

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Study Abroad



GRAZ, AUSTRIA
FALL/AY 2019-2020

Program Guide

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Congratulations on being accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire exchange with the University of Graz, 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 growth
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 guide in conjunction with the general Study Abroad Handbook. The Handbook has information that is valid for all UW-Eau Claire study abroad programs. This guide has information to assist in your preparation for participating in the exchange. It complements the Handbook, study abroad orientations, additional information in your UWEC online study abroad account and from your peer advisor, and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Although all the information available at the time of publishing has been used, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email additional information throughout the semester. We also encourage you to contact your peer advisor, the Center for International Education (CIE) staff, and past program participants with your specific questions.

Basic questions only you can answer include:

- 1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Common goals of student travelers include advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for change, and wish to challenge oneself with immersion in a new culture.
- 2) Given the way the program is set up, how can you best prepare to meet your goals? For example, if one of your goals is to truly be immersed in German language and culture, yet you have the option of taking classes with all international students, how can you ensure that you get out and interact with the local population?

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

An Important Note

Throughout this guide, you will find reference to the Universität Graz ([UG website for incoming international students](#)). Here you will find the [UG Welcome Guide for Incoming Students](#), among many other useful links. The website has information for students coming to Graz on a number of different exchange programs. **UW-Eau Claire students at Graz are considered "Joint Study" participants.** It is important to know this in order to make sense of the UG website!

The Program

In this exchange program, you become a regular international student at Uni Graz. The first UW-Eau Claire students went to Graz in 1986!

You will begin your exchange with a pre-semester intensive German course, which doubles as an orientation for your time in Graz. **In the fall, UW-Eau Claire students may enroll in classes for U.S. students (SUNY classes), other international students (Treffpunkt Sprachen classes), or regular university classes.** In the spring, students take Treffpunkt Sprachen and regular classes.

The Location

Graz, population >250,000, is the second largest city in Austria. Located in the

southeastern province of Steiermark (Styria) near the Hungarian and Slovenian borders, Graz is nicknamed "die grüne Stadt" due to its many parks. Theaters, jazz clubs, an opera house, and many cafés provide students with rich cultural opportunities. With three universities, the city is very student-oriented.

The University

Uni Graz was founded in 1585 by the Habsburg Archduke Karl II. With a student population of approximately 32,500, Uni Graz is the second largest university in Austria. The university is divided into six colleges: Humanities, Law, Natural Sciences, Social and Economic Sciences, Catholic Theology, and the Institute of Translating and Interpreting. Its "campus" is located in the center of Graz, but like many European universities, its buildings are scattered throughout the surrounding area.

Academic Calendar

The Graz exchange is for either semester or the full academic year. Below are **tentative** 2019-2020 dates. They will be confirmed in February; **do not make any travel arrangements until you are officially accepted by Uni Graz AND have confirmed dates.** Note that in Austria, the two semesters are Winter (our fall) and Summer (our spring)

Depart U.S.:	September 1
Arrive in Graz:	September 2

Required Intensive German/Orientation Course:	Sept 3-25
Winter Semester Classes/Exams*	Oct 1-Jan 31
Christmas break	Dec 16-Jan 3
Semester break	Feb 1-Mar 1
Summer Semester Classes/Exams	Mar 2-June 30

*Winter semester, including exams, runs through January 31; **exams are usually in the last week of that period.** Some professors will allow winter semester-only exchange students to arrange individually with them to take exams earlier if the student needs to be back earlier to begin classes at their home university. This is completely up to the professor. If you wish to try to arrange this, **it is your responsibility to talk early in the semester with each of your professors.**

The early exam option is **never available** for lecture courses (Vorlesungen). The College of Business and the departments of English and American Studies do NOT allow early exams.

Because you will not be sure exactly when you will be done with exams, get a plane ticket with a low change fee. It is possible that you will want to change your return date!

