

University of Zurich: Faculty of Business, Economics and Informatics

Programme: MA in Banking and Finance

Started: Winter Semester 2017 (expected graduation as of June 2019)

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University and Programme

UZH is ranked as the 3rd university in Switzerland and 73rd worldwide according to QS University Ranking 2018. My two-years Master's degree is in Banking and Finance and it is taught in English. Students can choose among many programmes and specializations, which can be found here: <https://www.oec.uzh.ch/en/studies/master.html>. The ones with a good reputation are Economics and Banking and Finance. Moreover, there is a joint Master's degree of UZH and ETH in Quantitative Finance, which is surely best renowned. It is quite selective and challenging, but there are students from IES who were accepted and finished it. You can also officially start Banking and Finance, pass successfully all the courses required for Quant Finance and be reallocated after one year.

The lectures are usually good, many of them are held by experienced professors which studied/worked before at the top universities such as MIT, Harvard Business School, Stanford, etc. You can choose lots of diverse courses at UZH and as a student of UZH, you can also take courses from ETH which you are interested in. With respect to my programme, compared to the Bachelor's programme at IES, it is not more difficult in terms of content of courses, but it is quite demanding in terms of work that has to be done during the semester. Furthermore, there is only one date for an exam and basically almost no time after a semester to prepare for exams so you have to work continuously. The libraries and facilities of university are modern and numerous, but mostly crowded and not many are open during the weekends.

Extra insight: there is a two-year long elective course called Portfolio Management Programme (<http://www.cpm.uzh.ch/en/portfolio-management-program.html>) in which you learn the theory in the first year and in the second year you and your team get an actual portfolio worth 1.5 million € to trade and manage. Alumni say it is very easy to find a job in financial industry after finishing it, because you learn a lot, but it is pretty time-consuming, stressful and can easily make a no-lifer out of you.

Financing

Unfortunately, I am not aware of any scholarships of UZH for international students (only ETH has one). It is rather difficult to manage part-time job and studies at the same time, especially in the first/second semester of your Master's. If you don't mind the risk of prolonging the studies, it might be a choice how to finance it since even student jobs like dishwashing are paid starting from min. 20 CHF per hour in Zurich. If you find a full time professional job after graduation, your study expenses would be recovered in several months.

Here is a useful prices' overview:

Tuition fees	870 CHF (~ 737 €)	per semester (includes a membership in uni organization which provides a number of sport trainings/ free-time activities for free every day)
Accommodation	From 500 CHF (~ 424 €)	monthly in student dormitories it is around 500 CHF (but I've heard of one for 260 CHF) look here http://www.woko.ch/ ; in shared flats it's around 900 CHF
Public transport	48 CHF (~ 40 €)	monthly for students (for city of Zurich), some people also ride bikes, there are many routes for cyclists, but it is not so convenient in the winter
Transport from/to Prague	From 19 €	Overnight buses, ČD train or low-cost Vueling flights
Lunch	From 5.00 CHF (~ 4.2 €)	at the university mensa, (many students cook at home, which is much cheaper; there are low-cost supermarkets such as Lidl or Aldi and many cheap Turkish stores)
Beer	From 6.00 CHF (~ 5 €) ☹	in a bar (in the supermarkets slightly higher prices than in the CR)
Coffee	From 1.50 CHF (~ 1.2 €)	at university

Social life & Free-time Activities

Since the prices in the cafes, restaurants and pubs are such that frequent visits would make you broke, the majority of the social life is concentrated in student dormitories, where we hang out, make dinners, parties. There are mainly Swiss and German students, but also many international ones living in the dormitories and you can always find someone who is up to something. Moreover, you can join student clubs at UZH/ETH or take part in a variety of sport activities offered for free by university every day (yoga, cross-fit, volleyball, bouldering etc.). Zurich

as a town is not that big (360 000 inhabitants), but it is beautiful with its picturesque lake and surroundings where you can take some easy hikes. It is also a great starting point for any trips within Switzerland and it is 1 hour drive from Germany, which is popular mainly for shopping due to lower prices.

Overall impression

I find the city and surroundings beautiful and the university quite good while the tuition fees are much lower than for example in the UK. One has many opportunities on which courses to take including the ones from ETH and there are some truly great lecturers both at UZH and ETH. However, I find some of the compulsory courses in my programme not so useful and quite time demanding, so it is difficult to do all the electives that you are interested in besides that or to work part-time. Moreover, many things are not affordable for students, so sometimes you need to skip activities you would otherwise do at home. But there are also some student discounts and majority of the international students are in the same situation as you are, so they'll share the compassion. With regards to my programme, I still can't tell with certainty if it pays off compared to staying at IES to be honest. (I can update this, when I will get a job, hopefully. :D) One sure thing is that if you find a job in Zurich, your investment will be paid back in several months. And if you are a quant type of person and you truly enjoyed Mathematics courses at IES, I would definitely say that the UZH/ETH Quantitative Finance programme is a perfect fit and worth it.

Find a few photos on the following page and in case you have any further questions, feel free to drop me an e-mail on mpartelova@gmail.com. :)



View from the main uni building



Zurich



From a walk/hike near Zurich



Zurich lake



Swiss fondue with flatmates



Chinese dinner with PhD friends