

Student Exchange Report

Name and surname	Alessandro Mendoza
Date of birth	03rd April, 1988
Home Country	Italy
Receiving University	Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK)
Home University	Politecnico di Milano
Home University personal ID	10387812 (codice persona: 10387812, matricola: 820696)
School Level	Master of science
Home course of study	Communication Design
Exchange course of study	Interaction Design
Start of studies	Autumn Semester 2013
Exchange Period	Spring Semester 2015
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Before the Exchange

I applied for the international exchange student within the Swiss-European-Mobility-Programme (SEMP) in Switzerland at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (Zürich University of the Arts) because I was interested to discover the Swiss culture and the differences between the Italian and the Swiss school systems and try to get inspired from the environment of the "Toni-Areal" the new campus of the Zurich University of the Arts.

Organisation

There were a few things to prepare in advance in order to be eligible to do an international exchange student within the Swiss-European-Mobility-Programme (SEMP). The information provided from my home university was sometimes not straight forward and I had to make some additional phone calls and emails in order to make sure I did everything I needed to do.

Nevertheless, both universities were very supportive and there was always someone who could answer my questions.

I had to arrange the flight and transportation in Switzerland by myself, and About the compulsory basic health insurance for Switzerland my Italian European Health Insurance Card (TEAM) was accepted well.

Once I was assigned to the school, I contacted the incoming exchange coordinator and stayed in contact with her until my visit and kindly for all my stay.

On the first day of my international exchange, we had a meeting head specialisation. We were informed about the expectations and were also given additional information about Switzerland and Zurich in particular.

It was a very helpful meeting because all of the administrative details of the international exchange were discussed and explained again. It was a very pleasant welcome and it was a nice beginning to the international exchange.

The Exchange

Studies

I really like the courses provided by the Department of Design. All the courses were well organized with a very detailed schedule given to us at the beginning of the semester. I learnt a lot from the Interaction Design course. The teachers there are very knowledgeable and helpful.

I had an extremely busy semester there. I was so occupied with study that I had no time to explore Swiss culture even though I spent nearly 7 months in Switzerland.

Because of the heavy workload, I couldn't take a German language course, which was quite a pity for me. I just had one German language course at the beginning. However, there are also some good points of having such a heavy workload. I did a lot of presentations during the whole semester and I believe that my presentation skill really has been improved a lot. I had a lot of experience of working by the deadline and I think I can handle the stress before deadline better in the future. I have had a direct impression of the Swiss academic system, which is quite different from the Italian one.

The study facilities provided by the Department of Design are very good. I liked to study in the libraries, which have very pleasant environment and a large quantity of English books. The online database is also very useful. The classrooms are very nice too and the "Toni-Areal" the new campus of the Zurich University of the Arts is amazing. I had a lot of inspiration from that building and from the Swiss environment in general.

Accommodation and living in Zurich

For the accommodation I choose to take a single room occupancy in the Woko of Meierwiesenstrasse, all things considered I was fine here and the place is good value for money.

I never been in Switzerland before and in particular I really liked Zurich a lot. I imagined it to be very busy and business oriented. Working in Zurich for these 6 months showed me how relaxed and down to earth many people in Zurich are. There is the busy shopping district close to the train station with the expensive shops but you can find many cute little shops and cafes that are reasonably priced.

Living in Switzerland is more costly than living in Italy. Eating out is more expensive for sure and bringing your own lunch makes a big difference on your budget.

Zurich offers many attractions and is a beautiful city right on the lake. It is definitely worth a visit.

Zurich is a very multicultural and international city. If you speak English you won't have any problems getting around.