

SWITZERLAND – FHNW Olten

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I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

[Help : How was your experience abroad? If you could go back in time, would you go to this university and why ?]

GRADE : [a grade between 0 and 5]

=> 0 (I do not recommend this semester abroad to my best friend) – 5 (I totally recommend this semester to my best friend)

My experience was a 5 out of 5. It was incredible. The country is very, very beautiful. The people are very charming. The level of English of the people is very good. And the university is great. As well as there are many activities and things to do in Switzerland.

If I could go back in time, I would definitely go to that university because I had a really great time, I met amazing people, and the country was amazing.

II. Before the travel

A. Preparation

1. Visa

[Help : Do I need a visa ? If yes, what is the process ?]

It depends on every case. In my case, I am a Mexican student that has studied her entire bachelor's in France, so I had the student visa from France, and because I have this one, I didn't have to go to Paris for applying for another type of visa. The only thing I needed to do was to go to City Hall and register myself as well as paying 250 francs in order for them to give you your Swiss residence card. But in the case that you are a

citizen of any country of the European Union, instead of paying 250 francs, you pay 70 francs and you don't need any visa either. But I would definitely recommend you to call the Canton so that way you can be sure, as well as checking the online websites. But normally, if you have the student visa from France, you don't need any sort of visa that is done in Paris.

2. The flight

[Help : what flight did you take (the company name, airport etc.) and when did you take your flight ticket]

In my case, I didn't take the flight. I took the train, which was like 5 hours, and it was pretty great. I went from Montpellier to Lyon, and from Lyon to Mulhouse, and then from Mulhouse to Basel, and then from Basel to Olten. It sounds like a lot of time, but it wasn't. It was pretty quick, and it's very easy to get there. You just have to take into consideration that you have to use the SNCF for the French territory, and then the Swiss SBB for the Swiss territory.

I would totally recommend you to look first for the trains from Montpellier to Mulhouse, because if you look online, a train that goes from Montpellier to Olten, it doesn't actually give you any options. But if you look it up, like, from Montpellier to Mulhouse, you will see. And then from Mulhouse to Olten, then you will get a lot of options.

There's even a direct train that goes from Montpellier to Mulhouse. It's the train that the final destination is Luxembourg.

3. My luggage

[Help : what to not forget in the luggage (what was useful and what you would like to have taken)]

What you shouldn't forget is an umbrella because it rains a lot, as well as clothes for the winter and clothes for the summer because back in May it's already kind of hot, but before it's kind of hot and sometimes it even, not that much, but it snows. And something that you shouldn't bring if you're staying in the staff house is like, for example, the pillow, the sheets, and the duvet cover because the staff house already includes it and you don't actually need it.

4. Bank account

[Help : did you have to change bank? To respect some amount requirement on the bank account etc.]

The bank that I would definitely recommend because it has the best exchange rates, it's Revolut. Because the change from euros to francs is always very good, and you don't have any commissions if you pay with that type of card. As well as the university in Switzerland is going to give you, if you apply for it, a scholarship. And this scholarship is 2,200 francs if you come from a European Union university. If you come from a university that is not from the European Union, it's 2,500 francs. And in my case, the bank didn't charge me anything when I received that money, but some international students that had different cards got a huge, huge commission from their banks and some of them lost even 300 francs because of that. So I would definitely recommend you to have Revolut.

What I did that was perhaps a mistake is that I registered my Revolute back in France. And in this case, every time I did the transference to the Staff House of the 400 francs that was what I pay per month, they charged me a fee of 1,31 francs because it was an international transaction. And in the case that I had registered my Revolut account in Switzerland, they wouldn't have charged me that. But still, if you want to use the card in France I would recommend you to register it in France, because in total of commissions from this international transactions it was just 6,55 francs.

5. Insurance

[Help : What insurance did you subscribe to ?]

