



Program of Study	Bachelor of Interior Design September 20 2023- January 24 2024		
Type of Study Abroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> UMAP exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
General Evaluation			
In a couple of sentences, summarize and explain your general evaluation of your experience.	8/10 It was an amazing learning experience and a great opportunity to meet people and explore new places. I found the language barrier a little difficult and Austrian culture to be slightly guarded but enjoyed my experience either way.		
Arrival			
How easy or challenging was it to obtain your travel documents (visa, permits, etc.)?	I wouldn't say it was difficult, but it took a little while to collect everything I needed for my application. Once I applied, my visa came within a week. All the requirements (checklist) for visa application can be found on the website when you do some simple googling. Also, as a tip, bring a clean printed version of the checklist to your application appointment – it doesn't say anywhere but they need it.		
Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you alter any part of those arrangements?	I planned a trip through parts of Europe with my friends prior to coming to Austria so by the time I got to the university I was already adjusted to the time difference/culture difference/was more familiar with European atmosphere. And starting out with friends helped me ease into the different lifestyle and helped me avoid culture shock.		
How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?	It went by very smoothly. No surprises.		
Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?	Once I got to Vienna, I travelled from the Vienna airport to Vienna central station (18 euros), And from Vienna central station to St. Polten (30 euros) This was before I knew about the discount card: ÖBB Vorteilscard Jugend (available to anyone under 26).. Its a 19 euro fee to purchase the card once and it is valid for 1 year and gives you 50% off for all ÖBB trains.		
Orientation and Assistance			

<p>How satisfied were you with the assistance available to at your host school? Were there people and resources available for you for support?</p>	<p>Not very satisfied. I along majority of new coming exchange students was surprised at the fact that Studio and some other classes were taught fully in German. We all thought that would not be the case from the communication we've had from NDU and their application process. When we came to the international office asking why that is the case and what kind of English support can be provided, we were merely dismissed, told "what did we expect" and that we still have a chance to go home. Studio teachers were also not very helpful though they tried a little. It was always our job to initiate and ask for everything otherwise no help would be provided. BUT there were a couple of good teachers that were very understanding and proactive in helping us both in school and giving life advice. And the majority of help came from other students on doing quick translations, helping explain projects, telling us about schedules.. etc. In the end it worked out, it wasn't the warmest welcome but if you know what you are signing up for from the start it might reduce the shock factor a little.</p>
<p>How was new student orientation at the host university? What did they do?</p>	<p>Orientation was very organized and helpful. Orientation lasted over several days and included introduction to the dean, tour of school, 1 hour tour of St. Polten, 3 hour tour of Vienna, Laser cutter training, and a welcome lunch covered by the school.</p>
<p>Housing & Daily Life</p>	
<p>Describe your accommodation in your host country. Were you pleased with this choice or what would you have done differently?</p>	<p>I was staying at WIHAST (dorm) in St. Polten I was satisfied with my room. The dorm is a bit far from school but there are no closer dorms and there is a bus stop nearby. If I had a little more money, I would choose to live in Vienna and transit to school (about 2/3 of NUDs students do that). St. Polten was just a little bit boring, stores close early, and there are no places to really go out in the town. (at least in the late fall/winter time)</p>
<p>When could you move into housing and how long were you allowed to stay?</p>	<p>Key Pick up dates were in the first couple of days of September (they send an email with specific dates and times), but if those dates do not work for you, you can email and arrange a different time. When you apply, you make a 1-year contract, and if you are leaving earlier, you must send them an email 2 months before breaking the contract.</p>

