

# Exchange semester at SeoulTech, South Korea

Fall semester 2024



*My Korean Language Class on our last day*

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to share my experience studying abroad in Seoul, South Korea. I spent my 5<sup>th</sup> semester as a Business Economics & IT student on exchange studying at Seoul National University of Science and Technology (SeoulTech).

I chose to apply for this university to challenge myself by experiencing a completely new culture, both academically and in my everyday life.

The university is booming with international students as well as national students. The facilities are high quality, and the campus is beautifully equipped with green areas. I came to find out that it is a top tier university in South Korea and very sought after by Koreans.

I am extremely grateful to have been able to have my exchange semester in this country and at this university.

## 2. Practical experience

### 2.1 Application process

The application process starts at KEA where your GPA and letter of motivation will determine if KEA is going to recommend you to the exchange university. When I applied, SeoulTech only had one slot open for a KEA-exchange student that semester, so I spent a lot of time on my application, since SeoulTech was my 1<sup>st</sup> priority.

Once you're recommended by KEA prepare for a lot of waiting time before receiving confirmation and information from SeoulTech. In this waiting time, you can prepare the necessary documents, such as a study plan, transcript in English, letter of recommendation from KEA and grant applications. Your international guidance counsellor will help you with most of these.

Once my application was approved by the school abroad, we were sent the necessary documents for applying for a student visa by the international relation team at SeoulTech.

After this the international team at SeoulTech helped me with any questions and shortly before departure I was assigned a "Buddy" from the International Student Club (ISC) that helped me a lot with any questions I might have about the school.

In some ways the application process was quite stressful due to the long waiting periods with no information, but once I had the confirmation from both schools everything fell into place, and it was easy to just take it day by day.

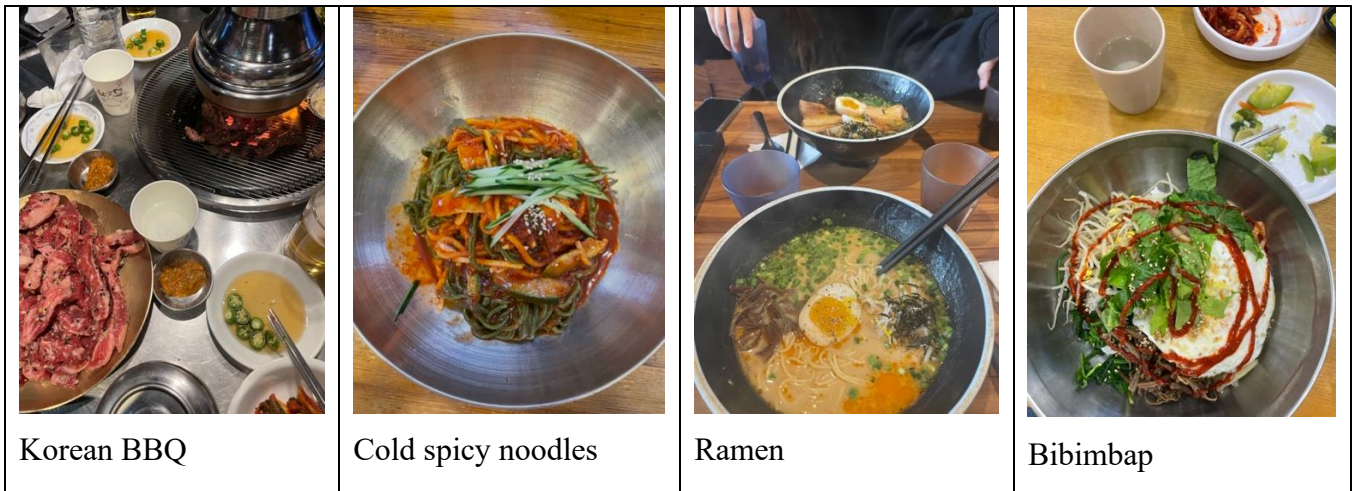
## 2.2 Housing

I received a Student Exchange Program Guideline from SeoulTech with various information about the application including information about dormitory opportunities. This included information about very few available dorms in the international hall and a warning that the dormitory buildings were aging, and mold infested. I can confirm that this was not true. I got my own room with a kitchen and a bathroom in the international hall. I also met people who were able to transfer from a shared room to a private room in the international hall. Of course, the rooms are not luxurious in any way, but I was very satisfied with my room considering the price. I paid around 2.000.000 WON (9.900 DKK) for accommodation for all 4 months. It is also possible to get cheaper rooms in the female/male dormitory where you will share a room with another student.

