

Final Report on Study Exchange at the University of Lucerne

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

Mobility program	ERASMUS
Home university	Università degli Studi di Milano (University of Milan)
Field of study	Law
Semester	Fall term 2013
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<p>General impression Please describe your stay in 4-5 sentences</p>	<p>I come from a City that is bigger than Lucerne and this was one of the first impressions I had as soon as I arrived here. This represented a problem only during the first week, in fact after having known some of the many international students that live in the city of Lucerne I started to feel at home again. The quality of the teaching was very good, both regarding German and English classes, as well as the maintenance of the University building that is pleasant and surprising. The welcome provided by the University was really good. The balance, before the exams, is great.</p>
<p>Entry/ arrival in Switzerland Immigration formalities, visa</p>	<p>Since I come from a Country of the European Union I didn't have to face specific difficulties in the completion of the required formalities (no visa). I only had to register at the communal office (paying a fee of about 35 CHF) that directly sent my file also to the Immigration Office without asking me to do anything more. The international relations Office of the University (Ms. Imboden) helped us to prepare the required documents. I received my temporary permit to stay by mail directly at home after a pair of weeks.</p> <p>Last but not least it is very important to be sure to be covered by a valid health insurance. I subscribed also a private liability insurance but it seems to be recommended but not mandatory.</p>
<p>Searching for rooms/ accommodation Experiences and useful addresses</p>	<p>I chose a place called "Student-Inn Steghof" (ex-hotel, Voltastrasse, 2, http://www.student-inn.ch/de/ueber-uns.html) instead of "StudWo Residence" in Emmenbrücke (that was recommended by the University) because I wanted to live inside the City. Afterwards, once I arrived here, I discovered the Student Mentor's Facility in Steinhofweg but when I had to choose the application and admittance procedures weren't very clear. The best place is for sure the Steinhof facility: new furniture, new buildings, nice area and big apartments with one kitchen each with 5 separated rooms each. Similar to this, but a little older is the Emmenbrücke dorm that has the disadvantage to require to be reached to rely always on the public transports (VBL monthly ticket 54 CHF). Steghof/Student-Inn has the basic difference to have a big common kitchen for all the guests (around 30 I think) but private rooms for everyone (no apartments). The price is everywhere around 550/600 CHF per month.</p>
<p>Public transportation Train, bus, accessibility of university buildings</p>	<p>Living inside the City area allows you not to buy the public transports (VBL) monthly ticket because, in any case, almost every place of the City (included the University) is easily reachable on foot. The public transports are necessary for those who live or have to reach Emmenbrücke.</p> <p>The quality of the public means of transports is good (vehicles) but the timetables (frequency of the buses) and the way they are distributed in and around the city makes their price definitely too high for what they really offer.</p>

	Bicycle, as is possible to see, can be a valid alternative.
Prearrangements Registration for courses, language tests, academic records	The registration for the courses and the relative exams is compulsory and has to be done at the beginning of the semester. The distinction between OLAT and StudPortal creates a very big confusion and the fear of not being registered in the right way on both portals. These difficulties can be overcome by relying on and asking the student advisors and tutors who are always kind, prepared and helpful. I haven't experienced yet with the academic records.
Information on university Location, size, infrastructure	The location of the university is simply fabulous: the building was finished in 2011 and is still new, the libraries are full of useful materials and the lending methods are clear and adequate. The size of the building is small compared to universities of bigger cities, but compared to the number of students that attend the University of Lucerne it seems to be perfectly adjusted. It seems to be hard not to find anyone's seat in the library, even if during the exams the rooms of the library can be very busy. The library is open until late in the evening (9Pm, Mo-Fri). To this is added the wonderful view on the Lake of Lucerne that makes the study-days more pleasant for sure.
German course at the university „German for Beginners“ visited? Content of course, usage	I took a German course at my home university so I didn't attend the “German for Beginners” course provided by the University of Lucerne.
Studying at the university Content of lectures, credits, assessments	The contents of the classes and of the courses seem to be adequate and balanced, even I still haven't taken any of the bigger exams. The accounting system of credits is the ECTS System that is basically valid throughout the whole Europe. Grades are awarded based on an “out of 6” (x/6) criteria. There are specific tables for each country to translate/transpose them in the correspondent grades of the home country of each one. For students of the Law Faculty the course “Introduction to Swiss law” is an incredibly precious occasion to know better the interesting institutional system of Switzerland, as well as the Country itself.
Assistance at the university Student advisors, Mobility Office, mentors, contact with other students	The student advisors are always helpful and prepared. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO READ ALL THE MAILS YOU RECEIVE: they are incredibly full of information that are interesting, useful and sometimes fundamentals. Mobility Office helps you in organizing the administrative papers but hasn't the power to dispatch directly the procedures for you.
Budgeting Living costs, study material, money transfer	The living costs are extremely high! It is true for almost everything. Study material: Books provided by the university (bookshop on the ground floor) have normally a reasonable cost. International students may often use readers that cost between 10 and 20 CHF. Outside the University the average costs rise a lot: the best library of the city is “Stocker” (Hertensteinstrasse 44, 6004 Luzern) but many of the books that you may need have to be ordered (1-3 weeks to get them). A big book in English (900 pages) can cost more than 200 CHF. Drinking, eating and leisure: A very good thing is the Cafeteria in the University building that allows you to eat a complete meal for about 5 CHF (or something more). Outside the cost of a Pizza starts from CHF 15 in every kind of restaurant. Drinks (water, cola, tonic water, etc.) are very expensive (3-5 CHF on average). Drinks in clubs and bars cost between 5 (small beer) and 20 CHF (cocktails in some places). Most of the discos have free entrance but you don't get anything to eat or drink.

<p>Living/ leisure Meeting places, sports, culture</p>	<p>The cultural events that take place in Lucerne are a lot: Lucerne Blues Festival, Lucerne Jazz Festival, Lucerne Festival, all the events that take place in the KKL, open air cinemas in summer, Rosengart Museum, Verkehrshaus der Schweiz and others. The sports offer provided by the University is very large and interesting, in specific the gym provided for free for the students (http://www.unilu.ch/deu/sport_4606.html). Nightlife can appear poor, but after a few weeks the students start too meet in the dorms and this gives the great opportunity to socialize and speak a lot with students coming from all over the world. These become some of the most important and enriching moments of the whole stay/exchange.</p>
<p>Comparison What is better/ worse at the University of Lucerne compared to your home university?</p>	<p>Two of the things that are better than in my University are for sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the ratio between professors and students is extremely better than in my University (even it is normal considered the dimensions of the City of Milan); - the level of maintenance of the University buildings and facilities. <p>In general the level of the teaching I think is comparable between the two universities. The training/course offer is higher in my University and I have to notice a lack of courses in English (that should be offered in both semesters) that can be really useful to be reported in our own universities: e.g. a complete International (public and private) Law course, an European Union Law full course, a Business Law course and similar ones.</p> <p>Anyway, compared to other universities of Europe (in particular of German speaking regions) the offer of English course is really interesting: it was one of the reason why I chose Lucerne University to spend my Erasmus semester.</p>