



Max Kade  
Clinical Clerkship Program  
In the USA

Experience Guide  
2018/2019

**MAX KADE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**



**The American Austrian Foundation**



<b>1. Short information about this guide:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Students attended a rotation at UPENN:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
A. A Day at PENN .....	3
B. Housing .....	5
C. Recommendations - Which suggestions or recommendations do you have for future Max Kade students (hospital, leisure time, etc.) .....	6
D. Other – Is there any other vital information you would like to share with future Max Kade students?.....	7
<b>3. Students attended a rotation at GWU:</b> .....	<b>8</b>
A. A Day at GWU.....	8
B. Housing .....	9
C. Recommendations – Which suggestions or recommendations do you have for future Max Kade students (hospital, leisure time, etc.).....	9
D. Other – is there any other vital information you would like to share with future Max Kade students?.....	12
<b>4. Students attended a rotation at Cornell:</b> .....	<b>13</b>
A. A Day at Cornell .....	13
B. Housing .....	13
C. Recommendations - Which suggestions or recommendations do you have for future Max Kade students (hospital, leisure time, etc.).....	15
D. Other – Is there any other vital information you would like to share with future Max Kade students?.....	16



## **1. Short information about this guide:**

We have asked former Max Kade Students to provide us with recommendations for upcoming students. We are happy to share this information with you.

## **2. Students attended a rotation at UPENN:**

### **A. A Day at PENN**

During my first 4 weeks of clinical clerkship at the congenital heart surgery at CHOP (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia) my day started at 6 am. I met the Residents and Fellows to check on the vitals of our patients on the computer before going on rounds on the cardiac ICU. At 7am we joined the attending sign out of the cardiac ICU together with our surgical attendings. Every second Monday an M&M conference was scheduled, every Thursday at 8am the cardiac catheterization/ surgery conference took place to discuss the upcoming cases of the following week. On Friday we had a 1 hour cardiac surgical teaching rounds, where one of the fellows presented a congenital heart defect and its options for surgical repair were discussed with the attendings. After the conferences or the attending sign out I usually went to the OR to follow the surgery on one of the big screens in the observation room or in the OR standing next to the anaesthesiologists. The team told me over and over that they would try to get me into a case to scrub, but had to ask the attending first. Unfortunately, a lot of our attendings were gone during my stay because of the American Heart Association Annualy Convergence. Therefore, there were not as many surgeries scheduled as usual. Also we had a lot of very difficult cases so that in the end I scrubbed for 3 surgeries within my 4 weeks at the department of congenital heart surgery and mostly observed. After the surgeries I usually went to my desk at the office with the fellows and read the chart of the patients scheduled for the next day and looked up their syndromes or heart defects.

On days without scheduled surgeries or a late start I joined the cardiac ICU rounds.

I also joined a lot of conferences or teaching rounds. E.g. on Wednesday afternoon the Fetal Heart Conference took place, where cardiologists show intrauterine ultrasound pictures of babies with congenital heart defects and discuss how to proceed. On Thursday afternoon there was the Pathology Conference for residents and fellows, where the head of pathology presented one type of heart defect and then showed human specimens which showed the discussed heart defect.

So after leaving an afternoon conference and reading the charts of the patients for the next day my day at congenital heart surgery usually ended around 5:30 -6 pm.

During my rotation on pediatric plastic surgery I was assigned to follow one attending, which was nice, because she felt responsible for me and told me where to go on which day of the week. She also presented me to the other attendings which I was supposed to follow on her days of absence so that they felt responsible for me, too.

Every day started with rounds at 6:15 am but I was asked to print the patient's list and right down the patients' vitals as well as lab results next to each name before we went on rounds with that list. So again my day started at 5:45 am.



On Mondays I went to see patients with my attending in the clinic. Since her focus is on cleft surgery those patients were mainly cleft patients – either before surgery to discuss the details or after surgery for follow up and evaluation of speech development. Those days were my only “short days”, because clinic was usually over around 3 pm (so just 9:15 hours of work). The other days I went to the OR either with the attending I was following or with another attending who gave me a private talk in between surgeries every day I went to the OR with him. His lectures were either about an upcoming case or a surgical procedure with anatomical drawings to underline the topic. With the plastic surgeons I was allowed to scrub every case as second assistant. Unfortunately, the attendings are so busy explaining every step to the resident or assisting them to operate, that I was not able to do more than cut sutures or suction. During my 4 weeks at plastic surgery I was allowed to do the sutures just once. But the cases at plastic surgery are very diverse and small cases like mole excisions alternate with bigger surgeries like cleft repairs or craniofacial surgeries. Usually we finished around 4 or 5 pm, but in case we were done early in the OR (around 3 pm) it was suggested that I went to the clinic to see patients there. In between seeing patients, I looked into the next patient's chart (in case it was not a new patient) and the attending explained the history and the performed surgery. A nice thing at the plastic surgery department is that the doctors take pictures of the patients before, during and after surgery for documentation so that anyone can see the course of the patient.

