DEAR FUTURE ACA STUDENT,

Packing up your life and moving to another country for a year can be a daunting, and even scary experience. However, it can also be a very exciting and fun adventure.

You are about to embark on an adventure at Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen. Most of this adventure involves figuring out some things on your own and experiencing mishaps, but we decided to give you some packing guidelines and some helpful hints that we hope will make the start of your adventure more enjoyable and a little less stressful.

Think of it as a set of guidelines or suggestions, not rules. Enjoy and don't be afraid to try new things, have crazy adventures, and learn German!

From,

Returned ACA students who know what you will be going through
**THE ESSENTIALS: CLOTHES**

**Winter clothes:** Be sure to have shoes and clothes that can keep you dry and warm. Be prepared for temperatures as low as 3°F.

**Summer clothes:** You will be arriving at a warm time of year. It can get up to 84°F during the summer.

**Windbreaker/jacket:** Even though the weather will be warm when you arrive, it can get very windy and cool in the evenings. Be prepared for the winter months as well; it will get much colder then. It would also be good to bring a rain jacket and other waterproof clothes.

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**Average Low and High Temperatures in Braunau am Inn, Austria (°F)**

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THE ESSENTIALS: CLOTHES

Dress code: The atmosphere is very relaxed here, and even the teachers will often wear very casual clothing eg. jeans and pullovers.

Church clothes: Their style is similar to Southern. Although it is somewhat relaxed, you should still remain respectful.

Ladies: Make sure to have at least one knee-length dress and do not wear short skirts. Also, bring appropriate shoes.

All-purpose shoes: You have to walk for miles sometimes, and a lot of the time you will be walking on mountain terrain.

Flip-flops/sandals: These are nice to have in the warmer months.

Sunglasses: Very important.
THE ESSENTIALS: SCHOOL

International Student Identity card: Getting this card gives you a lot of discounts when you travel. For the 2011-12 school year, this was given as a part of tuition.

Bible: Although the university will provide you with a German Bible, you might want to have a Bible in your language. If you want to bring your own parallel translation (the one they give you will be entirely in German), then you need to make sure it’s the Luther translation.

Phrase book: This is very important for the first couple of days. But, just about everyone on campus can speak English and they will have no issue speaking English to students that come with little to no German language experience.

Journal: Bring a journal or start a blog online.

Check your courses: Make sure you compare your courses with those of your home college and make sure that they will count for something when you get back.
**THE ESSENTIALS: ELECTRONICS**

**An alarm:** If you don’t have a cellphone to help wake you up, you need to pack an alarm.

**A long Ethernet cable and laptop:** There is no internet available in your room. There are only designated internet spots. They do not have Wi-Fi and sometimes the plug-in for the Ethernet cable is far away.

**External hard drive:** This may be helpful if you like to take lots of pictures and be able to back them up. Or even have your own personal library of music, movies, etc.
The Essentials: Electronics

Voltage/power converters: The electric current in Europe is 220 volts. You must use a converter with all of your electronic devices. If you need converters, you should get them before you go.

Camera: This should be a no-brainer. Austria (and Europe in general) is beautiful, and you will want to capture it to show your family and friends back home. You will severely regret it if you do not bring a camera.

Cell phones: They have SIM cards. Don’t get a phone card because it eats your money. Skype also offers a plan to call American land lines.
**RECOMMENDED: TOILETRIES**

**Small first-aid kit:** Getting things like Tylenol/contact solution/make-up/feminine products/etc. is relatively easy to do. Everything that you need is in town. It is better to bring your own medicine because it is the medicine that you are used to. Once you run out, keep the box to show the local pharmacists, so they can assist you with what suits you best.

**A reusable water bottle:** The water is great there, so you don’t have to drink from prepackaged water bottles.
**Instruments:** If you play an instrument small enough, pack it up! There are a lot of performance options, and you can take music lessons while you are there.

**Books:** You don’t need to pack any English literature (in case you get homesick). Not only will this save space, but if it really important to you, you can find the most popular American books (in English) around town. *But remember to surround yourself in German!* It’s why you are there!

**Pictures from home:** Put them on your dorm room wall! Your roommates and friends will love to see what your family looks like and the pictures will help with homesickness.

**Devotional book in English:** This keeps your spirituality accessible and separate from the frustrations of another language.

**Devotional book in German:** This will help you connect your spirituality with German and help you learn religious words.
You can find just about everything you need in town; however, if you want hair extensions or hair dye, bring your own specific brand. They may be hard to find there. Ethnic products can be difficult to find, so it is recommended that you bring your own.

Some ladies having fun on an Austrian playground.
**GOOD TO KNOW: EVERYDAY**

**One bathroom:** You have individual bathrooms that you share with one roommate, so you don’t worry about bringing flip-flops for community showers.

**Eating schedule:** Breakfast is early and lunch is late (around 1 p.m.), so have snacks until you adjust to their schedule.

