

Germany

COLOGNE



Language Assistantship

Accommodation

Location(s) – Cologne - Ehrenfeld.

Price of rent – Sub-let, cost roughly 300 euros a month inc bills.

Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones – Because I lived in a flat with another girl and sub-let it I didn't have to deal with any of this – it was great! But I did live on my own for a while before that and I would warn against anyone taking out a contract with Telekom for phone/internet as they just try to rip you off!

Travel

Local – Definitely recommend getting a Semesterticket, as this enabled me to travel anywhere in the entire state for free once I'd paid 200 euros for it. This meant that I could go anywhere in Nordrhein-Westfalen without paying any extra (although it does only include specific trains and not ICE/EC trains).

National – We went to Berlin using Blind Booking on German Wings – made the whole thing much cheaper and your destination is a surprise! Definitely recommend it. You can also hitch a ride with "Mitfahrgelegenheit" – I never did it but some friends did and they said it was perfectly safe and cheap as well as a great way to meet people. Just make sure you take a friend or let someone know where you're going!

International – Worth booking flights in advance to get the best deals – book your Christmas flights in October or you will have problems! Easyjet always had great deals on flights.

COLOGNE



Tourism

Where to go – Definitely go to Berlin if you haven't been before, Aachen is also cool to visit and so is Bochum. Düsseldorf is also a great city to visit! Make sure you see plenty of Christmas markets, as they have to be one of the best things about Germany.

What to see – Christmas markets, Karneval, Berlin – as much as you possibly can! If you're anywhere near The Netherlands then I also recommend popping over the border there as it's a lovely country.

Costs – Christmas markets are free, Berlin isn't too expensive (accommodation will cost the most, but still only about 20 euros a night – I recommend Wombats Hostel) & if you use public transport/trains you can get to most cities for free with a Semesterticket or for about 20/30 euros without.

Social/Night life

Socialising was pretty much the same as it is here in England, though you need to remember that many clubs still allow smoking, so don't take your best clothes!

In terms of nightlife, you'll find that Germany is a bit behind with music – but there are quite a few good clubs in Koeln-Ehrenfeld and also in Bochum!

Miscellaneous

I know I keep saying it, but you have to experience the Christmas markets! There are four or five in Cologne and all are worth looking at – even the medieval one. Karneval is also a must, but be prepared to make some serious effort with your fancy dress costumes! German people go all out for this and there are parades, festivals, everything. Just remember to get there early as parades are packed & clubs tend to be sold out on the Thursday and Monday of Karneval. The Geisterzug is also a must-see on the Saturday evening, just remember to dress like it's Hallowe'en!

Oh and there's a great (but slightly more expensive) Currywurst place near Friesenplatz Underground – it's on Antwerpener Strasse. There's also a great Cupcake place, which is also near Friesenplatz. It's on Alte Wallgasse, but you'll probably need to Google directions to find it!



Your Placement

Assistantship:

What age group did you work with? How did you find this experience?

I worked with every class at some point and although it was interesting to teach different age groups, it's definitely a lot more fun to teach the younger ones (who enjoy games and are really sweet) or the older groups (who are able to say a lot more and are less afraid/less likely to mock you!)

How many hours a week did you work? (Teaching hours and preparation time)

I worked 12 hours a week and only spent a couple of hours each week preparing material as the school I was at was very organised and provided me with lots that I needed. For certain activities or for weeks when I taught alone I needed a lot more time to prepare lessons.

Did you receive teacher training? How did you find teaching for the first time?

I didn't receive any teacher training other than during the induction in Altenberg. Teaching was fun – quite daunting at first, but as long as you appear confident and know what you're doing it all works out fine!

Any advice or tips on the types of activities your classes responded well to?

Kids loved it when we used songs or games in class, so I used these to teach grammar and vocabulary (for example, I used 'If I were a boy' by Beyonce to teach the subjunctive in English!)

How did you integrate with other native speakers?

Not so well to be honest! I found it difficult to make friends, but it definitely helped to live with someone who was German, as I met more people that way. Avoid living on your own as it's really very lonely and incredibly hard to meet people! Oh and make sure you make friends with the other language assistants, as although they aren't native speakers they are in the same situation! They may also know other people they can introduce you to.

Why would you recommend an Assistantship placement?

