



Language assistants programme



Handbook

FOR ASSISTANTS
2023/2024



Handbook

FOR

ASSISTANTS

2023/2024

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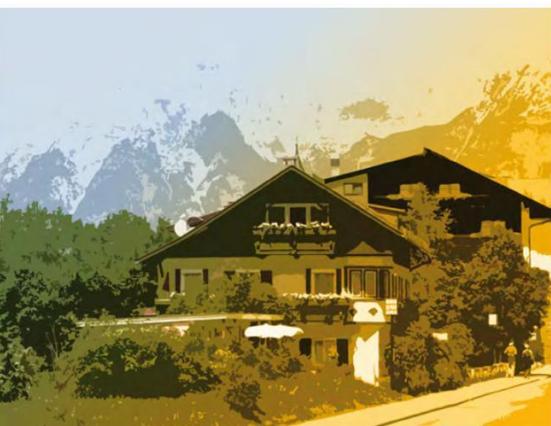
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001

INTRODUCTION

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) is delighted that you will be spending the coming academic year working as a language assistant at one or more schools in Austria.

The BMBWF has produced this brochure as a handbook to support you in organisational and administrative matters regarding your stay as well as your work at school.

Reading the following information, tips and suggestions carefully will help to pre-empt most frequently asked questions.

Your time as a language assistant will be one of diverse experiences valuable for your future career. You will have the opportunity to improve your linguistic as well as your pedagogical skills, while at the same time enhancing your intercultural competences living and working abroad.

For many of you, this will be your first time staying in another country and taking on a job for an extended period of time for which you are bound by a contract or being in fixed employment. There are certain organisational and administrative consequences arising from this.

Therefore, please invest some time and thought into preparing for your time as an assistant, so that your year in Austria will be a successful one for all parties.

The contents of this brochure have been compiled in close cooperation between the BMBWF and the OeAD; they are believed to have been accurate at the time of publication and have been produced based on extensive experience; however, neither the BMBWF nor the OeAD may be held responsible for any errors or omissions.

The BMBWF and the OeAD welcome any comments and suggestions for improvement.

Entry requirements

Language assistants from **Russia** require a valid entry visa and a residence permit (*Aufenthaltstitel*), both of which must be applied for **from within** Russia.

Language assistants from the **USA** and **the UK** may spend up to 3 months in Austria without a visa. Before starting work, however, a residence permit (*Aufenthaltstitel*) is required, which is normally applied for in the USA/UK. For further details, contact the Fulbright Commission/British Council/*Weltweit Unterrichten*.

Language assistants from the **EU (EEC) and Switzerland** may stay and work in Austria for an indefinite amount of time without visa. Within the first **4 months** however, a **registration certificate** (Anmeldebescheinigung 📄) must be obtained from the appropriate authority (district authority [*Magistrat*] or district commission [*Bezirkshauptmannschaft*]) at a cost of € 15,-.

The following documents must be presented when applying for a registration certificate:

- completed application form
- valid passport or other form of ID (original and copy)
- initial certificate of registration (*Meldezettel*), obtained within first 3 days (original and copy). See page 14.
- work contract
- evidence of sufficient health insurance (e.g. e-card)

Police clearance certificate

All members of school staff who start working at Austrian schools need to present a police clearance certificate. This also applies to (1st year) teaching assistants. Please obtain a police clearance certificate in your home country (not older than 3 months) and bring it along to your main school on your first working day.

Exception: language assistants who already submitted a police clearance certificate to the Austrian authorities when applying for the residence permit.

Health insurance BEFORE starting work

Be aware of the fact that you will not have health or social insurance until you start working at your school(s). This will be the 1st October at the earliest. For the time preceding 1st October you are required to arrange any insurance yourself. EU citizens need an internationally valid insurance card ("e-card"). We recommend arranging private travel/health insurance until the end of November – especially teaching assistants who need a residence permit (in case of administrative delays).

Induction seminar

You will receive an invitation by email from *Weltweit Unterrichten* and can then sign in on our platform www.weltweitunterrichten.at 📄. Participation is not compulsory yet highly recommended. You will receive only one invitation (exclusively teaching assistants working their first year will be invited). The induction seminar offers information and workshops about your rights and duties as a language assistant, methodology and didactics, lesson planning, ...

For the academic year 2023/2024, this introductory workshop for language assistants will take place in presence from **25th – 29th September 2023**.

English speaking assistants assigned to schools in **Vienna, Lower Austria, Burgenland and Styria:** Bildungshaus St. Hippolyt 📄, Eybnerstraße 5, 3100 St.Pölten

English speaking assistants assigned to schools in **Carinthia, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol and Vorarlberg:** Club Kitzsteinhorn 📄, Gletschermoosstraße 13, 5700 Zell am See

French/Italian/Spanish-speaking assistants
Jugendhotel Ennshof 📄, Saliterergasse 20, 5541 Altenmarkt

A fee of 100 EUROS per person is payable in cash once you have arrived at the induction seminar.