**Exercise:** You will probably exercise outdoors rather than in the gym. If you are a sports fan, bring knee pads for volleyball and hockey. Bring cleats for soccer (if you have them) because it is an extremely popular sport there.

**Student-led youth groups:** Pick one and join it—just do it! It is a great opportunity to get to know people and explore Austria. You can switch youth groups if you want throughout the year, but the point is to get involved.

**Theft:** It is a pretty safe environment.

**Arbeitsnachmittag:** It means “work in the afternoon.” Every student has a certain amount of hours or work to do around campus. The students are the ones responsible for cleaning the campus—there is no janitorial staff. You can work ahead (or work extra hours later) if you decide to take a day off to travel.

**Sick days:** When you get sick, you will stay in bed, and they will make it a point to come and check that you are in your bed. So stay there.
Laundry net: The laundry room is on the top floor of the ladies’ dorm and the bottom floor of the men’s dorm. You have to pay to use the laundry machine (save 50 cent Euro coins). The dryer does not work very well, so expect to hang up clothes on racks or hang them up outside. Also, you are expected to have your own laundry detergent.

Cafeteria: It is all-you-can-eat. The food is different from American cuisine. Be prepared for all kinds of things (i.e. tomato pudding).

Packages: Women should see the dean if they are expecting a package. Men should look at a list that is on the dorm wall to see if they have a package.

Guests: They don’t have to pay anything for lodging, but they will have to pay for food.

Sports: It is recommended that you get involved in sports—it’s a great way to make friends.

It’s informal: Students call their teachers by their first name, and it is all informal conversation. This is not how it is in the cities, so don’t forget to be respectful to those older than you are.

Breaks: You have more breaks than you would think. There are a lot of holidays that you get off. If you stay at the dorm while you are on break, you should buy your food in advance because they won’t feed you.
GOOD TO KNOW: MONEY

Credit/Debit: Definitely bring a credit card/debit card. Don’t forget to let your bank know that you are going abroad. Otherwise, they will freeze your account.

Cash: You should also have some US money when you arrive, so you can exchange it. Have at least $50 and have at least 50€ with you for emergencies.

Most stores are closed on Sunday.

Exchange rate: http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=EUR&To=USD
GOOD TO KNOW: DOCUMENTS

Passports: Don’t lose yours! Keep it safe and locked up when you don’t need it. You will have to show it when paying for bus tickets, hostels, etc. so expect to use it often.

Other important documents: Make sure you have all your papers when you arrive and when you leave Austria (visa, birth certificate, etc.). During the year make sure all documents are stored in an inconspicuous and locked area. Make and keep copies of all important documents.
TRAVEL TIPS

Daypack and backpack: Bring a day pack for when you go to town and a backpack for weekend trips. It is also good to bring a little purse/fanny pack to carry money in if you don’t want to bring a larger daypack. It is nice to bring the daypack because you have to pay for bags/carts when you are shopping, so bringing bags can be helpful to avoid the extra costs.

Sleeping bags: These may be useful to have when you are traveling independently or staying at a youth hostel.

Emergency clothes: Pack a couple days worth of clothes in your carry-on bag in case your luggage gets lost.

Hand sanitizer/toilet paper: Restrooms may lack these essential items. Make sure to bring them on trips.

Clay Perez makes good use of his backpack.
**TRAVEL TIPS**

**Tickets:** Bus tickets are not expensive. Make sure that you punch/stamp your ticket or the ticket inspector will fine you.

**Travel buddies:** If you go traveling on breaks, try to go with people who share similar interests.

**Schedule:** Always check the train/bus schedule. It is bound to change, especially for special events.

**Airport:** Never fly through the Frankfurt airport—it is constantly under construction and can delay your connecting flights.

**Pack light:** The goal is to pack light. You want to have some room for all the stuff you get while you are there.
**TRAVEL TIPS**

**Skiing and swimming:** Be aware that you may have the possibility of going skiing, so if you have skiing clothes, you might want to bring them. You might also have the possibility of going swimming, so you should bring your swimsuit. There is no swimming pool on campus, but there is one in the area (admission = $2).
WHAT’S PROVIDED

- Towels
- Facecloth
- Bedding
- Pillows

**Hangers:** They give you wire hangers, but they aren’t very sturdy, and they don’t really give you enough. So bring some that you can leave there for others to use.
ENJOY YOURSELF

Be nice. When needing to talk to advisors, teachers or even peers at the school it is more likely that they will help if you are nice first. Outside of school try not to argue with vendors; just smile, disconnect eye contact, and keep walking if not interested in their merchandise.

Be frugal. Everyone's financial situation is different, but the more money you can hang on to, the more confident you will be when traveling. Always try to find good deals and live cheap. Occasionally it is fun to splurge on a nice dinner, show or clothing item.

Talk to people. One of the best ways to learn about the local culture is by chatting with people on transportation, or in markets. They will have plenty of questions to ask you, too.