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My name is Jane, and I am a biology major at the University of South Carolina. I spent the summer of 2018 working in a cell biology lab at the University of Bayreuth in northern Bavaria. My research involved examining the effects of the protein TDP-43, a protein known to be involved in various neurological diseases such as ALS and Alzheimer's, using brewer's yeast as a model organism. The ninety days I spent abroad in Germany were some of the best and most eye-opening and unforgettable of my life.

Initially I was a bit nervous to spend the summer in Germany—I had been abroad once before the previous summer, but for a much shorter period of time, and I knew virtually none of the German language or the country's customs. It was a bit nerve-racking to decide to spend my entire summer in a foreign country thousands of miles from anyone I knew; however, after getting over my initial trepidation, I found the experience of being thrown alone into a different way of life to be exhilarating and eye-opening.

I generally worked typical nine-to-five hours in my research lab, but I was also given plenty of time to travel across Europe. Germany is ideally situated for travel all over the continent, and on the funding from the stipend provided by the DAAD as well as a small amount of personal money I was able to visit cities like Paris, Rome, Berlin, Munich, and Prague all during my stay in Bayreuth. It was amazing to be exposed to so many different languages and cultures in such a short period of time, and thanks to the DAAD RISE program I was able to see dozens of places I may not have otherwise ever had to opportunity to go to.

Overall, I would rate my experience in Germany as one hundred percent positive, and I have almost no regrets from the time I spent there. This internship was my first experience working on my own personal research project (within the scope of my PhD student supervisor's work) as well as my first experience in a cell biology lab. I learned many new research techniques as well as general skills including collaboration and presenting the results of my work to an audience. But most importantly, living in another country for three months broadened my horizons and exposed me to new cultures and work environments.

Sincerely,

Jane Marryat