

## Field Report

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General, every stay abroad is an enrichment for ones personal and professional life, and from my experience I can only confirm this. The opportunity to make my master thesis at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the best university in many fields of science and engineering, was incredible. It gave me a deep insight into top-notch research activities and meeting people working there was profoundly inspiring.

Of course, the quality of MIT as the host institution was very high. The international office was very supportive in every aspect of the organization of the research stay and also the last administrative steps directly at MIT could be done without greater difficulties. Striking were the great many safety trainings I had to do before I was able to start working in the lab. However, reading papers was on my agenda for the start anyway, and will be for many other visiting students too.

Since MIT has many visiting students, there was an own visiting student association, in which various events were organized from visiting student for visiting student. This was a great way of meeting all kinds of people from all around the world at the beginning of my stay who were basically in the same situation as me.

MIT is home to many renowned research groups, and it was fascinating to be a part of this organization, albeit only for a short time. The people in the group of Professor Rupp were welcoming and open hearted. Although I could choose my approach on the research topic defined beforehand relatively freely, I never felt lost or neglected. My direct supervisor at MIT, a Postdoc, was always very supportive and if I had open questions, I could always ask him directly or any other group member. Professor Rupp was however not often reachable in person since many appointments had to be attended by her outside MIT campus.

I had a desk in a shared office with a handful of other PhDs and visiting student, which allowed an alive and stimulating discussion about the diverse research topics inside and outside the reach group. The people I met there were very friendly, and conversations were always very interesting and even helpful for my own research.

One of the few, if not the only critique is that there was no canteen on campus like at universities in Austria. There were various food trucks and a single cafeteria, which however served mainly sandwiches.

In the end I want to highlight the great support und understanding I experienced when I decided to end my research stay ahead of schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was this support and cooperation that allowed me the continue my research in Austria in cooperation with MIT and the group of Professor Rupp.

I can only recommend other student to also make research stays in the US and use the great opportunity that is granted by the Marshall Plan Scholarship. Important things to note are that one should always plan in enough time for all the administrative tasks, especially the visa. A short visit at the US embassy is required and to my positive surprise the visa only took a few days to arrive. But for the visa one need a confirmation form from the university in the USA, which is sent to Austria by mail. This might take some time, and it is important to not underestimate this. Waiting for this form was definitely the most nerve-racking part during the organization. However, if these things are planned and budged accordingly, the organization of the research stay is not overly hard, and I can only recommend to always keep in mind the positive anticipation of an exciting and unique experience in the US, the land of opportunity.