



EXCHANGE REPORT:

HANYANG UNIVERSITY (ERICA CAMPUS)

ANSAN, SOUTH KOREA

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1. INTRO

I wanted to go to Korea for the culture shock – I have never been to Asia and I thought it would be a great experience. There was a lot of problems that arose because of the pandemic, but I pulled through. If you are interested in going to SK for exchange, feel free to contact me at sara340x@stud.kea.dk.

2. COVID19 REGULATIONS

In terms of COVID19 regulations, Korea is very strict. Even if the numbers are not high, they have hard rules since it would spread much quicker. You understand that when you fx. ride a subway where everybody is squeezed together like sardines or go to Itaewon on a weekend night.

Firstly, arriving at Korea, I needed to quarantine 14 days somewhere. My university organized quarantine at campus where I would get a room for 14 days, 3 meals a day, a SIM card, 2 PCR tests and the taxi ride from the airport to the quarantining place for around 7000dkk. The whole of process of coming to the airport, filling out paperwork for like 3 hours and then trying to find a taxi made me lose around 3 years of my life. All in all, you get a lot benefits with that quarantining deal but do not do it. Just find an Airbnb and order food or something. I was not too sure if it was possible, so I resulted for the more expensive option.

For the time I was there, even though Korea was having fewer infected people than Denmark, it was mandatory to wear a mask everywhere (everywhere). There were also regulations regarding the amount of people going out, but that changed couple of times. To get around there was a QR code app that you would use coming into cafes and restaurants, but I will talk about that in the 4.4 section.

One more thing, there is a lot of banter in Korea about foreigners bringing in COVID19, so it is not a surprise to see signs where it says 'no foreigners allowed' or to get rejected when you want to go to a restaurant etc. People have a misconception that foreigners go to Itaewon (the foreigners party district) or Hongdae (the student party district) and party without a mask on and so on, which is true sometimes, but Koreans also do that. While I was there, there were 'unofficial' threats coming from the police that they would be deporting foreigners breaking COVID19 restrictions in Seoul, so in conclusion I would just advise you to act respectful, I guess.

3. THE UNIVERSITY

The university campus is in Ansan, a smaller town next to Seoul. It is huge (for Danish standards) and can be confusing, fortunately there is maps online, all in Korean though.

Back at KEA, I study Architectural technology and Construction Management (BA). Since there is not the same kind of course here in Hanyang, you have to mix and match with the course that are offered. You will get the instruction on applying to the courses from the university, so I won't go into details, I will just mention to watch out which ones are in English, and preferably ask the professor just to be sure if it is going to be English.

The courses are based on Hanyang credits (1 Hanyang credit = 2 ECTS points), most of them are 3 credits, but my core major can be 6.

The courses I took were:

1. Architectural Design Studio – 6 credits
2. Architectural Environmental Design – 3 credits
3. Housing theory – 3 credits
4. General building structure – 3 credits
5. Steel structure – 3 credits
6. Survival Korean – 3 credits

Architectural Design Studio

This course was taught by So Young Kim. She's a great Korean–American teacher, and she speaks English fluently (rare). This course takes a lot of time, and it is basically design architecture, which we don't do back home. Nevertheless, it was really interesting and fun developing the projects. You work individually and everybody there uses Rhino, V-Ray and Photoshop or Illustrator. I just did it in Revit because it was easier for me.

Architectural Environmental Design

I actually have no idea what this course was supposed to be. In the beginning I understood it was the most similar to our Services. My motivation completely died because it was completely theoretical, boring and we concentrated on American standards. We had a few homeworks and two multiple choice exams.

Housing theory

This course was also taught by So Young Kim. It was mostly lectures on housing types across the world. The assignments were centered around famous housing projects in the world – first you would recreate one digitally and make a report about it, and for the

finals you did a physical model. It was significantly easier than the design studio, but it was also fun.

General building structure

This is like our Structure class back home. We basically analyzed masonry, timber, glass, and steel construction through key junctions. For the midterm we needed to analyze a building of a certain construction and present its junctions and for the finals the same thing, just with a previous project of yours. Also, the professor did not speak English, he just read a script.

Steel structure

This course is engineering. The professor Lee Mun Seong was great, I just didn't devote much time to it since I am not that interested in it. We did load analysis, buckling calculations etc. for steel structures, had a bunch of homework, and two exams.

Survival Korean

This course was shorter than others, so it was finished in November. It was fun but not that useful. I would rather advise you to do a couple of online Korean tutorials before coming to Korea; like learning their alphabet, Hangeul, because a lot of signs are just English words written in their alphabet.

