



fulbrightaustria

HANDBOOK

**For US Teaching Assistants in
Austria**

Spring 2025

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(AAEC Austrian-American Educational
Commission) 2025–26

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with useful advice and information, which you may need before leaving the United States, while preparing for your arrival in Austria, and during your stay in Austria.

The material is general in nature. It is illustrative and by no means comprehensive. Some opinions contained in this document may seem colored by personal experiences of former teaching assistants from whose reports we draw. **No two experiences as an English-language assistant are alike, and you should bear that in mind when reading this handbook.**

The mid-year survey reports and final reports you complete during the year will offer a good opportunity for constructive comments on the materials provided and your experience as an English-language assistant. These reports will be used to periodically update the information included in this handbook. If the handbook proves to be helpful in preparing you for your year in Austria, it will have served its purpose. Please bring it with you to Austria and refer to it as needed throughout your stay.

As of 2024, we have expanded our pre-departure materials to include [short videos](#) on handbook topics starring former teaching assistants.

Working in a foreign institution is just as challenging as living in a foreign culture. The purpose of this Handbook for US English-Language Teaching Assistants in Austria is to provide incoming teaching assistants with background information on the Austrian school system, to inform them of the obligations of teaching assistants, and to share pragmatic tips and resources for instruction. It is based on surveys completed by former US teaching assistants in Austria. The bulk of the text was drafted by Ms. Joan Riegert, who taught English for two years in Austria as a US teaching assistant as well as German in the White Bear Lake School system (in a suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota). Major revisions and editions were made in 2010 by Mr. John Andy Brunner-Brown, who taught German at California State University Long Beach before teaching English for one year as a US teaching assistant. The two previous handbooks were merged into one handbook in 2023 and updated in 2024 and 2025.

Fulbright Austria staff edits, revises, and updates the handbook on an annual basis.


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HOW TO NAVIGATE THE USTA HANDBOOK LIKE A PRO

All sections are important, but some are especially crucial for a successful preparation and stay. Those are hyperlinked below. Page numbers can be found above.

Please also watch our short **videos** discussing some of the topics presented in the handbook – click on the  sign next to chapter headings and search for the listed number in the [playlist](#) on our YouTube channel.

I'm looking for...

- **Checklists, timeline, and after-arrival quick guide:** [Chapter 5](#); [quick guide](#)
- **A list of expected fees and other expenses:** [Chapter 7](#)
- **Residence permit application preparations:** Chapters [9](#) and [13](#) (housing); [Chapter 18.3](#) (*Meldezettel*)
- **Step-by-step instructions on how to navigate the residence permit application process:** [Chapter 10](#)
- **Step-by-step instructions for filling out the residence permit application form:** [Appendix](#)
- **EU-citizens registration requirements (*Anmeldebescheinigung*):** [Chapter 11](#)
- **Packing/What to bring:** [Chapter 15](#)
- **Financial information (salary, loan deferral etc.):** [Chapter 22](#)
 - How to open an Austrian bank account: [Chapter 22.2](#)
- **Medical information:** [Chapter 23](#)
 - Emergency numbers: [Chapter 1](#)
 - (Medical) Preparations for coming to Austria: [Chapter 23.1](#)
 - Information on healthcare in Austria: [Chapter 23.2](#); [Chapter 23.6](#) to [23.9](#)
 - What to do if you have not received your e-card: [Chapter 23.4](#)
 - How to find a Hausarzt: [Chapter 23.6](#)
 - Mental health information and resources: [Chapter 23.10](#)
- **School and program-related information:** Chapters [2](#) to [4](#) (program logistics; employers); [6](#) (dates and holidays); [12](#) (contacting mentor teachers); [14](#) (orientation); [18.5](#) and [18.6](#) (first day and schedule); [19](#) (your duties) to [21](#) (workplace)
- **Public transport:** [Chapter 25](#)

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1. EMERGENCY NUMBERS AND PROCEDURES

The most important emergency phone numbers in Austria are:

- 122 – fire department (*Feuerwehr*)
- 133 – police (*Polizei*)
- 144 – ambulance/paramedics (*Rettung/ Notarzt*)
- 112 – [Euronotruf](#) (emergency services in Austria and in Europe)
- 140 – mountain-rescue (*Bergrettung*)
- 141 – [Ärztenotdienst](#) (for evenings, public holidays, weekends – when Austrian GP is off-duty)
- 142 – [Telefonseelsorge](#)
- 1450 – [health hotline](#)
- +43 1 4069595 – [Kriseninterventionszentrum](#) Vienna (crisis intervention; Mo-Fr: 8-17:00)
- [Information](#) on smartphone app DEC112 for silent emergency calls and more features

Information by the U.S. Embassy on medical assistance for US citizens (English-speaking doctors) can be found [here](#) – but please note that you can find an [entire section on medical care](#) in this handbook (as well as [mental health resources](#)) and you'll receive Austrian health insurance to see a doctor.

In case of a high-level emergency in Austria (terror attack, etc.), someone in program administration or management would reach out to check in – for that reason, please let us know your personal information (email address, phone number, residential address) in our USTA online contact form in fall.

1.1 Security Issues

The US government publishes official travel directives and advisories for US citizens abroad, accessible on the [Department of State website](#).

For relevant news releases and statements with a more “local” or Austrian focus, [the website of the U.S. Embassy in Austria](#) has good resources.

US citizens staying in Austria for more than three months are encouraged to register with the US consulate in Austria and to inform them of your arrival, address in Austria, and eventual departure date. The relevant form can be completed online using the U.S. Embassy's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).

Fulbright Austria is regularly in touch with the U.S. Embassy in Vienna and informs USTAs if there are any warnings, alerts, or specific issues of concern. Please note, however, that Fulbright Austria has no additional sources of information on security issues outside of the official sources listed below.

1.2 U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate in Vienna

U.S. Embassy Vienna

Boltzmanngasse 16

1090 Vienna

Tel: +43-1 31339-0

Web: <https://at.usembassy.gov/>

U.S. Citizens with emergencies ONLY, call (+43 1) 31339-0 and ask to speak with “American Citizen Services”. From the United States, dial 011-43-1-31339-0

U.S. Consulate in Vienna

Parkring 12A (in the same building as the Marriott Hotel), 1010 Vienna

Tel: +43 1 313 39

Email: ViennaUSEmbassy@state.gov

Web: <https://at.usembassy.gov/>

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Since 1962, more than 4,000 US college and university graduates have served as English-language teaching assistants in Austria under the auspices of a program that Fulbright Austria (Austrian-American-Educational Commission) administers for the [Austrian Ministry of Education](#) (BMB).

Although the majority of US teaching assistants are not officially Fulbright grantees, Fulbright Austria's administration of this program falls under the Fulbright Program's mandate to "promote further mutual understanding between the peoples of Austria and the United States through educational and cultural contacts." Article 2 (10) of the bilateral agreement that established the commission in 1962 also listed such activities as part of the commission's mandate: "[to] administer or assist in administering or otherwise facilitate educational and cultural programs and activities that further the purposes of the present Agreement but are not financed by funds made available under this Agreement."

The US Teaching Assistantship Program started small—initially with six positions—and has expanded throughout recent years. Approximately 150 US teaching assistants will be placed in Austrian secondary schools in all nine Austrian federal provinces (*Bundesländer*) and in communities large and small during the 2025–26 academic year. They will work at some 260 schools with 1,900 different classes and have contact with an estimated 40,000 Austrian students between the ages of 10 and 18, holding a **job placement** with their regional Austrian school board from October to May.

The mutually beneficial nature of this program is obvious: it contributes substantially to the quality of foreign-language instruction in Austria—for teachers and students alike—and is also a fine opportunity for US teaching assistants, who not only serve as linguistic and cultural ambassadors in the Austrian classroom but also, upon returning to the US, are truly assets for and advocates of Austria. Given the nature of their work and the number of people with whom they have contact in an educational setting, US teaching assistants make a considerable contribution to the promotion of mutual understanding. **Please note, however, they are neither Fulbright students nor scholars nor grantees in the Fulbright Program.**

If you wish to describe your participation in this program on your resume, please use the following formulation for the sake of accuracy:

US Teaching Assistant in the Teaching Assistantship Program of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education (BMB), administered by Fulbright Austria (Austrian-American Educational Commission).

Combined grantees completing their award both in the Fulbright Student and USTA Program are mostly not mentioned separately – for the purposes of this handbook, they are USTAs. In some cases, specific information for combined grantees is added.

3. RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS – THE WHO'S WHO

As a teaching assistant you will work with **two organizations** while on the program:

On one hand with **Fulbright Austria** who administered your application, informed you of your placement, and will support you throughout your preparations and stay; on the other hand, if you are NOT placed at a school with an agricultural focus, with *weltweit unterrichten/OeAD*.

The *weltweit unterrichten* initiative (based at the OeAD, Austria's Organisation for Education and Internationalisation) coordinates the entire Teaching Assistantship Program (*Fremdsprachenassistenzenprogramm*) on behalf of the **Austrian Federal Ministry of Education (BMB)**. They act as an interface between teaching assistants, schools, local education authority (=your employer), and the BMB and collaborate closely with Fulbright Austria on the USTA Program. They are also in charge of the online [weltweit unterrichten platform](#) (= hub for many administrative affairs for TAs). You will interact with *weltweit unterrichten* from early summer onwards after having formerly accepted your placement on the platform and throughout your stay alongside Fulbright Austria. The overarching funding institution is the BMB.

TAs placed at so-called "Green schools" (*Grüne Schulen*), managed by the **Austrian Federal Ministry Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BML)**, will receive all relevant information from Fulbright Austria and their assigned schools directly. They will not interact with *weltweit unterrichten* and will not use an online platform due to the relatively small number of Green schools and placements. Fulbright Austria also works together closely with the responsible official at the BML to ensure equally great support for USTAs working at Green schools!

4. WHO'S MY EMPLOYER? – OF MINISTRIES AND SCHOOL BOARDS

While both *weltweit unterrichten* and Fulbright Austria are contact points for information and concerns, **neither of them is your employer**. Your immediate superior at your schools is the headmaster/headmistress, so please make sure to introduce yourself to them after starting at your school – your mentor teacher can help you with that. Your employer are the local school boards (*Bildungsdirektionen*; located on the next hierarchical level):

- If you are teaching at **BMB-coordinated schools**, your employer will be your provincial school board – the *Bildungsdirektion* of the province in which your school is located (*Bildungsdirektion Kärnten* etc.). Find a list of all Austrian school boards [here](#). Hint: you teach at a BMB-coordinated school (or *Pädagogische Hochschule*) if you did not receive your mentor teacher contact information in your acceptance email!
- If you teach at a ***Pädagogische Hochschule* (a special BMB-coordinated school type)**, your employer (and school board) is the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education – *Bundesministerium für Bildung* (BMB). This is an exception to the rule above.
- If you teach at a **"Green school"** with an agricultural focus, your employer (and school board) is the Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BML) – *Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Regionen und Wasserwirtschaft* (BML).

The terms "BMB schools" and "Green schools" will be used in some parts of this handbook and in mailings by Fulbright Austria to highlight differing information relevant to the respective contingent of TAs, but all TAs receive the same care and same level of information.

Since most TAs will be assigned to two schools: the school listed first is your *Stammschule* (main school) and takes care of all administrative affairs; your second school is the *Mitverwendungsschule*. A (rare but possible) third school would be *Mitverwendungsschule 2*.

5. CHECKLISTS: ACTION ITEMS AND TIMELINE 2

These items all need your attention and are time sensitive:



- ☐ Email your letter of acceptance + GDPR form back to Fulbright Austria within 14 days and (if a first-year candidate) pay processing fee of €100 via PayPal
- ☐ Whitelist the @fulbright.at domain in your email app and save these email addresses to your contacts: khuetthaler@fulbright.at; sprachassistenz@oead.at (they should *never* go to spam; consider whitelisting them as well)
- ☐ Email your final transcript (as soon as available but by **15 July at the latest**) AND a copy of the biographical page of your passport (upon acceptance)
- ☐ Ensure that the information on the *Bestätigung* (2nd mailing in May) is accurate.

Forward to Fulbright Austria as soon as possible, but **no later than 1 July**:



- ☐ One portrait photo for Fulbright Austria office use (jpg format; you should be recognizable)
- ☐ Submit a **COMPLETE** application for a residence permit to an Austrian consulate or honorary consulate in the US:
 - **VERY IMPORTANT: Create a scan (digital copy) and at least one paper copy of EVERY document you submit for your personal records!!!**
 - **DO NOT submit originals** unless specifically asked to (authorities will keep documents)
 - Passport valid for at least 3 months **after** projected stay in Austria (best: six months)
 - Completed application form (do NOT yet sign)
 - *Bestätigung* (check for accuracy of information)
 - Police clearance letter **with apostille**
 - **Rental contract or accommodation agreement**
 - 2 passport-sized photos (max. six months old)
 - **Collect** receipt (fees) -> email Fulbright Austria
- ☐ **Contact your schools** (and current USTAs) by phone and/or email by June (if placed)

BEFORE your arrival in Austria:

- Research the **location** of your school(s) and **travel time** to your intended place of residence [online](#) (for morning, daytime, evening, and nighttime commutes)
- Start your search for housing **as soon as possible!**
- **Start saving money NOW—your first paycheck comes in mid-November!!!**
- Don't forget about domestic financial obligations (student loans, etc.)
- Packing (winter clothing, important documents, etc.)
- Photocopy and scan ALL important documents!
- Start to collect [teaching material](#)
- Book your flights—arrive early enough to have some time to settle in before orientation (this also allows for time to take care of housing or residence permit issues as well) but don't arrive too early (you can only stay 90 out of 180 days without a residence permit)

BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE FROM THE US		
Timeframe	What?	"To-do" for applicants
Early April	<p>Applicants receive the 1st mailing via email. It includes (links to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of status and placement: all applicants are informed of their status and their placement (location and school details) • Letter of acceptance • Link to PayPal for processing fee of €100 (or banking coordinates for second-year fee) • GDPR consent form • Memorandum • USTA Handbook + link to videos 	<p>Sign and return the letter of acceptance, the GDPR form, and pay the processing fee to Fulbright Austria via PayPal within two weeks of receiving the email.</p> <p>Send a scan of the biographical page of your passport and a photo of you to your program officer.</p> <p>Read the USTA Handbook carefully and watch our videos on YouTube</p>
Mid-May	<p>Nominees receive the 2nd mailing by email. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further information on the residence permit application and appointment • <i>Bestätigung</i> (confirmation of assignment) <p>Please attend the pre-departure orientation online!</p>	<p>Please keep Fulbright Austria informed of your current email address at all times and check it!</p> <p>If not done: Schedule an in-person appointment for submitting your residence permit application with your responsible Austrian honorary consulate or Consulate General!</p> <p>Secure housing EARLY!!!</p>
<p>May–June (Deadline: 1 July)</p> <p><i>Candidates who fail to submit their residence permit application by the deadline or fail to notify Fulbright Austria of delays beyond their control disqualify themselves from participation! (Exception: late-admits who might receive their placements shortly before or after 1 July)</i></p>	<p>To submit your residence permit (<i>Aufenthaltsbewilligung</i>) application at your personal appointment in June, you will need the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residence permit application form "Aufenthaltsbewilligung Sonderfälle unselbstständiger Erwerbstätigkeit" (= Special cases of gainful employment) • Passport (+ copies of all pages) • Police clearance letter + apostille • Proof of accommodation in Austria (rental contract; accommodation agreement) • <i>Bestätigung</i> (printed in color) • Passport-sized photos (mind measurements!) • Fees (Ask how to pay fees when scheduling your appointment – card, money order, cash) <p>Please DO NOT submit originals (unless specifically asked to since authorities will keep your documents) and create (paper and digital) scans and copies of every document before attending your appointment.</p> <p>Applications at honorary consulates will not be processed on site but will need to be sent to the resp. Consulate General (in New York City, Washington DC, Los Angeles) by yourself after your appointment. You will not be able to submit fingerprints at honorary consulates, but will do so in Austria after arrival.</p>	<p>BMB TAs: Formally accept your assignment on the <i>weltweit unterrichten</i> platform (you will receive an email on that)</p> <p>Email/talk to your mentor teachers/ schools (BMB TAs: after having received their contact details on <i>weltweit unterrichten</i>; Green-school TAs will receive information in their acceptance email)</p> <p>Please complete and submit your application for a residence permit to the proper authorities!</p> <p>Inform Fulbright Austria immediately if any issues occur!</p> <p>Please send Fulbright Austria your official transcript!</p> <p>BMB TAs: Register for first-year orientation through the <i>weltweit unterrichten</i> platform; Green-school TAs receive instructions (second-years do not go again!)</p>
July–September	<p>Prepare for departure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not done: Secure funds (to last until at least end of November 2025 – first paycheck in mid-November) • Collect teaching material 	<p>Please wait for your Austrian authority to reach out to you on your residence permit status and keep Fulbright Austria informed of developments at all times!!</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make travel arrangements (purchase airfare and look into public transport at your destination) • Applicants will receive emails from their USTA program officer regarding administrative tasks after arrival and helpful information regarding communication throughout summer/early fall 	<p>Use our checklists to help you with any preparations for your stay and what to bring for your job.</p> <p>Read the separate BMB handbook (if placed at a BMB school) -> shared with you in summer by <i>weltweit unterrichten</i></p>
Day of departure and arrival	<p>If you have never flown overseas before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly label your luggage and carry-on with your Austrian address • Check luggage size and weight limits • Make sure to adhere to customs regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <u>Note:</u> You'll enter Austria as a tourist (90 visa-free days out of 180 days) • Know how to get to your Austrian address 	<p>Put important documents (passport, birth certificate, email/ phone numbers of landlord and mentor teacher, medical records, residence permit documents, <i>Bestätigung</i>) in your carry-on (if luggage is lost or delayed); have euro coins on you for public transport and public restrooms</p>
AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL IN AUSTRIA		
Within three days of arriving at your place of residence in Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register with the authorities to establish a residence in Austria ("<i>Meldezettel</i>") • Settle in and explore your new surroundings • Finalize your residence permit (submit fingerprints, show <i>Meldezettel</i>, pay remaining fees etc.) – check here where to go to • Open a bank account – your salary can only be transferred to a European bank account (Ask your bank for the <i>Kontoerklärung!!</i>) 	<p>Fill out the Meldezettel and report to your authority (Bezirkshauptmannschaft or Magistrat) to get your address registered as Nebenwohnsitz.</p> <p>Attend your appointment to finalize your permit at your authority (NOTE: printing the card afterwards will take 7–10 business days)</p>
22–25 September	<p>Orientation Seminar (Monday to <u>Thursday</u> only!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USTAs are strongly encouraged to arrive before 22 September to finalize residence permits, open a bank account, register with the local authorities, etc. (mind 90-day rule!) 	<p>Attend orientation in either Saalbach-Hinterglemm or St. Pölten, depending on your placement. Finalize residence permit, etc., BEFORE orientation!</p>
1 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If ready by that date: Pick up your residence permit card at your <i>Bezirkshauptmannschaft</i> or <i>Magistrat</i> • Start of your contract at your schools (if your residence permit card arrived) and meet with teachers and headmaster for introductions 	<p>Report for duty at your <i>Stammsschule</i> on 1 October with your residence permit card <u>in hand</u> (go in only AFTER your card has been issued) and let Fulbright Austria know if you cannot start!</p>
15 November	First payday (if you started on or shortly after 1 October with a valid residence permit in hand)	Let <i>weltweit unterrichten</i> know by email if you are not paid
December—January 2026	Application period for interested extension candidates (for a second year on the program; more information will be distributed in fall of 2025)	If interested: Complete your extension application and talk to your schools on extending too
February–April 2026	Tax season for fiscal year 2025 in Austria and the US (basic information will be provided by your program officer)	<p>File your Austrian and US taxes; download your paystubs from the Bildung.Austria portal</p> <p>Inform your landlord of your projected date of departure</p>
31 May	Last day of teaching	Obtain letters of recommendation from your school(s)
Before departure		Deregister your residence at your Bezirkshauptmannschaft/Magistrat
After arrival in the US		Return your residence permit card to the issuing authority by mail after having relocated to the US

6. DATES OF YOUR ASSIGNMENT, AUSTRIAN HOLIDAYS, AND SCHOOL BREAKS

Teaching assignments begin on Wednesday, **1 October 2025** and end on Friday, **31 May 2026** (13 hours per week). You are NOT permitted to start at your school before 1 October or teach after 31 May.

Combined grantees simultaneously enrolled in the U.S. Fulbright Student Program might notice slightly different grant dates displayed on their Fulbright grant authorization – however, the employment dates for their TA portion are the same as everyone else's.