I would recommend an Assistantship if you are thinking about teaching in the future, although it's important to be aware that you might not teach on your own very often/at all. You do need to be independent and confident for this placement though, as unlike at University you will have to take the initiative to make friends and be sociable. Oh and if you like to be busy then this placement isn't for you, as lots of us found we had a lot of free time on our hands!

Germany

MARBURG



Erasmus student at university

Accommodation

Location(s) – Student halls on outskirts of town. About half hour walk from city centre or 10-15 minutes by bus.

Price of rent – 184 Euros per month.

Price of monthly bills – Gas and Electricity included in rent. For me, internet was an extra 10 Euros although for most people near me, it was about 5 or 7.

Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones – I paid in person in cash at the beginning of every month, although is also possible to set up direct debit with German bank account.

Travel

Local – With the student “card” (it’s more a slip of paper), you can travel on Marburg’s reasonable bus service for free. You can also get anywhere in Hessen (the Bundesland) by train using this card.

National – There are certain places outside the Bundesland which you can get to with the student card, e.g. Heidelberg, Mainz, etc. Otherwise, the Deutsche Bahn system is fairly efficient and you can get around fairly easily for reasonable prices.

International – The nearest airport is Frankfurt, an hour train journey away. Ryanair flights go from Hahn, a further 2 hour coach journey away from Frankfurt. Flights back to the UK are reasonable, especially if you book really early in advance.

MARBURG



Tourism

Where to go – The old university is very pretty and The Elisabethkirche is worth a look.

What to see – Walking up to the castle which overlooks the city is always worth it. So pretty up there and the views are great too. Just walking around the old town is great, really lovely and full of cheap bars, restaurants and shops.

Costs – Not a lot but didn't go to any museums in Marburg! If you want museums, Frankfurt nearby is full of them and I think they're all different prices but most of them reasonable.

Social/Night life

I ended up not going to any nightclubs in Marburg (bit of regret) but the city has a few of them, Nachtsalon being the most popular which goes on all night, I think.

There are tons of restaurants and bars which are all very cheap and sell delicious food and drinks.

There is also the main cinema which shows films in German and sometimes English (although I'd watch the German ones more often!). There are also other cultural things such as theatres, music events, etc. Also, if you're Christian, there are churches there which are all fairly close knit and hold events which are a nice way of meeting new people as well. Hugo's and Early's are two restaurants/bars I'd especially recommend.

Miscellaneous

Be prepared for the winter, as Germany gets very cold and snowy! Having said that, Marburg is beautiful covered in snow. When the weather is nice, I would recommend hiring out a paddle boat on the river there. Is really pleasant. Not sure what else I should put here. EAT AUFLAUF!



Your Placement

University

Were there any language courses available? If so, give details.

I completed a language course at the beginning of the year which was definitely worth it. It cost 100 Euros and lasted 4 weeks. You get 6 ECTS from it, better your language skills and meet a load of new people. There are also courses in the Sprachenzentrum during the semesters which are about 2-3 ECTS points each and cost between 40 and 60 Euros. I found them very interesting and they helped me a lot.

What sort of modules did/could you take? Any specific recommendations?

I did mainly linguistic ones which were fairly interesting. I would recommend doing some seminars because they are more interactive and you're more likely to concentrate! I did one that helps you become more confident when speaking in public. That was great fun and was probably my favourite course of the whole year. Do not, under any circumstances, take Mittelhochdeutsch! Like Shakespeare English but German, very difficult!

How were you assessed and what sort of level of assessment was expected from you?

You are expected to take the exams and write the essays that the native students do. However, they usually go easier on international students. For example, I was able to do an oral exam instead of a written one for one of my modules and it was easier because it gave me more time to think. Also, the length of essays is generally shortened for international students, making it easier.

How did the university system work in your city? Were there points that confused you/how did you resolve them?

German university system is generally more chaotic than the English. It's all about admin and getting lots of forms signed by various people. The orientation week helped a lot when sorting out uni stuff. Also, asking other international students is good too because then you can help each other out. Picking courses is different too as you pick them all yourself and have to make sure that you have the right number of credits and that none of your classes clash. But again, is helpful to ask other international students.

Was there sufficient pastoral support? Where could you find this?

Again, the orientation week was great for this. Otherwise, lecturers in Germany are generally a lot more formal than lecturers in UK. They all have office hours though and are pretty friendly. However, you do not have a tutor like in the UK so in this respect, one is definitely required to be more independent with their studies.

How did you integrate with other native students?

