

# STUDY ABROAD REPORT

You should upload/send this report **within 2 months** after the end of your stay abroad to Mobility Online (Joint Study) /send via e-mail (CEEPUS). You should also upload the confirmation of your stay abroad from your host university as well as the equivalence list signed by the dean after your mobility to Mobility Online (Joint Study)/send via e-mail (CEEPUS). If you should not fulfil these requirements it is possible that your whole study grant will be revoked (see letter of acceptance). Queries: [jointstudy@boku.ac.at](mailto:jointstudy@boku.ac.at) or [ceepus@boku.ac.at](mailto:ceepus@boku.ac.at)

## BASIC INFORMATION

1. Name of student: **Anonym**
  
- Study programme: **H 066 418**
  
2. Host university: **University of Florida**  
 Host country: **United States of America**
3. Your period  
 of stay: from **04. 01. 2022** to **29. 04. 2022**  
 Study year: **2022**

## FEEDBACK FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

4. Information about the host university. How helpful were the following sources of information?

(Please enter a number between 1 and 5, where 1 = not helpful and 5 = very helpful):

Homepage of the host university	4
Students / friends	1
Teachers at BOKU	4
Curricula	4
Host university	5
BOKU International Relations	5
Other: Social Media and Google searches	5

5. How would you evaluate your ability in the language of the host university?

(1 = weak to 5 = excellent)

	Before your stay abroad					After your stay abroad				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 6. Languages of care/support at the host university and their use in percentage:

Language of care was German: ☐ Yes ☒ No

1.) English	100 %	3.)	%
2.)	%	4.)	%

## What recommendations would you give to future students about the host country and university? (Questions 7 -14) Please give tips, sources of information, contacts, and links

### 7. Host country

The most important step after being accepted for the Joint Study Program was to figure out VISA requirements. Exchange students have to get a J1-visa to enter the US (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study/exchange.html>). I started about 2 months prior to my departure with preparations. The people in the US are very welcoming to Europeans and it was easy to get to know them. Coming here one has to consider that the USA is culturally different; one big disadvantage as an exchange student is the car culture - without a car it was difficult to get around. Florida in general is known for sunny days, their alligators, the springs (going kayaking or tubing there is highly recommended) and their beaches (the closest beach is about 1,5 hours away).

### 8. Host university

The city of Gainesville is all about the University of Florida and their gators (GO gators! [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida\\_Gators](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida_Gators)). The campus is considered the center of Gainesville and contains about 900 buildings. Therefore, buses operate (for UF students for free) to connect the routes (GNVRideRTS app). However, having a bike was helpful for me to also explore other places. UF has three important websites: our BOKUlearn is their Canvas (Canvas student app), our BOKUmail is the gatormail and our BOKUonline is their ONE.UF. The campus is very beautiful with a lot of nature. Campus food and the surrounding restaurants and supermarkets are very expensive so it is worth it to either drive to the supermarkets further away (Trader Joe and Walmart at Butler Plaza) or order food from Aldi (first orders are free).

## 9. To what extent did you feel socially integrated?

(1 = not at all to 5 = very well)	1	2	3	4	5
in the local culture/community in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
with students at the host university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
with international students at the host university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## 10. Which contact person (at BOKU/the host university) helped you organise your stay abroad?

██████████ (<https://boku.ac.at/en/personen/person/EFEDE9DECDDD105A>) from the BOKU helped me out with questions. At the University of Florida ██████████ was the contact person for all international students.

**11. How would evaluate the general advice and help given in administrative matters?**

(Please give a number between 1 and 5, where 1 = not helpful and 5 = very helpful)

at BOKU International Relations	5
from teachers at BOKU	5
from the host university	5
from students at the host university	5
from others: other internationals and local people	5

**12. Registration process, financial support, other requirements**

Upon arrival the Dean of my College - the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (<https://www.eng.ufl.edu/surf/contacts/cals/>) - [REDACTED] registered me for courses and helped out with the course selection. Financial support was coming from the Joint Study Program (about 2500€ once). Working in the USA with the visa is only allowed on campus and upon acceptance by the International Center of UF. Therefore, it is recommended to have some savings to spend as well.

**13. Can you give advice and suggestions regarding the social aspect of your host country/university (cultural differences, importance of language ability etc.)?**

The people I met in the US were mostly very talkative and social. I was thankful to get to a country where everyone is welcoming and also trying to be your friend and help you out (asking you to give a ride, inviting you to their home quickly). Another difference already mentioned is the car culture. Going for a walk is mostly done in a small designated area or park and not in the city itself. Going for groceries or restaurants is mostly done by car, due to less expanded public transport. English is spoken everywhere and it is important to understand it to a high level. Discussions in class are highly encouraged and it is important to be able to participate. Furthermore reading skills and technical vocabulary are very important, since a big part of classes is understanding research paper.

**14. Were there events organised especially for exchange students during your stay?**
☒ Yes      ☐ No
**If yes, please indicate which ones:**

The NaviGators is a group of UF students organizing events for international students all over the semester to connect international students and show them the most important things during their stay. (<http://www.ufnavigatorsinternational.com/>)

**ACCOMMODATION, SERVICES, AND COSTS****15. What was your primary residence during your stay?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student dormitory                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel / guest house   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Room in a private apartment               | <input type="checkbox"/> own private apartment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flat share with other students |  |

**16. Who helped you look for accommodation?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Host university | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Friends/family  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing market  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Facebook |

**17. How helpful was the host university in looking for a room?**

(1 = not helpful to 5 = very helpful)

- ☐
- 1
- ☐
- 2
- ☐
- 3
- ☐
- 4
- ☒
- 5

18. How would you evaluate the quality of the accommodation? (1 = poor to 5 = excellent)

☐ 1      ☐ 2      ☒ 3      ☐ 4      ☐ 5

19. How would you evaluate the availability and/or accessibility of assistance given during your studies (regarding for example the library, computer rooms, labs, equipment etc.)?

