



## Getting to know the Student-house – its mission and infrastructure, the costs of stay and admissions

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### Summary

The Moussonstr. Student-house (Reformierte StudentInnenhaus Moussonstrasse 17, CH-8044 Zürich) is one of the four student houses that belong to the public charity organisation "Association of Reformed Student Houses in Zürich" (Verein Reformierte Studentinnen- und Studentenhäuser, Zurich).

It is [located](#) where Zürich's central university quartier meets a residential area of traditional villas in the Fluntern neighbourhood: about 5-10 minutes walk from the central buildings of the ETH, the UZH and the ZHdK.

### Some of the key features of this Student-house include:

- It provides home to a lively, international community made up of 19 students in their BSc or MSc studies
- New vacancies become available at the beginning of the semesters in twin rooms \*
- Common activities, such as community dinners on a weekly basis, seasonal excursions and helping each-other in the everyday are integrated part of student-life in the House
- Shower rooms and toilettes are available on the corridors; furthermore, a number of community rooms, such as kitchen, tea-kitchen, dining room and TV room, as well as a garden are also available
- The students of the House are responsible for the everyday management of the building, including, for example, the management of selected waste collection and so on
- The minimum length of stay in the Student-house is one full semester and at the same time its inhabitants are eligible to stay for a maximum of four semesters (two years)

\* *Twin room: two students sharing the same room. After having spent about two semesters in the House, usually (however not always), it becomes possible to move into a single room.*

### What is new?

During the summer in 2018, the student rooms went through a partial refurbishment. In addition, a brand new community kitchen was installed. In a next step, during the summer 2019, the main staircase of the building was also renovated.

### What is next, if you are interested?

Please read this entire document to develop an understanding what you can expect from living here and also to learn how the admission procedure works!

Whenever new vacancies become available, a call for applications will be published on the [website of the Student-house](#).

## **1) About the Student-house**

The mission of the Moussonstr. Student-house is to provide affordable accommodation in a sociable environment for students starting their bachelor or master studies in Zürich and thus to help their integration into the student communities of the city.

It is located in a historical building, which was built in 1902 by that time city architect of Zürich, [Gustav Gull](#). In the mid 1940ies, the inheritors of Gull sold the building to the [Association of Reformed Student Houses](#) and ever since then it has hosted students.

Placements in the building are available in six twin rooms and seven single rooms, altogether for 19 students. As of spring 2019, the Student-house was home to an international, coeducational student community that represented 11 nationalities!

Community life and the active contribution of the inhabitants to the everyday operation of the building is a central character of the Moussonstr. Student-house.

Examples of relevant activities include:

- The organisation of social events, such as seasonal excursions, semester party, various game events and so on are the integrated part of everyday life in the Student-house.
- House dinners: each Wednesday during the semester the students, together with the house-leaders, organise a community dinner. A team of three students cook and serve the diner. After the dinners, the students discuss ongoing topics in the House (such as the tidiness of the public rooms, planned community events, and so on), as well as other topics in the interest of the student community.
- Shared food for breakfast scheme (Monday to Friday, during the semester): the students themselves bulk purchase some staple food for breakfast, such as honey, jam, muesli, fruits and so on. A bakery and a local framers' association deliver bread and milk to the doorsteps of the building. Everyone prepares then her/his breakfast individually and the food that has been purchased commonly is shared proportionally.
- Regular house tasks: each of the students carries out some regular activities on the weekly basis in connection to the operation of the House. Examples of regular house tasks include the disposal of selected waste at the public collection points and/or cleaning in the kitchen, and so on.
- Sponge parties: once per semester, in an informal atmosphere (usually background music is provided and so on), the student community carry out a thorough cleaning of the student kitchen, as well as of the other public rooms of the building. These "parties" last for three hours and include a community meal upon finishing with the relevant activities.

## **2) Admission criteria**

According to the mission of the Student-house, accommodation is provided for students who are at the beginning of their BSc or MSc studies at one of the recognised higher education institutions of Zürich.

Occasionally, students in vocational education, or PhD students, moreover BSc or MSc students, who are already at a later stage in their studies, are also accepted.

Students from all over the world are welcome, regardless of their religion and/or nationality. Recommended age range: 18 – 25 years old at the time of moving in.

### **3) Available infrastructure**

Furniture provided in the student rooms includes study desks, beds and wardrobes (see also the illustrative photos provided on the website). Bedclothes are available on request.

Shower and bathrooms, as well as toilets are available on the corridors.

Other facilities and infrastructure of the Student-house include:

- community kitchen (including fridges, individual food shelves, and so on)
- dining room (including a piano)
- television and reading room
- tea kitchen
- laundry room (including washing machine and tumbler dryer)
- roof- and side terraces
- garden (including a roofed bicycle shed, Ping-Pong table, and so on)
- wireless Internet connection

Please note that no car-parking place is provided!

### **4) Costs of stay**

Twin rooms in the Student-house cost between CHF 330.- and 380.- per person and single rooms cost between CHF 430.- and 560.- per person per month (depending on the size and the location of the room). This rent includes the costs utilities, such as electricity, heating, and so on.