Managed to meet a fair few native students (naturally!) However, I must admit that my communication with them was restricted mainly to lectures and I usually spent time outside of lectures with other international students. Having said that, I did make friends with a few native speakers and integrating successfully with them is definitely doable.

Why would you recommend a University placement?

It was a great experience, I met loads of great new people (natives and internationals!), very interesting doing the Uni thing in another language, challenging at times but definitely worth it. For me personally, I have several years of work ahead of me and wanted to milk studying as much as I could!

Germany

SAARBRÜCKEN



Teaching Assistant

Accommodation

Location(s) – If placed in Saarland I recommend living in Saarbrücken and commuting to the school, as all other 'towns' are really small in the region. SB is a uni town, a bit smaller than Southampton. The Altstadt is not your average Altstadt, there aren't bars and cafes, it's mostly where families live on the opposite side of the river to the town. Nauwieserviertel or St Johann is central, cheap and where students live.

Live in a WG – best with students – have to be persistent. Looking for a WG is like an interview, so be yourself and be interesting and interested in them.

Price of rent

220 euros to 320 per month. Kalt= without bills included. Warm= with bills included.

Price of monthly bills

Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones

Wg-gesucht.de/easywg.de – for accommodation.

Most phone contracts are a year long, so maybe pay as you go is best.

Travel

Local – Register at the uni (a short bus ride out of SB) and you get a semester ticket – free travel within Saarland for the semester. It costs about 150euros to register, but well worth it if you need to travel round for work. you can also go along to some uni classes and all fitness classes/sports programmes run by the uni.

National – Group train tickets are such good value for money, just be sure to read the terms and conditions, so that you don't get on one of the ICE trains with a cheap ticket and that you travel within the times allowed.

Mitfahrgelenheit- car sharing, can be really cheap and get to chat to Germans! – just be careful to check out the person's profile before going on a long journey!

International – Ryanair flights from Frankfurt Hahn all over Europe.



Tourism

Where to go – Not a lot of touristy things to see in Saarland really. You can tour SB in an afternoon. Völklinger Hütte are interesting – old coal mine (Saarland used to be the Wales/North of Germany-loads of coal mines) ugly, but beautiful in an odd way.

Visit any town you can, all slightly different. Trier is near and a Roman town. Heidelberg is beautiful. Saarlouis is lovely, very French and quaint than SB.

What to see – Wolfpark – ring ahead to find out when the Wolfman will be in with the wolves.

Social/Night life

Die garage nightclub in SB. Very popular with students, different themed nights, so check before you go.

Most good cheap bars are in Nauwieserviertel – Feinkost Schmitt, kurze Eck, Fleur...

Manhattan and Coyote café, both have cocktail deals on certain nights and both are near St Johan square.

Die Kartoffel restaurant (at end of St Johann square) and the brewery 'pub' (there are 2 brewery places to eat, one is posh and expensive the other is more like a pub- down the 'Gasse' off St Johann square) both do good value German food.

Seven nightclub is also good.

Flash nightclub in St Wendel is a bit tricky to get to and full of fairly young people. Also they have a card system where you pay on exit- very chaotic and long queue to leave.

Germans don't really dress up to go out. Think Jesters or Sobar outfits, no heels or short skirts, just casual.

Also short skirts during the day can mean you get a few looks.



Miscellaneous

Try anything and everything offered to you. Follow up and vague friendship or offer of friendship that comes your way. Even if you already have a good group of friends, you may meet even more great people later on.

Germans can be hard to get to know properly, so just be open and friendly and persistent.

Use any opportunity to travel you can, school holidays are great for seeing more of Germany/ Europe. You will probably end up travelling with other assistants as they are the ones who want to travel and who have the time and money to do so.

Saarländisch can be hard at first, but once you get a basic understanding and a few words of the dialect under your belt, you can understand enough. Some Germans can't even understand it, so don't be disheartened. Ask if you don't understand – most people will speak Hochdeutsch to you if you want.

Your Placement

Assistantship:

What age group did you work with? How did you find this experience?

10-18 great experience. Mentor teacher in first school didn't want me to work with younger kids, but mostly worked with them in my second school and loved it. They are so keen and pick up the language so quickly. The older kids are harder to prepare for and more of a challenge, but just as rewarding when it all goes well.