2025

Sonntag 26. Oktober 2025	Österreichischer Nationalfeiertag (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Sonntag 26. Oktober bis Freitag 31. Oktober 2025	Herbstferien (schulfrei in allen Bundesländern)
Samstag 1. November 2025	Allerheiligen (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Sonntag 2. November 2025	Allerseelen (schulfrei in allen Bundesländern)
Montag 8. Dezember 2025	Mariä Empfängnis (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Mittwoch 24. Dezember 2025 bis Dienstag 6. Jänner 2026	Weihnachtsferien (schulfrei in allen Bundesländern)
Donnerstag 25. Dezember 2025	Christtag (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Freitag 26. Dezember 2025	Stephanitag (gesetzlicher Feiertag)

2026

Donnerstag 1. Jänner 2026	Neujahr (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Dienstag 6. Jänner 2026	Heilige Drei Könige (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Samstag 28. März bis Montag 6. April 2026	Osterferien
Montag 6. April 2026	Ostermontag (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Freitag 1. Mai 2026	Staatsfeiertag 1. Mai (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Donnerstag 14. Mai 2026	Christi Himmelfahrt (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Samstag 23. Mai bis Montag 25. Mai 2026	Pfingstferien (schulfrei in allen Bundesländern)
Montag 25. Mai 2026	Pfingstmontag (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Donnerstag 4. Juni 2026	Fronleichnam (gesetzlicher Feiertag)
Samstag 15. August 2026	Mariä Himmelfahrt (gesetzlicher Feiertag)

Please check your individual province's breaks (*Ferien*) [here](#) or [here](#) and the provinces' patrons' holidays:

- **Burgenland:** 11. November (hl. Martin),
- **Kärnten, Steiermark, Tirol, Vorarlberg:** 19. März (hl. Josef)
- **Oberösterreich:** 4. Mai (hl. Florian)
- **Salzburg:** 24. September (hl. Rupert)
- **Niederösterreich, Wien:** 15. November (hl. Leopold)

Schools with a focus on tourism or Green schools may have a different schedule for school breaks: please check with your mentor teachers and headmaster.

Pädagogische Hochschulen (PHs) are teacher-training colleges and thus, institutions of higher education. Therefore, their semester break usually takes up all of February – since

regular *Semesterferien* are just one week for everyone else, TAs placed at PHs can be asked to teach/assist in adjacent PH-coordinated *Praxis-Volksschulen* or *Praxis-Mittelschulen* (training elementary or middle schools) during the three additional weeks of *Semesterferien* when PHs are not in session and older students are away from campus.

Be sure to confirm the dates of school breaks or days without classes with each school you have been assigned to, as school calendars can vary from school to school. Also communicate travel plans in advance with your schools. You are expected to return to school on time, teach, and be available until 31 May since that is the period your contract covers.

You are not permitted to take additional days off – the frequently occurring school holidays offer ample time for leisure trips. In multi-day emergencies, please reach out to your school(s), *weltweit unterrichten*, the BMB (if you are placed at BMB schools), and your program officer at Fulbright Austria and [follow the guidelines for such cases](#). Your employer, the school board, is not legally bound to accommodate your request.

7. EXPECTED FEES AND EXPENSES

The following is a list of fees and expenses that USTAs should expect to incur prior to departing and after arriving in Austria:

- ✓ €100 administrative fee to be paid upon acceptance of their placement offer
- ✓ Fee for obtaining the police clearance letter needed for the residence permit application or school board (Please note that this fee will vary based on the jurisdiction issuing the police clearance letter and whether the issuance is expedited.)
- ✓ Fee for an apostille for the police clearance letter (Please note that this fee will vary based on the jurisdiction issuing the apostille and whether the issuance is expedited.)
- ✓ Funds to travel to an Austrian (honorary) consulate in the US to submit the residence permit application
- ✓ €160 fee for the residence permit (Depending on which Austrian (honorary) consulate USTAs submit their applications at, the fee may be paid: 1) in full in the US before departing for Austria, 2) in full in Austria after arrival, or 3) in installments in the US before departing and in Austria after arrival)
- ✓ Airfare to Austria
- ✓ Costs of travel insurance covering the time between entering Austria and starting work (employment-based insurance coverage begins on the first day of work)
- ✓ €130 fee to participate in orientation in Austria (Orientation is four days, and the fee includes full board and room. Please note that attending orientation is not required but is highly encouraged.)
- ✓ Deposit for housing (Deposits could be up to three months of rent.)
- ✓ Monthly rent (Housing is not included in the program.)
- ✓ Enough funds to cover initial costs (bedding, towels, appliances, etc.)
- ✓ Enough funds to cover cost of living (groceries, transportation, toiletries, phone bill, etc.) between arrival date and mid-November (The first regular salary will be disbursed in mid-November.)

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF ACCEPTANCE 3

Please acknowledge the acceptance of the assignment by submitting the completed and signed **letter of acceptance** to Fulbright Austria per email **within two weeks** of receipt of your acceptance email. The corresponding processing fee payment also must be received by Fulbright Austria (Austrian-American Educational Commission) no later than **fourteen days after your notification**. This processing fee helps defray administrative costs.

If you wish to decline your offered placement, please let Fulbright Austria know as soon as possible, so the necessary administrative steps to reassign your placement to an alternate candidate can be swiftly taken.

If you fail to notify Fulbright Austria within fourteen days of your notification, the BMB reserves the right to retract your position and reassign it to an alternate candidate.

If for personal or professional reasons you are unable to accept the teaching assistantship position offered, please **immediately notify Ms. Katharina Hütthaler** (responsible program officer) by email (khuetthaler@fulbright.at), so that Fulbright Austria may make provisions for filling the position with an alternate candidate.

TAs at BMB schools will also be asked to officially (bindingly) confirm their placement on the *weltweit unterrichten* platform in spring (late admits will do this after they accept) – AFTER having initially accepted their position with Fulbright Austria (see the [timeline](#) for more information). You will receive an email from *weltweit unterrichten* with your login data and instructions on how to complete this step. Your personal information will be shared with schools and school boards – **please DO NOT CONTACT your schools before** since they will not yet know who you are (if you are placed at BMB schools and not at Green schools).

Formally accepting your placement on the platform within the listed timeframe is **required** – failure to do so results in your spot being re-assigned to another candidate. After you accepted your spot on the platform, you will be granted access to contact information of your mentor teachers to get in touch with them and be able to browse a contact list (*“Standortliste”*) of all current BMB TAs on the program and find past TAs’ contact information.

Green-school TAs do not need to confirm their acceptance a second time. They can reach out to either their schools or to the Fulbright Austria program officer for current TAs’ contact details. The consent of the current TA is needed for sharing the information.

By mid-May, Fulbright Austria will also send you a *Bestätigung* (**letter of confirmation**) confirming the location of your assignment, gross salary, and health and accident insurance by email. **You will need this official document for your residence permit application. Please therefore ensure that you provided Fulbright Austria with your correct email address.**

Please check the **accuracy of all the information** in the *Bestätigung* once it arrives in May. This confirmation lists your personal information (name, date of birth), school placements (school names, addresses, and locations). If any information is—to your knowledge—not correct, please contact Fulbright Austria immediately so that we can issue a new *Bestätigung*.

9. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR STAY 11

USTA candidates will deal with and obtain many different important documents assembling their residence permit application (*Aufenthaltsbewilligung*) or EU-citizen *Anmeldebescheinigung*, completing their housing search, and providing any additional documents Fulbright Austria asks for while preparing for their job placement abroad.

9.1 General Remarks on Important Documents

Please make sure to create hard copies and digital scans of **ALL** vital documents you are taking with you to Austria or submit at the Austrian consulate in the US.

Note that Austrian authorities (in the US and in Austria) might **keep submitted original documents**, so please always provide them with **copies** unless explicitly instructed to do otherwise. **Bring your originals for cross-checking** but do not submit them. Authorities can also ask for additional documentation on top of what you provided to them if they need to. They should subsequently tell you what they require.

For safety purposes, also **photocopy and scan ALL other important documents and materials**, such as your birth certificate, medical records, US driver's license, etc., and keep another set of hard copies in a separate place for reference in case the originals are lost. Also make sure to upload all these documents where you can easily access them even in case you lose your phone.

Once settled in Austria, make a copy and scans your Austrian residence permit card, e-card (Austrian social security card), and the *Meldezettel* printout (confirmation of residence registration) as well after you receive it.

Please collect all required documents and keep them in a folder or binder.

9.2 Austrian Bureaucracy

Austrian bureaucracy can get extremely intricate, time-consuming, and has existed for centuries. Every single person living in Austria (native or expat) likely has had their own experience with it since it's such a prominent feature of daily life. Especially during your first days and weeks in Austria, you will come into contact with a lot of bureaucratic forms and processes.

It is worth noting that **for Austrian authorities you do NOT have special status**: they will not let you skip the line or expedite your permit processing because you happen to teach on the USTA Program or are a combined grantee. Austrian bureaucracy largely operates in German – please be prepared to communicate in German with your authority and to be **polite under all circumstances** (use the formal “Sie” form in emails or calls). Throwing a tantrum doesn't help but instead could increase the wait time and anger your case worker. Please be patient – bureaucracy does take time (= several weeks).

Many administrative errands also require you to schedule a timed in-person appointment in advance; inquiring if you can walk in without an appointment or indeed need an appointment is crucial (sometimes, websites explicitly state if you need an appointment). You will schedule those appointments either by email, by phone, or through a website.

Sometimes calling the authority or case worker on the phone for information is more efficient than emailing (if you do not need written confirmation). In some cases, it can be beneficial to get written confirmation from your consulate or authority first (e.g. on the whereabouts of your permit application) before calling and politely following up by phone.

Also keep in mind that Austrian civil service offices tend to **have limited business hours** (08:00–12:00 from Monday to Friday in the morning; no service in the afternoon except on a specific day once a week, etc.).

9.3 European Entry/Exit System (EES) and European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) (currently not operational)

New **regulations for entry and exit to/from the European Union/Schengen area** are planned for third-country citizens – the [EES \(European Entry/Exit System\)](#) and the [ETIAS \(European Travel Information and Authorisation System\)](#). Currently, **neither** system is operational.

IMPORTANT:

Launch dates for EES and ETIAS have been repeatedly pushed back for several years, and exact launch dates are currently **unknown**, as of March 2025. The current tentative start date for EES is reported for late 2025 and ETIAS is scheduled to be launching at least six months later – currently set in 2026.

Since teaching assistants receive their residence permit in Austria and not in the US, they would enter the EU/Schengen area as **tourists** and thus be subject to those systems and procedures – depending on when the systems launch.

US-EU/EEA dual citizens will be [exempt](#) since they are EU/EEA-passport holders.

ETIAS will only start after EES went live and a transition period is planned. We are currently waiting for further official information.

How will the systems work?

For [EES](#), your passport would be checked, a photo of your face, and scans of your fingerprints would be taken at your point of entry to the Schengen area (29 countries) – find more information [here](#). This could either happen through “traditional” passport control or (at some point in the future) self-service terminals. Be advised **to plan in enough time at the airport** when transferring flights within the EU/Schengen area. Find information [here](#) on how this system might work. It also stores information on refused entries to the Schengen area.

[ETIAS](#) will be an entry requirement and travel authorization for visa-exempt nationals traveling to any of [29 European countries](#). It will be an online application to be submitted and processed **BEFORE** you fly and you would need to pay an [application fee](#) of seven euros through card payment. It is similar to ESTA for Europeans coming to the US and the [official website](#) states that it should be a fast procedure for most travelers. It would be linked to your passport. ETIAS would not *guarantee* entry to the Schengen area just as having obtained ESTA does not guarantee entry to the US for European travelers. Find information [here](#) on what you would need to apply.

9.4 Criminal Records and Your Police Clearance Report

Fulbright Austria assumes that candidates for teaching assistantships do not have criminal records. However, if you have been convicted of or currently are under indictment for a misdemeanor or a felony, you are **required** to contact Fulbright Austria and to provide additional information (also since Fulbright Austria effectively vouches for you in the course of placement).

Withholding relevant information from Fulbright Austria can lead to the revocation of a USTA assignment; withholding information or providing false information to the Austrian authorities in order to obtain an Austrian residence permit is **illegal** according to Austrian law.

When applying for a residence permit, you will be required to provide the Austrian authorities with documentation on your record: a so-called **police clearance report** (*Strafregisterauszug; polizeiliches Führungszeugnis*). To fulfill this requirement, you should **contact the police in your city or county of permanent residence** (home address) and ask them to provide you with a report or clearance letter indicating that you have no criminal record. There may also be lead time on this item of up to a month. You can alternatively file for an official FBI background check but please factor in enough time to obtain it as this can be more time-consuming than the simpler background check from your home county.

This is a document which you will need to get [apostilled \(legalized\)](#) by your state!

Dual US/EU citizens also must obtain a police clearance report prior to arriving in Austria. They have to show this document to their schools upon reporting for duty on their first day. They do not have to get it apostilled (legalized).

If you lived outside the US for longer than the last six months as a resident, you need to provide **a police clearance letter from the country you last resided in** before coming to Austria. Please talk to your responsible Austrian consulate in the US or your local Austrian authority (use [this tool](#) to look for your authority; enter your Austrian city/town or Austrian ZIP code) on what to provide.

Teaching assistants extending their stay for a second year may want to check in with their future responsible authority in Austria before departure in May if 1) an Austrian police clearance report is required to be submitted by the TA, 2) if they need a new (apostilled) US clearance report or 3) if authorities have access to the information through their databases and no document is therefore required to be submitted.

9.5 Transcripts

One of the prerequisites of the assignment as a first-year teaching assistant is the successful completion of a bachelor's degree. Documentation that you have completed and received your degree must be submitted to Fulbright Austria **as soon as it is available but no later than 15 July**. Ask the office of the registrar or transcript company to send an official digital transcript to:

Ms. Katharina HUETTHALER (USTA program officer)
khuetthaler@fulbright.at

Failure to complete your degree program and/or to submit this documentation will lead to a retraction of your placement. If delays arise without any negligence on your part, please inform your program officer at Fulbright Austria as soon as possible by email.

9.6 Passport

Since Fulbright Austria vouches for you in the process of residence permit application by issuing a **placement confirmation** (*Bestätigung*), all first-year applicants are required to submit a scan of the biographical page of their passport to Fulbright Austria upon accepting their placement.

The passport has to be [valid for at least three \(best: six\) months](#) AFTER the projected end of your stay and departure from the [Schengen area](#).

You are also required to submit a scan of your passport to Fulbright Austria after accepting your placement. US/EU dual citizens should submit a scan of their European passport.

Please let US (U.S. Consulate in Austria), your local Austrian authority (*Bezirkshauptmannschaft; Magistrat*), and Fulbright Austria know **immediately** if you lose your passport after you submitted your residence permit application with the old passport information and have already arrived in Austria before picking up your permit. If you lose your passport while still in the US but after your appointment, get in touch with your Austrian consulate (since they forwarded information that is no longer accurate) and the responsible authority in the US to get a new passport and let the local Austrian authority know.

9.7 Birth Certificate

Please also bring an original copy of your birth certificate and have it [apostilled](#)/legalized before departure. While third-country citizens are no longer required to submit it for their residence permits, you might need it for other purposes (studying at university; other administrative affairs). You do not need to send a scan to Fulbright Austria – this is strictly for your personal records and affairs.

10. APPLICATION FOR AN AUSTRIAN RESIDENCE PERMIT FOR US CITIZENS



4

NOTE: This procedure does only apply to individuals who are US citizens and NOT dual US/EU or EEA citizens. Dual US/EU or EEA citizens should skip this section and read the information provided in chapter 11.

Participants are solely responsible for collecting their documents, submitting their application, and obtaining their residence permit within the indicated timeframe. Fulbright Austria **CANNOT** do this for you due to data protection and immigration laws in Austria.

A residence permit allows you to stay and work in Austria as a US citizen (third-country national) for longer than six months. It should not be confused with a visa (*Visum*) which allows stays up to six months. It is essential to work on obtaining all the documents needed for the residence permit application as soon as possible because the lead times can be up to six weeks or more.

Candidates who do not submit complete and correct applications for Austrian residence permits (*Aufenthaltsbewilligung*; commonly referred to as *Aufenthaltstitel*) by **1 July 2025** at the latest or do not contact the USTA program officer about any delays, disqualify themselves from participation in the program.

You will 1) start this process at an Austrian (honorary) consulate/Consulate General in the US and later 2) pick up your residence permit card at your local authority in Austria after having arrived and moved to your place of residence in September.

Please do **NOT** go through third parties like VFS which are issuing visas for shorter stays. Residence permits are filed directly at consulates and never through VFS.

You are legally allowed to start working only AFTER having collected your physical permit card in Austria. Violation of this can lead to your removal from the program and potential detainment and subsequent deportation by immigration authorities.

Parts of the residence permit process described below could change after receiving the handbook due to legal changes or updated forms. Fulbright Austria will inform program participants on the newest regulations by email. This chapter was created by *weltweit unterrichten*, the Austrian Ministry of Interior (BMI), and Fulbright Austria in a shared effort.

10.1 Introduction

The following information will prepare you for the application process. Please be aware...

- that it is **your OWN responsibility to submit the application including the complete set of documents required in time**. We recommend applying for the residence permit as soon as possible (ideally not later than June). Secure an appointment with the Embassy/Consulate well in advance!
- that the information below is supplied without liability and is for preliminary orientation **ONLY**.
- it is **your OWN responsibility to obtain all relevant information directly from the competent authorities**.
- that as a rule the application has to be submitted **in person** at the [Austrian Embassy /Consulate in your country of residence](#).

10.2 Important Links

The following links will help you with the application process. Please save them in your browser.

- [Settlement and residence in Austria \(bmi.gv.at\)](https://bmi.gv.at)
- [Residence permit 'special cases of gainful employment' \(bmi.gv.at\)](https://bmi.gv.at)
- [Application form – English version – English version](#)
- [Explanation of the application form 'Stay Permit – Special Cases of Gainful Employment'](#)
- [Antragsformular - deutsche Version](#)
- [Erklärung des Antragsformulars auf Deutsch](#)
- [OeAD-Website – General information and Checklists](#)

10.3 Process

Start collecting all documents required to be submitted in June **as soon as possible**.

1. Download the [application form](#) (and explanation in [German](#) or [English](#)) from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior ([BMI](#)). Your permit type is called *Aufenthaltsbewilligung "Sonderfälle unselbstständiger Erwerbstätigkeit"*.
2. [Complete the form](#) legibly but **don't sign it yet**. You will have to do this in person with an employee of the Austrian Embassy/Consulate at your appointment.
3. After filling in the form (and NOT having it signed yet), add **photocopies** of the following documents (don't forget to take the **originals** to the Austrian Embassy/Consulate to your appointment, so they can be cross-checked).
 - ✓ **Copy of your passport** (all pages)
 - ✓ **Police clearance certificate** from your country of residence; **not older than 3 months** at the time of application ([legalised](#)/ = with an apostille)
 - *What is an apostille?:* An apostille is a diplomatic stamp/sticker verifying the authenticity and validity of a document to other countries.
 - **Note from Fulbright Austria:** In order to fulfill this requirement, you should contact the police in your city or county of permanent residence (home address) and ask them to provide you with a [report or clearance letter](#) indicating that you have no criminal record. There may also be lead time on this item of up to a month, please also factor in time to get it apostilled by your state or by a federal authority.
 - You can also submit an FBI clearance certificate but please be aware of significant lead times of several weeks and additional time to get it apostilled!
 - Second-year TAs should ask their future Austrian authority before departure if they need an Austrian or US police clearance letter or nothing since they stayed in Austria this year already and disclose if they plan to submit in Austria or the US.
 - ✓ [Passport-sized photograph](#) (color photograph, size 3.5 x 4.5 cm); **not older than 6 months** (mind measurements!)

