

## Guide for studying in Austria for Pakistani students

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### **Introduction**

This document contains information on admission and visa process for Austria, for students from Pakistan. The reason to write this document is the lack of information about Austria, as very few Pakistani students come here. Also, Austrian embassy (in Islamabad) does not clarify much about any matters related to the visa process and the residence permit application for students. Apparently, the authorities at the Embassy do not even know about the procedure for proving your financial status to the authorities in Austria. At least, they don't clarify this enough. This makes the visa process more difficult. That is why we decided to write this document and categorically elaborate each step for admission and visa, in Austria.

### **Step 1: Eligibility**

To apply for a Master degree program in Austria, one needs to have 16 years of education. All the examples below are eligible for admission to a Master program in Austria:

- FA/Fsc + Bachelors (4 year)
- FA/Fsc + Bachelors (3 year) + Master (1 year)
- FA/Fsc + Bachelors (3 year) + Master (2 year)
- O-level/A-level + Bachelors (4 year)
- O-level/A-level + Bachelors (2 year) + Masters (2 year)
- FA/Fsc + Bachelors (2 year) + Masters (2 year)

Intermediate (FSc/FA) or A-level degree holders can apply for Bachelor program provided that he/she fulfills language requirements. Almost all Bachelor degree programs in Austria are taught in German, but you can find some in English as well.

## **Step 2: Note the application dates**

Admission/application dates vary from university to university. Most universities intake is annual and it is usually in fall semester. For autumn semesters (beginning in September/October), admission starts usually in February/March. For Spring semester (beginning in March/April), admission dates are usually in October (of preceding year). You have to consult the website of your prospective university to know about the exact dates, and further information about intake.

## **Step 3: Search for the study program**

See these websites to find the study programs offered by Austrian Universities:

<http://www.studyguide.at/> → *Particularly for Austria*

The website is in German language but you can use Google Translate. You may not find the details of every degree program at this website, but at least you will see the name of the university, and can find it on the internet to get more information (details about study program, admission procedure fees and everything else.).

<http://www.mastersportal.eu/> → *Whole Europe.*

This website also gives some description of the program and in some cases its curriculum with the link to course home page.

## **Step 4: Prepare the necessary documents for admission**

**Passport:** Passport is needed not only for IELTS/TOEFL as it is also required by every university for admission.

**IELTS/TOEFL:** This will make you eligible for admission anywhere.

**Document Attestation:** Get your academic documents attested from BISE, HEC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Pakistan). Get sufficient copies attested from BISE and HEC so that you can apply to at least 3 or 4 universities.

**Attestation from Austrian Embassy:** Get your documents attested from Austrian Embassy; this may not be required for admission but it will eventually be required for visa.

**Recommendation Letters:** Get some recommendation letters (2 or 3) from your university teachers. Ask them to make general recommendation letter, and not specific to one university, so that you can use them for applying to different universities.

**Step 5: Application procedure**

Unlike Sweden, Finland or Germany, there is no central authority for receiving and verifying documents in Austria. Each university conducts its admissions separately. Please look at the website of your selected university, to know about the admission procedure and tuition fees. Some universities may want you to apply online and then send your documents along with a printed copy of the online form. In some cases they may defer your documents until you have been preselected. If you are preselected, then they will ask you to send hard copies of your documents. The process varies among universities. In some cases they may conduct an interview as part of the application process.

**Document Attestation from Austrian Embassy**

**Austria Embassy address in Islamabad:**

House No: 13, Street No: 1, F-6/3, Islamabad.

TEL: 051-2209710/11

E-mail : [Islamabad-ob@bmaa.gv.at](mailto:Islamabad-ob@bmaa.gv.at)

E-mail: [austria@isb.comsats.net.pk](mailto:austria@isb.comsats.net.pk)

Some universities in Austria ask the applicants to send copies of documents, attested by Austrian Embassy. Otherwise, there is no need to send them the documents attested by the Austrian Embassy<sup>1</sup>. Here is a list of documents which Austrian Embassy Attests.

