

Global Leadership Program Report

University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland

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Exchange duration: 2023.02.15 – 2023.07.31

1. Reason of application

I got to know the Global Leadership exchange program through my friend and gained interest in the program. After doing some research on the program, I decided to choose Switzerland as the country of exchange. I have always wanted to travel to Europe to experience the culture and atmosphere there. Hence, Switzerland is one of the best choices as it is located at the heart of Europe. I applied for University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW) as they have specialized programmes for student of Computer Science and offer a lot of courses in English.

2. Studies

a. Mobility website

Each exchange student is required to register an account in the mobility website. This website helps students to meet all requirements needed for the exchange program. Documents needed such as identification documents, motivation letter, certificate of language proficiency are all submitted through this website. Course registration is also done through this website. Also, the final academic transcript after the exchange program ended can also be received through this website.

b. Courses

I took a total of 7 courses with a total of 16 ECTS during my exchange semester:

- i. German for Exchange Students
- ii. Grammar Intensive - Clean up your English
- iii. Mathematics for Data Communication
- iv. Foundation in Data Science
- v. Foundation in Data Visualization
- vi. Interactive Visualization
- vii. Current Management Topics by MOOCs

I originally wanted to join a semester project offered by the university, but was then told that it is hard for me to join the project as there was no suitable group for me to join in. As an alternative, I took a few courses that are related to Data Science (course iv – vi), which I learned a lot about the field of Data Science.

c. Assessments and examinations

Assessments are conducted either two or three times depending on the course. The professor will notify students on the schedule of the assessments on the start of the semester. The courses I took mostly have only written assessments, except for German for Exchange Student having one oral examination. The grade of the assessment is

ranked on a scale of 6.0. Below shows the grading scale and the relevant grade compared to the grading scale in SNU.

- 6.0: Higher grade than A+
- 5.5: A+
- 5.0: A
- 4.5: B+
- 4.0: B
- 3.5: C+
- 3.0: C
- Lower than 3.0: Fail

The final grade of each course is calculated based on aspects such as assessment results, assignments, and projects. Most courses do not take attendance into the grading process.

3. Life in Switzerland

a. Registration in the city hall

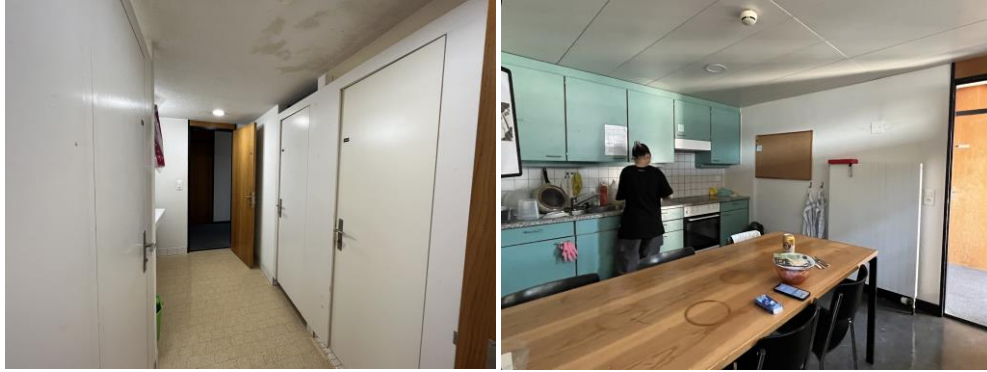
Upon arrival, I visited the city hall and applied for my residence permit. After that, I waited for some time to receive an email which required me to go to the immigration office to take photo and register for the residence permit. Most of the officers speak English, which no communication problem occurred and the whole process was smooth. The application fee for the residence permit is 243CHF.

b. Dormitory

I have applied for dormitory provided by the school. The dormitory is located in Olten, inside a local hospital. The dormitory is a one-room style dormitory, which each student gets their own room. The toilet, shower room and kitchen are located outside the room in a shared space, but it is very convenient as each floor has its own facilities prepared. The kitchen is also equipped with a lot of things such as pots and pans, cutlery, cups and bowls, and even a rice cooker. It is very convenient as I do not have to buy my own items. On a side note, FHNW university provides subsidies of 2500CHF for each exchange student per semester.