- ✓ **Employment contract = “Bestätigungsschreiben”** that you will receive by email from the Austrian Ministry of Education (BMB). (* For US teaching assistants, this document will be issued by Fulbright Austria on behalf of the BMB in May by email). Please print in color.
 - Minimum funds to finance your stay in Austria [as of 2025]: EUR 1.273,99/month (for couples: EUR 2.009,85/month for both, for each child additionally: EUR 196,57/month)
 - As a rule, the *Bestätigungsschreiben* confirms that you will earn enough to finance your stay (EUR 2.012,90 gross/ EUR 1.631,42 net).
 - In general, immigration authorities are entitled to require proof of sufficient additional funds (e.g., savings issued in your name) for your accommodation at any time. They might especially do so if rent and utilities exceed 733,50 euro/month. Utilities do not include electricity, heating costs, internet, etc.
 - Please check the expiry date of your residence permit after you pick it up: In case it expires after 31 May, and you keep staying in Austria you will have to prove additional funds for as long as you plan to stay after 31 May (since your stay is prolonged).
- ✓ **Declaration of regular expenses** (loans, maintenance payments or other financial burdens) if applicable.
- ✓ **Proof of accommodation in Austria** according to the local standards (e.g. rental or subtenancy contract, legally valid preliminary contract, [accommodation agreement](#) [*Wohnrechtsvereinbarung*]). Required at the time of application.
 - ➔ Please check our [housing section](#) and get in touch with former TAs and your schools in May after having received your mentor teacher contact details and the list of former TAs to ask about housing.
 - **Important:** If you change accommodation between application and issue of your permit, make sure that the new address is located in the same “*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*” or “*Magistrat*” (=same jurisdiction). Otherwise, there will be long delays as your application has to be sent to a different authority and processed from anew. You can check [here](#) (search for “*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*” and then enter ZIP code or name of city/ village).
 - AirBnBs might not be suitable as preliminary accommodation according to law.
- ✓ **Proof of travel health insurance** (covering medical costs of more than 30,000 euro, including guarantee to cover possible recovery and repatriation costs, valid in the Schengen area for at least three months). This is to cover health costs for the period between entering Austria and e.g. the start of coverage within the statutory insurance in Austria.
 - Your *Bestätigungsschreiben* confirms that you will have statutory insurance cover from your first day of work until 31 May with your insurance provider (BVAEB = *Versicherungsanstalt Öffentlich Bediensteter, Eisenbahnen und Bergbau*).
 - Please note that the registration for insurance with the BVAEB can **only be made after having received your residence permit**. We strongly recommend organizing travel insurance until the end of November to be on the safe side.

4. Please make sure you book an appointment well in advance so you can attend the appointment at the Austrian Consulate General or your honorary consulate in June (second-years will do this in June or July, after their current permit expired). Appointments may not be available if you do not secure an appointment well in advance. You can always reschedule your appointment if you do not acquire the required documents on time.
 - Fulbright Austria has a special arrangement with the Austrian authorities that allows US teaching assistants to submit the applications for residence permits not only at the “official” Austrian Consulates General in New York, Washington, DC, and Los Angeles, but also at a wide variety of **honorary consulates** all over the US, ranging from Anchorage, Alaska, to St. Louis, Missouri, to Miami, Florida. This makes it substantially easier and cheaper for US teaching assistants to submit their applications.
 - To receive a residence permit, which is a prerequisite for being employed as of 1 October, you will be required to **submit your application for a residence permit by 1 July (if you have been accepted by that date)**.
 - Please also know that honorary consulates may be closed during summer months as consuls are on holiday, so be sure to inquire about their availability in advance when scheduling your appointment.
5. To schedule said appointment in advance with your [Austrian Embassy/Consulate](#), please ensure you **include the following information in your email**:
 - a) **type of residence permit** you are applying for (*Aufenthaltsbewilligung “Sonderfälle unselbständiger Erwerbstätigkeit”* = stay permit “Special Cases of Gainful Employment”)
 - b) **your occupation in Austria**: Foreign language assistant (*Fremdsprachen-assistenten*)
 - c) **your preferred date for an appointment**.
 - d) **type of payment required**: Please make sure to ask if you need to bring cash, if your consulate accepts debit/credit card payments, or if you have to pay by money order (or a different payment type) or if you have to pay in Austria.
6. **Attend the appointment at the Embassy/(honorary) consulate**: Submit your documents, sign the application form at the Embassy/consulate, and pay the application fee of **EUR 120**. **Your fingerprints (=biometrics) will also usually be taken at this point.** (Note from Fulbright Austria: Honorary consulates aren’t equipped to do that – in this case, your fingerprints will be taken in Austria. Sometimes, this also applies to TAs who were able to submit their fingerprints at the Consulates General but still have to do it again with their local Austrian authority.)
 - **Please keep the receipt for the fee, so you can prove that you have submitted your application (this is NOT confirmation that your application has been accepted/approved).** Please email Fulbright Austria a scan of your receipt after your appointment.
 - **Please do NOT submit originals of documents unless explicitly instructed to do so by consular staff! Austrian authorities might keep documents and not return them to you!**
 - Note from Fulbright Austria: If you are submitting at an honorary consulate, **you** will need to send your application by postal mail to the responsible

Consulate General after your appointment and they will then pass on your application to Austria. Honorary consulates are not able to pass on applications.

7. The Austrian Embassy/consulate will then forward your application to the relevant domestic authority in Austria for processing. This will be the authority responsible for the area of your intended accommodation¹.
 - **Total costs: EUR 160** (EUR 120 when submitting the application, EUR 20 when the permit is granted, and EUR 20 fee for the collection of police identification data/biometrics).
 - Note from Fulbright Austria: The “official” Austrian Consulates General are equipped to collect this fee, but not all honorary consuls may be able to do so. Therefore, the procedure can vary on a case-to-case basis, and in some cases the entire €160 may be charged as a back-end fee due when you pick up your residence permit in Austria. There may also be additional back-end charges that exceed the amount of €160. These charges are at the discretion of the relevant authorities in Austria.
 - Additionally for foreign civil status documents (birth certificate, marriage certificate, civil union certificate) depending on the type of document: EUR 3,90, EUR 7,20, or EUR 14,30
8. Once you have provided the Austrian authorities with your prospective Austrian address on your application, please note that **you should NOT move to a different address in a different jurisdiction until after you have received your permit.** Changing your address during an ongoing application process could result in your application falling under a new jurisdiction, which would cause the entire process to start from the beginning again and significant delays could follow. After you have your residence permit in hand, you are free to change addresses, keeping in mind the need to de-register your old address and [register your new address](#) with the [Meldeamt](#).
 - Please note: The issuing of the permit may legally take up to six months. **So please make sure you start the application process in time (= June).**
 - You may work only **AFTER issuance** of the permit, and **you can only have one employer (= your local school board) in Austria while working on the program.**
 - It is also possible to submit an application directly at the local residence authority in Austria (*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*, or *Magistrat*, MA 35 for Vienna) after lawful entry and during a lawful stay (90 out of 180 days visa-free for US citizens).
 - **Important:** You must apply with the authority of your residence even if your schools are located in a different district (*Bezirk*) or province (*Bundesland*). You can find all authorities [here](#) – search for “*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*”) and then enter ZIP code or name of town/ village where you will be living.
 - Please also note that the application does **not permit you to overstay your visa-free stay of 90 days**. As it may take several months until the permit will be issued (six months as the legal maximum) you might have to go back to your country of residence and wait for further instructions. Simply staying in Austria beyond 90 days could lead to a denial of your residence permit.

¹ This is why they will need to know your address in Austria or at least the city/town in which you will stay!

- You will be allowed to stay in Austria as a tourist after your assistantship ended/ after your residence permit expires. But please make sure you still follow the 90/180 rule (see point 10).
9. Wait for the Austrian authorities to reach out to you with an appointment for fingerprinting and document check. Most authorities reach out to you by email within four to six weeks of your application being submitted. Some authorities will reach out to Fulbright Austria instead – your program officer will notify you by email if that happens and you will follow up with the Austrian authority yourself. Sometimes, authorities will ask you to contact them for scheduling an appointment only after you arrived in Austria! Please inform Fulbright Austria once contacted!
- If you have NOT been contacted by the local Austrian authority within four weeks after having submitted your application at the Embassy/consulate, we encourage you to politely contact the relevant authority in Austria by email or phone and ask if your application has arrived and when your permit will be ready/when to come in for fingerprinting. Some authorities do not reach out themselves – in this case, you will send them an email or call them.
 - The relevant authority could be either a „*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*“ (regional administrative authority) or a „*Magistrat*“ (only in [statutory cities](#)). Which authority is responsible for your procedure depends on where you stay. Please note once again: if you change your address BEFORE picking up your residence permit, this could cause a change in the responsible authority and therefore **a delay in the procedure**. Use the following links to find out about your respective local authority:
 - ✓ **Vienna:** [MA 35 \(Business Immigration Office\)](#)
 - The main MA 35 office (located at Dresdner Straße) is usually not responsible for TAs, instead the MA35 Business Immigration Office based at Zelinkagasse 9, 1. Stock, 1010 Wien, is (sometimes, other MA35 offices in Vienna aid them with handing out permits, so you could be asked to go somewhere else for picking up your permit, but they will process your application)
 - Legal counseling for Vienna TA residents only: Questions on more complicated immigration issues can be raised with the Business Immigration Office based at MA35 – the legal consultants are not the same as the caseworkers!
 - Email: businessimmigration@wirtschaftsagentur.at
 - ✓ **Graz:** [Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung](#)
 - ✓ **Rest of Austria:** search for „*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*“ or „*Magistrat*“ (larger towns) and then enter ZIP code or name of town/village where you will be staying.

10. **Travel to Austria:** As noted before, **UK/US citizens** may enter and stay in the [Schengen Area](#), which includes Austria, without a visa or residence permit **for up to 90 days in a period of 180 days**. You may only stay longer than 90 days if you have picked up your residence permit card before this time. Otherwise, you have to go back to your country of residence and wait for further instructions. Simply staying in Austria beyond 90 days could lead to a denial of your residence permit. As of 2025, [third-country and EU/EEA citizens also need a visa for the UK](#).

- Bear in mind not to arrive too early! **Third-country citizens (non-EU/EEA citizens) only have 90 visa-free days (within any 180 days) in Austria or any country in the Schengen area** until they will need to have picked up their residence permit. You will have to **leave Austria and the Schengen Area** if your permit is not ready within that timeframe. **Arriving before September is therefore NOT encouraged for non-dual citizens.** You may want to arrive as early as the beginning of September, depending on your personal circumstances and what information you receive from the Austrian authorities.
 - Note from Fulbright Austria: We recommend that first-year TAs arrive **in advance of the orientation seminar** (before 22 September) to register their residence and submit fingerprints to the authorities issuing the residence permit before attending orientation (see below).
11. **Register your residence** within three business days as a *Nebenwohnsitz* by filling out (and have your landlord sign) the [Meldezettel form](#) and take the final printout you'll receive from staff with you. Please keep this printout – you'll need it!
12. **Attend your initial appointment at your local authority:** you might be asked to show your documents and *Meldezettel*/printout, submit additional materials, pay any remaining fees, and/or get fingerprinted (if not done before). You will be assigned a second (later) appointment to pick up your residence permit card before being able to work.
- Note from Fulbright Austria: You might need to **wait around 7–10 business days** between fingerprinting and picking up your residence permit card since the card itself needs to be printed. Some authorities do not issue the permit card before 1 October. Ultimately it is your decision when to arrive, as long as it is before 22 September (first-year orientation). Second-years should arrive before 1 October and have enough time to pick up their permit too.
13. **Collect your residence permit at your second appointment:** Your residence permit (credit-card format) will be issued by the local Austrian authority responsible for your place of residence in Austria and you will be informed by email as soon as it's ready, or if any documents are missing². You must collect the permit card in person at the local Austrian authority in Austria. Some authorities will issue the residence permit card prior to the 1 October start date; others will insist that they legally cannot issue the permit earlier than 1 October. **Your permit is only valid as of 1 October. You are required by law to have your residence permit on you at all times.**

Please check the spelling of your name, and please check your employer listed on the permit card. If any information is incorrect (e.g., Fulbright Austria listed as your employer or an expiration date after 31 May) or spelled wrong, please contact your authority to get a new card.

- Please be mindful of the somewhat **limited business hours** of public offices in Austria – you may need to appear between 8–12 AM in the morning since Austrian authorities/public offices are often closed in the afternoon.

² If your application hasn't been forwarded to Austria (for whatever reason), please follow-up with your Austrian consulate in the US self-sufficiently and inquire where your paperwork currently is. Inquiring on your residence permit application is your responsibility.

11. ANMELDEBESCHEINIGUNG – PROCESS FOR DUAL US/EU CITIZENS

Dual US/EU citizens DO NOT need to apply for a residence permit, however they need to obtain an *Anmeldebescheinigung* – that confirms their lawful stay in another EU country. This is due within **four months of relocation to Austria** and can usually be done at your *Gemeindeamt*, or, if residing in a statutory city, your *Magistrat*.

Please make sure to provide the staff with the required documents (passport, *Bestätigung*, etc.) and do not confuse the *Anmeldebescheinigung* (for EU citizens only) with the *Meldezettel* (=registration form; everyone living in Austria needs this document).

You will first fill out your *Meldezettel* (as everyone living in Austria has to) and afterwards proceed to do the *Anmeldebescheinigung* for EU citizens.

You may need to show multiple paystubs, so be sure to inquire with your local authority what to bring and if you need an appointment or if walk-ins are allowed. Doing this later than September/October is okay (also due to the paystubs which you will not have available upon arrival) but ask when you can start the process and start as soon as possible.

Dual citizens are able to start working at their schools on 1 October, even if their *Anmeldebescheinigung* is not ready yet (since you will need multiple paystubs for that).

Please be mindful of the somewhat **limited business hours** of offices in Austria – you may need to appear between 8-12 in the morning since Austrian authorities/public offices are often closed in the afternoon.

Note: EU citizens will NOT submit a photo in this process, so they will need to bring a photo to a registration center (in-person appointment) in order to receive their health insurance card (e-card). More information on what to do can be found [here](#) (Chapter 23.4).

US-Austrian dual citizens will not need an *Anmeldebescheinigung*.

12. CONTACTING YOUR SCHOOLS AND MENTOR TEACHERS 9

Schools to which you have been assigned will be informed of your assignment by the BMB ministry after you formally accepted your placement in late spring (tentatively in May/June). **Please DO NOT contact them earlier!**

For TAs placed at BMB schools, said mentor teacher contact information will subsequently be made available on the *weltweit unterrichten* platform – your hub for many administrative things and information on the program. You will receive an email with instructions and login data from *weltweit unterrichten* in late spring to access the information. Late-admits will receive their login information from *weltweit unterrichten* after accepting their school placement with Fulbright Austria.

TAs placed at Green schools will have received the contact information in their acceptance email due to the different ministry infrastructure and should reach out to their schools as soon as possible.

Fulbright Austria requires all TAs at both BMB schools and BML schools to **contact their schools by June at the latest** to establish lines of communication (exception: late-admits will do so after receiving their login and accepting their placement on *weltweit unterrichten*).

Current USTA contracts expire at the end of May, and Austrian schools are closed for summer break in July and August. **Do NOT expect teachers to be available via email during the summer holidays.** Reaching teachers during summer (July to end of August) can be challenging.

Please make sure to use a formal and appropriate form of address (“Sehr geehrte Frau *surname*” or “Sehr geehrter Herr *surname*”) when you first contact the English teachers at your schools and use the formal “Sie” form. **It is important to investigate whether the school(s) can help you find accommodation if you haven’t had any luck so far.**

Make sure to ask to be put in touch with the USTA (or TA from another country) currently at your *Stammschule*, who may be able to advise you on many practical aspects of your assignment (including housing). For a comprehensive list of USTA assignments during the current school year, please [consult our website](#). You’ll receive their contact information by May on the *Standortliste* curated by *weltweit unterrichten* if they consent to it being shared.

Although you should contact your schools by email, past experience has demonstrated that phone or video calls are effective in establishing personal connections with the teachers working at your school as well. Many Austrians use WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom, or GoogleMeet now – inquire if your teachers would be willing to talk to you on any of those platforms too.

It is advisable to do some online research on the schools that you have been assigned to. You are provided with website links in your letter of acceptance. Find out more about the type of schools, the teachers, and the different activities or projects the schools offer.

Please note that as a teaching assistant, **YOU** are solely responsible for obtaining housing in Austria. It is of utmost importance that you start your search for housing as soon as possible. **FULBRIGHT AUSTRIA CANNOT FIND HOUSING FOR YOU!**

Note: Regional authorities in Austria and consulates in the US are entitled to not accept your permit application if you are unable to provide a valid Austrian residential address and a signed rental contract or a rental agreement at the time of application (= in June or July)! Please secure housing before your appointment!

13.1 How To Get Started

Please start your search **EARLY** – as soon as you know your schools' location, you should start the process of finding a residence. Make sure to contact current USTAs and/or your future school(s) and solicit advice if needed. Contact information will be shared with you on your *weltweit unterrichten* profile in spring (BMB schools) or in your acceptance email (BML/Green schools).

If you have been assigned to a smaller community (as opposed to a larger urban center), people from your school or previous USTAs might have a good idea what the local market looks like and be able to inform you accordingly. Generally speaking, teaching assistants assigned to smaller communities do not have much of a problem identifying housing as the host schools are familiar with the teaching assistant's needs and the opportunities. Teaching assistants at schools in urban centers may not necessarily expect their schools to be so forthcoming in identifying housing opportunities.

Past USTAs have lived in dorm rooms, with host families, in single apartments or apartments shared with other students, and rooms rented in a private home, each with positive and negative aspects in terms of cost, privacy, comfort, and opportunities for German language use. For example, renting a room in a private home usually imposes certain restrictions on privacy and the use of kitchen and bathroom facilities. However, it may also offer you more opportunities to use the German language and experience Austrian culture.

Dorm rooms are the most inexpensive type of accommodation. However, they must be booked in advance and may entail contracts that cannot be terminated on short notice. Please talk to dorm agencies to find out about the expected duration of lease. Dorms might require you to be a matriculated student at an Austrian university – please ask in advance if you can apply for a spot if you are not a student.

13.2 Where To Find Housing

IMPORTANT NOTE: The closer you get to the beginning of the academic year in Austria (October 1), the tighter the market for student housing gets. Therefore, teaching assistants are advised to identify appropriate housing as soon as possible, but **in any case**, (if they aren't dual US-EU/EEA citizens) **BEFORE** they have their appointment for their residence permit since they will need to provide a rental contract or accommodation agreement.

The *OeAD WohnraumverwaltungsGmbH* is a private organization (connected to OeAD – the non-governmental organization managing scholarships/grants for the Republic of Austria) responsible for administering student housing in dormitories and apartments of various sizes (single- or shared-living). OeAD housing is safe, reputable, and situated in the seven Austrian university cities (Innsbruck, Salzburg, Linz, Leoben; Graz; Klagenfurt; Wien); [consult the OeAD student housing website](#) for more information on provincial housing options. Spots can be gone quickly, so please inquire with them as soon as possible,

Below you can browse other suggestions of where teaching assistants can find (information on) housing – some of them are student housing options and you might need to ask if you (in case you do not plan to study) as a TA are able to reserve a spot. Since it can be hard to find an apartment on the free market, please do not discredit student dorms as an option.

- **Austrian National Union of Students** (*Österreichische Hochschüler:innenschaft (ÖH)*): The ÖH has chapters at each of Austria's universities. The ÖH branches maintain online "brokerages" (*Börsen*) for student housing: you can look for dorm rooms (*Studentenheimplätze*), shared accommodations (i.e., rooms in apartments with other students (*Wohngemeinschaften*)) and apartments.

For the ÖH's housing "brokerage", see <https://schwarzesbrett.oeh.ac.at/wohnen/>

Additional individual sites:

[ÖH University of Graz](#)
[ÖH University of Innsbruck](#)
[ÖH University of Linz](#)
[ÖH University of Salzburg](#)

ÖH branch offices also have *Sozialreferate* that may be of assistance in finding housing. Links to the branch offices of the Austrian National Union of Students can be found at <http://www.oeh.ac.at/oeh> or on the websites of Austrian universities.