Once you have confirmed your participation you must be present during the whole seminar. At the end of the seminar you will receive a **confirmation of your participation**, which **should be handed in** at your **main school** (in case the induction seminar ends after 1st October).

First contact with your school(s)

Get in touch with your school(s) as soon as possible. This will enable you to obtain early information about the school and allow the school to prepare for your arrival in time.

Inform your school(s) about the date of your arrival and ask what day and time you should arrive at the school(s) the first time. Normally this is 1st October (if it's not a weekend).

The earlier you get in touch, the easier it will be for the school to help you **look for accommodation**. Please keep in mind that in general, finding accommodation is your own responsibility.

At each of your schools, you will be supported by a **mentor teacher**. Their names and e-mail addresses are accessible on the platform www.weltweitunterrichten.at after having confirmed that you will take up the position. They will help you with administrative issues and will send you information prior to your arrival in Austria.



003

PREPARING FOR YOUR ROLE

List of required information

Put together a list of questions that need to be answered before you depart for Austria.

Of course, you will want to find out as much about the school as possible.

Some general questions about Austria or the community where you will be living may also arise. The school will endeavor to provide you with any information you are looking for.

CHECK IT

- I am insured in Austria for the period between entering Austria and starting work.
- I have signed up for the introductory workshop.
- I have let my school know when I will be arriving.

Please also see the checklist "[vor der Abreise](#)" on our Website for more tips.

If you didn't apply for a residency permit you must present the police clearance certificate to your main school on the first day of work at the latest.

Type of school

Language assistants in Austria are usually assigned to general secondary schools or to schools specialising in vocational training. However, you may also be assigned to an institution specializing in training teachers or preschool teachers. During the preparatory discussions with your mentor teacher(s) you should ask about the type of school and find out what will be expected of you, what topics you should deal with in class, etc.

Useful links:

<https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulsystem/sa.html>

<https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/bw/index.html>

www.bildungssystem.at

→ QUESTIONS

- Can the school help me look for an accommodation?
- How do I find good value accommodations in the area?
- Can other/former teaching assistants give me advice regarding housing – contact details may be found on the intranet (*Vernetzung/Standortliste*)?
- What is the best way to travel to the school (which mode of transport)?
- Where is the nearest airport/railway station?
- Who should I report to after I have arrived at the school? Where can I find this person?
- What is the name and e-mail address of my predecessor? See *Vernetzung*.
- When exactly should I come to the school for the first time?
- What type of school is it?
- How big is the school?

- How many pupils? How many teachers? How many teachers teach my language?
- How old are the pupils I will be teaching?
- What teaching materials should I bring with me?
- What will my responsibilities be? What will be expected of me in the classroom?

Authentic teaching material

It depends on the type of school, as well as on the expectations of the teachers, as to whether you decide to bring general materials or specialized materials (i.e. economics, art and culture...). It is advisable to clarify this with your school before your departure.

→ What **MATERIAL** to bring

- Photos:** your family, friends, pets, your house, town or school and university
- Music:** Music from your home and neighborhood
- Newspapers, magazines**
- Newspaper cuttings:** horoscopes, weather reports, comic strips, television guides, cinema and theatre listings, advertisements, classified ads, pictures of wellknown actors/singers
- Videos:** weather forecasts, commercials, cartoons, news broadcasts

- Maps**
- Tourist **brochures** about your country
- Posters**
- Postcards**
- Menu cards from restaurants**
- Recipes**
- Games**
- Bus tickets, cinema tickets, etc.**
- Time tables** (buses, trains, etc.)



➔ CHECK IT

- I am in touch with my mentor teacher.
- My questions about the place, the school and daily life in Austria have been answered.
- I know what type of school I will be working at and what is expected of me.
- I have put together materials for the classroom.
- The school is able/not able to help me look for an accommodation.

004

REMUNERATION – SOCIAL SECURITY – ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Important tips for looking for accommodation

When looking for accommodation in Austria **do not rush to sign anything!** Please be aware that by signing agreements or contracts, you may agree to a legally binding rental agreement and the terms and conditions contained therein. Please also be aware of the notice period given in the contract. Adding an article similar to the so-called **diplomatic clause** to the rental contract will facilitate the termination of a rental contract in case of force majeure. This happens very rarely but occurred in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic when the language assistance program ended one month earlier and many countries evacuated their citizens. This article could be worded like this:

"Für den Fall des vorzeitigen Abbruchs des Fremdsprachenassistentenprogramms nachweislich von offizieller Seite (insbesondere wegen höherer Gewalt, u.a. im Falle einer Pandemie oder einer offiziell von einer Regierung ausgesprochenen Reisewarnung), oder sollte die/der Benutzer/in des Mietobjekts aus anderen triftigen Gründen Österreich dauerhaft verlassen müssen (etwa aus medizinischen Gründen), kann das Mietverhältnis mit einer Kündigungsfrist von 30 Tagen von der Mieterin/vom Mieter gekündigt werden."