The dormitory room



Shared toilets and kitchen area

c. Transportation

As the campus is located in another city named Brugg, which is 30 minutes train away from the dormitory, FHNW university has provided us subsidies for train tickets (188CHF per month). I have bought the monthly travel pass (245CHF) which allows me to use the whole transportation system in Switzerland. With the monthly travel pass, not only I can commute between campus and dormitory anytime, I can also travel around Switzerland using the travel pass.

d. Bank account

I have opened a UBS bank account, which is free of charge for students. A debit card and credit card is given, which can be used in Switzerland and also in Europe as well. There is a UBS bank nearby the dormitory, hence it is very convenient. UBS bank can also be found all over in Switzerland. Bank account is needed to pay fees such as dormitory fees, phone bills and insurance fees.

e. Insurance

I applied for Swisscare international student insurance (61CHF per month). After applying for the insurance, I had to report my insurance status to the Swiss officials. If not, I will be fined for not being able to report my insurance.

f. Mobile phone subscriptions

There are several companies such as Sunrise, Swisscom and Salt offering phone services. I chose Salt company as they offer cheaper package compared to others. The coverage is also good.

g. Grocery

Marts such as Migros, Coop and Lidl can be found almost anywhere in Switzerland. I usually visit Lidl mart near my campus as it is the most convenient and offer more budget prices. Prices in Migros are in the mid-range, while prices in Coop are often in the high range. Still, you can get more quality items in Migros and Coop compared to Lidl. Sometimes, I go for grocery shopping at the border of Switzerland and Germany because the prices in Germany are way much lower compared to Switzerland.

h. Events for exchange students

There are tons of events for exchange students throughout the whole semester, such as welcome parties, orientations, hiking and camping events, sports events and more. The international student body named Erasmus Student Network is the main organiser of all

these events. Most events are free of charge, but some requires a small amount of fee. If you join their ESN membership, you can also get discounts on their events. I had a fun time joining the events and meet a lot of friends from all over the world. It was truly a memorable experience for me. I have also applied for the buddy program, which I was assigned to a Swiss buddy. She helped me a lot at the start when I just came to Switzerland, and we also had a fun time going to cafés and enjoying good food.

i. Travel

Switzerland is known for its beauty of nature in the whole world. During my stay there, I got the chance to explore the amazing landscapes in Switzerland. The snow mountains in Zermatt, the translucent turquoise blue lake in Interlaken and the bustling city of Zurich are just too amazing.



Pictures taken in Switzerland

Not only in Switzerland, I also travelled in Europe during my free time. Since Switzerland is in the heart of Europe, it was very easy to go to countries like Germany, France and Italy. A 4-hour train ride from Switzerland can take you to either Paris or Milan. My friends and I travelled a lot using trains and buses. One of the cheapest intercity buses is Flixbus. Airline companies such as Easyjet, Ryanair and Wizzair also offer cheap flight tickets to further cities. I have travelled to more than 10 countries during my stay in Switzerland.

4. Thoughts and reviews about the program

Overall, I had a very wonderful experience being an exchange student in Switzerland. I experienced different cultures of Switzerland, from the atmosphere of studying in a local Swiss university, to the unique cultures that the Swiss people have. People in Swiss are generally very kind and helpful, and most of them can also speak English. This made my life in Switzerland very convenient and comfortable as well as I do not have to worry about language barrier. Through this program, I have also got to know a lot of international friends from Taiwan, Indonesia, Mexico, France and lots more. Apart from that, I have also become a more independent person, because living in a foreign country is not easy as you will have to deal with all sorts of things by yourself. I would highly recommend anyone who would like to experience life in Switzerland or Europe to join this program. Lastly, I would like to thank the College of Engineering for giving me the chance to join this exchange program and also all the people who have helped me through the whole program.