

# PH Zug Exchange Semester Final Report – Ciara Fleming

## Accommodation / Living Situation

For my exchange semester in Zug, I didn't actually live in Zug itself. I lived in student accommodation in Hergiswil which is around 15 minutes from Lucerne by train! Each day it only took around one hour to travel to college. I really enjoyed this commute as the views from the train were beautiful, especially the view of Lake Zug.

In terms of finding accommodation, it wasn't that easy. As the monastery accommodation was booked up, it was hard to find accommodation in Zug itself. This is what led me to look towards the direction of Lucerne! There were not many options in Lucerne either, a lot of student accommodation was fully booked. That is how I ended up living in Hergiswil. I really enjoyed living in Hergiswil as I felt I was able to fully experience another region of Switzerland. The monthly rental cost of my accommodation was 635 CHF. This included free use of washing machines and dryers / weekly cleaning service of the kitchen and communal bathrooms. I had an individual room in a 16-person apartment. The apartment was very spacious and comfortable to live in and I would definitely recommend the accommodation. I would say the biggest factor to consider is that you have to commute each day, but I have to say I found it to be a very pleasant commute.





## Overall Programme

As for the PH Zug itself, I had an amazing experience attending college here for a semester. I immediately felt very welcome at the PH Zug. Judith Kreuz and Patrick Pfeuffer of the international office were so helpful and attentive in making sure we settled in okay and checked in throughout the semester, so I always felt like I had a line of support. Another line of support that was brilliant to have was the buddy system within the PH Zug. Us incoming students were assigned two buddies who were fellow students of PH Zug. My buddies were amazing, they supported us through our entire semester and answered any questions or queries we had. It was very nice to have fellow students of PH Zug to turn to if we ever needed anything. They also organised trips and events for us to ensure we had the most fulfilling experience possible – which we most definitely

did. This was a great way to meet and get to know new people and new places.



The very first day I noticed the harmonious atmosphere of PH Zug. There was a great feel about the college, and I was very excited at this point to get started with the programme. There was a great variety of modules to choose from, ranging from nature and science-based modules, a speech and voice training course, piano / singing lessons and a special education module. I thoroughly enjoyed all of the modules, they were all practical and most of the lectures involved



an activity or something active to participate in. I both enjoyed and benefited from the nature of the lectures. There was a great balance between theory and practice across all of the modules I completed.



## Teaching Practice

I completed the teaching practice module during my semester also. I completed my teaching practice Every Tuesday and Thursday morning from 8:30 – 12:00. I attended an International School for my school experience which was such an insightful experience. The school was very multicultural which was an enriching experience for me, as I gained a deeper understanding about many different cultures. The school's curricular ethos was very inquiry based. This was a significantly different approach to what I was used to back home in Ireland, but again an enriching and insightful to witness the curriculum in action! There was a very child-centred independent learning approach which was fascinating to watch. The children would build their knowledge and understanding through their own lines of inquiry and subjects they were interested in. There are definite aspects of this approach that I will be drawing into my future pedagogy. In connection to the teaching practice module, I

completed a mentoring teaching practice module with mentor Olivia Greene.

## Challenges Faced



To be honest, I was quite apprehensive about the music-based modules prior to my semester at the PH Zug, I had very little experience with music. One thing I would say that my perspective of music has changed completely after my semester. Although my ability has improved, that is not the most important takeaway for me. My biggest takeaway is that my confidence with the subject had improved greatly. I believe much more in my ability to teach music after my experience at the PH Zug. I am so grateful for this experience as it has transformed my view of music, which has benefited me greatly but also the future children I will teach.

## Personal Evaluation and Recommendation:

My exchange semester at PH Zug is genuinely one of the best things I have ever done. It has taught me so much about the world but also myself as a person and an educator. I will take some of the most amazing memories with me from the experience and for that I am so

thankful that I made the decision to complete my exchange semester at PH Zug. I could not recommend the experience enough. It will challenge you in new and exciting ways and allow you to flourish. I met so many amazing new friends and saw the most beautiful sites that I will remember forever. The experience was both academically and personally transformative. It feels like a step out into the world, that I believe everybody needs to experience.



