

Internationales Kulturinstitut (IKI) Program, Vienna, Austria
Summer 2010

Program Evaluation

1. Arrival Overseas/On-Site Orientation:

- a. IKI arranges accommodations for summer students in Haus Salzburg, a student residence in Vienna. Students are individually responsible for traveling to Vienna on their own. Haus Salzburg contacts the summer students prior to their arrival in Vienna with the necessary information for check-in. If students are arriving in Vienna prior to move-in day, they are responsible for their own accommodations unless otherwise arranged with the dormitory. I would thus recommend arranging to stay in a hostel or hotel before move-in.
- b. First-time students at IKI register for courses by completing an online assessment of their German language skills. Upon arrival in Vienna, students then meet with a professor or administrator from IKI the Sunday before the start of their course to evaluate their speaking skills. After these two evaluations, students are given a final placement into a course level, and basic information about when and where their class will meet. Some kitchen utensils and household items are available to borrow from IKI upon request. Otherwise, there is no formal orientation for IKI or Haus Salzburg.

2. Academics:

- a. The classroom structure at IKI is very relaxed and conducive to learning. There were less than ten students in both of my classes. While this size is roughly comparable to an upper-level German course at UW, there was a much higher focus on group work in IKI courses, which provided much more individual participation and opportunity to practice language skills. A typical German class at UW meets for an hour daily, five days per week. While student participation in these classes is strongly encouraged, there are usually only a handful of students who participate on a daily basis, and many students never participate. Classes at IKI met for three hours a day, five days per week, and I spent the vast majority of those three hours speaking. Thus, my courses at IKI provided much more individual speaking practice. Student-teacher relations were also very relaxed – IKI instructors frequently attended the after-school free-time activities alongside students. Several instructors also led evening cooking classes for students. IKI sponsors a monthly outing at a traditional Viennese wine tavern, which both students and instructors attend and look forward to. After the last class each month, our

classes met and ate lunch with our instructors. Thus, it was both easy and expected for IKI students to cultivate warm working relationships with the instructors. This contributed very positively to the classroom environment. While there were no formal exams in either of my courses, we completed frequent individual in-class exercises to judge our progress.

IKI's administrators are incredibly friendly and helpful, frequently lending out kitchen utensils and other household items to summer students. IKI also allows students to use the office computer or bring their laptops to the building to use the Wi-Fi network.

- b. The quality of instruction at IKI was unprecedented – I learned more in a week of class at IKI than I have learned in an entire quarter's worth of instruction anywhere else. While the course content was similar in some ways to a UW German course, there is really no substitute for the conversational practice IKI provided. I had a strong basis in grammar and writing prior to studying at IKI; however, I lacked practice and confidence in my speaking skills. After two months at IKI, I was completely confident in my skills and was able to communicate effectively and easily with other foreign students and Austrian natives.
- c. Courses at IKI are determined by a student's language skills, so it's not really possible to recommend specific courses. Every single instructor at IKI is more than competent and incredibly helpful.
- d. I studied German language for three years at UW before attending IKI, so there was a direct correlation between my courses at UW and at IKI. However, while I felt like I cultivated a strong background in German language at UW, I never would have reached the same level of speaking ability had I not studied at IKI. Prior to my departure, I felt that my German skills had figuratively hit a wall, and my studies at IKI provided the perfect curriculum and environment to move past that roadblock.

3. Housing:

- a. IKI arranges accommodations for summer students at Haus Salzburg, a student dormitory in Vienna. Students have the option of living in a double or a single room. While students also have the option of finding summer housing themselves, I would strongly recommend living in Haus Salzburg, as it further encourages students to spend time with peers from other countries and acquaint themselves with other cultures. For example, I lived in a double room with a violinist/music student from Taiwan, and was one of three Americans on my dorm floor. Thus, I had the opportunity to get to know not only

a roommate from another country, but spent time with students from other various backgrounds.

4. Program Site:

IKI courses are taught at two locations, about five minutes from each other and less than a ten minute subway ride from Haus Salzburg. While there is no formal "campus" like at a university, as the classrooms are essentially housed in office buildings, both locations are in the historic central district of Vienna. Thus, they are literally across the street from some of Vienna's most prominent and famous attractions and historic sites.

