

Exchange Semester at BOKU



Evaluation of incoming student questionnaires Summer semester 2021

This is a report on the results of the survey conducted among the incoming students, who spent the summer semester 2021 at BOKU. At the end of their stay, the students were given a questionnaire asking them what they liked and disliked about their stay and what they felt could be improved upon. 71 questionnaires were returned.

1. The most appreciated things at BOKU

The most appreciated things that the incoming students at BOKU mentioned were the beautiful green buildings of the university and the warm friendly atmosphere. Several students have mentioned that despite the situation caused by COVID-19 the welcome days were very well organized and there were many online events for the students. The online courses were also very well organized. The teachers and professors were very helpful.

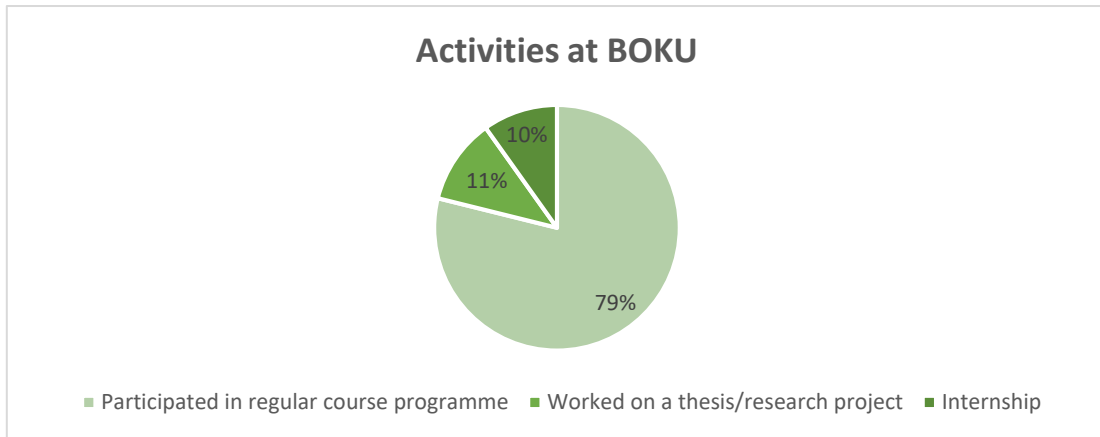
2. Things BOKU could do better for international students

Although most of the students praised BOKU, some of them believed that there are some issues that should be dealt with, and that there was still room for improvement. For example, in some responses it was mentioned that the number of ECTS does not always correspond to the amount of workload for the course. Some students wrote that they would appreciate more help with the timetable of different courses. Many students found it hard to feel like they are part of the ESN community with the current COVID-19 situation.

3. Motivation, Information and Events

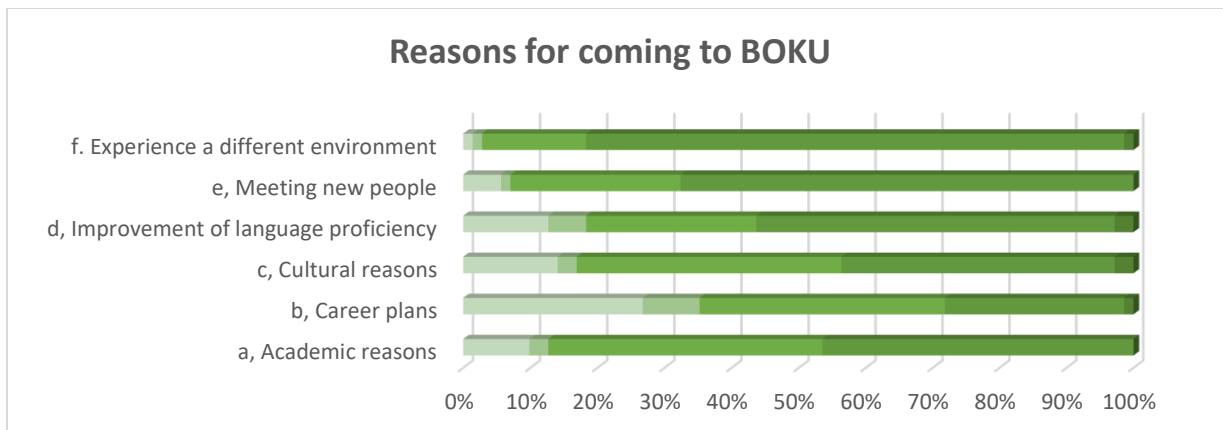
3.1 Activities at BOKU

79% of respondents participated in a regular course programme during their stay at BOKU. 11% took an internship and 10% worked on a thesis or research project.



