

My Semester Abroad at Appalachian State University

Spending a semester abroad at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, was one of the most enriching and memorable experiences of my life. I would wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone considering studying abroad.

After being accepted into the program, I had to navigate quite a bit of bureaucracy, including completing numerous forms for both my home university in Innsbruck and Appalachian State. Fortunately, both the International Outgoing Office in Innsbruck and the International Student and Scholar Services and Outreach Office (ISSSO) at App State were incredibly supportive and did their best to simplify the process. From the beginning, I was introduced to App State's online portals, where I had to apply for housing and register for courses. Although initially overwhelming, this early exposure helped me become familiar with the system and made things much easier once I arrived on campus.

Upon arrival at the Charlotte airport, I was warmly welcomed by students from INTAPP, a student-run organization that collaborates with ISSSO and supports international students. Throughout the semester, INTAPP organizes various events that are open to all international students—these are great opportunities to meet both local and international peers. I was part of a group of about 40 international students who were transported to campus by bus. Once we arrived, we moved into our rooms and spent the following days in orientation, where we were introduced to campus life and all that App State has to offer.

The university provides a wide range of clubs and extracurricular activities. During the warmer months, many events take place on Sanford Mall, a central green space on campus. Additionally, student admission to campus sporting events is free, so I highly recommend attending at least one football, basketball, or baseball game while you're there.

Housing assignments are determined by the university, so you can't choose your specific residence. That said, international students are often placed in newer and more comfortable buildings, which was certainly the case for me, as I was accommodated in New River Hall. I would also encourage all students to reach out to ISSSO with any concerns—they may not always have the answers immediately, but they will point you in the right direction.

App State furthermore offers two main dining halls, three coffee shops, and a couple of small campus markets where you can use your meal plan card. However, dining on campus can be expensive, so if you have the option, preparing your own meals using groceries from off-campus stores can be more cost-effective.

Academically, I recommend staying on top of your coursework from the very beginning. While the courses I took weren't necessarily more difficult than those in Innsbruck, they did involve more frequent assignments and homework. Since it's easy to get distracted by social and extracurricular activities, staying organized is essential. All in all, most instructors are very approachable and willing to offer additional support if they know you might need it.

Another valuable advice is to build connections not only with fellow international students but also with local students. While you'll likely bond quickly with other exchange students during orientation (and perhaps share some classes), making local friends can significantly enhance your experience and help you feel more integrated into the culture.

Boone does offer public transportation, but it's not as reliable as what you might be used to in Austria. Buses often run late, arrive early, or are canceled altogether due to even minor weather conditions like ice or snow. Fortunately, the campus is walkable, and it's easy to get from the residence halls to your classes. King Street, the town's small but charming downtown area, is also within walking distance and features shops, cafés, and restaurants—perfect for unwinding after class. However, if you want to explore areas beyond King Street, getting around without a car can be challenging. There is a car rental service in Boone, though it's pricey, especially for those under 25. If you plan to rent a car, coordinating with friends to split the cost and driving responsibilities is a good idea. There will be plenty of opportunities for weekend trips and excursions.

In summary, I highly recommend spending a semester abroad at Appalachian State University. I've made lasting friendships and gained valuable experiences that I'll carry with me for a lifetime. It's a unique opportunity to expand both your academic and personal horizons while enjoying the beauty and hospitality of one of the most scenic parts of the United States.

Hannah Stark

Auslandssemester: Januar – Mai 2025

Kontakt: Hannah.Stark@student.uibk.ac.at

Report

Fall Term 2024 at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC

My semester abroad in Boone, North Carolina, was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Spending the Fall Semester 2024 (August - December 2024) at Appalachian State University (App State) gave me a wealth of experiences and lessons I will cherish forever. Initially, the university's website didn't give me a clear picture of what to expect, and information was limited. Because of this, I began my journey with no particular expectations - a fact that, in hindsight, made the experience even more rewarding.

