# EXCHANGE REPORT

## SOUTH KOREA / SPRING 2023
### HANYANG UNIVERSITY

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Computer Science

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# INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Danny. During my 4th semester at KEA studying Computer Science, I had the unique opportunity to spend a semester at Hanyang University ERICA in South Korea.

During a gap year in 2019, I visited South Korea. I was struck by the convenience of everything - from the public transport to the lifestyle. It was an easy place to be, and that inspired me to consider studying there.



Fast forward, I completed a semester at Hanyang University.
By the time I arrived on February 22$^{nd}$, 2023, the Covid-19 restrictions had been lifted just a week prior. While the first couple of weeks were still had some of the pandemic's residual effects, they soon vanished, and life resumed to a new normal.

In this report, I've shared the realities of the university life, the academics, and the bits of wisdom I gained along the way.

## Academics: A Different Approach

Applying for Hanyang University was initially overwhelming. The selection of classes was based on a first-come-first-served system, requiring you to be up at night (in Denmark time) to apply. For the Survival Korean class, there was a separate application process via a survey link. I also had to ensure that my class schedules did not overlap.

Initially, I intended to enroll in six courses - Computer Networks, Basic Introduction to Robotics, Game Programming Language, Deep Learning, Systems Security, and Survival Korean - to complete my 30 ECTS credits. However, after consultations with my international coordinator, Anne Dibbern, we realized that only five courses were needed.

Due to the first-come-first-serve system, I ended up taking Computer Networks and Game Programming Language from my initial list and got a spot in Computer Architecture and UX Design. After realizing I didn't meet the prerequisites for Computer Architecture, I switched to AI+X: Introduction to Data Science. Thus, my final list of courses was AI+X: Introduction to Data Science, Computer Networks, UX Design, Game Programming Language, and Survival Korean.

# Overview of my courses

### Game Programming Language

I chose this course due to the hands-on opportunity it offered to create our own game throughout the semester. We learned C# and how to use Unity, which was fascinating but also very time-consuming, especially when working in a group with no prior experience. I'd recommend it to anyone interested in game development, but be prepared for the challenges that come with it.

### Computer Networks

My interest in this course was sparked by our 'Technology' class during the 3rd semester at KEA. Having some prior knowledge proved useful, as the initial lectures might have been confusing without it. While the professor's English level made lectures a bit hard to comprehend, studying with classmates for midterms and the project, which involved socket programming in C/C++, helped me understand the course content better.

### AI+X: Introduction to Data Science

This course was unique, with lectures conducted online but watched in a physical classroom. We had weekly assignments that took up quite some time. Some things we're quite interesting, as we dove down into Machine Learning models, but I wouldn't recommend the course, as many hours a week were spend on the weekly homework and assignments.

### UX Design

Initially, I assumed this course would focus on web design. However, it centered more on improving the city of Ansan. The lectures were in English, but student presentations were in Korean, which exempted non-Korean speaking students from presenting. This was a unique experience, as we were presenting to government officials.

### Survival Korean

I highly recommend this course. The course itself turned out to be quite hard, as I was completely new to the language. Though, the basic words and phrases we learned proved to be useful and helped me understand daily conversations and interact with Koreans.

## Cultural Experiences and Fun: Not Just All Books and Exams

Outside of the classroom, I got to do loads of cool stuff. ERICA campus is located in Ansan, a city with a lot to explore. From food markets, to parks and karaoke spots, there was always something to do. Korean cuisine is a whole new world of flavors, and outside of campus offers a lot of restaurants that's just waiting to be discovered.

My course schedule felt intense with classes held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, resulting in long academic days. However, this allowed me to have an extended weekend from Thursday to Sunday.
Even though it looked like I had lots of free time, my courses had overlapping projects, so I often spent much of my time on Thursdays and sometimes the weekends in the library.

### Spring Festival at Hanyang University ERICA

In Korea, many universities hold a festival each semester. The biggest one is the Spring Festival. At Hanyang University ERICA, our Spring Festival lasted for three days. There were many food trucks and bars on the campus streets that were run by students. We also had concerts.

For those interested, the Spring Festival of 2023 had performances by HYNN, Lee San-hoon, 10CM, HEIZE, Dynamic Duo, BTOB, and Aespa.

Some universities, including ours, let people who are not students come to their festivals. If you ever see that PSY is performing at one of these, you should go. His performance was the best I have seen at any spring festival concert.

## Settling In: Accommodation and Living Expenses

The dormitory life at Hanyang University ERICA, particularly at the CHANGEI dorm, comes highly recommended. It provides various facilities, from gyms to dining options, and is worth the slightly higher cost compared to other accommodation options.

In terms of general expenses, budgeting is essential as expenses can exceed initial estimates due to travel and other unforeseen costs. Students are also advised to apply for various grants and scholarships, which can significantly ease financial pressures.

## A Global Network

Studying abroad isn't just about the academics or cultural experiences, it's also about the people you meet along the way. I was lucky enough to connect with a diverse group of folks from all around the globe. This includes people from the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, France, Mexico, Indonesia, Ireland, England, Ukraine, Japan, and of course South Korea. Each one of us brought something unique to the table, and it was pretty enlightening to see how different cultures approach problem-solving or express their creativity. Sharing thoughts, ideas, and even heated debates over late-night study sessions created bonds that were more like a family than just friends.

## Challenges: Overcoming the Unexpected

Like any adventure, studying abroad came with its fair share of challenges too. The language barrier was definitely the biggest one. But that's the Survival Korean course was proven useful. Other than that, adjusting to the differences in educational system and lifestyle was also a bit of a ride. The late-night study culture was a shock at first, but I eventually got the hang of it and enjoy the memories I have of them.

