



Faculty/college	Geosciences
Level (bachelor's or master's)	Master's
Name study programme	Sustainable Business and Innovation

Destination city & country	Seoul, South Korea
How did you travel to your destination?	Airplane
Name university abroad	Sungkyunkwan University
Start date	02 / 09 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)
End date	20 / 12 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
How did you experience the exchange application process at Utrecht University?	It felt quite straightforward as I handed in my top 3 choices with Sungkyunkwan University being my first choice. Once my exchange to Sungkyunkwan was confirmed, I was happy to be selected for my first choice and had a positive experience with the information that followed through email and the predeparture meetings. From there we had to wait for a while before we received the emails from Sungkyunkwan.
How did you experience the counselling & support from the International Office?	In my experience, the International Office was very helpful as they always responded quickly to whatever question I had (usually within 1-2 days).
Did you do any language preparation? If so, what did you do?	Once it was confirmed that I would be going to South Korea I started preparing through Duolingo. Although flawed, I think the app is great for learning the Korean alphabet (Hangul). Knowing the alphabet beforehand is very helpful, especially if you take a Korean language class at the exchange university. Besides Duolingo, I signed up for following the free Korean course that was offered to us in the summer before the exchange. These were basically 15 recordings of Korean language classes during the summer exchange semester that you could watch up until a certain date.
How did you finance your exchange?	Besides saving up money earned from my part time job I also applied to the NL Scholarship and was fortunate enough to be selected. I would therefore recommend applying to that scholarship even though the chance of being selected may not be that high.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
How was the organisational process regarding your course registration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it difficult to find and/or change selected courses? • Can you say something about the language of instruction for the courses available? • Which courses did you end up taking?
	Prior to the moment of course registration, it was quite stressful to see how much they were changing the courses at the faculty of energy sciences. Initially, I had created a list of around 8-10 courses that I found interesting and that suited my study at UU (more than enough as I only needed 2 courses due to the high credit conversion for master's students). I kept checking the available courses for the fall semester in the months leading to the exchange and they kept removing courses or changing the language from international (English)



to Korean. By the time of course registration I was left with only 3 courses. Then, as a master’s student, my course registration process was significantly different from the one for bachelor’s students. I was not allowed to register for the courses online on the university website. Instead, I had to apply ‘offline’ by emailing the professors or visiting their class room in person with an approval form. I got rejected by the professors of my top 2 courses that I wanted to take. Eventually I ended up with my third choice (Climate change & renewable energy) and found another one called “sociology of sustainable development”, which was not the type of course I aimed to follow but I simply had to make sure I got enough credits at that point. Additionally, I registered for the Intensive beginner Korean language class for fun.

How was the academic quality of the courses?

I personally would consider the classes at Utrecht University to be of higher standards, but this may also be down to personal preferences. For one, there is more emphasis on attendance and participation compared to what I am used to at Utrecht University. Furthermore, the exams seemed to focus more on reproduction, thus knowing things by heart, rather than applying knowledge. Back home I often saw that certain theories, facts or numbers would be given during an exam in order for the student to apply it to the given scenario to showcase a deeper understanding of the subject. At one of my exams at Sungkyunkwan I needed to know those theories, facts or specific numbers by heart. Lastly, apart from the Korean language class that I took, it felt like there was not that much interaction between the teacher and the students, the students there are not into asking questions as much as the average student here.

How did you experience the counselling & support from the host university?

During my semester I did not really need the counselling or support from SKKU apart from the application process for the Alien Registration Card (ARC). They explained to us how it worked during the orientation day, and we were assisted by a company called HireVisa. We were told to provide the necessary documentation through their platform as they will check it for completeness. Although it was somewhat confusing and their website experienced many issues, in the end it worked out and I got my ARC. However, I did hear from a few students that something went wrong during the process, and they only got their ARC at the very end of the exchange.

STUDENT LIFE

How was the welcome & orientation programme?

The orientation day programme felt very well organized. We started off by gathering in a big auditorium where we were welcomed and informed about many important aspects such as the ARC application process, the campus layout, course registration process and useful apps. We were also treated to a K-pop dance performance from the dance club within the university as well as a performance from the SKKU cheerleaders. Afterwards we toured the campus by some of the SKKU students before going to restaurants in groups. There was also the option to go to a vegan/vegetarian restaurant, which you had to specify in the google form that we received prior to the orientation day.

How was the process of finding housing? For example, was it difficult finding housing, how was the rent, was it what you expected?

Finding housing was quite challenging. I decided to not apply for the dormitory as I wanted more privacy and no curfew. At first, I was trying to apply for a room in a shared apartment in Seoul at Simple Spaces like many other UU exchange students, but I was simply too late (end of July). I was late looking for accommodation as I initially planned to stay in Suwon as I wanted to take all my courses there. I ended up taking less courses there and was also recommended by others to stay in Seoul instead as there will be much more to do there. Thus, I then started to look at goshiwons in Seoul, which are much cheaper but are very tiny. I almost booked one, but I had to pay some rent and the deposit upfront without signing a proper contract, it felt a little too risky to me. I read online that it would be better to just book an Airbnb first for a few days and then visit some goshiwons as they often have spots left and it gives you a chance to view the quality of the room you may sign up for. Luckily, I received a tip from someone who had been to Seoul before, she told me about Borderless House, a shared



housing concept where half of the rooms/apartments belong to internationals and half to Koreans. They just renovated an apartment building near Hongdae, offering studio apartments which were quite pricy for Korean standards. Although I had to pay quite a lot of rent, the deposit was not as high as with most Korean apartments. I ended up staying here for the entire duration as was very glad to have my own place in a great location.

What did you do for leisure & culture?

In my spare time I met up with many new people that I met from university, especially the other exchange students. We often went to cafes and restaurants together and we also spent some time at karaoke bars, arcades and board game cafes. I would say my main activity was to explore Seoul and the rest of Korea as much as possible. This includes visiting many different neighbourhoods of Seoul, museums, markets, parks, historical buildings such as temples and Hanok villages, and other tourist attractions such as Namsan or Lotte Tower. Outside of Seoul I went on a surfing trip to Yangyang beach and on other trips to Busan, Jeju Island, Nami Island and Japan (Tokyo).

