

Personal Experience Report

University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria

B.Sc. Environmental and Resource Management, WS 2019/20

An ERASMUS+ exchange semester at BOKU, Vienna is something challenging at times, but is definitely worth trying.

The preparation process at the host university was smooth and understandable. BOKU has a detailed course catalogue with requirements, module and exam descriptions, ECTS to choose the subjects from. After the courses have been chosen and the learning agreement has been signed, all you need to do is to upload the required documents and fill in the application form on the BOKU ONLINE-MOBILITY platform for exchange students and then wait for your application to be processed.

Finding an accommodation was not an easy task, at least for me. It turned out to be quite difficult to find something when you are not in Vienna, have no EU-citizenship and just for a few months for a decent price not far from the university. Ideally, one should start looking for an apartment long before one gets officially nominated from the BTU.

The organization of studies is quite different if compared to Cottbus. The number of subjects on offer is very high, even for students with no sufficient German skills. However, most subjects are only worth 2-3 ECTS, which means you need to take at least 10 subjects to get the recommended 30 ECTS/semester. Moreover, some courses take place every week, some – every other week, whereas others are block modules taking place either during one week only (Mo - Fri 9.00-17.00) or it could be just a one-day module with an exam directly afterwards. Interestingly, there is no unified timetable regulating the time when a lecture starts/ends and how long it lasts, everything depends on the module and the professor.

As for exams, they do not necessarily take place at the end of the semester. What is more, before you have registered for an exam, you can get the detailed information about its form in the module catalogue on the BOKU website. In some cases, the exams dates are known at the very beginning of the semester, in other cases they are officially announced only 2-3 weeks



before the exam takes place. If you take modules from different departments, it is very likely that you may have several exams on the same day or within a week.

The professors are well-qualified and experienced and have very good explanatory skills, as well as a very good command of the English language. If you have collisions in your exam dates or something is not very clear to you, you can always ask a question or write an email, asking for an appointment.

Another useful thing for students in Austria is the STUDD-App, which provides information about your timetable (time, campus, changes), university events and announcements, and allows you to (de)register for courses and exams and to get in touch with other course participants.

Everyday life in Vienna is similar to Germany, though more expensive. Even if you have no German skills it is not a problem to get used to the new environment, as Vienna is extremely



tolerant and intercultural. The public transportation system works well, the city is beautiful, and the people are helpful which makes Vienna and the BOKU in particular a perfect destination for a semester abroad. Cultural life in Vienna is extremely eventful, everything depends on your tastes, time and finances available. The university organizes some events like a welcoming info session, a

welcoming party (Heuriger), Xmas and the annual BOKU Ball, plus there is a weekly student meeting (Stammtisch) for BOKU and exchange students. Apart from the university events mentioned, the city itself and its countryside offers a great number of leisure activities, from hiking and shopping to clubbing and going to the world-famous Vienna opera.



All in all, an exchange semester is a great opportunity to challenge yourself and your adaptation skills, as it gives you a chance to make up your own study plan, improve your language, communication and soft skills and make friends from all across the EU.