrival time is uncertain, you will also have your address and can take a taxi to your new home.

**SETTLING IN**

**Orientation**

If you sign up for the buddy program, your buddy will assist you in finding your way around early in your stay, give you information about banking, food shopping, and generally answer your questions. In the words of a past participant, "The most beneficial aspect of the program when dealing with the understanding of host culture came from our mentors (buddies). They welcomed us into their homes for true immersion in Austrian culture, whether eating a traditional dinner together with the family or venturing out onto the famed slopes of the Austrian mountains."

During the pre-semester intensive German class, the UG Office of International Relations holds “Welcome Week” seminars about choosing classes, registration, health insurance, student life, getting your residence permit, and more. You will receive help with registration and all of the official paperwork necessary for enrollment at UG.
**On-Site Support**

Christa Grassauer, the incoming exchange coordinator in the Office of International Relations will be your main contact while at UG. Her contact information is on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

**Local Transportation**

**Walk or Bike:** in Graz, it's often fastest to travel on foot or by bicycle. If you plan to buy a bike, one option is Rebikel, a used bike shop located at Keplerstraße 38. This is not too far from the Hauptbahnhof (main train station). At the end of your time, you can return the bike and get about 50% back of what you paid for it, if it is in good condition.

**Bus or Tram:** You can also use the bus and Tram/Straßenbahn. You can buy single tickets, 24-hour, week-long, or month-long passes. Just make sure you stamp the pass on the bus/tram and never ride without a ticket. Fines are very high if you do.

Past participant tip: *"One fun thing to note is that if you take Linie 1 all the way to the end in either direction (Eggenberg or Mariatrost) you will end up at a tourist site in Graz. Eggenberg will take you to the palace, and Mariatrost will take you to a huge yellow cathedral!"*

**Getting Involved**

One of the keys to a good study abroad experience is connecting with people in your host country. Because you will go through an orientation just for international students, it is easy to hang out just with them, or even just with the other Americans you meet. Try to meet and do things with Austrian students.

Keep in mind while doing this that the Austrian students already have established groups of friends. You will have to take the first step, and often the second and third, to become part of the group. But it is well worth the effort.

**Buddies**

How to begin? Get to know your Austrian mentor. Austrians volunteer to be mentors because they like to get to know international students. Don't be shy; ask your mentor to have coffee or go to an event with you. Take the first step so that they know you are interested in more than just a formal "advising" relationship.

**Roommates**

You will most likely have Austrian roommates, or at the very least, there will be Austrians on your floor. TALK with your roommates; get to know them as people, not just as someone you share space with. Invite them out with you. Do this more than once!

**Tandem Partner**

The Sprach Institut offers a "Tandemspracher/in" program that pairs native German speakers with native English speakers for language exchange. You meet weekly (or more) to practice your language skills and get to know each other.

**Erasmus Student Network**

Join the Erasmus Student Network (ESN). Although you are NOT an Erasmus student (Erasmus is an inter-European exchange program), they welcome the participation of other exchange students, also. They sponsor hikes, plan trips to nearby countries and neighboring towns and attractions and host a meeting every other week where international students and their Austrian buddies can get to know one another.

**University Sport Institute**

You can take all sorts of extracurricular courses (sports, dance) and weekend trips (hiking, climbing) through the Universitaet Sport
Institute (USI). The USI office is in the basement of the Hauptgebaude on campus. Check out their offerings at http://sportinstitut.uni-graz.at/de/. Note that you do not get credit for these courses.

**Musical Options**
Are you musical? Some past students have played with the Grazer BlaserVielHarmonie (http://www.blaeservielharmonie.at/). In addition to rehearsing, the group has a regular Stammtisch after practice, which is a great way to get to know Austrians.

**Activities/Events**
Past students reported that community events were posted clearly around the dorm and in Graz, making cultural experiences easily accessible. They took advantage of the experience by attending operas, sporting events, plays, and concerts. The Office of International Relations is another good location for finding local information.