ACADEMICS

There is additional information on maintaining program eligibility, as well as topics such as registration, class attendance, credits and course load, grades, transcripts, and accessing the UW-Eau Claire library while abroad in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Pre-Semester Intensive German Course

All UW-Eau Claire students are required to take the pre-semester German Intensive Course offered through the Univ Graz language institute, Treffpunkt Sprachen. This course doubles as an intensive orientation program. You will register for this online. Registration usually opens in mid-May, and the course sometimes fills before the final registration date, so register early. [Find details here.](#) Choose German as a Foreign Language>Intensive Courses on the left sidebar.

Cost for the course in 2018-2019 was €170. This cost is **NOT** included in fees you pay to UW-Eau Claire; you will pay it directly to Uni Graz.

Regular Semester Course Options

You can take any course offered at the regular university as part of the exchange. There are also some German as a Foreign Language courses offered during the semester through Treffpunkt Sprachen.

Exchange students may take one Treffpunkt Sprachen course for a reduced fee (€70Euro in 2018). Additional courses will be charged at the full rate. (€170/course in 2018). More information on these classes is available at <https://treffpunktsprachen.uni-graz.at/en/>

Finding Courses

Courses for the next academic year are not published until July, so you will need to use the previous year as a guide.

The International Office at UG has an [excellent guide on how to look for courses](#), complete with screen shots. Use this guide to make sense of the [Online Course Catalog](#).

There are also some [courses taught in English](#). To see those offered for the current year, just select the term and click search. Be patient; it can take several minutes for all of the courses to load.

Remember that "W" = Wintersemester (fall) and "S" = Sommersemester (spring). Also, although the directions from UG say that you may register for classes at any level, from the UW-Eau Claire perspective, you may only register for undergraduate (bachelor's level) courses.

Course Equivalencies Before You Go
(see the UG website for more course information.)

If you take SUNY fall semester courses, the following UW-Eau Claire equivalencies are already determined:

The Treffpunkt Sprachen classes may transfer back differently depending on your level of German. Consult your German faculty advisor to discuss your particular situation.

You can find regular university courses that have already been evaluated for UW-Eau Claire credit on the [UW-Eau Claire Transfer Wizard](#). However, because UG did not start using a uniform course numbering system until recently, it may be difficult to determine if a course has already been evaluated. Please contact the CIE with questions.

You will find several courses in Transfer Wizard with the prefix "**SUNY**". These courses were part of a study abroad program through the State University of New York (SUNY) system and **are no longer offered UG**.

If a course has not yet been evaluated for UW-Eau Claire credit, this will happen after you actually register for the course at UG.

Credits and Course Load

UG uses the European Credit Transfer System, or ECTS. The conversion of ECTS credits to UW-Eau Claire credits is simple: Two ECTS credits equal one UW-Eau Claire

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, so you will need to register for 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.

If you take fewer than 12 credits/semester while in Graz and you received a Graz scholarship from UW-Eau Claire, 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 also 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.

Course Equivalencies in Graz

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 UW-Eau Claire 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 ECTS 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

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

Keep all 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, in particular, are 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.

Austrian Grade	UW-Eau Claire Equivalent
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Sehr Gut (1)	A
Gut (2)	B+
Befriedigend (3)	B-
Genuegend (4)	C
Nicht genuegend (5)	F

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) the student will be required to order another transcript or explain in writing the lower number of credits reported.

Transcripts

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

Once your grades are available, you must access and download the electronically signed transcript through your UNIGRAZonline account and 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.

Transcripts and Delayed Graduation

If you are a senior and are studying abroad for your last semester, please note that the different timelines in grade reporting **will require you to delay your graduation**. The Blugold Central/Registrar's Office must receive grades within 42 days of the last day of the UW-Eau Claire semester in order to confirm your graduation that semester. For example, for May graduation in a UW-Eau Claire semester that ends on May 17, grades must be received by June 28. This is a UW-Eau Claire requirement, and our partners abroad cannot change their usual timelines to accommodate it.

Austrian Academic System

Traditional higher education in Austria is very different from that in the U.S. Professors lecture on topics of expertise. Students are expected to 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 very uncommon. Grades are largely 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 you, 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 also have a second portion with group discussions or a group project. There is typically a little more engagement in the class than there is in a VO.
- **PS: Proseminar.** PS's require engagement in the class. 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 UW-Eau Claire). 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."