CONCLUSIONS

Would you recommend this university/destination to others? Please explain.

I would definitely recommend both Sungkyunkwan University and Seoul. The two university (Seoul & Suwon) campuses are beautiful, and the facilities are great. As there are so many exchange students you will have lots of opportunities to meet new people during your exchange. I also really appreciated the fact that the University organizes a festival, one per semester, on the campus grounds with performances from famous K-pop artists. As for Seoul, the city is huge and has many different cool areas to explore. You could visit the many different cafes, restaurants, bars, clubs, PC rooms, karaoke bars and shops. You could also visit the cultural heritage sites such as the temples and Hanok villages or even go for a hike on the mountains around the city. The city feels very safe and clean while it also organizes many different events such as firework/drone/light shows and traditional/cultural festivals. And then for South Korea in general, I think the unique culture alone is reason enough to choose this destination. It also has more to offer besides Seoul, with many exchange students including myself visiting Busan and Jeju Island, adding even more unique experiences to the exchange. Some people even toured around the country with a road trip as there is so much to see.

Do you have any additional advice or comments for students who would like to go here?

When it comes to paying, I had a very positive experience with my Wise card, it never failed apart from one time in a convenience store. For public transportation in Seoul, I bought the Climate Card which enables you to buy a monthly pass for unlimited use. Make sure not to use it when going to the Suwon campus though (as it's officially outside Seoul), instead use the T-Money card as otherwise you will be stuck at the station where you get off (if stuck you can try to find a subway employee who then charges your T-Money card instead).



Faculty/college	Geosciences
Level (bachelor's or master's)	Bachelor
Name study programme	Innovation management & Science

Destination city & country	South Korea, Seoul
How did you travel to your destination?	Plane
Name university abroad	Sungkyunkwan University
Start date	28 / 08 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)
End date	20 / 12 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

How did you experience the exchange application process at Utrecht University?
The application process takes time. With the deadline for submitting the application form in my case at December 1 st 2023, at January 21 st I got to know that I was nominated to go to Sungkyunkwan University. At April 10 th we got sent the steps to apply at the university there, with a deadline on April 30 th . This deadline was earlier than first communicated.
How did you experience the counselling & support from the International Office?
The international office in Utrecht did respond quickly on my e-mails.
Did you do any language preparation? If so, what did you do?
I learned the Korean Alphabet (Hangul), and got familiar with the language by consuming media. The alphabet is easy to do on yourself.
How did you finance your exchange?
I did save before going on exchange.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

How was the organisational process regarding your course registration?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was it difficult to find and/or change selected courses? • Can you say something about the language of instruction for the courses available? • Which courses did you end up taking?
<p>The course registration opens at 10.00AM local time, thus 03.00AM Dutch summertime, and not even 2 minutes later many courses where already full. The courses that are not specially made for exchange students, do have a limited amount of spots available ranging from 4 to 10 spots. In the registration page, you can pre-select courses, and I was there right when it opened. So I got 4 out of 5 my most preferred courses, luckily I preselected some replacements. Others were not as lucky as I was.</p> <p>In the end I followed the courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contemporary Korean & Society - Economics in global environments - Economics of Education - Practises in data visualisation - Game theory and applications



The teachers I had, spoke good English, as most had studied themselves in the U.S. Sometimes the teachers spoke Korean to explain things to the other Korean students.

How was the academic quality of the courses?

The academic quality is a bit lower than what we have in Utrecht. This is noticeable with the type of education, where it is mostly a lecture where you listen to the teacher and something as a seminar is not really a thing. Some of the exams are also just a multiple choice, rather than critical thinking and argumentation.

How did you experience the counselling & support from the host university?

The host university replied quickly on my emails with advise.

STUDENT LIFE

How was the welcome & orientation programme?

The welcome program started with a presentation with some performances of the Help and Information club (HI-club), with a campus tour and optional dinner afterwards. There is a buddy program, but some do less things than others, I believe that every 3 weeks an activity should be planned, but mine did plan 2 activities in total. The Hi-club does offer some activities to do with other exchange students.

How was the process of finding housing? For example, was it difficult finding housing, how was the rent, was it what you expected?

In the pre-departure meeting in Utrecht we were told of a organization (Simple Spaces) which does offer good rooms for an reasonable price. Rent was ₩810000 (€550), for a standard room. Other people I know got into the dorms, which are a bit cheaper but have some disadvantages such as a curfew and no outsiders policy. To find something yourself, is not something that I heard often.

What did you do for leisure & culture?

The city has so much to offer, from areas for going out (Hongdae), to more shopping (Myeongdong), to culture (Insadong). The city does organize some festivals such as the fireworks festival, to winter festa (light shows). With many museums being free all year round, or maximum of ₩20000, you'll find yourself going to one often if that is what you are into. I enjoyed going on hikes, in the outskirts of the city. There is so much to see and do in Seoul alone, that in 4 months you won't see everything.

I did travel out of the city a few times, which is easy to do.

CONCLUSIONS

Would you recommend this university/destination to others? Please explain.

I would recommend this destination, as the city has so much to offer that you won't get bored. And it is easy to adapt to the lifestyle as a foreigner.

Do you have any additional advice or comments for students who would like to go here?

I heard from vegetarian friends, that the university area does not have much to offer. But neighbourhoods such as Itaewon and Haebangchon there is much to find. Speaking about food, I did cook most of my meals myself and that costed around ₩100.000 a week, the groceries I got from the Lotte mart inside Seoul station (Zettaplex). Not many people do cook often.

When going in the fall semester, be careful that in August/September the humidity and temperature is still high with the perceived temperature of 40C and only in the middle of November it got cold really fast with temperatures in the night as low as -10C in December.

Each step of the application process takes time, so don't do it last minute and risk missing it.



The visa status check, at the [KOREA VISA PORTAL | 조회/발급 > 진행현황 조회 및 출력](#), does not work properly (it did not say that retrieval was possible, when in fact my passport was already back for retrieval). Most likely in 2 weeks time after submitting all documents, you can retrieve your passport.

