Exchange South Korea – SeoulTech
Spring semester 2022
21. February – 3. June

Basic information

Name & email Marek Visnovec *marek.visnovec@gmail.com*

Program Top-Up *Product development & integrative technology*

Semester *6th*

Exchange university *Seoul National University of Science and Technology (SeoulTech)*

Website *https://en.seoultech.ac.kr/*
https://global.seoultech.ac.kr/inbound/invitation/overview/

Foreign contact *Julie Sunyeong Hwang (황순영), later Marina Miran Park*

Introduction

The end of an 5th semester was approaching, and I was thinking what next. So, I checked available destinations for semester abroad, and as Europe wasn't something I was looking for South Korea struck my attention. I decided to try it on Seoul National University of Science and Technology not knowing much what it will bring as I was doing everything on last minute, but then when the answers from the school started arriving, I knew it is going to be exciting experience. University which I chose is of very high quality. Not only their design faculties but the whole rest as I got to know from other internationals and locals. This experience was definitely something that will be useful in my life and only think I can say is if you have chance just take it and try semester abroad in South Korea. You can get small insight in document bellow.

Activities before departure

Some of those information might be outdated or different as they have been affected by Covid-19 pandemic.

Information about courses

Curriculums of different courses can be found on this page https://for-s.seoultech.ac.kr/view/login.jsp after logging in as a Quest and choosing correct semester.

Documents needed for Seoul Tech

You will need transcript of records and GPA, motivational letter, recommendation letter from KEA and study plan (preliminary choice of your courses – you will get document later from Seoul Tech). Additionally, school will need visa confirmation, plane ticket number and health confirmation with negative tuberculosis scan in case you want to live in dormitory. All those documents are uploaded using Seoul Tech electronic system.

Visas

For exchange you will need D-2 visa which I recommend applying for as soon as possible. You will need passport, visa application (made online), passport type photo, certificate of admission from school, business registration and invitation letter from Seoul Tech which you will get delivered to you in time. Additionally, they will ask you for proof of enough finances on your bank account, in my case it was at least 3000 $ and additionally proof of accommodation in case you will not live in dormitory (in that case they will only ask for address).

Insurance

Having insurance was not mandatory. Personally, I did not use commercial insurance, as in South Korea you will need to pay for national health insurance.

Vaccination

There was no mandatory vaccination.

Courses

For courses you are already applying during writing of your study-plan. You can check different courses here: https://for-s.seoultech.ac.kr/view/login.jsp, some specific courses are rated with star, that means course gained very high score from students. Retrospectively I must say apply for more courses which you would like to take, you will have chance to drop them later if they are not by your taste. Also, you can apply for more during the first part of semester, but even if you manage to get additional classes you will already miss some lessons, and maybe on division into the groups for semester project. Also do not get discouraged about taking courses that might be very close to each other on time schedule, some teachers will be ending class little bit sooner, or you will have group work so you might still have chance to make it to your next class. Also, if you would like to learn some Korean apply for Basic language course, you will be also able to network with more internationals.

I personally took four classes from Monday-Wednesday. Three of them in Industrial Design faculty and one in Architecture faculty. I will go through all of them in sections bellow.

DaVinci hall – building where Industrial Design programs are held.

Smart ID

Professor: Young-Jun Ko (고영준)

"This course aims to further develop students' problem-solving and form-creating skills by carrying out a product design project. In this project, students will have an opportunity to design a product that apply smart technologies such as IoT and A.I."

I will start with class that gave me the most. After introductory class we got set of possible design cases to choose from. Those were: Bathroom faucet/shower, White cane, Mobility, Backpack, Pet feeder, Bus stop. There was chance to work solo or in groups. We created group of 4 people focused on design case of mobility. Two locals and one more international student from Germany. Also, we were able to change design case slightly, from vehicle, we got green light to also do infrastructure around mobility. Specifically issue of electric vehicle charging. Course will be evaluated on those 5 areas: originality, usability, aesthetics, safety, commerciality. And so we begin, whole course will go through designing, manufacturing of prototype up to advertising of the result. For every class we had assignments that will be presented in front of class, and we will be given feedback from professor and from other students.

We prepared plethora of presentations from market analysis to user scenarios, creating over 100 slides of high-quality presentations. After initial group part, every person had to choose specific project to keep working on, so that is to make all team members do whole design run. At the end our group ended with 4 distinct products, 2 charging stations, adapter for charging, and mobile app.

At the end of the course the final results are showcased in faculty art museum.

I recommend taking this course.

Design Research

Professor: Kim Sang-gyu (김상규)

"This class is to examines and understand what design research is and to address different ways in which design has been characterized and practiced throughout history."

This class was mostly about understanding different ways how to present ideas and data in appealing and interesting way. From educative (historic) value it was very well prepared and presented, but it won't show you how to "draw/sketch", so I would recommend person attending the class should already know to do some graphical expression and be highly creative. During the semester we had 3 projects. Final one was about Music, that I personally was not the biggest fan, but it was group work. I would recommend this class to someone who is keener on graphical design. Final results are also exhibited.

