

Internship Testimonial for DAAD RISE PRO 2014
Evonik Industries AG
Hanau, Hessen, Germany
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Dear Potential and Future DAAD Scholarship Holders,

Greetings from Germany! I was very fortunate to be accepted to the DAAD RISE PRO program as an advanced undergraduate student. I applied to this exchange program during the last year of my Bachelors. My intent of application to this program was to gain international experience, immerse myself in the German culture and be closer to my families in Berlin. At the time of application, I was extremely nervous about the chances of being accepted as I knew that I was in direct competition with Masters and PhD students. When I found out that I was offered a position, I was beyond thrilled. It had always been my dream to work and live in Germany for a short period of time. My internship was conducted in Evonik Industries AG for 3.5 months. The company was located in Hanau, Hessen, Germany; a small but beautiful fairytale town and the birth place of the famous Grimm Brothers.

I was placed in the New Health and Nutrition Business Unit within Evonik and I worked as a Global Food Market Analyst for Innovation Management. At the time of the internship, I had just completed my Bachelors in Food Science. I had a very strong food background in science but none in business, so I met a major learning curve at the beginning of my internship. None the less, I enjoyed every moment of the process because it was a very unique experience to be working in a field that I'm extremely passionate about but from a different perspective than what I was comfortable with. My supervisor gave me a lot of support while I was settling into Germany. He made sure that all my questions were answered and that I had no major problems with all the administration work. Before arriving in Germany, the company had hired an agency to find housing for me. But unfortunately, there were no possible options available, so I looked into airbnb and found a place to stay. It in the end, it worked out very well and my commute to work was not long. The administration process in Germany was rather slow and long. It took me a whole month from getting a tax identification number, opening up a bank account, submit all the paper work to the company's HR for payroll and extend my visa with the foreigner's office. The hardest part for this process was to figure out what to do. Evonik did not give new employees a welcome package; my supervisor was the only person to help me with the process. But in the end, all worked out and it was very smooth sailing.

A typical work day at Evonik in Hanau involves going to work for around 8:30am and finishing in between 5:00pm to 5:30pm. The company required interns to work 7.5 hours a day with a 45 minute lunch break. A typical work day involves coming in the morning and start off by checking my E-mails. Then, I spend the entire morning searching in research engines and on some days, we have team meetings. At lunch time, everyone in the department goes to the cafeteria together and eats lunch. My co-workers are all extremely friendly; they try to teach me German and will always have conversations in English so that I can understand. After lunch time, I usually go back to my office and continue with my work. My major internship project was to conduct market analysis using various search engines and google to obtain information on the global food and beverage market. Then, I was to compile and analyze this information in ultimately determining a potential food platform which we can incorporate the company's ingredients into. Throughout my internship, I was responsible for keeping a detailed word document file with all of my findings and make summarized powerpoint presentations at our regular team meetings. I was also given the chance to present at one of our workshops and to the

company's consultant who was the former vice president of research and development of a major international food company. In addition to my main project, I have also assisted with minor projects along the way. For instance, there was one week I had to perform all my work in Chinese Mandarin (due to the fact that I was fluent in the language). Evonik has sections in China and the USA, often business is conducted globally. Throughout this internship, I was able to gain a wide perspective in how a business functions and the collaboration between internal departments and with other companies. It was a very valuable and rewarding experience from a science student's perspective.

From a personal side during my stay in Germany, I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the German culture and travel around Europe. I enrolled in an intensive evening German class for beginners, which was mostly covered by DAAD. The course was taught entirely in German and it is designed to allow students be familiarized with the grammar and push students to speak German. Before coming to Germany, I had no knowledge of the German language. After taking this course, I was able to order in German, engage in some day to day conversations and understand information notices in public areas, especially at the train station. On most weekends, I traveled around, either within Germany or to neighboring countries. German companies treat their employees very well and give them many mandatory vacation days. I mostly travelled on weekends and after my internship ended, I stayed in Germany with my family for Christmas and traveled some more after. Within Germany, I had the opportunity to visit Frankfurt, Cologne, Heidelberg, Nuremberg, Berlin, Munich for Oktoberfest, Leipzig, Hannover, Dusseldorf and Hamburg. Outside of Germany, I went to Austria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Italy, Spain, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Poland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and France. I love traveling and meeting new people, it was very nice to just hop on a train for a few hours and arrive at a new German city or even to another country. Traveling in Europe was very affordable, the supersaver train fares was a bonus. There are also many low cost airlines like Easyjet and Ryanair which flew me to places that were not easily accessed by taking the train. During my travels, I met so many people across the globe and to built friendships. Germans are very nice and that I was always able to meet the right people at the right time. My landlord picked me up from the airport as I first arrived in Germany, and this saved me a lot of trouble in trying to figure out the public transport system. During my short trips, I have met friends who later met up with me again in Germany and showed me around. Whenever I had trouble with the language, there was always someone to help me. I once had to take a bus connection after getting off the train; I did not know where the bus station was. A friendly lady from the same train walked through the entire train station with me to find the bus station and ensured that I got on the bus with no problem.

I unfortunately was not able to attend the Scholar Meeting in Cologne this year as my internship started a bit later. However, I was still able to maintain great connections with other DAAD scholars either through our common Facebook group or in person, for those who are close by. Everyone is so friendly and supportive of each other; it really felt that we were like a big family. The program coordinator, Mrs. Martina Ludwig was also extremely nice and helpful with everything. She was always there to answer our questions and helped us with the process of settling in.

Overall, I had a marvelous experience working in Germany and traveling around during my spare time. The DAAD RISE PRO program had helped me grow so much both personally and professionally. I was at first hesitant to take some time off doing this internship because the start date of my Masters would delayed. But I can truly say that I am so glad that I participated in this international internship. The amazing experience and fond memories that was created during my time here in Germany will always be something that I look back and cherish.

I strongly recommend this program to any student who loves to learn, be challenged and wants to experience something new. The experience that you will gain from this program cannot be portrayed in words. It's a type of learning step and self discovery that you must experience to know. I can wholeheartedly say that I would without a doubt participate in a program like this again in the future. I love Germany, and I will one day come back here either to travel or work for a period of time. But right at this instant, I will have to say so long for now Germany, to a place that I will always refer to as my second home. Thank you so much DAAD for this opportunity.

<p>Evonik Industry AG</p> 	<p>Dinner with other DAAD interns and coworkers</p> 
<p>Weekend travels to Heidelberg , Germany</p> 	<p>Weekend trip to Prague, Czech Republic</p> 

“I agree that my report and accompanying pictures are used by the DAAD in printed materials, presentations and on the website in order to inform funding organizations, sponsors and students about the RISE professional program.”