

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 or ceepus@boku.ac.at

BASIC INFORMATION

1. Name of student: **Anonym**

- Study programme: **H** **066223 Wildtierökologie und Wildtiermanagement**

2. Host university: **West Virginia University**
 Host country: **USA**
3. Your period
 of stay: from **10. Januar 2022** to **06. Mai 2022**
 Study year: **SS2022**

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	1
Curricula	1
Host university	4
BOKU International Relations	2
Other:	

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

I would definitely use the 30 days after (or before) the semester to travel around a bit. Unfortunately, you hardly have time for that during the semester.

If you're in the US during the Spring Semester, I would definitely recommend getting away during Spring Break. For example, we rented a car and drove to New Orleans (highly recommended).

Pittsburgh and Washington DC are not too far from Morgantown and definitely recommended for a weekend trip.

As a vegetarian, you can actually get along quite well in the US, as long as you cook for yourself. All kinds of fast food restaurants don't have vegetarian options and it's often not that easy in the normal restaurants either.

8. Host university

In general, it can be relatively tedious if you don't have a car in Morgantown. Therefore, it is a big advantage to make friends with someone who has one. There is a small grocery shop on campus, but unfortunately not everything is available there and it is also a lot more expensive. The nearest larger grocery shop is at Evansdale Campus, which is about a 20-minute walk from downtown, but you have to walk uphill a lot.

I would also recommend not renting an on-campus flat, as they tend to be much more expensive. The doorms are also disproportionately expensive and you have to share a room there (without a wall between the beds!). In addition, you don't have a kitchen and have to book a meal plan from the university, which is also very expensive, and the food in the canteen is quite unhealthy and not very good.

It is better to look for a flat privately (for example via Facebook groups). For example, I had a flat in the Sunnyside UClub complex. There, you have the option of sharing a flat with 3 other students. You either have your own room and only share the kitchen and living room, or you can also share the room with a bathroom (but you have a wall between the beds). The latter is a lot cheaper. UClub rentals also end immediately after the semester. Most other rentals are for six months!

What's also very cool are the recreation activities offered by the university. Especially if you don't have a car, it's really the only way to explore the Morgantown area. All kinds of hiking trips are offered, some of which were really nice!

Connecting with other exchange students was a little difficult at first, as there were no university events. However, there is a Facebook group for exchange students at WVU.

The High Street is generally very popular throughout students and there are many bars, cafés and small shops. The Blue Moose Cafe and the River Birch Cafe are also recommended.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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?

My contact person at BOKU was [REDACTED], who helped me a lot, especially at the beginning of the application process. At West Virginia University, I had a contact person who was assigned to me by the university. She accompanied me throughout the semester and helped me when I had a problem. She was especially helpful with course registrations. Her name was [REDACTED].

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	2
from teachers at BOKU	1
from the host university	3
from students at the host university	2
from others:	

12. Registration process, financial support, other requirements

Financial support is not enough. You have to pay lots of fees in advance and living costs are pretty high in Morgantown.

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

Student life in the US is very different from that in Europe. In general, the average age of the students is much younger than one is used to at European universities. In addition, most students live on campus. A big difference for me was everyone uses a car to get around in town. So it's not bad to make friends with someone who has a car.

14. Were there events organised especially for exchange students during your stay?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please indicate which ones:

There were no events organised by the university, except at the very end of the programme, which was really disappointing. There was, however, the "international dinner" every Friday, which was hosted by a private person.

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?

- ☐ Host university
 ☐ Friends/family
☐ Housing market
 ☒ Other: Facebook groups

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): 900 €

Overall expenses per month (inc. Accommodation) 970 €

Breakdown:

Accommodation		500	€ / Month
Food		350	€ / Month
Travel costs at place of study			€ / Month
Costs for books, photocopying, etc.		20	€ / Month
Study fees			€ / Month
Other:	Bars, Restaurants	100	€ / 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:**

It was interesting to see how different studying is in the US. The professors are much more open and you generally have a closer relationship with them than I am used to at BOKU. The courses were generally very small we had regular assignments, tests and

presentations during the semester. Therefore, we were forced to catch up on the material immediately. Therefore, it was quite stressful during the semester, but you had less stress at the end.

My tip: Take advantage of the fact that the professors are so open and interested. For example, I simply wrote to some professors personally and asked if they had a project I could help with, as my courses unfortunately had little to do with my studies. In the end, I was allowed to help out with a very cool birding project, where I learned a lot and made some good connections.

From a social/cultural point of view:

I personally learned a lot during my semester abroad. I learned a lot about myself and discovered new sides, which was very instructive and will bring me a lot for my future. I also made some very good friends and connections.

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

I had some problems with my visa in the beginning - the sooner you apply, the better!!! It was also a shame that it was so difficult to get into classes. In the end, I only took courses that had little to do with my studies because there were so many restrictions. It's an advantage if you take care of it early enough and just keep asking. If you write to the professors personally, you also have the opportunity to take Master's courses.

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:

Since I couldn't take some courses at WVU, I missed a few exams that I now have to make up. It's also a bit disadvantageous that the summer semester doesn't start until January, so the winter semester before at BOKU was practically for nothing, since you don't have the opportunity to write the exams (because you already have to be in the US).

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

I think that it should be easier to get into Master's courses or to take courses in general. Almost all the subjects I wanted to take had so many requirements and restrictions that I couldn't actually take any subject from my actual degree programme. This was really disappointing and I hope that it will be easier for future exchange students.

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...

In general, I am very happy to have done this semester abroad and it has helped me a lot personally. It is very interesting to experience such a different teaching system and the very personal relationship with each individual professor was also very helpful.

I took the following classes:

- ANPH 424 - Physiology of Reproduction (3 credits): This course was lecture only, 3x a week and very complex. There were several exams during the semester and a final exam at the end of the semester. This course was very demanding and the content was mainly livestock related. However, the professors were very nice and also very competent.
- BIOL 376 - Research Methods (3 credits): This course is actually a teaching class, but is also open to externs. The professors were very nice and concerned. Personally, I got a lot out of this course because you had to write a lot of papers and give presentations. The course was very time-consuming.
- FMAN 423 - Urban Forest Management (3 credits): The professor of this course was very nice and caring and the atmosphere of the course was very pleasant. I learned by far the most (new) things in this class and I would definitely recommend it and the professor. There were weekly assignments and tests during the semester. There were also 4 major exams and a final group project. During the semester there were several guest lectures and a final field trip on campus.
- GEOL 493E - SPTP: Climate Change & Sustainability (1 credit): This seminar was by far the best course. Unfortunately it started halfway through the semester, but I learned a lot. It was a very small group and grading was by participation and presentations. The main topics were renewable energies and the coal industry. You were able to participate a lot and the discussions were very interesting. There were also some guest lectures.
- ULIB 101 - Intro to Library Research (2 credits): This course was better than I would have thought. It also started in the middle of the semester and the goal was to complete a final project on a law of one's choice. In general, however, it was rather boring and not particularly instructive.

The last two questions

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

I personally benefited the most from the semester abroad. I learned how to deal with difficult situations and became more relaxed. The exchange with so many different people was also very interesting.

Which particular piece of advice would you give interested students?

I definitely wouldn't be put off by the paperwork during the application process. A semester abroad is definitely worthwhile and the States are a great place for it. If you keep at it and keep asking, you have a relatively good chance of being allowed to take the classes that interest you.
For me personally, it was great to have American flatmates, because otherwise I didn't have that many contacts with Americans. I would definitely recommend not living alone.

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.