



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info at the IO.
faculty/college	Social and Behavioural Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Cultural Anthropology and Developmental Sociology

destination city & country	Suwon, South Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	23/ 02 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	23/ 06 / 2023 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION
<p><b>exchange application process</b></p> <p>The application process is quite long since you need to apply for Utrecht first and after you're accepted you'll need to apply again for the host university. Everything that's needed for application for Utrecht is described clearly on the UU website. After being selected by UU (I got this email at the end of January) you will have to apply at the host university. In between, you receive more info on going on exchange from the International Office and you will have a predeparture meeting with other students going to the same region as you are. I got an email from the Utrecht International Office detailing the application process around October, but it took until November until I actually received the email with all the info from Ajou themselves. This email will explain all the documents that you'll have to provide in order to apply. The information they provided wasn't always clear, but with some help from the Utrecht International Office I was able to hand everything in. After handing all of this in you will receive an email from Ajou (I got mine around the last days of December), which contains the documents that you need in order to get a visa. Keep in mind that this is basically only two months (or even less depending on when you leave) before your departure and so you will have to be quick with making a visa appointment since it gets really busy around that time with all the applications. Also keep in mind that you will have to go back to the embassy to pick up the visa.</p>
<p><b>counselling &amp; support at Utrecht University</b></p> <p>The support from the International Office in Utrecht was great. At the beginning of the application process there were times where some things the host university asked me to provide which I didn't quite understand immediately. The international office responded fairly quickly and were always able to help.</p>
<p><b>academic preparation</b></p> <p>Academic preparation wasn't needed.</p>
<p><b>language preparation</b></p> <p>Before going to Korea I had already started studying a bit of Hangul, so I at least knew how to read a little bit. I would definitely recommend this. Although most exchange students took the course Basic Korean 1 (me included), I noticed that it was much easier to pick that up with some background knowledge already. (you could use memrise or duolingo for this for example)</p>
<p><b>finances</b></p> <p>Going on exchange is expensive, so it's a good idea to save up as much money as you can before you leave.</p>



The fee for the international dorm was roughly 900-1000 euros (1.372.000 won) for the whole semester. This can of course change a little bit, based on exchange rates. (Hwahong Hall is a bit cheaper, but I honestly think the international dorm is worth the extra money). Apparently, when I went on exchange Ajou had decided to grant one dormitory scholarship to UU and I was lucky to be chosen and not having to pay the dorm fee. However, I'm not sure if this is going to be a standard thing and it was also completely random, so I wouldn't expect anything.

The dorms have kitchens so if you want to you can cook for yourself. However, eating out is sooo much cheaper in South Korea than it is in the Netherlands. You can go as cheap as you want, sometimes you can have dinner for less than five euros, but of course this is not always the healthiest option ;). In general, you can get a good meal for under ten euros though and usually it's pretty healthy (and really delicious). I have to confess that I only cooked twice during my stay at Ajou. This was also partially the case because you have to buy all your cooking supplies yourself once you arrive. I personally didn't feel like buying pans and cooking supplies for only four months just to have to throw them out at the end of the semester. Also, as a fruit lover I was upset to find out how expensive fruit is in Korea (because they have to import everything from very far away). So I think it's a good idea to bring some multivitamins with you, or at least vitamin c tablets or something.

When deciding on your budget, definitely keep in mind that you'll probably want to go on trips in South Korea. Of course, these trips can be as cheap or as expensive as you want them to be. Personally, I only got to go to Jeju Island, but it was a really nice trip and I definitely recommend it! Other people also went to Busan, Sokcho, Jeonju, etc. If you want to go on trips out of the country or if you want to travel after the semester is over, you definitely want to save even more money.

Also good to keep in mind (although it doesn't cost that much) are club activities you mind want to participate in. Ajou University has some clubs (which you often have to pay a fee for to become a member) and the buddies organise some activities as well, such as going to a theme park such as Everland. Keep in mind that you'll probably want to join some of those as well.

All in all I think I spend around 4500(?) euros, including a really expensive plane ticket back to the Netherlands (+/- 1025 euros) and my trip to Jeju Island. If you don't plan on traveling after the semester, book your plane ticket home as soon as possible. I was unsure for a little bit on whether I wanted to travel more or not and ended up having to book a really expensive ticket back home as a result of waiting so long :( I think trying to save up around 4000-5000 euros is a pretty good guideline, but you can of course make your exchange cheaper or more expensive depending on what you want to do and see.

Also good to know, you need a credit card in South Korea, might seem obvious but can't hurt to repeat :) Besides a credit card it's smart to always have cash on hand, because there were many instances in which my friends' credit cards weren't accepted somewhere, so keep in mind that that might happen.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### study programme (content and organisational issues)

Because I didn't need a certain amount of credits I only took 4 courses at Ajou. These courses were: Korean Society through Film and Media; Current Issues in Korean Society; Western Music History; Basic Korean 1. I highly recommend taking Basic Korean 1. It's really useful to learn some short sentences and how to read. Pretty often food items etc. have English words on them but written in Hangul, therefore, if you can read Hangul you'll suddenly be able to understand what you're buying without the help from Papago :). It's also fun to have one class with only international students. My teacher was ms. Jeong and she was a sweetheart, so that made classes even more fun. However, I heard from students who had the other teacher that their teacher was very mean, so I guess you have to have a bit of luck when applying. Western Music History was a bit of a random class for me to take since it has nothing to do with my major. However, it was a really fun class. Most days we got to listen to music for half of the class and the teacher was



really funny. So if you have the space in your schedule and are even slightly interested in music history I would definitely recommend this class! (The exams were also pretty easy if you simply paid some attention in class, since it was all multiple choice).