Do not expect that everybody speaks English fluently.

The courses may change during the application process, from language to unavailable to available again.

For transportation in Seoul, a climate card may be useful. For ₩62000 for 30 days for unlimited trips. Otherwise a T-money card is needed for public transport.

The following apps are useful:

- Naver maps / kakao maps
- Papago (translating)



Faculty/college	Geosciences
Level (bachelor's or master's)	Bachelor
Name study programme	Earth Sciences

Destination city & country	Seoul, South Korea
How did you travel to your destination?	Airplane
Name university abroad	Sungkyunkwan University
Start date	01 / 09 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)
End date	20 / 12 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)

You are requested to write on the following topics. Text boxes will expand automatically while typing!

PREPARATION	
How did you experience the exchange application process at Utrecht University?	<p>It was quite straightforward. In Osiris I had to register my interest, by providing my 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices + motivations. Somewhere end of January (29th for me) I received the confirmation that I've been chosen to go this particular university (yay). I had to hand in the relevant documents for the 30th of April, which included things such as (but not limited to) the latest academic transcript available and a certificate of enrolment at my home university. I had to fill in some other personal information on SKKU's personal website, and I received a fact sheet with some guides on SKKU, their healthcare system and an online application guide, somewhere begin of April. End of may I received the 'acceptance package', which included a few documents needed for the D-2-6 Exchange student visa I was trying to get. Admittedly, very late! If you have a vacation planned early June, watch out that you receive your passport back from the VISA office in time! I myself had a vacation planned from the 30th of June to somewhere the 18th of July. When I handed in my passport the 5th of June, I received an email back from them, telling me it could take up to 6 weeks for them to process everything. Do your VISA application as fast as possible to prevent stress, it can be confusing so ask for help whenever needed! I received my info the 28th of May but still I was stressed out when I handed in my passport the 5th of June and received that email telling me I might not have my passport back in time. They are in high-season starting the 1st of June, so it's best to hand in the required documents in May if possible.</p>
How did you experience the counselling & support from the International Office?	<p>Quick, accurate responses to any questions I had regarding things such as the correct address and other stuff. We received an email asking how we were doing somewhere halfway through the exchange, which was attentive and sweet.</p>
Did you do any language preparation? If so, what did you do?	<p>Only the Duolingo option to just learn the alphabet. I really suggest watching a video on YouTube about hangul (the Korean alphabet), and supplementing it with Duolingo, just so you can read the alphabet. If you really go for it you can easily learn it within a week. It really helps as well if you are to take any of the Korean Language Courses (which I highly encourage you to do, its really fun).</p>
How did you finance your exchange?	<p>I worked a part-time job here in the Netherlands and saved up money. One thing I'd like to mention is that you are recommended to get particular vaccines when you travel to South Korea, so get them before you leave. They can get quite expensive (all of mine were a combined total of 300+ euros), but I'd say your health is more important so just better be safe than sorry.</p>



STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

How was the organisational process regarding your course registration?

- Was it difficult to find and/or change selected courses?
- Can you say something about the language of instruction for the courses available?
- Which courses did you end up taking?

SKKU and Korean universities in general have horrible course registration procedures. The website with the course catalogue on its own is pretty bad, making it difficult to find courses. Besides that, not a lot of courses are given in English which makes it also pretty complicated to find courses. You also have to take notice of the timetables, they don't work with a timetable system like in Utrecht with timeslot A, B etc. You have to make sure your schedule actually works. For us living in CEST, we had to get up at 2:45 am, to register the courses you want to take. It is super competitive, first come first serve system, so its better to be set up and ready. For example, a course might have 45 spaces, but only 4 of them would be for foreign students. Foreign students do get to pick courses a couple of days before the Korean students, but beware and have backups incase the course you wanted to take suddenly becomes unavailable.

I ended up taking the intensive Korean Course (6 hours a week), a history course (East Asia History), and an introduction to philosophy course. For health insurance, it is mandatory (automatically done) to sign up for the NHIS, Korea's National Health Insurance. It costs about 75k a month and covered most medical needs. If you can, you can get them to exclude you from the NHIS, if you go to the immigration office in Seoul, with a translated document showing that your home insurance is adequate enough. They will help you out with any missing documents. It is super easy to go to the doctor here, no appointment needed, you just drop by whenever you feel pain or just want to let them check something out, and it is also super cheap. I got Xray's since I had twisted my ankle, and it only cost me like 20 euros total, including the consultation fee.

How was the academic quality of the courses?

The Korean intensive course was great, the teacher we had was super sweet and encouraged us to talk a lot in Korean whenever possible, and she made the entire course a lot of fun. I heard that the other beginner level intensive Korean course didn't have a great teacher at all, so I guess I got really lucky.

The introduction to philosophy course was super fun as well, since the professor encouraged us to discuss ideas and perspectives openly in the class, and it was one of my favorite courses.

The History class, although it was mega interesting, talked a bit too much about historical research methods used by historians instead of actually history. Only in the latter half of the semester did he finally start talking about history, but by then he was actively skipping a lot of content since we didn't have enough time. Maybe it will have changed by next year, since I think he himself realized that this isn't the greatest of experiences for students.

Overall, I think due to the type of courses I took, it was pretty easy. In general, I think the courses are not difficult, just a lot, so a lot of material you had to get through but not really in depth, and overall thus easier than in Utrecht. Don't let it catch you off guard though, since it can still be a lot of work.

How did you experience the counselling & support from the host university?

They were actually pretty helpful whenever you needed their help, so don't be scared and reach out to them whenever you need help with anything regarding the process. Do mind that they probably receive a lot of emails, so you might not receive an instant response. Creating a group chat with all the people going to the same destination is super useful, since struggling to figure out something together is a lot better than struggling to figure out something alone. Some of them even are great friends now!

STUDENT LIFE

How was the welcome & orientation programme?