Digital Motion Expression

Professor: Joo-mee Paik (백주미)

"Today, video has become a very important means of communication for artists and designers. In this course, students will study the basic principles of video production based on live action video and practice the basic skills of video shooting and digital editing using Adobe Premiere Pro."

This class is from Visual Design major. It is focused more on real shooting scenarios and artistic value of clips, than on fx motion graphics (that is different class). You will learn everything about cuts, how to prepare good composition and of course how to use Adobe Premiere and little bit of After Effects. For every class you had to prepare video, and later during the semester you will start working on your final creative project. You will be able to use studio room with blue screen set and additional tools needed for video creation. The class will make you also appreciate cinematography little bit more. I recommend it for someone with artistic vibes.

Smart Construction and Sensors

Professor: Na Won-gi (나원기)

This course is theoretical, and you will get to know many technologies used in construction considering modern technologies as drones, A.I. and robots. It is evaluated based on 2 exams.

Campus

Campus is located in Nowon-gu district. Even though it has highest population density in Seoul, campus fells incredibly good, it has nice surroundings full of greenery with lake in the center and nearby trails.

It consists of many faculties and departments. Department of Art and Industrial Design that I attended reside in building number 39 also called DaVinci hall. It is situated in northern part of the campus, by foot from southern gate it is around 10 minutes, from final campus bus stop its only 2 minutes, same goes for dormitory.

Additionally, you can find many useful places in the campus, from multiple small supermarkets to art store, bank, post office and sports facilities.

Social and cultural experiences

School clubs

Schools offers over 40 different free time activity clubs, as dancing, playing music, creative ones, martial arts, sports, academics etc. On start of the semester there are few days dedicated for when each of the clubs have their own booth set up and you can ask them questions and apply for them. I personally attended shooting club. Each of the clubs has its own club room where you can go and meet interesting people.

Networking and making friends

Koreans are very friendly, but you need to start talking to them. Best and easiest is get to know people over from your buddy or from school projects and clubs. Sometimes the language barrier can look like a problem, but people will still try to communicate with you with usage of translator, but by endorsing them to speak in English also gives them little bit of courage. After getting to

know them just a little you can fast get into their group of people and start hanging out with them more often, creating long-lasting friendships.

International Student Club

Office of International education has its own club that prepared for internationals few events during the stay. One of interesting and fun events was trip to Everland, that is South Korea's largest theme park. For only 10k Won we got transport, tickets and lunch. Definitely recommend.

Practical info

Expanses and finances

During my exchange I have spent around 3 700 € ~ 27 500 DKK ~ 5M WON total. Here are some expenses.

Flight tickets	1 140 000 WON	~	6303 DKK
Cov19 Quarantine	*900 000 WON*	*~*	*4970 DKK*
Dormitory	840 000 WON	~	4640 DKK / whole stay
Health insurance	171 000 WON	~	945 DKK / whole stay
City transport	1700 WON	~	9,4 DKK / average ride
SIM card	40 000 WON	~	220 DKK / whole stay

Flight could be cheaper if bought as return ticket, definitely buy through flight companies themselves, otherwise you can get ripped off on baggage or other benefits. Look for discounts for students with ISIC for example. Also, in case of delay apply for compensation, my flight back home got delayed 3:30h, I was able to get back almost full price.

Dormitory price is really good. International dorm with small kitchenette and private refrigerator is little bit more expensive though.

About the health insurance, there is possibility to not pay it in case you have commercial insurance with high coverage amount, but you need to do additional bureaucracy for that.

For city transport you will be using one of the money cards as T-money or CashBee that you can get in any convenience store, those can be recharged, and you get little bit of discounts over just paying for tickets with cash.

Eating out is affordable and good meals starts from around 8000 wons.

Look for discounts in apps like Klook. More about this in Tips.

Payment methods

For dormitory and school stuff you pay in cash in local bank, so in one way or other you will need cash. You can exchange it on many spots in city center (as Myeongdong), or you can use ATM of NK bank on campus where there are zero fees. Other than that, you use cash with some street vendors. Foreign cards are usually taken in every supermarket, but make sure you have CVV on your card. And do not get confused when they ask for you signature, it is usual verification method for foreign cards, not the pin, sometimes terminal can ask you to put in mobile phone number, you can ask vendor to change it to signature mode. Additionally, it is better to have VISA card as from personal experience it works more often. V Pay cards and Maestro do not work. Personally, I had multiple debit cards just to be sure, but for cash withdrawal I used Revolut card as it has better exchange rates. For online payments foreign cards are usually not accepted, so it is nice to have some Koreans friends if you going to order something online. You can also apply for local debit card, but I think it is not worth the hassle.

