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DAAD Rise Professional

Summer 2022

After finishing my bachelor's studies in Chemical Engineering and German, I had the opportunity for a DAAD Rise Professional internship at BASF in Ludwigshafen, Germany. My professor had shared the information from DAAD with me and it sounded like the perfect chance to apply both of my fields of study! The internship topic was Sustainable Materials and Circular Economy, which was of particular interest to me, as I intend on having a career focused on environmental applications.

My work mainly consisted of developing a database for comparing different plastic recycling technologies, and I was able to significantly expand my familiarity within the fields of chemistry and recycling. Especially as recycling is a popular topic nowadays, it was enlightening to learn about the process behind the scenes, with all the challenges and complexities it has, as well as possible approaches to address these areas. I greatly enjoyed being able to experience how chemistry knowledge is applied in a research & development setting that can lead to large-scale industry impacts.

Additionally, although my work was based in an office, I also had the opportunity to visit a production process, a laboratory, and a bus tour of the Ludwigshafen plant. The BASF plant itself was similar to a mini city, and the scale was quite impressive! The office I worked in had a beautiful view over the Rhein River. I especially enjoyed riding through the area on bike and the several lunch options available in the canteen.

For my general experience in Germany, I was fortunate to do my internship during the same time period that the 9-Euro Ticket was available and took advantage by doing lots of traveling! My favorite cities were Munich and Hamburg, especially their beautiful parks. My experience was also certainly enhanced by studying the language and culture beforehand. This eased my transition to Germany and made logistics and general conversations with others significantly easier. I would recommend that future interns learn some German beforehand and use their time in Germany to practice the language. By living in the country itself, you can also further learn and notice many things that you may not otherwise come across- I especially enjoyed discovering how Germany's windows can open in two directions for example!

I would recommend the RISE program to any student with interest in researching or working in Germany. My supervisor was very friendly and supportive as I was adjusting to a new environment and country, and I learned a great deal about environmental chemistry applications. I am very grateful for being able to have this opportunity and to all those who made it a great experience!

*I agree that my report and accompanying pictures may be used by the DAAD in printed materials, presentations, and on websites in order to inform funding organizations, sponsors, and students about the RISE program.*