The 2 hour introduction in the auditorium was pretty boring, but at one point the welcome committee president and a few other people decided to suddenly give a K-pop concert which definitely raised the energy and was fun. After that, the cheer leaders from SKKU also gave their own concert, and they were amazing.



Afterwards, we were invited to split into different groups and go to a restaurant, where we would be seated randomly, where I managed to meet some new people and friends.

How was the process of finding housing? For example, was it difficult finding housing, how was the rent, was it what you expected?

I was pretty much lucky that I got a place in Simple Spaces, which is a housing organisation. I didn't want curfew at 22 years old, and Itaewon was very much worth the extra travel time from the dorms to the university. One downside is that I didn't really end up hanging out that much with SKKU students since I lived away from the dorms where everything was happening. But that was fine to me, since I got to meet a lot of people in Itaewon instead, and I was free to invite friends to stay over for a couple of days as well, which is forbidden in dorms. If you do end up going to a dorm, SKKU will send out a bunch of stuff regarding all the stuff you need for that. The rent for dorms is also quite a bit cheaper (~300 euros). The rent I ended up paying for like a 18 m² room was around 500+ euros, which was reasonable given the location and that it was already furnished. Start early though, around as soon as you get the confirmation from the host university. I think I ended up spending around 900-1000 euros a month, (excluding rent), living quite carefree but not frugal. Can definitely be more if you add all the shopping and stuff I ended up doing.

What did you do for leisure & culture?

There is so much to do in Seoul, even when it is raining cats and dogs. I expected there to be a lot more days where I'd be stuck in my room doing not a lot, so I brought plenty of things to do in that downtime. But there's always something you can do, whether it be going to the PC bang (internet café with high-spec PC's) with your friends, going out to do some bowling, to a bar, playing some screen golf or just going to a café and studying, there's always something to do in Seoul. In my little area, there were tons of art galleries I could go to whenever I wanted. I had a really nice bond with some of the restaurant owners I frequented as well, to the point that I gave them some gifts when I left, and it was always nice to drop by and eat some good food with some small talk. I even managed to find a field hockey team full of Koreans in the nearby city of Incheon, where I'd go to every Sunday to play some field hockey. I got quite close with my (older) teammates, and they ended up gifting me hockey shoes and a stick, that I initially was lending from them, which was incredibly sweet. Seoul is full of art installations everywhere, and tons of beautiful temples to stroll through whenever you want. Above all, incredible mountains with beautiful hikes, only an hour from the city. My favourite trip was my trip to Jeju with my friends, where we rented a car and just drove around the beautiful landscape. Somewhere beginning of October is nice, since the temperature will be great and it won't be as packed as it is during the summer. Every season, Seoul invests a lot of money to create all these different cultural festivals, which is really nice and a joy to attend. From outdoor libraries to traditional concerts to outdoor sculpture parks and lightshows, they have a lot of activities you can join (almost always for free).

CONCLUSIONS

Would you recommend this university/destination to others? Please explain.

Absolutely, maybe even more for the experience of South Korea on its own than the university. I wish I had more time than just 1 semester. There are so many things that making living there great. I will definitely miss the convenience stores that are open 24/7, and just strolling around different parts of the city. Outside of Seoul, there's so many cool things to see and to do. Busan, Seoroksan, Jeju Island, are great and quite close. You can even easily go to China or Japan because they lie so close to Korea. It's around €200 for a round trip, which I definitely recommend, but it is not needed since there's so much to do and see in Seoul. I think me and my friends and I always said that there's no place as instagramable as South Korea. There's definitely an emphasis on the aesthetic of things so before food tastes good it first has to look good as well and this also goes for all the cafes in South Korea. it's really popular to do cafe hopping, going from café to café, and checking them out. For example, there was a café nearby my house that was quite famous for having a big window facing outside with artificial rain droplets falling down, trying to create a dark, moody rain vibe in the café. The people are nice and open, though not everyone is but a lot of them are, especially if you see them more often.



Do you have any additional advice or comments for students who would like to go here?

Public transport is excellent! I suggest getting a T-Money card (at any convenience store except the ones in Seoul Station), and put some money on it (for emergencies). It costs like 1.5k won for 1 fare. Besides that, get a climate card (at any convenience store except the ones in Seoul Station), and charge it with an entire month for around 60k, with the ttareungi option (rental bikes) its about 3k won per month cheaper. When you get your ARC (alien registration card, works as an ID card), you can authenticate your age on the climate card, giving you around 10k won discount, which is definitely worth it. The buses work like here in the Netherlands, press your card against a check-in machine upon entry and press it again when you leave the bus.

One rule of thumb I like to use when it comes to converting from Won to Euros, is that the price in won is around 70% the price in euros. So 10k won is around 7 euro's.

Eating out is super cheap in Korea, and cooking is slightly more expensive if you aren't cooking traditional dishes. Still, cooking is slightly cheaper, but I'd say that eating out is much more convenient and super easy, saving time and dishes, you'll get used to it!

For breakfast I struggled to think of something for the first few days. It is not that common to eat breakfast actually, but in the end I just prepped some rice in a rice cooker the night before and stored in the fridge (I'd prep for several days). In the morning, I'd throw some rice in a bowl (after heating it up in the microwave) + sesame seeds + some soy sauce + egg yellow, and mixed it. Other days I would just drop by the convenience store and get a muesli/granola bar.

I recommend to bring along your international driving license (you can easily get one at your local ANWB store without appointment for like 30 euros), in the case you need it. Because I really think if you end up going to Jeju, you definitely should rent a car to get around as it is much easier than public transport and worth the money. It's also super nice to take the scenic route along the coast and just enjoy the views over the water as you are driving. I really suggest to explore as much as possible, because although 4 months might seem like a lot, it felt quite short with how much there is to do. Plan early for the weekend trips or excursions, because you want to make sure you spend enough time in Seoul as well.

Also, try to pick up the cultural etiquette, if you are not sure, just do the same as the rest. Things such as, bowing slightly as a greeting, removing shoes indoor, or handing over things (such as your credit card) with 2 hands or one hand on your elbow is generally helpful to keep in mind. Seoul has modernized so much that the people don't really care, but once you get out of Seoul and explore other parts, etiquette is quite important to be polite. Since you are a foreigner, you automatically get a free pass to mess up, but they might still correct you on what is the right way to do things, outside of Seoul.