It's very important to say that you have to bring your carte vitale from France and as well your European Health Insurance Card that you have to solicit before you come and that is going to arrive at your house if you have assurance maladie. And with this you can skip a lot of fees from health. But still they're going to ask you for health insurance which I recommend Swiss Care because it's the one that they accept everywhere and it's the one that recommends the school. After that it's very important to say that you have to apply for the exemption of the health and for this you have to pay 100 francs for the entire year. But with this you're totally insured and if something happens to you, you can go to any hospital. In the case that you live in the staff house, you're going to have

the emergency room just in front and all the hospital. So if you need anything you just go there and they won't charge you a thing.

B. Housing

1. Where to live

[Help : Do a google maps capture and circle the area you recommend to live in (and the one you do not recommend)]

I would just suggest to stay in the staff house. It's where I stayed and where I passed a really good time. In the staff house all the Erasmus live and every floor has 14 rooms. It is very important to say that the only thing that is shared is the kitchen and the bathrooms and you can select if you want to be in a mixed floor or if you want to be in a floor that just has people from your own sex. It is also very important to say that it's very near to this to the school. You just have to walk 15 minutes or less to get there and it's very very close to the train station. You just have to walk 8 minutes to get there. Every room in the staff house has its own mirror, a place to wash your hands, and a closet as well as your bed that already includes the sheets, the pillow, and the duvet, and a huge window, a desk, and also a mini sofa.

2. Find a flat or a room

[Help : How did you find your flat? Do you have any recommendation]

So in order to just find the flat, you just have to, when they send you the link where you have to put all your paperwork, you have to select the option that says, it's a question that says, do you want to stay in the staff house? And you put yes. And then you ask for more information. And they're going to give you the email of the person in charge of the accommodation for the Erasmuses. And you just send her messages and send her everything, and she's going to help you.

3. Cost

[Help : How much should I plan for a room or a flat?]

The total cost of the rent per month in the Staff House is 400 francs, but it's very important to say that when you arrive, you have to give a deposit of 250 francs and you also have to pay for the cleaning of the entire year, 100 francs. So in the first month, you have to be ready with 750 francs.

III. When I arrive at the university

A. Inscription at the university

[Help : How was the process, what did you have to do?]

In order to do your inscription in the university, you just have to present the entire documentation in the website of Mobility. And if you present your entire documentation, then in the welcoming week, they're going to give you your student card as well as your inscription letter.

B. Information on the university

1. Class

[Help : for each class tell us how was the class, what did you like and not like, would you recommend it for the next student?]

In my case, I took the Business Communication II class, as well as Supply Chain Management, German Beginners, Cross-Cultural Management, Economic Applied Psychology, and the Swiss Banking Sector. All of them were great classes. I enjoyed them a lot, and each one was pretty interesting in their own way. Being honest, I would say that classes are way, way less heavy than in France. The education system is very, very easy, and something very great is that your entire score doesn't depend just in one exam. It depends mostly, like, 50% in the work you do in class, and 50% in the exams.



Out of these classes, I only did 3 physical exams, which were Business Processes & Project Management, German Beginners as well as Supply Chain Management. And I did two online exams, which were done at home, that were the Cross-Cultural Management exam and the Swiss Banking Sector exam.

2. Organization of the Class

[Help : tell us the duration of the class, the volum of work, the behavior of teachers etc. ?]

Being honest, the classes are very, very long. They are four hours each, and during these four hours, it's mostly talking. For me, it was very interesting to see that there aren't any classes in amphitheatres. It's always like in small rooms with 20 to 30 people maximum, and there you normally have time to work in a team, which was pretty interesting for me to see. And in terms of the volume of the work, it's not that heavy. Being honest, I would say that Montpellier University has a way heavier system.

3. List of courses and recommendation

[Help : list your different courses and let us know what do you think : level (easier, same or harder than the 1st semester course at MOMA, what you liked about the content, how is the class organization, who is the professor). Finally, for each class, tell us if you recommend the course.]

