

Austria – Fachhochschule Burgenland

Institution	Fachhochschule Burgenland – University of Applied Sciences Burgenland - Austria
Study programs	We offer a range of bachelor, master and PhD programmes. We also offer bridging programmes and further education courses. For information please refer to our homepage: www.fh-burgenland.at .
Skills in German language	German language skills are necessary for admission for most study programs.
Study fees	There are no study fees at the Fachhochschule Burgenland for the bachelor and master courses. A fee may be applicable for other courses. Please refer to the particular course on our website.
Interviewed Person	Asylum seeker from Ethiopia

Preparation

On 9.7.2018 an asylum seeker (M.G., male) from Ethiopia was interviewed at the Fachhochschule Burgenland by Anne Kalaschek.

A.G. is approximately 28 years old and originally from Ethiopia. He has been in Austria for nine months. He originally came to a conference in Austria and whilst here applied for asylum. Since then he has been officially registered as an asylum-seeker in Burgenland.

In Ethiopia, he obtained a bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management (three and a half years of study) as well as a Master's degree in engineering (one and a half years study). He then worked on an international research project in Ethiopia in his field for about two years.

Awareness

I explained the concept of validation to him and asked if he thought that this is generally known amongst the migrants he has contact with. He thinks that this is not known and cited the case of a migrant he lives with who has a master's degree in English and taught English for seven years but the migrant is not aware that his qualifications could be validated.

Documentation and support

He is in possession of all his certificates here and applied to the University of Life Sciences in Vienna to have his bachelor degree validated. He was told that he did not have enough ECTS for a comparable degree in Austria. He was not told what he needed to do to make up the credits, in other words his application was rejected.

Assessment

There are no preparatory or bridging courses available at the University of Life Sciences in Vienna, he was told. He was also told that he would need to find funding if he wanted to work on a research project at the university but he has no real idea how to go about this.

Impact

He has now applied to our university to study Energy and Environmental Management but the problem is that his German is not sufficient (he is at CEF level A2; at least B2 is required).

He mentioned two major problems for asylum-seekers in Austria:

- 1) The language: he is trying to learn German and has lessons twice a week given by volunteers.
- 2) He said that he feels very uncomfortable in his current situation as an asylum-seeker because he is given money, food and accommodation by the Austrian Government but is not allowed to do anything in return for it. This means he feels worthless and also bored.

This case once again highlights the problem of learning the local language. It also suggests that validation is not being practised in Austria.