- 1- Academic Certificate (Metric, FA/FSc, BA/BSc and any other degree issued by a Pakistani University or Institute)
- 2- Birth Certificate (Embassy verifies your birth by sending an advocate to your local area-union council)
- 3- Police Clearance Certificate or Police Certificate or Character Certificate (all are same).

First step of this attestation procedure is the verification. Embassy verifies each of your documents from a third party organization linked to the embassy, and you have to pay a “verification fee” for this service. This fee in 2010 was around Rs.

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<sup>1</sup> You will eventually have to get your documents attested from the Austrian Embassy for the visa procedure

23,000. When the documents are verified, the embassy will call you to collect the attested documents. Embassy will stamp at the back of your original documents with the signature of Counselor/Ambassador. They will charge 30-Euros per document for attestation. You have to pay equivalent amount in Pakistani Rupees.

You can go there on Mondays for documents submission without appointment. You have to be there early in the morning to have your name written at the gate. Otherwise your turn might not come on the same day.

Embassy only attests your original documents and not the photocopies. You will send photocopies of these attested documents to your university. In some cases, university may ask you to send them original documents attested by the embassy. In this case, if you are not selected, then they will send your documents back to you. But it's a risky process, because of Postal Service of Pakistan. So avoid such universities, or you can take a risk, if you are sure of your capabilities and luck.

#### ***Language Requirements***

If your selected program is in German than the university will require you to prove the proficiency in German language. If the program is in English, then they will require you to provide an English language proficiency certificate (IELTS/TOEFL).

Each university has its own requirement. Many universities accept IELTS band 5.5/6.0 or TOEFL IBT score 80. Some require a higher score of 90 (TOEFL) or 6.5 (IELTS).

If you are admitted, you will be notified by email and you will also receive an admission letter. You can start the visa process as soon as you have the admission letter.

#### **Step 6: Visa Process**

As soon as you have your documents attested from the Embassy (this process takes 4-8 weeks), and the admission letter from the university, you can begin the visa procedure. Application for visa is called "Application for Residence Permit". You apply for the Residence Permit and once your application is approved (It usually takes 4-6 weeks), the embassy will call you to submit Schengen visa form. After you submit the Schengen visa form, along with your passport and the visa fees, you can get your visa in 10 days.

The form for Residence Permit Application is in German. It has around 10-12 pages. You can find a soft copy of it on the internet<sup>2</sup>, and then use Google translate to help you understand it. Otherwise, find someone who knows German.

The fee for Residence Permit Application is around 80 Euros, which you have to submit while submitting your application (along with the proof of finances, proof of accommodation, proof of travel insurance, etc.). You will pay almost the same amount for the application for Schengen Visa, at the last step.

Residence permit application is necessary for students who want to stay in Austria for more than six months. Students who want to come to Austria for less than six months do not need to apply for Residence Permit.

Application Form for Residence Permit and its explanation is available on this site.

<http://www.bmeia.gv.at/vertretung/taipeh/ratgeber/formulare-zum-download.html>

(This page is in German. You can use Google translate to read it in English.)

### ***Proof of finances***

For the Residence Permit, you have to prove that you have sufficient funds to cover the expenses for one year (around 9500 Euros- for age above 24 years). It changes a little bit every year. If your age is below 24 years, then you have to show approximately 5258 Euros).

See this website for updated amount.

[http://www.oead.at/welcome\\_to\\_austria/legal\\_practical\\_issues/entry\\_to\\_austria/nationals\\_of\\_third\\_countries/stays\\_for\\_more\\_than\\_6\\_months/students\\_at\\_austrian\\_universities/EN/](http://www.oead.at/welcome_to_austria/legal_practical_issues/entry_to_austria/nationals_of_third_countries/stays_for_more_than_6_months/students_at_austrian_universities/EN/)

The bank statement in Pakistani Rupees will not be accepted. Actually, they require you to either open a bank account in some Austrian bank or provide them with equal amount of Traveler Cheques. Both are not possible because you cannot open a bank account in Austrian bank unless you are in Austria, and Traveler Cheques are not available in Pakistan. The solution is to open a Euro Account in an international bank like Standard Chartered or HSBC etc. We are not certain if your account in HBL or any other bank will work.. But above two banks, will definitely work. Transfer this amount of Euros (approximately 9500 Euros) to that

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<sup>2</sup> For example, on the Austrian foreign ministry website.

account, get your bank statement, and attach it to your Residence Permit Application form. Money doesn't need to be there for the last 6 or 12 months. You can open a Euro account just a week before applying for Residence Permit.

