

MANAGEMENT CENTER INNSBRUCK

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Host-/Research Institution: The Johns Hopkins University	Semester: 4th of MSc
Name: Stefan Kohlgrueber	

**Dear Marshall Plan Scholarship Holder:
We would appreciate your feedback on your research semester in the United States.
Your feedback will help future scholars to prepare themselves well for their sojourn abroad.**

1. 1. What was your general impression of your research stay abroad?

Very good. I was able to select from 3 topics to choose the one that fits my interests and qualifications the most. The supervisor was not only really competent but also very helpful. Whenever help was needed he made time to give very helpful advice. Because one comes across various types of people, one gains a lot of new experiences and can also learn a lot. To work in the same lab with top researchers provides the possibility to gain new insights. This is supported further by the weekly seminars where researchers of other universities like e.g. the Carnegie Mellon University are invited as guest speakers. Even though there are even bigger universities in the US, the scales are enormous. There are 5 campuses of JHU within Baltimore alone.

2. 1. How would you assess the quality of the host institution?

Very good. Not comparable with any university I have ever seen before. Everything is taken care of to ensure students can fully concentrate on their studies and/or research. There are security guards around the campus, a free shuttle that a lot of students use, for instance, to do their grocery shopping. To make sure the students do not lack of anything, there is an own center for student wellbeing. Also, on the Homewood campus there is recreation center as well as a football field, lacrosse field, etc.. The administrative staff is also ready to help anytime. Especially regarding stuff like internal health insurance, course enrollments, etc. which might be new to incoming students. Besides, there is a lot of literature available in the internal library. The quality of the professors and researchers is indisputable and I am really glad that I had the pleasure to get to know such bright minds.

3.1. Could you make contacts within the host institution; inclusion in the organization?

Yes, there is a lab lunch once a week to get to know the peers. Even with corona, the lab lunch was continued remotely via zoom to strengthen the team spirit. In general, it is possible to make contacts but sometimes one needs to show more own initiative and approach people by oneself. In general everybody is really friendly and supportive. Since there are a lot of exchange researchers from all over the world it is quite easy to find social connection.

4. 1. What recommendations would you give future Marshall Plan Scholars?

If you have the opportunity: do it. It is an invaluable experience. There are so many new insights. Not only related to the hard skills but also to things beyond. You will meet many new people from all across the world. It

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will not be a party semester and there will be a lot of work to do. But everybody is really motivated to make progress and this is a great prerequisite for achieving progress by oneself thanks to the productive environment.

Since it can be quite difficult to get a professor which accepts you as research scholar and agrees to supervise the thesis it is a good idea to contact multiple institutions.

It also helps to contact institutions, which might be interesting for a research stay, early enough since the process takes time. Do not underestimate the bureaucratic effort required to complete all documents, get a visa, housing, etc. After paying the fees for the visa and the background check by Homeland Security, you will need to go to Vienna to talk to the consulate before the visa can be approved.

A certificate undermining your language proficiency may not be required. Therefore, instead of wasting money in advance, it might be a good idea to inform yourself about the possibilities to fulfil the requirements. In some cases, an interview via Skype is sufficient.

Make sure to have a detailed look on the deductibles and out-of-pocket money when signing a contract with a health insurance carrier. Some contracts include a clause that 10 or 20% have to be paid by the patient. This amount can be up to e.g. 3000\$. Therefore, it might be worth checking on foreign insurances offered by Austrian carriers. These plans can be bought from under 100\$ a month.

For some housing agencies it is required to provide proof of funding in the height of thousands of US dollars to be trustworthy enough to get the lease. On the other hand, a lot of people rented out a flat on AirBnB to start their search for a flat there. Sometimes people in the lab are looking for a new roommate anyway.

If several flights are necessary, booking at a travel agency can save you a lot of struggle when some connections are cancelled. Also, using European Airlines ensures the right of compensation in case of delays.

If there are further questions, specifically about the JHU, I am happy to answer them. The contact can be provided by the Mechatronics office of MCI Innsbruck.