5. Health and Safety:

While Vienna is a large city, it is relatively safe for such a populated area. There is a far lower instance of theft and crime in Vienna, at least from my perceptions, than any other European or American city I've visited.

6. Cultural Aspects:

- a. I met most of my friends during the program either at Haus Salzburg, or in class at IKI. IKI also sponsors a different free-time activity almost every day during the summer, including Austrian cooking classes, excursions to various tourist attractions in Vienna/the surrounding countryside, and organizes several visits to traditional Viennese wine taverns per month. These activities also provided a great opportunity to get to know other students from various course levels, especially those who didn't live in Haus Salzburg.
- b. Because IKI is an international school, I was one of two or three Americans in my classes in both July and August. However, because there are so many different nationalities represented at IKI, it was almost impossible to maintain any cultural stereotypes. With only two or three people from any one country represented, IKI students focused more on the similarities that weren't dependent on cultural background. My experience at IKI thus encouraged me to view myself less as a US citizen or UW student abroad, but as a citizen of the world.

7. Financial:

- a. I always accessed money via my U.S. bank account, and simply withdrew cash from an ATM in large increments to avoid accruing large fees.
- b. I generally spent around 50 Euros per week on food – including all groceries and eating out. Rent was prepaid to IKI before departure. I bought a monthly Vienna Metro card for 50 Euros each month (100 Euros total), which provides unlimited travel on all forms of public transport available in Vienna. I also used around 100 Euros per month for miscellaneous expenses, including shopping, admission to museums and tourist attractions, and going out.
- c. I did not incur any unexpected expenses while abroad.

d. I did not receive any financial aid for this program.

8. Program/Exchange Administration:

a. N/A

b. The entire program was administered by IKI, including accommodations at Haus Salzburg, academia, and extracurricular activities. Prior to my departure, all of the administrative planning was coordinated via email with IKI. The office administrators at IKI always responded promptly and warmly to any of my questions, and made the application and preparation process incredibly easy. I have no complaints about the process, as IKI was very informative and helpful.

9. Program/Student Type:

This type of program is best suited for very independent students, who are hoping for a much more diverse and international experience than a UW study abroad program. I was the only student from the UW at IKI the entire summer, and only spent time with three other students from the US. This was initially rather challenging, as it was entirely up to me to meet students from IKI and the dorm. However, this deeply enriched my experience and gave me the opportunity to foster friendships with students from around the world, when I otherwise might have only spent time with students from UW.

10. Overall Experience:

I was honestly quite unsure of what to expect upon first arriving in Vienna. I was genuinely surprised by how easy it was to feel at ease with the IKI instructors and students, and was pleasantly surprised by how accepting and open the environment was at the school. Based on my previous experiences in several other European countries, I expected to be treated more negatively than others because I am an American. However, I was very pleasantly surprised both with how I was treated by the international students at IKI and by the Viennese natives I met. Due to its historical background and location in central Europe, Vienna has long been known as a melting pot of sorts – and this creates a very accepting atmosphere for foreigners.

Overall, my time at IKI was incredibly fulfilling and eye-opening, and I'd highly recommend this program to any student looking for an enriching international experience.

Program: Internationales Kulturinstitute (IKI) Program in Vienna, Austria
Spring and Summer Quarters, 2009

1. ARRIVAL OVERSEAS/ON-SITE ORIENTATION:

- a. Please recommend accommodations for future students upon arrival.
Upon arrival, I went immediately to the apartment that was arranged by the school. On the IKI website, they allow you to sign up for housing through the school. This provides your housing for your arrival, which is the easiest way to have accommodation when arriving in Vienna. If you are unable to stay in your housing on the night of your arrival, the Wombat Hostel on Mariahilferstrasse is a very nice and safe hostel. It is relatively cheap and you can book on www.hostelworld.com. IKI will arrange for a taxi if you email them. There is also a train from the airport to the center, which is a bit cheaper. If you ask for directions, it is easy to find the train. The ticket booths can be changed to English.
- b. If your program/exchange had an orientation, what did it cover and how did it help you adapt?
I did not have an orientation.

