

Marshall Plan Scholarship Report by Kuseso Onai

General Impression of Research Stay Abroad

In general my stay at the Graz University of Technology was a very memorable experience. This provided me the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and to share my experiences with them. Initially I was a bit apprehensive about the possible language barrier I would face considering that Austrian was a German speaking country. However, almost every person of material help could communicate with me in English-which was a huge relief. With time I was able to learn a few German sentences to navigate through the city and receive critical services when needed. Aside my research work, I spent some time touring the city and other nearby places to have a feel of life in Austria.

With this experience, I have gained an extra quality to easily integrate myself in a new society if I move to a new place in the future.

Quality of the Host Institution

Graz University of Technology is a well-rounded university which provided me with the opportunity to pursue quality research and made extracurricular activities available to me at my doorstep. The student organization provided me with an airport pickup service on my first day of arrival despite arriving late into the night. They also secured my room for me since the office for my housing unit closed before my time of arrival. These services were very helpful to me. In my first few days at my host institution, several welcoming events were organized for me and other visiting students from other countries. We were giving tours around the campus and to some important facilities. A cultural event was also organized to help us settle into our new environments and to cope with any cultural shocks we may experience.

On the research and academic level, my host institution was excellent in terms of the facilities provided to me. I was given an office to work from with all the needed facilities in the office. I was introduced to the laboratories available and given access to every equipment in the lab.

I had the opportunity to even take a course during my stay there. This course has been very helpful in my research upon my return to the United States of America.

Contacts within the Host Institution, Inclusion in the Organization

I was well received in the host institution. After a brief welcome and allocation of an office space to me, I was introduced to all members of the Electric Drives and Machines Institute at Graz University of Technology and was given a tour round the laboratories belonging to the institute. I was given access to the library of the institute and pretty much every facility belonging to the institute. I had the opportunity to interact with members of the institute and we regularly had lunch together. I met visiting scholars from other countries including the United States of America during the period of my stay.

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I had regular meetings with my supervisor during my stay at the institute. I met other professors at the institute from time to time to discuss the content of my research and to obtain help when I faced any obstacle.

Beyond the academic activities, the institute organized fun activities for us on a number of occasions. I also had the opportunity to take a tour of Fronius International to learn about their company and the kind of research activities they conduct.

Recommendation for Future Marshall Plan Students and Fellows

I highly recommend the Electric Drives and Machines Institute at Graz University of Technology to future Marshall Plan Fellows. The Graz University of Technology has a well laid down structure to receive future students and to help them settle before research starts. I will recommend that future students try to contact the student organization at the university with their travel itinerary to arrange for an airport pickup. This can be particularly helpful if the student is arriving late in the night.

I recommend that future students find accommodation close to the institute to ensure easy commute to the institute. However, Graz has a very well managed public transport system with trams and buses. Future students can purchase tickets covering the entire period of their stay. The institute can also offer bicycles for use during the period of stay.

Future students are advised to prepare for their research before arriving there and to organize their schedule immediately they arrive. Students should make sure to have regular contact hours with their supervisors during the period of their stay.

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