How many hours a week did you work? (Teaching hours and preparation time)

12 hours teaching – but about 20 hours a week in school, as lessons are not all consecutive. Personally loved being in school, just sitting in staff room doing prep or project work and chatting to teachers coming and going.

Did you receive teacher training? How did you find teaching for the first time?

Went to Altenberg 'training' for 2 days, learnt a few useful tips and got some materials to use, but wouldn't say that it was massively helpful.

The first 2 weeks at school are usually spent observing and introducing yourself to the classes. I found this useful but awkward as the pupils' first impressions of me was of being really quiet sat in a corner and making a few notes.

Teaching at the beginning was very nerve racking, especially with the older pupils, but once you get used to it, it is so enjoyable. Plan your lessons really well at the beginning with back up activities and ideas in case something goes wrong or they work really fast. Also most schools are not very well equipped, so don't go thinking you will be able to do lovely powerpoint presentations, you might be able to, but the majority of time you will probably only have a chalk board.

Teaching can be like acting, you have to act confident and be energetic and positive to keep the kids on your side, but still under your control.

Germany

SAARBRÜCKEN



Teaching Assistant

Accommodation

Location(s) – I found a room in a Wohngemeinschaft (flat share) with three German students using the website wg-gesucht.de. There's a lot available in the city centre, but if you want to move in in October there's a lot of competition so my advice is to get in early! Be very careful to check if the room is furnished as many aren't. The best possibility for furnished rooms is subletting (Zwischenmiete) from someone who's away for a year.

Price of rent – Cheap! I pay 220 euros a month with bills included, and my room is huge.

Price of monthly bills – As mine are included in the rent I'm not sure, but I think they're similar to what you would expect to pay in Southampton.

Travel

Local – There are lots of busses and a tram, many of which run from the early hours of the morning until gone midnight.

National – The rail network in Germany is really good (though expensive) and Saarbrücken has a big station. However, being right on the border means that getting to a lot of other places in the rest of Germany takes a long time.

International – You can go to France or Luxembourg for the afternoon, but getting back to the UK is a bit of a pain. The nearest airports Frankfurt or Frankfurt Hahn are about 2 hours away. You can also take a direct train to Paris which takes 2 hours and then get the Eurostar to London.

SAARBRÜCKEN



Tourism

Where to go – Saarbrücken itself doesn't have a lot in the way of tourism, but there are some museums and you can go on a walking tour. The nearby city Trier, and the nearest French city Metz are both worth visiting.

What to see – Saarbrücken itself doesn't have a lot in the way of tourism, but there are some museums and you can go on a walking tour. The nearby city Trier, and the nearest French city Metz are both worth visiting.

Costs – The museums are fairly cheap or free.

Social/Night life

Please write all you can about how/where you socialised, general costs/advice/recommendations:

Saarbrücken has a lot of bars and restaurants as well as a few clubs, so the nightlife is pretty good. Lots of places have a happy hour for cocktails and beer is reasonably priced in most places. On an average night out I'd expect to spend a similar amount as I do back in Southampton.

Miscellaneous

If you're teaching in a small town and are worried about it being really boring, consider living in a nearby city and commuting to work.

I work Homburg which is half an hour away from Saarbrücken, and whilst it means getting up earlier, it's definitely worth it. I've saved a fortune on travel costs by enrolling at the university, as your student card acts as a travel pass for all transport within the state of Saarland.

It costs 149 euros to enrol for one semester, which is 6 months. A monthly train ticket for me would be 105 euros, so I'm saving loads. Being enrolled at the uni also means you can go to lectures (only if you want to!) and join sports clubs which is a good way to meet people.



Your Placement

Assistantship:

What age group did you work with? How did you find this experience?

I work at two Gymnasium schools in classes ranging from Year 5 to 12 (ages 11 to 18). I was surprised that I found it difficult with the younger ones as first as they hardly know any English so you have to be really careful to use simple language that they can understand. However, they're all really enthusiastic and keen to learn. With the older classes, you have more freedom to do what you want as their English is generally of a very high standard, although there are some classes who are bit unenthusiastic.

How many hours a week did you work? (Teaching hours and preparation time)

I'm in 12 lessons a week (6 at each school), but as the lessons are only 45 minutes it's not really the 12 hours that they say you're supposed to work. I go to each school on alternate days and get Mondays off. Lesson preparation varies, usually about 4 or 5 hours a week.

Did you receive teacher training? How did you find teaching for the first time?