2. ACADEMICS:

- a. Please evaluate the instruction you received abroad. Compare the following to the University of Washington's system:
The classrooms in IKI are relatively small. They consist of tables and chairs. The class size is smaller due to the intensive nature of the courses. The largest class is 15 people, although in my 4 months at the school, I never saw a class size that big. My largest class was 11 people. The classes are entirely taught in German. However, students are allowed a dictionary and teachers give definitions in German, which are very helpful. Classes are 5 days a week, either in the morning or afternoon, for 3 hours. The teachers are all very nice and really want the students to learn German. Depending on the teacher, there are usually exams after every section in your book. In a one-month course, most likely you will have 3-4 chapter exams and a final. They are not comprehensive. The administration is very helpful and willing to give you help with anything you made need for class or exploring the city, everything from cheaper health clinics and directions to good restaurants. There is not a library or computer system, but classrooms are open for study after class. A tutorium is offered 3 days a week for extra help when needed.
- b. Please evaluate the quality and content of instruction.
The quality of instruction is great. The teachers are incredibly helpful and very intent on their students learning German. Extra help is available and they will repeat questions, answers and definitions when necessary. Since the classes are entirely in German and move very quickly, their willingness to help is wonderful. The classes are entertaining and you learn a large amount of material in a short amount of time. I felt my German level increase greatly while in Vienna.
- c. Are there any courses or instructors you would recommend to future students?
I had two teachers while studying at IKI. However, the teachers you receive depend on your level and when you are entering the program.
- d. How did your study abroad coursework relate to your UW education?
I needed a foreign language for my degree and this counted towards my foreign language. I also wanted the cultural experience of living and studying abroad, which was achieved by my study. It was an amazing experience.

3. HOUSING:

a. What housing options were available to you?

Housing was provided by IKI. When I filled out the forms for my application to the school, I explained that I needed housing. I was placed in an apartment near the center of the city. It was in a perfect location. I rented a room and shared a bathroom and kitchen with three other students. I would recommend finding your housing through IKI. It is easiest and the housing options are very good. They have apartment and dorm opportunities, all of which are in very good locations.

4. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE SITE:

Describe the campus and surrounding community.

The campus is in the center of the city. They have two different buildings where students attend classes. The main building is directly across the street from the Opera house. The other building is down the street, approximately a five minute walk. They are both in the center of the city and easy to find.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please describe any health or safety concerns (e.g., quality of medical facilities, unsafe districts, theft, etc.) associated with your study abroad experience.

Vienna is an incredibly safe city. I never felt unsafe in my time there. However, I was told to avoid Karlsplatz U-Bahn station at night. I did not go there in the evening and never had any trouble there during the day. If you are careful with your purse or backpack, keeping them close to your body, there shouldn't be any trouble with theft. Be aware of your belongings. I did not have to attend a medical facility, however I did go with a friend. The medical clinic was very efficient. They were very clean and it took less than an hour for my friend as a walk in-patient.

6. CULTURAL ASPECTS:

a. How did you integrate into the culture and meet members of the community?

I met the most people in my courses. As they were also learning German, most were not from Austria. However, I met students from all over the world. My closest friends were from Romania, England, Korea and India. Almost all of the friends I made were living in Vienna and had been in Vienna for a while. Through them, I was able to meet members of the community and explore the city. A few of my friends participated in Cricket and Rugby and we attended games with them, which included local participants. Through these sporting events, I met several locals. You can find the cricket and rugby clubs information online if you are interest. They are open for everyone interested in playing. Some are for beginners; others are for advanced players.

b. Describe cultural differences and challenges you encountered and how you addressed them. (e.g., gender issues, social etiquette, stereotypes, etc.)

Tipping in Vienna is the same as in the US. I was told before I left that they don't really tip, but that was not the case. When invited to a dinner at someone's house, bring something either to eat or drink as a gift. Be friendly, though you will notice that Viennese neighbors tend to be a bit less friendly and willing to talk to their other neighbors. That is not the case for every neighbor, but the majority unfortunately it is. But, many of the Viennese are very pleasant and willing to speak to their neighbors. I did not run into any gender issues or blatant stereotypes, though people occasionally assume that Americans are a bit more obnoxious than we really are. Don't prove that stereotype correct.

7. FINANCIAL:

a. What is the best way to access/transfer money from the U.S.?

The best way to access money would definitely be an ATM. Before you leave, make sure that your bank doesn't charge too much for taking money out of a foreign ATM. In

Vienna, the safest ATM's are the Bankomats, which you can identify by the green and blue sign above the machine.