In Austria, a deposit is normally required when renting a flat or a room. In most cases the deposit will be the sum of three months' rent and provides protection for the landlord against potential damage to the property. This deposit must be paid back to you in full, including interest, if you leave the property in the same condition as you found it. If damage did occur, the landlord may retain an appropriate amount of the deposit. For this reason, it is advisable to make a record of the condition and contents of the property when you move in (photos!). In case you are planning to use the services of an estate agency, be aware that you may have to pay an appropriate brokerage fee.

Registering at the Registration Service Centre (*Meldeamt*)

According to Austrian registration law, every citizen must carry out an ‘official registration’ (*amtliche Meldung*) **within 3 days** of moving into a new accommodation. In Vienna, registering, deregistering and notification of changes of address are taken care of by the registration service at all 23 district authorities (*Magistratisches Bezirksamt*). Outside Vienna, registration may be done at the town hall (*Gemeindeamt*). N.B. This official registration is not to be confused with the registration certificate (*Anmeldebescheinigung*), cf. page 6.

Although you are not legally requested, you may also indicate your religious confession on the registration certificate. Caveat: By doing so, you are at risk that a church fee (*Kirchenbeitrag*) may be automatically deducted from your salary.

The **registration with the Meldeamt is crucial** for the next administrative steps (receiving your social insurance number, opening a bank account, receiving your salary,...)

What to take with you:

a completed certificate of registration (*Meldezettel*), which can be found at the Registration Service Centre or online: <http://www.help.gv.at> (in German). Your **landlord’s signature** is required on the certificate. You will need to take your **passport**. Please don’t forget to deregister at the end of your stay in Austria. You will find the details on the government website.

Opening a bank account

Following your arrival in Austria, open a **salary account** (*Gehaltskonto*) at an Austrian bank of your choice (take your passport, contract and/or reference from the headmaster) as soon as possible. The bank will then give you a **certificate** (*Antrag auf bargeldlose Bezugsanweisung or Kontoerklärung*) stating that you have opened an account into which you want your salary to be paid. Hand this in at the secretary’s office at your school at the earliest.

Should your account number change, please inform the local education authority (*Bildungsdirektion*), or the BMBWF (if you are working at a school that is directly reporting to them) immediately. This will help to avoid delays in your salary payments.

Remuneration

Your salary will be transferred into your account by the relevant education authority or by the BMBWF (if your school is directly reporting to them) on the 15th of every calendar month. The first instalment will take longer – you’ll receive it 15th of November! Please take sufficient funds with you to cover costs for the first two months (e.g. rent, deposit). The last installment will be transferred 15th May.

You may download your pay slips from the platform “Bildung Austria”. Please keep in mind that you will have access only until the end of your contract period. You will receive the log-in data for “Bildung Austria” from your main school (*Stammschule*).

Important: To avoid delays in payment, please make sure that you handed the following [documents](#) to the main school: e.g. your Austrian address (*Meldezettel*), Austrian bank account (*Kontoerklärung*), police clearance/residence permit, information regarding tax liability.

Assistants from FR, IE, IT and SI

are exempt from income tax due to a double taxation agreement if they fulfill certain criteria (cf. page 16/17). Since tax issues are very complex and the exemption depends on many factors you must confirm to your employer (*Bildungsdirektion*) that you meet all the requirements. You will receive a form at the beginning of your employment at your main school.

ca. €	1.781,76	gross per month
- ca. €	269,40	social insurance (does not include income tax deductions)
ca. €	1.512,36	net per month

Assistants from CH, UK, US, HR, BE, ES and RU receive:

ca. €	1.781,76	gross per month
- ca. €	269,40	social security
- ca. €	70,31	income tax
ca. €	1.442,05	net per month

The relevant education authority (*Bildungsdirektion*) is responsible for your salary payments. Salary-related questions should be addressed to them.

Deductions

Before your salary is transferred to your account, social insurance contributions and, if applicable, income tax will automatically be deducted from your gross earnings. If you indicated a religious confession when registering at the Registration Service, a church fee might also be deducted (see above “Registering” at the Registration Service Centre).

Tax liability and exceptions

Language assistants from FR, IE, IT and SI who meet all of the following criteria are **exempt from paying tax** on their salary earned as an assistant in Austria on the basis of a Double Taxation Agreement:

1. The assistant is (or was before taking up the assistantship) permanently resident in their home country,
2. The assistant is spending no more than two consecutive years in Austria (returning home for holidays is included in this time),
3. The assistant doesn't have any additional income besides the income as a teaching assistant in Austria.

If even one of these criteria is not met, the assistant is liable to pay tax. Additional income for other employment (e.g. part time work alongside the assistantship) is also subject to taxation in Austria.

For language assistants from CH, UK, US, HR, BE, ES und RU there is no Double Taxation Agreement in place. These assistants are liable to pay tax in Austria.