On Thursdays rounds start already at 5:15 because the Residents' and Fellows' Teaching Rounds take place at 6am followed by the Grand Plastic Rounds (either M&M Conference, a teaching talk for the whole faculty or Journal Club) at 7 am, where also the attendings joined. Although the talks were scheduled so early in the morning, I learned a lot within these 2 hours.

All together I have to admit that even though I am a motivated student and very interested in both specialties, I had to get used to the working hours. Austrian students should be aware of that before choosing a surgical specialty for their clerkship. Also they will not be able to do a lot themselves, but learn a lot theoretically. There are different teaching rounds every day, the attendings are eager to explain and at CHOP you can see very rare cases which you might not see ever again. E.g. at the congenital heart surgery I did not only see a lot of different heart defects (like Tetralogy of Fallow, Ebstein's Anomaly, DILV, HLHS...) but we also had 2 kids with a situs inversus totalis, a baby with VACTERL, a Noonan-Syndrom, a vascular ring and a lot of trisomy 21 Kids. On plastic surgery I saw mainly cleft patients with all different stages, vascular malformations and different moles but two other attendings specialized in craniofacial malformations (micrognathia, cranial synostosis,...). I saw a Pierre-Robin-Sequence, some 22q Kids, a Poland syndrome, some hand and foot malformations (poly-/syndactyly) and two kids with omphaloceles who had tissue expanders implanted to cover the defect. I can definitely recommend a clinical clerkship at a surgical department at CHOP, but one should not expect to do a lot but try to observe and learn as much as possible.

Although I did not have time for many activities after work, I had the weekend off to explore the city center of Philadelphia. It is a wonderful city (not too big but big enough) that has much to offer: a lot of history, a beautiful promenade along the river to walk, run or bike, many different Museums (Art Museum is pay as you wish every Wednesday evening, Barnes Foundation is free every first Sunday a month) food from all over the world, a forest to hike, walk or bike close by, and a nice city center with a big market (Reading Terminal), Christmas Village next to the City Hall and Shopping locations all in walking distance.

## B. Housing

- **www.rightathomehomestay.com**

The University of Philadelphia offers some advice on housing on their website. I checked out the International House Philadelphia but since I didn't have much time in advance they were already fully booked. After this try I contacted Right at Home Homestay. The coordinator was very nice and helpful in finding the right family for me. After describing yourself and your interests they try to match you if a family that fits to your personality. In my case they found the absolutely perfect match and I could not have been happier to stay with that family.

- The costs include a placement fee of \$285,- and \$31,- per night once a host family has been chosen. Included in the price are 3 meals with the family per week and the family has to provide for breakfast.

You can read all about their program at [www.rightathomehomestay.com](http://www.rightathomehomestay.com)

- I entrust living with a host family to everyone. The coordinator of the organization "Right at Home Homestay", a very nice and helpful lady, found the perfect family for me. Just make sure you write honestly a little bit about yourself and your interests in your application and she will try to match you to a suitable family.
- You do not have a lot of time between confirmation of your clerkship and your actual arrival at Penn which limits your options. The University of Pennsylvania itself provides some dormitory options, for which I was too late and I wanted to resort to Airbnb as my last option. My research led me to the link of Right at Home Homestay, which is an organization specifically founded to support international students in finding a host family in Philadelphia. Based on my own pleasant experience with host families in the past and positive reviews from former reports, I contacted the coordinator who was super friendly and helpful to match me with a family suitable to my personality. I could have not been happier with my host family who are just lovely and delightful people! Their house was located within walking distance to CHOP, so I only had to walk 20min to work every day which was especially convenient during days rich in snowfall where public transport shut down. Staying with a host family is a wonderful way to connect with locals, experience their authentic culture and you have someone to rely on while finding your way through a foreign place. Personally, I am fond of the idea talking to people not working in the medical field after long days at the hospital, so I welcomed the opportunity to stay with a host family very much. Once the placement is confirmed, one should immediately start exploring his / her choices. Living in the US can be ridiculously expensive, so a good deal requires early initiation. On the sunny side, Philadelphia is probably the most affordable city on the East Coast, so you should not have difficulties to find a somewhat reasonable accommodation, however, it is better to start early than late.
- Unfortunately housing in big cities can be quite expensive so I definitely recommend starting to look for housing as early as possible. I did search through a couple student housing sites online but wasn't very lucky in getting a response. I think one of the best options is to look for a room or apartment through Airbnb.com. It is easy to stay for a limited time period and Airbnb rentals usually will provide you with a kitchen, kitchen supplies and bedding, which in my opinion makes it a lot easier than staying in a student dorm where you might have to bring your own. I ended up renting a room in a big house through a lovely Airbnb host. It did cost me a little over 1000 dollars per month. I stayed in the Western part of University City. The area had cute coffee shops, a grocery



Store and a park close by. Moreover, it was only a 15-minutes trolley ride away from the hospital and 25 minutes from the city center.

