
Personal account

Overall impression of the research period

My start at the USC was nice, my advisor welcomed me on my first day in Los Angeles. We started to discuss about my research project right away. The research group at USC Viterbi Engineering had a lot of plans for me. On the one hand this was really good, because I learned a lot about various research domains by reading papers. On the other hand, it was a little bit confusing, their ideas were widespread. So I had to figure out how I could possibly combine them into one master thesis project, which is still the size of a masters project and not a PhD.

Unfortunately the enthusiasm for the beginning did not last very long. The research group was busy with many other projects and there were some deadlines to fulfill. My advisor had no longer time for me, so I planned my research project with my advisor from Austria.

Once the plan was made, the research project was running well. I worked mostly on my own, but the other PhD students always had an advice when I needed some help. Also the support from home was good, the professors from Austria had always time for skype meetings.

After the research project was finished, I started to work on my master thesis. As this was my first major paper written in English, I needed someone to proof read it. Kathy, the administrative worker of Prof. Prasanna helped me with that point. She asked a student worker to proof read my thesis, the feedback was very helpful and it improved the quality of my thesis a lot.

The length of the research period, in my case 5 months, was really good. I could not imagine to finish a research project, a master thesis project in less than 5 months. As it is more difficult to start a project in a group where you don't know the other group members, you definitely need more time to get started. Another huge challenge, which should not be underestimated, is to write the thesis in English. I had a tight time schedule for my research project and I have kept it in mind. Although I could not finish my master thesis completely, I could finish my research project and that's more important.

My overall impression about my exchange semester at the USC is very well. I learned many things and I had a great time in LA. I learned how research works, how stressful paper deadlines can be and how important a good planning is for a research project. I have met many interesting people and some of them become friends.

Quality of the research institution

The quality of the USC, as a research institution, is amazing. There are so many interesting projects going on, not only in my research group at Viterbi Engineering, Computer Science. Through the other international students I got an insight in other departments and their research projects. From biomedical engineering projects, to the (maybe) airplane of the future, everything was forward-thinking. The other departments had no problems with showing their projects to students from other research groups. In my opinion, this is an indicator for an open minded university which acts in concert.

I never thought that the feeling to study in the USA and in Austria would be such a different one. The students of a university in the USA are one unit, they help each other and they are more connected through the various majors. The life on campus is totally different to what I was used to from home. There is one main campus where nearly all courses are, but there are also restaurants and some places to study or relax. I enjoyed studying at USC very much and I will miss the feeling of being part of one unit, the Trojans.

Integration in the research institution

As my advisor at USC had many other time pressing tasks and projects to do, he was mostly busy with writing proposals or taking care of his PhD students. From a research project point of view, I was not really integrated into the research institution, but from a personal point of view I was definitely integrated. My colleagues, the other PhD students were really nice and we talked a lot about research, technical stuff and how it is to live abroad.

Through the international office I met students from other majors, also mostly PhD students, which studied in LA for 6 months till 2 years. The OIS organized various events for international **students only, at those events I've met some amazing people. Soon we started to organize our own events and trips, that's why I never felt alone in LA.**

Recommendations for future mps scholars

The first thing when you arrive at your destination should be to contact the international office at your university. Tell them that you are here and that you would like to join their events or to meet other international students.

Inform yourself about **housing in advance, don't postpone it until you are there. As you properly** will start in the middle of the American semester, all good and cheap houses are booked out.

Look that you get the visa as early as possible. If needed contact the hosting university once a day, to get all the papers you need from them.