

# IAESTE-internship at the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Poland, Szczecin 10.2022- 12.2022



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Faculty of Biotechnology and Animal Husbandry  
Nanotechnology Laboratory

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## Before the internship

My intention behind this internship was to get some hands-on experience in a lab before my bachelor's degree, to see if working in research would suit me.

When I finally discovered IAESTE after a bit of research, I knew it was perfect for my ambitions and applied for it in December 2021. At IAESTE, you can apply for several internships, through an interview and many other emails, it is then finally decided where the intern fits best. In my case, the decision fell on Poland, more precisely on the city that nobody knows, called Szczecin. During the application process the support of the IAESTE-Heidelberg team was great, you always get a quick response to questions or other issues! Now that I knew where I was going, I only had to apply directly to the responsible professor with a letter of motivation and hope to be accepted. After this was also successful, nothing more stood in my way.

The next important step was to contact the IAESTE team in Poland to get more information about important documents, the accommodation and my buddy. My buddy in Poland gave me the advice to contact the professor and the dormitory personally by mail, so that they can prepare for me. Unfortunately, the administration of my dormitory took a long time to get back to me, so I only found out shortly before my arrival where exactly I would be accommodated and when exactly I could come.

## My arrival in Szczecin

Since my parents had never been to Szczecin, they decided to take me on vacation there a week before the start of my internship and explore the city a bit. So, on September 27, we went to ..., uh where again? Ah right!

To Szczecin! →



Szczecin is a mix of old and new, the reason for this is that after the Second World War the city was only partially rebuilt and so you can find a bit of history at every corner. Besides the many streets and parks of the city, there is also the possibility to take a long walk along the Oder River and breathe in the wonderful chocolate smell of the chocolate factory. If you are interested in cultural things, you

have the possibility to explore a lot, besides many museums, churches and libraries, there is also the philharmonic orchestra and the castle of the dukes of Pomerania, which offer different musical events. All in all, my parents and I were very enthusiastic about the city, and I knew right away that I would feel comfortable there.

The weekend before my internship starts, my parents helped me to move into the student dormitory, and we also had to make a detour to the mall right away, since there were no kitchen utensils, no clothes horse, and no cleaning supplies. It turned out that it was like that in all the dormitories, and no one knew about it what was very annoying. After we had taken care of everything necessary, it was time to say goodbye to my parents.

### The beginning of my internship

The first two weeks consisted of taking care of all the organizational things, which include to create a Polish bank account, buy a Polish SIM card and to take care of getting my student card, without whose additional student information you can't get internet access.

Due to the still existing Corona crisis and the upcoming Ukraine war, it also turned out very quickly that they do not turn on the heaters until November because of the high energy prices. In addition, we received the unexpected and unpleasant information that the rent for the student room of some interns will be increased by more than half. That's why you must be prepared in general to have to finance your stay in Szczecin with your own money.

Besides the not so nice sides at the beginning, I can report only positive things about Szczecin and my stay there.

### My time in the laboratory

From my dormitory I had to walk only 10 min to the building where my workplace was located. There, for the first time, I personally met my professor and the PhD student who would supervise me for the next three months. Both, as well as the rest of the staff, welcomed me very nicely and I felt comfortable right away. Since I am also fluent in Polish, it made general communication more comfortable for some of the staff. In the lab, however, people spoke in English because there was another master's student from the Czech Republic working there, which in turn made communication easier there. Thus, I had the opportunity to brush up on both languages my Polish and English.

During my stay I was able to learn a lot of new things in the lab. The most interesting thing for me to find out was that there are bacteria that can produce cellulose and that you can make different things with this cellulose, such as plasters, creams, masks and much more. But also, in medicine cellulose is used more and more. After about a month I started to develop my own project with my supervisors. My task was to isolate "natural" cellulose bacteria from different fruits. After several attempts, many of which failed, I managed to isolate cellulose bacteria from apples and pears. This now opens the opportunity to get the bacteria cheaper and experiment more with it. Moreover, it has shown me how much I like being in research and developing and working on projects with other colleagues.



## My time with the IAESTE-team and interns in Szczecin

During the first week I got to know some of the team members one by one, including my "substitute" buddy, since my real buddy was still in Austria for an internship. Without my buddies (here a big thank you to Wiktoria and Krzysztof!) I would not have been able to get along so well, because, as I mentioned before, a lot of organizational things from the Polish side did not go so well at the beginning. In the course of time we spent some great evenings together, got to know many people and some of whom have become very good friends.

## Travelling through Poland

Of course I couldn't miss the opportunity to explore the cities of Poland during my free days, of which I haven't seen many on the northern and north-western side of Poland. Often I was traveling with my closest friends, traveling in Poland turned out to be very convenient and the cities were beautiful. Especially I liked Świnoujście (perfect for sea lovers; 1<sup>st</sup> picture), Wrocław (the city of dwarfs and small islands; 2<sup>nd</sup> picture) and Gdańsk (exudes a romantic ambiance; 3<sup>rd</sup> picture) the most. But besides the traveling itself, I found the company of my friends the most enjoyable, as it gave me the opportunity to learn more about its origins and cultures.



## Conclusion

Poland is definitely worth a trip, many of the cities have been beautifully restored after WWII and have a great selection of activities and tours ("Walkative!" is highly recommended). The people there are all very friendly by nature, unfortunately their English is a little weak, but DeepL is always a good help. My internship showed me exactly what I wanted to see, that you can have a great workplace, with great colleagues and with exciting research projects. If you then also find friends with whom you can do everything together, you have hit the jackpot in my opinion. At the end of my stay, I didn't want to leave, but it wasn't a sad farewell, because I knew I'll come back to Szczecin again someday.

And also with my friends I will continue to keep in touch 😊

All in all it was a great time, with new experiences, many memories and a lot of fun! Thanks to IAESTE Heidelberg and Poland for this great opportunity!