- Housing in the United States is generally more expensive than in Austria, although Philadelphia is the most affordable city on the east coast. I was extremely lucky to find a great place in a perfect location, living with 3 Penn medical students. As soon as I got the definite confirmation for my elective, the university assigned me a peer student, whom I contacted immediately. She was a huge help in finding accommodation, as she forwarded me emails from a few of her classmates, who were looking to rent out their rooms for the summer. So I ended up renting a room from a student who was doing an away-rotation for the month. I paid 790\$ including everything for 1 month. I lived in center city on 24th and Spruce street with the most amazing roommates, who were all extremely nice, fun and welcoming.

### **C. Recommendations - Which suggestions or recommendations do you have for future Max Kade students (hospital, leisure time, etc.)**

- Choice of specialty:

If you are taking pediatrics or pediatric surgery into account for your future career, I can highly recommend to apply for the University of Pennsylvania and CHOP where you will encounter medical care for sick children with the rarest diseases on the highest level.

If you choose a surgical specialty be aware, that you will not be able to do a lot. Depending on the department you maybe scrub, maybe only observe but read a lot on your own. Feel free to ask as much as you can. They will all be happy to answer your questions and sometimes even give you a private talk on the subject. But if you want to follow your own patients I recommend a non-surgical department. No matter what you choose: plan to do your elective in the US, as you might wait quite long for the final answer from Philadelphia.

- Whether you are considering Pediatrics as your future choice of specialization or you are keen on pursuing specific medical knowledge in child care, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is the place to go if you want to get exposed to a cocktail of rarest diseases, break through research and top--class medical expertise. The University of Pennsylvania is one of the leading medical facilities in the US and as a part of the Ivy League, you can be sure that the training level there is of very high standard. While filling out the AAF application form, you will be confronted with a huge selection of different Pediatric services and it is important to figure out what exactly you want to gain from this attachment. Since I already had my fair share of surgical placements within my final medical year, I prioritized disciplines within the internal medicine range. You will be expected to engage in a lot of fast paced conversation and should definitely familiarize yourself with Medical English Terminology, especially with all their abbreviations.
- Try to get in contact with locals! UPenn will assign you a buddy, which is a great opportunity to meet new people and get insider tips for the city. I can dearly recommend the Endocrine department at CHOP. Everyone has been extremely nice, welcoming and helpful and I have seen many interesting cases and learned plenty.
- Thanks to the experience abroad in the US I got to see how a hospital with a great reputation for children works and it has broadened my understanding of pediatric plastic surgery. My day started together with the other students usually around 6 am to prepare the overnight vitals and to have



a look on the newest notes and changes concerning the patients of the department. The rounds usually started at 06:30 am where we checked on every patient. Then we usually had some time to get breakfast until the clinics or the operation started, depending on where our supervising doctor was working that day. We stayed with the resident until he sent us home, usually about 6pm.

- Philadelphia is a medium sized city with many nice places to go eat or shop and it has a great public transport System. The city played an important part in the American history and there are many interesting historic sites to go see. The National Park Service has a nice big visitor center right in the city center and also offers a lot of information online about where to go and how to reserve free tickets to Independence Hall etc. <https://www.nps.gov/inde/index.htm>). If you like to travel on the weekends I would definitely go to New York, which is only two hours away by bus and will cost around ten dollars one-way. Baltimore and Washington DC are also pretty close and worth a visit. Washington DC has tons of museums, which most are free.
- I spent one weekend in New York, which was great. It is very easy and affordable to get there from Philadelphia. There are different bus companies, that take you there for about 15\$ and it only takes 2 to 3 hours depending on traffic.
- Great trips around Philly are a bike ride to Wissahickon creek and the Devil's Pool and day trips to the suburbs Chestnut Hill and Manyunk, which are both really beautiful. In Chestnut Hill you can visit Morris Arboretum, a huge park including a botanic garden, which is absolutely beautiful. Admission is free for Penn students. As far as attractions, go, I would greatly recommend the Spruce Street Harbour Park at Penn's Landing, the Museum of Art (pay as you wish on Wednesday evenings), the Philadelphia Magic

#### **D. Other – Is there any other vital information you would like to share with future Max Kade students?**

- I can highly recommend doing a Max Kade fellowship in the USA. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience the American medical system. It is otherwise very difficult to be accepted as a foreign student and without the Max Kade stipend it would have been financially impossible for me to make this experience.
- One last thing I just did not exactly know before going to the US is how to dress in an US hospital. It is true that you wear slacks (meaning no jeans but normal pants) and a shirt with a tie and a nice sweater when going to clinic. As they did not care too much about it, I did not put on a tie except for the grand rounds on Thursday. When going to the OR you get blue scrubs that you wear all day long and you get new ones from a machine. Concerning shoes, you have to bring your own shoes to the OR where I would recommend comfortable sport shoes or some shoes that are easy to clean as you might get a few blood stains over time. The staff usually wears ugly leather Clogs in the OR and in the clinic you just wear some nicer shoes that you would also wear fitting to slacks and shirt, meaning e.g. no Nike sneakers in my opinion.
- Before applying to the program I knew that American schools or hospitals generally send their acceptance out late, so I was already expecting that. It possibly will make planning a little more spontaneous and I think it is useful for future program applicants to be aware of it.
- I absolutely recommend doing an eight-week rotation if possible, as you will be able to do more the better the team knows you and the more comfortable you are with daily tasks!