Pre-Departure Organization

Preparing for a semester in the USA involves quite a bit of organizational effort, including obtaining a visa, insurance, vaccinations, selecting courses, and arranging housing. However, once these tasks are handled, there is little left to worry about. For insurance, I highly recommend the ÖAMTC travel protection plan and [international health insurance](#) (can be extended over 92 days and you simply pay for each additional day). These plans offer the same coverage as the university's insurance but at a fraction ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the cost. If you ask ÖAMTC for a coverage certificate for the university's verification process, they'll provide it without any issues.

Regarding housing, App State requires exchange students to stay on campus. You generally have two options: a suite (double room with a shared bathroom) or an apartment (double room with a private bathroom, kitchen, and living area). I emailed the housing office before the portal opened to express my preference for an apartment, as this allowed me to opt out of the meal plan and cook for myself - a healthier, more varied, and more cost-effective option compared to the campus dining hall. While requesting an apartment doesn't guarantee it, it increases your chances. International students are typically placed in New River Hall (the best), Thunder Hill Hall, or Appalachian Heights (the least desirable due to its hilltop location and limited bus service).

The [International Student and Scholar Services and Outreach Office \(ISSSO\)](#) staff, particularly Oana and Karen, were incredibly supportive. They made the entire process seamless. I ended up in an apartment with an American, a Belgian, and a South Korean roommate, and having our own kitchen and living room made the experience even better.

Campus Life and Boone

I absolutely loved the campus - quintessentially American, with various buildings, dining halls, and sports stadiums. Students have free access to the gym, pool, and tennis courts, which was fantastic. As a **Strategic Management and Digital Innovation** master's student, I took MBA courses at App State. The classes were excellent, though not overly demanding, with a focus on attendance and participation rather than exams.

Boone itself is a small town centered around the university, reminding me of Innsbruck. It offers cozy cafés, thrift stores, and a handful of clubs like **Ale House**, **Boone Saloon**, and **Lily's**. While the nightlife ends early (clubs close at 2 AM), making the right friends ensures endless fun. Fraternity parties are also a unique experience. The highlight of the fall semester is undoubtedly the **football season**. Imagine students in black-and-yellow overalls, cowboy boots, and hats cheering in unison -

it's an unforgettable atmosphere. Boone's surrounding nature is perfect for hiking, climbing, and even skiing in winter.

IntAPP and AIM Programs

Upon arrival in Charlotte, members of [IntAPP \(International Appalachian\)](#) warmly welcomed us and drove us to Boone. This student-run organization helps international students settle in, hosting events like Welcome Week, game nights, and parties. During Welcome Week, IntAPP ensures that all logistics are sorted, organizes Walmart trips, and hosts a **Free Giveaway** where departing students donate essentials like bedding, kitchenware, and appliances for new arrivals. This sustainable cycle is both practical and thoughtful.

Another great program is [AIM \(Appalachian International Ministry\)](#), led by Jessy. She created a **Boone Bucket List** and organizes hikes, dinners at local families homes, and adventures like rodeos and line dancing. I highly recommend participating in these events, as they are free and enrich your experience. The [international friendship program](#) also connects you with a host family for cultural immersion - my family was amazing and took me on a lot of trips.

Immersing in Southern Hospitality

App State goes above and beyond to help international students dive into Southern culture. Boone's small-town charm and the warmth of its people made my semester truly special. Life moves at a slower pace, with a strong sense of community and kindness. I met incredible people who showed me new perspectives on life, and I grew to deeply appreciate the Southern way of living.

Travel Opportunities

Studying in the US also provided fantastic travel opportunities. I visited **New York, Chicago, Myrtle Beach, the Outer Banks, Puerto Rico** and many more. Flights within the US are affordable, though getting from Boone to Charlotte requires planning due to limited bus services.

Conclusion

I enjoyed my semester at Appalachian State University to the fullest and would do it again in a heartbeat. When else do you get such a perfect opportunity to immerse yourself in American culture for half a year? Boone may be small, but its impact on my life was immense. If you're considering studying abroad, **App State is a hidden gem worth exploring.**

Katharina Madreiter

Auslandssemester: August Dezember 2024

Kontakt: k.madreiter@student.uibk.ac.at

Report

Spring Semester at Appalachian State University, NC

My semester abroad at Appalachian State University in North Carolina, Boone, was one of the most magnificent and educationally valuable times of my life. It is an experience that I would recommend to anyone.

