

## Final report

### Semester exchange programme at PH Zug 2023/2024

#### 1 Support

I contacted the International Office in advance before my application process started. Judith Kreuz responded immediately for all of my questions about an exchange semester at PH. Whenever I needed any additional information, signatures or documents before or during my stay I received them via e-mail at the same day I asked for them.

That was my first impression about PH and helped me with my final decision where to study abroad. I am very grateful for that support which made my application process smooth and without any uncertainties. Here is the contact to the international office [incoming@phzg.ch](mailto:incoming@phzg.ch)

Throughout the whole program we received a huge amount of support from PH and our buddies. Our buddies were 2 students at PH in their final year of studies. They organized many trips and events to get to know each other and helped us to fit in. If we need any type of help, we can rely on them. They answered all our questions and made our first weeks and the entire stay easier to get used to it.

#### 2 Accommodation and living situation

Directly after my nomination I have received an e-mail from Judith Kreuz with recommendations for accommodation in the monastery Kloster Maria Opferung. That was the best decision I made. Monastery is situated 1 minute far away from PH and next to the student living accommodation WG. The accommodation is easily reachable by bus 11 from the train station Zug. It is situated in the countryside of the city. You just need to go further up the hill 200m far away and you reach viewpoints on the whole Zug city. There you can easily escape from the rush of the city.

Living in monastery is the cheapest option for living in Zug. Monthly payment is 550CHF. Cleaning and hygiene aids are covered. Living there has many benefits. It is easy to reach PH and calmness of the place is perfect for studying. What are the disadvantages of that place? What is good to know before staying here? You

cannot accommodate anyone in your room during your stay. What I really missed is that there is no living room or a place for socializing with others.

Due these reasons it is worth considering the stay at student accommodation WG. The only disadvantage of staying at WG is that you need to pay for the whole semester, also for August and January, no matter if you are staying here or not. Some of the exchange students takes courses during January. If it is your case, I recommend paying extra for WG.

In both of these accommodations the rooms are furnished and the kitchen is fully equipped.

### 3 Overall programme

PH Zug is a small university with familiar atmosphere where lecturers and students know each other. The university respect everyone as an individual. You will feel safe and welcomed here.

There are plenty of lectures provided by PH you can choose from. They are mostly practical. You are learning through group discussions; role play or group/individual projects. How can we promote these theories into our practice? That is the main focus of all of the courses provided by PH. Especially I appreciate the course Studying abroad – stretching boundaries – teaching diversity. This module is held five times in the whole semester and focuses on reflecting on your experiences you have here as an exchange student. It provides support for your well-being and motivates you to step out of your comfort zone and stretch new boundaries.

In most of the cases there are no final exam at the end of the semester. You reached the ECTS doing projects, learning journals or attending the course itself. It motivates you to work through whole semester and it does not stress you with any final exam period.

There are also many offers for On or Off-campus Sport activities outside the regular curriculum. You can join many of these sport courses without any charge.

During my stay I had the opportunity to take teaching practice twice per week at ISZL. Because I am not German speaking exchange student I was placed into the international school. This opportunity I enjoyed to the fullest. I have visited ISZL even more than twice per week and gained life-long memories and

valuable inspirations for my future. I have been teaching at least 2 lessons per week and have almost free hand in choosing topics or subject I was interested in. Teaching practice was the most enriching course I have taken at PH. Mainly because of the big amount of support I received from my classroom teacher. After each lesson I have received feedback with recommendation on which areas can I work on and what I have done well. Learning by doing is the most descriptive phrase of my Teaching practice.

My classroom teacher at ISZL, Katie Hugen, gave me the big amount of support. I have found my role teaching model in her. I have never seen much more inspirational teaching approach during my studies. Ms Hugen shared with me each detail about the whole class, individual impairments of the children, her own experiences gained during her stays in different countries, her struggles, worries and inspiring ideas she has. She answered every question and fulfilled my every wish I had during my stay. She helped me grow as a human being and future teacher.

Hand in hand with the Teaching practice we had mentoring practice with Olivia Green. We met every week after our teaching practice, discuss our experiences, make lesson plans and reflect on our experience. I appreciate the support of a mentor but it would be enough to meet 3- 4 times per semester like the German speaking exchange students did.

The biggest challenge I faced was teaching in English at my practice. That was the most enriching experience someone could have arranged. During my first days here I felt overwhelmed. There was too much for me deal with, too much input, things going on. Feelings of uncertainty raised up after realizing that I am the only incoming student who does not speak her mother language. Afterwards I realized that exactly I am in the best situation in which I always wanted to be and that I can gain the most. "Take the most from it" was the goal I settled to myself.

I will benefit from this experience for the rest of my career as an elementary school teacher. It can provide understanding and valuable support to my students in teaching a new language or I can easily put myself into someone shoes of those who are new incomings to our classroom.

4 Personal evaluation of the stay

My teaching experience at ISZL and studies at PH helped me grow as a future teacher. The skills and input I have gained during my stay here expanded my horizons and helped me to better understand myself.

I recommend this opportunity to everyone. Every student my age can further develop, gain confidence and learn a lot about themselves through this experience. It is beneficial to step out of your comfort zone and find out where your place is in this world.

For future arrivals, I highly recommend making the most of your time here, trying new things you've always wondered about, not being afraid to make mistakes, overcoming the insecurities and doubts you have about yourself, and finding balance in your life. You don't always have to force yourself into things you're not used to. But believe that you can learn a lot when you face new encounters.

I will benefit from this semester for the rest of my life. I appreciate the support I receive from PH and ISZL, and I highly recommend studying at PH to everyone.