Like I said, I took Business Communication II, Cross-Cultural Management, Supply Chain Management, Business Processes I, Project Management, the Swiss Banking Sector, and Economic Applied Psychology, as well as German Beginners. I would say that the most difficult classes were Business Processes & Project Management, because they taught us how to do the automatization of processes using Camunda, which was amazingly and surprisingly very interesting, but very hard. And Supply Chain Management, which was also very, very interesting, but was like way too heavy in terms of the amount of content, however, the exam was easy.

In the case of the Swiss Banking Sector, this one was a focus model. It was only two days. I would definitely recommend taking this one, because the professors that were teaching there were actual directors of Swiss banks, and one of them even worked in the European Union Bank, and he studied in the US in one of the best Ivy League universities. That class was amazing and was very, very interesting in just two days. In

the case of the Economic Applied Psychology, I would say not to take this one, because even though it was very easy, it was horribly boring. The only thing that was pretty much scored was a group project and your attendance, but it was just about communication and how to do workshops, and was more than boring. Do not take this one.

In the case of Cross-Cultural Management, I would definitely recommend taking this one. The teacher was a Chinese teacher that knew a lot of things, and she was very nice, and her class was very, very interesting, and it was amazing. I would also really, really recommend you guys to take the German Beginners class, because it was one of the best classes, and I learned a lot, and it's pretty useful to know at least some of the basics of German if you're living in Switzerland.

In the case of Business Communication 2, I would suggest you take it if you like communication, but it wasn't very interesting. Even though every class was a different teacher, it was pretty boring because they kept repeating themselves, and I liked it, but not that much. I would say that the Swiss Banking Sector, Economic Applied Psychology, Business Communication 2, Cross-Cultural Management, and German Beginners are easy classes, but Business Processes and Project Management and Supply Chain Management are difficult classes.

4. Exam

[Help : How was the exam? Format? Duration? Grade]

The exams are very different in Switzerland because the school has a lot of technology and they take their exams in an iPad. The exams are normally QSEMs but they do not have any negative points so it's actually great because you can get really good grades. It is very important to say that something that is kind of hard is that the iPad has a keyboard that is in German and you can make a lot of mistakes if you don't actually realize it. But it was amazing and I actually enjoyed far more doing the exams in iPad than in the way we do it at the University of Montpellier.

IV. When I life there

A. Safety

[Help : Is it safe? Is there areas or times I should avoid]

Being honest, Switzerland is incredibly safe. There wasn't any part of town in Olten that I felt unsafe, and everywhere I traveled in the country was amazingly safe as well.

B. Phone and Internet

[Help : How to be able to call and have internet]

In the case of phone and internet, I would definitely recommend you to get Digital Republic because you get unlimited phone calls and unlimited internet in all Switzerland for 19 francs, 99. But if you don't want to get unlimited, you can just pay for a couple megabytes also, and you can just pay 9 francs.

C. Events

[Help : How to know about the events?]

So, during the first week, the university organizes the welcoming week, where they bring you totally for free to Basel, to different museums, as well as the university that is in Basel. They give you food, drinks, and everything for free, and they even give you 30 francs and bring you to the food market to spend it, and any type of international food that was amazing. Then, during the semester, they did two different events, where they gave us food and drinks, and it was amazing. In the case of the Erasmus group from Olten, they try to organize things, but they cancel everything at the last minute, always, and to be honest, that's terrible, so I wouldn't recommend you to actually buy the Erasmus cards.

And if you want to go to different events and do different things, I would recommend you to check more the Instagram websites and everything else from the Erasmus groups that are from Basel and from other cities, because they do amazing trips. For example, they organized a trip to go to the Europa Park, which is located in Germany, and it was amazing.

D. Sports

[Help : What sport can I do ? and how?]

