

18-week internship at Medec Benelux NV in Belgium



Atomium, Brussels

According to my double-degree program, I had to obtain an engineering practice during the 18-week internship in industry. As I was interested in anesthesia machines at that time, I chose two nearest companies experienced in such devices: Draeger in Lubeck and Medec Benelux in Aalst, Belgium. In two weeks, my application at Draeger was refused and then I got a phone call from Medec that they would be happy to see me in their company. After that, I had two interviews with employers of the company: HR manager and Head of the R&D department to get the topic of my internship.

Preparation process: visa and accommodation

As I am an international student, at first I had to obtain Belgian visa for internships. I got it only in two months but the company paid the fee for it, supported me at all stages and helped me with documents. While I was waiting for the visa, I was looking for the accommodation in Aalst. It was a challenge because Aalst is a small town and almost all houses and flats may be rented for more than one year. Thus for the first time I took a room in Aalst via Airbnb and after that I moved to Brussels. However, the company can help you with accommodation: they have contacts with high school in Aalst where students can rent apartments.

Internship

During my internship, I had my own project in IT-field – I developed a system to collect and analyze the acceptance criteria of the anesthesia machines. During the work on the project, I learnt SQL, Python and special platforms for Big Data analysis: Apache NiFi, Spark, Kafka and Zeppelin. As I was an engineer before and had no previous knowledge of programming languages, all these tasks were new to me, but my supervisor helped me a lot and answered all my questions. R&D team was very friendly too and I always got help from them. However, I was the first intern at this company and unexpected for the team I finished my project much earlier than 18 weeks. At the same time, my supervisor left the company and we decided to continue my work with writing the “shell” in Java for my system with another supervisor.

Aalst and Brussels

The distance between Aalst and Brussels is only 25 km, but they are located in different “parts” of Belgium: Aalst - in Dutch-speaking part and Brussels – in French-speaking one. People from Aalst have better English knowledge and I may say that in Brussels nobody can speak English because I could not get any help even in Foreign Office. Anyway, Belgian cities are very beautiful and have many touristic places. Train tickets are

very cheap, so you can visit a lot of different towns nearby such as Ghent, Brugge, Antwerp, Liege and even Netherlands: Belgian railways have a direct connection to Rotterdam, den Haag and Amsterdam.

Conclusion

I really enjoyed my time at Medec Benelux NV. As I wanted to try a new field for me – programming, I gained valuable practical experience in it and this was the first step to my current scientific work. Moving abroad is always a good experience to check yourself in different situations and excellent “school of life”. Thus, I would recommend to apply for an internship abroad because this will be the best chance to travel a lot, to learn new cultures, meet different people and, of course, to get practical experience in your field of study.



Ghent



Antwerp

You can contact me at any time: ksenia.evteeva@rwth-aachen.de,
directly write to Medec HR manager, Yves Derycke (he speaks German): Yves.Derycke@medecbenelux.be
or to Head of R&D department, Dirk van Leuven: Dirk.VanLeuven@medecbenelux.be