

FIELD REPORT

MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING CANCER CENTER, New York
Department of Developmental Biology, Jasin Lab

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General Impression of My Research Stay Abroad

My stay abroad was an incredible experience and I can only recommend everyone to study or work abroad for some time. Being at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) gave me lots of opportunities to expand my knowledge in terms of new lab techniques and biochemical sciences in general. This time did not only enable me to grow professionally, but I also learned a lot about myself and was able to grow as a person. New York is an incredible city, with so many possibilities and I for sure was able to experience it very differently than I would have as a tourist. It is such a multicultural city and I made friends from all over the world, that I will keep in my heart forever and can't wait to visit as soon as possible.

I am very grateful to Maria Jasin to enable me to work in her lab and to all my colleagues for being so warm and welcoming. I also want to thank the Marshall Plan Foundation for granting me the scholarship to help cover the expenses of living in New York City.

Quality of Host Institution

I was very happy with my experience at MSKCC. As one of the biggest research centers in the USA it is full of bright and determined researchers. The institution offers a plethora of free seminars and high-quality talks from international speakers. Generally, the labs are all okay and well maintained, but there are newer and older buildings. You will have functioning devices and equipment of course; they might just be a bit older in some labs. MSKCC also has various core facilities, that provide great service. However, their service is not for free, so you will have to justify using their services.

Contacts Within the Host Institution / Inclusion in The Organization

Everyone within MSKCC was very helpful and I felt very well taken care of. Administrative personal has a lot of experience with the visa and onboarding processes, which made it very easy to start a living and working there. Maria was also very supportive and really did her best to enable me to work in her lab.

I felt like it was very easy to get to know people at MSKCC and people were very welcoming. Most people there are not from the US and therefore know what it's like to arrive in a new place and are more than happy to include you in their activities. This depends on the people in the lab of course, but the people at my lab regularly went out for food and drinks and organized game nights, hikes, and other activities. There were also bi-weekly happy hours at the local bar at MSKCC, which was a great opportunity to get to know people as well.

Recommendations for Future Marshall Plan Students and Fellows

In general, I can only recommend New York City and MSKCC as a place for a research stay. People there are of course all very smart, but I also found them to be very welcoming and fun to work with. MSKCC also offers a lot of interesting talks and seminars (and free cookies and coffee with them), which is great.

If you are thinking of moving to New York, be aware that life is expensive, and expect that you will have to pay a lot of money for a small apartment or room there. I was able to get subsidized housing by MSKCC because I lived there for a year, but if you cannot stay that long they are not able to do so.

Something that was very important to me and that I would like to emphasize here, is that although working hard is important, it is equally important to explore the city and enjoy your time there. Yes, you will probably have to work long hours and people in New York are generally very determined and focused on their career, but they also know how to have fun in their free time! Whatever you're into, New York has a lot to offer for everyone and I would recommend taking some time to explore it. Also, if you have time, make sure you leave the city to explore the country outside of the city! Trains, busses, or the ferry will bring you to the beaches on Long Island or New Jersey and there are lots of beautiful hikes in the surrounding state parks, that can be reached pretty easily with public transport as well.