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I participated in the RISE Germany 2018 program. My internship was in Kaiserslautern, Germany, at the Max Planck Institute for Software Systems. Overall I was very impressed by Germany. The people are very kind and the landscape is very beautiful. The culture is so different from the US, but I was still able to fit in and have a nice summer.

A typically day looked like this: I would get up and go into the office around 8 am. We didn't have set rules, but I felt better about getting the day started early. I would review my notes from the day before and check my email. Then I would typically have a short meeting with my supervisor, after which I'd spend several hours working. At lunch, we all ate together at the Mensa. After lunch, I would either work or have another meeting with my supervisor. Since I was doing a software engineering job, I spent all of my time working at a computer.

As far as advice, I would say to encourage people to set up a visa appointment IMMEDIATELY when they apply. I ran into many problems because by the time I was accepted into the program, I could not get a visa appointment. Then at the foreign office in Germany, I had a really difficult time. Four visits and much arguing later, I had a document to allow me to stay, but still not the correct one exactly. It was a headache that almost did not get sorted out.

My highlight was honestly all of the incredible people I met. My coworkers were from all over: Croatia, Iran, India, Canada, UK, France, Greece, Nigeria.. so it was a really unique experience for us all to come together. Professionally, I learned so much. I was able to get out of my major a bit (I'm an electrical engineer but I was working in software this summer). My experiences really helped me branch out personally and professionally. I was able to think seriously about what I should do in the future. I hope that whatever I end up doing in terms of graduate school and graduation, I will soon return to Germany once more.

Thank you to DAAD for all of their support, and thank you to the Max Planck Institute for providing me the opportunity to push myself this summer. It was certainly something I will cherish forever, and I could never forget it.