My RISE Professional 2026 Experience in Germany

Spandana Chereddy
PhD Student, Computer Science, University of Guelph, Canada
Host Institution: Forschungszentrum Jülich, Germany
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An Experience Beyond Research

My RISE Professional 2026 internship at Forschungszentrum Jülich in Germany was one of the most memorable experiences of my academic journey. As a PhD student at the University of Guelph, Canada, working in artificial intelligence and its applications in healthcare, I was excited to experience research in a different country, collaborate with international researchers, and explore new approaches to solving complex scientific problems.

Coming from India and pursuing my PhD in Canada, moving to Germany for a research internship was another opportunity to step outside my comfort zone. Although adjusting to a new country came with challenges, the experience helped me become more independent, adaptable, and confident.

My Research Experience

I joined the Institute of Neuroscience and Medicine (INM-4), Medical Imaging Physics, at Forschungszentrum Jülich, where I worked under the supervision of Dr. Ravichandran Rajkumar.

My research focused on precision psychiatry through artificial intelligence and advanced medical imaging. I explored how machine learning techniques could help researchers better understand complex brain-related data and potentially contribute to more personalized approaches to mental healthcare.

One particularly interesting aspect of my work involved analyzing magnetic resonance spectroscopy (MRS) data collected at different magnetic field strengths, including 3 Tesla and 7 Tesla. I investigated how measurements compared across these imaging systems and explored the potential of machine learning for analyzing neuroimaging and clinical data.

Coming from a background in computer science and AI, I found it especially rewarding to work at the intersection of artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and medical imaging. The experience introduced me to new scientific questions and helped me understand the importance of combining computational methods with domain-specific knowledge.

A typical day involved analyzing datasets, developing and testing computational approaches, reviewing scientific literature, and discussing research findings with my supervisor. These conversations helped me think more critically about my work, question my assumptions, and communicate technical ideas to researchers from different backgrounds.

The research environment at Forschungszentrum Jülich was both inspiring and intellectually stimulating. I appreciated the emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration, scientific rigor, and the practical implications of research.

Life in Germany

Beyond the laboratory, living in Germany was an adventure of its own.

Adjusting to a different language, transportation system, and everyday routines was initially challenging, but these experiences quickly became part of what made the internship memorable. I enjoyed experiencing German culture, exploring new places, and meeting people from different backgrounds.

Germany's public transportation system made it possible to travel and discover different cities. I also appreciated the opportunity to experience everyday life in a European country rather than visiting only as a tourist.

For future RISE Professional interns, my advice would be to start looking for accommodation early, familiarize yourself with local transportation options, and keep important documents organized before arriving. It is also helpful to learn a few basic German phrases, although many people in research environments communicate comfortably in English.

Most importantly, make time to explore outside the laboratory. The cultural experiences, friendships, and everyday discoveries are just as valuable as the research itself.

Personal and Academic Highlights

One of the highlights of my internship was the opportunity to work in an international research environment and learn from researchers with expertise outside my primary field.

I gained valuable experience working with complex biomedical datasets, exploring new machine learning applications, and approaching research questions from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The internship also helped me build professional connections and broaden my understanding of how research is conducted internationally. These experiences will be valuable as I continue my PhD and pursue a career in AI-driven healthcare research.

On a personal level, living independently in Germany strengthened my confidence and adaptability. It reminded me that some of the most meaningful opportunities for growth come from exploring unfamiliar environments and working with people who bring different perspectives.

Would I Recommend RISE Professional?

Absolutely!

The RISE Professional program provides an opportunity for students to gain international research experience while discovering a new country and culture. It offers much more than a research placement; it encourages personal growth, international collaboration, and the exchange of scientific ideas.

I am sincerely grateful to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Forschungszentrum Jülich, my supervisor Dr. Ravichandran Rajkumar, and everyone who supported me throughout my internship.

I returned to Canada with new knowledge, valuable professional connections, wonderful memories, and an even greater appreciation for international research collaboration.

My RISE Professional experience has been an important chapter in my academic journey, and I would wholeheartedly encourage other students to take advantage of this opportunity.

Publication consent

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