

Student finds a “home away from home” in Vienna, Austria

In a 2018 statement by the [Open Doors Report](#), researchers collected data from the 2016-17 academic school year regarding the number of college students studying abroad. In this report, the University of Illinois was ranked 24th in the nation with 1,945 students studying abroad.

Among those students is Simran Nijhawan. The junior, studying statistics and economics, spent four weeks of summer 2019 in Vienna, Austria studying at the Vienna School of Econ and Business. Although considered a “short-term trip,” it was nothing short of learning, culture and new experiences.

I sat down with Nijhawan to talk about all things Vienna and life abroad.

This interview was edited for length.

Amanda Brennan: What was a typical weekday like while you were in Vienna?

Simran Nijhawan: “Every weekday had about two hours of school-related commitment. Usually three days a week we would go to class in the building. It was kind of hard because our school was on the other end of where our dorm was, but public transportation is pretty easy there. The class was 2 hours long, and we had assignments outside of it. The days we didn’t have class we would have site visits. We went to UNICEF once and other places poly-sci related.”

AB: What classes did you take?

SN: “It was only one class. It was called EU (European Union) and Governance in Austria.”

AB: Were there other U of I students in your program?

SN: “There were only 15 of us on the trip, and we were all from U of I. The second 8 weeks of second semester we had a class together at U of I, and then May through June we were in Vienna.”

AB: What was one of the biggest differences between the education program in the U.S. versus abroad?

SN: “It was really similar for me because the same professor we had here was the one who came with us. And it was the same students. There were two other kids studying abroad who chose to take this class, and one of them happened to be from U of I. The only main difference was where it was.”

AB: What was the food like?

SN: “Eating out, all of the food was Viennese food, so schnitzel and hot dogs. It was so good, but after a while, we got bored with it. We also tried a lot of Mexican places, there was one Chipotle type of place, and by the last two weeks I would get that.”

AB: Did you get to do any other traveling?

SN: "Because it was short-term we didn't get to do individual traveling, and we had class and/or school work every day. We took a day trip to Melk, a small town a couple of hours away. We took a weekend trip to Salzburg, on the tip of Germany. And we took a day trip to Rax, where the Austrian Alps are."

AB: Would you do it again?

SN: "I want to do another short-term one, but I wouldn't do the same program."

The University offers many options around the globe for students who are looking to study abroad. For more information regarding applications, dates, and locations, you can visit their [website](#).