- b. How much spending money do you recommend per month? Please include rent, food, transportation, etc.

Rent and Tuition is about 700 Euro a month. If you choose to take public transportation to school, a monthly pass is the easiest and is 50 euro a month. I lived in the center, so I didn't buy a monthly pass because I walked. A one-way ticket is 1.80 Euro. If you don't eat out, food is relatively cheap and I would budget about the same as you would in the US. However, be aware that Spar's and Billa's are more expensive grocery stores, while Merkur, Hofer and Zielpunkt are cheaper with equal quality. The Naschmarkt is a good place for fresh groceries, though it is cheaper in the center of the market than at the entrance.

- c. If you used Financial Aid to fund your program/exchange, were there any complications? If so, how did you address them?

I did not have any complications with financial aid. I filled out the Budget request forms and the request for changes. It was very simple.

8. PROGRAM/EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATION:

If the IP&E did not administer your program, please evaluate the program's administration, both in the U.S. and abroad.

The program's administration is very efficient and helpful. The application process is simple. The office is willing to help with any problems or questions. They can arrange your housing. They will help with anything you might need. I did not have any trouble with the administration. The program was very good.

9. PROGRAM/STUDENT TYPE:

Please describe the type of student for whom this program is best suited.

The type of student that is best suited for this program would be a student who is outgoing and independent. Since UW students are usually the only UW student, or one of very few, in the classroom, the student needs to be willing to meet new people without hesitation or face loneliness. It is very easy to meet people in classes. The age range varies, but each student is usually looking for friends and willing to meet new people.

10. OVERALL EXPERIENCE:

How realistic were your expectations, both academic and personal?

My expectations were very realistic. Academically, I increased my German level hugely. Before I left, I spoke very little German. When I arrived in Vienna, I realized how little I understood. But, by the time I left Vienna, I was able to hold conversations with people who did not speak English. We could easily get our messages across and even joke around if we wanted. Many of my friends did not speak English, but we were able to converse quite easily. I went to Vienna hoping to increase my German level, and I went way beyond the point I thought I would reach in 4 months, making good friends and having amazing experiences along the way.



OCT 19 2009

German Language Schools
DID Munich, Germany / IKI Vienna, Austria (Summer Quarter)

1. Arrival Overseas/On-Site Orientation

a. Accommodation Location:

During my stay in Munich, Germany, I found housing accommodations with family friends, who lived 0.8 to 1.5 hours away from the school by public transportation. During my stay in Vienna, Austria, I stayed in a student dormitory in which my class was conducted.

I would recommend that students find housing as close to the school as possible to take part in cultural programs and reduce commute time.

b. On-Site Orientation:

My program had no orientation for being in Germany, rather their orientation consisted of a building and facilities tour. The program did conduct cultural outings during each week to help students immerse and adapt themselves to the local culture and customs.

2. Academics

a. Instruction:

Instruction was conducted in the Target Language (TL) using a mixture of texts, work books, current print media and audio visual material. Class room structure was always changing as students came in and out of classes. Thus, the course continued on a regular pace independent of the students, and students entered courses based upon their assessment tests.

i. Student/Teacher Relationships:

Student/Teacher relationships were professional and the teacher tried to personalize the learning experience.

ii. Grading/Exams:

Exams were conducted professionally, then graded by the teachers. Students then received tests back, and students reviewed their own test before handing them back in for control purposes. Tests were objective and graded with a standardized rubric.

iii. Administration:

The faculty was approachable and accommodating to students' needs, both personal and learning needs. The faculty was often overwhelmed during the summer time with the influx of new short-term students.

iv. Library:

The resource room at the Munich institute was small, but accessible. The resource room at the Vienna institute was inaccessible, but the instructor was willing to assist students in acquiring extra learning/study material if needed.

b. Quality and Content

i. Munich Institute:

Content was guided by the lesson materials and was sufficient. The quality of instruction was good, but slow-paced.

ii. Vienna Institute:

Content was guided by the needs of the students as assessed by the instructor and expressed by the learners. The quality was excellent.