## Financial Support During My Exchange Program

### SU and Erasmus Support

During my time abroad in South Korea, I continued receiving Student Support (SU) from Denmark. This is a monthly financial aid provided to students for living expenses. On top of the SU, I also received financial support from the Erasmus+ program, totaling to approximately 16,500DKK. The Erasmus+ program provides scholarships to students participating in international exchanges within its network, thereby easing the financial burden and making it more accessible to experience diverse cultures and education systems.

### Applying for Grants

While being busy with my exam project and application process for the exchange program, I didn't have much time to dedicate to applying for additional grants. However, it's something I'd highly recommend that you do. The more financial aid you can get, the more you can immerse yourself in the local culture and participate in various activities without financial restraints. I was fortunate to apply to the Knud Højgaards Fond, a grant that I ultimately received. This grant was invaluable, making it possible for me to join my friends on numerous trips, truly enhancing my overall exchange experience. Therefore, I strongly encourage future exchange students to set aside time to apply for as many grants as possible.

# Advice if you plan to go to South Korea

ARC

You should try to get your ARC (Alien Registration Card) as soon as possible. This card lets you travel outside of Korea and come back in again. It also allows you to open a Korean bank account. This can be handy because it makes it easier to buy things online from places like Coupang, which is like Amazon in Korea. It also helps you order food, reserve tables at restaurants and more. There will likely be times when you'll need a Korean bank account, so it's a good idea to get one.

Apps that you should download:

**Papagoo**: This is a translation app that often works better for Korean than Google Translate does. I do however recommend Google Translate for its live-translation feature.

**NaverMap** or **KakaoMap**: Google Maps doesn't do a great job in Korea. So, I suggest you use these apps. They are like the Korean version of Google Maps. NaverMap is my top choice because it is in English.

**KakaoTalk**: This is a messenger app that is widely used in South Korea. You will most likely use it with the Koreans that you meet during your exchange.

**WhatsApp**: It seems that most exchange students use WhatsApp to chat. Back home in Denmark, we often use Messenger. But outside of Denmark, WhatsApp is more popular.

**KakaoTaxi**: This is an app for calling taxis. It works well and is easy to use. It's a lot like Uber.

**YPT - Yeolpumta**: This app helps you keep track of how much time you spend studying.

Scooters
The university campus is quite large, so being able to use scooters has saved me from being late to class many times. If you have a foreign driver's license, you can use scooter apps like: SWING, beam, Bird, and SsingSsing (씽씽).

If you like to ride bikes, you can rent them from SWING and Kakao T. Kakao T even lets you pay with Paypal.

# Conclusion

While South Korea can pose some cultural challenges, the experiences of campus life, including participating in clubs and social events, more than compensate for them. Additionally, living in a dormitory can significantly enhance the overall study abroad experience. It offers much greater opportunities for interactions, which can lead to stronger friendships.

In a nutshell, my study abroad journey at Hanyang University ERICA was filled with academic and cultural learning, personal growth, and some good old fun. So, if you're considering this opportunity, I say, "Go for it!".

# Appendix

Budget for grant application

| Navn: | Danny Lu |
| Destination: | Ansan, Sydkorea |
| Opholdets startdato | 22. februar 2023 |
| Opholdets slutdato | 20. juli 2023 |

| Udgifter | | Beløb i DKK | Beløb for hele perioden i DKK | Kommentarer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flybilletter | Engangsudgift | 6,000 | 6,000 | https://www.momondo.dk/flight-search/CPH-ICN/2023-02-23/2023-06-06?sort=bestflight_a |
| Transport | Engangsudgift | 1,500 | 1,500 | |
| Husleje | Engangsudgift | 15,000 | 15,000 | http://oia.hanyang.ac.kr/files/attach/filebox/2023/02/2023-1_graduate_en.pdf |
| Bolig i Danmark | pr. Måned | 3,257 | 13,028 | I tilfælde af, at jeg ikke finder en lejer |
| Rejseforsikring | Engangsudgift | 3,374.72 | 3,374.72 | |
| Obligatorisk "National Health Insurance" | pr. Måned | 360 | 1,440 | https://www.hwis.or.kr/english/wbhcad055 00m01.do?mode=view&articleNo=10814171&title=2022+Booklet+for+the+Introduction+of+ |
| Visum | Engangsudgift | 1,000 | 1,000 | |
| Vaccinationer | Engangsudgift | 2,000 | 2,000 | https://www.sikkerrejse.dk/vaccinationer/sydkorea/ |
| Leveomkostninger | pr. Måned | 1,500 | 6,000 | (Mad, personlige pleje og husholdningsudgifter) https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Ansan-South-Korea |
| Internet og telefon | pr. Måned | 250 | 1,000 | https://www.trazy.com/experience/detail/prepaid-data-sim-card-long-term |
| Bøger og materialer | Engangsudgift | 2,000 | 2,000 | |
| Studieture og ekskusioner | Engangsudgift | 10,000 | 10,000 | |
| Rejser og oplevelser/Kulturelle formål | Engangsudgift | 5,000 | 5,000 | |
| Nødopsparing (Uventede omkostninger) | Engangsudgift | 5,000 | 5,000 | |
| **Udgifter i alt** | | **67,343** | | |

| Indtægter | | Beløb i DKK | Beløb for hele perioden i DKK | Kommentarer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SU | pr. Måned | 5,591 | 22,364 | |
| Opsparing/Investering | | | 32,963 | Kan variere i forhold til aktiekurser |
| Legater | | | | Afventer svar |
| **Indtægter i alt** | | **55,327** | | |

| **Difference** | | **-12,016** | | |