To conclude, apart from certain professors, I was kind of disappointed with the level of education here, it seems to me that there is a lot of useless stuff being taught. The level of difficulty (of the subject) is lower than KEA, I reckon, it's just a bigger workload. I would suggest doing the absolute minimum, so you have more free time to travel Korea.

My classmates 😊:



4. LIFE IN KOREA

4.1 ACCOMMODATION

The two options are to either stay at the campus dorm or rent out a place somewhere else, so I made a small comparison:

	Dorm	Other
PROS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Close to your classrooms (if it's not online)- Cafeteria- Cheap laundry- You meet a lot of classmates- Facilities (music rooms, gyms, tennis courts)- Probably cheaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Closer to the city- More freedom (no curfews, you can bring people home, you can drink there...)- Possibility to not share you room with someone- You can cook for yourself

Take what you want from this, personally, I think I shouldn't have stayed at the dorm. It was really restricting.

The dorm costs around 6300 dkk for 4 months (prepaid).

The view from my dorm:



4.2 FOOD

Korean food is tasty, it is mostly some rice or noodles, with spicy meat and something pickled. It is nice and spicy but after a while you realize how it is lacking something green. The only vegetable I ate during my stay was pickled cabbage (kimchi), pickled radish and maybe sometimes spinach or carrots. This wouldn't be a problem if I could cook for myself, but the kitchen was closed so I had no choice but to eat at the cafeteria (a meal was around 20dkk). Furthermore, the fruit is crazy expensive (25dkk for two apples, 5dkk for a tangerine, 75 for a watermelon) so I was living off of multivitamin drinks. This is funny, sure, but I miss broccoli so much. I would recommend going out to eat because it is not expensive. My favorite places near campus were: 알촌 (albab – meal with rice with vegetables, fish eggs and fish cakes), 한그릇 (poke bowls) and then all these small BBQ restaurants near the campus. A meal in these cheap student restaurants would cost you around 30–50 with drinks.

A great thing about Korean food is the abundance of side dishes, which is something I will definitely miss. My favorite meals are: Bulgogi, Bibimbap, Mandu (dumplings), Albab, Bibimyeon, Dalgalbi...

You need to experience the eating culture in Korea, I would urge you to find some Korean friends and either go with them to some hidden restaurant or order food with them, because it's really something else.



4.3 LEISURE

Korea is a beautiful country with beautiful history, and I recommend you travel as much as possible. The workload for uni is going to get bigger after the midterm so try to do most of the travelling in the beginning or after the finals.

You should go to:

- Explore the whole of Seoul
- Busan – better than Seoul
- Gwangju – there is a beautiful bamboo forest in Damyang close to Gwangju
- Seoraksan national park – hiking trip
- Bukhansan above Seoul – hiking trip
- Suwon – fortresses
- Jeju island – the ‘Hawaii’ of Korea (check for typhoon season)
- DMZ – border with North Korea

First of all, check out if there are flights to your destination, most of the time it is cheaper. Korea has high speed rail, but it is expensive, so I mostly travelled with bus.

Other experiences:

- Noraebang (karaoke rooms)
- Korean BBQ
- Arcade rooms
- Buddhist temples (!!!!!!!)
- Hiking
- Weird cafés
- Fish markets

As for the nightlife, Korea has great clubs and bars. The best neighborhoods in Seoul (in my opinion) are Itaewon, Hongdae, Kondaeh, Gangnam and Seongsu. As for Ansan, Gojan and Jungang neighborhoods are great! People drink beer and soju, quite often they will mix it up to have so-mek. It is not expensive to go out drinking.









4.4 TRANSPORT

For transport within cities, use your T-money card (the Korean Rejsekort). You can get it at any convenience store, it costs around 20dkk if I remember correctly, and you can only top it up with cash! The normal trip would cost you anywhere between 1250–3000 won, so 5–15dkk, depending on the line. It works the same as Rejsekort – however you always enter on the first door to check in and check out when leaving through the back door. To get around use Kakao Map or Naver Map (Google Maps does not work). You will mostly be on busses and subways, but you can also rent a bike (Kakao bikes, or some alternative) that are pretty cheap. Taxis are pretty cheap as well (you can order them on Kakao T).

Bus in the suburbs:



4.5 PAPERS

The amount of paperwork is overwhelming, and there will also be a lot of bureaucracy involved. You will need to acquire the ARC (Alien Registration Card) if you are staying for a semester.

