

**EXCHANGE REPORT****Name**

Yuxin Pu

Year and term for exchange

2021 Autumn

Exchange university

ETHz (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich)

Degree programme

Sustainable Urban Planning and Design

“I underestimated ETH Zurich”

Before departure

I love travelling so I am always looking forward to living in different country to experience the culture and life. I chose ETH Zurich as Switzerland is an awesome country and the university is with high reputation in academics. It is difficult for me, a non-EU citizen, to apply for a master study there so I think an exchange semester is the best choice.

Before entering the university, there are a lot of things in the list to do such as prepare your study plan, apply the visa, finding the accommodation. A piece of good news is that the exchange office in ETHz would help you a lot during the application so do not worry too much! As I am a non-EU citizen with Sweden long-period residence permit, I need to apply for a residence permit in Switzerland for staying more than 3 months. Before entering the country, I need to apply for a short-term visa and it is totally free. The documents required are also not too messy.

To find an accommodation was the most terrible thing for me. First of all, you could apply for an accommodation from the university directly in the application period, and I could say that all of my friends who apply for it got an accommodation in the student housing. However, the location, price, and facilities were much worse than those in Stockholm, so do not put too much expectation on it. If you do not care about where and what you live, just apply for it. If you have many requirements for your living, try to find the accommodation as early as possible. The living in Zurich is very high and rare so to be honest, it is quite difficult to find an accommodation for short-term by yourself, compared to SSSB in Stockholm.

Upon arrival



I arrived in Zurich almost one week before I started my pre-course. I took a pre-language course for German as Zurich is in German-zone. The pre-language course would be held two weeks before the

semester starting. The exchange office provided a detailed guideline for what to do once arriving in Zurich so do not worry about it. Two important things came to my mind. Upon arrival, usually you need to register in the government like we did in Sweden, and then you need to pay for the residence permit. Besides, you need to buy the basic health insurance, not like in Sweden, you have the health insurance once you have residence permit. For EU students, you need to apply for exemption of health insurance with your European health insurance card.

ESN is a great organization I would like to recommend. They organized a lot of activities for European exchange students. The student association in ETHz would also have many activities but I personally did not participate into so I have no experience to share. With their member cards, you could have a lot of vouchers in different platforms. Check on their website!

Financials

I got the Erasmus+ scholarship luckily as in the previous exchange, Switzerland does not belong to Erasmus+ anymore. Like other EU exchange students, I got around 15Euro per day during my mobility exchange. If you could not apply for Erasmus+, Switzerland government would provide you a SEMP scholarship and for Swedish students, it is 390 Swiss Franc totally and the university would give you the cash when you are registering. The requirement for this scholarship is to have at least 23 credits per semester.

As I mentioned above, the mandatory health insurance is required for every non-EU citizen. I bought the insurance from Swisscare and it is 69CHF per month. You could choose the one suits you best with different deductibles. The information about the insurance could be find on the website of the university.

The living expense in Zurich is much higher than Stockholm. Personally, I went to the supermarket in the boarder city in Germany to buy the necessity, fruits and vegetables and some meat once a week in the evening with 7/25 transport card, which you could take all public transport in Switzerland freely after 7pm if you are under 25. The prices of goods in Germany are almost the half of those in Zurich. However, you must spend more time on the way, so that depends on which is more important to you.

For the supermarket in Zurich city, Denner, Lidl, and Aldi are almost the cheapest compared to Coop and Migros. One important note is that most of supermarkets are closed on Sundays except for some near the stations, so prepare your food in advance.

The fee of public transport is similar to Sweden. If you love travelling around, a half-price ticket is highly recommended. You could buy all the tickets except for monthly tickets with half price using it and even in the way to some tourist attractions like Jungfrau. However, I would not suggest you to buy it once you arrive in Zurich. The ordinary price is 120CHF per year and yearly ticket is the only option. There are usually many discount codes for new customers which would be shared to loyal customers and they are always kind to share in the social media, so keep your eyes on that! Besides, the public transport company sometimes would provide 3-month half-price ticket with much lower price, so check on their website (SBB) regularly!

Accommodation

As I mentioned above, I applied for an accommodation to the university and got one successfully. My place is near to the Honggerberg campus as my exchange programme locates there. Other friends with more courses in the Main campus lived in other places.

