

Austrian Professional Hotel Association

Classification Procedure for Apartments & Holiday Homes - 2020-2025



Information, 14 July 2020

1. The system

- 1.1 The Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes is a standardised system, valid all over Austria - based on the hotel classification of the Hotelstars Union (HSU) -, which offers guests a reliable guide to apartments and holiday homes.
- 1.2 Classification into a particular star category is carried out, upon application by the establishment, by independent commissions (see Rules of Procedure Classification Commission). Regular inspections and a system of on-going self-assessment ensure quality.
- 1.3 Member businesses can choose to make use of this service feature of the Professional Groups of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber.
- 1.4 The criteria catalogue for the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes applies only to apartments, holiday homes or similar accommodation holding a business licence and which offer little or no service. It also applies to apartments and holiday homes, which are managed together with another accommodation, but as a separate outbuilding and with its own business licence. This criteria catalogue does not apply to full-blown hotels and establishments with limited gastronomic offer. There is a special criteria catalogue for these establishments.
- 1.5 The classification criteria are - based on the HSU-hotel classification - revised every five to six years, are based on current market observations and reflect guests' expectations.
- 1.6 The criteria catalogue for the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes consists of a mixed system with minimum criteria that must be fulfilled without fail, a minimum number of points and additional points. This mixture results in the number of stars to be awarded.
- 1.7 Apartments and holiday homes are divided into four categories. The addition Superior as well as the 5-star category is not possible for apartments or holiday homes.
- 1.8 For over 20 years the "Austrian Hotelstars" - which have been used until the end of 2013 - have been a registered trademark in Austria. The successive change to Hotelstars Union-design has started in Austria in January 2014. The new trademark of the Hotelstars Union - „HOTELSTARS.EU“ - is an internationally registered trademark as well. Hotels/apartments/holiday homes

now are committed to exclusively use the new Hotelstars Union-design. This registered trademark gives guests and hoteliers the guarantee that hotelstars are only used by classified hotels/apartments/holiday homes. Consequently, guests can be sure that Austrian accommodation establishments are only allowed to use the trademark if they can satisfy the high quality requirements of the Austrian classification system for hotels, apartments and holiday homes.

- 1.9 In case of a downgrading or a total withdrawing of the stars, hotels/apartments/holiday homes are committed to use the trademark/logo of the new classified star-category, respectively to refrain from using the stars at all. In case of insolvency or closing of the establishment, it is forbidden to use the trademark „HOTELSTARS.EU“ until a new classification - this applies to hotels/apartments/holiday homes. Moreover, the [rules for the use of the star-signs and the trademark "HOTELSTARS.EU"](#) in the current version apply.

2. General criteria for evaluation

2.1. The overall impression

Overall impression and condition (furnishings and fixtures & fittings) and immaculate standards of cleanliness and hygiene are basic pre-conditions for entry into the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes.

2.2. Over and above those criteria, the following are also important for classification into the particular categories:

- 2.2.1. If available: Quality of service and this includes demeanour, dress, friendliness and professionalism of management and staff.
- 2.2.2. External appearance, including access/access road, the drive up to the building, parking and garden.
- 2.2.3. The hotel's own leisure and additional facilities, for example an indoor pool, sauna, meetings rooms, garden and garage parking.
- 2.2.4. Guest satisfaction, the number of complaints and handling thereof.

3. Guidelines for the classification of apartments and holiday homes

3.1. One star

Simple fixtures and fittings, amenities necessary for a conventional overnight stay at the establishment are very clean and in immaculate condition.

3.2. Two star

Functional and comfortable fixture and fittings. The quality of the fixtures and fittings is measured by their functionality and cleanliness, the materials used are of lesser importance.

3.3. Three star

Refined and uniform fixtures and fittings in the visual field of guests, homely character. Hardware in good condition.

3.4. Four star

First-class fixtures and fittings, generous spaces with qualitatively high and up to date fixtures and fittings, good noise insulation, hardware in very good condition.

4. The classification process

4.1. The application

The accommodation owner applies by sending a completed application form to the relevant Professional Group for entry into the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes and declares that he/she is in agreement with the criteria catalogue and rules of procedure for the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes. Application forms are available at www.hotelverband.at. In the case of new buildings, conversions and extensions of accommodation, an application can be filed to promote the expected star category before the official grading according to a procedure specially set up for such cases.