### **3. Students attended a rotation at GWU:**

#### **A. A Day at GWU**

I completed a two 4-week clinical rotation at the Department of Internal Medicine, i.e. Endocrinology and Cardiology, at the George Washington University Hospital (GWU).

During my Endocrinology rotation, I spent most of the time in the outpatient clinic of the Medical Faculty Associates (MFA), working with three different attendings throughout my elective. I quickly became an active member of the team, as I was allowed to see patients on my own every day: I was taking their medical history, performing a thorough physical exam and then presenting them to the attending. We would always review my findings together and discuss about further diagnostic assessment and treatment plan. After seeing and discharging the patients with the attending, I was in charge of writing a complete note in the MFA's computer system,

including medical history, physical exam, assessment and plan. I am especially thankful to Dr. Cohen for entrusting me with such a big responsibility, I really felt like a useful member of the team. This enabled me to gain expertise in management of a wide variety of endocrine disorders, from very common conditions such as diabetes or thyroid disorders, to less frequent ones such as pituitary or adrenal disorders, as well as transgender patients. Furthermore, this rotation was filled with a lot of teaching. In fact, on Mondays, there was an Endocrinology Conference about various endocrine pathologies at 8:00 am and a Journal Club about state of the art papers at 4:00 pm. Moreover, daily so-called "Noon Conferences" were organized by the Department of Internal Medicine at noon, giving insight into diverse topics of the different divisions of Internal Medicine. On top of that, I was continuously provided with papers and review articles about the encountered endocrine disorders and I even attended a lecture about hyperparathyroidism. I also had to conduct literature research about a specific topic and I presented my findings to the attendings at the MFA. Finally, I became familiar with fine needle aspiration and thyroid ultrasound. My second rotation at the Division of Cardiology took mainly place in an inpatient setting at the hospital. I often had the role of an observer, but it was still very educational and I was able to acquire a lot of knowledge. In fact, there was a morning conference every day at 8:00 am about various clinical topics, e.g. cardiac catheterization, cardiac electrophysiology and heart failure. In order to provide students with an overall view of cardiology, we rotated in different parts of the division throughout the elective. Therefore, I started my rotation with a week in the echocardiography laboratory, where I learned a lot about scanning technique, key diagnostic parameters, important measurements and interpretation of different pathologies. I also saw stress tests and I was even allowed to perform some echocardiograms myself. During my second week, I was watching several interesting procedures in the catheter laboratory, e.g. right and left heart catheterization, stent implantation and transcatheter aortic valve replacement, as well as in the electrophysiology laboratory, e.g. pacemaker implantation and cardiac ablation. Finally, I spent the last two weeks in the inpatient setting on Gold team. Every morning, I checked on the patients I was responsible for. I also reviewed their laboratory values and study results in order to be prepared for morning rounds, during which we reassessed all the patients of the division. After Noon Conference, I was seeing new admissions by myself and I then presented them to the resident, fellow and attending in charge during afternoon rounds, discussing further diagnostic and therapeutic management. Besides, I had to write a case presentation about one of my patients and I also had two oral exams about ST-elevation myocardial infarction and heart failure





## **B. Housing**

### **International Student House:**

Regarding the housing I highly recommend the International Student House where you have the possibility to meet students from all over the world. I met a lot of amazing people there and lots of my memories of Washington DC are connected to this) exploring the city together, going out together, discussing international political and cultural issues together, spending a lot of time together, all this creates a big community. I can hardly think of a better place for spending a few months in the US. The prices range between 1200-1600\$ for 4-2 shared bedrooms or single rooms. But living costs in Washington DC are anyway very high and it is located in the center of DC surrounded by many nice bars and places to be. To GWIJ Hospital it is only a walking distance of 20 min from the International Student House.

### **Walter Hoenes:**

I contacted a man named Walter Hoenes (who's email I got from the Max Kade info booklet) for accommodation and I got a room in the center of Georgetown, a great neighborhood in Washington, DC. Rent in Washington is very high so I would recommend to budget around 1000-1500\$ per month for rent. I found a room in that price range which was a bit more than I was expecting to spend, but in the end it was a fair price for such a great room. The room was big and air-conditioned (a big plus in the incredibly hot summer months of Washington, DC) in a house which had a big shared kitchen, two shared bathrooms and all the linens were included. There are three permanent residents in the house but they live in a separate part and I only saw them occasionally. I spent a bit more time with Walter who is an extremely nice and uncomplicated guy, who occasionally showed me around the city, gave recommendations about anything from restaurants and supermarkets to sightseeing! I could walk to the hospital every day (15-20 minutes) so I saved a lot on public transport, which is not very cheap in Washington.