I lived in a student housing called M62. If you love parties, I guess it is the best place for you. We have 169 exchange students in the building and we shared kitchen, laundry room together. For each floor, there were one/two toilets and bathroom for male and female separately. I never met a crowded toilet but cooking with others was common, and party overnight as well. I was luckily living in the room

opposite to the yard so I felt quiet to sleep at night but I heard a lot of complaint about the noise. Sometimes students would call the police to solve the problem and, in this way, the noisy guys would be fined a lot, so please wherever you live, show your respect to your neighbours.

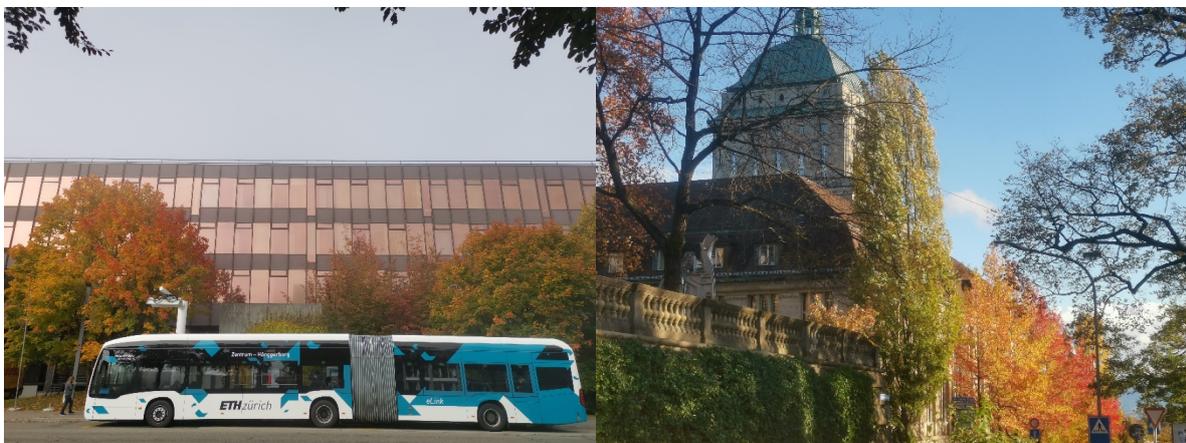


It is very hard to find a place to live by yourself, so if you are not satisfied with the accommodation you are assigned. Get to search as soon as possible!

University and studies

As my major is urban planning, there is no any subjects matching perfectly, but I could choose course from two program mainly, geomatics majoring in planning (transport related), and spatial development (landscape related). Besides, there are some basic courses from other programmes available to us, such as machine learning, R language, urban design history, which are open for Bachelor`s students, but they are also open for master`s exchange students. You need to contact the course responsible in advance, if on the course catalogue your programme is not shown.

ETH has two main campuses, and they provide free bus crossing two campuses every 15 mins. Be careful to the location of the course when you select.



Courses

I selected around 24 credits, but only passed 19.5 finally. ETH recommends to take 22-26 credits every semester, as the courses and exams are not easy and usually each course only has 3 credits, very different from KTH. I would advise to take one more course (7.5) at KTH before going to exchange.

City and country

I like Zurich and Switzerland very much. Zurich is the most developed city. It is very convenient to live there and the city owns a quite beautiful view locating between lake and mountains. Switzerland also has a lot of natural views especially the snowy mountains and lakes. I have to say the views are amazing, and it definitely deserves visiting for many times!



Leisure and social activities

Luckily, as a student at ETH, you could enjoy the sports mostly for free! Not only in the gym, but also a lot of ball games and dances!

I love travelling. If it is the same to you, Switzerland is the best place for sure! Hiking is the most popular activity in summer and autumn. Try to explore your own hiking way!

Sustainability

I have to take a plane to Zurich as there is no direct train between Stockholm and Zurich. Unfortunately, the bike network in Zurich is not as good as Stockholm, so I usually take bus or tram instead of bikes or scooter. There are a lot of second-hand markets and stores in the city. The recycling rules are stricter than Sweden, but I do not know why plastic is not required to recycling.

Other recommendations and observations

The working pressure is much heavier in Switzerland, so make a schedule for your exchanging semester in the beginning, and control your life!

If you want to write your thesis at ETH, contact your preferable supervisor (professor) as soon as possible☺