School systems

https://suis.seoultech.ac.kr/ - for grades, withdrawal from courses, adding new ones, changes of address / mobile phone

https://eclass.seoultech.ac.kr/ - equivalent of Fronter / Teams, all online classes are accessed through here, materials from teachers, prerecorded classes, communication with professors.

https://mail.seoultech.ac.kr/ - webmail that will be needed for Adobe Suite in case you are attending digital design classes.

https://domi.seoultech.ac.kr/ - dormitory website, with announcements

Tips

SIM and Internet – it is better to prepay data package for your whole stay as it won't get cheaper later. Most of the internationals used Chingu, it contained unlimited data and you can get interesting discounts if more people decide to apply together.

ART stores – for industrial design programs you will need to get some materials for your projects. There is one big store near southern gate called NARA art

store, but there is also smaller one in campus on second floor of building 37 (student union).

Discount apps – you can get better prices for attractions, food, or travel tickets using one of discounts apps, I preferably use one called Klook.

Trips

Busan – you can get to Busan using KTX bullet train (use Klook for rail pass, it will be cheaper), but make sure to do reservation before, because you can get into the situation you won't get back to Seoul on time because whole train will be booked up. Other way to get there is by plane from Gimpo airport, usually it can even be cheaper than train.

Definitely take more than 1 day for Busan, 3 is good if you want to travel also somewhere around the city.

Gyeongju – if you want to check some history.

Suwon – city right next to Seoul, you can even take metro there. It has very nice fortification that is lit up during the night, nice for walks.

Jeju – island on the south, take plane from Gimpo, hike mountain (you need to do online registration for that), try their oranges and seafood.
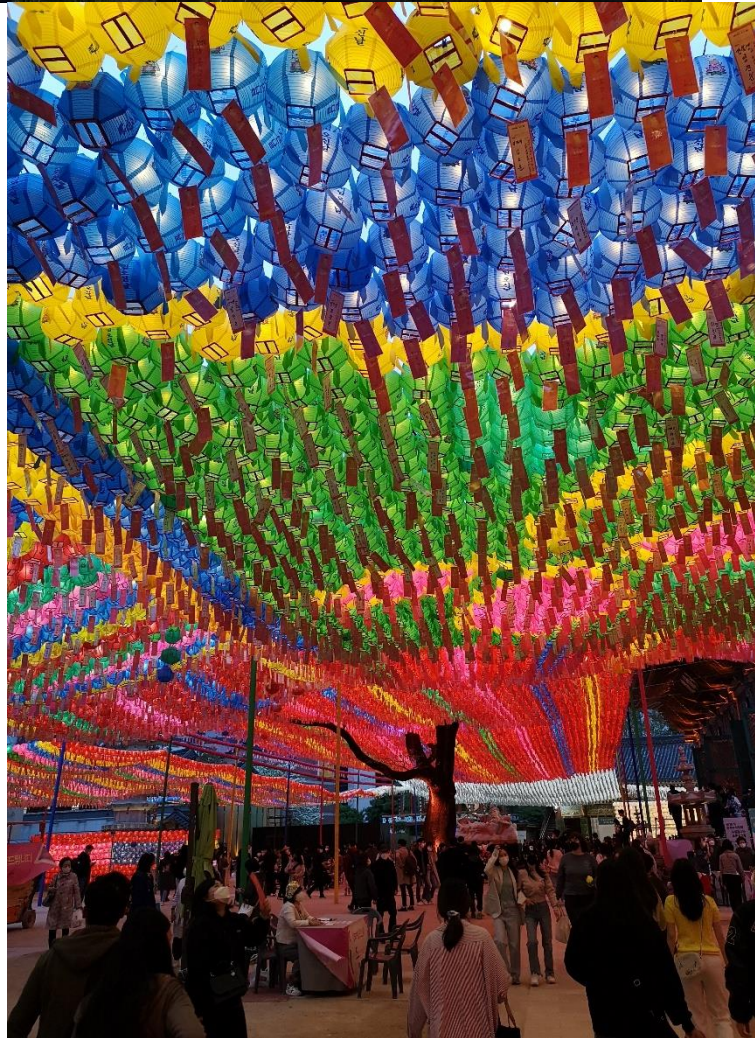
Abroad – you will get opportunity to use cheap international flights around Asia. Just be aware to have already ARC card, otherwise you won't be able to get back to the country as you VISA will be already used on your first entrance.

Conclusion

If you have chance to go abroad for semester, definitely do it. You will not regret. Seoul Tech totally fulfilled even surpassed my expectations. You will get motivated from the atmosphere of the university itself and hardworking and creative people all around you. Educational staff is very professional, and I didn't meet with any problem. Different approach towards things will broader your view towards your future endeavors. Plus, with possibility to experience different, very interesting culture and ability to meet many new people.

Gallery

Exchange South Korea 2022 KEA-SeoulTech Marek Visnovec