***Proof of accommodation***

When you are applying for Residence Permit Student, you have to show a document proving that you have an accommodation for your stay in Austria. For that, you must have booked a room in a hostel or a student dormitory. Your university will usually arrange the proof of accommodation, if you are admitted. If they don't have student hostel/dormitory than you have to book a hostel/dormitory at your own.

Here are some student dormitories/Hostels in Austria:

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|---|--|
| 1. Home 4 Students  | website:   |
| <a href="http://www.home4students.at/">http://www.home4students.at/</a> |  |
| 2. Mozartheim   | website: <a href="http://www.mozart.uni-klu.ac.at/">http://www.mozart.uni-klu.ac.at/</a> |
| 3. Studentheim  | website:   |
| <a href="http://www.studentenheim.at/">http://www.studentenheim.at/</a> |  |

Book your room there and they will provide you with an agreement that you can submit to the embassy, as a proof of accommodation.

In this case, you will have to pay them, for example, an advance rent for three months or some security. You will transfer this money to their account. Later, if you cannot make to Austria for any reason, they will send you, your money back, while charging you the transaction free.

***Proof of travel insurance***

Travel health insurance is a must, when you apply for Residence permit from Pakistan. You have to get health insurance of at least 3 months (better to get a 6 month insurance) from your expected date of travel. You will submit this insurance certificate with your Residence Permit Application.

Please check Chartis health insurance and Adamjee health insurance groups for the insurance document. You can Google, their office in big cities of Pakistan and go there to get this health insurance.

## **Step 7: Life in Austria**

### ***Estimated cost of living***

Usually, there is a tuition fee of around 363 Euros per semester in Austrian universities.

For single person living alone in single room, the cost will be from 300 to 400 Euros per month (this includes rent, internet, electricity cost and food). Room rent is usually from 200 to 250 Euros/month. But if you share your accommodation, you can reduce your monthly cost to around 250 Euros. Food cost per month is around 50 to 80 Euros.

Health insurance is a must in Austria. You have to get it after you arrive in Austria. It costs 50 Euros per month. You will need to apply for student health insurance at a local insurance company.

### ***Part time Jobs***

Due to relatively less number of international students, part time jobs are available in Austria. With odd jobs, you can earn roughly 500-800 Euros a month. You can work in Newspaper in small cities, and on restaurants and pizza shops in big cities. For the newspaper work, you should have a car (and of course a driving license) so that you can easily get his job. And also, easily do this job. An adequate car can be purchases in 800-1200 Euros cost in Austria for this purpose.

### ***Driving License***

Driving license is very important to have, if you want to work in newspaper and also, it's good to have it. You should get an International Driving License from Pakistan and bring your local (Pakistani) driving license with you. International Driving License will allow you to drive the car for 6 months. Within these 6 months, you must get an Austria Driving license. For this purpose, you should enroll in a driving school at your town, and they will conduct a test for you. This is the case that you had a license from Pakistan. This conversion of Pakistani license to Austrian License, after a test, cost around 230 Euros. If you don't have any license from Pakistan and want to learn driving in Austria, then this will cost you from 1500-2000 euros.

Please bear in mind that once you apply for the Austrian License, while you have one from Pakistan, they will send your license to Pakistani embassy to verify it.

### **Useful links**

[www.studyguide.at](http://www.studyguide.at) → Austrian Universities guide.

<http://www.mastersportal.eu/> → Master portal for all Europe.

<http://www.oead.at/index.php?id=1916&L=1> → Austrian Exchange Server. This is a very useful and informative link about study in Austria. You will find up-to-date information about financial proof and scholarships available in Austria. It also contains detailed information on visa process, part time work and work permits in Austria.

<http://www.bmeia.gv.at/vertretung/taipeh/ratgeber/formulare-zum-download.html>.

For Residence permit application form and other documents.