**Past Participant Tips: Getting Involved**
"Once classes start, be the first to introduce yourself. Do it the first day; it becomes harder as the semester goes on. And don’t stop with an introduction; follow it up with an invitation to do something."

"Go to the weekly Stammtisch for international students and invite Austrians to come with you."

"Take a USI class at the sport center; great way to meet people."

"Get involved early on in as many social gatherings and events as possible. You may be surprised how many really interesting people you will meet."

"For soccer enthusiasts, Graz has two professional soccer teams. They play at a stadium in Graz that was partially funded by Arnold Schwarzenegger (he was born in a small town near Graz) and is conveniently called Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadium. Tickets are relatively inexpensive depending on where you choose to sit."

"There is also a beautiful opera house in Graz. If you want to see a show, the cheapest way to do it is by going to the Opera House ticket counter about one-two hours before showtime. Then any tickets that haven’t been sold yet are sold at huge discounts. It was cheaper than going to the movie theater! And the seats were really great, too."

"The same goes for the Schauspielhaus (theater) where you can watch plays performed in German, Italian, French, and English. Unsold tickets can be purchased cheap right before the start of the show."

**HOUSING**

**Living Situation**
Once you are officially accepted to UG, you must apply directly for housing either via the housing office of the Austrian Exchange Service (OeAD) or at the dorms directly.

OeAD: https://housing.oead.at/en/accommodation/graz-en

The minimum period of rent in student dormitories is one semester. Term of lease:
winter semester: 15.9. – 15.2. / summer semester: 15.2. – 15.7. See the Money Matters>Housing Costs section of this guide for details on paying for housing.

**What’s Provided?**
You will usually have a double room and share kitchen and bathroom facilities with several other students on the floor. All dorms have
laundry facilities, though dryers are rare, as Austrian students generally hang dry their clothes.

If you are in an apartment, it is likely that you will have a single room and share common space only with your apartment-mates. Costs will be correspondingly higher.

**Bedding:** In some living situations, bedding is provided; in others, you will need to provide your own. Read the information about each housing option carefully. It is generally not recommended to bring sheets from home, as bed sizes are often different.

**Internet:** Internet access varies from dorm to dorm; see the specific dorm descriptions for details and follow up with them for additional information.

Another thing to note is that it takes a little while before you can set up your Internet account in student housing, if your housing has it, since you first will receive a password for it during orientation week. If you bring an Ethernet cord, you won’t need to buy one there.

Most housing has a printer available. In order to use it, you must purchase a printer card from the housing office. This gives you a code to punch in each time you use it and deducts money from your printer account. The printer card is priced reasonably.

A description of housing from a past participant: "Our accommodations in the Wistheim on Ghegagasse were well maintained, newer facilities. Located a short distance from the main train station, we were always able to find transportation around Graz as well to other destinations. My roommates consisted of a very nice group of Americans, Bosnians, and Austrians. Since we did most of our own cooking, sharing a kitchen with five other people made for some interesting meal times, but everything went smoothly for the majority of the time."

**Meals: Cooking at Home**
You will have use of a kitchen, either in your apartment or shared with those on your floor in the dorm. You can also choose to eat some meals quite inexpensively in the campus cafeterias.

A great money saver is to cook for yourself and prepare sack lunches. Head to the corner Spar (grocery store chain), Hofer (like Aldi-inexpensive), or a Bauernmarkt (farmer’s market) to get groceries. Remember to bring your own bags, or you’ll have to buy one at the grocery store.

**Meals: Eating out**
You’ll also want to eat out, at least occasionally. Things to keep in mind:

**Water:** Austrians love their sparkling water. When you go to a restaurant and ask for water, that’s what you’ll get, and it is not free. If you want tap water, ask for "Leitungswasser."

**Silverware:** Fork in the left hand, knife in the right, and try to not put them down between bites! You'll get used to it.

