

Austrian Professional Hotel Association

Classification Procedure for Apartments & Holiday Homes - 2025-2030



Information, 1 January 2025

1. The system

- 1.1 The Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes is a standardised system, valid throughout Austria - based on the hotel classification of the Hotelstars Union (HSU) - which provides guests with a reliable guide to apartments and holiday homes.
- 1.2 Classification into the respective star category is carried out by independent commissions upon application by the establishment (see Rules of Procedure Classification Commission). Regular on-site inspections and a continuous self-monitoring system ensure quality.
- 1.3 Member businesses may use this service provided by the Professional Groups of the Austrian Federal Economic Chambers on a voluntary basis.
- 1.4 The catalogue of criteria for the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes applies only to apartments, holiday homes or similar accommodation holding a business licence and offering few or no service. It also applies to apartments and holiday homes that 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 set of criteria for these establishments.
- 1.5 The classification criteria are reviewed every five to six years based on the HSU Hotel Classification and are based on current market observations and reflect guest expectations.
- 1.6 The catalogue of criteria for the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes consists of a mixed system of minimum criteria to be met, a minimum number of points and additional points from optional criteria. This mixture results in the number of stars to be awarded.
- 1.7 Apartments and holiday homes are divided into four categories. The Superior level and the 5-star category are not available for apartments and holiday homes.
- 1.8 On 1 January 2014, the Hotelstars Union brand - 'HOTELSTARS.EU' - was launched in Austria. It is internationally protected. Establishments are obliged to use only the Hotelstars Union design. This registered trademark gives both guests and businesses the assurance that the stars may only be used by hotels/apartments and holiday homes that are officially classified. Guests can therefore be sure that Austrian accommodation is only awarded

the label if it meets the high quality standards of the Austrian Star Classification.

- 1.9 In the event of a downgrading or the total withdrawal of the stars, the establishment is obliged to use the trademark or logo of the newly classified star category or to refrain from using the hotel stars. In case of insolvency or closure, hotels/appartements/holidayhomes may not use the trademark „HOTELSTARS.EU“ until they are reclassified. Moreover, the [provisions on the use of the star-signs and the "HOTELSTARS.EU" brand](#) apply in their current version.

2. General evaluation criteria

2.1. The overall impression

The overall impression and the state of maintenance (facilities and equipment) as well as the impeccable cleanliness and hygiene of an establishment are basic prerequisites for inclusion in the Austrian Classification for Apartments and Holiday Homes.

2.2. In addition, the following points are important for classification in the respective category:

- 2.2.1. If available: The quality of the service, including the appearance, dress, friendliness and competence of the management and staff.
- 2.2.2. The external appearance, including signage, access, driveways, car parks and gardens.
- 2.2.3. Own leisure and ancillary facilities such as indoor swimming pool, sauna, conference rooms, gardens, garage parking.
- 2.2.4. Guest satisfaction, frequency and handling of guest complaints.

3. Definition and differentiation of categories

3.1. One-star

Simple furnishing and equipment, the facilities necessary for a normal overnight stay at the establishment are provided in a clean and immaculate condition.

3.2. Two-star

Practical facilities with some comfort. The quality of the facilities is measured by their functionality and cleanliness rather than the materials used.

3.3. Three-star

High quality and uniform furnishings in the guest's field of vision, with a homely character. Good state of maintenance of all hardware. The overall impression of the apartment/holiday home in terms of materials is of a high standard. Furnishings are consistent in shape and colour throughout and offer a good level of comfort.

3.4. Four-star

First class facilities, spacious rooms with high quality contemporary furnishings, good soundproofing, very good condition of all hardware. The overall impression of the apartment/holiday home in terms of materials is of a high standard. Fixtures and fittings are of high quality and offer first class comfort.

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.

By completing the application form, the establishment representative applies to the relevant Professional Group for inclusion in the Austrian Apartment House and Holiday Home Classification and agrees to the catalogue of criteria and the procedural provisions. The application forms are available for download at www.hotelsterne.at. Once the application has been submitted and checked by the relevant authorities, the establishment will be authorised to complete the classification questionnaire electronically. In the case of new buildings, conversions and extensions to accommodation establishments, an application may be made to promote the expected star category prior to the official classification in accordance with a specially designed procedure.

