DAAD RISE Professional Internship Report

I completed a **12-week** internship through the DAAD RISE Professional programme at the **German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt, DLR)**, Institute of Software Technology, in Braunschweig from **May 2026 to August 2026**. This report shares my preparation process, research experience, daily life, and overall impressions, along with practical advice for future participants.

Pre-Departure Preparations

On confirming the acceptance, I immediately connected with the host institution and finalized my internship dates. Once my internship dates were finalized, I booked my flights around March, since flights (especially for summer months) get significantly more expensive the longer one waits. Over the next 2-3 weeks, I received my Letter of Award and Health insurance documents from DAAD via the online portal. The ZAV document took longer.

For banking, I opened an account with **WISE**, which I would strongly recommend. The entire process was online, straightforward, and my account was active within a day. It generates the **IBAN number** for you which is required for most transactions there. Also, the wise account was convenient because it allowed me to hold and manage multiple currencies, making it easy to handle expenses in Germany and also other countries during travel.

Finding housing can be challenging and I recommend starting early-on, though most listings might open later. I began by reaching out to friends and contacts already living in Germany, and supplemented this with online platforms. Of these, **WG-Gesucht** was by far the most reliable and useful, followed by **Kleinanzeigen** and various **Facebook groups**. That said, I would urge caution, as scams are common on these platforms. My advice is to always video-call prospective landlords or flatmates before committing to anything, and if you happen to know someone in the city already, ask them to visit the apartment in person to verify it is legitimate.

Since my stay in Germany was **under 90 days**, I applied for a **Schengen Type-C visa**. Visa requirements can change, so I found it best to check the relevant German embassy's website directly for the most current rules and document requirements. When I had specific questions about my situation, I emailed the embassy directly, and they were prompt and genuinely helpful in clearing up my doubts.

Research Experience

I worked at DLR's Institute of Software Technology in Braunschweig for the full 12 weeks of my internship. My supervisor and colleagues were extremely welcoming and supportive. I found it genuinely fascinating to be immersed in the cutting-edge research being carried out at the institute, and the overall experience left me motivated to return, if the opportunity arises again in the future.

What I found particularly interesting about my project was the nature of the work itself: developing software that supports research activities in other scientific domains. I applied my skills to build a **Web API for running digital twin simulations**, a tool designed to be used by researchers working in fields such as physics, transportation, and flight simulation. It was genuinely rewarding to know that the software I built would have practical value across such a range of research fields. The project also pushed me to work with a technology stack I wasn't very experienced in beforehand, which turned into one of the most valuable learning experiences of the internship.

My workday usually began around 8:00 AM, starting with checking emails. The first week was dedicated to onboarding and basic HR training, after which I transitioned into learning the relevant tools and technologies and beginning active work on my project. I had weekly progress meetings with my supervisor to review my work.

One part of the day I always looked forward to was lunch, which the whole institute shared together — a simple but meaningful way to interact with colleagues outside of formal work discussions. Most of my day was spent writing code, along with reading and researching to make informed decisions about the technology stack I was

using and typically wrapped up around 5:00 PM. I also kept a daily diary noting what I had accomplished and what my action items were for the following day. This habit proved genuinely useful, since 12 weeks is a fairly short window to both adjust to a completely new environment and build a project from the ground up.

Highlights of the Internship

On a personal level, having professional experience outside of an academic setting was something I needed, and it taught me to be more disciplined and organized in how I approached my work. Academically, one of the standout moments was presenting my completed project to the department towards the end of the internship.

Another major highlight was the **DAAD meetup in Heidelberg**. It was a wonderful experience — I met fellow scholars, learned about the diverse research they were engaged in, and made lasting friendships. The trip included time in the beautiful city of Heidelberg, an **industry visit** to ABB, and a session on **future opportunities** with DAAD. I would strongly recommend attending this meetup to any future participant, and I am very grateful to everyone involved in organizing it.

Traveling In and Around Germany

For local transport, I got the **Deutschlandticket**. I had some trouble purchasing it online, but visiting the DB office in person shortly after arriving resolved the issue quickly. I used the ticket extensively, both for my daily commute and for weekend travel around the country — one tip worth remembering is to cancel the subscription at the right time once it's no longer needed. For longer-distance travel, I took advantage of a **trial BahnCard25**, a 3-month subscription offering a 25% discount on ICE and IC trains, which proved very useful. Travelers under the age of 26 should also make sure to check for the applicable youth discount, as it can offer additional savings. Finally, it's worth noting that many cathedrals and historical tourist sites across Germany offer **student discounts,** so I made a habit of carrying my college ID while sightseeing to take advantage of these discounts.

General Impressions of Germany

Germany left a lasting impression on me as a beautiful and welcoming country. Over the course of my internship, I had the chance to visit cities like Berlin, Munich, Cologne, Dresden, Heidelberg, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, and Hannover. As a solo female traveler, I consistently felt safe throughout my time in the country.

I met some genuinely kind and friendly people, and made good friends outside of my work circle as well. For anyone interested in learning German, this experience offers a wonderful opportunity to practice. I would try to speak broken German and simple phrases with friends, in shops, and in restaurants. Looking back, those small exchanges are some of what I miss the most. I would also encourage future participants to try the local food and beverages wherever their travels take them — it's a small thing that adds a lot to the overall experience.

Would I Recommend the RISE Professional Program?

Without question, **YES**. The RISE Professional programme is a wonderful opportunity to experience Germany's work and research culture firsthand, and I benefited from it both personally and professionally. I do understand that the application process can feel a little challenging at times, and I found it genuinely helpful to speak with previous DAAD alumni for guidance. I would strongly encourage future applicants to do the same — and I'm happy to be reached over LinkedIn to help pay that forward, just as others did for me. Looking back, this internship gave me far more than research experience; it gave me a place, and people, I'll genuinely miss :)

“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.”

- Manali Kushabhau Teke



Altstadtmarkt Braunschweig – June 2026



Elbe Riverside, Dresden – May 2026