

2024

IMBA DUAL DEGREE REPORT

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- Department: Department of Strategy and Innovation
- Program: Master in Strategy, Innovation and Management Control
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INTRODUCTION:

Hi everyone! My name is Eduardo Alfonso, and I'm from Spain. I had the incredible opportunity to take part in the dual degree program between WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business) and NCCU (National Chengchi University in Taiwan). It's been a unique and rewarding journey, and I'd love to share a bit about my experience—what it was like living in Vienna, studying at WU, and everything in between. Whether you're considering this path or just curious, I hope my reflections can give you some helpful insight!

Joining the second wave of IMBA students on the dual degree adventure at WU has been an incredibly enriching experience. As someone currently living and studying in Vienna, I'd like to offer a glimpse into what this chapter has been like—for those considering the same path.

Rather than a step-by-step guide, I'll walk you through key aspects of this journey, including navigating the visa process, settling into housing, adjusting to academic life at WU, and embracing daily life in Vienna. I'll wrap things up with some personal takeaways and reflections.



RESIDENCE

Since I'm European, I didn't have to go through a visa or residence permit application process to stay in Austria, which made things a bit easier for me. However, that doesn't mean there's nothing to take care of when settling in—there's one very important step that everyone, no matter where you're from, needs to keep in mind.

If you're planning to stay in Austria for more than three months, you're required by law to register your address with the local authorities. This is done through a form called the Meldezettel, which you submit at the local registration office (Meldeamt). It's a simple document that confirms where you're living, and it's essential for things like opening a bank account, signing up for health insurance, or even just staying legally in the country.

The process itself is pretty straightforward: once you've found a place to live, your landlord (or whoever is renting the place to you) will need to sign the Meldezettel. You then take it to the municipal office, usually within three days of moving in. While it might seem like a small formality, don't skip it or put it off!

Why? Because not registering—or registering too late—can lead to a hefty fine. And trust me, it's not just a slap on the wrist. Austrian authorities take this seriously, so it's best to get it done right away and avoid unnecessary stress. So, even if you're an EU citizen like me, don't forget: the Meldezettel is a must

Anlage A

Meldezettel

Zutreffendes bitte ankreuzen ☒


Erläuterungen auf der Rückseite!

FAMILIENNAME (in Blockschrift), AKAD. GRAD (abgekürzt)				
VORNAME lt. Geburtsurkunde (bei Fremden laut Reisedokument)				
Familiename vor der ersten Eheschließung/Eingetragenen Partnerschaft				
Sonstiger Name (nach fremdem Namensrecht, z.B. Vatersname; siehe auch Rückseite)				
GEBURTSDATUM	GESCHLECHT (siehe auch Rückseite) männlich <input type="checkbox"/> weiblich <input type="checkbox"/> divers <input type="checkbox"/> inter <input type="checkbox"/> offen <input type="checkbox"/> Sofern nicht zutreffend: keine Angabe <input type="checkbox"/>		GESETZLICH ANERKANNTE KIRCHE ODER RELIGIONSGESELLSCHAFT/ BEKENNTNISGEMEINSCHAFT	
GEBURTSORT lt. Reisedokument (bei österr. Staatsbürgern auch lt. Geburtsurkunde); Bundesland (Inland) und Staat (Ausland)				
FAMILIENSTAND <input type="checkbox"/> ledig <input type="checkbox"/> verheiratet <input type="checkbox"/> in eingetragener Partnerschaft lebend <input type="checkbox"/> geschieden <input type="checkbox"/> Ehe aufgehoben oder für nichtig erklärt <input type="checkbox"/> eingetragene Partnerschaft aufgelöst oder für nichtig erklärt <input type="checkbox"/> verwitwet <input type="checkbox"/> hinterbliebene(r) eingetragene(r) Partner(in)				
STAATSANGEHÖRIGKEIT Österreich <input type="checkbox"/> anderer Staat <input type="checkbox"/> ➔ Name des Staates:				
REISEDOKUMENT bei Fremden Art, z.B. Reisepass, Personalausweis: Nummer: Ausstellungsdatum:				
ausstellende Behörde, Staat:				
ANMELDUNG der Unterkunft in ...	Straße (Platz) bzw. Ort ohne Straßennamen		Haus Nr.	Stiege
	Postleitzahl		Ortsgemeinde, Bundesland	
Ist diese Unterkunft Hauptwohnsitz? ja <input type="checkbox"/> nein <input type="checkbox"/>				
wenn nein, Hauptwohnsitz bleibt in ...	Straße (Platz) bzw. Ort ohne Straßennamen		Haus Nr.	Stiege
	Postleitzahl		Ortsgemeinde, Bundesland	
Zuzug aus dem Ausland? nein <input type="checkbox"/> ja <input type="checkbox"/> ➔ Name des Staates:				

Example of the Meldezettel

ACCOMMODATION


While WU doesn't have its own dormitories, it does provide a list of recommended housing options on its website:


 [WU Accommodation Info](#)

Due to the high number of international students coming to Vienna each semester, it's a good idea to arrange your housing as early as possible. I personally stayed at ViennaBase19 during my time at WU and had a great overall experience.