C. Course Recommendations

i. Munich Institute:

I would not recommend the Munich institute for advanced learners. The classroom dynamics are in constant flux and students are not expected to accelerate.

ii. Vienna Institute:

I would highly recommend the Vienna institute for all levels. The UofW currently has a program exchange with this institute. I would highly recommend participation in this study

abroad or a personalized program at this institute.

d. UW Education Relevance

Both programs bolstered my ability to speak, read and research in the German language.

3. Housing

a. Options

Both institutes offered arranged housing in student dorms, with host families, in hotels or apartments.

b. Selection

I chose as student dorm based on proximity to classroom location.

c. Recommendation

I would recommend that students find housing as close to the school as possible to take part in cultural programs and reduce commute time.

4. Program Exchange Site

a. Munich:

The campus was located in one building directly near the central train station. Transportation was simple and the town center was very near.

b. Vienna:

The campus was divided within the southwestern quarter outside of the old city. My particular class was one small lecture hall in a student dorm. The surrounding community was middle-class, safe, and accessible by subway and bus.

5. Health and Safety

Overall safety was good. I had no concerns for myself or any of the other students. I had no experience with the medical system.

6. Cultural Aspects

a. Participation

Both locations offered activities for students to experience the language in the cultural context with other students. This built a better sense of community at each school.

b. Differences

There were no significant difference, but most of all the young persons smoked cigarettes at every break.

7. Financial

a. Transfer of Funds

At both locations, ATMs were common and the financial system was international, allowing for multiple language options.

b. Monthly Expenditures

Each month required about 600 - 700 Euros for lodging, food, and local transportation. Overages were for entertainment, extra travel, and souvenirs.

c. Unexpected Expenses

All expenses were predictable.

d. Financial Aid

I had no complications using financial aid.

8. Program/Exchange Administration

My program was self-administered. In part, I had the assistance of the Germanics Department and Student Fiscal services for the initial contact and financial phases. They were of great service and everything ran smoothly.

9. Program/Student Type

This program is suited for a student who is a self-learner, outgoing, and willing to balance academic discipline and free-time activities in order to maximize the learning experience in language and cultural contexts.

10. Overall Experience

I expected the program/classroom environment in Munich to be more intense than it was. The program in Vienna exceeded my expectations.

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DEC 09 2008

Vienna - IKI Program
Summer Quarter 2008

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Arrival Overseas:

I set up my arrival on the day in which I was supposed to move into Haus Salzburg. The U-ban system is a little hairy when you first arrive, but it's manageable. Make sure you get the address so you can find it; no one knows what the IKI program is and won't be able to help you out. So get the address and know where you're going- I suggest using google maps or something like that. I did not do this and it took me 4hrs to find the place, it was lame.

Academics:

The IKI program provides a great learning environment, but is not comparable to the university. The course is very relaxed, conducted by one Austrian instructor that has probably been doing their job for longer than you've been around. The material covered is difficult, but the grades the instructors give out are very reasonable. I got 15 credits for two months time in Austria.

Housing:

The housing system is lame, but there's nothing you can really do about it. It's expensive, but housing anywhere will be about the same price. I chose a single room- it was great but costs a lot of money- not really worth it. But if you like privacy, do it. The people that run it suck, but you don't have to interact with them that much.

Program Site:

You go to school in the middle of the city center, its great, lots of people, and lots of places to go, very close to all the things you want to see and experience.

Health and Safety:

Vienna is a pretty safe place; I was comfortable walking places by myself.

Cultural Aspects:

There were a lot of activities that IKI put on to integrate culture, great way to introduce yourself with the Austrian culture. The nightlife is pretty good, lots of clubs and bars. If you stay in Haus Salzburg, check out the Ausie Bar a block or so a way, really cool bartender named Max.

Financial:

I can't really recall how much it cost me per week, but I spent about \$6000 total, I wasn't that loose with the cash but, I could have easily spent another \$1000. Europe is expensive, and if you are going to travel, expect to spend a lot more than that.

Program Administration:

The IPE office didn't help out at all or make the process any easier, so be prepared for that. I was pretty upset about the way they handled everything. Just jump through their hoops, give them the \$200 and don't worry about anything else.

Student Type:

If you're not going to go to class, this isn't the program for you. That's about it.

Experience:

I had a great time. It's not what you're expecting. Everything had its drawbacks, it sucked at first, but if you can meet some cool people like I did, it was definitely worth it.