### **Dupont Stay Dupont Stay**

I lived at the Dupont Stay, a lovely and intimate hostel 15 to 20min walk from the hospital. It is also located close to downtown and several sights including "The Mall". I can definitely recommend this place, since it was a very enriching experience itself, living there and meeting interesting people from all around the world. The price was 1300\$ per month, which is quite a decent price for Washington DC. But if you are lucky you might find a cheaper alternative on rotating rooms. I wouldn't recommend staying in the suburbs for the sake of saving a couple dollars, since you waste a lot of time getting back and forth and spending the saved money for transport after all.

## **C. Recommendations – Which suggestions or recommendations do you have for future Max Kade students (hospital, leisure time, etc.)**

- Washington DC offers a good metro network and many shuttle busses. For each ride with the metro you pay about 2 \$. Another option is to take the bike which is very convenient in this city. Often you are faster compared to the metro. All around Washington there are bike rental stations where you can rent a bike either for one day for 8 \$ or a month for 28\$. A year costs 78\$. I often used these bikes for sightseeing. It was a great experience.
- American medical students are very well trained in patient care, present a great fund of knowledge and normally work very independently. They will help you if there is no fellow or resident to ask. Definitely you should be prepared in the field you will work in. The book "Success on the ward" by

Samir P. Desai gives insight in the American medical education system and what a team expects from students, how to behave, how to do the notes properly and how to present the patients to the attending physician. Ask the fellows what are their expectations. Every attending has his preference how a case presentation should look like. The fellows normally know best.

- Keep in mind that Americans use a lot of abbreviations in medicine. So it is sometimes hard to follow what they are talking about. I strongly recommend to become familiar with the most common ones before coming to the US. I personally liked the website MEDINELINGUA, which informs also about typical terms and phrases used while taking the history.

This is a short list of some common abbreviations I encountered in the hospital:

*BIPA = brought in by ambulance*

*c/o = complains of*

*CP = chest pain*

*DDx = differentials = differential diagnoses*

*GP = general practitioner*

*h/o = history of*

*m or f = male or female*

*OB = gynaecologist*

*p/w = presents with*

*PMHx = past medical history*

*s/p = status post*

*SOB = shortness of breath*

*UTI = urinary tract infection*

*w/ = with*

*y/o = year old*

Example: 38y/o f w/ h/o asthma p/w SOB

- Be prepared that you will spend about 10 hours every day in the hospital. That is why free time is limited for the weekend.
- Try to be as proactive as possible, if there is not enough teaching. Most of the doctors are just too focused on their everyday tasks and forget that you are there and just need to be reminded. There might be doctors who will refuse to share their knowledge, but if you don't try you won't find out.
- I definitely recommend the rehab department at Children's Nationals. I really learned a lot and felt like I became part of the team. They treated me like a resident and I enjoyed working there a lot. However, I think it is one of the more intense and time-consuming choices. Students who were at some other departments of George Washington University did spend significantly less time at the hospital, so they had more time to discover the city (there is a lot to discover in DC!).
- Especially for students of the Medical University of Vienna doing their clinical practical year, I would recommend to check the different options concerning starting dates and to organize their other internships accordingly. Unfortunately, there is no flexibility with these dates on either side for the Clinical Practical Year. I would also recommend choosing a specialty where they offer a lot of internships, to increase the likelihood of finding internships for two months in the same area. I was luckily offered to stay at the same department, but seemed to be an exception to the norm.
- I would highly recommend getting a book which includes the translation or explanation for all the medical abbreviations commonly used in the United States. I bought a book called "Medizinisches Englisch pocket". However, I only used the chapter with the abbreviations, so there might be better options.
- The students would present the patients to their interns or chief residents who, in turn, would present them to the attending in charge. When writing progress notes or presenting a new patient

they expected the SOAP format (Subjective, Objective, Assessment and Plan) and would ask questions about the differential diagnoses, further tests and therapy recommendations. Most of the residents and attendings would expect you to know the answer but would explain everything very well if you didn't know. However, they did expect the students to research the topic if their knowledge was not adequate. A good tip is to read up on the most important guidelines for the common diseases and conditions in the department you will be working in, the American system relies very much on the newest recommendations and guidelines published by the various national associations (for example, ACOG for OB/GYN).

