



**Summer Internship Programme in Epigenetics,  
Cellular Plasticity and Stem Cells**

The summer of 2016 has seen the launch of a pilot Summer Internship Programme in Epigenetics, Cellular Plasticity and Stem Cells at Helmholtz Zentrum München.

Initiated by the Institutes of Functional Epigenetics and Epigenetics & Stem Cells, together with 7 other institutes at Helmholtz Zentrum München, the internship programme offers talented and motivated undergraduate students from all over the world the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the lab alongside top researchers in the fields of epigenetics, cellular plasticity and stem cells.

“The overall, long-term goal is to attract the bright young talents out there to join the participating institutes for their future PhD or Postdoctoral research, thereby shaping research in these cross-cutting areas at Helmholtz Zentrum München, within an internationally competitive and culturally diverse environment” says Astrid Lunkes, who heads the Epigenetics & Stem Cells Research Management and Strategy Office.

The internship programme was advertised internationally and received one hundred applications from individuals in 20 different countries and of 28 nationalities. The nine selected internship students came from universities in Ireland, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Turkey, Spain and Greece, united by their interest in the research topic and motivated to gain practical experiences to enrich their university studies.

Welcomed for 8 weeks by the nine participating institutes, the internship students participated in cutting-edge research projects specializing in biochemistry, molecular biology, imaging and computational approaches. Scientific discussions were stimulated through active participation in lab meetings and seminars, and in the presentation of their work to researchers at the centre during an afternoon of short talks.

To promote interaction and networking between the internship students, accommodation was provided in two shared apartments and a number of activities were planned during the internship period to promote coherence within the group and stimulate interactions between interns and HMGU researchers. “In addition to exposing the interns to the excellent science taking place at the centre, our aim was for the whole internship experience to serve as a good opportunity to establish networks that will endure in their future studies and careers” says Emily Steed, coordinator of the internship programme.

“This internship programme is the first of its kind here at Helmholtz Zentrum München and it has been a great pleasure to set it up in a truly joint effort with members of the centre’s administrative teams, who were instrumental in rendering it a success” adds Astrid Lunkes.

The groups and institutes participating in the pilot scheme are as follows; Micha Drukker (ISF), Dirk Eick (MEG), Elke Glasmacher (IDO), Irmela Jeremias (AGV), Robert Schneider (IFE), Raffaele Teperino (IEG), Fabian Theis (ICB), Maria Elena Torres-Padilla (IES) and Wolfgang Wurst (IDG).

“There’s a great sense of community at Helmholtz Zentrum München and I am very sad to have had to leave... I might just have to come back some day!” Orla Deevy, Drukker lab intern

“Every single experiment, method or working technique has been a great learning experience for me.”

Eric Walzthöny, Jeremias lab intern