3.2 Reasons for coming to BOKU

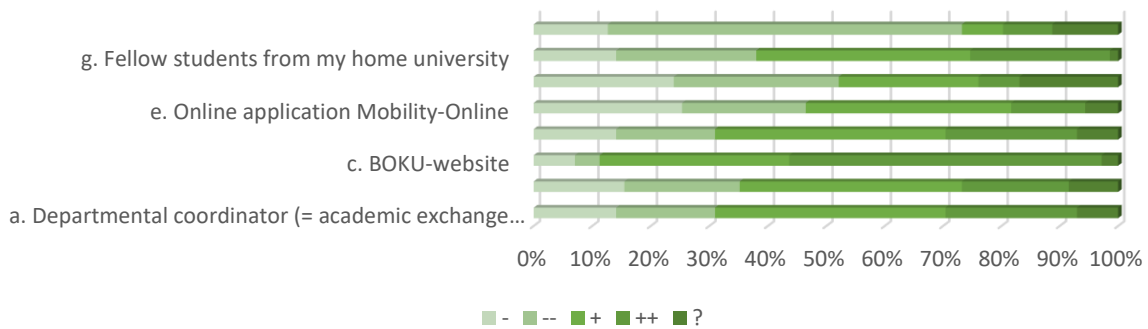
The main factors which motivated students to come to BOKU were to experience a new environment, meet new people and improvement of language skills. Academic reasons and cultural reasons also proved important for students. Finally, future carer plans played an important role for incoming students, when they decided to study abroad.



3.3 Information Before the Stay

The BOKU website was the most popular source of information for students before they arrived at the university; it was used by 86% of students. Other major sources of information included exchange coordinators, both at home university and at BOKU, fellow students and the international office at home universities.

Where did you get information about studying at BOKU BEFORE your stay?

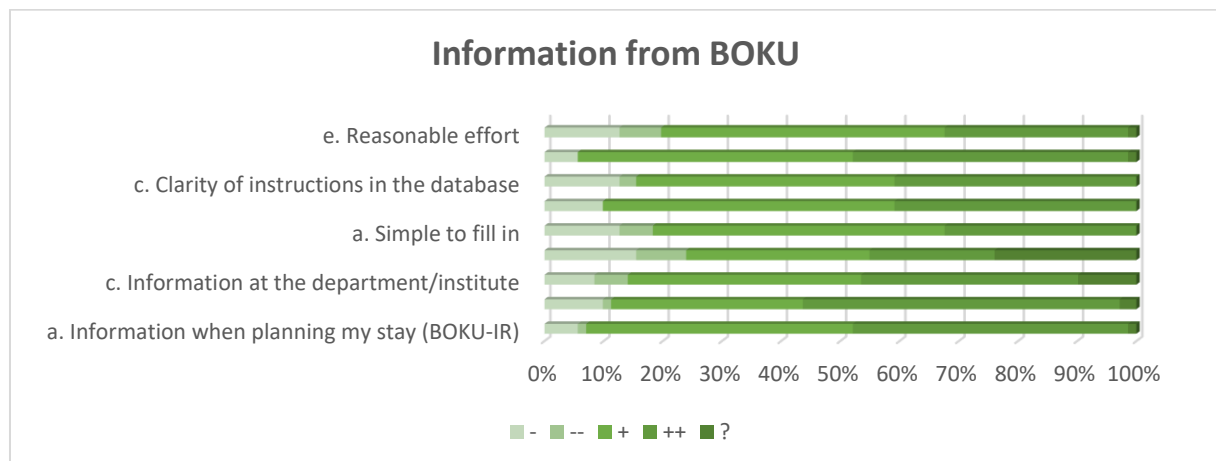


3.4 Information from BOKU

86% of students claimed that they found the information they received from the International Relations office during their stay either good or very good. 92% thought the same of the information from IR office when planning their stay. 76% valued the information from their department or institute and 52% expressed positive opinions on the information from other service departments.

3.5 Mobility Online

Opinions on Mobility Online were largely positive. 92% of students were pleased with the clarity of the emails, and 90% believed that the operation of the system was reliable. 82% felt that the application form was simple to fill. 85% thought the instructions in the database were clear and easy to understand.

