



Exchange Experience Reports

École Polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland

Host University Evaluation

Reports

Name: Leanne W. **Term Abroad:** W'19 **Faculty:** Engineering 1

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Academic life

How easy was it to figure out your course selection at your host university?

- Super simple!
- Relatively straightforward
- Pretty difficult to navigate
- It was complicated and frustrating

What did the process look like? Was it easy to register in your preferred classes?

Fairly straightforward, but always a bit challenging getting used to a new system.

Were your courses as academically rigorous as your McGill courses?

- Yes, they were as rigorous as my McGill courses
- They were similarly rigorous to my McGill courses
- No, they weren't as rigorous as my McGill courses

We'd love to know more about the academic level of your courses compared to McGill. Please explain your answer to the previous question using examples, ex: assessments, readings, labs.

All of my classes were 100% final, which was interesting and definitely more stressful, but academic level fairly similar. I took 4 core engineering classes, since they don't have that many options for electives. Their electives are mostly worth only 2 credits, and you need to be registered for 20 credits to be considered part-time and eligible for exchange scholarship money. However, I believe you might be able to take some UNIL classes (non-engineering university right beside EPFL) if you really didn't want to take your core classes.



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How did the teaching quality at your host university compare to what you're used to at McGill?

<input type="radio"/>	It was better!
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Pretty similar
<input type="radio"/>	It was much worse

Tell us about it! How did it differ from the teaching quality at McGill? What can other students expect from their profs and course work?

About the same, bigger classes, some profs are good, some not so much.

What were the main evaluation methods in your courses?

100% finals, it was a scary exam period honestly because you have no idea how you're doing in the class or what the exam is going to be like. One of my finals was just 2 problem solving questions. Also, a pass is considered a 4/6, which seems high but ends up being similar to a C.

How would you describe the evaluation and grading methods at your host university? Please select as many adjectives as applies!

<input type="checkbox"/>	Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unfair
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transparent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Complicated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficult to understand
<input type="checkbox"/>	Similar methods to McGill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Different methods from McGill

Is there anything else you'd like to share about the academic experience at your host university?

They are a highly reputable university and there is lots of very cool and innovative research going on.

Student Life

Were you satisfied by the welcome and orientation services provided to you by your host university?

<input type="radio"/>	Very satisfied, everything was clear	<input type="radio"/>	Pretty satisfied
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	I was able to figure things out, but it took some time	<input type="radio"/>	Pretty confusing
<input type="radio"/>	Very confusing, I was lost		



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What is the best resource that helped you find your way at your host university?

The exchange student network (ESN) hosts tons of events throughout the semester and is a great way to meet other exchange students and get oriented.

What was the campus environment like at your host university? Please describe your experience on campus with regards to safety, social opportunities, accessibility, etc.

The campus is beautiful, right by the lake. It always felt very safe, even at night. Switzerland has a really cool Bixi-like bike rental system, except that as a student, you get every 1st hour free, meaning that you can essentially always ride for free. It's great way to get to the beach or come home from a night out.

Where did you live? Was it easy to find housing? Did you receive any support from your host university?

One of the FMEL houses (Rainbow) - they used to guarantee housing for exchange students, but they have changed systems and I'm not sure if this is true anymore. If not, apply sooner than later because it is very competitive. Rainbow house was nice and modern but kind of far. It was on the opposite side of campus from downtown, limited bus access at night and on weekends, I ended up doing a long-term bike rental to get around.

What advice would you share with students travelling to your host university? Briefly give up to 3 tips!

Don't get too far behind in your classes, but also don't stress about them too much. I didn't do much throughout the semester, worked pretty hard in June and managed to pass everything fairly easily.

Join the Exchange Student Network and go to some events to meet people.

What advice would you share with students who will live in your host city? Briefly give up to 3 tips!

Travel as much as you can around Switzerland! It's a beautiful country and super accessible by train. Definitely get the half fare pass, I also bought the Track 7 which was free transit after 7pm (great for getting home after skiing).

Over-budget. Everything is quite a bit more expensive, especially eating out, and you'll find yourself wanting to go on tons of trips and activities. I went way over my initial budget (skiing and travelling is expensive) but it was worth it. ESN has really good prices on their trips that can save quite a bit of money.