

Foreign internship in LSMU, Kaunas, Kamila Kaszycka

Between June 1, 2025, and September 1, 2025, I completed a foreign internship in Kaunas at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LSMU), under the supervision of Prof. Paulius Matusevičius. The primary objective of my stay was to expand my research experience in the field of ethology and animal welfare, as well as to acquire practical competencies in conducting field studies in animal shelters. The internship turned out to be not only an intensive scientific development but also an opportunity to collaborate in an international team, exchange experiences, and learn about the realities of research work in another country.



During the internship, I was mainly involved in preparing and conducting olfactory preference tests in shelter dogs. These tests involved exposing the animals to different essential oils and observing their reactions to assess their potential preferences and behaviours. Each dog I examined performed 18 trials with different scents (17 essential oils and one control trial). The oils I used were certified for zoopharmacognosy and safe for animals. Conducting the research required not only an exact methodological preparation but also adapting the procedures to the specific conditions of the shelter. The shelter with which I cooperated differed both in size and in the organisation of work from those I had previously worked with, which made flexibility and the ability to react quickly to emerging difficulties essential.

Animal shelters are, by nature, relatively closed environments. This made collaboration with a shelter, particularly for a person coming from a completely different country, an even greater challenge. It was necessary to hold conversations with the staff of various shelters, present the research goals, and explain the methods in detail to gain their trust and support. This required not only strong subject-matter preparation for individual conversations with shelter managers but also high social competencies. Thanks to this, the research could be conducted efficiently, while fully respecting the customs and approaches toward animals prevailing in each shelter. During the studies, I made an effort not to disrupt the daily rhythm of the dogs in order not to introduce another stress factor.



The most valuable experience I gained from this internship was the opportunity to work in an international research environment. The team brought together people from different countries. Each of us contributed our own experiences and perspectives, which made our discussions and exchanges of ideas particularly inspiring. Working under the supervision of Prof. Paulius Matusevičius involved not only consultations on methodology and data analysis but also an exchange of experiences between team members. We discussed various research approaches, shared observations from our own countries, and reflected on the possibility of implementing new methods and expanding my research to include additional aspects. This cooperation was not only scientific in nature but also cultural – it fostered openness, understanding of different perspectives, and the ability to work effectively in a diverse environment.



Working in this team allowed me to understand how scientific work is organised within international projects. I observed how activities are coordinated between different institutions, how tasks are divided, and how subsequent stages of research are planned. These experiences are extremely valuable for my further academic career and potential participation in future international projects.



An inseparable part of the internship was the opportunity to get to know Lithuania – its culture, history, and everyday life. Kaunas, combining modern infrastructure with numerous historical landmarks, turned out to be an excellent place to discover both tradition and modernity. In my free time, I had the opportunity to visit the city and its surroundings, which enabled me to gain a better understanding of the local context.



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The three-month internship in Kaunas was an incredible experience for me, allowing me to combine intensive research work with developing professional skills and discovering a new country and culture.

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