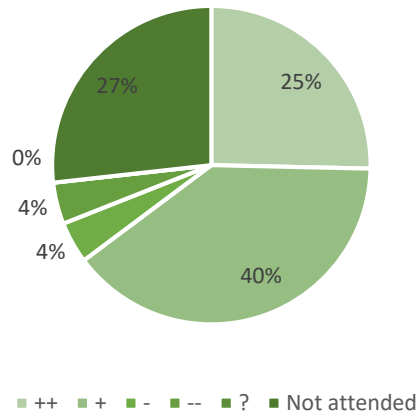


3.6 Welcome Days

73% of respondents attended the Welcome Days, and 65% of them reported that they had a good or very good overall impression.

Students also could elaborate on what they liked and enjoyed the most in particular. Most students stated that they prefer on-site events to online events. Several students wrote that they appreciate the work of the International Relations office and the students were amazed by the city of Vienna itself.

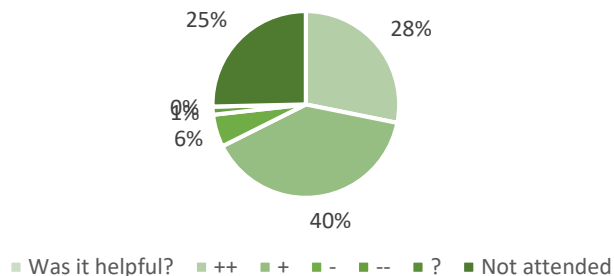
What was your overall impression of the Welcome Days?



3.7 BOKUonline Info Session

75% of respondents attended the BOKUonline info session, and 68% of them found it helpful. Students thought the information was very well explained and appreciated the detailed explanations of the system. The explanation of how to register for courses was noted as very useful, and all questions were answered well.

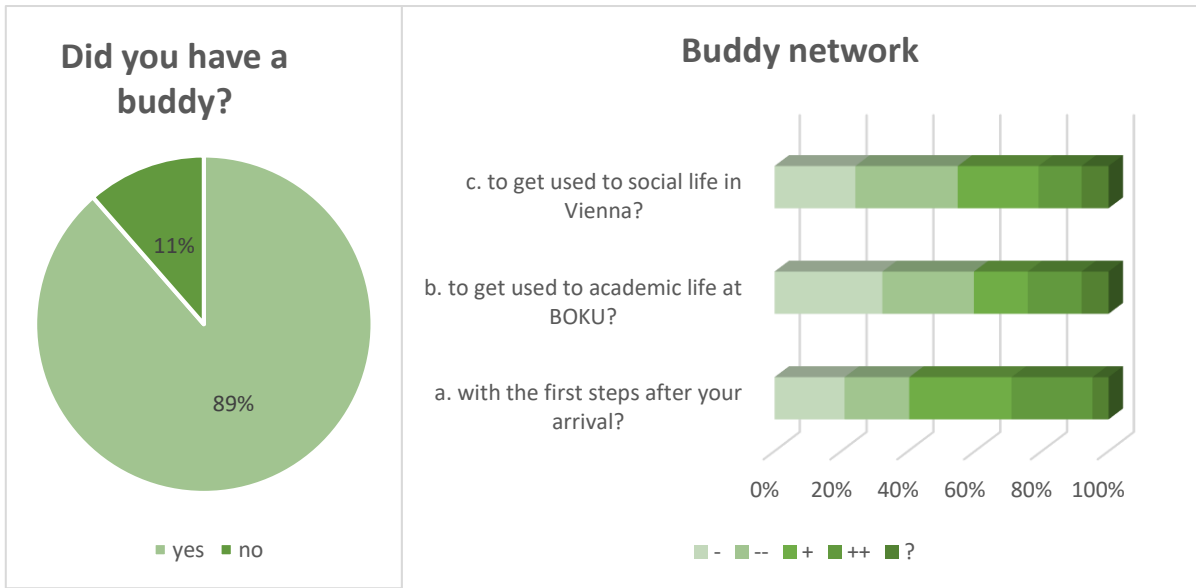
Was it helpful?



3.8 Buddy System

All exchange students were offered a chance to have a Buddy, an Austrian student who could help them with their arrival in Vienna and to get used to life at BOKU and in the city. 89% of respondents took this opportunity. Reasons given by those who did not have a buddy were that they were native German speakers and therefore didn't need help with the paperwork, or because they just preferred to manage their affairs without help. In some rare cases, they had a buddy but never met.