There was a 4 day induction course before I started at school and I spend the first few weeks just observing lessons. Whilst this was helpful, I still found teaching for the first time a little bit scary, but I got used to it fairly quickly.

Any advice or tips on the types of activities your classes responded well to?

Pick topics which you think are interesting to the age group which you are teaching. Roleplays and debates are good ways to students speaking more.

How did you integrate with other native speakers?

I live with German students so I speak German with them all the time at home. I asked the teachers to speak German to me outside of lessons (although not all of them do which can be frustrating). I got to know the other assistants in the area who also have German flatmates, so we kind of 'share' our German friends as much as possible. I also found a tandem exchange partner.

Why would you recommend an Assistantship placement?

If you're considering a career in teaching, the assistantship is a great way to try out whether or not you like it and are good at it. You get to mix with a much wider variety of people than you do at university and whilst you speak English in lessons, there is still a lot of opportunity to speak with native speakers. You get a lot of free time which you can use to travel around and see other places in Germany or visit friends who are also abroad, which you can afford to do because of the money you earn.

Germany

TÜBINGEN



Erasmus

Accommodation

Location(s) – The locations of halls in Tübingen are ok – all are easily available by bus, except Konrad-Adenauer-Str where there are no buses at weekends or evenings, but it's only 20 min walk from town. Most halls are in a big student village called WHO – there are always buses but it's not walking distance from town/uni.

Price of rent – Everything in Tübingen is fairly expensive (say the Germans) but I found accom was about the same price as in Soton. It really is best not to go for the cheapest ones, some of them are very horrible and unhygienic (avoid Prondorfer Str if this is a problem).

Price of monthly bills – N/A

Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones – Studentenwerk – they are pretty good, you don't have to worry about internet or bills. A lot of bureaucracy but fairly straightforward.

Travel

Local – Semester ticket is only about 60 euros and includes all buses and trains in the NALDO region (www.naldo.de/). Buses are punctual and clean and regular to most areas of town.

National – DB can be quite unreliable, often running 5-10 minutes late, despite reputation! Good links to major cities e.g. Stuttgart.

International – Cheap bus direct to and from Stuttgart Airport (Airport Sprinter 828), you get discount with the semester ticket. Flights from Stuttgart to Heathrow and Stanstead.

TÜBINGEN



Social/Night life

Only 1 or 2 nightclubs in Tübingen, none of which I went to.

Some fantastic little street bars and pubs, very cosy and reasonably priced, esp Neckarmüller which produces its own beer in the pub and does very good food.

There are lots of good Fast food and takeaway places, esp Kalender, and also very good cafes. A beer normally costs 3 euros, as does a coffee. There are no uni societies apart from orchestras and sports clubs so it's generally harder to get to know people.

There are often events which almost the whole town attends, like the town race, the rubber duck race and the boat race.

The Xmas market is famous because there are no commercial stands, most things are homemade or home baked. There is also a Chocolate festival in December which is fantastic.

Miscellaneous

Tübingen has a fantastic Altstadt which is centrally located and has a fantastic atmosphere. It's a small enough town that you can't get lost and you feel a part of everyday life.

There is a strong community spirit that it is easy to join in with. Everyone is very friendly and understanding if you can't speak german very well.



Your Placement

University:

Were there any language courses available? If so, give details.

DAF department, very competitive so only allowed to take 3 per semester. Some are fantastic, others a bit hit and miss. They run a Startkurs for 3 weeks before semester starts which is fantastic, I don't know what I would have done without it. Good for making friends when you first arrive.

What sort of modules did/could you take? Any specific recommendations?

Anything from the Germanistik department, either linguistics or literature is good. The translation course in the English department is also good but competitive. Email Brendan Donnellan and he will let you in his class.

How were you assessed and what sort of level of assessment was expected from you?

Mostly Klausuren (multiple choice) in lectures and Referaten in Seminars. They are generally harshly marked and hard to pass. In DAF department they are much less strict.

How did the university system work in your city? Were there points that confused you/how did you resolve them?

No one seems to know what's going on and what Erasmus students should be doing, esp lecturers. It's not always clear which courses are suitable for Erasmus.

Was there sufficient pastoral support? Where could you find this?

None that I knew of.

How did you integrate with other native students?