**Special Diets:** If you're vegetarian, or have diet restrictions, Austrian restaurants have vegetarian and sometimes gluten free dishes and will often accommodate you by making a dish without meat or with a wheat alternative.

**When you're done:** put your fork and knife parallel across your plate to signal the waiter/waitress that you're done eating.

**Etiquette:** Europeans enjoy sitting for long periods of time to enjoy a meal or drink, and the staff in their restaurants typically won't be in a rush to get you out (unless they're closing for the night).
Getting the bill: You’ll need to ask for your check (“Zahlen, bitte”) and you normally pay the waiter directly at your table. People often split the bill, so be able to tell the waiter what you ordered.

Tips: In Austria and Germany, waiters and waitresses don’t depend on tips to complete their salary, but it’s still important! It should reflect the quality of the service. A good general rule is to round up to the nearest Euro or two with good service, and maybe a few more if the service was excellent. For example: if you have a bill of 11,30€ - just give the waitress 12€ and say "Stimmt so," which means you don’t want change.

BUT: if you have a bill of say, 15,80€ and want to give 17€ but only have a 20€ note, give the waiter/waitress 20€ and say "Drei zurück, bitte." They will then keep the 1,20€ tip.

COMMUNICATION

Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and on computer app-based phone services (SKYPE, What’s App, Facetime, etc) is in the Contacts & Communication section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Time Difference
Graz is in the Central Time Zone (CET) and can be either six or seven hours ahead of Eau Claire, depending upon when Daylight Saving Time begins and ends in each country. To see the current time in Austria, visit: https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/austria

Computer Access on Campus
If you don't bring a laptop with you, there are several computers and computer labs on campus you can use. However, the wait can be long, so make sure to calculate a little extra time. And note that your UG email account/login, which you will need to use the computers on campus, will not be set up until approximately two weeks after registration in Graz. In the meantime, you can use an Internet café.

Printing on Campus
Your other option for printing is to use a printer on campus in one of the computer labs. In order to print, you must set up an account from which money is also deducted per sheet of paper you print. This is done at the main computer lab. Come prepared, as you can only use a credit card to set up your account; cash is not accepted.

Telephone Information
Past students recommend buying an inexpensive, pay-as-you-go cell phone (Handy) once in Austria to use to text friends in country. There are plans that receive free incoming texts/calls, and within Austria rates are cheap, but calling or texting internationally is expensive. The recommendation is to use an app like TextPlus or WhatsApp for international communication. See details in the Study Abroad Handbook. Another alternative is to buy prepaid SIM cards valid in Austria for your smart phone.

Calling from the U.S
From the U.S to Austria: First dial 011, the international dialing code from the US. Next, dial 34, the country code for Austria, and then the rest of the number to reach a specific city and location. Note that if there is a “0” listed before the main number, drop it when dialing internationally.

Snail Mail
International airmail takes 7-10 days to cross the Atlantic in either direction. Be sure to tell family and friends to write Austria/Europe in your address. This will prevent their letters
from being sent to Australia first! See the UG website for more information.

**Communicating in German**

You've studied German for years; they speak German in Austria. Right? Well, actually, they speak Austrian German. Your ears will have a little adjusting to do at first, but you'll soon catch on.

Here are a few Austrian words to get you started:

- der Erdapfel = der Kartoffel
- Heuer = dieses Jahr
- das Mädchen = das Mädel
- der Palatschinken = der Pfannkuchen
- die Paradeiser = die Tomaten
- der Rahm = der Schlag
- Restaurants/Kniepe = Lokale
- das Sackerl = die Tüte
- die Semmel = das Brötchen

- **Before You Go:** Start listening to Austrian music, movies, TV in German. Get your ear accustomed to it before you get there! Tagesschau is a great site for current events in Europe: [http://www.tagesschau.de](http://www.tagesschau.de)

Also, start reading in German, beyond what is required for class. Consider changing your phone language to German, reading websites from Austria and finding online newspapers.