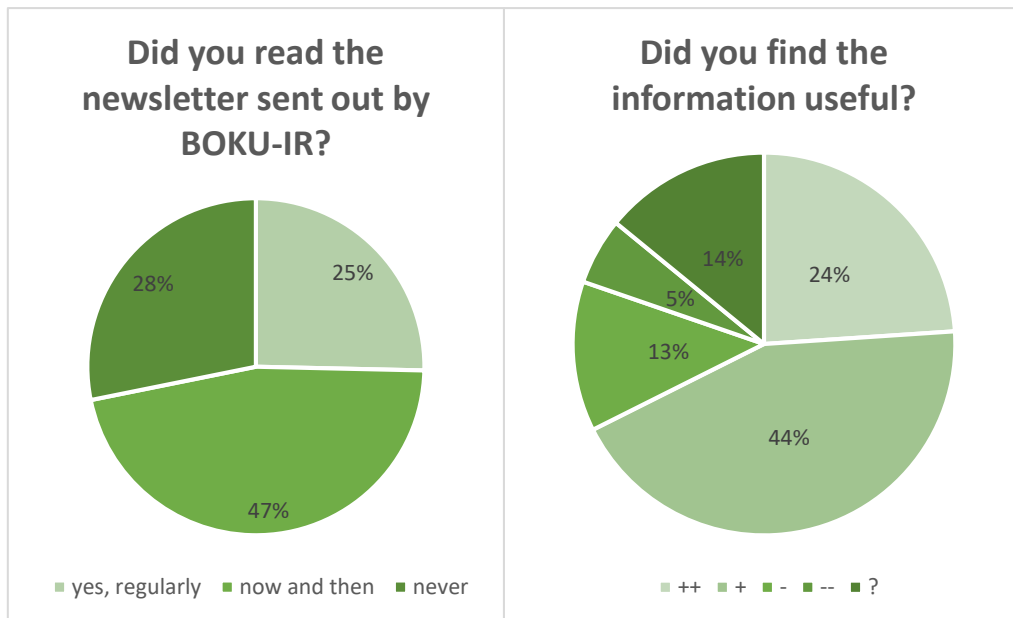
55% of students felt that their Buddies assisted them with the first steps after their arrival in Vienna. 32% said they helped them get used to academic life at BOKU and 37% appreciated that their Buddies helped them get used to social life in Vienna.



For those who were unsatisfied with their Buddies, the main issue was a lack of contact when the students arrived at BOKU – their buddies simply did not have time to meet them after arrival, or did not respond to emails at all. Some students said their Buddy did not live in Vienna or he/she was busy with something else.

3.9 International Newsletter

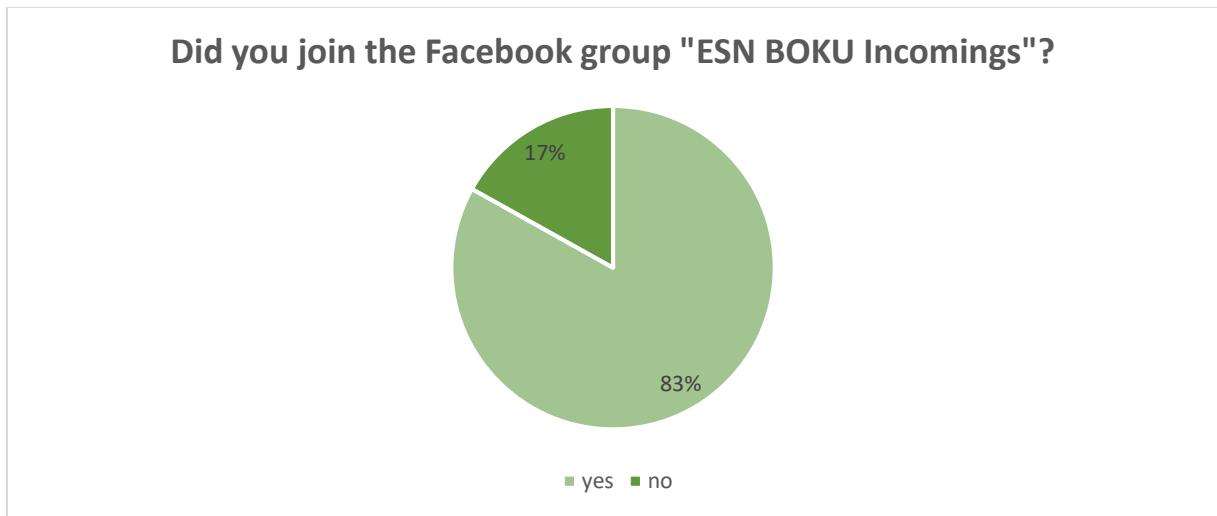
25% of students who answered the feedback questionnaire said that they read the weekly International newsletter regularly, 47% saying they read it now and then. 44% found the included information useful. When asked what could be improved in the newsletter, students suggested to send the letter a bit earlier, and use the newsletter to inform about internships offers.



