

# **MARSCHALL PLAN SCHOLARSHIP – FIELD REPORT**

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## **General impression of my research stay abroad**

My experience in Boston was tremendously affected by the once-in-a-century global pandemic that we are facing. For that reason, I would like to focus on the first months before the pandemic, which are the circumstances that I hope future Marshall Plan Scholarship holders will encounter.

Boston is an extremely international and inspiring city. Contrary to what I expected before heading to Boston, the temperatures in winter are certainly bearable and snowy days are not that frequent. Boston and the nearby areas of New England offer a huge range of parks and landscapes. In particular, my research stay in Boston was extremely inspiring and helped me to realize the research topic I wanted to continue working on in the future.

## **Quality of the host institution**

My research lab was located in the Charleston Navy Yard Campus of the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). Additionally, I carried out part of my experiments at the Wyss Institute located in Longwood. Both MGH and Wyss Institute are two top-notch research centers that are associated with Harvard Medical School. I highly recommend both institutions for everyone who wants to be part of first-class science. In particular, the environment and the working atmosphere of Wyss Institute make it a place where an early stage researcher can easily thrive and progress in the future scientific career.

## **Contacts within the host institution, inclusion in the organization**

Throughout my stay at Massachusetts General Hospital, in particular at Morizane Group, I felt extremely well-integrated. From the very beginning, I was allowed to take part in regular meetings that the research group held with close collaborators from different institutes, including Harvard Stem Cell Institute and Wyss Institute. Additionally, even though it goes beyond my field, I was encouraged to attend a number of Clinical Case reports that were organized in the Nephrology Department.

Remarkably, my supervisor, Ryuji Morizane, showed a great understanding for all the changes that arose as a result of the pandemic and he was extremely concerned about involving me in alternative projects that I could continue to work on remotely.

After having finished my stay in Morizane group, I still stay in contact with my supervisor and we still have some ongoing projects, and I cannot imagine another group environment that could have improved my experience even more.

### **Recommendation for the future Marshall plan students and fellows**

Boston is one of the most expensive cities in the United States. Additionally, the market offer of flats for students that are suitable for a short-stay, such as a Master Thesis, is certainly limited. For that reason, I recommend that you start looking for accommodation as soon as you have been accepted into a group, even before you receive official confirmation from the Marshall Plan that you have been awarded a scholarship.

On the other hand, in my case, it took Massachusetts General Hospital (on behalf of Partners Healthcare) some time to provide me with my institutional badge. Luckily, my research group made things easier for me and allowed me to start working even before I had it. Thus, since you have to pass certain bureaucratic barriers in order to be provided with the badge, I recommend that you contact your Principal Investigator, or the person in charge of your Department, a few weeks before starting the stay to try to speed up these procedures.

For all the above reasons, I highly recommend any student to leave their fears behind and to directly contact the research groups of their interest in order to be able to be accepted for an internship.