

Trainees report – 3 months at the Research Institute for Medical and Health Sciences at the University of Sharjah (12.02-04.05.2017)

In December 2016, I applied for a short offer, which was announced on the homepage of laeste Germany. After I sent in my paper work, it didn't take long till [REDACTED] from the University of Sharjah contacted me for a skype interview. He asked me a few questions about what I expect, what my background is and when I want to do the internship. Within the interview, he already informed me that I can do the internship in his research group. So, everything worked out quite fast. Afterwards I just had to wait for the official acceptance and my entry visa (laeste UAE takes care of it) in order to book my flight.

Upon arrival, a driver from university picked me up at night from the airport and drove me to the apartment (it belongs to the university and is rented by laeste, there are separated apartments for men and women), where I immediately met the only other intern and some people from the local committee.

The furnished apartment consists of 3 bed- and restrooms, kitchen, store room and a dining/living room with TV and couches. For 2 people it was more than enough space, for 6 people it might become cozy. The location is also quite good. The apartment is close to supermarkets and many (!) restaurants and cafes, the university is kind of close (10 min without traffic, 45 walk but that's not advisable as there are no sidewalks) and there is a nearby bus station to get to Sharjah center. The apartment is situated in a complex with security and cleaning is provided once a week. A problem, however, is that no men are allowed in the female dorms and the LC mainly consists of guys....

Well, Sharjah is very strict. It's the most conservative emirate of UAE. Other important rules are, that you have to cover knees and shoulders and no alcohol is allowed (not even at home). But Dubai is really close, and sometimes you might feel like in Europe there.

But how to get to Dubai or other places? Everyone here has a car. Without a car, it's hard to get around. Public transportation is not that good (only the metro in Dubai itself) and takes kind of long. Luckily, the LC guys drove us around a lot. Otherwise we took a taxi (careful: for crossing the Dubai-Sharjah border they charge you with extra 20 AED, so you might want to change taxis and walk over the border) or sometimes the bus; e.g. there is a direct one to Abu Dhabi. The transport to and from university was provided: every morning a shuttle bus picked us and some professors from our apartment complex up and dropped us at the university. In the afternoon, the driver brought us home. Easy, but therefore not very flexible in the timing.

The internship itself was very interesting. In my first week, I had a look at different projects until I decided on which one I want to work. I decided to work on a project about failure in chemotherapy. The thesis is, that one specific efflux pump is responsible for the resistance, so I checked for the transporter in 4 different cancer cell lines (control vs treated samples). It was very nice to have my own project. However, it also meant that I was responsible for it and if the experiment required me to come on a weekend, I had to come. Fortunately, this did not happen too often. I worked nearly 9h per day (due to the transportation times), some days

were very busy, some days were very relaxing. All in all, it was a good experience and I learned a few new things. But mostly I mastered in methods I've already known before.

So, after work and on the weekends, I and the other trainee mostly hang out with the LC. We didn't always do sightseeing things, but within the 3 months I would say we've done the most important things and even more. We had a lot of fun with the guys, they took us to many places, introduced us to many great and interesting people – so now I won't just leave UAE. I will leave a country which became somehow a new home and I will leave a lot of very good and close friends. So, enshallah I will come back one day and they will come to Germany to visit me. I had a great time here and can totally recommend everyone to come to the Emirates and also to the Research Institute for Medical and Health Sciences, where many awesome and welcoming people are working.