(1 = poor to 5 = excellent)

☐ 1      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4      ☒ 5

20. How would you evaluate the accessibility and/or quality of computers and email services at the host university?

(1 = poor to 5 = excellent)

☐ 1      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4      ☒ 5

21. Expenses during your stay abroad (in Euros):

Travel costs (for a single return journey): 1500 €

Overall expenses per month (inc. Accommodation) 1000 €

Breakdown:

Accommodation	560	€ / Month
Food	120	€ / Month
Travel costs at place of study	200	€ / Month
Costs for books, photocopying, etc.	5	€ / Month
Study fees	5	€ / Month
Other:	leisure/hobbies	200 € / Month

## OVERALL ASSESSMENT

22. How would you evaluate your stay abroad from an academic point of view?

(1 = poor to 5 = excellent):

☐ 1      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4      ☒ 5

23. How would you evaluate your stay abroad from a personal point of view?

(1 = unsatisfactory to 5 = highly satisfactory):

☐ 1      ☐ 2      ☐ 3      ☐ 4      ☒ 5

24. Which aspects of your stay abroad did you like the most?

### **From an academic point of view:**

The classes I took were challenging, but I learned a lot. A big part of studying was held free for yourself to choose depending on your interests. Presentation topics and literature review topics could be chosen from oneself. Furthermore, the focus was a lot on reading the newest research papers. The presentations and discussions in class also helped me a lot to comprehend the topics better. The system at UF also reminded me more of our school system than our university system, since a lot of homework was given and participation was highly encouraged.

### **From a social/cultural point of view:**

Being in a new country is always a perspective change. The different cultures are interesting to explore and it is always good to see how other people live and grow up. I liked exploring new foods and hobbies. It is also always a personal development to be abroad and I learned a lot.

**25. Did you have any problems during your stay abroad?**

I had to move once, because I did not like the house I lived in before. I found the place online on Facebook and did not have the chance to see it before actually moving there. It was challenging to find a new place and to get out of the old lease. I had to pay one month more than expected, but in the end it was worth it, because I liked my new place a lot.

**26. Will your academic progress at BOKU be hindered as a result of your stay abroad?**

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ I don't know

**If yes, please explain why:**

**27. How could the Joint Study and student exchange programme be improved in your opinion?**

I had a great experience and it was helpful to receive financial support from the Joint Study Program.

## **General Report**

**Short feedback on your stay: attended lectures, seminars, excursions, etc.**

Other things you found interesting, you think future students should know, problems, general tips and recommendations...

My stay in the US was instructive on a personal and professional level. I have not been to the US before, so the culture differences were all new to me and I had a fun time exploring and seeing new things. Florida in general is a beautiful and sunny place for studying. I would recommend to visit places nearby: the springs (tubing at Ichetuknee river is a great weekend activity), beaches in St. Augustine, Jacksonville and Tampa and towns like Cedar Key. However, be aware that all of these daytrips are only possible by car!

I took three courses from the CALS institute at UF for my graduate program: Plant Biochemistry, Plant Genomes and Genetics and Advanced Microbial Ecology. All the courses were demanding and I learned a lot. I will be able to transfer the credits of the courses as specializations and free electives. The grading of the courses was very generous and it helped to be in classes and participate. The dean of the CALS institute also showed us the research center nearby and invited us for dinner. That excursion was very insightful and a great addition to my stay abroad.

Food at campus can get quite expensive and is often not vegan/vegetarian and if you are not too much into food prepping - I can recommend Krishna lunch (<https://krishnalunch.com/>).

As mentioned before I had troubles with my accommodation and a lot of other people were unhappy with their choice. I would recommend to get a short term accommodation first and then visit the place in person or gather a lot of information on the place first (Weaver Hall is a student dorm right on campus for international students and in general people were happy to live there for reasons of being included in the international community).

## The last two questions

**What did you gain the most out of your stay abroad?**

I got a new perspective on academics and on life in general. It is always interesting to meet people with different backgrounds and life stories and learn from them. I had to present myself during lectures which made me more confident giving presentations. I also learned to appreciate certain aspects of Austria that were just natural for me (public transport, health insurance and healthy food options). In addition, I met a lot of amazing people from Europe and all over the world and now I always have friends to visit when I feel like traveling.

**Which particular piece of advice would you give interested students?**

Inform yourself, but not too much and just enjoy the stay! It can get more expensive than expected (I had to change flat and it cost me an extra month of rent), so it is recommended to have enough savings to enjoy the stay without having to worry too much about money.

**Many thanks for your support!**

**Publication of this report**

I agree that this report, including the above data (field of study, host university, year of study, length of stay), will be published on the website of BOKU International Relations for the purpose of exchanging information on the study visit, so that future interested outgoings can be informed about your experience at the host institution.

☒ Yes      ☐ No

The consent is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time in the future without giving reasons. Any revocation can be declared at any time by e-mail to [joinstudy@boku.ac.at](mailto:joinstudy@boku.ac.at).