You cannot use google effectively in South Korea due to restrictions from the South Korean government on foreign apps like google, so instead you should download Naver Maps and KakaoMap (I recommend both since people use both, and whenever they send over a link to a place, you never know if they will send it through KakaoMaps or Naver.

Kakao T, Uber and K.ride (last one specifically for foreigners) are apps that you can use for taxi services. It works just like Bolt and Uber work, here in the Netherlands or other parts of Europe, and they are quite cheap! Half and hour ride is about 15k won, which is around 10-12 euros. There are over 250k taxi's in Seoul so they are quite easy to catch, and also they are notorious for being crazy speedy (personal experience).

If you have android, when you long press the bottom side of your screen, you'll open google lens. You could then click on the translate icon to translate whatever is on your screen, which is really useful! Also speaking about translating apps, I suggest using Papago instead of Google Translate, since it is specially made for translating from and to Korean.

Coupang eats is THE app for any food deliver services you might want, and it is definitely *too* convenient. With a press of a bottom you'll have your food delivered for fees as low as 2k won, and the quality of the delivered food generally is quite high since almost all restaurants joined this service, so it is a better version of Thuisbezorgd basically.

Coupang is the amazon app, and one time I have for people cooking for themselves, is to check out their chicken. At the time they sold 100gr/350 won, which is incredibly cheap whilst being good quality.



Kakaotalk is their version of WhatsApp basically, so I suggest downloading that as well for easy communication with friends you'll make there, besides Instagram, which is really popular to use.

Watch out for anyone approaching you on the street, either recruiting you for their (Christian) church or seeking to share their culture etc, it is a red flag! They could approach you, asking you questions and seeking friendship, before inviting you to a 'cultural exchange' the following Sunday or something. After the exchange, they might ask you to make some 'donations', which they will pressure into doing so. They generally go after Koreans but will also go after foreigners. Not everyone is there to recruit, some are there to genuinely spread Christianity. I once had a lady approach me next to Itaewon station, and she walked with me for 400m whilst saying a prayer, before thanking me and leaving me. If you want more info to this, I suggest googling since there are a ton of articles online about it.

If you want, you can decide to hang out less with fellow Dutch students and more with internationals, which I can highly recommend. It doesn't mean you don't engage with the Dutch students at all, I myself became very good friends even with the Dutch students, but just that you don't limit yourself, and make some international friends! It's really cool to say, well, I am going to Copenhagen so let me send x a message to see if we can hang out, and stuff. Highly recommend!

On the topic of friends, I suggest joining a club! On the main SKKU website there's a list of all the available clubs, also you can message the international office of SKKU about it, since you want to be on time with this. Football, Taekwondo, Ice Hockey, American Football, but also an Art Club/Drawing club, film club, etc, they have a lot of clubs and many of them are interested in foreign students! There's also a buddy program that is run, but only join if you are actually interested in joining all the activities since it is pretty annoying when you're the only person in your buddy group (besides the buddy) actively participating in the events (speaking from experience).

I suggest starting your ARC application as soon as possible! Like the moment you arrive, since it will take months before you receive your ARC, and you cannot leave the country in the meantime since you'll lose the validity of your VISA.

I can highly recommend getting a vacuum bag for packing from the HEMA, you can fit so much more if you use these. You could even potentially bring some winter clothes (it gets really cold in the winter, like -8 is normal, so either buying it there or bringing thermos clothing with you is recommended).

Also, the government uses the NL-Alert equivalent more as a general information source, so beware that you might get several alerts (per week, sometimes per day), when you're in Korea. I suggest also registering yourself with the Dutch Embassy (or whatever embassy is appropriate), in case of any emergencies. In my case, a (failed) coup took place whilst I was there, so it was at least good to know that the Dutch embassy would come and get me in case something had happened. Remember, North Korea and South Korea are still at war, so it is in my opinion important to register yourself with the relevant embassy.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

Contact info available at the IO.

faculty/college	Beta sciences (Betawetenschappen)
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Biology

destination city & country	Seoul, South-Korea
name university abroad	Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU)
start date	28 / 08 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	15 / 12 / 2024 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION

exchange application process

When I first started the application process I was a bit stressed and confused. This was because there are a few different steps you must take and an application deadline that you must meet. However, after carefully reading all the information provided on the UU website it all got a lot clearer. When I was unsure of anything I immediately planned an appointment with my study advisor or the international office. This helped so much since they gave great advice or confirmation that I was doing everything according to the requirements. So, when you do start this application process make sure to take it slow and read everything carefully and ask for help when needed.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support I got from my study advisor and the members of the international office was great. So don't hesitate to ask them for help!

academic preparation

I did not have to do any academic preparation besides making sure that this exchange fitted within my bachelor program.

language preparation

I already knew how to read Hangul and that helped me a lot. I really recommend you learning this before you go to Korea. I was also familiar with a few basic phrases, pronunciation and words which helped me a lot when I continued to study the language at my university there. Almost no one there speaks English so this might be hard for some. However, ordering and buying things is still easy since you can point to the menu and because they use a lot of English (Konglish) words too. There is also a great app called Papago which instantly translates texts, menus, and conversations. Everyone used this a lot and locals are familiar with it.

finances

I saved up some money before I went to make sure I could do fun things there if I wanted to. I put my DUO on max and didn't regret this for a second. The food there is super cheap (I went out for dinner or lunch every day) and you will probably visit café's every day. The supermarkets are a lot more expensive in my opinion, so I barely cooked at home. The public transport however is pretty cheap and you can take affordable trains or bussed to other provinces which I highly recommend.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)