Please see the list below for some links to student dorms and other accommodation options – inquiries on any option are best addressed directly with the proper parties:

General links for finding housing or a dorm spot:

- <https://studynaustria.at/en/living/living-costs> (Living costs in Austria; by OeAD)
- <https://www.studium.at/studentenheime> (directory of Austrian dorms and current open spots; all of Austria – search by province; look for "Zimmer frei" in green)
- <https://www.studium.at/karte> (map of Austria with dorm rooms, apartments, and WG rooms)
- <https://www.studieren.at/wohnen/studentenwohnheim-finden/> (directory of Austrian dorms; all provinces)
- <https://www.oeh.ac.at/en/dorm-guide/> (dorm guide by the Austrian student union)
- http://www.heimdatenbank.at/hp_abfrage.php (dorm database; all provinces)
- <https://www.wg-gesucht.de/> (WG listings; all of Austria; especially bigger cities)
- <https://www.1000things.at/blog/alles-ueber-die-wiener-bezirke/> (districts of Vienna)
- <https://austrianadaptation.com/blog/where-to-live-vienna>
- <https://www.willhaben.at/iad/immobilien> (an Austrian phone number is needed for registration)

Links for dorms and rooms in Austrian provinces:

- <https://www.home4students.at/en/> (Home4Students student housing; all of Austria)

- <https://www.studentenwohnen.at/standorte/> (dorms in Vienna)
- <https://www.wohnbuddy.com/> (Wohnbuddy; rooms in senior citizen residences; usually for a year+; spending time with senior citizens to socialize is usually expected)
- <https://www.wihast.at/> (WIHAST; Wien and Niederösterreich)
- <https://www.kolping.at/kontakt-adressen/wohnen/jugendliche-studierende> (Kolping-Häuser; all of Austria)
- <https://www.akademikerhilfe.at/de/studentenheime> (Akademikerhilfe; all of Austria)
- <https://www.stuwo.at/> (STUWO; all of Austria)
- <https://www.oejab.at/studierende-jugend/studierendenwohnheime> (ÖJAB; all of Austria)
- <https://www.thesocialhub.co/de/wien/unterkunft/studenten-unterkunft/> (The Social Hub; apartments in Wien)
- <https://viennabase.at/> (ViennaBase; Wien)
- https://effi-studios.at/de/home_de/ (Effi Studios; apartments in Wien)
- <https://www.the-fizz.com/> (The Fizz; Wien Brigittenau; Wien Hauptbahnhof)
- <https://www.milestone.net/de/student-living/> (Milestone; Wien, Graz, Leoben, Linz)
- <https://www.uni-graz.at/de/studium/rund-ums-studium/wohnen/> (Uni Graz)
- <https://www.wist-steiermark.at/> (WIST Steiermark; Styria)
- <https://www.sws.or.at/> (SWS Graz)
- <https://www.greenbox.co.at/> (Greenbox Graz and Leoben; Styria)
- <https://www.jku.at/campus/wohnen/studierendenheime/> (living in Linz; JKU Linz)
- <https://www.oeh-salzburg.at/beratung/studierendenheime/> (Salzburg)
- <https://boersen.oeh-salzburg.at/boersen/wohnungsboerse/> (ÖH bursary; Salzburg)
- <https://studentenheim.at/> (dorm in Salzburg)
- <https://www.uibk.ac.at/universitaet/welcome/wohnen/index.html.en> (info on accommodation in Innsbruck)
- <https://www.studieren.at/wohnen/studentenwohnheime-innsbruck/> (Innsbruck)
- <https://www.plus.ac.at/abteilung-fuer-internationale-beziehungen/buero-fuer-internationale-beziehungen/international-life/wohnen/> (University of Salzburg)
- <https://www.fhv.at/infopoint/praktische-informationen-zum-leben-in-vorarlberg/unterkunft> (living in Dornbirn, Vorarlberg)

Other helpful agencies: *MieterHilfe* (<https://mieterhilfe.at/>) – Vienna; reach out to them if you have questions on your rental contract, suspect foul play with your rent etc.; for issues with dorms contact your dorm agency. In Graz, you can contact *Wolst* (*Wohnungsinformations-stelle*); in Linz you can contact the *Magistrat* for some information if issues arise (not for issues with your landlord).

13.3 General Remarks on Housing and Rental Contracts in Austria

Costs for energy and rent currently are relatively high due to the war on Ukraine has increased inflation.

Many Americans—especially those from suburbs or smaller cities—are accustomed to housing that is cheap by European standards. Conversely, they frequently feel that rents in Austria are too high for what they get. The prices and standards of Austrian housing differ from those in the US for a number of reasons: The Austrian concept of space is different than the US one. An apartment that Austrians might consider sufficient or even "spacious" may be "small" by US standards. Consequently, many furnished sublet apartments do not quite meet US expectations (for the rent paid) or standards (in terms of "normal conveniences" in US terms).

A watertight contract written by a lawyer and/or notarized may prevent unpleasant surprises but will involve additional expenses. Most teaching assistants and landlords therefore do without it and rely on agreements in the form of a letter confirming the basic details of subletting space (*Untermiete*). In some Austrian provinces, the authorities might require a formal contract.

NOTE: Austrian authorities in the US and in Austria might need to see either a (*Haupt-*) *Mietvertrag* or a *Wohnrechtsvereinbarung* (plus the *Hauptmietvertrag*) for accepting and also for finalizing the application for a residence permit. Please read our [section on the residence permit application](#) and check what your local Austrian authority at your destination asks you to show at your in-country appointment or send by email in advance.

The relationship between you and your landlord will be a matter of mutual trust, but it is best to be as specific and as clear as possible about expectations and obligations. Try to keep the period of notice (*Kündigungsfrist*) down to one month as set by law in the absence of a special agreement and do not sign a contract which may force you to remain in an apartment for a specific length of time. Avoid engaging a realtor or other agents since fees will amount to up to three months' rent. Most landlords ask for **one to three months' rent as a deposit** (*Kaution*) in addition to the rent for the first month to cover possible utility bills, damages and the like when you move out. The deposit will be refunded in full when not needed.

Renting a room in a private home usually imposes certain restrictions on privacy and use of kitchen and bathroom facilities. Teaching assistants have frequently preferred to rent small apartments, to share an apartment with one or more subtenants (in a so-called *Wohngemeinschaft*, or *WG*) or to live in a *Studentenheim* (student dorm). Most USTAs sign contractual rental agreements. A watertight contract written by a lawyer and/or notary may prevent unpleasant surprises but will involve additional expenses.

Some general advice: Do NOT pay for anything online in advance if you have not seen the accommodation, have not met the owner or agent personally, or do not have the recommendation of a trustworthy source, such as a current or past renter who is familiar with the accommodations and/or parties involved.

13.4 Rent, Living Spaces, and Furniture

It is recommended that you do NOT use Craigslist. You might want to check the [list by weltweit unterrichten](#) in the section "*Wohnungssuche*" apart from the list included in this handbook. USTAs should plan in advance to arrange housing. Consulates can require a housing contract at the time of application for a residence permit.

[Rent in Austria](#) generally ranges between 300 and 600 euro for a room, apartments might be more expensive, depending on the size and type of housing, the size of the city, and the location within the city. Rent can be significantly higher in tourist regions in western Austria. Many Austrian residential buildings are old—over 50% of the buildings in Vienna were built before World War I—and have been adapted to meet modern standards but are generally built with smaller bedrooms and living spaces than American apartments. Austrians might consider an apartment sufficient or even spacious that may be small by American standards.

Keep in mind:

- Avoid engaging a realtor or other agents: **fees** will amount to up to three months' rent.

- An unfurnished apartment (*unmöbliert*) may not include light fixtures or basic appliances; ask your landlord for a detailed description of what the apartment contains to avoid unpleasant surprises. An apartment with furniture is advertised as "*möbliert*".
- Most people who rent out their flats ask for three months' rent as a deposit (*Kaution*) in addition to the rent for the first month. The deposit will be refunded in full if it is not needed for damages or unexpected utility charges when you move out.
- Heating and utilities are checked and then averaged over every quarter. Whether they are included in your rent will depend on your rental agreement. Unless otherwise agreed upon, rent does not include the costs of heating and utilities or charges for the telephone or internet.
- Most apartments do not come with air conditioning, but windows usually can be tilted and fully opened in their angles to let in fresh air or for cleaning.
- Do not expect a microwave as a standard appliance.
- WiFi may or may not be provided – talk to your landlord in advance.
- Your apartment could include either a dishwasher or a just a sink, and refrigerators are small with correspondingly small freezing compartments.
- Bedding and kitchen utensils may or may not be provided – talk to your landlord in advance.
- Bedding in Austria does not include comforters or quilts – you can buy a mattress cover (*Spannleintuch*), sheets (*Bettwäsche*) and bedding (*Bettdecke; Polster*).
- Some apartments may be furnished with a washing machine for clothing, but a dryer is rare – especially outside of bigger cities. Laundromats and dry cleaning are expensive by American standards.
- You will be accountable for any damage. If something is damaged or out of order when you move in, inform the owner of the flat immediately so that there are no misunderstandings when you move out. Also take photographs after moving in as proof. Your deposit might be used for the repair – talk to your landlord.
- Not many apartments are pet friendly.
- When shopping for furniture and household supplies, there are other options beyond Ikea, such as [Mömax](#), or [Möbelix](#) and many supermarkets or stores carry cookware (Hofer, Interspar, Müller, Billa Plus).
- You might also want to look at a local charity second-hand shop chain called Carla run by the Caritas ([Wien](#), [Graz](#), [Linz](#), [Salzburg](#), Innsbruck etc.) for housing utensils or cheap furniture.

The relationship between you and the owner of your flat will be a matter of mutual trust. However, it is best to be as specific and as clear as possible about expectations and obligations. When moving in, make it clear you will give notice at least one month before moving out (*Kündigungsfrist*); most contracts require at least three months' notice. Try to keep the period of notice (*Kündigungsfrist*) down to one month as set by law in the absence of a special agreement and do not sign a contract that may force you to remain in an apartment for a specific length of time.

14. ORIENTATION SEMINARS 12

An **online pre-departure orientation** will be organized by Fulbright Austria in mid-May. This is an opportunity to e-meet fellow USTA candidates, get information on the residence permit, other administrative affairs, and you'll be able to talk to and ask your program officer and second-year TAs questions.

The BMB will conduct official orientation in-person seminars (*Einführungsseminare*) for incoming teaching assistants in conjunction with the respective teacher-training colleges (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) from the provinces in which assistants will be teaching. The [orientations](#) provide important information on the Austrian educational system and the duties of a teaching assistant; they also offer an opportunity to meet fellow teaching assistants!

You'll register on the *weltweit unterrichten* platform and you'll receive an email on how to do it in early summer. You will also be able to let the organizers know your dietary needs. Green-school TAs will receive instructions on how to register without the platform by email. Late-admits receive information upon receipt of their placement acceptance.

The seminar will take place from **Monday, 22 September to Thursday, 25 September 2025**, and you are **strongly encouraged to attend**. Animals are not allowed at the seminars. The BMB **will hold an in-person seminar**, recordings of any sessions will not be available. Participants are expected to pay a fee of approx. **€130** in cash on site to help defray the costs of the seminar, which includes room and full board. Should you for some reason not be able to attend the seminar last-minute or arrive late, notify your seminar organizer and Fulbright Austria.

After the conclusion of the seminar, you are expected to **report for work at your Stammschule on Wednesday, 1 October** if you have secured your residence permit card by that date (only relevant to non-dual US citizens).

Please note that your Austrian employer-based **health insurance is ONLY effective once you've signed your contract at your school** (ideally on 1 October). It is your responsibility to provide for adequate health and accident insurance **before** your work-related Austrian insurance starts – the program recommends arriving with additional travel health insurance that covers you until at least mid-November, should you be unable to start working in October due to delays with your permit.

- A) The seminar for teaching assistants assigned to schools in **Wien, Niederösterreich, Steiermark and Burgenland** will be held at:

Bildungshaus St. Hippolyt
Eybnerstraße 5,
3100 St. Pölten (province of Lower Austria)
Website: hiphaus.at Email: hiphaus@kirche.at

- B) The seminar for teaching assistants assigned to schools in **Kärnten, Salzburg, Tirol, Oberösterreich, and Vorarlberg** will be held at:

Bundesschullandheim Saalbach
Dorfstraße 38
5754 Hinterglemm (province of Salzburg)
Web: www.bslh-saalbach.at Email: saalbach@bslh.at

15. INFORMATION ON PACKING AND WHAT TO BRING 10

Do not take too much with you: you may add to your wardrobe while in Austria; shipping can be expensive, and airlines usually enforce luggage restrictions.

What to pack:

- Consider bringing hassle-free, wash-and-wear clothes. You probably will not have access to a dryer, so you may need to iron more than you are used to.
- Semi-casual is the appropriate dress for teachers (dress shirts, blouses, khaki pants, nice jeans, skirts, and sweaters).
- The weather in Austria can vary greatly within a day but is generally cold in winter with rain and snow yet warm and pleasant in summer. Layering is a key element to comfort, with a variety of light and thick sweaters and jackets.
- Warm winter clothing, rain gear, and good footwear will dramatically improve your comfort in and enjoyment of Austria.
- You may also walk more than in the US but bring comfortable dress shoes for daily wear.
- Indoors, the Austrian standard of comfortable temperature may be somewhat below that of the US standards; slippers and warm lounge clothing are recommended.
- Many past USTAs have taken advantage of the opportunity for athletic pursuits in Austria. Consider packing for both winter and summer sports; sports apparel and equipment can seem expensive compared to US standards.
- Shopping in Europe is generally more expensive than shopping in the US.

Previous USTAs also suggest bringing the following items:

- favorite toiletries,
- make-up (as it tends to be more expensive in Austria),
- contact lens supplies,
- if you love cooking: an American cookbook/recipe collection, some of your other favorite kitchen gadgets, measuring cups, and spoons.

16. GERMAN LANGUAGE 23

The importance of knowing German for the success of your stay in Austria cannot be sufficiently stressed.

A person's enjoyment and profit from their year in this country are almost proportional to the degree to which they know the language. If you become dependent on English-speaking Austrians and the American community in Austria, much of the benefit of your stay abroad will be lost. Apart from that, most authorities will communicate with you in German only (on your residence permit or anything else) and not everyone in your city or small town (outside of bigger cities) will be able to speak conversational English. Emails from *weltweit unterrichten* will be written in German most of the time as well as this is an Austrian program.

Many USTAs who have extensive experience in Germany have (some) trouble with language in Austria when they arrive: keep in mind that Austrian German not only includes many regional accents, but also dialects with vocabulary and sounds significantly different from High German (e.g. in [Tirol](#) and [Vorarlberg](#)). Especially, the dialect spoken in Vorarlberg is linguistically closer to Swiss German/Alemannic than to High German and even most

Austrian natives residing outside of Vorarlberg cannot understand a fast-speaking Vorarlberg native unless having had exposure to the dialect, so please don't worry if you are overwhelmed at first – and everyone will also be able to speak High German with you.

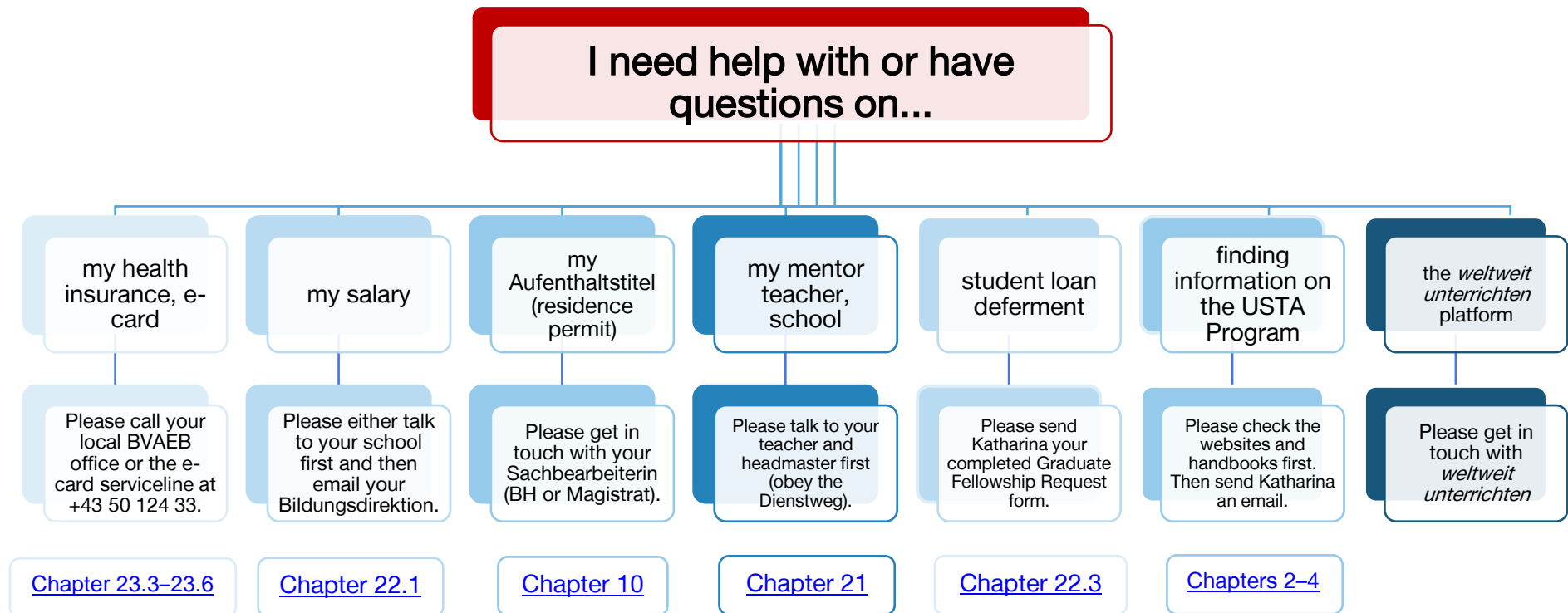
For USTAs who have not yet been abroad in a German-speaking country: sometimes, people (either on the street or at your local authority) might speak to you quite fast and use heavy dialect if they don't know you are still learning. You should be able to politely ask them to repeat what they said, and most Austrians are friendly to foreigners, especially if you try to speak German and are polite. People might also adjust their level of dialect and use language closer to High German but in some cases they might not.

- It is **strongly recommended** that you use the time before arrival to brush up on verbal communication. Try to work at the language lab at your school, listen to [Austrian media](#) (podcasts, TV, radio) to enlarge your vocabulary, talk to your mentor teachers in Austria, your Austrian expat professors or TAs at university, sign up for a conversation course, or attend activities organized by the local German club to practice your German.

Dependents accompanying you should also make every effort to get a start in German before their arrival. Children attending Austrian schools will likely receive instruction exclusively in German, though bilingual schools are established in larger urban centers. Try to speak German with them before departure – even a little familiarity with the language will make it easier for them.

There are a number of possibilities to learn German in Austria throughout the whole year, including Berlitz and many others – just use Google to get an overview and find one close to your location. Courses are also available at *Volkshochschulen* (www.vhs.at), *Berufsförderungsinstitute* (<http://www.bfi.at>), and universities.

If you would like to blend in: Try to pick up the local dialect in your area after arrival and ask your students for Austrian dialect phrases and words – they usually love to “teach” their US teaching assistant!



18. ONCE YOU ARRIVE

18.1 Tips for Arriving in Austria

Austria can be reached by plane, car, bus, and train. Airports are located in many provincial capitals (Graz, Klagenfurt, Salzburg, Linz, Innsbruck) and in Vienna (VIE; Flughafen Wien-Schwechat) – however, direct long-distance flights usually only arrive in Vienna; you might be able to go elsewhere by transferring in Europe. From the airport, you can take public transport to the city – please look [here](#) for all options (for updated departure times, look on the public transport portal [Scotty](#)). Please note that the City Airport Train (CAT; lime-green) and Vienna Airport Lines are both NOT regular public transport options but special lines with more expensive fares. Taking other options (ÖBB RailJet for longer distance travel, fast regional trains called REX, S-Bahn for slower travel times within Lower Austria and Vienna) is recommended – it's usually cheaper and there's no big benefit in taking the CAT.

The [Vienna Airport](#) is part of the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#) initiative that allows travelers with autism, ADHD, or other invisible disabilities to show that they might need more time or help with airport procedures through a small sunflower pin or a sunflower lanyard. You can get those at no charge at the following locations in the airport: Airport Service counters in Terminal 1, Terminal 3/level 0 und Terminal 3/level 1 – no questions asked!

The biggest train station in Vienna is the *Hauptbahnhof* (main train station) – trains to the provinces operated by the Austrian Railway Services (ÖBB; *Österreichische Bundesbahnen*) leave from there. Please know that traveling from Vienna (airport) to Vorarlberg (Bregenz, Dornbirn, Feldkirch) will require roughly seven to eight hours of train ride; you can reach Innsbruck in four to five hours by train (depending on which train you take); Graz is two-and-a-half hours away, Salzburg is two-and-a-half to three hours (depending on which train you take) away, and Klagenfurt can be reached in roughly four hours from Vienna. More information on public transport can be found in chapter 25.

18.2 Fulbright Austria Services

Fulbright Austria sends you valuable administrative information throughout the year and remains in contact with the teaching assistants in Austria. Most of it will be sent by your program officer. We will inform you of events, administrative announcements, report on matters of general interest, and publish occasional newsletter articles. Your contributions are welcome and appreciated!

We are also creating more video content – if you would like to sit down sharing your USTA or your US university experience after arriving in Austria, please [email Mr. Dune Johnson](#) (responsible for communications at Fulbright Austria).

18.3 Registration with the Local Austrian Authorities: *Meldezettel* 5

Please note: [Registering with the Austrian authorities](#) and securing your residence permit are two separate procedures!

Within three business days of arriving at your Austrian destination, you (and your dependents) are **required to register your Austrian address as *Nebenwohnsitz*** with the appropriate authorities at your place of residence. You will do that by filling out a “*Meldezettel*” (form of registration), check *Nebenwohnsitz*, have your landlord sign it, and submitting the form to the authorities in person. You’ll then receive a printout with your information for your records, **please do not give that away – you will need it!**

This *Meldezettel* printout is an important document for bureaucratic identification purposes, and you will be asked to show this document to many authorities and institutions. Please do not submit the original document to authorities since they will keep it! You are also **required to de-register** with the authorities **at the end of your stay in Austria**.

In Vienna: register with the *Magistratisches Bezirksamt (MA62)*; consult [this Austrian government website](#) for addresses and office hours. You may need an appointment in the afternoon – check online in advance to get the booking done since dates might be gone fast.