<p>What kinds of services and facilities were nearby where you lived (shop, cafe gym, parks, pharmacy, stations...)</p>	<p>There is a big store nearby (SPAR) where you can purchase food/home supplies/ hygiene products/school supplies/some electronics.. Etc. - This is the store I went to for most of my shopping</p> <p>There is also a mall a little further (15 min walk.. Or you can take a bus) that had clothing stores, home supplies stores, grocery stores etc..)</p> <p>For bedding, kitchen supplies etc.. I would highly suggest going to Ikea in Vienna. Take the train from St. Polten to Westbahnhof and the Ikea is located right at the train station. You will save a lot of money rather than buying all that stuff at SPAR.</p>
<p>Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?</p>	<p>I cooked my own meals. Most of the time rice or some kind of pasta with a paste/sause and veggies. And 1-2 times per week I would cook some kind of meat because I found it to be a little pricy for my budget. But dairy is super cheap.</p> <p>There is also McDonalds as a cheap take-out option. You can also get food delivered but I never did so I wouldn't know how much that costs.</p> <p>Also check out the “too good to go” program.. It's an app where stores and restaurants sell extra food or food that will expire soon for cheap. A lot of students take advantage of this app.</p>
<p>How close was your accommodation to where you studied?</p>	<p>30 min bus ride 50 min walk Not close but there are no dorms closer.</p>
<p>Academics & Course Registration</p>	
<p>Describe the registration process at your host institution. What assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?</p>	<p>I was satisfied with the process. They replied fast and provided the information that was requested, as well as answer any questions I might've had before applying.</p>
<p>What advice would you offer to another exchange student about registration at your host institution?</p>	<p>Don't leave things till the last minute. Especially while trying to keep up with the ongoing course load, it can become very overwhelming.</p>
<p>What tips do you have for finding the courses and course syllabuses/ outlines?</p>	<p>Email the Host University. This is the best way to get the up-to-date courses that they offer. And ask them questions if you are interested in any electives. NDU is not a big university, they will be able to assist you. And make sure to ask about the language!</p>
<p>Academics & Course Registration (cont'd)</p>	

How satisfied were you with the amount of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?	I am satisfied with the education I received but I did find the education to be a lot less intense than it is at KPU. All the projects were group projects, which was an interesting experience, and I learned a lot about communication, collaboration, and meeting someone halfway. But for the most part, all the classes felt very self-guided, and I did not feel that a lot of teaching was done.
How did the style of teaching, and workload compare to Canada? Was it more independent or group learning?	More independent, self-guided and everything was group work.
How many courses did you take during your time abroad? Are there particular courses would you recommend?	I took 5 courses. 3 were mandatory interior design courses. 1 was intro to German – need to take this class if you don't speak German (they follow A1 level workbook) 1 was a field school type of class where we got to go to Rome for a week and draw. I highly recommend this one, it was an amazing experience.
What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?	They are very up to date with the technologies and resources they provide for students. They had a PC computer room and a Mac computer room available to all the students. Printer rooms, woodworking room, Laster printing room, heavy machinery room etc. Free internet access for all students, free coffee machine for all students. Library had up to date magazines (in German) and variety of design books

Cost	
Books and Supplies/per term:	Under 50\$
Flight:	2000\$
Accommodation/per month:	550\$
Meals/per month:	100\$
Local transportation/per month:	50-100\$
Health insurance/per term:	185\$
Communication (internet, phone, etc.) – per term	250\$
Travel documents (Passport, Study permit, visa, etc.)	375\$
Vaccinations:	0\$
Personal spending (entertainment and extra travel) – per term	3000\$