Work Load: The overall work required has been judged to be similar to that expected at UW-Eau Claire, 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 UW-Eau Claire students have found most professors happy to have them in class and understanding of their occasional struggles with the German language, but you will 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 have 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 International Office, 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

Information about how payments are made, when they are due, withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, budgeting, and how to bring money abroad is in 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 Austrian student receives, and the Austrian student receives the benefits a typical Eau Claire student receives. This type of arrangement allows students to participate in overseas programs at a cost similar to what they would pay to attend their home university.

Personal Travel

The amount spent on personal travel varies greatly from student to student. It depends on your budget and your priorities. Students who want to be involved in their host community generally spend less time (and money) traveling. Others travel every weekend with correspondingly high costs and fewer close connections in their new home. Past participants who responded to our money survey spent between \$1,000 and \$4,000 on personal travel.

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.

The exchange rate as of December 27, 2018 was 1 euro = \$1.10453 U.S. You can find current exchange rates at

<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

MONEY ABROAD

In addition to the information about bringing money abroad in the Study Abroad Handbook, past participants report the following about the Graz.

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!

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.

SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition to the financial aid and scholarship information in your Study Abroad Handbook, there are some scholarships that specifically support students on the Graz program, or German majors/minors, including:

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

In addition to the general information in the Study Abroad Handbook, you should be aware of the following health & safety information specific to the Austria.

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/month in 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.

Medical & Counseling Services

UG has a university hospital and clinic, or you can go to any other physician of your choice. The UG International Office will give you a

list of English-speaking doctors during orientation. Be sure to bring your insurance cards with you to all appointments.

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 look at the level of accessibility in Austria. To find more information on this topic, please see the [State Department Country Specific Information page](#).

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

Tick vaccination/medication: If you will be in Austria for the Summer term, you are strongly advised to get a tick vaccination, since tick bites can cause encephalitis, among other things. For effective protection, you need two shots: the first one around February and a booster 3–4 weeks later.

Safety in Austria

Information on crime, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in Austria is available online at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Austria.html>

Emergency Contacts

General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook and UG international office staff are available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card from your peer advisor. The information is also on the *Contact Names & Addresses* section of this guide and will also be posted to the Learning Content of your UWEC online study abroad account closer to departure.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Passport

General passport information is found in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Visa

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. US citizens studying in Austria for one semester must apply for a student visa; this may require travel to Chicago. Students studying for a full academic year must apply for a residence permit.

See the “Visa/Resident Permit Information: Austria” in the Learning Content section of your BugoldsAbroad account for basic information about the visa options.

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.

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.

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

In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about Austria.

Clothing & Weather

The climate in Graz is somewhat milder than the climate in Wisconsin, but you will still want clothing for all weather. Dress at the university will be casual, with jeans and sweaters the primary clothing of choice. Bring warm clothes. Sweaters, jeans, and warm nightwear are recommended. Austrian apartments/dormitories are often

not as warm as Americans are used to. You will also want a warm winter coat, gloves, and hat.

What to Pack

Your Peer Advisor will provide a suggested packing list at Orientation 2.

Appliances

The standard electric current in Europe is 220 volts. U.S. appliances such as hair dryers and razors run on 110 volts. If you plan to bring these appliances, you will need to buy both a **converter and a plug adapter**. You may also choose to buy the appliances abroad.

TRAVEL TO AUSTRIA

There is additional information on travel, including student-oriented travel agencies and instructions for booking a flight, in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Travel Arrangements

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Graz.

Remember:

- **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.

See the "Arriving in Austria/Graz" section of the UG Welcome Guide for important details about arrival.

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. Simpler options:

- get a connecting flight from Vienna to Graz at the same time you buy your main ticket
- fly to Munich Airport in Germany (MUC – Franz Josef Strauss) which has a direct train connection to Graz

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.

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/> **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.

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 International Office 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.

HOUSING

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>

Dorms: <https://www.uni-graz.at/en/studying/student-life/%20accommodation-and-food/student-hostels/>

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. 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?

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.

In some living situations, bedding is provided; in others, you will need to provide your own. It is generally not recommended to bring sheets from home, as bed sizes are often different.