Respond to or leave notices in the language department asking for language tandems. Sign up for international student mentoring, go to as many events as possible. Sometimes in DAF classes there are Hospitanten, i.e. German students who help out and want to get to know international students. Choose halls with more than 4 people per flat, I had 4 and it was quite lonely because the Germans were very studious! Even better, try to find a WG with German students. Although I'm not at all religious, I went to an international church a few times with some friends, and everyone there was extremely friendly and willing to help. There were Germans and international students there too. I wish I'd discovered it sooner.

Why would you recommend a University placement?

You get a lot more support in terms of language eg daf courses. You can also take courses in any other languages you are learning, although it is very difficult to keep up another language while abroad (definitely do not start a new language). If you are strict with yourself and avoid speaking English, it is a great environment to learn German.

Germany

WUERZBURG



Language Assistant

Accommodation

Location(s) – Grombuehl in a flat with a German student. Was a very good location as it wasn't far from the city centre, the shops, or the pubs and clubs. Avoid areas like Sanderau and Rottendorf as they are quite far- stick to places like Grombuehl, Zellerau and the Altstadt. A good website is wg-gesucht.de, as you can find accommodation with other German students.

Price of rent – 350 euros per month.

Price of monthly bills – all inclusive/ Warmmiete.

Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones – All done already- there was a rota for cleaning the hallway and corridor to the flat.

Travel

Local – Most places are within walking distance. Probably worth investing in a bike! The transport is really efficient though- there are several tram lines, and a day ticket is 4.30 euros.

National – All sorts of good deals. Definitely get a Bahnkarte 50- costs 120 euros to buy, but I probably saved about 500 euros in the year. You get 50 percent off all train tickets, even if you buy the ticket on the day. You can also get tickets for your Bundesland- such as a "Bayern ticket" which means you can travel anywhere within that state for about 20 euros, and you can use 5 people on the one ticket!

Tourism

Where to go – Marienberg Festung in Wuerzburg, and all the old buildings like the cathedral. Definitely go to Munich and Berlin- there is so much to do!

What to see – Englischer Garten, Hofbraeuhaus, Olympic stadium, Allianz Arena- all in Munich. Berlin- all the historical sites, such as the former Berlin Wall and the history museum, Brandenburg Gate, etc.



Social/Night life

The nightlife is incredible- of 120,000 citizens, there are about 30,000 students.

Brauhaus on a Monday night is fantastic- 1.60 euros for half a litre of freshly brewed German beer, good mix of music, and a lot of fun German students.

Kamikaze, Zauberberg, Das Boot (a club on a boat!), Bombe are all good. Studio and Airport are more English style clubs if you want that.

There are no shortage of pubs either- all of them are good, and the Red Lion is a good option if you want fish and chips or an English breakfast- or to watch English football matches.

Miscellaneous

Go to the Fruhlingsfest! One word...amazing! It's like Oktoberfest but on a smaller scale- litre Maß of beer, dancing to Schlagermusik on tables, everyone dressed in Dirndls and Lederhosen.

Your Placement

Assistantship:

What age group did you work with? How did you find this experience?

11-18. The older classes require more preparation. The younger pupils lap up every word you say, and are very eager to learn- they particularly liked competitive games, like Simon Says and any game involving a prize!

How many hours a week did you work? (Teaching hours and preparation time)

12 hours teaching (although normally less), and about the same for preparation.

Did you receive teacher training? How did you find teaching for the first time?

There was a 3 day course at Bonn with other English language assistants and it was quite useful. It was nervewracking to start with and some of my lessons weren't great, but I improved as time went on and learnt to make the lessons fun and enjoyable.

Any advice or tips on the types of activities your classes responded well to?

Quizzes, games, debates and discussions, roleplays

How did you integrate with other native speakers?

I lived with a German and met lots of German friends through him. I also met a lot of people at the pub and clubbing and met up with them. As soon as you say you are from England they will love you!

Why would you recommend an Assistantship placement?

Austria

VIENNA



Teaching Assistant

Accommodation

Location(s) – At first in the outer suburbs, then after moving, in the inner city.

Price of rent – 220 in one hall and then 400 in the other.

Price of monthly bills – Included in rent.

Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones – Through the Austrian Student Housing agency.

Travel

Local – Vienna public transport system, very punctual, 95% success rate.

National – Very good train system.

International – Bratislava airport much cheaper than Vienna airport but much less convenient.

Tourism

Where to go – Anywhere in the city. The central market is unmissable with real local and cosmopolitan atmosphere. Visit the interiors of all the fancy concert halls with very decorative interior design.

