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# 1. Introduction

This my version of South Korea so do not let my personal experience discourage you for going abroad.

I chose to study abroad because I love knowing other countries. Before going to South Korea I lived in 4 countries and I chose to go to South Korea because first of all it was the furthest away both in terms of culture and physical distance which intrigued me.

My expectations were very high, I imagined a more welcoming place and that it was going to be easy to make friends and have fun in the city.



## 2. Experiences at the host university

### Erica Campus

The Erica Campus is very beautiful and big. It comes in handy to use the school buses to go to the entrance or go to the nearest Train/bus terminal station

The Hanyang buses are free, check-in with your student card.

The dormitories have two gyms, playrooms (ping-pong etc.) and even Karaoke rooms.

There's laundry, copy room, restaurants, and a convenience store. I love how easy it was to find food, there's water dispensers in every floor and microwaves.

You need to get a card for doing laundry and some floors will have some washing and drying machines. There's a bigger laundry room on the male side of the building.



### Courses

I found most of courses very boring and very theoretical, a lot of slides and not a lot of projects. In my experience to pass the semester you need to memorize every slide; I found these techniques very outdated.

The school personal was very helpful, they are always willing to help.

The system for choosing the classes is not the best and all the students need to wait for a specific time to choose the classes and practically fight for the spot. You can always send an email to the teacher and ask for a spot if you don't manage to get into the 2 rounds the school give you.

### These are the courses I took:

1. **Computer Architecture:** The goal of this course is to help students build up a strong foundation to understand modern computer systems. This course is structured around the three major building blocks of general computer systems: processor, memory, and storage.

2. **Computer Networks:** This course studies computer networks and the services built on top of them. Topics include packet-switch and multi-access networks, Internet protocols (IP, TCP), congestion/flow/error control, routing, addressing, naming, multi-casting, internetworking, wireless/mobile and network security.
3. **TED talks English:** The course objective is to develop students' critical thinking and communication skills and gain global perspectives on the topics learned by watching and listening to TED Talks. The TED Talks will be interesting and stimulating for students to assist in developing their own ideas and language skills that they will need to express themselves in English.
4. **Survival Korean:** Korean Language Program is student-centered and focus on speaking, featuring a variety of communicative activities to improve speaking abilities. Students can improve their ability to speak quickly by learning vocabulary and phrases used in daily life while engaging in very realistic activities.
5. **General Taekwondo:** Through learning Taekwondo and self-defence skills, one can learn the five tenets of Taekwondo; courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit. Also, one can learn how to understand and care for others and learn how to cultivate sociality through the mind-set of physically defending oneself and caring for others.
6. **Data Analysis and Machine Learning for Social Science:** This course will provide lectures on basic machine learning techniques. After the course, learners will be able to apply their modelling skills to solve real-world problems.

**I would recommend you take the following courses:**

1. **General Taekwondo** was a breather from all the other classes. The teacher was very dedicated. It also helped me to understand about the history of South Korea and why this sport is so important there.
2. **Data Analysis and Machine Learning for Social Science** because the teacher was passionate about the class. You could see the effort he put in every lecture and the materials for the class was also given before the class so you could prepare better and ask any question if the material was not enough.

**The class I would not recommend:**

1. **Computer Architecture**, from the start the teacher was very negative, saying the class was hard and we should drop it if we couldn't do the exercises. The materials were not provided before class, and overall, it was boring.



I managed to meet a lot of amazing people during this trip, and I'm very glad I went and try to make the best out of this experience. After traveling to other cities, I found more friendly locals that make my last days more enjoyable.

### **How to find friends and how to network**

It was hard to make Korean friends because the Koreans just go to class and don't say a word. They also don't say hi or greet you in any ways. I do recommend you join the Buddy program, running club, cycling club or any club you are allowed to join (Some of them don't accept foreigners). My buddy was very nice and sweet and that's how many others got Korean friends, but you usually end up hanging out with the other international students.

## **4. Practical experiences**

I travel to South Korea by plane when the war with Ukraine was not a thing, so it was a very straight forward trip of 12 hours with a layover in Helsinki.

When I got to Incheon (International airport) I had to show a lot documentations due to covid, but the rules has changed since then and made it easier.

I was pick up by the quarantine facility in a special bus and dropped in the place where I was staying, they took care of taking me to do the corresponding PCR tests.

After the Quarantine was over Hanyang University arranged buses to pick up the students and move them straight to their dormitory in ERICA campus, where the check-in was straightforward.

### **My Dormitory Experience**

To apply to the dormitory is also a straightforward step, you only need to make sure you click on it when you're doing your application for the exchange online, the fees will come in a separate email once you're getting closer to going on exchange.

The first day I got the dorm the room was completely empty, and the bathroom was very dirty, so I had to run for blankets, toilet paper and all these small things for cleaning the place.

The personal at Hanyang gave us some addresses and told us where to find bedding.

### **Expenses**

I paid these expenses with my savings, so I didn't have to ask for any loans or get help from my family.

I recommend you get a health insurance before travelling only for 2 months because you're obligated to pay the National health Insurance and the insurance you get privately before going will not exonerate you from not paying.

Dormitory for 4 months	6.821kr.
Quarantine Facility 7 days	4.739kr.
Plane Tickets	4.704kr.
Health Insurance * 4 months 2 weeks	2.036kr.
National health Insurance in SK 3 months	925kr.

Total:	19.225 kr.
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I had savings so it was enough for me to live every month with SU after everything else was paid.

I usually used to take around 4000 DKK in cash and leave the rest for in the card, I think the sooner you get a bank account in Korea the better but is not completely necessary, some stuff will not work smoothly if you have an international card like asking for things online or paying in certain places.

You just need to be prepared to spend money on food, traveling and entertainment. Cooking food can be very expensive so it's cheaper to eat in a restaurant or a convenient store.

### **Other practical experiences**

The application process to apply to Hanyang University was very intuitive, if you have the correct documents, it should be alright. Your average should be more than 6. The Office of International Affairs of Hanyang is always very helpful, they answer the emails within a day or two.

The advisors a KEA answer every question very fast and very helpful with getting the correct documents on time. They were very honest about how the classes would be at the receiving school, so I really thank KEA for being such a helping hand in this process.

## **5. Some advice**

- If you're staying in the dormitory be prepare for rules and noise.
- Always have cash (It is a gamble to be only with a card)
- Try to ask the teachers by email if the class is in English, many classes are listed as English, but the teachers only speak Korean.
- Staying in the dorm is very cheap if you want to save up money for traveling around.
- Don't show shoulders, it is an unspoken rule but is seen as "sexy" or be prepared for the looks.
- Don't look people directly in the eyes, is consider rude.
- If you see a protest/strike, try to avoid getting into the middle you may get deported if you're seen in a riot.
- Some places don't accept foreigners.

## 6. Conclusion

### **My expectations after living in south Korea**

I been living in other countries and never had such a cultural shock like when I went to South Korea.

You need to be prepared mentally for racist offense if you're black/brown, if you are blonde you shouldn't worry about that, and your friends may be called the N word out of the blue. People don't say "excuse me" or "sorry" if they push you, they are always in a hurry, and it was extremely hard to make Korean friends.

Culturally and professionally my expectations were not met, it is a very conservative country, and they care a lot about how you look, women are not allowed to show feminist believes otherwise they are scrutinised by the society. I can't live in a place like that.

Also, you are not allowed to disagree with your boss or teachers, so you need to very careful how you speak to others while you're there, always show extra "respect".