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."*

FOOD

Preparing Your Own Food

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.

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.

Specialties to Try

Past students recommend the following taste sensations:

- Wiener Schnitzel: breaded & fried veal or pork
- Spätzle: noodles
- Käsespätzle: noodles covered in cheese, onions, and sometimes vegetables
- Kaiserschmarren: a thick, fluffy pancake with raisins, often served with powdered sugar & apples
- Döner: a Turkish sandwich, usually lamb or beef
- Jause: afternoon snack (bread, cheese, fruit, vegetables ...)
- Schnitzelsemmel: a fresh bakery roll (Semmel) filled with fried Schnitzel and Salat (lettuce, onion, etc.)
- Game dishes: exactly like it sounds; the people of Graz tend to favor meat, but there are still plenty of vegetarian options
- Liptauer cheese: a spiced, white cheese to be spread on crusty bread
- Apfelsaft gespritz: apple juice mixed with mineral water (any juice can be used)

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 floormates; 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 also 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 International Office 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."

COMMUNICATION

Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and on calling apps is in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Internet

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

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.

Another thing to note is that it takes a little while before you can set up your Internet account in student housing 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.

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.

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.

Calling/Cell Phones

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.

From the U.S. to Austria: If you want to call someone in Austria before you arrive, you must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you dial 43, the country code for Austria, then the city code, and the rest of the number.

Language Notes

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

Past participants suggest that you do your best to use your German over the winter break in order to make an easier transition in the spring. Possible ways to do this:

- listen to **Internet radio stations** from Germany or Austria. You can find free, live stations that play both European and American music. (This is also fun because you'll know what kind of music they are listening to there.) Try this to start: <http://www.listenlive.eu/austria.html>
- check out some **websites in German**. Brush up on the news by surfing German language news sites; it's good to be informed about what's going on in Europe/Austria.
- **speak with others who know German**—build your confidence!
- change your Facebook language to German to familiarize yourself with new vocabulary and help you to start thinking in German.
- Try reading some books or the newspaper in German; Tagesschau is a great site for current events in Europe: <http://www.tagesschau.de>

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 travel information in your Study Abroad Handbook.

To get around in Graz, it's often fastest to travel on foot or by bicycle. If you're planning on buying a bike for your semester, 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 semester, you can also return the bike and get about 50% back of what you paid for it, if it is in good condition.

Another way to get around the city is with the bus and Tram/Straßenbahn. You can buy single tickets, but you also have the option of buying 24-hour, week-long, or month-long passes. Just make sure you stamp it on the bus/tram and never ride without a ticket. This is known as Schwarzfahren and you can be fined quite a bit if you do it.

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. Go to both of these places, especially in the summer since it's so beautiful!"*

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."

WEB RESOURCES: AUSTRIA

<i>Graz</i>	<i>Graz</i>	<i>Travel/Austria</i>
University of Graz Homepage http://www.uni-graz.at	Graz Tourism http://www.graz.at http://www.graztourismus.at	Austrian Rail http://www.oebb.at/
Uni Graz International Office http://international.uni-graz.at	Pharmacies & English-Speaking Doctors in Graz http://www.info-graz.at/cms/1/7426/ https://at.usembassy.gov/us-citizen-services/medical-assistance/	TUIfly Regional Airlines http://www.tuifly.com/en/index.html
Uni Graz: WIST Student Dormitories http://www.wist.vc-graz.ac.at/	Bus & Tram Lines in Graz http://www.holding-graz.at/linien/fahrplaene.html	Austria Info http://www.austria.info/at
UG Intramural Sports http://sportinstitut.uni-graz.at/de/	Graz Events http://www.theater-graz.com	Austria Quick Facts http://www.tourmycountry.com/austria/quickfacts.htm
UG Student Band http://www.blaeservielharmonie.at/		Austrian Radio http://www.listenlive.eu/austria.html

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<http://international.uni-graz.at>

* 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

<http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/embassy/consulate-general-new-york.html>

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/>

UW-EAU CLAIRE

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After Hours Emergency

(715)577-9045

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.



1/10/19, clw