Elsewhere in Austria: register with the local *Magistrat* or *Gemeindeamt*. Consult [this government website](#) to identify the appropriate office in your area with the *Behördenadresse-Abfrage*: choose *Gemeindeamt/Magistrat* for *Behördentyp* and type in your *Postleitzahl* (ZIP code). Usually, you do not need an appointment, but check with your authority to be sure.

You will need:

- A completed *Meldezettel* registration form **with your landlord’s signature**
 - The *Meldezettel* form is available at your local registration office and [online](#)
- Your passport, supporting documents if applicable (e.g. marriage license for spouses)

The authorities will record your personal data, passport number, and current and permanent addresses and assign you a twelve-digit “central registration number” (*Zentrale-Melderegister-Zahl* or *ZMR-Zahl*), which is used to identify yourself in any further official business. It is imperative to deregister before leaving Austria, three days before or after moving out. You will also receive a separate mailing from Fulbright Austria on the *Meldezettel* in early summer 2025.

NOTE: If you voluntarily disclose your religious confession/affiliation (e.g. Roman Catholic, Protestant...) on the form, this information might be used to automatically sign you up for the so-called “*Kirchenbeitrag*” (church rate) – for Roman Catholics, it’s a fee (1,1 % of your gross annual income after social deductions are made) that is collected annually from members of faith and used for missionary work, maintenance of sacral buildings, and more. You can leave this field blank to not get signed up.

Please keep Fulbright Austria informed of your contact details. As soon as you are settled, please inform the Fulbright Austria USTA program officer of your address, telephone number, and current email address via the Emergency Contact Google Form (link will be shared with you). Please also notify Fulbright Austria should any of your contact information change over the course of the year. Also don’t forget to update your *weltweit unterrichten* profile accordingly – Fulbright Austria and *weltweit unterrichten* are two separate organizations – both require you to keep your information up to date.

18.4 Finalizing your Residence Permit: *Aufenthaltstitel*

Please consult our [main section](#) on residence permit application and procedure for reference.

This last step is **required** to be able to start working at your school(s) if you are not a dual US/EU citizen.

18.5 First Day at Work (1 October): *Dienstantrittsmeldung* and signing up for insurance

You are expected to report for work at your main school (*Stammschule*) on 1 October if your permit has been issued before that date. **Otherwise, you are required to wait until your permit has been issued in order to start at your school.** You may want to arrange a meeting time with your contact teacher prior to your arrival, as they may or may not have time for a scheduled appointment/meeting at the time you arrive.

On the first day, you should meet with your mentor teacher, be introduced the headmaster (*Direktor/in*), and complete paperwork with the *Direktion* or *Administrator/in* at your main school to inform the appropriate authorities that you have reported to fill the position to which you have been assigned (*Dienstantrittsmeldung*).

This, among other things, is a prerequisite for you being insured and paid. Your main school should provide you with a “job description” (*Bestellungsschreiben*). **You should NOT start unless you have secured your permit card (NOT applicable to US/EU dual citizens with an *Anmelde-bescheinigung*).**

Please bring your residence permit card to school and have it copied. Dual US/EU citizens should show their police clearance report to the school.

You can also direct them to the teacher guidebook (*Leitfaden für Schulen*) published by the BMB/*weltweit unterrichten* for official written information on the regulations. **If they still do not comply, please inform *weltweit unterrichten* and Fulbright Austria immediately.**

You should provide your name, birthday, and Austrian address to the staff in the *Direktion* and make sure that they register you for your health and accident insurance (*Kranken- und Unfallversicherung*). If you already know your bank details, you should give them to the staff in the *Direktion* as well. You may be asked to provide a written confirmation from the bank to verify your account information (a “*Kontoerklärung*” or “*Antrag auf bargeldlose Bezugsanweisung*”).

Be sure to provide to your school:

- Your date of birth
- Your Austrian address (“*Meldezettel*”)
- Your [bank account information](#): the routing code (IBAN), name, and address of the bank (form “*Kontoerklärung*” or “*Antrag auf bargeldlose Gehaltszahlung*”)
- **Non-EU citizens: A copy of your residence permit card** (the *Direktion* is **required** to check this to ensure you are allowed to work); you do not need to submit your police clearance report to your school since you applied for a residence permit with it!
- **US/EU dual citizens: your police clearance report** (*Strafregisterauszug*)

18.6 Teaching Schedule

Please wait until you received schedules from ALL your assigned schools before planning your leisure time – especially if you are placed at two or three schools!

You should be introduced to your *Betreuungslehrer:in* or *Mentor:in*, the teacher responsible for supervising you, and run through the details of your class schedule at this time. Sometimes, teaching assistants are asked to work with the mentor teacher to organize their schedules. You may be allowed to make small requests regarding your schedule but that is entirely at the discretion of your school.

Please expect to be utilized **five days per week (Monday to Friday) on average**. TAs at *Pädagogischen Hochschulen* can be asked to come in and assist on Saturdays since those schools cater to a different demographic (students older than 19 years seeking tertiary education). You will assist for **13 hours per week on average** – small changes (15 hours in one busier week and 11 in the next to get back to the average) are allowed, as long as they even out over time and do not occur frequently.

Your primary role in Austria is to serve your school as a teaching assistant and the USTA Program is a “real life” job placement with corresponding responsibilities and duties and not an exchange.

Teaching assistants' work schedules vary from school to school based on the needs, schedules, and preferences of the teachers but generally follow these set formats – your school is required to create a set schedule with or for you. **A sign-up sheet to get teachers sign up for lessons with you spontaneously is NOT allowed.**

1. **Set schedule:** USTAs and the teachers agree on regular classes to teach in, resulting in a constant and generally fixed schedule (exceptions for exams, excursions, etc. apply).
2. **Set odd/even weeks (*ungerade/gerade*):** The mentor teacher assigns a fixed schedule in which the teaching assistant has two class schedules, one for odd and one for even weeks – the schedules rotate.

Coordinating schedules between two or three assigned schools will largely depend on the location of the schools and class schedules, but schedules will probably follow these formats:

1. **Odd/even weeks:** 13 hours in one school every odd week and then 13 hours in the second school every even week.
2. **Alternating days:** Six hours in your second school spread over two days of the week and for seven hours in the main school spread over three days of the week.
3. **Same-day switch:** If the schools are within close proximity to each other, it is possible to work in both schools on the same day, perhaps even in consecutive lessons.
4. **Semester/semester:** The USTA works at one school for one semester and the second school for the second semester.

Teachers may choose to deploy you in a variety of ways. You may be asked to assist with lessons in whole classes (note that you are not supposed to teach entirely on your own), to half of the class (while the teacher works with the other half), or to small groups. Your role may include cultural, conversational, or topical lessons. You may also be asked to teach

directly from the book or using materials that you or your mentor have prepared. **Maintaining flexibility is of utmost importance.**

19. DUTIES AS A TEACHING ASSISTANT 18

It is important for you to recognize that you are expected to conduct yourself as an employee of your assigned school board and will be treated as such. You are expected to deal with your schools self-sufficiently.

The status of foreign-language teaching assistants has been carefully circumscribed by law in Austria (*Erlass*, from the Ministry of Education), which outlines what you may and may not do. The details about your legal rights, duties and responsibilities, and salary are incorporated into the *Lehrbeauftragengesetz* (teacher's employment law).

As noted throughout this handbook, the BMB also publishes a handbook for teaching assistants – this handbook can be found on the [weltweit unterrichten website](#). It addresses many of the job-related issues raised in this Fulbright Austria handbook in a more detailed manner. Most importantly, the handbook is an **official document** from the Federal Ministry of Education (BMB).

Read the BMB handbook (“Leitfaden”) carefully. Individual teachers with whom you work may not be aware of your obligations or limitations, and you may want to show them the BMB handbook so that they are informed. There is a [section](#) on the *weltweit unterrichten* website specifically for schools – please refer them to that and to the *Leitfaden for schools* (in German) if necessary.

The guidelines provided in the handbook are clear in theory, but practical application may sometimes be more difficult. This is certainly not an excuse to be uncooperative. Some teaching assistants in the past have also “violated” the guidelines because they wanted to assume more responsibility in the classroom than they were supposed to. It is important to use common sense and discretion in interpreting and following the guidelines. **Be sure to communicate proactively with your mentor teacher in advance!** A helpful video for schools on tasks and requirements for having a TA can be found [here](#). There's also an English [video](#) available on Do's and Don'ts for TAs!

Remember that you are subject to the directives of your superiors: you are required to comply with requests made by your superiors within the framework of your employment as a teaching assistant. If you want to bring things to the attention of your superiors, **always follow the *Dienstweg* – the official chain of command within Austrian bureaucracy.**

You are expected to:

- Carry out your teaching duties with the utmost dedication, prepare your lessons, and incorporate the advice given to you by your mentor teachers.
- Teach 13 hours per week.
- Familiarize yourself with the rules and customs of your school. (Ask your mentor teacher to introduce you to the peculiarities of your school's “institutional culture.”)
- **Communicate and cooperate** with your teachers in all matters ranging from the preparation of lessons (e.g., with regard to what your teachers expect from you) to the solution to problems that might arise.

- Discuss any problems that arise with your contact teacher (first) and/or principal.
- You are also required to be discreet. Any matters addressed in staff meetings or parent-teacher meetings are not to be discussed outside of school.
- Try to create real-life situations when repeating materials that have been previously covered by teachers (younger students might also enjoy playing games). Do not hesitate to enrich lessons by including your personal experiences.

Teaching assistants are not formally licensed to teach in Austria.

Therefore, you MAY NOT:

- Teach on your own without supervision.
- Grade or correct work. If you are interested in doing so, ask the teachers if you can assist them. However, the final decision and responsibility always lies with the teacher.
- Provide corridor supervision (*Gangaufsicht*) on a regular basis.
- Perform administrative or menial tasks.
- Teach new chapters of grammar.
- Go into the lesson unprepared.
- Be used for substitute teaching*.
- Being used for menial tasks.
- Just sit in the back of the classroom and be used as a “walking dictionary”

* Only in exceptional cases may you be asked to substitute for another teacher, with the principal bearing full responsibility. Make sure you know exactly what is expected of you in the lesson. You have every right to respectfully decline; you have no obligation to teach alone or substitute.

Schools are often hosting an open house for a day (*Tag der offenen Tür*) between October and February to promote and show the school to interested prospective students. Sometimes, those events are scheduled on a Saturday. Students who would like to go to your school next fall can observe classes and talk to teachers and students. They usually watch dance performances, art projects, science experiments, and mock classes in different subjects. **If your school asks you to help them with their *Tag der offenen Tür*, please do so.** They should discuss your responsibilities with you beforehand and allow you to have appropriate time off to even out your hours (if you work more than 13 hours that week).

It is important for all teaching assistants to recognize that they have a contractual relationship with the school authorities. If teaching assistants are negligent in the execution of their duties, the school authorities may terminate their contracts.

20. EXPECTATIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS 22

Your teaching position in Austria could be an experience of a lifetime. This opportunity is what you make of it. The cliché is true: you will get out of it what you put into it.

20.1 Accents and Colloquialisms

It is important for you to recognize that British English—in terms of pronunciation as well as spelling—is the generally recognized model in Europe. Therefore, some teachers may feel that you (as an American) do not pronounce English “correctly” or that you use some grammar improperly since they were trained to use a different (“correct”) model. You may be confronted with this pro-British (or anti-American) bias. There is nothing you can do about it, so do not worry about it.

20.2 Adjusting

Many teaching assistants have previously lived and/or studied abroad, yet it is important to recognize that there are a number of differences “the second time around.” You will not be a student in a faculty-led program with other students; instead, you will have to fend for yourself while working in a different cultural and institutional environment, where the way things work may not clear in the beginning. Being a teaching assistant demands a considerable amount of flexibility and the capacity to solve problems.

You may be placed in a very small town or in a large city; **allow yourself time to adjust to your new settings**. In the words of one teaching assistant, “Don't despair if you don't get assigned to where you wanted to go. It may take a while to get used to your surroundings (i.e., from NYC to Wieselburg), but you may like it. It's a great experience.”

Another teaching assistant who had a hard time adjusting said, “I found that it was tougher for me to be stared at by the townspeople than to be overlooked by my colleagues. Until [December] most people didn't reply to my greetings, but all of a sudden, it's like they all agreed to embrace me with open arms! Just don't get discouraged with the small-town mentality. You'll find your own way soon enough.”

Some USTAs have found that it takes Austrians a bit to warm up to new people. Living and working in Austria is likely a great endeavor, one that could prove to be a life-changing experience. However, in some schools (particularly urban schools), you may be just one of many language assistants that the school has had over the past few decades.

21. WORKPLACE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT 17

Not only will you be learning how to adjust to a new living situation, you will also be adjusting to (new) professional working conditions. It may be difficult at first to learn how to work and coordinate with many different teachers, each of whom has a different teaching style and different expectations of you and of their students. You will also be working with different ages of students with varied skill levels. As one assistant said, “Each teacher has a different 'style', and you need to adapt to each one's needs. After a few months, it is easy to understand what they expect from you. But again, this takes time.” Another assistant observed: “The tasks became clear only after I understood the expectations that each teacher had in class.”

As you will likely be working with many different teachers and classes throughout the year, a system to organize your weekly schedule and responsibilities will be very useful. **It will most likely be your responsibility to speak with teachers regarding the lesson plans. Try to do so at least a couple of days in advance so that you have ample time to gather materials and**

prepare the lesson. You may also wish to request contact information from your teachers and provide them with yours if a class is canceled, or you fall ill.

21.1 How to Deal with Conflicts at Your School(s)

Below, the steps of navigating potential conflicts at your school are laid out. In contrast to the United States, Austrian work culture is much more direct in terms of addressing issues or giving honest feedback. This doesn't necessarily mean you are doing a bad job, but merely your teachers might be interested in making you aware of shortcomings early. Please do not shy back from addressing issues as they come up with the responsible parties (teachers, etc.) in a private and respectful manner.

21.2 The *Dienstweg* hierarchy (Official Chain of Command and Communication)

Most problems teaching assistants have had in the past have been based on an insufficient understanding of the way things work or a lack of communication (or both). If you do not understand something or are unhappy about something, **you have to actively communicate readily in order to address these problems.** Your Austrian teachers might not actively ask you what's going on if you are silently struggling or something's wrong. If you do not say something, the situation will not change.

You need to solve any emerging conflict at your school and together with the involved teachers first. Your *Betreuungslehrer/in* or another trusted teacher can help in times of need or complication – this is **stage 1** on the *Dienstweg*, the official chain of command for school employees that you have to adhere to when bringing up issues. Try to speak to your mentor teacher privately and schedule a meeting with them to do so respectfully. Please also give them time to implement changes afterwards (two weeks or so). You can ask another teacher to be present at the meeting for moral support if needed. Fulbright Austria should only be informed **AFTER** you discussed the issue with your school and nothing changed.

If the problem still exists after your initial communication with your mentor teacher, you should speak to the headmaster at your school about the issue (= **stage 2** on the *Dienstweg*).

Stage 3 on the *Dienstweg* would include informing the BMB and eventually the school board of your issue – this would usually be done by *weltweit unterrichten* or the BMB.

Please know that you cannot “progress” to a higher stage of the *Dienstweg* if you, e.g., just don't want to talk to your mentor teacher. The ministry only gets involved **AFTER** you spoke with your mentor and headmaster and the problem wasn't solved.

However, if you are still feeling unwell at your school(s) after having addressed the issue with your mentor, please inform your Fulbright Austria program officer by email of your issues.

21.3 How to Communicate in an Emergency Situation

In case of a family emergency, **BEFORE** buying your tickets and departing Austria, ...

1. Immediately inform your mentor teachers and headmasters **in each of your schools** in writing about the situation. Please wait for written decisions (approval or denial) from **all** parties.
2. **BMB TAs:** Immediately inform *weltweit unterrichten*/Mag. Brigitte Stockinger-Resch (sprachassistentz@oead.at) and the BMB/ Mag. Stephan Neuhäuser in writing about the situation and wait for their reply. Your local school board (=employer) will also be informed of your absence and needs to approve.

Green-school TAs: You will only do 1. and 3. since you do not work with *weltweit unterrichten* and do not correspond with the ministry directly. Your employer (BML) will be notified by Katharina and needs to approve as well before you leave.

3. Immediately inform Fulbright Austria (Katharina Hütthaler/ khuetthaler@fulbright.at) in writing about the situation and also wait for my reply. Combined grantees will notify Darrah on their plans too – this is because we might need to inform our US partners.

DO NOT BUY your tickets unless you have received written approval from all parties!

DO NOT DEPART from your post until everyone has been informed and has approved of your departure in writing (= by email). Being in a state of panic or concern or being instructed by family members to rush home DOES NOT relieve you of your administrative obligations!

- ➔ You can send one email to your schools (teachers and headmasters); and another to the BMB, *weltweit unterrichten*, and Fulbright Austria, but make sure all parties are informed. Please explain the situation in your email(s) and let us know if/when you will return to Austria by providing a **return date or at least an estimated return date if you cannot tell for sure yet**. This information is crucial for your schools, your school board, and us.

A potential leave of absence for bereavement or severe medical emergencies cannot be granted for longer than five days for legal reasons and could also not be granted at all (depending on the situation) by the school board. In this case you cannot leave your position unless you withdraw from the program entirely and let us know at least four weeks in advance that you would like to do so.

You should be ready to **provide written official documentation on the situation** (letter from doctor/hospital; etc.) as proof to anyone upon request.

If you were allowed to leave temporarily but would need to be gone for longer than five days, your contract could be paused or even be terminated by the school board. Being able to restart your position is not guaranteed after returning – there is no legal claim to it. Leave of absence does NOT cover family celebrations or other non-urgent events – you cannot leave in such cases.

4. You would also need to get in touch with your case worker at your responsible authority (*Bezirkshauptmannschaft; Magistrat; MA35* in Vienna) to discuss what to do regarding your residence permit. If you would need to be gone longer, your permit could be paused (similar to your contract).

➔ That means you would NOT be 1) insured in Austria or 2) salaried for the duration of your absence because you would temporarily neither be present in Austria nor work here. Your BVAEB insurance is not valid in the US anyway.

5. If you already received or are about to get your **salary**, you could be asked to transfer part of the amount received back to the school board if you would not continue to work until the end of the month.
6. Your local school board might need to provide you with a written *“Wiedereinstellungszusage”* after a longer absence since your authority might otherwise not reinstate your residence permit. If your school board does not agree to that due to negative feedback from your school(s), you cannot return to Austria and the program.
7. Remain in contact with us throughout your leave and provide us with updates on your return. Open communication on your situation with all parties will be necessary.
8. If your return to the program and your school(s) would be granted, you could be asked by your school(s) to work in missed classes after your return to Austria.

21.4 Your Role as Teaching Assistant 17

Establish a good rapport with fellow teachers from the start of your assignment. Many times, you will be better off if you can find a teacher with whom you can connect and communicate openly about any problems that arise. A teaching assistant told us, "I receive support from many teachers, regardless of the subject they teach. I have gone to a few teachers with some personal issues, and they have helped me."

It is important to be **proactive and open-minded** when communicating with your fellow teachers. It might be a good idea to talk to the English teachers you will be working with and find out what they expect from you. USTAs have also recommended doing the following things:

- Be proactive and ask what the English teachers expect you to do and share your own ideas.
- Conduct a survey among your students about topics of interest.
- Keep track of your lessons.
- Try to be enthusiastic, friendly, and upbeat in your lessons.
- Have a fun introductory lesson about yourself and the US prepared (you'll likely present that many times!).
- Join in on lessons in other subjects—it is always rewarding to watch your classes interact with other teachers.
- Socialize with all the teachers at your school (not just the English teachers).
- Join teachers during office hours; attend PTA meetings and similar events.
- Try attending the final oral exams (Matura), an excellent opportunity to witness the results of your efforts.
- Participate in extracurricular activities that the school offers (choir, theater, sports). This is a great opportunity to interact with students and teachers and to be part of the local community.
- Join your class on day trips and remember that ski trips (Skikurs), excursions, or parties (Schulball) are an excellent opportunity to get to know teachers and students in a relaxed atmosphere.

Another (very important and extremely helpful) resource you have are other teaching assistants. Sharing difficulties and achievements with your colleagues in provincial chat groups can give you new perspectives on your work as a language assistant as well as strategies to address potential problems.

Fellow USTAs can also provide you with information about events and travel in Austria. As one USTA said, "Get to know other assistants in other areas. I have friends in Linz, Salzburg, and Tirol I have visited."

Be sure to clarify sensitive and official matters with the program officer! And stay in touch with your regional advisor.

Teaching assistants maintain an **intermediate position** between teachers and students, a representative of an educational institution yet often just a few years older than the students. You should try to maintain a healthy, balanced relationship with both teachers and students, and it is important that one group does not feel like you are taking the other's side. As one teaching assistant observed: "We assistants are definitely in the middle: we aren't teachers or students. I say, take advantage of the situation and use it to everyone's benefit."