For those assistants whose earnings are subject to a Double Taxation agreement, it is up to the home country to determine the extent to which earnings amassed in Austria are taxed in the assistant's home country.

Retrospective tax liability

If an assistant who was initially exempt from paying tax on the basis of a Double Taxation Agreement later fails to meet one of the criteria listed here (e.g. if the contract is extended), he/she becomes liable to pay income tax retrospectively from the date he/she first started working as an assistant. If your situation changes you must immediately inform your main school.

!! If you are liable to pay income tax you must tell the headmaster immediately (Belgium, Spain, Croatia, Russia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA) !!

Money back? – “Employee Assessment”

Assistants liable for income tax have under certain circumstances the chance to claim back a portion of the income tax the following calendar year. We are not permitted to provide information or advice regarding tax for legal reasons. The information on employee assessment can be found on the official website of the [Austrian Ministry of Finance](#) (English version).

Social insurance

In the framework of the General Social Insurance Law, you will be insured by BVAEB (*Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter, Eisenbahnen und Bergbau*) which is a social insurance institution for public sector employees. This comprehensive social insurance includes health and unemployment insurance. Your Bildungsdirektion (=your employer) will automatically register you with the insurance company as soon as you start working. Teaching assistants who need a residence permit may start working only after they have received their permit in person and are not insured with the BVAEB before that!

Insurance number

All insured parties receive an insurance number. The number will be sent to you or your main school (Stammschule) within 1–2 weeks. The insurance number is needed when visiting the doctor as well as any communication related to your insurance. In the course of a few weeks you will receive a credit-card sized 'e-card' by mail. This is your health insurance certificate. E-cards are only issued with a passport photo. From persons who have applied for a visa or residence permit the authorities should already have your photo. To make sure call the e-card- service line. All others have to provide the registration office with a suitable photo. You will find the necessary information here [👉](#).

In case of illness

You are required to inform your school immediately in case you are unable to work, and, if the headmaster/principal insists, you might also be required to provide a doctor's note. Failure to do so could result in you forfeiting some of your pay, at least until you provide a doctor's note. If you are unable to work due to illness or an accident that was not your fault, you will normally be entitled to your full pay for up to six weeks. After that you are entitled to another six weeks of half pay. Always given that you have a doctor's note/confirmation.

In general, I felt at ease in the classroom and I think most of the pupils got something out of my lessons, especially in the classes where I was used as a 'cultural resource', sharing my own experiences, and in the classes where I led discussions with smaller groups on a certain topic. (Assistant, Vienna)

Extent of health insurance cover

Insurance cover will start on your first working day, on 1st October at the earliest. Your health insurance covers the costs of necessary treatment from a GP, consultant or dentist as well as hospital treatment, as long as the doctor or hospital in question has a contract with BVAEB insurance company (check [here](#) before you go!). We recommend to find a GP in your area as she or he is your first contact person for medical questions and can also refer you to specialists if necessary. In case of illness, you must ask her/him for a sick note. Before seeing a specialist, ask whether a referral is necessary. Treatment costs at outpatient clinics operated by social health insurance institutions are also covered. A small [contribution](#) towards treatment must be paid by the insured.

Useful links:

www.docfinder.at
www.gesundheit.gv.at

The e-card issued by the BVAEB must be presented at the doctor's before any treatment. Prescription medication is subject to a **prescription fee**, to be paid when collecting medication from a pharmacy. A contribution may be required towards some health products. If you also want to take out a special recreation insurance (e.g. for sports such as skiing and hiking), get in touch with the many providers offering various options and tariffs.

Insurance cover when abroad (on holiday)

Should you fall ill abroad (this is outside of Austria whilst still being employed in Austria, i.e. during Christmas holidays or a short break on a weekend), you may still be covered, thanks to arrangements with various countries. Before embarking on a trip abroad, please obtain the necessary information from the BVAEB (www.bvaeb.sv.at [👉](#)).

Check if your e-card is activated as a European e-card – to be valid as a European e-card, the number-fields on the backside of the card must not contain any stars (*****). If you plan to travel outside of Austria (even for short breaks!), and your e-card is not a European e-card, please contact the [BVAEB](#) in good time.

You will also need to carry an "Urlaubskrankenschein" with you, that you may order online. You will find more details here [👉](#):

Insurance expiry date (grace time)

In principle, your insurance will expire when you cease working as a language assistant. In certain cases, however, cover may be extended for a slightly longer **transitional period**. This transitional period (grace time) is capped at 6 weeks.

Entitlement to unemployment benefits

The form U1/E301 confirms that you have worked and have been socially insured in Austria. This should be taken into account when calculating your entitlement to unemployment benefit (EU/EEC countries and Switzerland). Unemployment benefits will be subject to local regulations in your country. The [U1/E301 form](#) may be downloaded directly from the AMS-homepage (Public Employment Service). Please keep in mind that the AMS complete and sign the form only after the end of your contract.

