Competition makes us faster, collaboration makes us better.

---Mahfuz Ali Shuvra, an EPIC KIT Summer Study Abroad Program Scholarship recipient in summer 2015 expresses his experience about the affiliation between UNCC EPIC and KIT.

Born and brought up in Chittagong, a small port city in Bangladesh, Mahfuz got his Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering in 2011 and 2014 respectively. He is an alumni of Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET). He has almost 3 years of experience working as a project engineer in PGCB, the sole authority for power transmission in Bangladesh.

Life doesn’t always follow a straight path. It keeps changing. Although quite settled with the job, Mahfuz couldn’t help but accepted the offer of EPIC Research Assistantship in fall 2014:

EPIC made me an offer I couldn’t possibly refuse.

As a consequence, He started his PhD journey with Dr. Badrul Chowdhury, one of the research gurus in Power Systems at UNC Charlotte. He describes the reason for choosing UNCC:

Why not? Industry collaboration, High qualified faculty members and the fastest growing Energy Hub in the US, Charlotte is unique.

Currently he is working on integration of solar energy through power electronic interface at distribution level. He works as a media manager in a student organization called EPIC Power & Energy Society (PES) that encourages and educates students about power and energy sector.

When he saw the flyer of the scholarship, he thought about a family reunion with his German aunt and two cousins whom he has never met. So after being selected as the only one from Electrical Engineering he says:

Probably the best thing ever happened in my life.

Mahfuz worked as a summer research intern at Institut für Elektroenergiesysteme und Hochspannungstechnik (IEH) in Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT) from May 13, 2015 to July 13, 2015 under the direct supervision of Simon Wenig and Prof. Dr. Thomas Leibfried. During this short time he worked on the MCCF based synchronization technique for MMC-HVDC system. He also completed beginner level German language course.

From 9am to 9pm, he worked hard to finish his assigned project. But there is a different view:

The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.

Applying this belief, Mahfuz visited France, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and the Netherlands. He also took part in different excursions arranged by KIT Energy Center.

KIT colleagues were extremely helpful and supportive. I was always welcome to their offices.

Mahfuz has got a unique experience in the process of this summer adventure. He managed his own apartment without knowing a bit of German language, which is kind of a miracle. Simon
Gorges, one of the KIT students who went to UNCC as an exchange student helped him a lot in the process.

**I was extremely lucky at that time. Vielen Dank, Simon.**

When asked to describe the experience about Karlsruhe, Baden Württemberg in one word, Mahfuz says,

**It’s not a city, it’s not a place- it’s an inner feelings that will be enshrined forever.**

Learning German is fun and extremely important to integrate in the German culture. He emphasizes learning this language and wants to give credit to KIT International Students Office to get him enrolled in beginner level language course. He smiles and says-

*keine Sprache, kein Spaß*

Mahfuz wants to come back in Germany. He specially thanks Dr. Kai Rebensburg, Dr. Julia Johnsen and his student mentor Lena Birkhäuser for their continuous support. He encourages everyone to take the advantage of EPIC KIT Summer Study Abroad Program.