

## Support

### From PH Zug / the International Office

The International Office has been really helpful at my exchange experience. Patrick, the head of the Office, has given us kind advice on the first day of school and equipped us all necessary tools and documents to access all of its services. Judith, the Mobility Coordinator and also our “go-to person” when we meet any difficulty to adapt in our new home and school, helped me to find my host family for accommodation and checked up on me to see if I adapted well into the new environment.

### From your buddy

Our student buddy is Nicole Portmann. As our schoolmate, she showed us a lot about the Swiss way of life as she invited us to the Mittelalterfest and a dinner meeting at her home, she also organised German lessons for us, doing a lot to help us immerse into the local culture. We had a lot of quality time together.

## Accommodation and living situation

### Finding accommodations, type of accommodations, cost

I had been living with a host family during these three months. My host Priska Fuchs owns a three-storey house in a residential area just about 10 minutes of walking away from the PH, while a bus stop that connects to the train station is just down the street.

As mentioned above, Judith the Mobility Coordinator helped me to find my accommodation, as we contacted through emails two months before the beginning of the semester to discuss the possible ways for me to find a place to live, at the end Judith introduced me to Priska; we then had a webcam meeting together to discuss details such as rent and transportation.

The rent is 500 francs each month, I got to have my own room with my own shower room, while I share the kitchen, toilets and living room with Priska and her daughters.



Left: me; middle: my colleague Polly; right: my host Priska



The lovely house I have been living in for three months!

### Approximate monthly living costs

The cheapest costs I find can be 1600 francs, that includes anything but not the rent and having to go outside the city you are living in, as the train tickets for travelling between cantons are quite costly --- at least 8.7 francs, while inter-canton tickets are either 2.7 or 3.1 francs. Also if you cook your every meal and not eating outside which will be a cheaper option, as a meal in a restaurant costs about 20 francs, while a week worth of foodstuff bought from supermarket costs about 50-60 francs.

### Overall programme

#### Programme at PH Zug (lectures etc.)

Programmes at PH Zug are well-designed aiming to support our needs as exchange students, as they provide extra language materials and sessions where both exchange and local students can share their opinions and ideas. For instance, the programme “Studying abroad - stretching boundaries - teaching diversity” allows us to learn and practice new methodologies of expressing and transforming pressures of cultural clash into healthy incentives of knowing and studying from other cultures whilst feels like home. Other programmes, such as “On the road @ Humanities”, also provided us the chance to express our cultural experiences with local students and teachers, as in the last lesson, me and my other exchange students has introduced to the class our own education system, which sparked a fun and meaningful discussion.

Besides being beneficial at our cultural exchanges, the PH programmes also enriched our concepts and thoughts of what it means to be an educator. The programme “Studying abroad - stretching boundaries - teaching diversity” discussed issues arising from integrated education and multicultural classrooms and possible strategies to tackle them, while other programmes also taught us about useful skills and tools for teaching, for example from “Person and Interaction” we learnt active listening for parent-teacher counselling, from “On the road @ Humanities” we learnt about proper lesson planning.



Me and Polly on a consultation lesson of a course.

### Teaching practice programme

The teaching practice programme provided by PH and the International School of Zug and Luzern (ISZL) has given me a good opportunity to practice and improve my set of teaching skills as a prospective teacher.

The mentorship lessons, organised by Olivia Green, were arranged before every teaching practice session. In these lessons, Olivia provided us with insightful advice to improve our lesson plans and activities through consultations, also, we had to summarise our teaching experience by writing Learning Diary entries for her to check and feedback, which is helpful to recollect our experience and to improve our teaching knowledge and skills upon them.

The PH has found for us ISZL to conduct our teaching practice. Since it is a school using English as its medium, we faced no language boundaries for our teaching. The practice programme gave us enough time to establish meaningful connections with our students by providing sufficient to observe and assist in the classrooms before we plan our own lessons for them. Also my support teacher, David Edwards, has been really helpful through my practice, as he was responsible for planning my practice period and examining my performance. Both him and Olivia had given me really thorough commentaries on my teaching style, all of its strengths and weaknesses, for me to work on it to advance further.

### Challenges you faced

For quite a few lessons, I found myself unable to navigate myself through its content due to existing language barrier. It was usually resolved when I asked for assistance to my instructors and classmates, who were very helpful on that. Also despite considering myself to be a reserved person back home, I still find it a challenge to make friends here, that being said, all the Swiss I met are nice and helpful, but they seem to have a stronger set of boundaries that might need time for newcomers to go through, which was not much for three months.

### Personal evaluation of the stay

### Benefit for your future studies and career

For my studies, the programme has introduced to be a lively and fascinating discussion of different strands of teaching styles and pedagogies coming from a different culture, which broadens my imagination as to what education can be --- now I know there can be a wholly different philosophy and methodology of teaching and learning, I can take my experience back home.

For my career, this programme is a real “kickstarter” to my journey as an educator, as I gained invaluable experience of teaching in a classroom, drawing up lesson plans, talking with my students and many other features of working as a school teacher. From this programme, I found myself more confident to endow in the teaching career in the future.

Generally, this programme has been a really good chance to make me grow to be an independent learner and educator, equipped to be open-minded in this day and age of international community and welcome all challenges in the future.

### Recommendations for future students

I will recommend those who really want to see themselves if they can teach in the future to come to PH Zug, as it will give you an excellent opportunity to learn the essentials about teaching and learning, also I think it would be really convincing that if you can teach well in a foreign school, you might very well be able to teach in your own schools!

### Personal evaluation (3 positive and 3 negative points)

- + I became more confident to develop my teaching career.
- + I became more bolden to explore new places and meet new friends.
- + I had a quality time to think through and formulate my life plans and goals thanks to the serene and clean lands of Switzerland.
- I found myself to have time management issues, from missing a bus to overrunning my lesson, this had not been prevalent until I studied here.
- I found myself treating myself too harsh when trying to evaluate my qualities and performances, as it appeared in the “Studying abroad - stretching boundaries - teaching diversity” course and the teaching practice mentorship.
- I found that I can be too serious when managing my own matters.