

## DAAD RISE-Pro Internship Reflection

My internship in Germany was an incredible experience, thanks to the help of DAAD. DAAD provided an extensive list of hosting organizations in Germany, and I was able to find a company that best accompanied my skills and knowledge. In addition to financial support for flights and salary, DAAD assisted in the process of obtaining a work permit and insurance for me. Annkristin and the DAAD team were always available for support during this process, which I greatly appreciated. I highly recommend the RISE-Pro for students and researchers looking to engage themselves with innovative companies in Germany.

As an American, it is uncommon to travel outside the US due to costs and distance. For this reason, most Americans do not have the ability to explore different cultures other than its own. This opportunity through DAAD allowed me to do just that. Traveling across the world was a bit overwhelming at first, but my company welcomed me with open arms. While I was in Germany, I took the opportunity to travel within Europe on the weekends. This allowed me to continue learning other cultures and growing my network. One of my highlights from the summer was traveling to Bonn, Germany to meet other DAAD students and exploring the area. My impression of Germany was very different from what I expected. In America, the population tends to regard Germans as introvert and direct. This can be true at times, but I found in general that Germans are loving people who embrace others from different cultures, always willing to assist.

My company gave me tasks that were relevant and had an immediate impact. The work environment was a healthy one. My supervisor ensured I had a good work/life balance during my time in Germany. One of my fond memories from the summer include learning German words and phrases from my co-workers throughout my time. In addition, through the support of DAAD, I was connected with an in-person German course in the evenings. This allowed me to continue my German learning, even outside of the office. A typical workday would look like the following. Wake up at 6:15am for morning preparations. Then a 10min walk to the S-Bahn Station, 30min train ride, and a 10min bike ride to the office. I would arrive to the office before 8:30am. We start the day with a team meeting to discuss our daily tasks. Around noon, we would walk to Kaufland together to purchase lunch. Sometimes we would all cook lunch together. I really enjoyed this time. It was laid-back and we could enjoy being around each other. After lunch, I would work until about 5pm. I would take the S-Bahn to my German Learning course where I would study from 6:15pm to 9:15pm. It was here I continued to make more friends in the area. I would return to my apartment before 10pm.

With assistance from DAAD, my company, and online resources, I was able to best prepare prior to arriving in Germany. I personally used N26 as my preferred bank. It is a completely online bank, and salary deposits were made easy. The DeutschlandTicket is preferred by all. For 49 Euro a month, you can travel with all public transport methods within Germany, not including long-distance trains. Residence permit application proved to be difficult. The KVR, the organization that handles registration, books out far in advance for appointments. I would advise setting up this meeting at least a month before you arrive to Germany. Travel within Europe is incredibly easy between trains, buses and planes. I prefer to use the FlixBus app, DB app, and Omio app for these purchases. Locating housing was also difficult, especially since I was in Munich. I didn't have much luck through WG-Gesucht, an online flat listing platform. I luckily had a contact in Germany who was able to ask around for available apartments for me. The preparation for these things can seem intimidating, but DAAD is always ready to support. Reflecting on my 10-week internship experience in Germany, I'm incredibly grateful to have been selected for this opportunity and I recommend that all eligible students apply.

**“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.”**

**Andrew Walz**