In terms of sports, all the sports from the university are in the campus that is located to Brugg. And for example, during Tuesdays they have hiking classes and classes of everything you can imagine. The university has a lot of sports that are free and are amazing. But in the case of Olten, they do not offer any sports. So you can actually just go to the gym. You have to pay 55 francs per month to go to the gym that is very close to the staff house. And this gym opens 24 hours, seven days of the week. So it's the one that I would recommend you to have. If not, you can just do hiking and long walks. Or something that you could do also is to buy the NightGA, which actually offers you the night trains totally for free from 7 p.m. till 5 a.m. And go to the gym in those hours if you want to go to Brugg, to the university gym.

E. Eating

[Help : Any recommendation? Or good tips (e.g. an international house buffet)]

In terms of eating, I would just recommend you to go to the Lidl, that it's very close to the staff house. You just have to walk 15 minutes to get there, and they have pretty much the same prices as France, so that's great, because being honest, eating outside is very, very expensive in Switzerland. As well, I wouldn't recommend you to pay the buffet in the school, because it's super expensive. You have to pay like 15 francs. It's actually very, very great, and it looks amazing and tastes amazing, but it's very, very expensive, so I would just recommend you to cook in the staff house and bring it to your classes.

F. Go to the university : bus, car, bike

[Help : How did you get access to the bus, car or bike]

To go to the school from the staff house I would just recommend you to walk because it's just 15 minutes and actually in the entire town of Olten you can go everywhere by walking so you don't actually need to use a public transport and I wouldn't recommend it either because it's very expensive it cost 2.5 francs every ride and being honest you don't actually even need it in case that you have classes in other campuses just use the train and I would recommend you to buy the half tax which is the card that actually allows you to pay half the prices of the trains and it allows you to save a lot of money or the night TA so that way you can have free trains from 7 pm till 5 am.

Actually, the university always has coupons in order to buy your half-tax or 98 cards, so I would definitely recommend you to ask, because that allowed me to save 30 francs from the total cost of the card, and some people even save more money.

G. Travels

[Help : What do you recommend and what do you not recommend]

For the travels, I would definitely recommend you to visit Zurich, Basel, Luzern, Luzern, and any other amazing cities in Switzerland. Switzerland is a country that has a lot of things to see, and that is very, very different from the French part, to the Italian part, to the German part, so it's actually very interesting to see the differences in the people, in the culture, and even in the way they live.

H. Any other information you would have liked to know about *[Help : What would I liked to know if I could have gone back in time]*

Something that I would definitely like to know before is that the NightGA card is actually more useful than the half-tax card because you can just pay for the ride on the morning or even get there before 5 a.m. and return at 7 p.m. and do not pay anything to visit any places. Well, for the half-tax, it's just that you pay 50% of the ticket every time.

I would absolutely love to know beforehand that the best trips are organized by the Erasmus groups that are from Basel, Zurich, and other major cities, as well as the fact that I didn't know before coming that you could actually get a scholarship from the university. It's very important to know that this university, even though they know that you cannot apply for the Erasmus Plus scholarship, they give you their own scholarship, which is 2,200 francs, which are pretty useful, and that they offer you accommodation for very cheap, as well as they even help you with some things like discounts on the train cards, and they offer a lot of events and free food. Also, other things is that if you go to the cafeteria after 4 p.m., they actually give you the food that is left totally for free, and you can take it to your house. That's amazing as well. So, to be honest, before coming to Switzerland, I really thought it would be a very expensive Erasmus, but it wasn't. I think I actually spent far less than other people that had to pay very huge rents in cities that do not offer that much help.

V. After your semester abroad

A. What are you planning do to?

[Help : What do you want to do next year]

For the next year, I'm going to go to the Masters in Paris-Saclay University, where I'm going to do my Masters in Alternance. It's the Master in Gestion de la Production, Achats et Logistique. (Master GPAL), and I'm going to do that with a specialization in Management Global des Achats et de la Chaîne Logistique.

B. Did you apply for master?

[Help : in which master where you accepted

Yes, I was accepted in many different universities, but I was more interested in the ones that offered alternance. In the ones that offered alternance, I was accepted in Panthéon-Assas, Paris-Saclay, Aix-Marseille, and Sorbonne.



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[1] To update the agenda just click right on your moose