**Fluency:** In the words of a past language student, "I am going to warn you right now: you WILL NOT be fluent after only three-five months in another country. I definitely improved in my reading, writing, listening and speaking, but I did not sound like a native. Don't expect to come home fluent, or you will spend your whole time abroad frustrated with yourself. Take things one day at a time and you will be so impressed with yourself. There were days where I would all of a sudden realize that I was participating in classes that were only in German! It's definitely a great feeling to see how much your German speaking is improving."

**Speaking:**

Speak as much as possible. You have SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES to speak German (since you're living in Austria). And there are so many people willing to help you get better:

**Professors:** For Treffpunkt Sprachen teachers, their job to help you improve, so they will correct you in class and will require you to speak often. They are always willing to help explain things or sit down and talk with you about things you don't understand.

**Other People You Meet:** Austrians KNOW that you are not a native speaker even before you open your mouth. In most cases, if you are making an effort to communicate with them, they will be very kind and patient with you. In addition to this, get to know local students. Many of them are studying English and would LOVE to get together and talk. One thing to remember: you need to make the effort to get to know them.

**Past Participant Tips:**

**Communication**

"Austrians are often a bit reserved around foreigners at first. When beginning a conversation, try your best to speak in German even if you’ve heard the person speaking English. They’ll probably realize quickly it’s not your first language, but they’ll appreciate your effort. After I realized that, I made some great friends. No one expects you to be perfect, but just to try your best. Relax and have fun with your German and with learning Austrian dialects and accents!"

**TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD**
See additional information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Air Travel**
You can find deals on cheap air travel in Europe with companies such as RyanAir. They have a hub in Graz and you can fly to London (Stansted) or Barcelona (Girona). Prices are always changing, so be sure to check often as you plan. Also, be aware that some budget airlines charge for checked luggage, so know how much you'll be checking before you buy your tickets.

**Train Travel**
Traveling by train in Europe is economical and efficient. Some past participants recommend buying a VORTEILScard, an under-26 discount card offered by the Österreichische Bundesbahnen. This card costs about €20/year and gets you up to a 50% discount on rail travel within Austria. You may also find other special promotions for tickets outside of the country. You can ask for more information at the Hauptbahnhof in Graz or by checking out www.oebb.at. The website is also very helpful in planning rail travel (even outside of Austria). Trains leave on time in Europe! Be early so you don't miss your train.

**Past Participant Tips: Travel**
"When traveling, try eating a big lunch and a light dinner. Lunches cost less and will fill you up later into the day."

"When looking for hostels, try to find one that offers a free breakfast. It's faster and cheaper than finding a café."

"With Ryanair the only connection from Graz is to London-Stansted, which is the Ryanair hub. From London-Stansted you can fly nearly anywhere in Europe. It's best NOT to check luggage with Ryanair and only bring a backpack. This will save so much money and time."

"Travel by train is much easier than flying in Europe, especially if you buy a <26 Vorteilskarte."

