

I participated in the autumn semester of 2015 in St. Gallen University in Switzerland.

Switzerland and St. Gallen

I knew Switzerland from many years back when my parents used to live there and therefore I knew it would be a great place to spend an exchange semester in.

Switzerland is a beautiful country with breathtaking views and many places to see.

St. Gallen in particular is in my opinion one of the most beautiful and interesting cities of Switzerland.

The old city of St. Gallen has very old churches and also a unique old library which holds books from even a 1000 years ago. The university gave us a cultural tour in the city during the first week so we could see and get a full explanation about where we are.

I personally did not live in St. Gallen so I had a long commute every day to the University, but at least I enjoyed the views. Almost every weekend we had enough time to travel around the country and see different places. The advantage of being in Switzerland is that you are in the heart of Europe and therefore can easily travel to other countries without wasting too much time on the roads.

The university and the ISP program

St. Gallen University is one of the top business schools in Europe and is considered to be the best one in the German speaking part of Europe.

The classes and the level of education was impressively high. The University clearly puts a lot of effort and invests much in their students and you feel it especially in the exchange program. I chose to take part in the ISP exchange program (International Student Program). The program focuses on strategy and European business. Even though we learn in class, there are a lot of activities, usually in groups which puts a lot of focus on practical activities as opposed to theoretical study. This is what impressed me the most and is the reason I felt I learned a lot in every course I took. I was left with practical tools which I could actually use in my professional career and in my eyes this is the reason you go to MBA studies in the first place.

The ISP program consists of 5 mandatory classes:

- Strategic Management- A European Perspective
- Leadership in European Companies
- European Corporate Governance- surprisingly one of the most interesting courses in the program. It was my first and only exposure to this very important topic.
- European Culture and international Management
- Team Building- a full day course focusing on leadership and team competencies. An amazing experience.

In addition, there are elective courses which you select. I chose 2 courses which I can also recommend as really good and interesting.

- Europe's Business Environment: Rules, Reform and Restructuring. One of the most revealing classes although demands a lot of effort.
- Global Managerial Communication- interesting and fun.

In all of the courses (except for the European Culture class) we had papers and team projects to hand in as a final assignment for the final grade of the course.

In addition to the formal courses we take in class, we had other activities and company visits, as follows:

- Cultural tour in Appenzell (a canton in Switzerland)
- Company visit to Bühler- one of the biggest heavy machinery producers in the world
- Company visit to Siemens
- Company visit to BMW offices and main factory in Munich, Germany.
- Company visit to Callier- one of the big chocolate manufacturers in Switzerland
- WEF (World Economic Forum) and UN visit- a privilege possible thanks to the high reputation of the University in Switzerland.

To conclude, I had a wonderful, interesting and fulfilling time in the exchange program and I can highly recommend the University. The level of education and the professors is world class, the activities are exceptional, and the country it all takes place in is truly one of the most beautiful countries in the world.