

Field Report



Home Institution: Salzburg University of Applied Sciences / Puch bei Hallein, Salzburg

Host Institution: University of Southern California / Los Angeles, California

The following report aims to give an overview about my personal experience during my research stay at the University of Southern California.

Quality of the Host Institution

The University of Southern California is a very renowned institution and constantly ranked under the top Universities in the United States. Therefore, I have found that also the quality of the research in the Viterbi School of Engineering where my research group was located was very high. The research team was very international which was also beneficial to the research because everybody had a different background knowledge that could be combined in the weekly meetings.

Contacts within Host Institution / Integration in the Organization

Before my arrival I was already in touch with the administration staff from the department. Upon my arrival I had directly an appointment with the department administration where I got the keys to my office and to the building. I was also added to the mailing list, so I could see when my research group had meetings and what was going on. A few days later I took part in the first meeting where I met my group and fellow research colleagues as well as the department head. After introducing what I wanted to work on the group had different recommendations for me and I was also assigned a supervisor who assisted me when I had questions about my research. Furthermore, I had a weekly meeting with my supervisor to discuss my progress. Also, in the weekly group meeting everyone shortly presented their current research progress and it was discussed in the group to give further input, comments or recommendations from everyone. Besides the integration in my department the international office of the University also had an introduction meeting at the beginning where you had the opportunity to meet the research scholars from all other departments. It was great to have contacts to other researchers to also have friends outside my studies.

Recommendations for Future Marshall Plan Students/Fellows

I would definitely recommend the University of Southern California to other Marshall Plan Students in terms of the quality of research. However, I want to note one downside of my research stay and that is the location of the University. What I wasn't aware of before is that the University is located in a very dangerous part of the city where the crime rate is very high. As a female student I did not go outside alone after dark because there are a lot of incidents happening at the University which I was very scared about. I want to note that the university has a lot of police inside the campus and security around starting to patrol in the late afternoon to prevent crimes from happening. Also, the university offered free rides with the ride sharing company lyft after dark during the semester in a selected range around the campus which was great. However unfortunately not all crimes can be prevented. I would therefore recommend to not live around the campus even if it is more convenient. Because of the dangerous environment I would maybe consider choosing another university with a similar research quality but a better and safer environment.

General Impression of Research Period Abroad

Overall it was a great and challenging experience to write my master thesis at the University of Southern California. Moreover, it was an honor to experience the research environment at one of the top universities in the States. I learned a lot about the scientific research domain and was able to dig deeper into my selected topic and focus on my master thesis. Also, the university offers many guest speakers from other universities. It was great to get a broader view by learning about other research that is currently been done in the engineering domain. My stay at USC also enabled me to focus on my research topic with support from experts in the field. Also, the USC has a very large library, physical and online, which makes it easy to find high quality literature. I want to thank the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation for giving me this amazing opportunity to experience the research domain in one of the top universities in the United States.