Pension scheme

As regards evidence of your public pension scheme, please contact the central office of the Pension Insurance Authority (*Pensionsversicherungsanstalt*) directly at Friedrich-Hillegeist-Straße 1, 1021 Wien, Tel. 05 03 03, e-mail: pva@pensionsversicherung.at, or alternatively at the relevant office in your area (Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tirol, Vorarlberg, Vienna). More information (in German) at www.pensionsversicherung.at.

Bringing your car

Cars with non-Austrian EU-number plates may be driven with these number plates in Austria to a maximum of one year if the main residence of the owner is not in Austria. Please check the [government website](#) for more details.

It is a very good opportunity to improve our language skills and to spend a year here. Working as an assistant was very interesting, it teaches you a lot about your own language and culture. (Assistant, Salzburg)

Television and radio license

If you live independently (not in a sublet), and want to listen to the radio or watch television, you are currently required to pay a license fee (*Rundfunkbewilligung*). You must register your Radio/TV device with the GIS who collects the license fee. Car radios are exempt from the fee and from being registered. Legal changes are currently under way.

More information:
www.gis.at | e-mail: kundenservice@gis.at | service hotline: 0810 00 10 80

Child benefit

Language assistants with children are eligible for child support for each child. Applications will be handled at the relevant tax office.

➔ CHECK IT

- I have checked my rental agreement carefully.
- I have registered with the authorities.
- I have opened a salary account.
- I have told the school whether or not I am liable to pay tax.
- I have received my social insurance number.
- I have checked my pay slip to see whether income tax is being deducted.

Official job description

Your official title is 'foreign language assistant' (Fremdsprachenassistentin/Fremdsprachenassistent.). In written communication with the authorities you should be more specific and refer to your country of origin, e.g. 'Italian foreign language assistant'. Language assistants are members of the teaching body. Their work is based on international and bilateral agreements.

Duration of employment

You are employed from 1st October 2023 to 31st May 2024.

Hours per week

Make sure that your school knows how many hours you are expected to work: all language assistants teach 13 hours per week (usually Monday to Friday, Saturdays are school days only in a few Austrian educational institutions).

Schools in different locations/Travel costs

If your schools are in two different towns/villages you may ask for a (partial) reimbursement of your travel costs in line with the cost of public transport, taking into account available discounts. You must put in a request to the local authority (Bildungsdirektion) through the official channels (see below), stating the specific circumstances (number of journeys per week, number of days per week, distance, the method of transport you are using). If and how much reimbursement you will get will be decided by the Bildungsdirektion in your Bundesland. There is not legal entitlement for travel cost reimbursements!

Contract

Ensure that your main school hands you your contract (=Bestellungsschreiben) as soon as possible (after having started your work).

Report/confirmation/letter of recommendation

After you have completed your contract, your mentor teachers will compile a report that will be forwarded to the local Authority (Bildungsdirektion) and – on request – to the appropriate authority in your home country.

Ask your school or mentor teacher for a letter of recommendation at the end of your stay. You may also request the school(s) to issue a **proof of employment**. You will find the respective German and English templates on www.weltweitunterrichten.at.

In April/May, language assistants will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about their work and experiences in Austria.

Extension of your contract for another year

It is only possible to extend your contract for a second year if your **home organisation** and **your schools agree**. Yet, there is no guarantee that you will be assigned the same schools you worked at the previous year! Unfortunately, extensions are not possible for language assistants from Spain and Italy. More information: www.weltweitunterrichten.at

Withdrawal

If you withdraw from your assignment for important reasons, you must talk to your schools and send a detailed explanation to *Weltweit Unterrichten* as well as to your home organisation. You must also send a request for termination including your reasons to the Bildungsdirektion.

Please remember that you will receive your monthly salary in the middle of the month. If you stop working during the month, you may have to pay back part of the salary! Any withdrawal must be announced 4 weeks in advance.

ATTENTION! You may leave your job only after having received the school's consent.

Official channel

Middle schools and high schools report to the local authority (except for those that report directly to the BMBWF). The headmaster/principal is responsible for administrative and pedagogical matters at his/her school. The teaching and administrative staff are answerable to him/her.

The relationship is as follows:

! BMBWF → LOCAL AUTHORITY → HEADMASTER → TEACHER (foreign language assistant)

Should teachers wish to raise any questions with their line manager (or superior authority), they must address this via the headmaster, after which the issue will be forwarded on the local authority and, if necessary, the BMBWF. This procedure is known as the **official channel** (*Dienstweg*) and is also to be observed by language assistants.

At schools reporting directly to the BMBWF and at teacher training institutions, the following official channel is observed:

! BMBWF → HEADMASTER → TEACHER (foreign language assistant)

In written communication, the official channels must always be observed!!!

Class times

In Austria, the teaching week normally lasts from Monday morning until Friday afternoon. Classes normally last 50 minutes. Some schools also have classes on Saturdays or in the evenings. Classes may also start before 8am and not end until 8pm.

