RISE Professional 2026 – Final Internship Report

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"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."

My name is Dalia Sebat, and I am a new computer science graduate from the University of California, Santa Barbara. My internship at the Fraunhofer Institute for Wind Energy Systems in Bremerhaven focused on improving the usability, scalability, accuracy, and validation of their wind farm simulation tool, FarmQSim. As this was my first experience in the wind energy field and with research in Germany in general, my first few days on the job were a big adjustment. I had to adjust to the time change, move into my apartment, and get acquainted with the many tools and applications used daily at IWES. Although I came into the internship feeling intimidated, my supervisor Keno Ohrmann and Master's thesis students at the lab were always willing to help me if I had questions and really made the workplace a welcoming environment for me.

Throughout my internship, I not only learned how to code in the Modelica programming language, modifying and running various simulations, but also how to generate easily understandable figures and communicate my ideas clearly to an international group of researchers. I felt the proudest of my academic contributions when I was able to build on my computer science background to propose new ideas to make the simulation setups more user-friendly and restructure the codebase. Because the rest of the researchers came from an engineering background, I felt that my perspective was nuanced and helped the group progress.

On a personal level, I felt the most fulfilled when I had the opportunity to travel to Heidelberg to present my poster at the RISE conference. I was able to meet young researchers from Canada, the US, and the UK, bonding over a shared love for science and our shared experiences in Germany. I immediately bonded with a group of four other students, and we spent the rest of the conference exploring the historic city. A highlight was going bouldering with my new friends and walking by the river late into the night.

As someone who has lived in Berlin as a Bachelors exchange student in 2024-25, and again this past summer, I feel that I have lots of knowledge about German bureaucracy and

banking systems, as well as miscellaneous quirks of the German culture. I'll list them here in case anything is helpful to future students:

1. Banking: I found it helpful to look for a bank that caters to expats, with English-speaking customer service lines and online banking opportunities, so I chose N26 Bank. You can withdraw cash for free from any Sparkasse ATM or at most DM stores (popular drugstore chain in Germany)
2. Selling/Buying things secondhand and looking for share houses: Kleinanzeigen (website and app)
    a. Looking for share houses: WG-gesucht (also an Ebay-type listing platform but only for shared housing)
3. Traveling around Germany: Deutschland Ticket monthly subscription allows unlimited rides on all local and regional public transport throughout Germany (not high-speed ICE trains). If you plan on traveling a lot, I would also get a Bahncard (one-time yearly purchase that gets you either a 25 or 50% discount on ICE trains)
4. Visa/residence permit (for Americans specifically): you don't need a visa to enter Germany, but many jobs require you to have either a visa or a residence permit before your contract with them begins. To avoid delaying your start date, apply for a visa from the US for the duration of your stay in Germany if possible. Also – you need to register your address (Anmeldung) before you can apply for a residence permit in Germany, so keep that in mind (it requires a document from your landlord).
5. Exercise: for people in major cities, especially Berlin, the app Urban Sports is a great subscription which allows you to go to many fitness services, gyms, pools, etc. from one subscription.

Overall, the RISE Professional Program has been an amazing growth opportunity for me, which has set me up for success as I begin my Master's in Informatics at the Technical University of Munich in the winter semester. With the knowledge and professional experience I gained from RISE, I feel confident in my ability to pursue a career in software or research in Germany, when the time comes.