

Experience report at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

1 Preparation

I applied directly through the guest student program at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Every year, WHOI provides a limited number of guest student appointments in our laboratories on a year-round basis for full-time graduate and undergraduate students. To find more information, you can search via <http://www.whoi.edu/gueststudent/>

I sent an email to my tutor at WHOI and asking for the chance for the project. We talked a lot about the common research interests, besides I sent him my personal website along with my resume, transcripts and statement of research interests.

After I knew I got the PROMOS scholarship to study in USA, it was around March. Then I received the DS-2019 from the host institute to apply for the J1 VISA in USA. It took me a lot of time to prepare the documents for the VISA and experienced the security check. Please make sure that you get the VISA and then order the flight ticket. For more information, one can search via <https://de.usembassy.gov/visas/study-exchange/>

2 Formalities in the host country.

Security card and bank account: Since I also received some subsidies from my supervisor, so I need to apply for the social security card to open a local bank account, one can get more information about the social security card application via <https://www.uscis.gov/> I opened the bank account at Bank of America. Please note that if you are under 24, you can open the student account without paying the month rate. <https://www.bankofamerica.com/>

3 General information about the partner university.

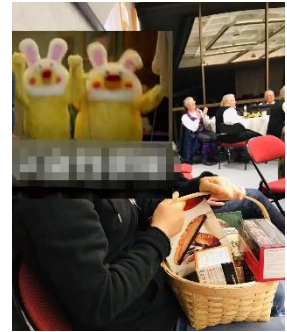
WHOI is an independent non-profit oceanographic scientific research institution. The research areas include a wide range of topics related to ocean and earth science and marine policy; including interdisciplinary work related to the coastal ocean, ocean life, ocean exploration, and climate change. WHOI is located in Woods Hole, Falmouth, MA. When you arrived in the Logan Airport in Boston, then take the Peter Pan bus from Logan Airport to Woods Hole, you can book the ticket online or just buy it through the window. It will take around 2 hours to take the bus from Boston to Woods Hole. <https://peterpanbus.com> Woods Hole is a pretty famous tourism spot with the Martha's Vineyard island especially in summer, so the house rent could be extremely high in summer around 2000 dollars a week for a house. But in winter, the house rent is accepted, however the weather could be super bitterly cold, almost -10 Celsius degree.



Woods Hole Source: online

As for the contact person, I contact the secretary before I come, so I just went to the Smith Lab to get the key for my room and went to Humanity Resource to check in.

There are lots of parties in winter, I participated the Christmas party and International party. The secretary will send the festival-related emails then we can decide which celebration to go. One thing to mention is that some parties may be free to attend some may need to bring some food or donate money. I was lucky enough to get the gift on the International party and my gifts are some cookies.



4 Accommodation

The house rent could be extremely high in summer and the student rooms are so too. Since the student rooms are prior to the PhD program students, I suggest to book other houses via <https://www.whoi.edu/housing/housingListing.do>. One thing to mention is the house rent needs the reference and sending emails to request, it could be very hard to find a suitable house in a short time. Please make appointment for the house at least one or two months earlier.

5 Other information

Even though we do not have courses to take at WHOI, there is regular scientific seminar every Tuesday afternoon with the world class scientists giving about the state-of-the-art science and technology. One can also get some information for the workshops, when I was here, I got the chance to attend the R-studio workshop here. It was really amazing that the sharing science and open source science are so popular in American Universities.



R-studio memory photo

There are lots of chances to explore the WHOI labs and vessels. We got the chance to walk around in one research vessel and the staffs introduced lots of the instruments. As one photo shown below is the staff introducing the submersible to us. I need to recognize that the USA leads the oceanographic scientific research for so many years. I feel aspired to go further study there to continue my Ph.D. study.

Since Woods Hole is not so far from Boston, I suggest one can go travelling to Boston (2 hours) or go to New York (6 hours). Try to book the bus ticket online earlier to make sure there are enough discounts inside. One thing needs to mention is that the public transportation system in USA is not as far as in Germany. Most people may prefer go out by car. And the train is not as far as in Germany,

so prepared to take bus for travelling.



Navigation Manned Submersible

As for the weekly shopping, since I was in a local village and the bus is around one hour, I need to walk 20 minutes and take the bus to the supermarket. It could be very windy sometimes, so I suggest try to find the accommodation in Falmouth not in Woods Hole. Falmouth could be more convenient for daily life but you can take the shuttle in village to go to work. Maybe the most convenient way is to rent a car yourself. I don't know whether German driver's license could be available in Massachusetts, but the Chinese driver's license is not available here but you can rent a car with the Chinese driver's license for a short period time.

6 What should be avoided

There are some labs doing the dangerous experiments, without permission, please never enter in such labs and do not hang around the labs doing the instruments tests. This is related with the piracy if one take photos without permission in such labs.

7 Conclusion

I stayed at WHOI for around 4 months, I worked with three supervisors to study the scale dependence of the SST-wind and current-wind coupling with the long-term satellite and model output data in Arabian Sea. I learned how to use the 2dimensional spatial filter and cross spectral analysis to study the time range and spatial scale of the thermal and mechanism coupling. The experience here is so wonderful here, not only do I made lots of new friends but I found my way to do scientific research when I graduate from University of Bremen. I feel so grateful for the PROMOS scholarship, giving me the chance to make the exchange study in a world-leading institution.