Here are the details of my accommodation:

Housing Provider: ViennaBase

 Website: viennabase.at

 Building Name: ViennaBase19

 Google Maps: ViennaBase19 Location

Costs:

- Monthly rent: EUR 480
- Washer/Dryer: Included in common facilities (paid per use)
- Water, electricity, heating, and Wi-Fi: Included in rent

Room Setup:


- Private bathroom (with toilet and shower)
- Shared kitchen on the floor with other students

Pros:

- Great value for money—EUR 480 for a clean, private space in a secure student housing environment
- The room was modern and well-maintained
- Very good Wi-Fi connection and study-friendly environment
- Grocery stores (like Spar and Billa) nearby
- Easy metro and tram access to get around Vienna

Cons:

- Shared kitchen may get busy during peak hours
- No air conditioning (which can be noticeable during the summer months)
- Limited storage space if you bring a lot of luggage

 Note: ViennaBase is not managed through OeAD, so the application, payments, and support requests are handled directly through their own portal. They were responsive and professional throughout my stay. Just make sure to apply early, as spots tend to fill up fast—especially in centrally located buildings like ViennaBase19.

ACCOMMODATION

Photos of my accomodation



My room



Views from my room



Common Area



Entrance to my dorm



Shared Volleyball court

STUDYING AT WU



ACADEMIC STRUCTURE AT WU

- **Semester Timing**
 - Winter semester: starts in October
 - Summer semester: starts in March
- **Pre-Semester Program (Highly Recommended!)**
 - Runs in mid-September, two weeks before classes start
 - Optional but great for settling in and meeting people



Spritzerstand at the beginning of October



ORIENTATION & GERMAN COURSE

- **Orientation and Cultural Program**
 - Includes city tours, day trips to wine cellars, and visits to historic sites around Vienna
 - Transportation and guides are arranged by the university
 - Great chance to explore Vienna and connect with other international students
 - Cost: €270
- **Pre-semester German Course**
 - Held during the mornings of the Orientation Program
 - Focused on basic conversational German for everyday life
 - Cost: €40
- **Semester German Course**
 - Optional, more in-depth course
 - Cost: €207

STUDYING AT WU

COURSES & STUDY EXPERIENCE

- **Course Selection**

- SIMC program coordinator reviewed my NCCU credits and helped select courses at WU
- Course selection was smooth and done via email communication

- **Courses I Took**

- Obligatory ones
 - Thesis Seminar
 - Business Project – Starting Up
 - Personal Skills: Visual Thinking, Company Building
- Elective ones:
 - Personal Skills II
 - Personal Skills II
 - Organizational Design
 - Behavioral Insights
 - Selected Topics in Entrepreneurship
 - Digital Strategy and Disruption
 - Innovation Performance Management

THESIS PROCESS

- **Dual Degree Thesis Requirements**

- One thesis can be used for both NCCU and WU, but it must follow both institutions' guidelines
- No oral defense required at WU—just submit the document online
- Oral defense at NCCU is still required (can be done online)

- **Finding a Supervisor**

- Start contacting WU and NCCU professors early—ideally a month before semester begins. It took me around 3 months to finalize my topic.
- WU thesis supervisors are from research institutions tied to the Department of Strategy and Innovation

- **My Supervisors**

- WU: Prof. Weichieh Su/ NCCU: Professor Verena Dorner

LIVING IN AUSTRIA



LIFE IN VIENNA & BEYOND

- **Central Location in Europe**

- Vienna is perfectly located at the crossroads of Central and Eastern Europe
- It's just 1–2 hours by train to nearby capitals like Bratislava (Slovakia), Brno (Czech Republic), and Budapest (Hungary)
- Weekend getaways to neighboring countries are super easy and affordable

- **Cost of Living**

- Generally falls somewhere between Western and Eastern Europe
- Not the cheapest, but very manageable—especially with student discounts on transport and public services

- **Language & Communication**

- While German is the official language, English is widely spoken, especially in Vienna
- Most Austrians in the city—especially younger people and those working in services—can communicate in English with no problem



Karlsplatz, one of the most emblematic areas of Vienna



SHOPPING & LOCAL CULTURE

- **Religious & Cultural Norms**

- Austria is a predominantly Catholic country
- This is reflected in daily life, especially in how businesses operate

