

Exchange semester

Konkuk University

International Business Administration SoSe 23



I am studying International Business Administration and spent my 3rd semester abroad in Seoul, South Korea. I chose Konkuk University as my host university and overall, I am very happy with the experience I had there.

Before departure

The process of applying for a semester abroad is a lengthy process however not very difficult. Through mobility online the university guides you through the whole process. One important aspect to consider is that the Korean semester and the German one overlaps a few weeks since the Korean one starts earlier. So, during the summer semester you may miss a few exams in Germany. As for the Visa the process was very easy and does not take longer than 2 weeks. However, an appointment should be made on the website of the Korean embassy early enough. Another important matter is international health insurance which is required I chose one from Hanse-Merkur and later on applied for exemption from the Korean health insurance since international students are obliged to contribute to it. The National Health Insurance Service in Korea granted me an exemption, so I did not have to pay the monthly fee for the Korean one which roughly is about 100 Euros a month. For the exemption you have to provide your Health Insurance Documents in English and Korean and the only thing they really look out for is that the documents mention your name and birth date. Moreover, I recommend booking your flights as soon as you can since it's going to be cheaper. I flew with Asiana and they offer 23kg for your baggage and 10kg for your carry on. I recommend only bringing one suitcase with you when you arrive and to buy another one in Korea. This ensures you have enough space to bring back the stuff you bought over the months. For my accommodation I chose to stay in the Konkuk Dormitory.

My checklist included:

- Visa
- Passport
- Credit Card (Revolut is a good choice because they do not have extra fees when paying)
- Korean Sim Card (I got mine from Woori Mobile it was about 60.000won for 4 months for unlimited data)
- Flight
- International health insurance
- First round of course registration

Useful Apps for your stay:

- KakaoMap/NaverMap (You cannot use Google Maps in Korea since it's not accurate so you have to use one of those)
- KakaoTalk (what Korea uses for communicating; WhatsApp's Korean counterpart)
- Yogiyo (Food Delivery App)
- Kakao T (Taxi)
- Papago (Translator and in my opinion the best one)
- Namane (You can get a Korean card to pay with through Namane without opening a bank account.)

What did you like? What did you not like?

All in all, I was very happy with my experience in South Korea. I did not experience a huge culture shock since I knew what was expecting me. The food was good but often did not have enough salt for our European liking. I would carry a mini saltshaker with me to combat that.

South Korea and North Korea are still considered at war so there was one instance where we got woken up at 5am by presidential alerts on our phones. North Korea had launched a satellite which was falsely classified as a missile by South Korea and Japan. We were told to seek shelter underground since they expected Seoul to be the target. After 20 minutes the Korean government sent alerts telling everyone to return to normal life and apologized for the false alarm. That was the first time in 7 years that this situation had arose so it's probably not likely to happen again in the near future.

Courses

I took 5 classes at Konkuk. You have register for the courses during a specific time and competition is very fierce since its first come first serve. During the first of round of registration I did not get into a single course. But there is a second and third round. And during the second round which took place in Korea I got all my courses. Don't be stressed! If you cannot get into all your desired classes, you can write the professors and ask them to add you into the class. The exam season is split into two first Midterms and at the end of the semester the final exams.

My courses included:

- Monetary Economics

Counts as Macroeconomics at FRA UAS. The professor was good at explaining the course material and workload was very doable. Midterm and final exam were both multiple choice based.

- Financial Management

The course is completely online in form of prerecorded lectures. Students have one week to watch the lectures. Midterm and final exam were also multiple choice. We also had one group project which made up 30% of our final grade. I was the only international student in the course with another exchange student the rest of the class were only Korean students but since the lecture is held in English we had no issues.

- Marketing

This course was held offline, and it was the only course I took that was not based on multiple choice exams. However, both exams were very doable, and we were allowed to use cheat sheets.

- Korean Elementary (WP)

The course itself was very fun but I have to mention that the professor is not that good at teaching the material. I would still consider taking the course to have a better start at learning Korean. Both exams consisted of multiple choice and written questions.

- Organizational behavior (WP)

This course is online in form of prerecorded lectures. The exams are multiple choice based and doable. But the lectures were hard to follow due to the heavy accent of the professor. Course included a power point presentation at the end of the semester which we had to record and upload.

Overall, the courses are a bit easier at Konkuk compared to FRA UAS which stems from the fact that the exams are multiple choice.

My experience in Seoul

Seoul has a lot to offer and there is always something to do. My favorite part of Seoul was Seongsu an area which has a lot of cafés and pop ups to offer. There is in general an endless amount of restaurants, cafés and bars so you are never going to be bored!

My suggestions for your stay:

- Photobooths, Karaoke, Café hopping and visiting Palaces
- Hangang (river)
- Kondae Area (Konkuk University Area is called Kondae in short)
- Lotte Mall (shopping center)
- Lotte World (amusement park)
- Hongdae (especially for clubbing)

Dormitory

As I mentioned I stayed at the Dormitory at Dream Hall. For 4 months it was around 1500 Euro. I would recommend staying at the dorm. The room is small, and you have to share it with a roommate but you live on campus so you don't have to commute to university. Also, through living at the dorm you are able to make friends very easily.

To conclude:

I would encourage everyone who is interested in visiting Korea to do an exchange semester! I had a great time, and I am very grateful to have had this opportunity. Plus, an exchange semester is a great addition to your resume and for your future career. Especially for IBA students.

