

## “Vienna Is Different”

### Facts and Figures

Vienna is a city whose historical roots stem from major growth. With approx. 1.7 million inhabitants, it is the tenth largest city in the EU in terms of residents.

Vienna represents top-rated and innovative medicine. The city houses over 40 hospitals to cater for the healthcare needs of its residents. This includes 13 publicly funded clinics run by the Vienna healthcare association (KAV).

### Training and Development in Austria

After the standard medical training of six years, young doctors begin their rotations, which usually last 36 months and result in the award of the practical medical diploma (“ius practicandi”). Most head physicians require that this compulsory rotation be completed before a specialist residency position is given. Waiting periods of up to two years before this first career step are not uncommon.

The medical residency takes six years, and the entire training period can be completed in one specialist department. Established electives in other specialist areas have to be taken as part of rotations, such as pathology for surgical residents. The training ends with a specialist exam.

### Individual Focus

Both authors work as residents in the plastic surgery department of a public hospital



**Dr. Dirk Hellekes, M.A.**

tal with 2,100 full-time employees. Applicants are initially invited to an interview. If both parties are interested in taking the application further, the applicant is given a verbal offer of an intended appointment, which unfortunately does not come with a written binding confirmation from the management. Applicants are then in the unenviable position of having to give no-



**Dr. Ariel Edwin Noltze**

practice on their current job without being certain of being able to start their new job, but this usually works out in the end.

They must then register with the chamber of physicians, with takes around 20 minutes.

Once the management has all the required paperwork, the medics can take up their new position. They do not

receive their written contract until around 1–3 months after starting work.

### Work in a Vienna “Spital” is Very Different from that in a German Hospital.

Adhering to statutory working hours is of the highest importance in Austria. In many departments it is normal to document any overtime above 15 minutes, which is then given in lieu (multiple of 1.5) or paid. The overtime documentation also serves as a basis for establishing jobs available or required, rather than evidence of an organisational deficit on the part of the departmental management.

Night shift hours are deducted by the Vienna KAV from the 37-hour working week – after working a night shift, staff usually go home. There is also a holiday entitlement of 30 days per year and the net salary of a specialist doctor including overtime

and night-shift bonus is approx. €3,000 per month. Two additional months’ salaries are paid as a holiday/Christmas bonus.

The pace of work also differs considerably in Austria and Germany. While in Germany, the working day is generally a race, the Austrian working day is characterised by a collegial, determined execution of the tasks in hand without the “home-made” stress. In addition to their regular working hours, Austrian doctors may undertake private practice, treating additional patients to gain further income.

### Conclusion

Overall, the formalities of being able to practice as a doctor in Austria are the same as those in Germany, but the working conditions differ significantly.

The working hours, the recognition and the salary are appropriate to the occupational image of a doctor. Overall, quality of life and job satisfaction are better, which is a positive change for family environments.

The above-mentioned positive structural aspects should therefore be entered into the debate on changes in other European healthcare systems.

### Contact:

**Dr. Dirk Hellekes, M.A.**  
**Dr. Ariel Edwin Noltze**  
**Krankenanstalt Rudolfstiftung der Stadt Wien**  
**Abteilung für Plastische- und Wiederherstellungschirurgie,**  
**Vienna, Austria**  
**Dirk.Hellekes@wienkav.at**  
**Ariel.Edwin.Noltze@wienkav.at**



[www.bmgfj.gv.at](http://www.bmgfj.gv.at)

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Health, Family and Youth (BMGFJ)

[www.wien.gv.at](http://www.wien.gv.at)

The City of Vienna Webservice, with information about administration, culture, education, health, Vienna transport, tourism etc.

[www.aerztekammer.at](http://www.aerztekammer.at)

The Austrian Medical Chamber with Information on legal prerequisites for migrating doctors see international department (in English)

[www.wienkav.at/kav/kar/](http://www.wienkav.at/kav/kar/)

Municipal Hospital Rudolfstiftung with 16 departments, 800 beds where the authors work.

[www.unvienna.org](http://www.unvienna.org)

Along with New York, Geneva and Nairobi, Vienna is one of the four Headquarters duty stations of the United Nations.

[www.goinginternational.org](http://www.goinginternational.org)

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