3.10 ESN BOKU Incomings Facebook Group

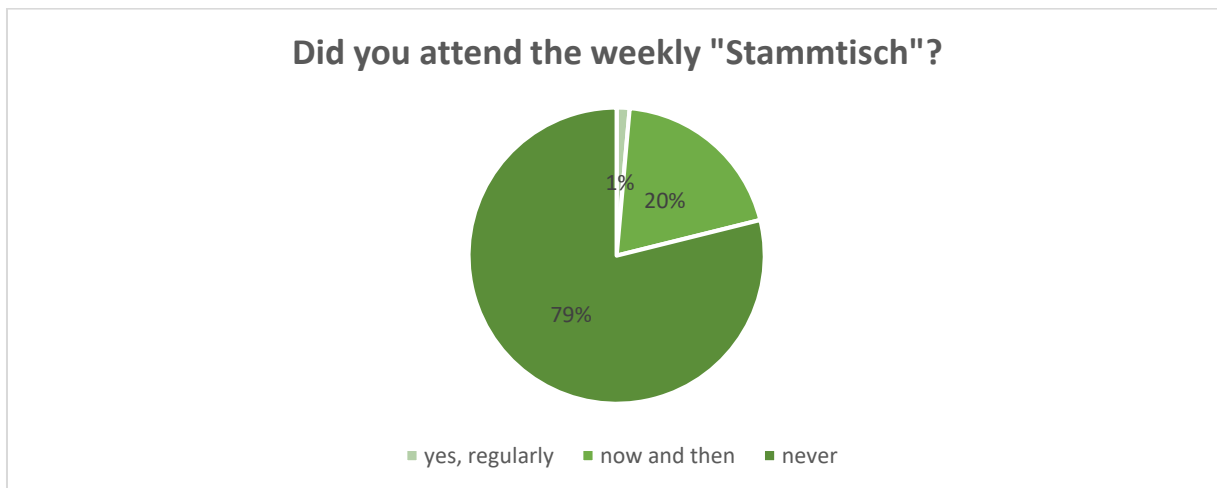
85% of students joined the ESN BOKU incomings Facebook page. 74% cited the page as being useful for different purposes, from reminding about the departure checklist to finding information about future

events and activities. For students who didn't join the Facebook page, the only reason given was that they did not have a Facebook account.



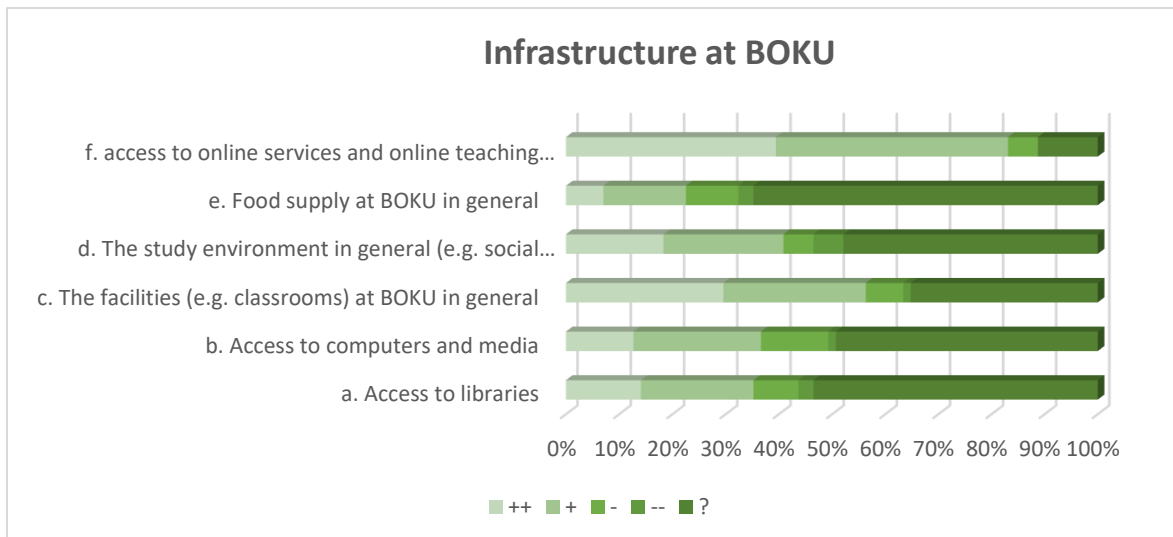
3.11 Stammtisch

21% of students attended the weekly Stammtisch either regularly or every now and then. The most common suggestions for ways to make the event more attractive were to change the location of the Stammtisch. Due to corona the online version of Stammtisch was appreciated. Several students also suggested organizing different themes for every Tuesdays.