Were there unexpected costs you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than expected?	Train tickets were a little more than I expected at times. Going from St. Polten to Vienna can really add up. And Nightlife is more expensive then expected.
Extra-Curricular & Social Activities	
What type of organized activities were available to you? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future students?	There are some – you just have to ask around (classmates/teachers) but again it’s all in German so I did not get involved in school-related activates other than my courses. But you can find a lot of clubs/classes in Vienna even in English if you look (dance classes, pottery, etc..)
Did you travel outside the host location? If so, where do you recommend?	I traveled to Slovakia, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Portugal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I would recommend Bratislava in Slovakia for a budget trip. Its super close to Vienna and OBB has a great deal where you can take a train there and back and use any bus within the city for a total price of 22 euros. - Germany is also a close option, and you can take a train to get there. I went to Munchen, which was nice but on the pricier side with accommodation. And Frankfurt, though I do not suggest going there solo.. Some areas feel very unsafe especially as a girl traveler - Spain and Italy are great options – Can usually find great ticket deals to get there but the flight ticket back is almost always on the more expensive side. - Portugal is very cheap but also do not suggest going there solo.
What opportunities were there to work or volunteer? Did you require special permits to do this?	Did not participate in any of opportunities due to language barrier
Health and Safety	
Describe any health/safety concerns or issues you had during your experience.	Did not have any health and safety concerns. Except bad blisters – make sure to bring good shoes when travelling in Europe.
What helped you keep safe and healthy? Did you access any health care supports and if so how was the experience?	I was careful to avoid contact with people that I knew were sick. I also avoided participating in any activities that I knew could get me hurt. Just make smart decisions.
What wellness supports did they offer at the University? Were there counselling or medical services?	I did not hear about any counselling or medical support at the school, so I am not sure that they offer any.
Personal and Cultural Connections	

Were there any cultural differences you had to adjust to? Were there language barrier issues?	People were a lot less friendly initially, It takes time to make friends with Austrians. But the other exchange students were very nice. And language was a big barrier, in both school and everyday life.
What part(s) of the country and culture did you most appreciate?	I liked that they were relaxed and liked to enjoy life but also organized (unlike Italy or Spain which I found more loose). They also care a lot about sustainability and recycling, which was nice to see.
How was it traveling alone and making friends?	I found it a lot easier than expected. It's easy to get around Europe and being on my own encouraged me to be more social and made it easier to make friends.
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	Initially I found that Austrian people don't make the effort to get to know you. They can seem very closed off and don't really make small talk. Once you make the effort, they can eventually warm up to you. Faculty and staff, some I found very approachable, some not so much it really depends. Usually, the teachers that are not Austrian are much more friendly though. But some of my best friends that I made were other exchange students who came for the same semester as me.
How accommodating are they to students with a disability? Were there any accommodations offered?	I did not see students with disabilities in my school or dorm, so I would not know.
How is the situation for students who are visible minorities in your host country?	NDU is an expensive private university that is also the only university in the whole Austria that teaches interior architecture, so i did not see any visible minorities in the school, so I can't speak to that.
How welcoming are they to for those who identify as LGBTQIA+?	Though I did not meet students who identified as LGBTQ in the school, I've talked to students about it, and they said that people are very accepting of it.

Overall

What are 5-10 important things other students should know before going to your host country/region?
1. Need to know Sufficient amount of German to comfortably participate in school (Studio and some other classes + all electives are taught in German)
2. All stores + pharmacies are closed on Sundays
3. Fines for not having a train or metro ticket is 100+ euros (I know of a few people who got this) and the people who check don't really care about your excuses
4. Once a year there is an event called "long Night of Museums" where to pay one small fee and can visit up to 100 museums until 1 AM. Very good opportunity – usually happens in the fall.
5. Winters can get very cold and WINDY. Must bring warm clothes.

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What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?	Learning to be more independent. Growing as an individual and realizing a lot of things about myself and how I view the world. I have a very different perspective on life now and some of my goals have changed since coming back from Austria.
What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?	Being far from family, especially because there was a lot going on at home while I was away, and I wasn't able to be there and support some of my friends and family physically.
How has your perspective changed as a result of your study abroad experience?	I came out of this experience more energized, excited and optimistic about life in general. I gained a passion for travelling and meeting people and learning about new cultures. While before I never thought I could see myself living anywhere but in Vancouver, this was my home, now I catch myself constantly thinking of relocating, travelling, and wanting to know more about other places in the world.
What else do you want to add about your study abroad?	It was not easy, but also one of the best things I have done in my life. I would highly suggest to anyone considering.

Below is a space to share any photos



**This is from the Rome class – drawing.
One of my favorite memories from this experience.**