Taking time off for urgent reasons

If you have important personal reasons for taking time off (urgent medical treatment that can't be done in Austria, family bereavement, exams at your home institution,...), you may be allowed to take up to 5 days off during your stay. You need to apply in advance at your Stammschule and also inform your 2nd school (if applicable). Both schools have to agree.

Holiday dates

Autumn holidays 27th – 31st October 2023 all federal states

Christmas holidays

24th December 2023 – 6th January 2024 all federal states

Half term holidays

1st week in February: 5th – 11th February 2024 Lower Austria, Vienna,

2nd week in February: 12th – 18th February 2024 Burgenland, Carinthia, Salzburg, Tirol, Vorarlberg

3rd week in February: 19th – 25th February 2024 Upper Austria, Styria

Easter holidays 23rd March – 1st April 2024 all federal states

Whitsun 18th – 20th May 2024 all federal states

Summer holidays (main holidays)

29th June – 2nd September 2024 Burgenland, Lower Austria, Vienna

6th July – 8th September 2024 Carinthia, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tirol, Vorarlberg

In addition to these [school holidays](#) you will have off on regional public holidays as well as on certain days decided upon by the respective school autonomously.

Important: You are not permitted to take leave outside school holidays/public holidays/days without class (=schulfreie Tage an Ihrer Schule).



CHECK IT

- I will teach 13 hours per week.
- I have received my contract (*Bestellungsschreiben*).
- I have to send off my application for an extension by the beginning of January.

Introduction at your school(s)

If you are assigned to more than one school, all administrative issues should be discussed with the headmaster/principal and mentor teacher at the school named as your 'first' school: This is your **MAIN SCHOOL** (*Stammschule*). Introduce yourself to the headmaster (principal) at your main school first. Introduce yourself to all the teaching staff as soon as possible, so that you can get to know them. If you are assigned to more than one school, introduce yourself at the other schools as soon as possible.

The initial meeting with your mentor teacher(s)

An initial meeting with your mentor teacher and other colleagues is an opportunity to discuss what your work will entail, to establish the most important organisational and content-related issues and to agree on a timetable. You may use this meeting to talk about your ideas and interests and to present your preparatory work.

You will probably have a lot of questions, especially at the beginning of your assignment in October, and you will want to talk to the teachers about your upstarting work with individual classes. Do not be disappointed if teachers do not seem to have ample time for discussion in between classes! Instead of asking questions in the middle of a hectic school day, please ask your mentor teacher to organise a short meeting with each of the teachers you will be working with over the course of the school year.

Cultural and pedagogical differences

Interaction between staff and pupils may be more formal or more relaxed than is normal in your home country. Basic principles of pedagogy may be completely different and, at first glance, may seem surprising for someone who was educated in another country, e.g. there may be more or less group work during class time or teachers may adhere to ex-cathedra teaching.

Timetable/Changes to the timetable

The schools are required to agree on a fixed timetable with you from the outset! Please be aware that school days may be hectic and it may be the case that teachers repeatedly forget to tell you that particular lessons will not take place (because of skiing trips, hiking days, etc.). Please also be aware that there are special school holidays as well as official holidays, when the school will be closed.

Show an interest in the everyday workings of the school and discuss your classes **in plenty of time** with the teachers. Check the **supply book or notice** regularly.

I thoroughly enjoyed working at the schools, especially working with the students. I put in a lot of effort and get a lot out of telling them about France and about the region where I am from. Teaching them and bringing the French language to life for them was always fun. Apart from that, I simply discovered Austria: the culture, the dialect and the local people. (Assistant, Styria)

Overview of essential tasks and obligations in school

- You are expected to be diligent and sufficiently prepared and to pay attention to the pedagogical advice and suggestions of your superiors.
- The headmaster/principal is in charge of the school and acts as the immediate superior of the teachers, including the language assistants. His/her decisions are to be respected and complied with.
- If you take part in conferences or parent consultation meetings, all conversation is confidential and may not be discussed with any person outside the school .
- Read the rules and regulations in place at your school. (Ask your mentor teacher to inform you about any special regulations.)
- Always show willingness to cooperate with the teachers. Should any problems arise, try to solve them directly with the teachers before turning to your mentor teacher, the headmaster/principal, Weltweitunterrichten.at or the BMBWF.
- Make an effort to motivate your pupils to speak the foreign language whenever possible. When it comes to making lessons interesting, powerful and entertaining, your imagination knows no bounds.
- Use the educational material the teachers have already worked through with the pupils in a conversational mode (with young children this could be done in a playful way). Complement your lessons by introducing personal experience; use the knowledge you have gained through practical experience and everyday life in your home country to expand on the content of text books; draw comparisons that bring the content of text books to life and put them in perspective.

Extra-curricular activities (sport, theatre, clubs etc.)

In some schools, numerous activities take place outside official school hours.