4. Infrastructure at BOKU

The respondents were also asked in the questionnaire how satisfied they were with the infrastructure at BOKU. The incoming exchange students were most satisfied with the facilities at BOKU in general and with the access to online services and online teaching particularly during Covid19 pandemic.

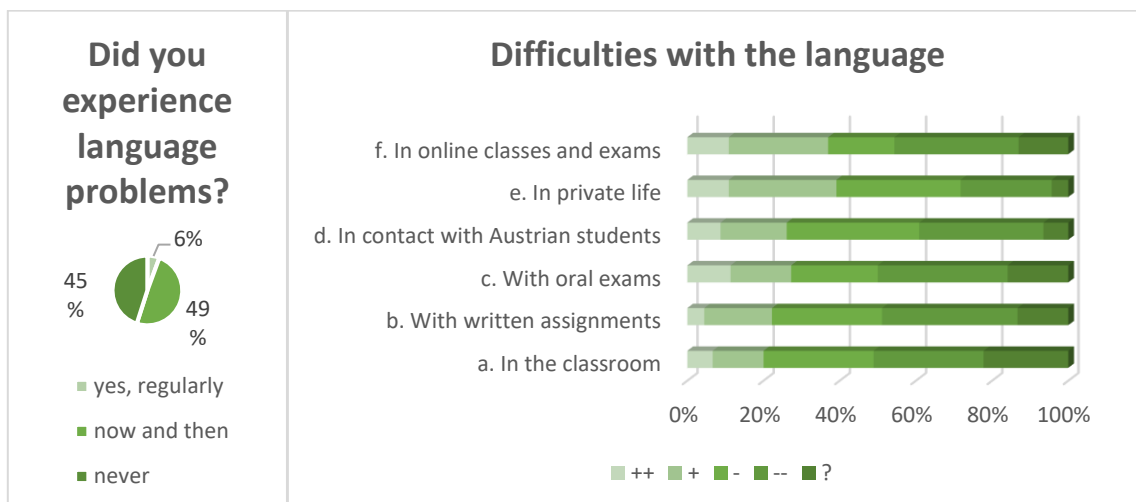


5. Languages

5.1 Language Problems

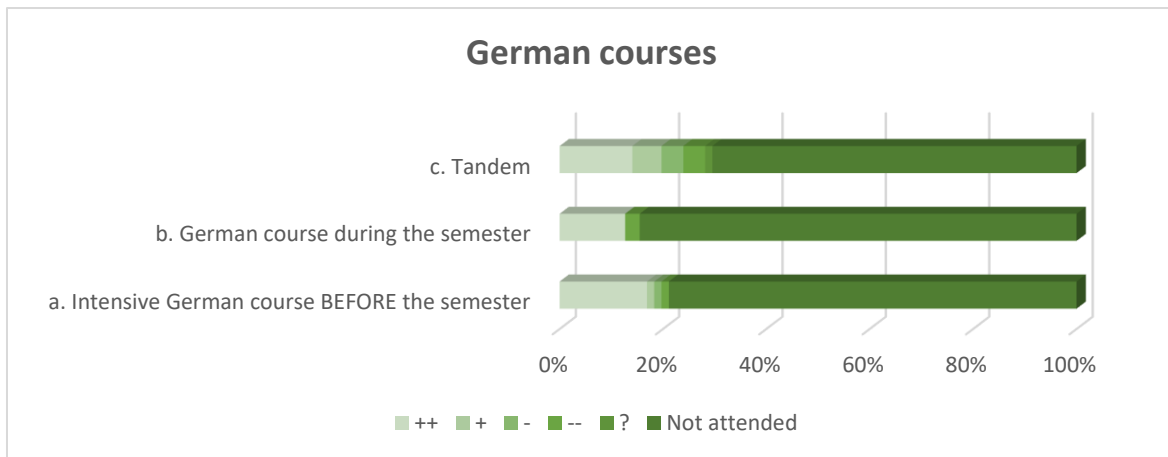
6% of international students experienced language problems regularly, 49% now and then, and 45% never had any difficulties.