What to see – Sky Bar, brilliant views over the cityscape, enjoyed with delicious homemade cocktails. Try to avoid the mainstream culture scene, and if possible, make contacts with locals. Through contacts, I attended an opera singer's practice. A very eye opening experience.

Costs – Extortionate.



Social/Night life

See above. Kept costs down by socialising with locals, who spend little money on partying. My halls of residence offered a very open and inviting guest room.

Miscellaneous

Much safer than London. The newspaper makes sensational headlines but in reality, the streets are much safer. On a few occasions I came across drunk people in public but otherwise very civil citizens.

Your Placement

Assistantship:

What age group did you work with? How did you find this experience?

Older teenagers. Very enriching. At first very exposing as I clearly did not have the confidence but gradually I felt more comfortable in the role.

How many hours a week did you work? (Teaching hours and preparation time)

13 hours but most weeks much less.

Did you receive teacher training? How did you find teaching for the first time?

At first daunting. No formal teaching. Simply observation over the first few weeks, before the ball was handed over to me.

Any advice or tips on the types of activities your classes responded well to?

Discursive texts.

How did you integrate with other native speakers?

In the staff room and at the local church

Why would you recommend an Assistantship placement?

Because you grow as a person, on all levels. At the end of the placement, you gain so many transferable skills, like people management, time keeping, and lesson planning. It's beneficial year in so many ways.

Austria

VIENNA



Teaching Asistant

Accommodation

Location(s) – 10th District (NOT recommended. Very far from uni and friends.)

Price of rent – 380

Price of monthly bills – 0

Organisation of accommodation/gas/electricity/internet/phones – Landlord

Be careful when applying. Go through jobwohnen.at or <http://www.housing.oead.at/> but you **MUST CHECK** that the accommodation is in a good location i.e. mz house is 20 mins from my nearest friends and 45 mins from university. For more information, ask someone who's been there before. Email clh1g09@soton.ac.uk for info.

Travel

Local – Bus and train.

National – Bus and train.

International – Bus train and plane (Vienna is close to many countries)

Tourism

Where to go – Schönbrunn Zoo, 15 euros; Praterstern park, free; Museumsquartier, between 5-10 euros per ticket for different things. 29 euros gives a year-long ticket to the art museums (8 of them).

VIENNA



Social/Night life

Go to all Erasmus events. They're really nice people and you'll find so many to hang out with. Don't feel like you've got to be everyone's friend, and you will find people you feel really comfortable with.

Food is more expensive here, especially bread and chocolate. They don't have nice normal Hovis or Wharburtons, etc. so prepare yourself for some nutty bread. It's not great, plus it's expensive, but what you gonna do?

Pints cost pretty much the same as in England – 3-3.50 a pint is usual.

Miscellaneous

Throw yourself at everything. If someone says Hey man, "wanna hang out?" never say sorry, I'm too tired, got too much work to do, etc. Of course, don't party your whole life away, but here, friendships are more important than work, insofar as these years marks (apart from the project) are not valued at home.

Don't get a girlfriend too quickly. This is not even because I promote a sleazy lifestyle and think you should see as many people as possible, rather that if you go out with someone who ends up in your close friendship group, when you break up, it can of course go sour and that can cause problems.



Your Placement

University:

Were there any language courses available?

If so, give details. 3 week intensive course before university started. Different levels for ability.

What sort of modules did/could you take? Any specific recommendations?

I took an economic language module. It was interesting, my German was good enough for it. Others available: literature, culture, etc.

How were you assessed and what sort of level of assessment was expected from you?

Exam at the end of the course.

How did the university system work in your city? Were there points that confused you/how did you resolve them?

You get given 1000 points to allocate on the courses you want to do. Though some of the courses are pointed, some are not, so that is confusing, and you have no idea how many points other people will put on. You can see how many people registered to it, but nothing more. However, as Erasmus, you can just say to your professor, "hey man, I wanna do this course" he'll say "HELL yeah, you can do it!" so it works out fine for Erasmus people.

Was there sufficient pastoral support? Where could you find this?

Erasmus office is very well organised, made me feel very at home.

How did you integrate with other native students?

Very well. Erasmus is full of natives who want to meet non-natives and that is grand.

Why would you recommend a University placement?

Only time in our lives we're going to have such easy access to education like this. Sure, teaching would make money, but this is not what this time in our lives is for.