Please help with the organisation of these events, including open days, school concerts, sporting events or plays. Taking part in these events gives you a better insight into the culture of the host country, both in a pedagogical and in a general sense.

Taking part in school events (e.g. skiing trips, hiking days, etc.)

Participation in school events is permitted in accordance with § 44a of the education regulations (*Schulunterrichtsgesetz*). The headmaster/principal will provide you with the necessary paperwork (in this case a *Dienstauftrag*), which will provide you with full insurance.

Your travel costs may be reimbursed as part of an agreement with your school.



What you are NOT allowed to do

- teaching the whole class independently
- marking work like home work, written exams etc. (ask the teacher if you can be present during marking; this is at the teacher's discretion.)
- correct tests and homework independently (ask the teacher if you can mark work together with him/her. The final mark is always the teacher's decision.)
- as a rule, you are not allowed to be on hall duty nor are you allowed to take over supervision duties during the Matura (school leaving examination)
- carry out administrative tasks
- introduce new grammar topics
- work unprepared (however, you are also not allowed to be made to act as a 'living dictionary' only)
- stand in for other teachers (act as a substitute teacher).

Only in exceptional circumstances may the headmaster/principal call on you to **stand in** for another teacher. In this instance, responsibility rests with the headmaster/principal. Make sure you know exactly what is expected of you during these special classes.

If any problems arise

If you happen be dissatisfied with any aspect of your work as an assistant or if you feel that the guest school is not treating you properly, the first person you should speak to is your mentor teacher. Any issue should be discussed tactfully and in confidence. If the issue is not resolved after talking to your mentor teacher, try approaching the headmaster/principal.

If it is a matter of urgency, you can also get in touch with the Weltweit *Unterrichten*, the local authority and then the BMBWF. If you feel that the problem remains unresolved, speak to your home organisation.

→ CHECK IT

- I have been introduced to the headmaster/principal.
- I have met all of my other colleagues at the school.
- I have a fixed timetable.
- My mentor teacher has familiarized me with the practice at the school (photocopier, materials, breaks, etc.).
- I am always given notice of changes to the timetable.
- I know what my rights and responsibilities are.

Lesson preparation

Ideally, all the lessons in which you are involved will be carefully prepared together with your teachers. During the planning process, you should agree who of you will carry out which tasks.

If you have any questions, you should always try to speak to teachers long enough in advance of classes such as to get a clear idea of the aim of the lessons and what you will be doing in class. At the very least, you should meet up once a week.

Regular meetings with your mentor teacher(s)

Informal meetings with your mentor teacher on a regular basis will be a decisive factor in the quality of your work and for your integration into foreign language classes at your school. These meetings will offer you an opportunity to exchange ideas, evaluate any progress made, deal with problems and agree on a common concepts for future classes.



Approaches to correcting mistakes

The way in which individual teachers choose to correct pupils' mistakes is a crucial point. Many teachers lean towards the more 'modern' concept, that excessive correction, particularly of a spoken language, discourages pupils and is thus counterproductive. According to this concept, assistants should only interfere if a pupil is obviously searching for a word or a phrase. Otherwise, pupils should only be corrected once they have finished making their contribution. Yet, the assistant must respect the wishes and the concept of the school and the teachers.

Relationship between assistant and pupils

The relationship between assistants and pupils is not the same as the relationship between teachers and pupils. Pupils should always feel that they can speak freely with the assistant without feeling ashamed. At the same time, they should recognize that the assistants are members of the teaching body and that their instructions should be followed. Your first contact with the pupils is of great importance for your future relationship with them. For this reason, please be friendly with them whilst demonstrating a sense of confident authority.

*I have experienced so much during my year as an assistant.
I learnt a lot from my colleagues and from the pupils.*

(Assistant, Carinthia)

How to speak in class

As you are teaching your mother tongue, you are advised to speak as clearly as possible, though no faster or slower than is usual in your language (except with absolute beginners). After all, one of the reasons you are at the school is to give a realistic impression of how your mother tongue is spoken. Although it may be difficult at first, pupils will soon get used to the way you talk and to your speech patterns, and they will quickly value the authentic conversations they have with you.

Disciplinary issues

Wherever possible, resolving disciplinary issues should not be left entirely to the teacher, even if letting the teacher restore order seems to be the easiest solution. Collaborate with the relevant teacher to work out strategies for overcoming any problems.

Additional opportunities

Make use of the opportunity to

- take part in other teachers' lessons (for your own fields of study or interest); it is always interesting to observe a class with different teachers teaching subjects other than foreign languages.
- take part in teachers' conferences and parent consultation meetings.
- take part in school leaving examinations.
It is a good opportunity to see the fruits of your labour!
- take part in hiking days, school festivals , etc.
You will get to know teachers and students in a relaxed situation and will have the opportunity to establish personal contacts.



➔ CHECK IT

- Regular meetings with my mentor teacher are taking place.
- I am spending a sufficient amount of time preparing for lessons.
- I am receiving sufficient information from teachers in order to prepare for lessons.
- During classes, pupils are active and responsive.

