

## Final Report on your Study Exchange at the University of Lucerne

Please write the report (max. 2 pages) in German or English and in complete sentences (no keywords).

**The report will be posted on the website of the University of Lucerne and may also be viewable via internet search engines. A subsequent amendment or deletion of data (e.g. name) will not be possible after the report has been submitted!**  
Please send the report back in Word format only.

<b>Mobility Program</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEMP (Erasmus inside Europe) <input type="checkbox"/> PARTNERSHIP (outside Europe)
<b>Home university</b>	Universität der Bundeswehr München
<b>Semester</b>	Fall term 17
<b>Field of study</b>	Main subject? International Law and Politics Study level? <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master
<b>Name and E-Mail (optional)</b>	Pascal Pohl

<b>General impression</b> Please describe your stay in 4-5 sentences	I stayed in Lucerne from September 2017 until January 2018. I really liked the city, which is just the right size between a cosy small town and a big city, as well as the people who were polite and helpful most of the time. I spent a lot of my free-time outside, the nearest mountains are just 20-40 minutes away and you can go on a small hike even in the early afternoon and be back for dinner in time. As exchange students we had many opportunities to get to know Lucerne itself and other Swiss cities by trips organized by the International Office and the Mentors (sometimes for free). I made many new friends from all over the world, but unfortunately, my integration into Switzerland itself somehow failed because I was mostly around with the other exchange students. Overall, it was a great experience which was way too short.
<b>Entry/ arrival in Switzerland</b> Immigration formalities, visa	As military personnel no significant problems. Formalities were done by the office of the military attaché in Bern.
<b>Searching for rooms/ accommodation</b> Experiences and useful addresses	<a href="http://www.studentmentor.ch/pages/mietobjekte.html">http://www.studentmentor.ch/pages/mietobjekte.html</a> Modern apartments about a 20-minute walk away from the university. Pros: Silent neighbourhood, nice view onto the city Cons: Rental agreements have a minimum contract of 6 months The administration is very helpful. Any damages or malfunctions that occurred were fixed within at least two days. There are locked rooms to put your bikes in safely. Each building has two washers and a room with dehumidifiers, which dry the clothes usually within a day.
<b>Public transportation</b> Train, bus, accessibility of university buildings	Public transport is well organized and very punctual most of the time. The university's location next to the main station makes it easily accessible. Bike-sharing (nextbike) is also a good and cheap way to move from A to B.
<b>Prearrangements</b> Registration for courses, language tests, academic records	The registration for the courses was done online without complications. Changes of the courses were possible throughout the first time, so you had the chance to decide what you like the most. As a native German no language test was required. Academic records required were the latest transcript of records and the learning agreement.
<b>Information on the university</b> Location, size, infrastructure	Next to the main station, the university is easy to find. With only about 3000 students, the four-floor main building is comparably small. The way the rooms are organized is easy understandable. The university itself has a small shop, which provides books and other supplies, as well as a cafeteria where you can get coffee, snacks etc. and whole meals during lunchtime, which cost around 10 CHF. The library is well organised and the stuff is very helpful. If there is any struggle the information desk on the right side of the entrance provides the answers.
<b>German course at the University</b> "German Short Course" visited? Content of course, use?	No, I'm a native German.
<b>Studying at the university</b> Content of lectures, credits, assessments	My lectures contended topics of international and Swiss law, as well as Switzerland's History during the Cold War. As a German it was very interesting to see the differences when dealing with those topics from another perspective. The credits given were fair compared to the workload. The assessments were either oral or written exams. For me oral exams, especially with partners, were a new experience. It is hard to say how good the performance was, because the professors did not drop any

	<p>hints in my case. However, they were supportive to make the questions understandable and to put someone back on the right path. The written exams were nothing special compared to those in Germany, only some Swiss words were different but didn't caused any serious trouble.</p>
<p><b>Assistance at the university</b> Mobility Coordinator, International Relations Office, student advisors, mentors, contact with other students</p>	<p>The staff from the International Relations Office as well as the Mobility Coordinators were always helpful and provided their help without any delay. Communication was done either per e-mail or in personal appointments.</p> <p>The mentors provided all the important information for us in the beginning and organized some more activities throughout the semester. From my point of view, the time provided for the mentors in the first week was too short, which made some of the activities quite stressful to finish on time.</p> <p>Contact with other students can be difficult. On the one hand, most of them are interested as soon as they know you are an exchange student. On the other side, especially as a non-German speaker, you stay in kind of a bubble with classes in English, which are visited mostly by the other exchange students.</p>
<p><b>Budgeting</b> Living costs, study material, money transfer</p>	<p>The rent for my room in a shared apartment of five people was 660 CHF per month, which is cheap for Swiss conditions as I was told. I had a Swiss mobile phone card, which was 65 CHF per month (including a flat rate to Germany). Incomings from Europe might check on options of their provider for cheaper options. All together my monthly living costs were around 1300-1500 CHF per month, the scale on the information sheet from the International Relations Office is pretty accurate on that.</p> <p>For groceries the supermarkets are always the best option, take away and fast food are very expensive. Meat and fish usually cost three times the amount of what it costs in Germany for comparison. You should stop comparing the prices to those in your country very soon, it just drives you crazy. Just one exception: When buying more valuable goods (e.g. technology or clothing) check the exchange rates, Apple products for example are cheaper than in Germany.</p> <p>Transferring money from my German to my Swiss bank account took around three days each time. I would recommend, opening a Swiss Bank account, because you only have transaction fees once if you transfer money from your home account and the banks have special offers for students.</p>
<p><b>Living/ leisure</b> Meeting places, sports, culture</p>	<p>Outside the university, the most common places for me to meet other students were parties, either in clubs or at the dormitories. But there are also small parks and other lovely places at the bankside of the lake where you could hang out. The area around Lucerne is very suitable for outdoor sports (running, hiking, cycling and in winter skiing (check out the Snow'n Rail offer from SBB!)). Gyms are quite expensive; an alternative therefore might be the "Zurich Vitaparcours", some outdoor gyms in the parks/forests nearby.</p> <p>I cannot say much about culture in detail as I'm not so much into that topic, but there are many offers to choose from.</p>
<p><b>Comparison</b> What is better/ worse at the University of Lucerne as compared to your home university?</p>	<p>As a student officer the diversity in people, especially under the exchange students, was a lot better than at my home university.</p> <p>There were only some small things that were worse from point of view, mostly because I have the impressions from the military on my mind:</p> <p>The professors I had gave no precise requirements for formalities in papers, which made it hard to assess if you meet their goals, especially when you don't know them. When doing field trips the count of completeness was done in a rather loosely way. The professors or mentors mostly depended on the help of the other students to make sure everyone was present. Nobody got lost however, but for me it's not a big deal to call for everyone's attention in the beginning and check the attendance list when you are responsible for people.</p>
<p><b>Reasons</b> Why did you choose to complete an exchange semester at the University of Lucerne?</p>	<p>Some of my friends took an exchange semester at the University of Lucerne two years ago and they praised it a lot. In addition to that, I thought that special status of Switzerland in the world, as a neutral country, is reflected in the classes, which opens the possibility to see the topics from a different/broader perspective.</p> <p>After completing the exchange semester, I can confirm the impressions my friends had and my idea of getting new impressions on the topics dealt with in class.</p>
<p><b>Duration</b> Looking back, was the duration of your stay here:</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> too short                      <input type="checkbox"/> too long                      <input type="checkbox"/> just right</p>