

Studying at Korea University in Seoul, South Korea

Korea University, Seoul
August 2022- December 2022



Introduction

I am a third year student at University College Freiburg, majoring in Life Sciences. I spent the last semester in Seoul, South Korea studying at Korea University and I will share some of the challenges I faced, experiences I made and tips I have for you in this report. I hope it will help you decide if you want to study at Korea University and be of some guidance to you, if you do end up studying there.

Korea University

Korea University is one of the SKY universities. This acronym stands for; **S**eoul, **K**orea and **Y**onsei University. They are the top universities in Korea and have large campuses and modern facilities. Korea University is separated into two campuses, which are only 10 minutes walking from one another, a humanities campus and a science campus. There are a variety of classes taught in english to choose from and you can also take korean language classes. Beware however that the classes are “first come first serve”, meaning it is important to be early on registration day as classes fill up quite quickly. I was able to get most of the classes I wanted, however I have many friends who didn't. Especially humanities and korean language classes, were hard to get into.



Accommodations

This is probably something that many people worry about. There are several options when it comes to accommodations. You can apply for the on-campus dorms, however since the IO program does not guarantee you a space, the likelihood that you will get a dorm is relatively slim. Instead some good alternatives are living in a goshitel (you will find more information regarding this on the KU website for offcampus housing) or like me you can find yourself an apartment. The goshitel rooms are very small, however you will have a sense of community that you will probably not have if you get your own room-apartment. Regarding the apartment you would need to contact a korean housing agency in the area, who will then show you the available rooms nearby.

Living in Seoul

Seoul is an amazing city, which has many attractions to offer. While it is quite big, the public transportation is good and you can even take it to get to some neighbouring cities like Suwon or Incheon. Seoul is known for its cafes and they are really something else. You can find any cafe you would like here from animal cafes to themed cafes to cafes located in traditional korean houses, Hannoks.



There are also many events across the city. For example during the World Cup 2022 there was a public viewing event and later in December a Light Festival on the square in front of the palace.



Life at KU

KUBA, Korea University Buddy Association, is a group of Korean students, who will help you adapt to your life at the university and in Seoul itself. They will organize fun activities, which will allow you to meet many of your fellow exchange students, and they will also help you with any questions you have. Some of the activities we did together this semester were; going to Lotte World (Seoul's amusement park), getting dinner together and attending the Koyeon games. Speaking of the Koyeon games, this is a super fun sports competition between two of the SKY universities, Korea University and Yonsei University. This year was the first time they were being held again since Corona started and it was super fun and an incredible experience. I would advise you to go participate in this event as an audience member since you probably will never experience something like this again.



Red = Korea University (Mascot = Tiger)
 Blue = Yonsei University (Mascot = Eagle, i.e. Chicken)

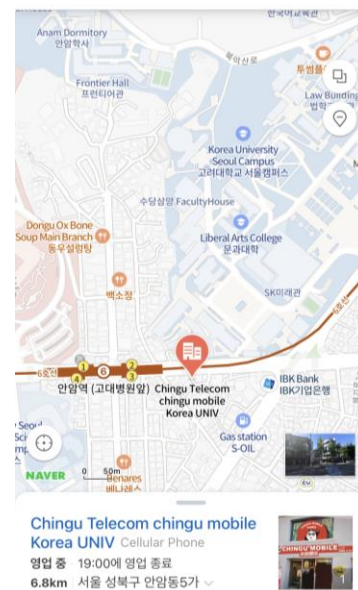
Advice for you

Earlier I said that you will probably not get a place in the campus dorms, however the goshitels and other housing is also gone quite quickly, so it might be a good idea to look into it in advance. For example when I was looking at the goshitels 3 weeks before the beginning of the semester, most of the rooms were already gone. So just be sure to look into accommodations ahead of time.

I would highly recommend you get a phone plan and not a prepaid card like I did. It will take some time to set up the plan and you will need to bring your passport but the same would be true for a prepaid card. Plans are cheaper than prepaid cards here. I would recommend for you to go to chingumobile, which is right across from KU campus and I have been told it is good and cheap.

To find your way around Seoul, google maps does not work that well, so I would recommend you get "Naver". However, sometimes it is hard to find something if you type the english name in the searchbar.

Additionally be sure to get a T-Money card to use for the subway. You can buy one at the airport train station I am pretty sure, but if you can not find it just ask the information place where you can get the T-money card. You will need to charge this card with cash and can do this either at specialized machines in the subway station or in any convenience store at the cashier. Also be



sure to tap your card when you get off the bus, because if you don't do this and transfer from a bus to the subway, you will be charged twice.

I mentioned earlier that courses are “first come first serve”. As such you should be sure to put in your calendar the date and time it opens, as most courses are gone within the first 10 minutes. Additionally you should however also write in your calendar when the Add/ Drop period ends. There is only one Add/ Drop period and once this ends it is not possible to drop courses. Believe me I tried. I made the mistake of signing up for too many classes and then missing the time to drop them and even after going to the department heads they said they couldn't do anything. So once the period is over you will not be able to drop any more classes, Korean universities are really strict about this. Just keep this in mind and don't make the same mistake as me.

Class attendance is mandatory, however, how many classes you can miss depends on the professor so be sure to check, since missing too many classes can potentially result in you failing a class or seriously impacting your grade.

Lastly don't be afraid to try new things. The whole purpose of an exchange semester is to do things you wouldn't normally. So join clubs, go watch KU sport games and try new foods. Fruits and western goods are expensive here so try to adjust to the Korean diet to not spend too much money on food.

I hope you have a lovely time in Seoul and have fun at Korea University!