Contact address at the BMBWF

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
division V/8 – www.bmbwf.gv.at/english/home

MR Mag. Stephan Neuhäuser

phone: +43-1-53120-6016

Email: stephan.neuhaeuser@bmbwf.gv.at

Contact address OEAD-GmbH

Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation
www.oead.at/en

Mag.^a Brigitte Stockinger-Resch

phone: +43-1-53408 519

E-Mail: sprachassistenz@oead.at

www.weltweitunterrichten.at

Addresses of diplomatic missions in Austria

BELGIUM

Embassy | Prinz Eugen-Straße 8–10, 1040 Wien

Tel.: +43-1-50207-0

<https://austria.diplomatie.belgium.be/fr>

FRANCE

Embassy | Technikerstraße 2, 1040 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-50275-0

<https://at.ambafrance.org/Francais>

Cultural Institute | www.institut-francais.at

UNITED KINGDOM

Embassy

Jauresgasse 12, 1030 Vienna | Tel.: +43-1-71613-0

www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-vienna/office/british-embassy.de

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Embassy

Rotenturmstraße 16 – 18, 5. Stock, 1010 Vienna | Tel.: +43-1-7154246-0

www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/austria

I feel that I have made the English language interesting and easier to understand for the students. (Assistant, Lower Austria)

Dieses Assistenzjahr war für mich ein Jahr voller Lebenserfahrung. Ich habe von den Kollegen und den Schülern viel gelernt. (Assistentin, Kärnten)

ITALY

Embassy | Rennweg 27, 1030 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-7125121-0

https://ambvienna.esteri.it/ambasciata_vienna/it

Cultural Institute | Ungargasse 43, 1030 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-7133454-0

https://iicvienna.esteri.it/iic_vienna/it

General consulate | St. Veiter Ring 43, 9020 Klagenfurt

Tel.: +43-463-513055-0

https://ambvienna.esteri.it/ambasciata_vienna/it/ambasciata/la_rete_consolare/consolati-onorari.html

General consulate | Conradstraße 9/a, 6020 Innsbruck

Tel.: +43-512-581333 or 584983

CROATIA

Embassy | Heuberggasse 10, 1170 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-48020830

<http://at.mvcp.hr/hr>

SLOVENIA

Embassy | Kolingasse 12, 1090 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-3191160

www.dunaj.veleposlanistvo.si

SPAIN

Embassy | Argentinierstraße 34, 1040 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-5055788-0

www.exteriores.gob.es/Embajadas/VIENA/es/Paginas/inicio.aspx

Instituto Cervantes Viena | Schwarzenbergplatz 2, 1010 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-5052535-0

<https://viena.cervantes.es/es/default.shtm>

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Embassy | Reisnerstraße 45-47, 1030 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-7121229

<https://austria.mid.ru/ru>

SCHWEIZ

Embassy | Prinz-Eugen-Straße 9a, 1030 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-795050

www.eda.admin.ch/wien

USA

Embassy | Boltzmanngasse 16, 1090 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-31339-0

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

Fulbright Commission

Austrian-American Educational Commission
quartier 21/MQ

Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Vienna

Tel.: +43-1-236-7878-11

www.fulbright.at

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WEBSITES

General/bureaucracy

www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/leben_in_oesterreich.html – "living in Austria" – very useful government site

www.bmeia.gv.at – Federal Ministry European and International Affairs

www.bmi.gv.at – Federal Ministry Internal Affairs

www.bmf.gv.at – Federal Ministry Finance

www.orf.at – Austrian State broadcasting station

www.oebb.at – Austrian Railways

www.austria.info/en – Austria tourism board

www.museen-in-oesterreich.at – Austrian museums

Education

www.bmbwf.gv.at – Federal Ministry Education, Science and Research

www.oead.at – Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation

www.oead.at/en/to-austria/studying – Studying in Austria

www.kulturundsprache.at – Teaching material/teacher training "German as a Foreign Language"

www.oesterreichinstitut.at – German language courses/cultural exchange abroad

www.osd.at – International German language exams

www.vhs.or.at – Adult education

www.weltweitunterrichten.at Educational mobility programmes (including teaching assistants)

Housing

Student homes

www.studium.at/studentenheime

www.oeadstudenthousing.at/de/oead-student-housing

www.akademikerhilfe.at/en

www.home4students.at

www.oejab.at/en/students/dormitories

<http://wist.at/002/heime/index.php>

Shared accommodation

www.oeh.ac.at/wohnen

www.wg-gesucht.de

I was very happy with my job as an assistant. I learnt so much, not just professionally, but also on a personal level. I was very well integrated in the school and really felt like a part of the community. It seemed to me that the students were better motivated in English because I was there. The students were always pleased when I came to their English lessons.

(Assistant, Vienna)

Translated by Catherine Hawkes

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www.weltweitunterrichten.at