

RISE Germany 2017 - Final Report

Name of intern: Joanna Krynski

Home university: McMaster University

Subject: Medical Physics

Guest university / institute: Uniklinikum Wuerzburg

Name of supervisor: Sonja Wegener

What is your impression of research in Germany?

I found that all the researchers in my office were very studious and hard-working; they clearly were passionate about their work. My supervisor had many ideas for work for me and meticulously planned and checked that the work would be useful. The dynamic of my research ground was open and collaborative. Everyone could talk to anyone if they had a problem or inquisition. My overall impression was that research here is considered a group effort where everyone is responsible for his or her piece but one never needs to feel isolated in their work.

What is your impression of German universities?

I did not spend any time on university ground as my office was far away from in. However, the campus in Heidelberg was spacious and mostly modern. In my opinion, there wasn't a big difference in campus life and style between Heidelberg and my university or other Canadian universities I've been to.

What did you find particularly interesting about your research?

I really enjoyed looking at the measurement results, performing statistical analysis on them and coming to some conclusion that could be applied in the clinic. Having never done experimental research before, I enjoyed brainstorming why something could be happening and what the results mean in a clinical sense. I left my internship thinking that I actually did discover something and contributed to the realm of this research.

Describe a typical day of your internship.

I arrived at the office between 9 and 9:30. I would usually check the schedule of patients to see if there were any times that measurements were being done. About half an hour into the day, my supervisor would come and discuss what could and should be done. Usually we planned work a few days in advance, since measurement times had to be booked ahead of time. Once a plan was put into motion, I would work in one software program to create the fields required for the machine to irradiate. Then I would distribute the field plans to the detector's respective programs. Usually this would take about a whole day. On other days when I had collected data, I would perform statistical analysis and take notes on the results. Whenever I had free time, I read papers related to my work, as well as other fields I might like to work in.

Highlights of your stay (both personal and academic).

An important thing I gained from the internship was the ability to function in a real medical physics department. The opportunity to shadow clinical physicists was integral in my decision to continue on in this field for my graduate studies. I saw the daily workload of the physicist, how they collaborate with doctors and each other, and how they divide their time between clinical and research duties. I truly believe that this was the most unique arrangement that I could have been in, and am very grateful for it. Outside of the internship,

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a highlight of my stay was meeting new people: fellow DAAD interns, scholars researching at the university, and people living in the city. I sharpened my knowledge about the politics, academics and cultures of the other interns' countries and Germany.

What is your impression of Germany in general?

It is hard to give an impression for all of Germany. Each place I went to had its benefits and downsides. The people of Germany were kind and welcoming everywhere. Despite not knowing the language well, people understood that it was difficult and spoke English, and helped with whatever I asked. The culture, again, varies from city to city. Living in Bayern, I got the "most German" experience, I think. I admired at the amounts of city festivals where locals bonded and marvelled at the traditional dress. Berlin, on the other hand, is not like any other German city. I really like the dichotomy between the commercial and big city feel of Mitte and the artsy, laid back feel of Neukolln and Kreuzberg. My final impression of Germany, then, is that each city, every place and person has something new to offer.

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