Of the of students who did have language problems, they mostly occurred in the classroom and when students came into contact with Austrian students. A few students noted they also had language problems when doing written assignments and oral exams. Other comments included that the students had troubles with communication in the city, as well as with understanding Austrian accent.



5.2 German Language Courses and Tandem

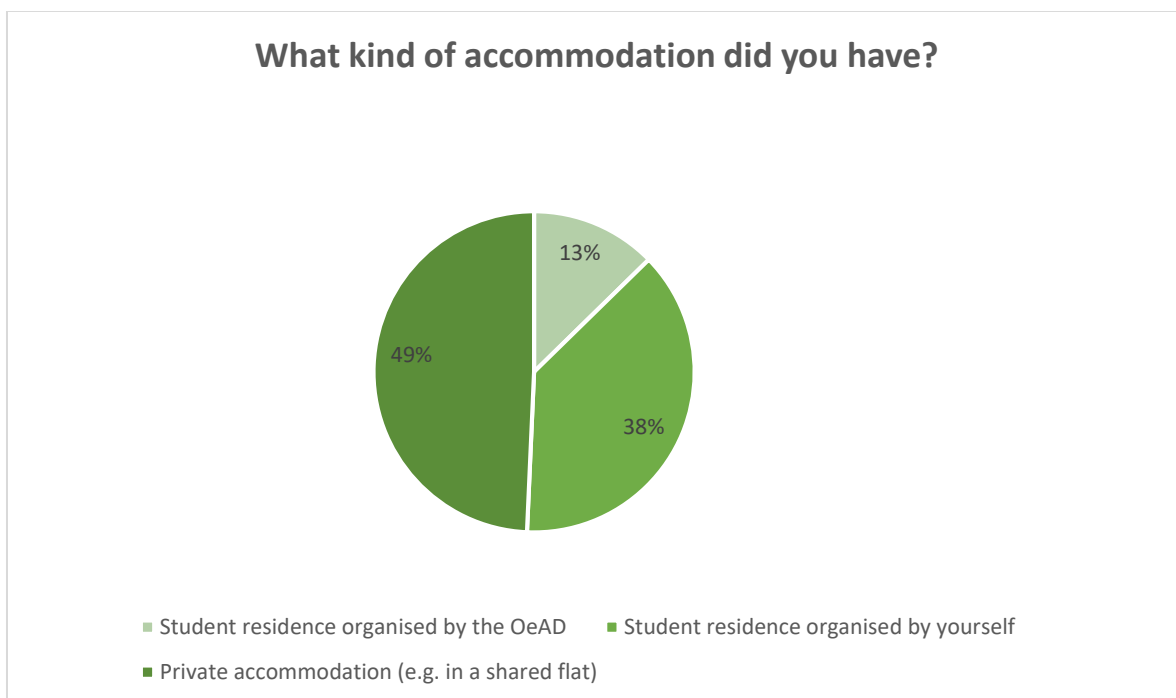
21% of respondents took part in an intensive German language course before the semester 15% took one during the semester and 30% participated in the Tandem programme.



6. Accommodation

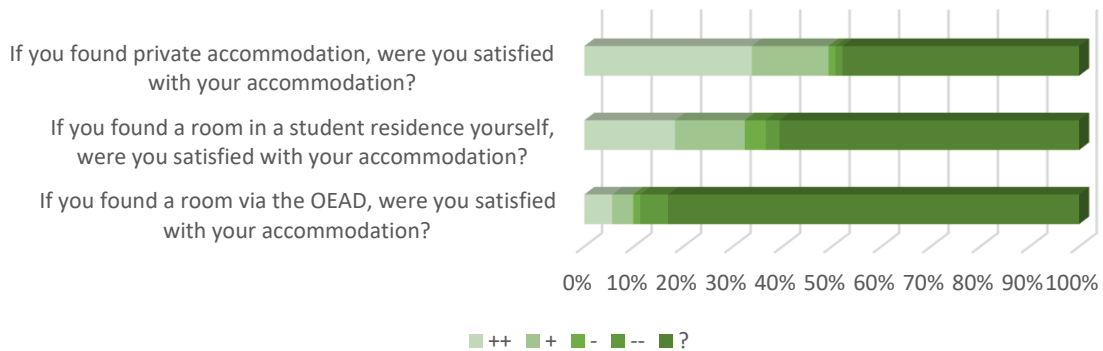
6.1 Accommodation type

Around 51% of the students who submitted the questionnaire lived in student residences during their stay in Vienna – 13% in student residences organised by the OeAD and 38% in those they had organised themselves. 49% lived in private accommodation (such as a shared flat).