Before anything, you need to have a Korean phone number. The one I used is from Woori Mobile, they have cheap data plans (I think it was 500dkk for an entire semester). Your phone number is going to be used for everything, and ultimately for your ARC as well.

There will be organized ARC applications through the university, but I would advise you to do it alone; you just need to go to the immigration office, bring all the documents (Application form, Power of attorney, Residence certificate and the passport, not just a copy of the passport), and then in a month you will pick it up. It is a card, similar to a yellow card, with your number, similar to a CPR number.

As soon as you apply for the ARC, you will have a health insurance, so by the time you get your ARC, you will get a receipt for the 2-month payment of your health insurance. The health insurance is around 39000won or 215dkk per month. So before coming to Korea, buy insurance for the period between leaving Denmark and (the estimated time of) applying for the ARC. The university gave out some wrong information about the insurance to the students when I was there, so a lot of students ended up paying more. If you are not planning on paying for the Korean national health insurance because you have a private international one from home, you will have a lot of trouble explaining to people that it's valid. Just be prepared and be sure that it covers the amount it needs to cover.

Moreover, during the pandemic, you need to obtain the QR pass to get into cafes and restaurants, which you can do only after receiving the ARC. You need to bring your vaccination certificate to a health center and have them upload it to your name in the citizen registry (from what I understood). After that, you go to KakaoTalk and connect your KakaoTalk ID with your ARC with which you will get the QR code on the app under the section 'wallet'. You also have to download the app COOV that you also need to connect to your ARC. By that point you will have two QR codes, and you will also use both of them.

Seeing as I stayed for only one semester, I didn't open a Korean bank account, and I don't think you will need it, just find a friend that has one, because there will be instances where they can only refund you on a Korean bank account. (Food delivery is also only paid by a Korean bank account or cash)

4.6 FINANCES

Korea is definitely cheaper than Denmark but considering that you will explore and travel and go out a lot, it evens out at the end, in my experience.

When paying in Korea, my Danish cards didn't work, so I used my Revolut card (I suggest you get a Revolut as well, because there are no extra fees when paying). Apart from that, I had a few thousand kroners in cash for topping up the T-money and for times when my card did not work.

In my case, since I am not Danish, I did not receive any support from the state while on my exchange so I pullet out an SU loan. Later on, I also received a grant from KEA that helped me a lot.

I broke down my finances, so you get a better picture:

	August	September	October	November	December
Food/Drinks	900	3400	4400	3200	2000
Shopping	1000	700	200	1000	300
Health	/	/	250	/	/
Travel/Transport	1200	200	200	200	100
Other	/	500	400	200	/
Sum	3100	4800	5450	4600	2400
Final	20350				

And then adding the prepaid expenses:

Flight tickets	cca 7000
Quarantine	cca 7000
Accommodation	cca 7000
Other fees	cca 500
Sum	21500

It would seem I spent around **41850**dkk. Those are the spendings of a person that went out every weekend to cheap places, has a nicotine addiction, and forgot to pay her health insurance, just so you get some perspective.

In August, I spent 2 weeks quarantining, that is why the food expenses were low. And then November and December I spent most of my time studying so I didn't travel or go out too much.

5. EXTRA

- You do NOT have the right of way in traffic – the cars are crazy and never look for pedestrians so prepare to have a few close encounters
- Almost no one speaks English, not even public officials at immigration offices or hospitals
- People will stare, a lot, they will also compliment your eyes and appearance and ask you for pictures (some won't ask)
- Older ladies (*Ajummas*) are your best friends – there is a bad reputation about them, but they are the people that were the kindest to me (especially in restaurants – they helped me with the food preparation and treated me as a baby)
- A pack of Marlboro Red is 4500 won or 25dkk
- The Kakao company/app is the main app for everything:
 - The main messaging app – KakaoTalk
 - The QR Pass – KakaoTalk
 - Taxi, bike, other rentals – KakaoTalk
- Seoul has a great jazz scene (great jazz bars)
- You will most likely hang out only foreigners, but I urge you to try to find some English-speaking Koreans, because they're a lot of fun
- Go thrifting in Korea (cheap)
- Download a VPN, some sites are blocked in Korea...
- Korean guys always pay for everything
- You cannot smoke inside or in any public open spaces (main streets and squares)
- Korea (especially Jeju) has the most beautiful sunsets I have ever seen

6. CONCLUSION

Considering this exchange is mostly for the culture experience and not so much for educational purposes, I would urge you to go to Korea for the adventure. Although there were some bad aspects, I am glad I did the exchange, because I experienced a different culture.