

Erasmus+ Experience Report

Thanks to Erasmus+ I was able to do a part of my medical practical year in Graz (Austria).

When I was organizing the practical year before, I thought it could be nice to do a part of it abroad. At the same time my girlfriend from Czech Republic was thinking about an Erasmus semester abroad as well in a German speaking country. That is why we thought to go abroad together. After considering different options and possible places, Graz became our favourite choice. I applied by myself to all the hospitals in Graz but got rejected from all of them. Luckily, a friend of mine told me about the option to go abroad as an Erasmus+ trainee. After contacting the Erasmus office in Pécs and Graz and applying for the traineeship, I was finally accepted to go to Graz as an Erasmus+ trainee. For that I am very thankful to Erasmus coordinators in Pécs who helped me a lot with the application process and organization. The traineeship was for 10 weeks and included internships in General Surgery, Traumatology and Psychiatry.

From my experience, Austria is not that much different than Germany, therefore I expected to have a smooth start without many difficulties. But it was meant to be my first internship at university hospital, that is why I was curious about the working environment, the communication in the team and the way of treating patients.

Together with my girlfriend I found a room over Airbnb for our stay in Graz. It was not particularly cheap (600 € together), but that seems to be normal for Graz. However, it was a nice accommodation and not too far away from the hospital. The public transport system worked well for me. I bought monthly tickets (50€) and the trams drove quite often and accurately.

The internships went well. The main language of communication was German, however there were also some English-speaking students. Of course, there were differences between each department, but all together everything was organized very well, and I was successfully integrated into the daily routine.

At the Department of General Surgery (6 weeks), as expected, I helped most of the time at the surgeries. It was interesting to see all kinds of different operations, though sometimes it was physically very challenging, as it is common for surgery. In my opinion, the doctors could have taught and explained more to me and to the other students. Somehow it seemed that most of them were not so motivated about teaching students.

The teaching was much better at my second internship, which was Traumatology (2 weeks). I was assigned to an assistant doctor, who explained me a lot during the time there. It was very interesting, and I was always welcomed to ask questions. There were two surgery days per week, therefore I also got a satisfying view into the different surgery technics.

My last practicum was Psychiatry (4 weeks). Compared to the two internships before, everything was a little bit more relaxed. That was also due to the time of the year (spring), because at this season there are not many patients usually coming to psychiatry as I was told. As students, we had more time to work on our own and I could even study a bit for my exams during working time. Also here was the team very nice and kind.

My Erasmus contact person in Graz was very nice and helpful. She always answered my mails as soon as possible and supplied me with useful information.

Unfortunately, I did not travel around Graz that much during my traineeship. During the first weeks of my stay also had to write on my thesis, so I was quite busy with that in the free time. But Graz is a very lovely city, so during my stay there was enough to discover. The architecture of the city with its Mediterranean flair is impressive. Besides that, the city seems to have a pretty creative scene due to its universities for art and music. I visited some great jazz concerts and street festivals, which was fun.

I would recommend the Erasmus+ program to other students, because it is a great chance to go abroad and gain experiences in another country, especially in a working environment. Without Erasmus+ it can be hard for foreign students to find an internship abroad. For me it was the only possible way to find a paid internship in Graz. I think in our times it is very valuable to live abroad as often as possible.



Erasmus+ City Tour organised by Medical University in Graz



View from the Grazer Rathaus