DAAD RISE Professional: End-of-Internship Reflection

1. Motivation and Overall Experience

I have been studying in Canada since 2018, where I have completed internships and research projects and gained experience in both industrial and academic environments. The DAAD scholarship gave me the opportunity to experience a corporate setting in Germany, which is especially valuable as I continue to develop my career internationally.
Bayer Pharma, as an international pharmaceutical company, provided strong resources and support for exploring contemporary AI tools and developing skills that can further benefit my research. The internship was also my first opportunity to explore Europe. During the three months, I visited several cities in Germany, saw historical landmarks, and experienced daily life in the country. I also travelled to other European countries, including Poland, Czechia, Austria, and France—memories that will stay with me for life.
During the internship, I attended around ten internal and external hackathons. I worked with colleagues from different countries and departments, learned about the challenges they face in their daily work, and helped develop practical solutions. These events were an excellent opportunity to build connections and leave a positive impression for future collaboration. I also participated in internal events such as “Lions Cave” and “Summer Vibe,” which allowed me to experience Bayer both as a corporate environment and as a German company. This enriched my professional experience and helped me adapt to teams with diverse cultural backgrounds.

2. Practical Tips for Future Interns

Bank Account

Consider using a prepaid card from Wise and requesting a physical card before travelling. Register in your home country so that you can use your existing phone number, as setting up a German phone number after arrival can take several days.

Travelling in Germany

Get a Deutsche Bahn subscription as soon as possible after arriving in Germany. Airport staff can usually speak English and may be able to help you set up the contract.

Housing

Platforms such as HousingAnywhere can be useful, but it is important to check the location and surrounding area carefully. Some accommodations may be older and may not have modern infrastructure.

Visa and Residence Permit

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Plan ahead and decide how long you intend to stay. Apply for the appropriate visa early and check appointment availability on the embassy or consulate website as soon as possible.

3. A Typical Day During the Internship

A typical day started around 6:00 a.m. I usually took the local streetcar at about 7:30 a.m. and arrived at the company around 8:00 a.m. After getting a cappuccino, I would open my computer, check emails, respond to Teams messages, and then open GitHub to continue coding for my project. I occasionally had meetings to align requirements with clients and report progress to my supervisor. Lunch with colleagues was usually around 12:30 p.m. I continued working until about 5:00 p.m. before heading home. In the evening, I sometimes went grocery shopping and cooked dinner, and afterwards I either explored Berlin or rested.

4. Highlights: Personal and Academic

One major highlight was winning an internal hackathon as the coder on my team. Another was joining an external hackathon with a local cardiologist in Leverkusen.
Bayer hosted several internal hackathons where colleagues from different departments presented real workplace challenges and teams developed solutions. Among 15 participating teams, my team won one of these hackathons with the MVP I developed.
I was also selected to participate in an in-person hackathon with an external doctor. We used AI tools to develop a solution for their problem, and I was able to demonstrate how to use vibe coding to build confidence in creating software independently.

5. Impression of Germany

Germany is an impressive and beautiful country, with a well-connected train system and many historical sights worth visiting. One challenge I noticed is that administrative processes and other practical arrangements can sometimes feel slow.

6. Recommendation of the RISE Professional Program

Yes, I would highly recommend the RISE Professional Program to my colleagues. The experience was meaningful, professionally valuable, and personally memorable.

Consent

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

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