Avoid situations where you publicly disagree with your teachers, thereby creating a situation where they (or you) may lose face. If a teacher corrects you in the classroom situation, deal with the correction graciously and with humor.

Although you are “not a teacher and not a student”, it is important for you to establish a certain amount of authority. Teaching assistants who are too chummy with students ultimately have great problems (not only with the students, but also with the teachers) because they are not taken seriously. It is also important for you to dress appropriately when you are in the classroom (“faculty dress codes” may vary widely from school to school).

21.5 Workplace Relationships

It is a great idea to socialize with both students and teachers outside of the school and to participate in extracurricular activities, like school excursions or ski trips. However, it is equally important to remember to establish and maintain **personal and professional boundaries**. Amorous or sexual relations with teachers usually create problems (regardless of the “consenting adults” argument). **Amorous or sexual relations with students are an abuse of position and incompatible with the responsibilities USTAs have by virtue of their positions.** If you experience sexual harassment, please talk to someone you trust or contact www.gewaltinfo.at or www.frauenhelpline.at. There is an [office](#) on anti-discrimination for LGBTQIA+ people located in Vienna and there is the [HOSI](#) initiative.

21.6 Classroom Discipline

Classroom discipline is an issue that teaching assistants frequently find difficult because they have observed that—by American standards—there is less discipline in the classroom in general and fewer school-wide disciplinary policies and systems at the teacher’s disposal (detention, demerits, etc.). When you start teaching, it is therefore necessary to establish authority in the classroom. Be friendly but clear about what behavior you will and will not accept. Do not be afraid to ask your teachers for help with discipline if you need it. Here is some advice from past assistants: “Students are excited to have someone new, but it's important to show that you can really teach something. If they see that you are nervous, they will heckle you” and “Don't put up with unruly students. They learn fast who is in control and it is hard to regain control once you lose it.”

Remember, respect is not something that a classroom of teenagers is going to give you automatically. You have to expect it and command it. Furthermore, if you structure the material you wish to present, you are structuring the classroom environment as well. If you come poorly prepared or unprepared and students recognize this immediately, you will create a disciplinary problem because you do not know how to keep students’ attention or structure their time and expectations.

22. FINANCIAL MATTERS 14

The Austrian monetary unit is the euro (€, E or EUR). Please check current exchange rates online.

All teaching assistants are presumed to have sufficient financial resources to meet their annual income tax and other financial obligations in the US while abroad. It is advisable to keep some funds in an American bank or with a friend for the payment of such obligations. Transferring money between countries is possible but can be logistically difficult and include extra expenses, particularly through wire-transfer.

Check with your American banks and credit card companies whether they charge for usage in Europe and if you need to do anything before departing for Europe.

Many ATMs (*Bankomaten*) in Austria accept US ATM cards (Maestro, Cirrus) and withdraw the transactions directly from your account (at the exchange rate of the day of the transaction). However, beware of withdrawal fees charged by both the Austrian bank and your US bank.

Daily (staffed) banking hours in Austria are Monday to Friday 8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 1:30–5:00 p.m. This may vary considerably; check the opening hours of your local bank. You should be able to withdraw money from an ATM independently of staffed opening hours.

The usual form of payment in Austria is with cash or debit/credit card, or through a *Überweisung* (wire transfer) either online (online banking) or with a paper-based *Erlagschein/Zahlschein* (rarely used nowadays; mind extra fees!). Many companies and supermarkets also accept and support contactless pay options (ApplePay/Google Pay) and Austrian debit cards often come with contactless usage options.

Even after the COVID-19 pandemic, paying with cash is still very common throughout Austria. Especially in smaller restaurants or shops or when paying amounts of less than 10€, there may be no alternative to paying with cash.

It is advisable to always have a small amount of cash (small change) on you – also because some public restrooms (located in city centers or train stations) in cities like Vienna, Salzburg, or Linz aren't accessible freely (guarded by a physical barrier) – you are required to pay 50 cents (or any amount listed) to enter the restroom.

There is no counterpart to the “personal check” in Austria, and the *Bankomatkarte* functions as a debit card. Therefore, you do not have to worry about opening a checking account. Traveler's checks are increasingly difficult to find and are therefore not recommended.

If you have the PIN code for your credit card, you may withdraw cash at ATMs in Austria, but you should look into the charges your credit card carriers and some Austrian ATM companies impose before using this as a method of withdrawing funds.

Your teaching assistant salary should cover necessary day-to-day expenses for one person only in Austria. USTAs with dependents must have sufficient extra funds and should not expect to finance their family's stay on one teaching assistant salary. Housing is a major expenditure for all teaching assistants, and clothing can be expensive by American standards. Unlike in the US, price tags show prices including taxes.

22.1 Your Salary as a Teaching Assistant

The relevant provincial school board (*Bildungsdirektion*) or the BMB is responsible for disbursing your salary to you on a monthly basis on the 15th of each month.

USTAs will receive a gross monthly salary of approx. **€ 2.012,90**. Deductions for compulsory accident and health insurance and Austrian income tax will result in net earnings per month of approximately **€ 1.631,42**.

- It takes a certain amount of time for the authorities to get your information into their system; October's salary is usually distributed a month late in **mid-November**. **It is important for you to bring enough personal funds to cover at least the costs of your first six to eight weeks** (until at least November/ December). Your expenses will be a bit higher in the first month to cover costs associated with setting up your household, travel expenses, residence permits, deposits, etc.
- **You only receive a salary for any time AFTER your residence permit card has been issued.**
- If you started at a later date during any month, your **salary can be pro-rated** (=you are paid **only for days worked with a permit being present and NOT for the entire month**).

You will receive your monthly pay slip (*Lohnzettel*) on the [Bildung.Austria online portal](#). You should receive an official *Lohnzettel* in early March stating your gross and net earnings until then. Your teachers or the secretary at your school(s) will be able to give you detailed information on your typical monthly deductions. You may also check the *weltweit unterrichten* [website section](#) „Anstellung und Bezahlung“.

If you have questions on your salary, you should contact your school administrator or the responsible *Bildungsdirektion* for clarification – the school board distributes payroll for schools.

- ➔ If you are **NOT paid in November**, please check if you have submitted all required documents to your school for signing you up for payroll and if your school signed you up. Delays in opening an account or providing your *Stammschule* with your bank information may impact your first payment. Sometimes, delays in your salary disbursement are a result of the transfer speed of your bank or public holidays – transfers might arrive a little later (a day later or so).

If you are still not paid, please inform *weltweit unterrichten* and Fulbright Austria immediately. USTAs at Green schools should talk to their schools and inform Fulbright Austria!

22.2 Opening a Bank Account: *Gehaltskonto* 15

Teaching assistants are salaried employees of the school board of the province in which they teach. Salaries are paid through direct deposit; giving your account information to your main school in the first week helps with a timely **first payment in November**.

NOTE: US citizens might be asked for their US Social Security Number in order to open a bank account at some banks in Austria or be denied service entirely – this is due to the United States' stance on taxation of their citizens. Please check with a different bank if a venue denies their service to you. Current TAs might know which banks have accepted USTAs in the past. As of 2024, it is possible to also open or use an account from any

European country as long as it has an IBAN number, and you can receive a “*Kontoerklärung*” from them (see below).

You can find a signed PDF participation confirmation to print from *weltweit unterrichten* for administrative affairs (like opening a bank account) on your *weltweit unterrichten* platform (if you are a BMB teaching assistant) or you can also show them your *Bestätigung* from Fulbright Austria (Green-school TAs). Please also take the contract from your school or a letter by the headmaster with you, so your employment is confirmed.

At a local bank, open a *Gehaltskonto* (salary account, sometimes called a *Girokonto*) with your passport and a few euros for an initial deposit; some banks will also require your *Meldezettel*. **Do NOT open a *Konto* (account) or *Sparkonto* (savings account) or a US dollar account at an Austrian bank—they will be of no use to you and are very expensive.**

You will need to hand in the form „*Antrag auf bargeldlose Bezugsanweisung*“ (also known as *Kontoerklärung*) at your school – please ask your bank for it when opening your account!

You will pay the bank for their services on a **quarterly basis**, automatically deducted from your account at the end of each quarter (approx. €10-20 per quarter), and you will most likely not earn interest on your account. Those studying at an Austrian university will be able to open a **student account**, which costs less but usually requires an *Inskriptionsbestätigung* (confirmation of university enrollment). Inquire about this possibility at your local bank.

Banking vocabulary

<i>Bankomat</i>	ATM; cash dispenser
<i>Bankomatkarte</i>	ATM/debit card for national and international withdrawals
BLZ = <i>Bankleitzahl</i>	Routing number; a five-digit numerical code for individual banks
<i>Dauerauftrag/</i> <i>Einziehungsauftrag</i>	Customer order form to regularly pay incoming bills from specific companies (e.g. phone, utilities, etc.) by automatically deducting the required amount from your account
<i>Gehalts-/ Girokonto</i>	Salary account, private checking account
IBAN	International Bank Account Number (ID of your account)
<i>Konto</i>	Account
<i>Kontoauszug</i>	Account statement (printed from a machine in the bank foyer)
PIN	Personal Identification Number needed to use your ATM card
SWIFT or BIC	Bank Identification Code
<i>Sparbuch</i>	Savings account (in general not used by USTAs)
<i>Spesen</i>	Bank charges
<i>Überziehungsrahmen</i>	Overdraft limit. (Note: High interest is charged!!)
<i>Überweisung</i>	(wireless) Bank-to-bank transfer (if possible, it is recommended to choose “SEPA Credit Transfer” or “SEPA-Überweisung” to make sure there are no fees added to your transfers)

22.3 Financial Obligations at Home 13

Look into the status of your **student loans**. The teaching assistantship is not a graduate fellowship or scholarship, and you will not be considered a “full-time student” during this time. It is, however, a legitimate full-time educational pursuit (analogous to student teaching in the US), and program participants have successfully deferred loan payments in the past.

Once you have arrived in Austria at the beginning of October, the Fulbright Austria program officer can also issue a confirmation that you are participating in the program as a teaching assistant, which should suffice for the purpose of loan deferrals.

22.4 Taxes

Note: Teaching assistants are solely responsible for all taxes and tax declarations in Austria and the United States. Fulbright Austria does NOT advise teaching assistants on US or Austrian taxes for legal reasons. Taxes are always filed one year retroactively (e.g., for FY 2025, taxes only become relevant in 2026).

Although bilateral agreements exempt USTAs from certain European countries from Austrian income tax, this exemption does not exist for US citizens; therefore, income tax will be deducted from your salary. It is important for you to draw this to the attention of the *Direktion* at your school and confirm that *Lohnsteuer* is listed on your pay sheet.

Income tax in Austria is progressive and calculated upon the basis of an extrapolated annual income. In light of the fact that USTAs work only three months in one year (October–December) and five months in another (January–May), the income tax deducted is too high. Therefore, USTAs may apply for a tax refund at the beginning of the calendar year. This entails obtaining forms from a local tax office (*Finanzamt*) and submitting a formal request online called an *Erklärung zur Durchführung der Arbeitnehmerveranlagung*.

If you do not file by yourself and have nothing else to additionally declare for tax deductions, your *Arbeitnehmerveranlagung* will be automatically done in summer and the surplus amount that has been deducted from your salary will be transferred back to your Austrian bank account!

Consult the [Finanzamt's website](#) to [find the Finanzamt responsible](#) for your *Arbeitnehmerveranlagung*. Also read the corresponding section in the BMB's handbook (*Leitfaden*), look [here](#) or ask the staff and faculty at your school for advice.

You will also receive information about both Austrian and US taxes from Fulbright Austria in early 2026. Usually we are hosting an online US tax workshop in February that helps you gain insight into filing US taxes while living abroad. Information on US taxes and downloadable IRS forms for filing taxes are available on [the IRS website](#).

23. MEDICAL MATTERS 6

In this chapter, you'll get an idea how to (medically) prepare while still in the US, an overview of the healthcare system in Austria, your employer-based insurance, how to access Austrian healthcare, how your e-card works, and how to take sick leave on your job as a teaching assistant.

23.1 How to Prepare for Austria with Your Medical Providers

Before arriving in Austria, you are responsible for:

- 1) checking in with your current US healthcare provider(s) to discuss any needs you might have while in Austria,
- 2) determining how to best manage your personal medication while staying in Austria, (bearing in mind that not all US-approved medication is **available or legal** to bring into Europe/Austria and that allowed quantities for personal use are **extremely limited**), and
- 3) if necessary, getting in touch with authorities and Austrian doctors for any needed prescriptions or services after you arrive.

If you have a previous history of medical needs or are in a regular regimen of medication, you should definitely bring background information, prescriptions, or copies of relevant **medical records** with you (and create both hard copies and digital scans of every document) and ask in advance if you need translations/stamped copies for customs or physicians.

Please carefully check the [CDC page](#) on Austria, more generally their [guidance](#) on taking medication to other countries, and especially follow the official [guidelines of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection](#) on bringing medication to Austria. This [document](#) shows specific restrictions for certain prescription medication and corresponding contact information at the ministry. For the US side of things: The Department of State also operates a [website](#) with general travel information, while the US Embassy's dedicated "medical assistance" [section](#) also lists English-speaking physicians in bigger cities and other advice for medical care. The OeAD also shares [information on medical services](#).

Proactively talk to your US doctors, pharmacists, and insurance providers in the US to discuss traveling to Austria with your medication and what that could mean for you. It is also advisable to contact the US Embassy in Vienna or the US Department of State to discuss the legality of bringing certain medications into Austria as well as the possibility of needing translations of or stamps on official documentation related to your medications.

All your sensitive medical records/immunization records should be stored **in your carry-on/backpack**, so that you don't lose them during transit to Austria even if your luggage is lost or delayed. **Additionally, save PDFs** of everything online so that you have the information available even if your carry-on is lost or stolen, and leave a set of hard copies at home with trusted individuals as well.

Therefore, please 1) collect all your current medical documents, 2) see if your immunizations are up to date, 3) ask Austrian authorities if you need to have anything stamped and/ or translated, and 4) make sure to bring all important documentation to Austria with you. It's recommended to schedule check-ups with your US-based doctors before departing for Austria.

23.2 Healthcare in Austria – A Brief Introduction

Accessing (Austrian) emergency services via phone is critical – and also being able to receive phone calls. You can call paramedics/ ambulance services via numbers **144 (in Austria) or 112 (in Austria and all of Europe)**.

Healthcare is organized very differently in Austria than in the US but on par with the usual standards of highly developed, industrialized countries. Health insurance is largely public, and there are only a few private insurance providers in addition to the mandatory public ones. Your health insurance is public and mandatorily assigned through your job – you are not able to choose. You will also receive a mint-green insurance card (= the so-called *e-card*) for accessing medical care and other healthcare-related services in Austria after registering with your school and being signed up for insurance by your school board (more on that below).

A big difference to the US (largely private system) is that within a largely single-payer system (government-provided healthcare), medical bills are less frequently exchanged between the insurance provider and patients – most services are billed by your doctor with your insurance provider directly and medical debt (as it is known in the US) is rare. You might however be asked to pay a small deductible (*Selbstbehalt*) for some services or exams either by your doctor on-site or by bill through mail. You will not be billed for calling an ambulance if someone is clearly in need of one. Still, some procedures (like getting braces) can be expensive.

You might need to factor in a bit of wait time for any planned (non-urgent) doctor's appointment and are advised to schedule those in advance with your GP, specialist, or dentist in Austria. If your ailment turns out to be severe, you'll be given priority over less-urgent cases.

Large hospitals operate emergency rooms for accidents (*Notaufnahme*) on a 24-hour basis. Outpatient clinics (*Ambulanzen*) are open in the mornings on weekdays for the general public and are places where medical care can be obtained for minimal fees or under Austrian insurance coverage if you cannot go to your *Hausarzt* (GP). For examinations or less severe injuries, a consultation at your GP's office (*Ordination; Arztpraxis*) is suggested. Please call ahead of time to schedule an appointment.

You might need to have a physical exam before receiving prescriptions by your doctor in Austria (e.g., contraception) since you are a new patient here. Please ask your doctor in Austria what is necessary.

Some USTAs recommend immunization against the flu and the common cold. Wood ticks (*Zecken*) in Austria carry a serious viral infection similar to Lyme disease (TBE, or tick-borne encephalitis – in German: FSME; which can result in meningitis in some cases), and tick immunization is strongly recommended. Talk to your doctor before coming to Austria or your GP in Austria if you would like to know more. You might also see giant tick models (or posters with giant ticks) hanging in Austrian pharmacies to advertise the vaccine.

23.3 Your Austrian Insurance: BVAEB and Your *e-card*

During the period of their assignments in Austria, teaching assistants are covered as employees by the civil servants' health and accident insurance program of the *BVAEB – Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter, Eisenbahnen und Bergbau*. This is a very comprehensive insurance program with excellent coverage and should work in most cases.

Once you are registered with your schools and school board, the insurance will issue you a ten-digit *Sozialversicherungsnummer* (insurance number) by post, consisting of four random numbers followed by your birthdate in the format *ddmmyy* and a corresponding mint-green plastic *e-card* (health insurance card), which should separately arrive by post within a month. The number is used to identify you to all physicians and healthcare providers and the card will also display your photo. Your securely stored insurance information can be accessed by inserting your card into a desk terminal at your doctor's office, hospital, or at the pharmacy. Also, most billing will be done directly with BVAEB through your *e-card*. In some cases, you'll be asked to pay a deductible upfront (vaccines...).

In case you have issues with [e-card](#), call the e-card service line at +43 50124 33 11 (tell them your name and that you are insured with BVAEB insurance provider) or call your [BVAEB provincial office](#) – both offices should be able to help you with inquiries.

23.4 What To Do If You Do Not Receive Your e-card

YOU NEED TO OBTAIN YOUR E-CARD – otherwise, you will not be able to access health-care services in Austria. Everybody working in Austria needs their e-card!

The following process has to be done by dual US/EU citizens in any case since their photo won't be in the system due to their lack of a residence permit application with a corresponding photo.

US citizens: If you have applied for a residence permit and still **haven't received your e-card after four to six weeks of working** with your residence permit card issued, please do the following:

- 1) Ask politely at your school if they have signed you up for insurance. If they did....
- 2) [Call your provincial office of the BVAEB](#) or the e-card service line (+43 50124 33 11) and ask for your *Sozialversicherungsnummer* (if you also did not receive the letter with the number) by giving your full name and birthdate – they should be able to let you know your number. The number consists of ten digits – four random digits and then your birthdate in the format *ddmmyy*. If you received your number by mail, just report that you did not receive your card and ask what address they have on file. TAs with a residence permit: Ask if they have your correct address and your photo in the system, because....
- 3) Sometimes the **photo** is NOT automatically transferred from the permit to the e-card system, and you need to bring a photo to a registration office during an in-person appointment (scheduling an appointment well in advance is required). Please look [here](#) for more information on what to do, [here](#) to find your nearest registration office, and subsequently booking an appointment (after having read through the information). Please mind the EU measurements for photos and how old the photo should be.
- 4) Book your appointment online and go in at your chosen time with your photo. Your e-card will be sent to you by post within a couple of weeks afterwards.

BE AWARE: Appointments are listed **several weeks in advance**, so potential waiting times for appointments can be **long** (= several months). Please book your appointment as soon as possible.

If you are a second-year TA, you should check your *e-card* from last year if it's still valid (check the date on the back) and call the *e-card service line* at +43 50124 33 11 to confirm (if the validity date is still in the future) that you can still use your old e-card and it will be re-activated. If no validity date is visible and the fields are filled with *, please call the service line.

Don't worry: You are able to see a doctor, even if you are still waiting for the card – please let the doctor's office know when scheduling your appointment that you have not received your e-card yet but be sure to provide them with your name and *Sozialversicherungsnummer*. You might need to pay a deposit if you haven't obtained your card – please ask about that.

After receiving it, bring your *e-card* to all medical appointments and pharmacies and keep it in your wallet – it's also used for ID at the doctor's office. After your teaching assistantship ends and your contract expires (i.e., after 31 May), you will still have limited coverage for a six-week grace period.

If you lose your *e-card*, you can get a new one through [this website](#). Not obtaining your e-card can result in it being blocked by the *Sozialversicherung*.

23.5 Your Insurance Coverage

Coverage includes treatment for illness and injuries, eye examinations, basic dental care, pregnancy, medication, therapeutic and laboratory services (if prescribed by a physician), medical supplies, hospitalization, partial coverage of psychological treatment, etc.

For detailed information on the conditions and extent of coverage, please consult [the BVAEB website](#) or call the *BVAEB hotline* at +43 5 04 050. You can also call your [provincial BVAEB office](#). If you have questions on your *e-card*, please call the *e-card service line* at +43 50124 33 11 or check the [e-card website](#).

