

## IAESTE SWITZERLAND EXPERIENCE REPORT

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**Internship Institution:** Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology (Empa), Switzerland.

**Department:** Materials and Systems: Building Acoustics

### 1. Experience of being abroad all by myself

The experience of being in Switzerland was fascinating, a culture in which time, punctuality and efficiency is of high importance. Having been in Germany before, adapting to the life in Switzerland was much easier; thanks also to the IAESTE Switzerland and IAESTE Zurich local committee's organized forums, such as joined communication groups and weekly meetings, that made sharing of information easier and efficient for the interns in Switzerland.



### 2. Experience at work

The most touching experience was with my supervisor at Empa, Sven Vallely, all the way from the time of the interview, to the end of the internship. He was very supportive. From arriving at the airport in Zurich, having never met before and not knowing me, he stood at the airport exit with a paper having my name, in order to identify me and pick me at the airport. It was the best experience that made me feel at home in a foreign land, great love and support to the interns! With little experience in acoustics computer simulations, he offered to train me in detail prior to the start of the assignments. This training offered me a solid foundation, which made us achieve the objectives of the internship within the allocated time.

The opportunity to work as an intern at Empa was one that offered great exposure and efficient transfer of multiple skills to me as a research student. I worked at the Laboratory for Acoustics and Noise Control, in the building acoustics section of the Materials and Systems department. The work involved vibro-acoustic simulation using finite element software, Ansys Mechanical. The simulation was followed by laboratory experiments, modal fitting to extract modal parameters and finally model updating. It was an exciting journey of discovery of the power of finite element analysis (FEA) and use of technology to achieve critical insight regarding acoustics and noise control.

Additionally, the work on collaborative programming with my supervisor was an opportunity to sharpen my Python programming skills and improve my knowledge and skills on MATLAB programming. Indeed, the internship gave me opportunity to work in a high-tech and results oriented environment, with opportunity to contribute in the team as well as to learn from the team.

### 3. Experience with IAESTE

My overall experience with IAESTE in Switzerland was superb! The great support, and ease of settling in Switzerland was made possible by IAESTE. All the processes of getting the contract to having visa and work permit was seamless. As an intern through IAESTE, I received full support, both from the local authorities and at work place. The advantages of the internship through IAESTE were the ease of identifying open internship opportunities, and the simplicity of applying as well, all through the IAESTE website. To me, IAESTE is more than just exchange of students for technical experience, it is indeed a body that helps in exposing the students worldwide to diverse working cultures, and is an eye opener to students on their potentials in their career paths. Through IAESTE, I learnt that my skills were not limited to my country but can be utilized anywhere in the world. Additionally, IAESTE widens the network for career opportunities for the students in the future, beyond the borders of their countries. It is my hope that all the institutions in my country will join IAESTE in order to offer their students these wonderful opportunities through the exchange.