I only followed two courses during my time there (15EC worth) since I only needed that many study points to finish my bachelor. However, I was supposed to do 22,5 EC worth but due to some miscommunication I got "lucky". I followed intensive Korean twice a week and Climate Change and the Humanities one a week. At first, I also wanted to follow a biology related course but apparently all the science courses are taught on the Suwon campus instead of the Seoul campus. This is about an hour travelling away from Seoul. I did not know this at first and since as a biology student I was registered to that campus I had to travel there a couple of times for fingerprint registration and ARC pick-up. So, pay attention to where your courses are taught when making your schedule. It is hard to figure out what courses you can follow so don't forget to ask students who have gone through this process before to help you out. It took me a lot of time to understand it all. Also, when you need to register for the courses it is a first come first serve basis so its stressful. I was in the airplane at this time, so my sister had to do it for me... My friend only got 2 out of 6 courses she wanted and had to contact teachers personally after this to fill up her schedule. It's kind of badly organised but it all works out in the end. Also, if you want to follow Korean classes and sign up for the Beginner Korean, there is a big chance the classes will be full instantly. If you choose Intensive Korean, you don't have to personally sign in anymore and you will be assured of a spot.

academic quality of education activities

The classes have decently high information density and pace to it but are not super complicated. But if you study regularly (you don't have to study super hard) then you will pass all your assignments. Many friends who did follow around 5 courses said that it was not super hard but that there are a lot of assignments which take quite some time to finish.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I didn't need any counselling there. However, the support for international students is pretty good. They have an international office where they can help you with all kinds of issues.

transfer of credits

This was very easy. Just follow the UU website instructions or the ones provided in an email you will get at the end of your semester. There is a conversion table on the UU website you can look at. (1SKKU = 2UU)

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

There was a semester orientation day and a kick-off party. These were very fun, and it was nice to meet other international students and get a bit more familiar with the university.

accommodation

I stayed at a SimpleSpaces house (Yaksu house). The day I moved in they took over ownership of that house (so it was "new"). However, because of this the house was not what we were promised, and we had quite some construction going on. So, if you want to live in one of their houses, I recommend applying for another one (they have a lot). Nonetheless, the owners Ben and Ben were very nice, and they organised many fun activities, dinners and even trips. The trips were some of the highlights of my exchange since they were super super fun and veryyy cheap. And I highly recommend staying at a place with other international students since it will make you feel less alone and you can instantly make friends to explore the country with.

leisure & culture

I absolutely loved Korea and I will definitely move back one day. The city is of course just a huge city but there is so much to do and so much to see. There are pretty cafes, delicious cheap restaurants, and nice shops everywhere. If you like walking and hiking, then you will be very happy. Every day you can walk to another beautiful area. There are many parks in the city and around and throughout the city there are some national parks and hill/mountain tops to hike as well. I recommend Bukhansan national park if you want a little



challenge and the most beautiful view. (I feel like I am writing a travel agency add haha). All different areas of the city have their own fun things to see and their own vibe. If you want to see more foreigners and find English speaking restaurants/bars you should go to Itaewon.

suggestions/tips

I recommend getting a Chingu mobile phone plan, since they are super cheap and work very well. You can order it beforehand and pick it up at the airport but also pick it up at one of their multiple stores throughout Seoul (which I did). There is one right next to the SKKU school entrance too. If you are a girl I also want to let you know that there its more normal to wear short skirts etc, but tops that expose your shoulders and cleavage are not really common (and you will be stared at a little). I also stopped wearing them because I felt more comfortable being covered up a bit more. Also, when you arrive you will need a T-money card which you can buy at any convenience store to use the public transport. You can tap in and out just like you do in the Netherlands. However, you can only top them up (at metro lines and convenience stores) using cash, not card. Lastly, what surprised me at first is how private and shy a lot of people are there. People don't really look you in the eye as they are walking by, public intimacy is kind of a no go, and many were hesitant to approach me and my friends in clubs. So, don't start wondering if people in the streets or in clubs "ignore" you or don't like you, they are just shy and not used to Western openness 😊 Last tip: if you go to Suwon campus, don't take line 1 because it can be pretyyyy confusing. I recommend taking another line and then a red bus (which drives long distances). You can use Naver map to plan all your trips (maps does not work in Korea). People also use Kakao instead of Whatsapp. And foreigners can only order food through Shuttle and no other apps. I hope these tips help!

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Yes I totally do. I had the time of my live and every day felt like a holiday eventhough I had to study throughout my stay. There is so much to see and do, of which many things are completely free. From delicious food, to free pop-up stores, to beautiful parks, its all there. A city that never sleeps, closely connected to the beautiful country side and small traditional towns, it just can't get any better 😊

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Just go!!!! If you can get this opportunity, I'm sure you will not regret it.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology

destination city & country	Seoul, South-Korea
name university abroad	Sungkyunkwan University
start date	27 / 02 / 2023
end date	10 / 06 / 2023

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	The exchange application process was easy, yet the application processing took quite a long time. Officially, you're supposed to apply for visa 90 days in advance, and the results of the application process ended up being a bit later so that was quite stressful, yet everything turned out okay in the end. Just don't do everything last minute.
counselling & support at Utrecht University	The intl. office often replied quite fast with any information I needed.
academic preparation	Since I wanted to take on an intensive Korean course (12 EC), I had to do a two week zoom course. There were options for three different date ranges, for classes every day for two weeks with an exam at the end. The exam turned out to be quite easy and it made the intensive course a bit easier to study.
language preparation	I did the two week zoom course and studied on duolingo a bit. Although knowledge of Korean is useful, a lot of places in Seoul have English translation provided. In the subway and buses for example, announcements are also made in English and restaurants often have English translations or an extra English menu. Being able to read hangul (Korean writing) however can be really useful.
finances	I worked quite a bit before my exchange to save up and then also had duo for the duration. The living costs can be quite cheap, yet groceries are more expensive. Meals can be as low as 4 euros in some places, and eating out the entire exchange is possible on a "normal" budget. If you want to go on trips inside or out of the country as well, I would save up more than the financial requirement.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD	
study programme (content and organisational issues)	The course registration is a bit confusing, and I recommend signing up to courses the minute they open since a lot of slots are often filled quickly. There weren't a lot of English courses for my major (Sociology in Korea), but there were a number of exchange courses to choose from as well. Information on courses is mainly found on icampus, kind of blackboard, but it differed per teacher how much info they provided.