4.2. The inspection

The classification of the establishment is carried out by the Classification Commission on the basis of the catalogue of criteria for the classification of apartments and holiday homes, the information provided by the representative of the establishment and the inspection visit report. Establishments that have already been classified are regularly inspected over a period of 3 to a maximum of 6 years. The classification may be confirmed, modified or withdrawn. The Commission's decisions are communicated to the establishment in writing. By completing the survey form, the establishment also submits to regular self-monitoring. In doing so, the establishment confirms in writing to the Professional Groups that it meets the criteria relevant to its category. It is the responsibility of each owner to report any significant changes and/or reorganisation of the business to the relevant Professional Group without delay. Transfers and takeovers usually result in the loss of the establishment's star category and the owner has to submit a new application to the Professional Group. Any change of operator or insolvency of the establishment must be reported to the Professional Group in the relevant federal state. Inspections are usually only carried out when the establishment is open/operating. The Commission has the right to inspect all ar-

eas of the establishment. In addition, the Commission may at any time and without prior notice inspect the entire classified establishment (e.g. including rooms not prepared by the owner for the Commission's visit). During the Commission's visit, photographs may be taken for documentation purposes.

4.3. The committees

The Classification Committee is appointed by the managing board of the Professional Group after the elections of the Economic Chamber for the period until the next elections of the Economic Chamber (right of nomination chairman and CEO) and is set up at federal state level at the respective Professional Group of the hotel industry in the Economic Chamber. In Vienna, the expert committee for the classification of apartments and holiday homes is set up at the Vienna Tourist Board. The constitution of this expert committee, which also includes external experts, is governed by 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

Liability for damage caused by slight negligence on the part of the members of the Commission is excluded by mutual agreement. Liability for damage of third parties, loss of profit or unrealised savings is also excluded. This exclusion of liability applies to all levels of the process and to all commissions.

4.4. Appeals

The authorised representative may, within four weeks of receipt of the written copy of the Commission's decision, lodge an appeal by registered letter against the classification or non-classification in a category. The appeal must be substantiated and the application explained. The appeal must be sent to the relevant Professional Group. In principle, the appeal has a suspensive effect, unless the Classification Commission unanimously decides to exclude the suspensive effect, in particular if the general assessment criteria of the classification are not met. A new application for classification in a star category can only be submitted once the deficiencies cited by the Classification Commission have been demonstrably remedied or the conditions imposed have been fulfilled.

Handling of appeals

In the event of an appeal, the decision of the classification commission is reviewed by a regional commission appointed by the relevant Professional Group in the federal state.

The Regional Commission consists of at least two members from other federal states. There should also be a non-voting member from the federal state concerned, who has not yet been involved in the classification process. The Regional Commission takes decisions unanimously.

The Regional Commission inspects the establishment and prepares a report for the Senior Commission (see the Rules of Procedure Senior Commission). This report is issued in both positive and negative cases. The Senior Commission decides within seven months and keeps a record of the decision, including the reasons for the decision. The decision is notified in writing to

the complainant and the Professional Group concerned by the Professional Association of the Hotel Industry. The costs of the Regional Commission are borne by the company.

5. Provisions and declaration on data protection

5.1. Minimum criteria

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

5.2. Criteria and Procedure

The applicant agrees with the catalogue of criteria and the underlying procedural regulations of the Austrian Classification of Apartments & Holiday Homes in its current version, in particular the system of regular self-monitoring. In the event of changes to the catalogue of criteria or the procedural regulations, the respective Professional Group will inform the establishments in writing and in good time.

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

By applying for classification in the 1*-4* category, the applicant agrees that his personal data and the information provided in the classification questionnaire may be processed by the relevant Professional Group in the respective federal state for the purpose of classification and servicing of his establishment. In addition, the applicant agrees that the data - consisting of property name, address, telephone number, fax, e-mail, URL, star category - may be passed on to contractual and cooperation partners exclusively for statistical purposes and for communicating the star category achieved. Consent to data processing may be revoked at any time.

In case of doubt, the German version applies.

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¹ Although every care has been taken in the compilation of this information, no responsibility is accepted for its accuracy. Neither the author nor the Austrian Professional Hotel Association accepts any liability.