

Destination: Hanyang University Seoul, South Korea
Exchange period: VT 2018

Choice of the destination and courses:

I knew I wanted to study at a university in Seoul, but it was difficult to decide which university. From my experience it was not so easy to find which courses I could take at the different universities, but when I finally found them there were a lot of suitable courses at all of the universities. I thought Hanyang had the most interesting courses and the biggest variety of courses to choose from, therefore I chose Hanyang University.

Describe shortly the preparation process before the departure:

Before going to South Korea I had to prepare a lot of things. First of all I booked my flights, applied for a student visa and took the vaccine I had to have. For my studies I had to choose courses and also find accommodation since I didn't get that through my university.

Contact with receiving institution:

The contact with the Office of International Affairs at Hanyang University was good. It was a lot easier to contact them about concerns rather than contacting International Office at Umeå University and wait for them to contact Hanyang and then get back to me.

Support from Umea University:

I experienced a lack of knowledge about the different universities and the application process. I got wrong information from International Office and after a while I realized it was easier to contact the receiving department myself.

Arrival information:

Before the school started there was an orientation day with all important information and a lot of helpful tips. I got a Buddy, which I think is a great way to get to know Koreans and also other exchange students.

Accommodation arrangements:

The university has accommodation that you can apply for. I tried but didn't get a room so I had to find accommodation by myself. I lived in a Shared-Community Living Space called "Unidence Hanyang" located 5 min from my university. I found Unidence on the Facebook Page "Svenskar i Sydkorea". I am very satisfied with my accommodation since there is less rules than at the university's accommodation and in addition I got to live with 60 other exchange students who became like a family to me.

Transportation:

The easiest way of transportation in Seoul is the subway. You can pay with your student ID-card and one way costs approximately 1 euro. It is also very cheap to take a cab, it often costs less than 5 euros.

Budget:

The cost of living in Seoul is a lot lower than in Umeå. The food is cheaper, especially at restaurants. The only thing I experienced more expensive in Seoul was vegetables or typical western food.

Social activities:

The school arrange a lot of activities for exchange students, for example I got to try taekwondo and to dance K-pop. Other than the activities the university arrange Seoul is a city with so many things to do and see. There are temples and palaces, mountains to hike, 4-D cinema, food markets, great shopping, animal cafes and so on.

Recommendation :

Yes, I would definitely recommend Hanyang University.

Practical things to think about:

People aren't so good at English at Korea, therefore it can be helpful to take a class in Korean Language.

General information about academia:

The academic system in South Korea is quite different from the Swedish system. They have attendance, which means that you have to be present at a least 75-80% of the classes and it will also be a part of your grade. You get points for participation and I experienced that the classes are a lot more interactive than in Sweden. All the courses span throughout the whole semester and there is midterms halfway through and finals in the end. I had homework every week in all my courses.

Courses attended*Course 1:*

English Speaking and Communicative Competence - mostly about presentation-techniques. During this class I got more comfortable to hold speeches in English in front of an audience. The course requires quite a lot of workload, you have approximately one presentation every or every other week as well as homework every week. It's an interactive and practical course and doesn't focus so much on theory.

Course 2:

Globalization - this was one of my favorite courses. It has quite a lot of workload, you have homework every week, one research paper, seminar, midterms and finals. It deals with all global aspects; political, environmental, economic, technical, justice, military...

Course 3:

Creative and Critical Thinking - a very interesting course where you get new perspectives and learn how to recognize and use good arguments. It is more about critical thinking than the creative part. It is very theoretical but with many discussions in class.

Course 4:

International Relations in East Asia - also one of my favorite courses. This course really taught me about the political, economic and military relations in East Asia and how they differ from Europe. There

were interesting guest speakers like the president for TEPCO who was responsible for the Fukushima nuclear plants when they got destroyed. We also discussed North Korea and it was interesting to get the South Korean perspective on the dispute.

Course 5:

Introduction Korean (Level 1) - a course I really recommend to take. We started with the Korean alphabet and in the end of the course we could do conversations like ordering in a restaurant or asking for directions. You also learn a little about the Korean culture and history.

Additional Courses:

Did the university provide language courses? Could you receive ECTS points for them? What was your experience of such course?

Yes. I took a Korean Language (Level 1) course. It required quite a lot of effort since the pace of the course was high. Though, with the fast pace we manage to learn a lot of things in a short time.

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