- **Shop Opening Hours**

- Sundays and public holidays: most shops, including supermarkets, are closed
- Saturdays: shops often close early in the afternoon
- Exceptions: stores inside train stations and some central tourist areas are open on Sundays

LIVING IN AUSTRIA



GETTING AROUND VIENNA

- **Public Transportation: Efficient, Reliable, and Student-Friendly**
 - Vienna has one of the best public transport systems I've ever used—clean, punctual, and easy to navigate
 - You can use buses, trams, metros (U-Bahn), and city trains (S-Bahn/ÖBB) with the same ticket
- **Ticket Options**
 - Single ride tickets are available but can get expensive if used frequently
- **For longer stays, there are better options:**
 - Annual pass: €365 (only €1 per day!)
 - Monthly pass: useful if you're staying short-term
 - 7-day ticket: perfect for visitors or early arrivals before a longer pass starts



The metro station I frequently took



LATE-NIGHT TRAVEL

- **Weekend Metro Service**
 - On Fridays and Saturdays, the metro runs 24 hours, which is super convenient after late dinners or nights out
- **Night Buses**
 - During the week (Sunday to Thursday), night buses take over once the metro closes, covering most of the city

LIVING IN AUSTRIA

✈️ GETTING TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

- Vienna International Airport (VIE) is technically in Lower Austria, so it's not included in the annual pass zone
- **If you already have the annual pass:**
 - Just buy an extra ticket for €1.90
 - Available at train stations or instantly via the ÖBB app/website
- **Several options connect the city to the airport:**
 - S7 city train: most affordable
 - CAT (City Airport Train): faster, but more expensive
 - Buses: convenient depending on your location

🌲 A PERSONAL NOTE: CITY LIFE VS. NATURE

- I'll be honest—I'm **not really a city person**. Crowds, traffic, and tall buildings aren't really my thing. But Austria? It **surprised me in the best way**.
 - The natural beauty just outside Vienna is on another level. I'm talking breathtaking alpine views, crystal-clear lakes, vineyards, and charming villages that look like they're straight out of a postcard.
 - Some of the best scenery I've ever seen in my life is just a short train ride away from the city. If you're even remotely into hiking, cycling, or just relaxing in nature, Austria will spoil you.
- So even though Vienna is a capital city, the balance between urban life and quick access to nature made it a **fantastic place to live**—even for someone like me who prefers wide open spaces.



CONCLUSION: VIENNA AS A DD STUDENT

Living and studying in Vienna through the dual degree program between WU and NCCU was truly an unforgettable experience. As someone who isn't typically drawn to city life, I was pleasantly surprised by how Vienna's blend of rich cultural history, modern amenities, and easy access to nature made it an ideal place to live. Though I prefer wide open spaces, Austria's stunning surroundings—especially the breathtaking alpine views and serene lakes—quickly became some of the most beautiful scenery I've ever encountered. The city is a perfect balance of urban convenience and outdoor adventure, offering the best of both worlds.

Academically, WU offers a structured yet flexible environment that truly supports international students. The pre-semester orientation, including the German course and cultural program, was an excellent introduction to both Vienna and the academic style at WU. The courses I took were a mix of theory and practice, with challenging but rewarding topics in business, artificial intelligence, and sustainability. I was able to build on the credits from NCCU and, thanks to the helpful support from the SIMC program coordinator, chose courses that aligned perfectly with my academic and professional goals.

The thesis process, while demanding, was manageable. With guidance from both my NCCU and WU advisors, I successfully navigated the dual thesis requirements. The professors at WU were approachable and supportive, and the flexibility of writing a single thesis for both universities (with the necessary adjustments) made it less overwhelming. My time writing the thesis also gave me a chance to connect with the academic community at WU, further enriching my overall experience. Vienna's public transportation system was another highlight. While the annual student pass made commuting simple and cost-effective, I was especially impressed with the 24-hour metro on weekends and the efficient night buses. Being able to explore the city at all hours without worrying about transportation costs was a luxury. I also appreciated the seamless connections to neighboring countries, making weekend travel easy and affordable.

Though Austria is a Catholic country, with shops closed on Sundays and public holidays, I adapted quickly to the slower pace of the weekends. Vienna's charming coffee houses, combined with its historical landmarks, made these quiet days perfect for relaxation and reflection.

In conclusion, my time in Vienna was much more than just academic growth—it was an incredible cultural experience. From the fascinating courses at WU to the awe-inspiring landscapes just outside the city, every aspect of my stay felt like an opportunity for personal and professional development. If you're considering the dual degree program or a stint in Vienna, I highly recommend embracing both the academic challenge and the beauty of the city's surroundings. It's an experience you won't forget.