- What is certainly helpful is to get information on the way they typically present patients here, because this is something students must do every day. One very common system used here is the I-PASS handoff:

*I – Illness severity*

*P – Patient summary (the standard clinical summary)*

*A – Action list for the next team*

*S – Situation awareness/contingency plans*

*S – Synthesis*

- The amount of museums is endless and a lot of them are for free! There are also all the Monuments and Memorials on the National Mall, which are definitely worth seeing. Of course, one can't miss seeing the White House, the Capitol, the Library of Congress etc. During summer there are a lot of activities offered outside, such as free open-air cinemas, concerts or yoga classes. I also really enjoyed kayaking on the Potomac and even tried stand up paddling, which was a lot of fun. Then there is a lot of nice restaurants and shops in DC, if you like vintage or need some cheap business clothes for the hospital, I would recommend visiting Fia's Fabulous Finds. The restaurant Founding Farmers is known to offer the best "chicken and waffles" (a typical meal for this area of the US) in DC, and in front of Georgetown Cupcakes you will always see a long line of cupcake fans. There are many, many more delicious restaurants around town; the variety in DC is huge!
- Visit "The Mall" it is simply a breathtaking and unique collection of museums with outstanding exhibitions. On top of that the entrance is for free!
- Regarding leisure time, apart from the well-known sights at the National Mall, I can recommend the Museum of Natural History and the theatre where Abraham Lincoln was shot. All jazz-lovers should go to see a concert in Blues Alley. People who are interested in American history can take a train to Philadelphia, visit the Independence National Historical Park and easily return on the same day. My final recommendation is to buy food at "Trader Joe's" (1101 25th St NW), which is closest supermarket to the hospital that I could find.
- Washington DC offers many great sightseeing places. I personally fell in love with the National Mall, where all memorials, museums, the White House and the Capitol are located in one area. Sunrise and sunset are the best hours to take amazing pictures! Many museums are for free and are definitely worth a visit. My favorites are the Air and Space Museum and Natural History Museum. The Holocaust Museum has a very good exhibition. Other museums which I can recommend are the Museum, National Gallery of Arts and Spy museum. The Capitol and the Library of Congress should not be left over on your tourist program. A lovely district is Georgetown and its Campus. Kayaking and Stand Up Paddling is very popular in summer in this area. To get the real feeling of being in America you should watch a live football game. If you want to exercise by yourself, running is very popular. My favorite place to go running was the National Mall. The GW Campus has a gym, which you can use for 40\$ per month.
- I also did a day trip to Baltimore (the harbor area is really nice and they offer great sea food) and a weekend trip to Philadelphia, which is definitely worth a visit. The same for New York, where I



visited a friend before my internship started, for which it is possible to go for a weekend trip as it is only a 3-4-hour trip by bus or train.

**D. Other – is there any other vital information you would like to share with future Max Kade students?**

- Unfortunately, I spent only one month in a US hospital. In my opinion at least two are more convenient to get comfortable with medical English and adjusting to the system. Do not forget to bring appropriate clothes for the rotation. Just surgeons and staff of the ICU wear scrubs and tennis shoes, everyone else dresses up. A white coat you can buy for 12\$. Don't bring your own because there are too long. Long white coats only MD are wearing.
- All in all the time in Washington DC had a great impact on me in various relations: intercultural exchange due to my great housing and hospital experience, gaining medical knowledge, new medical skills and being part of the team, feeling more comfortable in speaking English etc. I can imagine myself in the future to come back and maybe doing research. I enjoyed nearly every single minute of my time in Washington DC.
- Living and working in the nation's capital for a month was really a lifetime experience. There were quite a lot of American and International students rotating at the GWU. I really appreciated the American way of teaching medicine. Receiving valuable feedback on my performance really helped me improving my skills. Spending time with US colleagues, patients and teachers gave me an idea about the American way of life and I learned a lot about US culture and history.
- If you have the chance, visit the departments of your fellow students. There might be very interesting things going on. I had the chance to watch a robotic surgery at the Obstetrics/Gynecology department, which was definitely a highlight for me.



#### **4. Students attended a rotation at Cornell:**

##### **A. A Day at Cornell**

I completed an 8 weeks rotation at the Department of Urology and Pediatric Urology at the NewYork Presbyterian Hospital. My day usually started at 6:45am at the morning conference together with the other residents. At 7:30AM I headed to the OR where I mostly helped to prepare the surgical field and to lay the catheter, after that I mostly scrubbed in to assist in the operation. I enjoyed urologic surgeries a lot because you really get to see a wide field of operations. I was able to assist in robotic surgeries, kidney donor nephrectomies, hypospadias surgeries and so on. The residents and attendings were always happy to have a student and willing to explain and answer your questions. In the most cases I was allowed to close the patient, always under supervision of a resident. Besides of the OR there was always the possibility to observe ureteroscopies, join the attendings in their clinics or to go see a council with one of the residents. In most days I was finished by 5PM. Every Monday there was a morning conference where residents and attendings were holding presentations based on recent patient cases followed by discussions with all the team. So if you have seen an interesting case or a special procedure, it is always good to come up with an interesting paper and to hold a little presentation.

Once I was finished with work I mostly hang out with the other international students and together we discovered NYC or just had dinner in one of the hundred multicultural restaurants. NewYork Presbyterian Hospital is located in the Upper East Side of Manhattan so in a couple of minutes you are at Central Park, Time Square or Empire State Building.