After being accepted into the program, I had to deal with various bureaucracy, which included filling out numerous forms for both universities. Thankfully, both the International Outgoing Office of Innsbruck and the International Student and Scholar Services and Outreach Office (ISSSO) of Appalachian State were very helpful and constantly sought ought to make the process as easy as possible. Right from the start I was introduced to the online portal(s) of AppState and had to apply to housing as well as chose my courses. While this seemed stressful in the beginning, it was actually nice to be acquainted with the AppState online systems before I got to campus as it helped me navigate the portals better once I was on site.

When I arrived at the Charlotte airport, I was welcomed by students of INTAP, which is an organization run by students who work together with ISSSO and, among other things, deal with international students. During the semester, they will organize various events where every international student is always welcome! I definitely recommend going to these events as it gives you a chance to interact with other international and local students (plus you get free snacks)! I was amongst approximately 40 other international students, and we were taken to AppState by a bus. Once we arrived, we had time to bring our belongings into our rooms and spent the next few days at orientation, where we learned a lot about the campus and were introduced to everything AppState has to offer. There are a ton of clubs and activities to take part in during the semester. Especially in the warmer months you will find many activities taking place on Sanford Mall (a green area in between lecture halls). Additionally, sport events on campus are free for students so make sure you go to a football, basketball, or baseball game at least once during your stay!

Housing is assigned, so one cannot really choose where one would like to be living. That being said, international students tend to be put into nicer and newer buildings, so I would not worry too much. I have to say that I had a bit of trouble with housing in the beginning as I had to switch rooms in my second week. However, the team of ISSSO is incredible and they were very helpful in this regard as well. In fact, I would recommend getting into contact with ISSSO with any concerns you might have, as even if they do not have the answer, they will help you find the correct contact partner. I ended up living in Thunder Hill Hall which was one of the new buildings and I enjoyed living there very much. I was put into an apartment, which meant I did not have to have a meal plan. If you are in a dorm with only rooms, you will be automatically enrolled and charged for a meal plan and will have to eat on campus. There are two main dining halls with many different places to eat from, as well as three coffee shops. There are also two small markets on campus, and you will be able to use your meal plan card for all these locations. Food on campus is rather expensive, so if you are not required to have a meal plan, I would suggest buying and preparing food from off-campus grocery stores.

I would recommend staying on top of your classes from the beginning. While the classes I took at AppState were not more difficult than my classes in Innsbruck, they did seem to require more effort, i.e., more homework and assignments. It is easy to get caught up in out of school activities and it will be hard to catch up if you forget to do your work. I also had to get used to having my classes twice a week instead of once. It can be overwhelming walking into a classroom and hearing only English. I suggest that after your first session you go introduce yourself to the professor and let them know that you are an international student. Most professors are incredibly friendly and if they know you are in their class, they will offer additional help where they can. Another piece of advice I can give you is to try to make as many friends with your classmates as possible. Chances are you will become friends with other international students during orientation or you might even have some of your classes with them. While it is nice to make new friends quickly, you will enjoy your time at AppState even more if you have local friends who can show you the area and make for a more authentic experience.

Boone has public transport; however, the system is not as reliable as it is in Austria. Busses show up too late or too early, or if there is the tiniest amount of ice and snow, the bus may not show up at all. It is easy to walk around campus and get from the dormitories to the lecture halls, and you can walk to King Street, which is the “downtown” area of Boone. King Street consists of one street with small shops, coffee shops and a few restaurants. We often went to hang out there after classes if we did not hang out in one of the coffee shops on campus. If you want to venture further than King Street, however, you will find it hard to get anywhere without a car. There is a car rental service in Boone, but it is expensive, especially if you are under the age of 25. If you do decide to rent a car, make sure to gather a few of your friends to split the costs and driving. There will be enough opportunities to go on small trips.

Overall, I definitely recommend completing a semester abroad at Appalachian State University. I have made new friends and experiences that I will cherish for my entire life. It is a great opportunity to broaden your educational as well as your personal horizon and you get to experience the United States from one of its most beautiful states. Go Mountaineers!

Auslandssemester: Januar – Mai 2022