

Report about my study abroad

South Korea, Konkuk University

A semester abroad and more, in a very special city

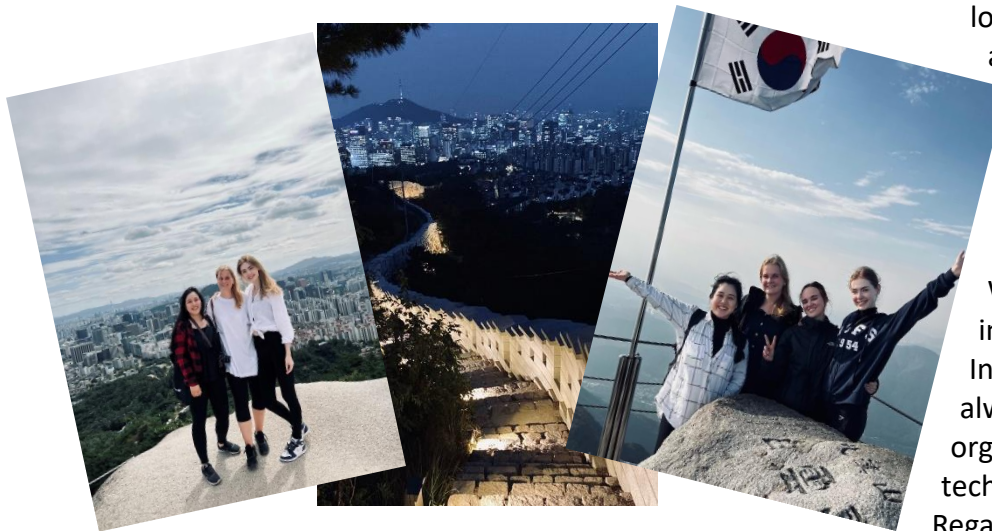
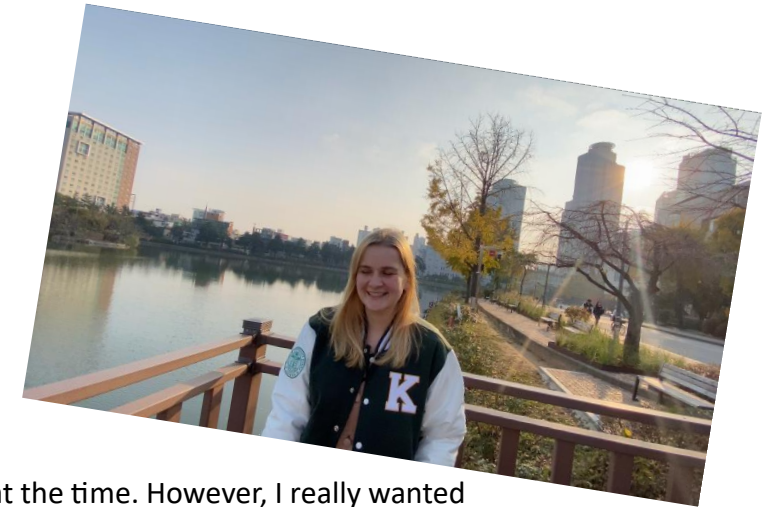
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As I write this report about my study abroad, I am thinking back to my recently completed semester full of new challenges, exciting discoveries and unforgettable experiences in Seoul, South Korea. (Minor spoiler: Fortunately, my journey continues in this great country. 😊)

I had already spent my third semester at a Korean university, but I was not satisfied with it at the time. However, I really wanted to go back to Korea and decided to spend my last semester here again. The decision to spend my fifth semester abroad at Konkuk University (KU) was one of the best of my life. Not only was the application process as a freemover and without an agency easy and uncomplicated, but the team at the International Office is also incredibly friendly and helpful and always supported me before, during and after my semester. The university is located in the eastern part of Seoul and offers not only a first-class academic environment (it is one of the best unis in Korea), but also the opportunity to experience the fascinating city quickly and up close thanks to very good public transportation connections. The campus is also simply beautiful and even has its own lake.

The first few days at Konkuk University were exciting. During the Welcome Week, the International Office gave us all the important information, showed us around the campus and introduced us to the International Student Volunteers (ISVs; 10 Korean students who were always available for students during the semester and regularly organized events for us). The campus is modern, well-structured and technically very well equipped.

Regarding my courses: It is common at Korean universities that it is very difficult and competitive to get into English-conducted courses because the demand is so high. Business courses in particular fill up within seconds (this was also my experience that other Korean university). However, I didn't have any problems at KU because they really do offer a lot of courses in English.



Campus life was super diverse. In addition to a lot of cafes and restaurants on campus and in the surrounding area, there were also numerous student organizations, clubs, and events that made it easy to make new friends and fit into the community. In my case, I made a lot of new Korean friends through the tennis club and volunteering to help out the International Office and ISVs!

Seoul itself is a beautiful city that never sleeps. The city offers a perfect blend of tradition and modernity. I spent countless hours wandering the streets, visiting traditional temples, tasting Korean food, and trying out many unique cafés.

Of course, there are also challenges. Among other things, the pressure to perform is much higher here. The final grade consists of mid-terms and final exams, attendance (every missing lecture was penalized with a point deduction and possibly an "F"), assignments and sometimes participation. Sometimes the workload can be overwhelming, but if you keep at it, you can still get very good grades.

The culture is also very different from what we are used to. Hierarchy, politeness, and respect are incredibly important here. No shaking hands but bowing; using an indirect communication style rather than telling the truth in a straightforward way; adapting to the different eating habits here... you have to adapt to something new and be open to other traditions. It's also an advantage to know a bit of the language, or at least Hangeul (the Korean alphabet), because that makes everyday life quite a bit easier.

Personally, I always had the best time of my life here, which is why I decided to stay in this country even after my bachelor's degree. You can't get enough of Korea, and especially Seoul. Therefore, I can only recommend that you explore this country for a longer period of time. Do it by spending one or two semester at Konkuk University!



Seoul Nightlife



A little tip: you can explore all the temples for free in the traditional Korean dress "Hanbok". 😊