##### **B. Housing**

- **airbnb.com**

I stayed at an apartment booked via [airbnb.com](https://www.airbnb.com). The apartment was very nice and very close to the hospital. Since we didn't book that much in advanced it was very expensive.

- **Gypsy housing**

Another very helpful side was the "Gypsy housing" group on Facebook.

- Housing: contact Dianne Young (the administrative staff for all Max Kade students) about housing opportunities. Airbnb which we chose, is another pricier option. Rents are about \$1000-2000 a month, if you wish to live on the upper east side.

- **Olin Hall**

I was lucky to get a room at Olin Hall, which is the student dormitory of first-year Cornell medical students. It is located in the Upper East Side of Manhattan right across the NewYork Presbyterian Hospital. I would really recommend this place as it is not only a 15-minutes walk to the central park and to a lot of different museums in that area but also very convenient to take the subway downtown to Soho, Chelsae or Brooklyn.

- **Assistant Director for Student Housing**

For incoming students, I would recommend contacting Mrs. Lisa Ryan (Assistant Director for Student Housing) and asking for any open spots in the Olin Hall dormitory (about 900 USD/month, washing machines and a gym downstairs, close to the hospital). I tried to get a room at Olin hall at first, but they did not have any apartments left. Luckily I was able to sublet a spacious apartment at Lasdon student housing (for 1000\$ a month), which is across the street from NY Presbytarian Hospital.



- **Kolping House**

I was staying at the Kolping House, which accommodates male under 35 years of age who are in training of some sort. The rooms are quite small and simple, but let's be honest, you will probably not spend a lot of time there unless you are sleeping, so that is fine. There is a free meal included on weekdays. As there are a lot of young guys staying there, it is also a great place to make new friends. And the best thing of all: it is a 20 minute WALK to the hospital and it is only a 1000\$ a month (you won't find that anywhere else in Manhattan) <http://www.kolpingny.org/hostel.cfm>

- **Webster Apartments**

An alternative for girls:

<http://www.websterapartments.org/reservations/applications/>

Unfortunately housing in big cities can be quite expensive so I definitely recommend starting to look for housing as early as possible. I did search through a couple student housing sites online but was not very lucky in getting a response. I think one of the best options is to look for a room or apartment through Airbnb.com. It is easy to stay for a limited time period and Airbnb rentals usually will provide you with a kitchen, kitchen supplies and bedding, which in my opinion makes it a lot easier than staying in a student dorm where you might have to bring your own. I ended up renting a room in a big house through a lovely Airbnb host. It did cost me a little over 1000 dollars. I stayed in the western part of University City. The area had cute coffee shops, a grocery store and a park close by. Moreover, it was only a 15 minutes trolley ride away from the hospital and 25 minutes from the city center.

- **Rotating Room** (<https://rotatingroom.com/>)

As everyone knows it is not easy to find affordable accommodation in NYC. Due to the fact that I had two 4-week elective rotations in two different hospitals, I had to move in between the electives to avoid long daily commutes. For students who are assigned to an elective in NYP Queens, I would recommend looking for an apartment on Airbnb or rotating rooms. However, there is a daily Shuttle from 68th Street and York (next to NYP on Upper East Side) to NYP Queens in the mornings (5:30, 6:30, 8:30 a.m.) and back to Upper East Side in the afternoons (2:05, 5:00, 6:55 p.m.). I did not know this until we were informed about it at orientation and it might be helpful information if someone wants to stay in Manhattan while rotating in Queens. I ended up staying in an Airbnb in Jackson Heights (close to the 7 subway) and payed 1200\$ for the month. For my second rotation at NYP on Upper East Side I stayed at a Cornell student's apartment. I was very lucky to meet a Cornell medical student on her exchange in Vienna, who sent out my apartment inquiry to her classmates at Cornell. I ended up paying 750\$ for a wonderful 2-bedroom apartment about 10 minutes from the hospital by foot. A lot of students who go abroad for electives or go on vacation are happy to sublet their apartments or dorm rooms which are usually close to the hospital (NYP on Upper East Side) and cheaper than most other housing options. Most of my international colleagues, however, stayed at Lasdon House or Kolping house, which also seemed to work out fine.