academic quality of education activities
The courses were good to follow but the course load sometimes was high. Some courses also provided field trips, but others had a more traditional education style. In Korea, the style of teaching is often more formal than at Dutch universities.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
The international office provided enough information and they had a desk on campus where you could just drop in if you needed urgent support.
transfer of credits
Credits should be transferred by the university itself, yet had to e-mail them myself to make sure.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
At the beginning of the semester there was an orientation programme, with a campus tour and a general introduction. At the end we were taken to a restaurant as well for a “welcome party”, they didn’t really have any food for vegetarians though. Later in the semester we got sorted into a buddy system, yet not every buddy was as active as others.
accommodation
I didn’t stay in the dorms, but stayed in a goshiwon for the first two months and then in an Airbnb the other two months. A goshiwon is a tiny room (10m ²) often with a shower/toilet combination, but with a shared bathroom. The rent was cheap and it was more private than the dorms, there were also a lot of options in walking distance of the university, so it is a good alternative. After two months I moved into an Airbnb for a bit more space, this was a bit more expensive and the options are limited in terms of distance to uni and such, but it was a bit more convenient in terms of cooking and independence.
leisure & culture
Seoul is a huge city, so it really never gets boring. Places like Hongdae (for going out), Insadong (more culture) or Myeongdong (shopping) are easy to reach. The last Wednesday of every month is also culture day which means that most museums and other cultural institutions are free of charge and cinema tickets are half off. The university itself has clubs ranging from sports like taekwondo to art clubs to tarot clubs and which made it easy to meet more people. Every semester there are also two festivals organised per campus, with two larger ones having performances by K-pop idols or well known artists (Like PSY and Ive) which was an amazing experience.
suggestions/tips
I would not go for the dorms and live in the goshiwons instead, as they’re also social places but offer a bit more privacy. The university neighbourhood is really nice to live in with plenty of places to eat and have a drink, but Sinchon could also be a good second option, if you want to live closer to popular neighbourhoods like Hongdae. Also go on trips and get out of the city on the weekends, to Busan or Jeju for example, transportation and accommodation was pretty cheap and it was easy to reach with the airport for flights to Jeju only being half an hour away and a bullet train only taking two hours to the other side of the country.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I definitely would recommend! Seoul as a city has a lot to offer, is easy to live in and adapt to as a foreigner and the social sciences campus of the university is still quite central in the city.



do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you're vegetarian and especially vegan, eating out can be a challenge as South-Korea is a very meat-based country in terms of meals. There are more and more places that offer vegetarian food though so it is doable.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	REBO (Faculty of Law)
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Rechtsgeleerdheid (Law)

destination city & country	Seoul, South Korea
name university abroad	Sungkyunkwan University
start date	27 / 02 / 2023
end date	15 / 06 / 2023

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	<p>The exchange application process through Utrecht University went fairly easily. On the UU website you could find all the information about the needed documents and deadlines. Keep in mind that you need to check with the board of examiners from your own study programme if you are eligible, the international office does not check this. After I was nominated by UU, I went through the application process of Sungkyunkwan University. The people going in the second semester received an email from them somewhere in October about their application process. You will have to submit some documents, then in November you will hear from them if you are accepted (more so a formality, if you have been nominated by UU). Then in December you will receive an email with a so called 'acceptance package' which includes documents needed for your visa request. Once you have this, you can make an appointment for your visa. The whole process is kind of complicated, but I found the people from the Korean Embassy in The Netherlands to be very helpful. If you have any questions, you can send them an email or call them.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>I found the pre-departure meeting organized by UU very useful, so I would recommend attending. Through this meeting I heard the experiences of people who were previously in Sungkyunkwan and I could meet the people who would be going there the same semester as me. Together we navigated the sometimes confusing application process.</p> <p>As far as the further counselling & support at UU went, they were quick to respond to messages, but as some questions were very specific to the exchange university, they could not always help us.</p>
academic preparation	<p>There was not much academic preparation for me. The only thing I tried to keep in mind was to make sure my GPA remained above the minimum requirement.</p>
language preparation	<p>Before I went to Seoul, I made sure I knew how to read hangul. I would highly recommend others to do so as well, it makes it much easier to navigate and it is not as difficult as it might seem in the beginning. I signed up for the Intensive Korean programme (6 hours a week, at any starting level) instead of the Basic Korean programme (3 hours a week, only beginners). The intensive programme included a Winter semester of 2 weeks where we would study Korean online 1 hour a day.</p>



finances
I saved up around 4000 euro before this semester. I would say I spent about 1000 euro per month including rent and excluding trips. However, this is personal and could vary per person.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD
study programme (content and organisational issues)
For my major, I could not follow any relevant courses. I knew this beforehand and it still fit within my own study plan. I followed a Korean language programme and a history course. Signing up for courses was very stressful. It is on a first-come-first-served basis, so it feels like buying concert tickets. You are given a guide on how to sign up, so make sure to follow that and have all your courses picked before the sign up starts and then try to add them immediately. If you fail to register during this period, you have about a week to go to professors' classes physically and ask them if you can still join their class.
academic quality of education activities
There are courses that are made specifically for exchange students and the academic quality of these courses is not as high. Then there are regular courses for Korean students with a few spots for exchange students. The academic quality of these courses is higher.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
They have an international office you can go to or email with questions. I have not needed them too much. I also got a lot of my information from other students by being in a big WhatsApp group chat for exchange students.
transfer of credits
At the time of writing this report, this process has not started for me yet.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
They have an orientation programme which included some practical information, a campus tour and later a dinner. I would recommend going here, as I met a lot of people here who would later become my friends.
accommodation
I have decided to find my own accommodation and not use the university dorms. The reason being that the university provides information on this quite late, you cannot choose your own building (some are very far from the university) and you will have a roommate and a curfew. I found a goshiwon through goshipages.com which is close to the university and filled with other exchange students at sungkyunkwan.
leisure & culture
You can sign up for clubs through the university, which is a fun way to meet new people. You can sign up during a specific week where there will be booths for the clubs where you can visit and sign up. But there is so much to do in Seoul/ South Korea that you do not need to do that to have fun.
suggestions/tips
I would recommend venturing outside of Seoul and visit other cities every once in a while.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain



Yes I would, since it is the only partner university of UU in Seoul and I really wanted to go to Seoul. It also has a big exchange student population which is fun. South Korea is very safe, developed and organized. The culture is still very different from the Netherlands. I think it is the perfect destination if you want to go very far away but have no worries about safety.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Get a Revolut card any other international card. I went here, expecting my Dutch debit card to work, but it does not, only in ATMs.

