# DAAD Professional Report

Research in Germany is very broad and very integrated. There are extensive international collaborations and a wide range of expertise, often accessible even within individual research departments. This structure is particularly beneficial for young researchers, such as those participating in the RISE program, as it facilitates the exchange of ideas and experiences among peers at various career stages. A typical working day for me involved focused study and research in the morning, followed by a group lunch at the canteen. This daily event proved to be an excellent opportunity for informal conversation and integration within the team, despite the relatively short duration of my internship. I found this to be a particular highlight, as I gained valuable insights from colleagues across different research areas. The afternoon was then dedicated to continuing my project work.

Beyond the laboratory, I would strongly recommend exploring the local area and pursuing personal interests. Reaching out to local clubs or hobby groups can be highly rewarding, usually I find that individuals who share your passions are very welcoming, and this was no exception here in Germany. For instance, I contacted a local water polo team, through which I not only trained and competed in their league but also formed lasting friendships. This experience allowed me to integrate into the community meaningfully and gain a genuine sense of daily life in Germany.

For domestic travel, the Deutschland Ticket offers excellent value for regional train journeys and is a highly effective way to explore the country. However, it is advisable to account for the fact that German trains are frequently delayed or experience technical interruptions, as such allowing for extra time for connections is recommended. I was fortunate to be based near Aachen, which borders several countries, and I greatly enjoyed trips to Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, and Switzerland, as well as visiting numerous German cities, where Cologne (Köln) was my personal favourite.

Regarding administrative matters, I would advise proactive engagement with both your local consulate and the host institution regarding visa and residence requirements, as the paperwork can be extensive and processing times can be lengthy. For daily use, I used a Monzo travel card. However, I discovered that German subscriptions, such as gym memberships or the Deutschland Ticket, often require a SEPA direct debit, which necessitates an EU IBAN. Opening a WISE account allows you to get one of these and is very useful, without the need to open a separate German banking account. For accommodation, I secured student housing with relative ease, despite the fact that I was not affiliated with a university (my research was conducted at Forschungszentrum Jülich), I was still eligible to rent a student apartment.

I would also like to highlight the annual DAAD conference in Heidelberg, which provides a fantastic opportunity to meet fellow RISE interns and exchange experiences regarding research and life in Germany. Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the exceptional professionalism and support provided by the DAAD RISE team. They are approachable, responsive, and willing to assist with any queries.

In summary, Germany is a remarkable country offering outstanding opportunities for both research and personal academic development. Its collaborative and well-integrated research facilities are immensely valuable for young scientists. I have thoroughly enjoyed immersing myself in the culture and have formed friendships that I will undoubtedly maintain beyond the internship. I cannot recommend the DAAD RISE program highly enough, it is exceptionally well-organised and the opportunities it affords are truly invaluable.

“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.” - EUAN WALKER 