"Remember, you are technically required to have your passport with you at all times, so bring it with you when you are traveling outside of Austria."
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<td><strong>University of Graz Homepage</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.uni-graz.at">http://www.uni-graz.at</a></td>
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<td><strong>Uni Graz: WIST Student Dormitories</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.wist.vc-graz.ac.at/">http://www.wist.vc-graz.ac.at/</a></td>
<td><strong>Bus &amp; Tram Lines in Graz</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.holding-graz.at/linien/fahrplaene.html">http://www.holding-graz.at/linien/fahrplaene.html</a></td>
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<td><strong>UG Intramural Sports</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://sportinstitut.uni-graz.at/de/">http://sportinstitut.uni-graz.at/de/</a></td>
<td><strong>Graz Events</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.theater-graz.com">http://www.theater-graz.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Austria Quick Facts</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.tourmycountry.com/austria/quickfacts.htm">http://www.tourmycountry.com/austria/quickfacts.htm</a></td>
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<td><strong>UG Student Band</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.blaeservielharmonie.at/">http://www.blaeservielharmonie.at/</a></td>
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<td><strong>Austrian Radio</strong>&lt;br&gt;<a href="http://www.listenlive.eu/austria.html">http://www.listenlive.eu/austria.html</a></td>
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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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<tr>
<th>University of Graz</th>
<th>UW-EAU CLAIRE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mag. Christa Grassauer</td>
<td>Cheryl Lochner-Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange Coordinator</td>
<td>Senior Study Abroad Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of International Relations</td>
<td>Center for International Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz</td>
<td>3 Schofield Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-8010 Universitätsplaz 3</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRIA</td>
<td>Eau Claire, WI 54702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PH: 011-43-316-380-1254</td>
<td>Phone: (715) 836-4411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:christa.grassauer@uni-graz.at">christa.grassauer@uni-graz.at</a></td>
<td>Fax: (715) 836-4948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://international.uni-graz.at">http://international.uni-graz.at</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:lochnecb@uwec.edu">lochnecb@uwec.edu</a></td>
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* If calling from inside Austria, drop the "011-43", add a "0", and dial the rest of the number.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Austrian Consulate General**

31 East 69th Street  
New York, NY 10021  
Phone: (212) 737 6400  
info@austria-ny.org  

**Consulate General, United States**

Parkring 12a  
1010 Vienna  
Tel.: (+43-1) 31339-7535  
ConsulateVienna@state.gov

Opening hours: 8:00 - 11:30 am  
Emergency Services: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm (after hours the duty officer should be called: (+43 1) 313 39  
https://at.usembassy.gov/

Remember that in most cases, local contacts are best in local emergency situations.

If you have an after-hours emergency that can be helped on the U.S. side, please call University Police at the number above. Calls can be made to this number 24 hours a day. You may get an answering machine; however, an officer is alerted as soon as you have left your message. Be sure to give the officer the phone number you can be reached at, as well as what type of assistance you require.
WHAT PAST PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID

“You just can’t pass up an experience like this. Graz is a vibrant and multicultural city that will never cease to amaze you.” Nessa S.

“I’m very proud of the way this year has increased my horizons. Experiencing the culture of my international and Austrian friends has been unforgettable. I realized how much more I am capable of than I once thought - I’ve learned a language very well, traveled to countries I couldn’t have placed on a map last year, and realized how adaptable I am. This year has helped me become interested in the international aspect of things. After this year, I know what is important to me, I know what I am capable of, and there are few challenges that I don’t think I could handle.” Bethany N.

“In my opinion, the Graz program is UWEC’s best way to improve your knowledge of German language and culture. You get to meet so many new people and actually use the language because you do not go with many other Eau Claire students or a lot of Americans. Austria has a great location for traveling Europe, and the people are wonderful. This program will really get you out of your bubble and into the Austrian language and culture!” Jackie S.

“Graz is definitely worth experiencing as a year-long study abroad program. Nestled in the mountains and surrounded by interesting travel opportunities, Austria provides a unique option to learn the German language and experience a different culture. While there, take advantage of every new and exciting activity available, whether traveling around the neighbor countries or skiing down the mountains of Salzburg. The more time spent trying new things, the more enriching the experience.” Craig M.

“For me this program was perfect. It gave me a balance of responsibility and freedom that allowed me to choose what my experience was. Also, I personally think a year is much better when traveling to a foreign country to learn the language. I felt that after 4 or 5 months I was finally fitting in and Graz was now my home. I couldn’t have imagined going home at that time. It was a great program for me and I would recommend it to anyone.” Andrew S.

“Graz is a great city with tons to offer! There are three different universities in Graz alone so there is always plenty for your average college student to do and great people to meet. Austria has a central location, which makes travelling to most countries easy. So, whether you are looking to improve your German or just go and experience life in another country, Graz is a great choice!” Kristi D.