Please check your *e-card*: if your card does display **** in any fields on the backside, you will need to request an [Urlaubsrankenschein](#) (also called *Auslandsbetreuungsschein*; *Formular E112*) so that you are covered in the event that you become ill while away from your place of residence. You can obtain this document online and in-person at the counter after ordering it.

Austrian health and accident insurance is valid in EU countries as well as in Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Iceland. You need to check with BVAEB, **and always take your card with you while traveling**.

NOTE: The insurance coverage for US teaching assistants does not apply to the United States. Contacting Austrian insurance companies can provide you with moderately priced travel insurance (*Reiseversicherung*). Before traveling outside of the European Union (e.g. in Eastern Europe), you should inquire with BVAEB if there are insurance reciprocity agreements between Austria and the countries you will be visiting.

Bear in mind, however, that your insurance through BVAEB does not cover dangerous tours and mountain rescues.

Many Austrian physicians or hospitals have contracts with the *BVAEB*. Make sure to check that the healthcare provider you consult has a *BVAEB* contract before going in for treatment. Health care providers bill the *BVAEB* directly for the costs of out-patient treatment, and the

BVAEB bills you for part of that (= deductible/*Selbstbehalt*). In-patient treatment (hospitalization) is covered in full.

It's highly recommended that you look for a BVAEB-contracted general practitioner (*Hausarzt/ Allgemeinmediziner:in*) close to you in Austria soon after arriving. GPs can also refer/point you to specialists if necessary. You can also schedule appointments with specialists yourself; look online for their contact info and call the doctor's office to inquire further. Talk to your teachers at school or to second-year TAs in your area as well for recommendations. The specialist should also be contracted by BVAEB insurance.

Your Austrian health insurance also covers medication. Only a prescription fee (*Rezeptgebühr*) of €7,55 (numbers as of 2025) is collected for each medication prescribed. If your prescribed medication is more expensive than the fee, you only pay the prescription fee. If it costs less than the prescription fee, you'll pay the actual price. Exceptions may apply, talk to your local pharmacist for more information.

The physician responsible for prescribing the medication must be consulted if additional medication is needed; in this case, the physician will issue another prescription [Note: birth control is not covered; the process is the same, but contraceptive pills will likely cost between €10 and €25 per month – talk to your doctor and pharmacist].

23.6 How to Find an Austrian Physician During Your Stay

In case of a serious emergency, call an ambulance (*Rettung/Notarzt*, 144 or 112) or any other applicable [emergency number](#). Always see a doctor if you don't feel well. In this case, be sure to ask them to issue a doctor's note as proof for your school if you are calling in sick!

If you need a doctor, ask your RAs, fellow TAs, the person renting your accommodation to you, your mentor, colleagues, or the main office at school for the name of their family doctor, or choose one in your vicinity from you. They should accept BAVEB insurance to ensure you are covered accordingly. You can also find doctors online using [this directory](#).

Some of the local *Ärztelkammern* (doctor's unions) even let you limit your online search to physicians who can speak English. Be sure to pick 'BVAEB' when selecting your *Krankenkasse*.

Burgenland:	https://www.aekbgld.at/arzt suche
Kärnten:	https://www.aekktn.at/arzt suche
Niederösterreich:	https://www.arzt noe.at/arzt suche
Oberösterreich:	https://www.aeko oe.at/patienten/arzt suche
Salzburg:	https://arzt suche.aeksb g.at/finder/search/land/SA,OO
Steiermark:	https://www.aekstmk.or.at/
Tirol:	https://www.aektirol.at/arzt suche
Vorarlberg:	https://www.medicus-online.at/
Wien:	https://www.praxisplan.at/

USTAs looking for **LGBTQ+ health services** in Austria might want to check [this website](#) (listing trans care options) and the [queermed](#) directory (unofficial directory; for browsing, click on "Verzeichnis") and could also ask their Austrian GP, fellow (second-year) TAs, or RAs for recommendations if they feel comfortable.

Specific information for queer TAs, counseling, and testing resources (in English) can be found at the following links:

- <https://aids.at/en/information/queere-infos/>
- <https://aids.at/en/tests-und-beratung/>

If you are looking for resources regarding PrEP medication, please browse the following links:

- <https://www.sozialministerium.at/Themen/Gesundheit/Uebertragbare-Krankheiten/Infektionskrankheiten-A-Z/HIV--AIDS/HIV-PrEP.html>
- <https://www.hivprep.at/prep-aerztinnen>
- <https://www.hivprep.at/prep-apotheken>
- <https://www.aidsgesellschaft.at/hiv-behandlungszentren/>

23.7 Pharmacies (Apotheken)

If you need a specific medicine while in Austria, check with your US-based doctor in advance if you can bring it in sufficient quantity for the beginning of your stay (inquire what [quantity you are legally allowed to bring](#)) and bring your doctor's prescription (and possible stamped translation) along with you to get a refill in Austria.

Sending (even over-the-counter) medications through the mail is ILLEGAL and can lead to problems with Austrian and/or US customs.

Medication is only sold at pharmacies (*Apotheke*) and often requires a prescription (*Rezept*) from a doctor. Some drugs for less serious illnesses such as the common cold can be prescribed on site at the pharmacy or are available over the counter (*rezeptfrei*). However, painkillers or other medication which would be openly available in the US are prescription-based (*rezeptpflichtig*) in Austria. The required prescription is usually stored on your e-card and you will need to insert your card in the card terminal at the pharmacy for your pharmacist to access it. If you do not have an e-card, your doctor can print a prescription for you.

Pharmacies are not typically open 24/7—they offer reduced hours on Saturdays and are usually closed on Sundays—but every day, there are some that stay open all day and night based on the pharmacies' rotation schedule. Check online to see which pharmacy near you currently offers on-call duty (*Bereitschaftsdienst*) outside of their standard opening hours. Some pharmacies now also offer vending machines outside the pharmacy to sell OTC medication and other non-restricted products 24/7 as an additional service.

Pharmacies are separate from supermarkets (unlike CVS in Target) and are independent entities. Pharmaceutical staff is university-trained and a good starting point for questions on health and your medication (apart from your GP). You can find pharmacies by looking for the [red pharmacy logo](#) in your city and online.

An [international pharmacy](#) is operating in Vienna, but local pharmacies in other provinces might also be able to order specific medication for you outside of Vienna – talking to your pharmacists and doctors is highly recommended and many might be able to speak English as well!

If they should be unable to order a specific medication/drug, they (or your GP) might also know what to prescribe instead or how to handle the situation. Open communication with Austrian healthcare providers is recommended.

You'll pay either the full price (over-the-counter medication or medication less expensive than €7,55) or only the *Rezeptgebühr* (for prescription medication more expensive than €7,55). Exceptions may apply – please talk to your pharmacist to find out more.

23.8 What To Do and What to Expect If You Fall Ill

If you are ill and unable to work, it is important to **1) stay home, 2) immediately call in sick at your school(s) on the first day of your illness** to let them know that you will not be coming to work. You might be required to **3) get a doctor's note from your GP (*Krankenstandsmeldung*)** stating that you are ill, which has to be forwarded to the *BVAEB* by your main school.

USTAs are Austrian employees and as such you can call in sick without a penalty – sick days are part of employment in Austria and it's okay to use them if necessary. Thus, please do not go to work if you are visibly ill – you are not doing anyone a favor and do not need to be ashamed or uncomfortable using those days to get well. You do not have to make up hours for sick days. However, you are required to immediately notify your schools!

Not informing your schools that you are sick and will not be able to work but still being absent can lead to the termination of your contract – please inform your schools immediately!

A doctor's note has to be obtained in person at your GP and does not contain your actual diagnosis or any details of your illness as this is confidential – your schools are not allowed to ask for details in most cases; all they need to know is the period you are unable to work and when you're able to return. The only exception would be communicable diseases.

Please inquire at your school when you are required to submit confirmation of your illness from your GP and to whom you have to send it – some schools might require it on the very first day of absence while others might only need it after two days – any of these timeframes are acceptable and you are required to comply.

Parts of your salary (for any days you do not provide a doctor's note for) will be withheld if you do not provide a doctor's note when asked to do so. If you can provide such a note, you'll be paid in full for up to six weeks even if you are unable to work and on sick leave. After that, you'll receive 50% of your current salary for another six weeks if still you are unable to return to work.

23.9 Health insurance for accompanying dependents

Accompanying children can be insured free of charge under the auspices of parental insurance as long as they are under 18 and still in school. [Accompanying spouses](#) may be insured free of charge if they are exclusively engaged in childcare. It is important that USTAs provide relevant documentation (birth certificate, *Meldezettel*) to the *BVAEB* if they want their dependents to be covered by their insurance. Please ask at your local *BVAEB* office for more information on dependents.

23.10 Mental Health

General emergency numbers (e.g., 144 for an ambulance or 1450 for the health hotline) can be found [here](#). Emergency numbers if **someone tries to harm themselves** can be found [here](#).

Please remember that as an employee, you will not have access to the same resources you likely had on your US campus as a student since the US teaching assistantship is quite literally a “real-life” job. Information and professional support are available, but finding the support that works for you is your responsibility.

Be prepared to sometimes [feel homesick](#) and experience [culture shock](#) (especially if you have never been abroad). Talk to your therapist/psychiatrist/counselor at home **now** about coping strategies. Information on receiving psychological care through BVAEB-contracted psychologists in Austria can be found [here](#). A search engine for psychotherapists can be found [here](#).

Every school should have an assigned school psychologist (*Schulpsychologin*) who offers consultations on certain weekdays – they also schedule appointments with teachers, staff, and TAs. Billing is done through BVAEB, and they might be a low-threshold starting point for TAs in need. Usually, they will work at multiple schools and be in your school on certain days during the month or week. You should be able to find information about them either on the school website or if you speak with a trusted teacher or staff member. Sessions with the psychologist are **free and confidential**. More information can be found [here](#). They also offer a hotline for questions: +43 800 211 320 (Mo–Fr: 8–20 Uhr; Sa: 8–12 Uhr).

You can also contact the [Psychological Counselling Services](#) (*Studierendenberatung*).

BMB TAs: Look on the *weltweit unterrichten* platform (login provided to you by late spring/early summer), where you'll find a dedicated section for “*Psychologische Hilfe*” under “*Aktuelle Informationen*”.

Green-school TAs reach out to Fulbright Austria.

And remember, while we at Fulbright Austria are not medical professionals, you can still always reach out if you are struggling or need help.

Further options for mental health support:

- The [crisis intervention center in Vienna](#) can be reached at +43 1 406 95 95 (Montag bis Freitag between 8:00 and 17:00 Uhr)
- Information on how to obtain help from a **psychologist or psychotherapist through BVAEB** insurance can be found [here](#). [Here](#) you can look up psychotherapists and [here](#) psychologists.
- If you need someone to talk to urgently, you can call the **Notfallpsychologische Dienst** Monday to Friday (9 bis 17 Uhr, Tel: +43 699 18855400).
- The **Psychiatrische Soforthilfe** (psychiatric emergency help) is available 24/7 at +43 1 31330.
- Another option is the **Telefonseelsorge** – it can be reached at the number 142. A live chat is available from 17:00 to 21:00.
- If you want to talk to a psychologist, you can call the [helpline by Austrian psychologists](#) at +43 1 504 8000 (Montag - Donnerstag, 9:00 - 13:00 Uhr)

- You can also call the **Sorgenhotline Wien** if living in Vienna (<https://psd-wien.at/sorgenhotline-wien>) or get in touch with the *Psychosozialer Dienst Wien* (<https://psd-wien.at/>). Information is available in English.

Other provinces:

- **Styria:** [Psychiatrisches Krisentelefon](#) at +43 800 449933 or crisis intervention team at 130
- **Carinthia:** [Psychiatrischer Not- und Krisendienst](#) (PNK) at +43 664/300 7007 (Ost) or +43 664/300 9003 (West)
- **Salzburg:** [Krisenhotline Salzburg](#) at +43 662 43 33 51 (pro mente), Krisenhotline Pongau at +43 6412 200 33 and Krisenhotline Pinzgau at +43 6542 72 600
- **Upper Austria:** [Krisenhilfe Oberösterreich](#) at +43 7322177
- **Tyrol:** Psychosozialer Krisendienst at +43 800 400 120 and there are [psychosocial centers](#) for help [located all around Tyrol](#) as well.
- **Vorarlberg:** [Sozialpsychiatrischer Dienst Vorarlberg](#) in [different locations](#)

24.1 Phones and phone plans

For a comprehensive listing of Austrian providers and respective rates, please consult [this website](#). Former USTAs recommend buying an Austrian prepaid SIM card („Wertkarte”) for a flexible experience because contracts typically require a two-year commitment.

Austrian cell phone providers include: [A1](#), [Drei](#), [Magenta](#), amongst others. Discounted rates can be found at those providers: [Hot](#), [Bob](#), [Spusu](#), and [Yesss](#). Talk to second-year USTAs in your province for their experiences and what they purchased. A1 is usually a bit more expensive, but it’s always worth checking all providers if ANY company offers a good deal.

[Important numbers](#) such as the **fire department (122)**, **police (133)**, **ambulance (144)**, long-distance codes, and various service numbers are good to have saved in your contacts. The landline is called „*Festnetz*” in Austria, cell phones are known as „*Handys*”.

24.2 TV and German-language Radio Options

In Austria, you are required to “register” your TV device with *ORF Beitrags Service GmbH* (OBS) through an [ORF-Karte](#) in your TV if you have any devices with a receiver in your primary accommodations capable of receiving Austrian public broadcasts. The license is NOT required for mobile devices (e.g., smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc.), even if you use the mobile devices to watch or listen to Austrian public broadcasts. More information can be found on [their website](#). Usually, TVs in your leased apartment should be set up by your landlord.

Since you are registered with a *Nebenwohnsitz*, you should not need to pay the *ORF Beitrag* (fee) for your apartment anyway. If you are registering your accommodation as *Hauptwohnsitz* and if no-one already pays for your apartment, you could become liable to pay the [ORF Beitrag](#) (ORF fee) either once per year, every six months or every two months. How much you pay depends on [where you live](#).

The new online streaming platform for Austrian national TV is [ORF.on](#) – you can stream Austrian TV shows, news, sports programming, and documentaries (with German subtitles). If you are an audiophile, browse [ORF Sound](#), the online radio platform for all regional radio stations (Radio Vorarlberg, Tirol, Kärnten, ...). It also includes [FM4](#), the radio station for younger audiences which also broadcasts English-speaking programming, and [Ö3](#), the Austrian mainstream radio station.

For everyone interested in German radio, please browse [ARD Audiothek](#), [Deutschlandfunk](#), and [Deutschlandfunk Nova](#) (their YA channel) for anything fitting – all three offer excellent podcasts to listen to. There’s even a *Radiotatort* available for crime-loving TAs.

Other great places for streaming German-speaking TV are [3sat](#), [Arte](#) (French-German cultural TV cooperation), [ServusTV](#), and [ZDFmediathek](#). [Funk](#) is a great place for younger content.

If you are interested in Austrian news, please check [www.news.orf.at](#), [Der Standard](#), [Die Presse](#), [Kleine Zeitung](#), [Salzburger Nachrichten](#).

25. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION 26

Austria's modern public transportation systems provide for easy travel within local areas and around Austria. While tickets are reasonably priced, there are heavy fines for riding without a ticket (*Schwarzfahren*) on public transportation (over €100 for the first offense).

For any sort of commute, it is highly recommended to ask transportation services about monthly, or annual passes which entail significant savings. Weekly passes are particularly valuable when holidays reduce the number of working weeks within a month. Purchasing „Semester-Tickets“ in case you are matriculated at an Austrian university could save you lots of money too. The newest addition to and biggest game-changer in the slate of tickets is the *Klimaticket* (see [section 25.2 Klimaticket](#) for more information).

Please take a look at the following list of public transport companies per *Bundesland* (province) and for provincial capital cities of Austria. You might also think about downloading the app of your local public transport provider, the Scotty app (for ÖBB routing information), the *Westbahn* app (for all TAs located west of Vienna), and the general ÖBB app from your device's app store.

25.1 Helpful links for traveling within Austria

- [Austrian Tourism Portal](#) about Austria in general – [here](#) you would find information on each of the nine provinces and [this subsection](#) gives you information about Austrian cities
- [ÖBB](#), Austrian National Railway website
- [Scotty](#), ÖBB route-planning tool
 - Phone and tablet apps for ÖBB (Austrian Federal Railways) and Scotty are available on both the Apple App Store and Google Play
- [Westbahn Railway](#) (private railway for the west and soon east of Austria)
 - app is available on both the Apple App Store and Google Play
- [VOR](#) (*Verkehrsverbund Ostregion*) – public transport union operating in Lower Austria, Burgenland, and Vienna (Vienna operates its own *Wiener Linien* inside the city limits but connections to Lower Austria and Burgenland usually are through VOR trains which connect all three provinces - they pass through Hauptbahnhof, Wien-Meidling, Wien-Mitte, Hütteldorf)
- [Wiener Lokalbahn](#) (a.k.a Badner Bahn; Vienna and Lower Austria; from Karlsplatz to Baden; slower than the fast trains from Meidling or Hauptbahnhof)
- [Flixbus](#), long-distance bus service (Austria and Europe)

Bundesländer/provinces and their public transport unions:

Province	Capital city/other major city
Vorarlberg	Bregenz ; Dornbirn
Tirol	Innsbruck
Kärnten	Klagenfurt ; Villach
Steiermark	Graz
Salzburg	Salzburg-Stadt
Oberösterreich	Linz
Niederösterreich	St. Pölten
Burgenland	Eisenstadt
Wien	Wien

25.2 Klimaticket

In fall 2021, the Austrian government presented its newest initiative for public transport: the [*Klimaticket*](#) (annual climate transport pass). Depending on which category you choose, the *Klimaticket* allows you to either use 1) all regional public transport [within your province](#) (*Klimaticket* OÖ, Salzburg, etc.) or even within 2) [all of Austria](#) (*Klimaticket Österreich*) for a whole year (exceptions apply for some tourist attractions). It's currently [priced](#) at €884,20 for young adults aged 25 or younger and €1.179,30 for everyone else. You can purchase the *Klimaticket* either online or in a public-transport service center (ÖBB service centers and at your local public-transport union service centers). You will need to bring a photo (all categories) and an ID (if you claim the discounted ticket for young people).

Please note that if you choose to buy it through the online store, **your pass will be valid only after 15 days from the day you purchased it (due to European consumer protection regulations for online purchases)**. If you buy it at a service center, it can be validated immediately (or at any date you'd prefer). You will receive a preliminary paper pass at the counter, the plastic card is sent to you by post. Your RAs and fellow second-year TAs know about the *Klimaticket* and will be able to answer some questions about it as well. You can also reach out to your program officer for questions.

As of late 2023, you can also get the *Klimaticket* [on your phone](#) and not just as a plastic card.

25.3 ÖBB Vorteilscard

If you don't need one of these aforementioned passes but would still like to save on public transport: the [discount train card](#) (*Vorteilscard*) issued by the Austrian Railway Company (ÖBB) is valid for one year and reduces the [costs of train rides by up to 50%](#). If you are under 26, the card costs €19; otherwise, it costs €71. There is also the possibility of getting a 25% reduction when traveling to neighboring countries with your *Vorteilskarte*. Please remember to take an ID and a passport photo with you when applying for the card. There are also a number of discount fares offered by the ÖBB to neighboring EU countries. More information on the *Vorteilscard* and the ÖBB can be found on [the ÖBB site](#).

Also look into bus travel, which can be cheaper than taking a train – e.g. [Flixbus](#) operates throughout Europe.

26. DRIVING 28

You are advised to consult with the local motor vehicle licensing authorities before driving and encouraged to investigate insurance issues in particular. Local Austrian automobile clubs can also advise you on legal and insurance issues (www.oeamtc.at and www.arboe.at).

Since the public transport system in Austria is extremely reliable, TAs are not expected to have a car on hand. If you still plan to drive a car in Europe, according to the ÖAMTC, a foreign driver's license is valid for six months in Austria if the driver is a resident of Austria and over 18 years old AND if the license is written in German or accompanied by an international license (available through AAA) or a translation (which the ÖAMTC can provide if you show them your *Meldezettel* and pay roughly €20).

Within six months, foreigners from outside the European Economic Area who are residents of Austria would need to have their license re-issued for Austria at any drivers licensing authority in order to drive. There are numerous documents required for this, as well as a fee; please inform yourself about the requirements if you are interested.

27. SHOPPING, STORE HOURS 29

Grocery shopping is done in person, but online shopping does get more popular here as delivery options expand. Business opening hours in Austria are shorter than in the US, often closing at or before 7 p.m (19:00). Please also keep in mind that there exists no direct equivalent to Target or WalMart in Austria (neither in size nor in offered range of goods), so getting all your shopping done in one place might be a little more challenging. Exceptions to that are shopping malls (Shoppingcenter) which combine a wide range of stores.