Before arriving, they will tell you to sign up for the national health insurance. If you have a health insurance from home that will cover your costs 100%, you should ask for an exemption. You can do this once you have your registration card by sending a text to a number (varies per region you live) with your translated policies and proof of insurance letter (you can ask for these from your own insurer and then translate them through Papago).

Useful apps to have: Kakao map, Naver map, Kakao talk, Papago, Kakao taxi.



UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info available at the IO.
faculty/college	Geowetenschappen
level	<input type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Sustainable Business and Innovation

destination city & country	Seoul, South Korea
name university abroad	Sungkyunkwan University
start date	01 / 09 / 2022
end date	15 / 12 / 2022

PREPARATION

exchange application process

The exchange application process at the Sungkyunkwan University is quite extensive and takes a long time. In order to apply and be accepted by the university, the exchange committee require several official documents and information sheets from you. It also takes a long time for the university to process all the application requests, so it is advisable to start as soon as they contact you. You need the official letter of acceptance from the university in order to apply for your visa at the South Korean embassy. It may take a while before you receive the official letter of acceptance, so don't worry if you think that it takes too long. Both the instructions for applying to the university as the visa are very clear.

counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support that the Utrecht University offers for your exchange period is very helpful. Early in the process they'll provide you with clear instructions for the application process. Furthermore, if you have any questions before, during or after the exchange semester, they are happy to help you and answer very quick. They also keep track of the students who go abroad. I experienced this, unfortunately, because when I visited Seoul, a public disaster occurred during Halloween, which led to the death of 151 Korean inhabitants. The exchange department directly contacted me to inquire if everything was okay and if I needed counseling in any shape or form.

academic preparation

I did not prepare myself academically at all, other than following my master's program.

language preparation

In the entire semester I only met one student who prepared himself by taking a Korean language course. However, if you are planning to take a Korean language course, this is not necessary because the course will start at the absolute basis. I did not take a Korean language course, which I do regret looking back. It is relatively easy to learn the Korean alphabet, to learn to read and to learn how to write. Most of my fellow students, who did participate in a Korean language course, were able to read signs along the road and the menu in restaurants quite quickly. This obviously does add to your experience of living in Seoul.

finances

It is very advisable to start saving for your semester abroad early. South Korea is, compared to the rest of South East Asia, not the cheapest country, but certainly also not the most expensive. I'll cover two elements of expenses: housing and food. I joined a shared living community called Simplespaces. The organisation offers



several apartments, meant for exchange students. The monthly rent was approximately €500,-. If you want to live cheaper, you can apply for the dormitories at the university. They are cheaper, but they do handle a curview and don't offer private rooms. Furthermore, everyone in Korea eats all their meals at restaurants. You can eat very cheap, between 3,5 to 7 euros per full meal at numerous restaurants all over the city, or even more cheap at the cafeteria of the university.

STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

study programme (content and organisational issues)

The Sungkyunkwan University offers very limited international courses for master Business Administration students. In that sense, this university is not the most interesting option to pick. Make sure that you are present at the very opening of the course application period, because course tend to be full very quickly. So make sure that you have chosen your courses prior to the application period. If courses are full, there is no need to worry. You can always contact the professors of the courses directly by email and ask for a spot in their course.

academic quality of education activities

The courses are heavily focussed on attendance, participation and assignments. The courses that I took had no exam, but were graded on the criteria above and a final project.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I have no experience with the counselling facilities of the Sungkyunkwan University but I always experienced that they give very clear instructions on application processes, and information on all other matters.

transfer of credits

On the website of the Utrecht University, you can look up the credit conversion table. Furthermore, the Sungkyunkwan University will once more offer very clear instructions on how to acquire your transcript of records, which you need to send to the exchange office.

STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

The Sungkyunkwan University hosts and organises several activities and parties throughout the semester, including a welcome programme. In the first week of the semester, some welcoming activities are organised on the campus, to meet your fellow exchange students and become familiar with the university. You will also be granted a study buddy, which is a local student, with whom which you will do some activities and who can help you with all your questions throughout the semester.

accommodation

As stated above, I applied for a shared living apartment from an organisation called Simplespaces. I shared an apartment with a French and a Spanish student throughout the semester. You can also apply for the university dormitories, which is a cheaper option. Another option would be to apply for a room in the student flat called Mangrove, which is also highly recommendable. Mangrove offers a lot of comfortability and is full of international students with whom you can spent the semester.

leisure & culture

Seoul is a huge city which you can endlessly explore. There are multiple districts with hundreds of restaurants, bars, temples or palaces. Furthermore, South Korea is an amazing country to get to know. So, make sure you make trips to other cities like Busan or Sokcho, or the island of Jeju. Furthermore, there are several beautiful hikes to make, both in Seoul as in other parts of Korea. Lastly, it is very advisable to visit the national museum of Korea in Seoul multiple times, to learn about the Korean wars and lastly the DMZ.



suggestions/tips

The advantage of joining an organisation like Simplespaces for housing, is that they organise monthly tours and weekend trips throughout Korea. It is an amazing way to meet other exchange students and familiarize yourself with South Korea. There are more organisations that offer these shared housing and activities.

CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain

Absolutely. South Korea is truly an amazing and interesting country. The culture shock is interesting, but not that chaotic since Seoul is a very developed city, which makes it easier to adapt.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

I chose not to spend my time with Dutch students, but with international and local students, to really experience the most of different countries, cultures and people. But this is of course a very personal decision.