



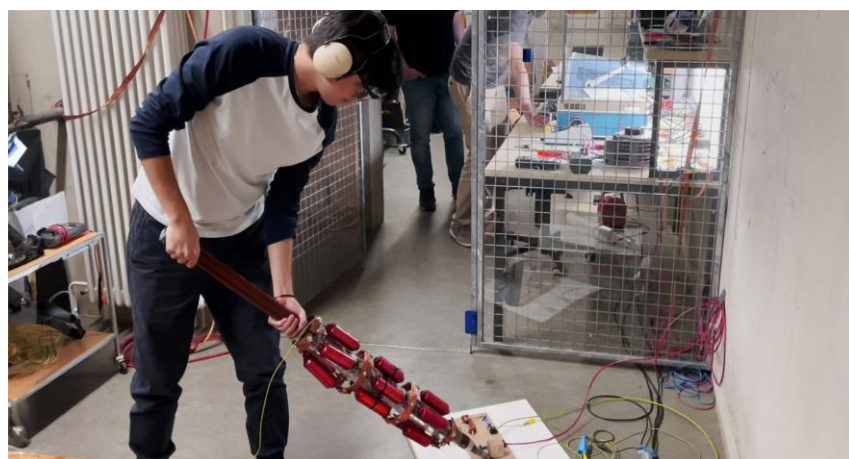
## Andy Silva, Ecuador - Intern at BFH (Bern University of Applied Sciences) Bern, 01.03.2023 - 31.05.2023

My internship as a foreign student in Switzerland was one of the best experiences of my life. This was my first time traveling alone, living alone, working, and visiting a country that speaks other languages. You can imagine how scared I was at the beginning... And I was even more scared when I arrived at 8pm at Bern train station with 2 bags of luggage, tired after almost a day traveling and no cellphone (I didn't have internet nor service). Thankfully IAESTE Switzerland managed to get someone to pick me up at the train station and he recognized me while I was trying to figure out what to do. It was all part of the experience lol. But after the first week, everything got a lot easier. I managed to have a good group of friends with whom I shared a lot during my internship, even on the last day that I had to take the plane to get home. I met them at one of IAESTE meetups to cook and eat fondue, somehow 2 of the people that were there lived in the same building as me, and after that it just clicked. All this experience helped me learn a lot of things about myself and how I managed to have so many incredible moments and close friends in such a short time made me proud of myself.



In my internship I had a fresh perspective on how the “real world” works. It was a 3-month long work in a field of my career that I really haven’t focused much on. This put extra pressure on me at the start because I was nervous of what to do or how to do it. Thankfully the people with whom I worked helped me with this process and I was able to adapt quickly. I worked as a laboratory assistant focused on electromagnetic waves and high voltage. I was surprised by all the equipment the laboratory had; it was all so advanced that I felt happy to have the opportunity to work in that environment. I had my own office where I spent most of the time making reports, creating laboratory experiments for students enrolled in EM waves classes for the next semester of the University. I didn’t like to work on that because it meant sitting in front of a computer for hours just typing and researching information. But when I had to really work in the laboratory, that’s when the fun began. At the start, they were careful with not letting me work on the laboratory directly (since its high voltage it could be dangerous) but after a month and a half I got the trust to work on it and it was incredible to see electrical discharges up to 6000 volts. We did mostly test on third party companies who wanted to check the functionality of their equipment. The best thing was building (literally) equipment to do high voltage discharges on a device under test, at the time it was confident of what it was, but later on my boss told me it was for a spacecraft focused on removing space junk, they even made an article where I appear working.

<https://www.bfh.ch/en/news/news/2023/bfh-supports-the-world-first-space-junk-removal-mission/> (If somehow, you’re interested in).



Switzerland is a special place, there's so many things to explore and a lot of foreign people to meet as well. I lived in Bern, which apparently is alive in terms of nightlife and culture. I got to experience a lot of events, museums and even some independent films displayed in the middle of a park. For me the best part was the public transport, it was so punctual, it related to everything and easy to understand and buy tickets once you get used to it. Thanks to all the train systems I could travel around Switzerland easy, fast, safe, and comfortable (sounds like advertising... But it's true!). The most cultural shock that I had was how expensive everything was. At least my first month, I feared buying a lot of things at the supermarket because of how expensive everything was (compared to my country, Ecuador). Thankfully my internship paid me well and I could enjoy my time there without being worried all the time about money, but it scared me a lot at first. Something positive of that was learning how to cook by myself a lot of things, because that was a bit cheaper than going to a restaurant or McDonalds every day.



I'm thankful to IAESTE Switzerland for arranging everything and giving this opportunity to explore another culture, getting out of my comfort zone, working, and expanding my perception on my career and most importantly to realize how to live grateful and giving the best effort in every moment that I can. This experience gives me a great advantage on my curriculum and my working environment, but it was the networking and the moments that I lived on that I'll keep with myself forever.