There are no greeters employed in Austrian stores, the exchange of money for what you bought is swift, and in order to do something for the environment, plastic bags are now usually only available for sale and not as complimentary offer, so be sure to bring your reusable bag or backpack.

Shops and restaurants are often closed on Sundays and national holidays – Turkish/ Arabic/international grocery stores might however be open. In smaller towns and villages, shops usually close at noon on Saturdays. If you need something urgently on those days, you may want to check supermarkets at train stations – but be aware that there might be a lot of shoppers frequenting those stores (especially during holidays after Christmas).

If you receive mail and ads to your address, you might also get leaflets from supermarkets with discounts – sometimes, stickers (“Pickerl”) are included to get a certain percentage off bought goods and you can also get a free “membership card” ([Jö-Karte](#)) to save money through discounts at certain stores. Some stores (Spar, Billa, Lidl...) also offer apps to collect discounts.

If you are shopping or dining in Austria, store assistants (or waiters) will not introduce themselves to you and you will only wait to be seated in more upscale restaurants.

Tip modestly compared to American standards: tips to servers, taxi drivers, porters, hairdressers, etc., are usually 5–10 %. Instead of leaving the tip on the table, it is customary to round off the bill. Thus, if the bill were €12.50, and you wanted to tip you would say, “*Bitte auf 13 Euro*”. Some Austrians may also leave a few coins on the table for the person who served them if the money for the bill was collected by a different server/employee, the *Ober* (*Zahlkellner*). Musicians (e.g., at *Heurigen*) expect tips, too. They usually set up a plate or basket in a strategic place near the door into which you can drop money on your way out. It is usually hard to miss.

- The most common supermarkets for groceries are [Spar](#) (also [InterSpar](#)), [Billa/Billa Plus](#), [Hofer](#) (Austrian variant of Aldi), [Penny](#), [MPreis](#) (in the west)...
- If you are looking for toiletries, check out [Müller](#), [DM](#), or [BIPA](#)
- If you look for organic and fair-traded goods, you can browse [Denn's](#) or [Reformhaus](#)
- Stores that offer a wide variety of goods for relatively small money are e.g. [Action](#), [Tedi.TK Maxx](#)
- Stores for stationery are e.g. [Thalia](#) (also for games and handicrafts/arts equipment), [Libro](#), [Pagro](#), [Mastnak](#) (Vienna)

- If you look for bookstores (with English/International sections), check out [Thalia](#), [Morawa](#), and local independent stores; universities also have their own specialized bookstores for textbooks and merchandise
- If you are looking for international food in Vienna, please check out [this article](#) on international stores. The biggest international food store in Vienna is [Prosi](#) (two locations). For Mexican food, you can browse [Casa Mexico](#) (in Vienna and Graz). Other shops in and around Graz include [MAM](#), [Farmah's Supermarket](#), and various Turkish/Syrian shops (also for fresh fruits).
- A dedicated store for food imported from the UK, US, Australia is [Bobby's](#) in Vienna. Prices may be higher due to imports.

28. STUDYING AT AUSTRIAN UNIVERSITIES 27

If you have been assigned to (or close to) a university city, you may wish to enroll at an Austrian university. Should you wish to enroll, please note that **5 September** is the deadline to apply for admission to an Austrian university for fall term.

For further information on deadlines, application procedures, and documents required, consult the website of your chosen university. (Note: you may disregard the information on applying for a visa as a student because you will be applying for a residence permit as a teaching assistant). As permit holder you qualify for the same privileges given to Austrian citizens regarding tuition. Please contact the individual university for inquiries.

29. PERSONAL AUSTRIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIPS 24

Personal relationships with Austrians are not only vital to your personal enjoyment of your year here but are also **essential to the basic aims of the Teaching Assistantship Program**. Making friends is usually not difficult; you will have plenty of opportunities if you have a snack or drink coffee in the teacher's lounge, eat at the school buffets, or participate in the activities of student and binational organizations as well as the programs offered by your school(s) or local sports clubs. Austrians, however, may seem more reserved, maintaining fewer but closer friendships compared to Americans.

Social patterns are more formal in Austria; greeting colleagues and friends in the hallway or entering and exiting the *Konferenzzimmer*, greeting employees when entering or leaving an office or shop, using appropriate titles, etc. While students now use the *du* form among themselves, the older generation continues to address colleagues with *Kollege* or *Kollegin*. A woman is addressed as *Frau* whether she is married or not. It is customary to take along flowers, a bottle of wine, or a small gift when invited to private homes. Austrians are also more likely to follow up on that invitation for a coffee that you might have casually mentioned recently.

30. BOOKS AND INFORMATION ON AUSTRIA

The more you know before arrival, the more rewarding your experience will be. To maximize your experience, try learning about the country where you will spend an academic year, either by browsing the internet in general, visiting the Austrian National Tourist Office's [website](#), or reading a guidebook. At the same time, you should be prepared to answer

questions about your own country and review your own cultural history before arriving in Austria.

- Former USTA Adam Brock has written the book My Song to Sing on his time as a USTA in Austria, published with New Degree Press.
- Cockett, Richard (2024): Vienna. How the City of Ideas Created the Modern World. Yale University Press.

The following websites may also be helpful in obtaining information about Austria:

http://www.bmeia.gv.at	Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs
http://www.wien.gv.at	City of Vienna
https://www.wien.info/en	Vienna Tourist Board
http://www.austria.gv.at	Austrian Federal Press Service: Federal Chancellery
https://www.austria.info/en	Austrian National Tourist Office
http://www.acfny.org	Austrian Cultural Forum, New York
http://www.cas.umn.edu	Center for Austrian Studies, University of Minnesota

General information on Austria as well as maps and brochures may be obtained from the Austrian Cultural Institute in New York, the Austrian consulates, and the Austrian National Tourist Office in the US.

If you are looking for other Americans to talk to and meet, you could get in touch with your local Austrian-American Society or Österreichisch-Amerikanische Gesellschaft (AAS/ÖAG) in your province:

- [AAS Oberösterreich](#)
- [AAS Carinthia](#)
- [ÖAG Salzburg](#)
- [ÖAG Steiermark](#)
- [AAS Tirol](#)
- [ÖAG Vienna](#)

31. REGISTERING FOR AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

If you want to vote by overseas absentee ballot in US federal and state elections, you generally need to register with your US county six weeks before the election. It's easiest to fill out the required form (called an FPCA-Federal Post Card Application, it is used for both registering and requesting a ballot) online via the [Federal Voting Assistance Program](#). Please note that while every state uses the same form, every state also has its own instructions for filling out the form.

The following two websites are nonpartisan and will also provide you with assistance and information:

overseasvotefoundation.org/ and
votefromabroad.org/

The Teaching Assistantship Program is about more than improving students' English: USTAs are also representatives of the United States and thus facilitate **cultural exchange in both directions**. This is an important aspect of the program given that the American perspective of the United States is different from the European perspective. Transatlantic relations and cross-cultural perceptions are topics that will repeatedly come up. In many ways—including geographically, politically, and socially—the United States is very large and very complex. It is impossible to know everything, and occasionally teachers and students may expect you to know more about the US than you actually do.

You will also inevitably be asked about current affairs. In recent years, topics of great interest have included how the Electoral College functions, current US presidents, the Black Lives Matter movement, 9/11, gun control, popular culture, the death penalty, gender equality, and the economic crisis. Direct questions are not always meant to be confrontational or a judgment on your character.

On occasion, however, you may be confronted with a certain amount of anti-Americanism. It is important for you to recognize that you are not personally responsible for American foreign policy since World War I, Hiroshima, the Vietnam War, poverty, crime, drugs, or racism in the United States. Your job is not to defend the United States, but to try and explain it to your students. This is not always an easy job but keeping this difference in mind always helps.

As former teaching assistants have observed:

- "Most of my students' knowledge of America comes directly from television."
- "The questions that the students have are usually based on what they've seen on TV."
- "I have been able to dispel certain myths about the US just by talking to the students and answering their questions. My being there has given them a better understanding of America and the American way of life."
- "I've made a difference by providing students with a real example."

These comments reflect the acquired knowledge of Austrians about America from American movies, TV shows and the Media. These represent America just as poorly as the few stereotypes of Austria that penetrate the American collective knowledge—Austria offers more than just Lederhosen, Arnold Schwarzenegger, *The Sound of Music*, and skiing. Therefore, it is important to have an opportunity like this, as one assistant said, "to open up the minds of students to things they never knew about the US by telling them how it really is at home." You will be able to do this by covering certain topics that are of interest to the students.

Most of your teaching time will be spent generating discussions, answering questions about America, and presenting [authentic material](#). **Your job is to engage the students**, to lower their apprehension about using a foreign language, and to get them to talk. Please however know that culture is not the only topic you should be prepared to talk about. Your school could also focus on their textbook or any other content (apart from grammar) which is also allowed.

Some teaching assistants wish to continue their stay in Austria. **Provided that their performance merits an extension for a second year**, USTAs may apply to have their teaching assistantships extended for a second year (*“Verlängerung”*), either at their current locations or at another location in Austria. Applicants for extensions are required to pay a processing fee of €60 to Fulbright Austria at the time of the application to help defray administrative costs. Notification of acceptance status is usually sent out at the beginning of April. The application for extension is processed through *weltweit unterrichten* for BMB USTAs and through Fulbright Austria for BML/Green-school USTAs.

It is important to note that teaching assistants are **not entitled** to an extension of their assignments. The number of extensions granted is contingent upon the number of applications for extension, their relative quality and merits, the size of the “first-year” applicant pool, and the number of teaching assistant positions available the following school year. Applications for extension can be rejected either by your school board, or by the BMB/*weltweit unterrichten*.

If you would like to be placed at a Green school (rather than a BMB school) in the upcoming school year (after a year at a BMB school), please reach out to the USTA program officer to inquire further (since we have limited spots at Green schools, informing Fulbright Austria is of utmost importance!).

Deadline

The deadline for the BMB to receive extension applications is usually in **mid-January**. Applying for an extension requires the online submission of the following items:

- *Antrag auf Verlängerung* (in the online application system of BMB/*weltweit unterrichten*)
 - A written, short statement from your school(s)
 - Statement in German from you (roughly 450 words) answering the question: “Why do you want to stay a second year?” (what have you achieved, what would you like to achieve in the next year)

Weltweit unterrichten will send you updated and detailed instructions about the extension procedure. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the school officials forward their materials. All of the abovementioned conditions and deadlines must be met, or your request will not be reviewed. For more information, please contact *weltweit unterrichten* in November or December.

Note for TAs at Green schools:

If you are teaching at one of the Green schools that are managed by the BML (Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Water Management) rather than the BMB your extension application process is **different** to the one from other TAs.

You will receive a separate email from the USTA program officer by mid-November or early December explaining how you can apply for your extension. You will have to do so directly via the USTA website and won't receive an email from *weltweit unterrichten*. This is regardless of whether you want to extend at the same school, or you wish to be placed at another school in the following year. You can also switch to a BMB school if you would like to! The deadline is the same for you – mid-January.

34. THE „AFTERLIFE“– YOUR IMMEDIATE FUTURE AFTER THE USTA PROGRAM

Applying for a third year on the teaching assistantship program exclusively with *weltweit unterrichten*

Teaching assistants currently in their second year can apply for another (third) year on the program during the extension application period (December to January). They would be cared for by the BMB and *weltweit unterrichten* as Fulbright Austria only supports first- and second-year teaching assistants. Third-year applicants would always be moved to a waitlist and could be offered left-over placements after first- and second-year candidates accepted their offers – this could be as late as July. Flexibility on location and school type is recommended. You can also participate while being on a student permit.

Staying in touch with Fulbright Austria through our Alum Advisory Panel

The Alum Advisory Panel is a volunteer panel comprised of Fulbright Austria alums that was established to support Fulbright Austria's mission by strengthening ongoing alum engagement, supporting Fulbright Austria's fundraising goals, and giving panel members the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the Fulbright Austria community. The panel works to foster and sustain a mutually beneficial community that supports research, study, and teaching opportunities for future Fulbright Austria program participants. The advisory panel advises Fulbright Austria on alum outreach, development, and fundraising events and activities. The panel also helps Fulbright Austria recruit alums to donate to Fulbright Austria financially or as volunteers at Fulbright Austria events and activities.

To be a member of the Alum Advisory Panel, you must have completed a program administered by Fulbright Austria and should:

- Commit to a term of two years
- Be a team player and able to express the effect your program had on your life
- Be passionate and committed to Fulbright Austria's values
- Show a history of connection to Fulbright Austria
- Lead by example and make an annual gift to the Fulbright Austria Opportunity Fund
- Promote Fulbright Austria in your social and professional circles
- Help recruit attendees for event and activities

The Alum Advisory Panel consists of up to 12 alums and meets a minimum of two times per year. Members can attend meetings either in person or online. The agenda will be driven by the panel's composition and the inputs panel members provide for the Fulbright Austria engagement plan. If you are interested in serving on Fulbright Austria's Alum Advisory Panel, please [email Mitch Sims](#), our alumni relations manager, for further information.

Applying for a Fulbright grant (either with Fulbright Austria or another Fulbright commission)

Teaching assistants without a combined grant can apply for [a Fulbright grant](#) if they meet the requirements their preferred program sets (because of the non-Fulbright status of USTAs). Usually, a period of residence in the US before starting the grant prohibits an immediate start, but please ask for information and if you would be eligible. In Austria, you would need to pause for a year but could come back as a combined grantee or full research student. Please mind that the U.S. Fulbright Student Program has its own [application process](#) and if you would come back to the program, we would also check how your performance was perceived at your schools during your USTA time.

**APPENDIX: APPLICATION FOR
YOUR RESIDENCE PERMIT
(AUFENTHALTSBEWILLIGUNG
„SONDERFÄLLE
UNSELBSTSTÄNDIGER
ERWERBSTÄTIGKEIT“)**

Application for a stay permit - *Special Cases of Gainful Employment*
Antrag auf Erteilung einer Aufenthaltsbewilligung - *Sonderfälle unselbständiger*
Erwerbstätigkeit

This explanation is for your information only. Only the law published in German language is legally valid and binding. This means that you cannot derive any rights from this explanation.

All teaching assistants who are not citizens of a member state of the European Economic Area (or Switzerland) and intend to reside in Austria for more than 90 days must apply for a residence permit “Special Cases of Gainful Employment”. It’s absolutely imperative that you complete this application form correctly.

Please don’t sign it! It has to be signed at the desk of the Austrian Embassy or Authority in front of an officer – this is to confirm your identity.

As a rule the application has to be submitted **in person** at the [Austrian Embassy \(consulate\) in your country of residence](#).

British and US-citizens may enter the Schengen area, which includes Austria, without visa (and stay up to 90 out of 180 days) and pick up the permit from their respective local authority during their legal visa free stay. You may only stay more than 90 days if you have picked your residence permit before this time. Otherwise, you have to go back to your country of residence and wait for further instructions.

If you apply directly in Austria, it is important that you submit your application as soon as possible after entering the country. If the residence authority does not decide within the visa-free period or the visa-required stay, you will have to wait for the decision in your country of residence.

You can download the [application form](#) and an [explanation](#) from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior ([BMI](#)).

Explanation:

1 EU passport photo

Notice:
35mm wide x 45mm high
www.bmi.gv.at/passbildkriterien

2 ↑Please sign here!↑
Please fill out everything that applies to you.
Please tick everything that applies to you.
Please enter the date in the format DD.MM.YYYY (e.g. 31.12.2022).

3 To be completed by the authority!
(You are not allowed to write anything here!)

Zahl: _____

Abgegeben bei: _____ am: _____ durch: _____

Fingerabdrücke von ö. Vertretungsbehörde abgenommen: ☐ ja ☐ nein ☐ Eingabegebühr entrichtet

☐ gesetzlichen Vertreter
☐ persönlich

1. Photo (upper left-hand corner)

Passport-sized photograph (size 3.5 x 4.5 cm) **not older than 6 months**, the exact dimensions may be found [here](#).

2. Signature (upper right-hand corner)

Don’t sign!! You will have to do this face to face later with an employee of the Austrian Embassy.

3. Leave blank!

“To be completed by the authority” ...to be completed by the authority only!

AUFENTHALTSBEWILLIGUNG

Please mark with "X": **17. Stay Permit – Special Cases of Gainful Employment for Foreign Language Assistants**

Application for a Residence Permit		
(1)	<input type="checkbox"/> Red-White-Red – Card for	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Highly Qualified Workers <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Workers <input type="checkbox"/> Other Key Workers <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed Key Workers <input type="checkbox"/> Graduates <input type="checkbox"/> Start-up Founders <input type="checkbox"/> Skilled Workers in Shortage Occupations
(2)	<input type="checkbox"/> Red-White-Red – Card plus	
(3)	<input type="checkbox"/> EU Blue Card	
(4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement Permit	
(5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement Permit – Gainful Employment Excepted	
(6)	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement Permit – Dependent	
(7)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term Resident – EU	
(8)	<input type="checkbox"/> Residence Permit – Family Member (from a person with Austrian citizenship)	
(9)	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement Permit – Artist	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed <input type="checkbox"/> Dependent
(10)	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement Permit – Special Cases of Gainful Employment for <input type="checkbox"/> Pastor <input type="checkbox"/> Media staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Scientist <input type="checkbox"/> Special Executives	
(11)	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement Permit – Researcher	
(12)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay Permit – Intra-Corporate Transferee („ICT“)	
(13)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay Permit – Mobile Intra-Corporate Transferee ("mobile ICT")	
(14)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay Permit – Seconded Employee	
(15)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay Permit – Self-employed person	
(16)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay Permit – Researcher-mobility	
(17)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stay Permit – Special Cases of Gainful Employment for <input type="checkbox"/> Au pair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foreign Language Assistants <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship holders <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

Type of application	
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Initial application	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Extension application
6 <input type="checkbox"/> Application for change of purpose	
7 <input type="checkbox"/> Extension application/Application for change of purpose	Attention: Double application fee (up to EUR 240 in total)

Please tick box 4 *initial application* (if you currently do not have a residence permit for Austria). **You may tick one box only!!**

A. MY DATA

Please fill out this part completely (8-22).

22 Health insurance that is compulsory in Austria and covers all risks

You will have statutory insurance as soon as you start working with the following insurance company: *BVAEB - Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter, Eisenbahnen und Bergbau*

23 Austrian social insurance number (4 digits + your birthdate ddmmyy). If you do not have an Austrian social security number yet, leave blank.

24 – 27 current (home) address

28 – 30 (Intended) place of residence in Austria

Fill out your address in Austria.

31 – 32 Contact details

Please fill out this part completely. Chose an Email address that will be valid for the whole period of your stay in Austria. The authority will send messages to this Email address. Please check your E-mail account on a regular basis.

33 – 39 Authorized representative:

It is important that the authority can deliver letters to you. For this purpose, it is useful to authorise a person in Austria to receive your mail (Zustellvollmacht). This means that the authority will then send all letters to this person (this can be, your spouse, partner, another relative, a friend...) You must enclose a separate form named Vollmacht (authorization) with the application for the permit. It's not necessary to do so if the person is a lawyer. You can

find a sample [here](#).

B. MY FAMILY MEMBERS

Parents (applicable only for minor children)

Wife or husband or registered partner (if applicable)

Children (if applicable)

C. OWN FUNDS AVAILABLE TO SECURE THE LIVELIHOOD FOR THE DURATION OF RESIDENCE

1. Property/assets

If you have any assets available to you apart from your income as a teaching assistant please fill out 66 - 69

2. Income

70 type of income: Gehalt als Fremdsprachenassistent/in

71 monthly amount - ca. € 2.012,90 (gross)

3. Liability statement

72 mark "no" with a cross (not required for your permit)

4. Regular expenses (amount per month in EUROS)

73 -79

IMPORTANT

Please carefully read the information regarding all documents you need to submit either in the [English explanation](#) or in the corresponding chapter in the handbook.

D. CLOSING STATEMENT

Please carefully read this part and be aware that you must report any changes of the data given on the form to the authorities.

Data protection declaration – general information article 13 DSGVO

Please see directly on the application form.

E. RENEWAL – What to I do if I want to extend my residence permit?

Your residence permit renewal must be done in person at the competent residence authority (Magistrat in larger communities/ cities or otherwise at the relevant Bezirkshauptmannschaft)

We do not recommend to apply for renewal as, depending on the respective local authority, a break of 4 months between two working contracts is too long for a renewal.

INFORMATION OF THE AUSTRIAN BUSINESS AGENCY (ABA)

<https://immigration-guide.workinaustria.com/non-eu-eea/work/temporary-employment>

CONFIRMATION of the RECEIPT of the RESIDENCE PERMIT

I confirm with my signature, that I have received my residence permit.

Place/date/signature

EDUCATION/WORK EXPERIENCE .. for statistical reasons.