Commenting on their accommodation, some students said that private accommodation was difficult to find and that the rent in Vienna was higher than expected. Due to Covid-19 it was even harder to find an accommodation.

Satisfaction with the accommodation

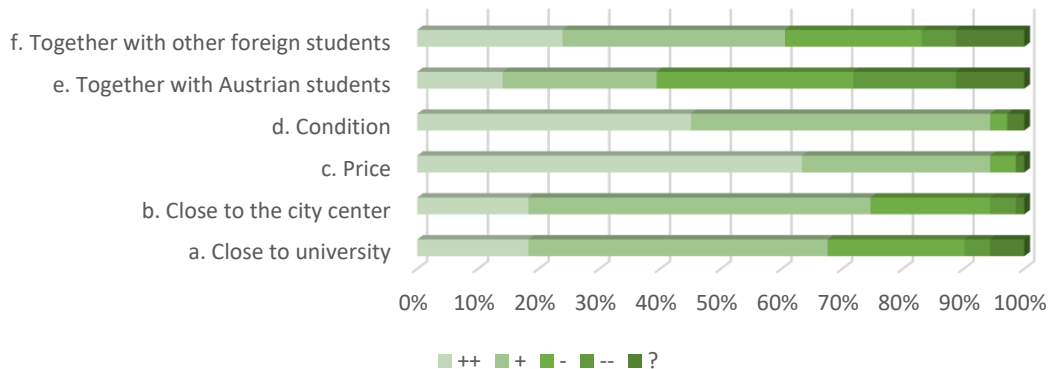


6.2 Important factors in choosing accommodation

The most important factor for students when choosing their accommodation was the price – 94% of respondents rated this as quite or very important. Condition was the second biggest factor (a priority for 93% of students), followed by proximity to the university; being important for 68% of students and the city centre (75%).

Living with other international students was a priority to 61 %, and 39% saying that living with Austrian students was important to them.

Important factors in choosing accommodation



7. Academic and Personal Outcomes

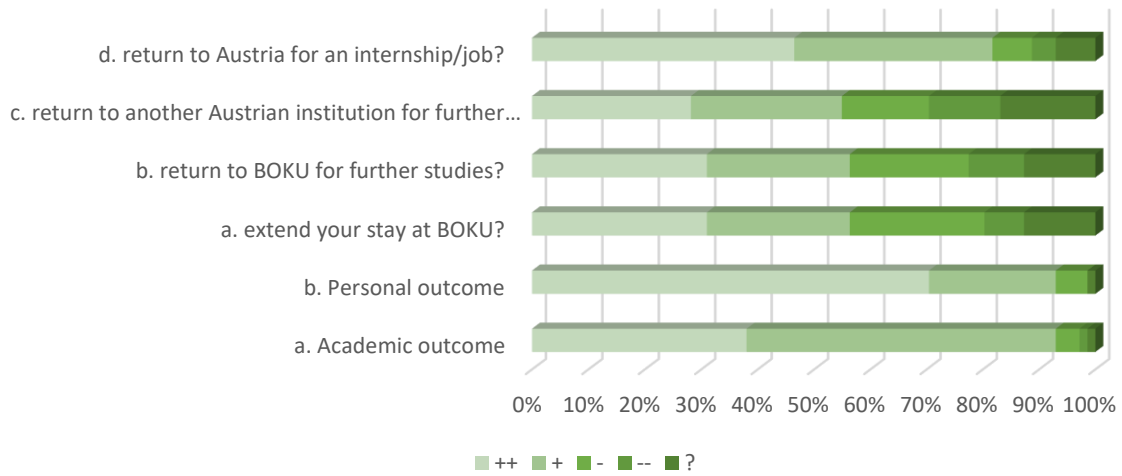
7.1 Outcome of the stay at BOKU

93% of the students believed the personal outcome of their stay at BOKU to be good or very good. 92% thought the academic outcome was also good or very good.

7.2 Extension of Stay at BOKU

82% of respondents said they would like to return to Austria to do an internship or to work. 56% wanted to extend their stay at BOKU, 56% wanted to return to BOKU for further studies and 55% said they would like to return to another Austrian institution for further studies.

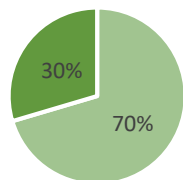
Extension of stay at BOKU



8. Background Information

70% of the respondents were female and 30% male. BOKU is lucky enough to host many different nationalities every year. In this semester 31% of the incoming exchange students were French students. There were also a larger number of German and Italian students.

Sex



■ Female ■ Male