Mind you accommodation in Seoul can be very expensive, so this helped me save a lot of money that went to other experiences. If you choose accommodation on campus, please notice that the rooms are completely empty upon arrival, so I advise you to bring some stuff from home to avoid spending a lot of money on bedding, cleaning supplies, kitchen appliances etc., as these are quite expensive in Korea.

## 2.3 Income and other expenses

I advise you to apply for as many grants as possible, so you can have plenty of experiences whilst abroad. I applied for various grants and ended up receiving 20.000 DKK in total. During the exchange I also received my standard SU of around 5.900 DKK each month. SeoulTech does not have an agreement with the Erasmus+ grant, so unfortunately, I did not receive that extra monthly payment. I followed my budget quite well and managed to have loads of cultural and culinary experiences. Once you get comfortable in the city you can find some great hidden gems with amazing and affordable food.



### 3. Academic experience

This chapter contains information about the courses I chose at SeoulTech, my study experience in those classes and the process of chose and adapting to the classes.

#### 3.1 Choosing and indulging in the classes

We only had about one week to choose the classes we wanted and very little information about each course was given. I almost ended up choosing the classes at random, as I had no idea what the actual class would be like. The first week of the semester was somewhat a trial-week and I realized that some of the classes I had chosen did not suit my program at all. Fortunately, the international coordinator at SeoulTech helped me rearrange my schedule a few times and I ended up really satisfied with my schedule and enjoyed most of my classes. The international classes are less advanced than I thought they would be, and the Korean students are for the most part not comfortable speaking English in class. Most of my professors were skilled in English and I didn't have a problem keeping up in class. Keep in mind that unlike KEA, attendance and assignments are a part of your grade.

#### 3.2 Courses

##### 3.2.1 Basic Korean for Foreigners

I am so glad I choose to take a Korean language class. Firstly, this is where I met the people that became my closest friends and we always had so much fun in class and practicing for exams together. Secondly, our teacher was simply amazing and managed to teach me lot in just a few months. The exams were challenging, but nothing the whole class couldn't handle. Being able to make simple

sentences in Korean and read the Korean alphabet (Hangul) helped me a lot in my day-to-day life. Overall, I found this class to be most rewarding during my exchange.

### 3.2.2 Business Process Management (BPM)

BPM was the most challenging class I had, as the exams were very difficult, and we had to learn a lot of theory and new programs/tools in a short period of time. Fortunately, it was all interesting and relevant to the business economics & IT program I study at KEA.

### 3.2.3 Python Programming

I did not find this class very valuable to me because most of it was taught online and during class we only did exercises. If you choose this course, I advise you to study hard as the exams are quite hard and with no internet access or aid of any kind.

### 3.2.4 UX Design

This class was quite different from my other classes as we had one large project throughout the whole semester. We started in groups and eventually had to finish the product individually. The exam was a presentation of the final developed product. I personally enjoyed this class a lot and learned new skills in Figma and prototyping.

### 3.2.5 Organizational Behaviour (OB)

OB has a very heavy usage of theories and concepts that you will need to memorize for the exams. In general, the subjects of this class were interesting, but the class is mostly a three-hour long lecture every week.

Overall, I advise everyone to take the Korean Language class, as you learn the basics of the language, but also about Korean Culture in general. Furthermore, I think your exchange semester is a great opportunity to try different classes from those available at KEA. You will get the same credits, but it's a great way to broaden your horizon and learn new skills.

## 4. Cultural/Personal Experience

The general difference between the Danish and Korean culture is quite large both at the university and in the day-to-day life. Seoul is very large, and it took a while settling into the busyness of the city. The population is roughly 9 million people and compared to Copenhagen it was overwhelming at times. The most challenging experience, culturally, was probably getting used to the social hierarchy, where you, as a young person, must put yourself last in favour of the elders. I quickly adjusted to this, although it sometimes felt a bit odd. That being said, my time in Korea was nothing short of



amazing. The nightlife, in-the-city-mountains, shopping, nature, and culinary experiences were some of the bests I have ever experienced. I also travelled to Jeju Island and Busan during the bank holidays and experienced the beautiful nature and scenery of other parts of the country.

## 5. Recommendations and conclusion

If you're thinking of studying abroad, Seoul is truly a great and unique location. I'll advise anyone going to SeoulTech to be open minded and patient during the first month, as a lot of things will be overwhelming in the beginning. The faculty at SeoulTech is very helpful, so use the tools given by the university to meet people and go on trips. Keeping an open mind in general is advised when it comes to campus dorms, your classes, and the people you meet. It's important to remember that this isn't Europe and that most things are done/handled very differently, so please be respectful and keep that in mind. Most importantly remember that it will go by so fast, so don't forget to enjoy every moment and have as many experiences as you can whilst in South Korea.

