



**AUSTRIAN
MARSHALL PLAN FOUNDATION**
VIENNA | AUSTRIA

MARSHALL PLAN SCHOLARSHIP FIELD REPORT AFTER STAY

PERSONAL DETAILS

First name	Marlies	Middle name	Kathrin
Last name	Berger		
Research period at host university, min = 3 full months excl. arrival and departure day			
From (DD.MM.YY)	3 rd April 2017		

FINAL FIELD REPORT (2 pages)

Please comment on the following topics concerning your stay at the host university:

General impression of your research stay

My general impression of my research stay in the US was a very positive one. It is important to note that enough time needs to be calculated for the organization beforehand, since I experienced some difficulties regarding my visa (J1) in terms of several documents that in part were difficult to obtain. Hence, I was positively surprised about how smoothly everything, concerning my start at work, went, once I was in the US. After some medical examinations and receiving the mandatory flu vaccine I immediately started work in the Dermatology Lab at the New York University. I was provided with a Lab coat and all needed laboratory utensils, a computer with my personal Login-data as well as with a project, my colleague had already been working on and I took over from the 1st day on I was at work. Since I was surrounded by great researchers from all different corners of the world, I could benefit from learning several new techniques and methods as well as getting the knowledge and background information about all the experiments I performed. Once a week we had a Lab meeting within my team of the Dr. Osman Lab and another day of the week we had a Melanoma Melanocyte group meeting of the whole Department of Dermatology, consisting of two presentations per meeting. One about a newly published journal the presenter could choose and one about the works in progress. I joined these presentations as a speaker and was able to present a very interesting paper about IQGAP1 as an oncogenic target in canine melanoma as well as my whole project at the very end of my stay. These presentations enriched my knowledge about melanoma, gave insight into my colleagues projects as well as new ideas for the different projects. New York and the US in general is a great spot for research, as motivated investigators from all over the world gather, exchange knowledge and have the resources to work on important research projects.

Quality of the host institution in regard to research opportunity

I would rank the quality of the host institution, the Department of Dermatology at the NYU hospital, as very high, since I was surrounded by great and enthusiastic scientists, most of them PhDs or Post-Docs. The quality of their studies is reflected in the amount of papers that are published in highly and medium-highly ranked journals in the different Labs in the Department of Dermatology at the NYU Langone Medical Center. NYU is a prestigious University, being the largest private University in the whole US. The researchers spend quite some part of their work time applying for grants, which is reflected in the resources they obtain and can build their research on, which is fundamental for a successful lab. My principal investigator, Dr. Iman Osman, founded the Interdisciplinary Melanoma Cooperative Group (short IMCG), a multidisciplinary, translational melanoma research program that consists of 34 investigators and multiple cross-institutional collaborations, which enables interesting projects through the provision of blood samples, tissue specimens, and clinical information. Among Melanoma researchers in the US, Dr. Osman and the Department of Dermatology at NYU are well known, and it deserves its good reputation thanks to the ambition, diligence and progress Dr. Osman and her team exhibit.

Contact within the host institution, academic opportunity for academic collaboration during stay

I was able to work on two very interesting projects, one about PTEN and another one about EZH2 in Acral and Mucosal Melanoma. The second project became most of my focus and time and is my Master thesis project. Dr. Osman was satisfied with my work and offered me a permanent position as well as the possibility for future Master thesis students to join her team.

Recommendations for future Marshall Plan applicants

I highly recommend the Department of Dermatology at the NYU Langone Medical Center and in specific Dr. Osman's Lab. It is very important to calculate enough time, since the whole organization of the stay, including the Marshall plan scholarship as well as the visa are quite time consuming. After all the effort put into the application and the planning, it is definitely a worth-while experience I am very grateful for. Since New York City is very expensive, the Marshall plan scholarship was fundamental in being able to afford the stay. Additional money has to be calculated for the daily expenses, because of the expensive housing-, living expenses and subway tickets in this big city. Since this stay abroad was an unforgettable experience for me in the sense that I was working on an interesting research project where I learned a lot and living in such a diverse, multi-culti city broadens your horizon, I definitely advise Dr. Osman's Lab to everyone.

Contact Email after completion of research stay**DECLARATION**

- ➔ I hereby declare that all information provided in the application is to my best knowledge, correct, and complete.
- ➔ I acknowledge and agree to the data included in this application being used for statistical purposes and any photos of official Marshall plan Scholarship events being used for promotion purposes by University of Graz and the Marshall Plan Foundation