

# RISE Germany 2017 - Final Report

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**Home university:** York University, Toronto, Canada.

**Subject:** Chemistry.

**Guest university / institute:** University of Tübingen.

**Name of supervisor:** Andreas Früh.

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Firstly, the DAAD guidelines were very helpful. My internship experience would have been quite challenging without these guidelines. However, as expected the guidelines only provided general information, which wasn't always applicable to my case. Therefore, I think these personal accounts provided by RISE interns are valuable to the continued success of the RISE program.

Finding housing was a little challenging because I was looking for short-term accommodation. Nonetheless, I found a decent place because I started house hunting right after I received my internship offer. Also, I found the WG-Gesucht.de website quite helpful for finding housing. Interestingly enough, landlords and flat-share mates in Germany require housing applicants to submit to a semi-formal interview. Anyways, my interview gave me a chance to get acquainted and share my values with my flat mates.

Moreover, interns have the option of applying to a Fraternity or Sorority of their choosing. Fraternities and Sororities are a great way to network while you're in Germany, and they offer cheap housing to their members.

After I found accommodation, I registered my address with the city. The registration office and the foreign office were at the same location, so with the help of my co-workers I registered and applied for a residence permit at the same time.

Nevertheless, it is best to speak with the German embassy in your home city at least two months before your planned travel date, as a youth mobility visa is available to Canadians. Unfortunately, I was unable to apply for the youth mobility visa because my internship offer came on short notice.

"Open a bank account" came right after "Register with the City" on my to-do list. Most German banks operate regionally, so they can only offer accounts to individuals who Register with the city. The processing time for opening an account was rather long; It

## RISE Germany 2017 - Final Report

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took one week to get access to my student chequing account. Luckily enough, I had enough cash on me to cover my expenses for one week.

Germany has an excellent transportation infrastructure, but I do think the trains rides could be cheaper. My commute to the university was quite easy. My flat was a train and bus ride away from the university, so it took me about 30 minutes to get to there. For my long trip (when I was more concerned about travel fares), I used the blablacar carpooling service. It wasn't always "first-class" comfort, but whenever my destination was "The bank" I laughed all the way.

Germany has a long history of chemical innovation, so I went in to my internship expecting cutting edge technology, and that is exactly what I got. Also, I had as much access to Laboratory equipment as the Ph.D. students, which was amazing.

A three-month long research internship at a research institute is not enough time to completely evaluate any university. Nevertheless, I thought it was awesome that most universities in Germany provide subsidized meal and transportation plans, as well as tuition free education.

My research project was very captivating: I got to setup my own low band-polymer Photo-degradation chamber with sample plates that I coated. I also worked with different analytical methods that provided me the opportunity to develop useful data acquisition skills. It was interesting to see how we combined data from different spectroscopic methods to draw conclusions on photo-degradation kinetics. Most importantly, our results could play a small part in improving the integrity of Organic Photovoltaic devices.

The project was not overly demanding. Normally, I had three experiments running simultaneously, and for the most part, I was required to collect measurements twice a day. I would get into the office by 0845hrs and settle in with a cup of coffee. Then I would head to the lab to collect UV-Vis and IR readings for different photodegradation experiments. After the first measurements, I would report to my supervisor. Between the first and second measurements, I had time to either look up scientific literature on my project or work on other projects. The last measurement was often completed by 1630hrs, so I would leave the university at 1700hrs.

During my stay in Germany, I had a lot of exciting moments. The Beer Garden was an integral part of my internship experience, and most of my best moments reside at the

## RISE Germany 2017 - *Final Report*

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bottom of a Radler. I also particularly enjoyed my time on the basketball court. It was an opportunity to meet people outside of the research facility.

Germany has a culture that is unmatched, which promotes scientific innovation by providing students with unhindered access to cutting edge technology.

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