



ADVICE & TIPS – AUSTRIA



There has been a recent growth in employment in Austria with all the main sectors of the economy expanding, although it is yet to be seen how this will be affected by the 2008 international financial crisis. A new development has been the increase in part-time employment.

- *Typical problems encountered:* Austrian graduates are generally older than their UE counterparts - more than half are over 25 when they graduate - so they may be seen by employers as being more mature. Austrian employers usually look for graduates with relevant degrees. Arts and social science graduates may find it more difficult than others to find graduate employment.
- *How to improve your chances:* a relevant specialist qualification or work experience before you apply for a job will make you more attractive to employers. A good grounding in German is vital. Knowledge of an East European language is an asset.
- *Language requirements:* the vast majority of the Austrian population are German-speaking. Although English is widely used in business, a sound knowledge of German is virtually essential for any type of employment in Austria, except perhaps for teaching English or for au pair positions. If you have only spoken 'high German' before, it may take a while to adjust to the Austrian dialect and accent. Some words are different from those you may have learnt, but this is not a major obstacle. In some provinces Slovenian, Croatian and Hungarian are also spoken. Slovenian is an official language in the province of Carinthia, while Croatian and Hungarian are official languages in the province of Burgenland.

Key words throughout the entire application process in Austria: 'accurate', 'factual', 'well organised' and 'meticulous'. Be aware of a formal process that requires a lot of input from the candidate.

Especially for small and medium sized companies informal methods of recruitment (word-of-mouth, networking, speculative applications) are not uncommon.

The Application Letter

A letter of application should create enough interest to make the potential employer want to look at your application more detailed by reading your CV and hopefully invite you for an interview. Your application letter, however, should not provide too much information about personal experiences and qualifications; this will be provided in your CV.

The letter is typed and usually a maximum of one to one-and-a-half pages long. Mention your personal skills in addition to your education and practical experience. Give a lot of attention to your education. Remember academic and professional titles carry a lot of importance in Austria. Finish the letter by asking to be invited for a job interview.

If you apply for a job in Austria or for an Austrian firm, your application should be written in German. In your application you should convey why you are the best suited candidate for

this job. However don't get dragged away, stay to the facts and list your experiences and abilities.

Your application should not be longer than one A4 page. Be clear and focus.

Try to relate to the firm or even position you apply for. Use for example these words: „ *Ich würde gerne in einem Unternehmen arbeiten, in dem ich meine Kenntnisse einsetzen kann und...*“ You should try to gather all available information on the web about the company.

The Curriculum Vitae

The key focus of your CV should be to persuade the employer to invite you for an interview. Therefore, your CV is a marketing tool, which should be adapted to the market in which you intend to use it.

The Austrian CV is written in chronological or reversed chronological order. Austrian employers consider extracurricular activities as important.

Attach a photograph of yourself – with your personal details on the reverse side – to your CV. Or scan the photo.

The Application Procedure

When the firm gets interested in you, you will get invited to an interview.

Expect an interview in German language – so if you do not feel comfortable with your language abilities practice beforehand.

Very important for the interview is punctuality, don't be too late. Austrians appreciate punctuality. Be self confident and polite. There is an informal dresscode: Men should wear suits! Jeans are not suitable. You should appear properly dressed in accordance with the position you apply for. Mental preparation will help you to master the interview. Try to guess as many questions as you can and prepare your answers so that you can convey a good image of yourself. However – stay to the facts and represent yourself.

Prepare yourself for questions concerning your mid- and long-term career aims. Having a clear plan regarding your self-development is key. Austrian recruiters expect you to have a proposal about what you want to earn - leave room for negotiation though. Expect two to three interviews in the Austrian application procedure.

On-line applications are becoming more common, but do not expect all Austrian employers to use it and/or to favour it.

Where can I work?

- Major industries: manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and domestic appliances, real estate, commerce and service industries, construction, health, social work, tourism (especially winter sports), communications.
- Recent growth areas: high-tech industries.
- Industries in decline: labour-intensive, low-tech industries.
- Shortage occupations: people skilled in the interface between business and technology are in demand and there is also a shortage of skilled manual workers in all fields.
- Major companies: Spar Österreich Group, Rewe Austria, Trenkwalder International AG, Austrian Federal Railways, Voest Alpine AG, Wienerberger, OMV, Red Bull, Swarovski, Doppelmayr. The majority of companies in Austria are small or medium sized.
- Major cities: Vienna (capital), Klagenfurt, Graz and Innsbruck.

What's it like working in Austria?

- Average working hours: usually 8 hours a day with a legal maximum of 40 hours a week.
- Holidays: employees are entitled to 25 days leave per calendar year.
- Average graduate starting salary: €24,000-€30,000 a year.
- Tax rates: individual income tax is currently (2008) set at 21%-50%, depending on your income.
- Working practices and customs: the business culture is relatively formal. A smart but unostentatious appearance is expected, formal titles are used and punctuality is very important.