4.2. The inspection

Based on the criteria catalogue for the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes, the data provided by the establishment owner and the inspection visit report, the federal state commission will classify the establishment. Establishments already classified are inspected regularly within a period of 3 to a maximum of 6 years. In the course of this check, an establishment's grading can be confirmed, changed or disallowed. Commission decisions are communicated to the establishment in writing. With the completion of the criteria catalogue the owner takes part in a regular system of self-assessment. Within this process, the establishment confirms in writing to the Professional Group that the relevant criteria within its category have been fulfilled. It is the personal responsibility of every owner to inform the relevant Professional Group immediately in case of essential changes or reconstructions in the apartments/holiday homes. In case of acquisitions and company transfers, the respective star category of the establishment basically expires, which is why the owner has to submit a new application to the Professional Group. An operators change or insolvency has to be reported to the relevant Professional Group. In general the inspection can only take place, when the establishment is in operation. The commission is entitled to inspect all operating areas. More over the commission can inspect the establishment unannounced at any time (including e.g. rooms that the owner had not prepared for the commission's visit). During the commission's visit, photos can be taken for documentation purposes.

4.3. The committees

The Classification Committee is appointed by the managing board of the Professional Group after the election of the Economic Chamber for the period until the next election of the Economic Chamber (right of nomination

chairman and CEO) and is established at federal state level at the respective Professional Group of the hotel industry in the Economic Chamber. In Vienna, apartments and holiday homes are classified by an expert committee at the Vienna Tourism Association. The constitution of this expert committee to which external professionals are also drawn, has its own rules of procedure.

For on-site commissions, the Classification Committee forms a classification commission with at least two commission members.

4.3.1. Liability

It is agreed there will be no liability for damage resulting from slight negligence by commission members. There is also no liability for damage by other parties, for loss of earnings or achieved savings. Disclaimer of warranty applies to every level of jurisdiction and commissions.

4.4. Appeals

The owner of the establishment can appeal by means of a registered written letter against a grading or non-grading into a category within four weeks after notification of the commission's written decision. The complaint must contain justification for the appeal. The appeal must be lodged with the relevant Professional Group. The appeal has a postponing effect unless the classification commission unanimously excludes this effect, especially in cases where the general assessment criteria for classification have not been fulfilled. A renewed application for classification in a star category can only be made if the deficiencies/conditions alleged by the classification commission have demonstrably been resolved/met.

4.5. Handling of appeals

In the case of appeals a regional commission - put together by the relevant Professional Group in the federal state - checks the decision of the classification commission. A regional commission is made up of minimum two members from other federal states and more over one non-voting member of the federal state concerned, who up until the time of the appeal has not been involved in the current classification process. The regional commission decides unanimously, will visit the establishment and write a report for the senior commission (see Rules of Procedure senior commission). This report has to be prepared, no matter if positive or negative. The senior commission decides within seven months and prepares a decision memorandum in which the reasons for the decision are given. The decision is sent in writing to the appeal applicant and the relevant Professional Group by the Professional Hotel Association. The costs for the regional commission are carried by the establishment making the appeal.

5. Terms and Data protection

5.1. Minimum criteria

The applicant confirms that the minimum criteria of the desired star category - 1* to 4* - are fulfilled.

5.2. Criteria and Procedure

The applicant agrees with the criteria and this Classification Procedure for Apartments & Holiday Homes in the currently valid version, especially with the system of regular self-monitoring. In case of changes to the criteria catalogue or procedural provisions, the establishments will be informed in writing in time by the relevant Professional Group.

5.3. Registered Trademark

The applicant hereby commits the usage of the trademark "HOTELSTARS.EU" registered with the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market exclusively in the sense of these currently valid procedural provisions.

5.4. Data protection

In the course of an application for classification in the 1*-4* category, the applicant agrees that his personal data as well as the criteria indicated by him in the criteria catalogue for the classification and servicing of his establishment are handled by the responsible Professional Group in the respective Federal State. In addition, the applicant agrees to a data transfer, including hotel name, address, telephone number, fax, e-mail, URL, star category, to contractual partners and cooperating partners for statistical purposes as well as to communicate his acquired star category only. Consent to data handling can be revoked at any time.

In case of doubt, the German version applies.

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¹ Although much care has been taken in compiling the information, no responsibility is taken for correctness. Both the author and the Austrian Professional Hotel Association disclaim liability.