- During my time in NY I stayed in a private apartment a few blocks from the UN headquarters, which I had found via rotatingroom.com. I had to email about 10 different people over a time period of 2 months to find an affordable place in a good location. While it was still expensive on a student salary (1500 USD/month) I have been told that for NY prices it was pretty decent. The only problem was that at the end of my stay the UN general assembly had started and the entire neighborhood was swarming with security. They often asked me to show them personal ID and my lease. Seeing as I only had a one-page rental agreement, it occasionally took some convincing to get back into the apartment.
- The AAF gave me the email addresses of all current Weill Cornell Medical School classes, so I sent out an Email and was very relieved when one student offered to sublet me his one-bedroom apartment. I would definitely recommend writing emails to Cornell students, since most of them live very close to the campus/Hospital and their rooms/apartments are more affordable. Otherwise I would recommend rotatingroom.com

### **C. Recommendations - Which suggestions or recommendations do you have for future Max Kade students (hospital, leisure time, etc.)**

- I really enjoyed working at NYP, since the hospital has a lot of departments and is very central. Also the staff was very nice.
- Books useful for a clerkship are First Aid for the Wards and SOAP (both available on amazon). Handbooks recommended for clinical work differ between disciplines and usually can be found if you google. Work hours were 8 am - 5/6 pm for me.
- Dress code is semi-formal (so guys, bring nice shirts, shoes as well as ties, girls wear blouses or dresses).
- Every student needs to wear a short, white coat (not the one we are used to wear in Europe, but really short ones, just reaching your hip).
- Useful books for a clerkship are First Aid for the Wards and SOAP (both available on amazon). Handbooks recommended for clinical work differ between disciplines and usually can be found if you google. Work hours were 8 am - 5/6 pm for me.
- Try to have your own patients and follow them. Work on presentations and how to write patient notes. Try to work with the online computer system. Otherwise, everyone is very helpful and friendly and appreciates your effort to get to know the American health care and medicine system.
- There is so much to do in New York, so many museums, so much culture and vibe, so many great stores and restaurants and markets that are worth going to. Here are some websites I found useful:
  - <http://www.nycgo.com/>
  - <https://www.timeout.com/newyork>
  - <http://freemuseumday.org/nyc.html>
- New York City has a lot of great places for leisure time. Lots of great food (try the Xi'an Foods spicy cumin burger on 80th Str., or if you're in radiology ask Dr. Alan Legasto for restaurant tips! He's amazing!) Central Park is always worth a stroll and even if you're really busy with your residency I highly recommend visiting the Metropolitan Museum for at least one evening.
- NYC is incredibly expensive, be prepared for that. However, museums and parks are mostly free and there is a lot of cheap, great delis and restaurants. And don't hesitate to go and see Broadway shows, jazz-clubs, ballets at the Met Opera, theaters and so on. It is money well spent!



- New York is a very expensive city to live in. But there are many free/cheaper things to do: Kayaking in the Brooklyn Bridge Park, Film Festival at Central Park, Public Citizen Festival at Central Park (free), Restaurant Week (Lunch menus for 29 and Dinner for 49 dollars in a lot of known and good restaurants), Broadway Week (2 musical tickets for 1)
- On [www.nycgo.com](http://www.nycgo.com) are always some good events and offers listed and you can find guides for pretty much everything you can imagine (ranging from neighborhood-guides to food tours).
- Each month the free magazine “Time out” gets distributed in front of many metro-stations and several public places, and even there you can find the best events, new restaurants and some tips for each month of the year.

#### **D. Other – Is there any other vital information you would like to share with future Max Kade students?**

- Try to have your own patients and follow them. Work on presentations and how to write patient notes. Try to work with the online computer system. Otherwise, everyone is very helpful and friendly and appreciates your effort to get to know the American health care and medicine system.
- For students coming from Austria: Don't be shy! In general, Americans talk more than we do. The doctors are a lot nicer than I had initially expected and enjoy teaching students when they have time.
- Before applying to the program I knew that American schools or hospitals generally send their acceptance out late, so I was already expecting that. It possibly will make planning a little more spontaneous and I think it is useful for future program applicants to be aware of it.
- I absolutely recommend doing an eight-week rotation if possible, as you will be able to do more the better the team knows you and the more comfortable you are with daily tasks!
- Apply and organize soon. It is never too early when you deal with US bureaucracy.
- I can recommend HSS for every student, not only if you are interested in orthopedic surgery. The people there are extremely nice and helpful, and they really want to teach you. For leisure time I would recommend to connect with the other visiting students and try to do some stuff you would not do usually, and try to see some things apart from the everyday tourist program. People in the hospital do often have some insider tips. The other visiting are really interesting people and they come from all over the world. Dianne was so kind to help us with doing that and even gave us some tips for the weekends.
- I was impressed by the doctors' enthusiasm in teaching and the integration of students in daily hospital life.
- Show the hospital staff that you are motivated and want to learn (they will not test your knowledge but they want you to show commitment). Take it all in, make the most of it, work hard but most of all ENJOY - you are in the greatest city on earth! If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: [fabian.brenninger@gmail.com](mailto:fabian.brenninger@gmail.com).
- I would recommend – besides enjoying this amazing city – to show a high degree of personal initiative, since you grow with each task and responsibility you are given. In case of “quiet moments” during your work day, I would visit the Weill Cornell Library as convenient place (quiet, located in the main hospital building) for research purposes, either by questioning the internet or by reading one of the excellent medicine books provided there. Additionally, these books helped me to extend my use of specific medical terms in spoken and written English (e.g. in my text notes/letters).