Besides, the students pay also a household cost contribution in the amount of CHF 210.- per semester. It covers the costs of the weekly community dinners, as well as of also other household-related expenses, such as the costs of dishwashing liquid, the replacement of the kitchen towels and so on. Even, it includes that the inhabitants of the House do not pay additionally for the use of the washing machine and the tumbler dryer in the laundry room.

Please note that a tenancy deposit<sup>1</sup> in the worth of CHF 400.- is requested at the time of moving in!

Outside the budget of the House, the student community runs its own Students' Fund and collects about CHF 15.- per student per semester for community purposes, such as the organisation of semester party.

### **5) Vacancies**

Typically, most of the new tenants join the Student-house at the start of the autumn semester (with the 1st of September, sometimes already with the 1<sup>st</sup> of August) and a smaller number of them at the start of the spring semester (with the 1<sup>st</sup> of February). Vacancies during the course of semesters become available only in very exceptional cases: for example, when one of our tenants leaves the house unexpectedly.

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<sup>1</sup> You pay a tenancy deposit to give the Student-house protection in case you leave without paying the rent or cause damage to the property or its contents. If you will have paid all the rent due and caused no damage, the full amount of your deposit will be returned at the end of your tenancy.

Please note:

- The minimum length of stay in the Student-house is one full semester, while students are allowed to stay for a maximum of four semesters (2 years)
- Almost without exception, accommodation for the new tenants becomes available in twin rooms (in a single room: when it is not taken by one of the elder students)
- Usually, four to five vacancies become available in the Student-house with the beginning of September and one to two, however sometimes none, with the beginning of February
- Information about where exactly an accepted new student is going to be located within the building (such as on which floor and in which room exactly) usually becomes available only during the course of the admission process

## **6) Application and admission**

Whenever new vacancies become available in the Student-house, a call for applications is published on its [website](#) and hence interested students are invited to send their application.

A complete application package consists of:

- 1) An Application Form filled out on your name
- 2) Your motivational letter (recommended: in the volume of maximum one page), and
- 3) Your résumé (recommended: in the volume of maximum two pages), including photo.

You may send these documents electronically, in PDF format (it is preferred when you bind the three documents together into a single PDF file!), or by post.

An individual visit to the House before or during the application process is possible: please send a relevant inquiry per e-mail, well in advance of the planned visit.

In the admission process, some of the most important aspects under consideration include:

- The personal profile of the applicants, based on their résumé and motivation letter
- The aim is to sustain a diverse and at the same time balanced student community with regard to the field of studies, the levels of education (BSc/MSc), moreover also in terms of nationality and gender
- Usually, preference is given to students who are in their first study year in Zürich. At the same time, exchange students are also very welcome to join the House, not least because they bring additional cultural diversity to the student-community.
- A good level of English is a must, in order to be able to actively participate in the everyday life of the Student-house

Please note that the Student-house has no "waiting list" and all applications that will have arrived by the application deadline are going to be considered equally!

The steps of the selection process are as follows:

- A good number of applicants are invited for a personal, or online (via Skype) interview
- In a next step, the vacant places are filled in based on the results of the interviews
- The aim is to inform everyone who has submitted an application about the results of the admission process by the end of May

## **7) The management of the house**

The house has been co-managed by Joseph Slezák and Sybille Stemmler (house-leaders), since July 2012.

**Sybille** (born in 1981, the citizen of Switzerland, at present she works ~ 5% for the Student-house) holds a MSc. degree in Environmental Sciences. In addition, she holds also post-graduate degrees in pedagogy and energy engineering. Next to her role as the co-manager of the Student-house, she has a part-time job in an engineering office, on the topic of energy efficiency in buildings. Last but not least, at present she is also a part-time student in the field of applied psychology.

**Joseph** (born in 1976, the citizen of Hungary, at present he works ~ 35% for the Student-house) holds a BSc. degree in Mechanical Engineering, as well as MSc degrees in Information Engineering and in Economic Sciences. Next to his role as the co-manager of the Student-house, he is an independent environmental-social scientist, on the topic of Sustainable Consumption and Production in a globalised world ([Sustainable Development Goal 12](#)). See also: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/jszlezak>

Their first daughter, Anna was born in May in 2013 and their second daughter, Edina was born in February 2016.

## **8) Student self-governance**

In the Student-house, a student self-governance scheme is in place.

Key principles and elements of this scheme include:

- The students of the House, both at the individual and at the community levels, take a high level of responsibility in the everyday operation of the building, including with regard to the tidiness of the public rooms and so on. Consequently, topics and issues for which it is likely that the community is able to find solutions/the way forward are decided primarily among the students themselves.
- Each semester, the student community elects two house representatives (a student may serve in this role for several consecutive semesters, when she/he is re-elected). The general responsibilities of the representatives include the facilitation of a smooth everyday life in the Student-house (in connection to the household tasks, the community, and so on), as well as the representation of the student community towards the house-leaders.
- The Students' Fund in place enables the inhabitants of the House to make some smaller investments that benefit the entire community (such as herbs garden) and/or to organise a variety of social events throughout the semester.