

On the stay abroad

An exercise in logistics and networking

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Outline

1 Before the stay

2 During the stay

3 After the stay

Before the stay: Lots of overlapping issues

Who, why, and where?

Who, why, and where?—An incomplete list

- Which are the possible locations/researchers for the visit?
- Ask yourself (and your advisor): What might be your goals for the visit to location *X* or researcher *Y*?
- Who would be interested in working with you? Do you have good feeling about this person?
- Who would be interested in helping you out with the local arrangements? (*Not necessarily the same persons as above.*)
- Prioritize topic-strictness or not?
- What about networking opportunities? (*Knowing people is **important** in this business (as in other businesses).*)
- What about the logistics? (*Paris is closer than, say, LA.*)

These questions are easier to answer after going on **previsit(s)** and/or talking to people that you've **networked** with at **summer schools** or **conferences**.

Before the stay: Lots of overlapping issues

When?

When?—An incomplete list

- When can you make the trip? When can your possible hosts host you?
- Are they going to have a lot of time for you? Are there anybody else that you can work with?
- Go early in your PhD (*risking that you don't know enough to benefit from the stay*); or late (*risking that you are too busy and stressed to go*)?
- If your bringing a significant other, child, dog, pet python; do you bring them—and how does the **when** fit their plans?

Again: These questions are easier after ... **previsits**; ... talking to people that you've **networked** with at **summer schools** or **conferences**.

Before the stay: Lots of overlapping issues

How?

How?—An incomplete list

- How to make the first contact?
- How long? Two, three, six, seven months? One stay or several shorter visits? (*Do think about the overhead in establishing working relations, social relations, etc.*)
- How much? What is going to cost—you, and the ITU?
- How do you calculate your taxes? (*Short answer: You google a lot, read various documents on www.skat.dk, use a calculator for the first time in five years, and still get a kind lady from SKAT to calculate it for you.*)
- How do you get a local bank? Do you need one?
- How do you get an insurance?

... [previsits](#); ... *networked* ... *summer schools, conferences*. And [SKAT](#), of course.

Before the stay: Lots of overlapping issues

How?

More hows

- How to get a place to stay? Which will hold you, your significant other, your kids, etc. (*My experience: Do try to find a furnished place!*)
- Do you prioritize living close to the university, or closer to a large city?
- How do you ship your stuff? Which operator do you want to ship your stuff with? (*My experience: Choose an international operator!*)

Before the stay: Who to talk to about these questions?

The supporting cast: Some options

- Your supervisor(s),
- your significant other,
- the PhD study board (*see also next slide*),
- other PhD students—preferably some that visited the country/university/researcher that you're aiming at.

Before the stay: What information can I get from the PhD Studyboard?

To save you some time digging around our wondrous intranet, have some links:

The PhD Study Board is there to help you!(*)

- Check out the FAQ on: http://www1.itu.dk/sw65241.asp#516_47705. Contains links to
 - ▶ details regarding the rates (for subsidies) for long-term stay abroad http://www1.itu.dk/graphics/ITU-library/Internet/Forskning/Phd/Rates_longtermstay_final2006.pdf;
 - ▶ a “who stayed where”—giving you the opportunity to check out who you can ask about stuff specific to the country/university, you’re going <http://www1.itu.dk/graphics/ITU-library/Internet/Forskning/Phd/oversigtudland.pdf>;
 - ▶ as well as the official app sheet for the stay abroad.

(*) *And demand half-year reports.*

During the stay: Various topics to consider

Work, work, work

On work

- What is going to be your working relationship with your host? To overemphasize: Are you a writing slave, a student, a co-researcher?
- How do you organize your work? Do you have daily/weekly/monthly meetings? What time of day is it usual to work?
- What is the social code? (casual or formal clothes, talking in the office, parties, ...) (*Yes. It does matter.*)
- Do you get an office-space? A desk? (*You should.*)
- What are your possibilities for interacting with other researchers? (*Do it! They might be the ones reviewing your next paper/job application; or they might be future friends.*)
- To what extent do you participate in the work, arrangements, and daily life of the research group of your host?

During the stay: Various topics to consider

The small things

Practicalities

- How do you get an every day life up and running?
- How do you get an internet connection, a cell-phone, etc.
- If you bring a significant other, child, etc. what are they going to do while you work? (*This is important!*)
If they want to study or work, prepare it from home, it might be difficult.
- What about local transportation? (*discount possibilities, etc.*)
- What about dentists, doctors, medicine, contact lenses, etc.?

During the stay: Various topics to consider

Socializing—do you need friends?

On socializing

- First of all: Decide if you want to get a social life; it's going to take time and effort. (*My suggestion: Invest the time!*)
- How to meet people?
- And on that note: Where do people meet each other in your host country? (*Find out. Ask the locals.*)
- What if you don't know the language? (*My experience: It does matter; less for working, more for social.*)

After the stay: You're back! You're done; right?

So you came, you saw, you conquered, got the t-shirt, and returned; you're done; right?

An assortment of loose ends

- How do you ship your stuff back? (*If you brought a girl-friend you might even have more stuff, than when you went there. . .*)
- What about the papers that you started, but didn't finish?
- What about the tax-return statement? (*Hopefully you did talk to the nice lady at SKAT?*)
- . . .

**I forgot a lot of things.
Do ask questions!**