Current Issues in Korean Society was a pretty interesting course, but the professor would go on long tangents which caused me to lose interest quickly. He also went deeply into the topic of the Korean economy which bored me immensely. However, he did tell us many interesting facts about Korean culture and society, so for me it was 50/50. There were no exams, only take home essay style assignments. I think he graded pretty leniently since I got a top score with writing some very mediocre essays, that I'm not sure would give me a passing grade at UU.

Korean Society through Film and Media was the only course I picked that was rewarded a level 2 instead of level 1 by the Board of Examiners from UU. This was a very interesting course for which we also needed to take photographs ourselves as a final assignment. However, the professor was pretty bad at teaching and would mostly have us read quotes from his PowerPoint or go on long tangents about concepts that he didn't explain very well.

#### academic quality of education activities

The quality depended on the course, so I'm not sure I can make general statements. As already mentioned above, some teachers were better than others and that really impacted the quality of the courses. Generally, the courses you'll take at Ajou will be easier than at UU since you're mostly allowed to pick courses that are doable without background knowledge and some are meant for first-year students.

This also really depends on what courses you pick, but I had almost no homework. This was of course great because I had a lot of free time to explore and do other things. Ajou is very strict with attendance though. You have to use an app to check into your classes every time, which uses your phone's location to check if you're really there. In a lot of courses, attendance can make up anywhere between 10 and 20% of your grade.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

There was counselling available at Ajou University, but I didn't use this service so I can't tell you if it was any good. The office of international affairs (OIA) at Ajou university was pretty good. The coordinator, Daian, was very friendly and helpful. Their office is also close by on campus, so whenever you have a question you can just visit the office quickly.

#### transfer of credits

My credits haven't been transferred yet.

## STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

Ajou has their AGA (Ajou Global Ambassadors) who are basically students that act as buddies for the exchange students. The buddies will make a Kakaotalk group chat for their group members and you'll be able to text your buddy there if you have any questions right before you leave, or of course after you've arrived. The AGA also organised a campus tour during the first week of the semester, which was nice because we finally figured out what buildings we would need to go to.

Orientation was organised by the OIA (Office of International Affairs) and dealt with a wide variety of topics, from safety, to the ARC process, and other things.

At the beginning of the semester there is also a sort of festival/market in which all the clubs try to gain new members. There are 2 clubs which are meant for international students to get into contact with Korean students and to undertake fun activities, these are the friends club and Ajess. Most other clubs don't accept foreigners sadly, but you can always try to find someone in them who speaks English and might be able to help you.



#### accommodation

Good to know: if you want to apply for a dorm on campus, you need to take a tuberculosis test beforehand. I applied for a dorm on campus, specifically the international dorm. If you are thinking about staying on campus, definitely try to apply for the international dorm. In the international dorm you share your room with one roommate. The rooms are not too big, but not that small either and there is plenty of storage and a pretty big desk. Interestingly, they tend to put nationalities together, so you'll probably be paired with another student from the Netherlands. (For me this wasn't the case as there was an odd number of Dutch girls. I actually preferred this because I got the chance to meet a really sweet girl from Barbados this way, who was the only one from her country).

The even floor numbers have a kitchen and the uneven floor numbers have a study room (although those floors do have their own fridge too). On the ground floor of the building there is a gym and the laundry room. Also, good to know is that you can get a blanket and bedsheets from the inspector of the dormitory, so you don't have to bring or buy these. However, you're not allowed to wash these yourself, so instead you can exchange them for clean ones every once in a while. The pillow they provide you with is quite literally almost as hard as a brick (even being brick-shaped), so I would suggest buying a pillow somewhere in your first few days there (I think I got mine at a Lotte Mart).

The other dorm option is Hwahong Hall. I have honestly only heard bad stories about this dorm (e.g. the whole building has to share 1 kitchen and people saw cockroaches there). For this dorm you can choose if you want to share your room with one or three other people. Also, this dorm does not have an elevator! So living on the fifth floor can be a challenge when you first arrive with all your luggage...

When applying for the dorms, make sure to be quick, all application processes for Ajou University are first come, first serve (they love competition in South Korea). Even though it's called the international dorm, there are many Korean students staying there and they will be quick to apply too since many of the other dorms for Korean students are straight up horrible. The international dorm is one of the 'newer' buildings and therefore very popular.

#### leisure & culture

During the weekends I often went to Seoul with friends. Suwon is pretty close to Seoul and the metro ride there generally takes between 30 minutes to an hour depending on what part of Seoul you're going to. It was a lot of fun exploring all the different areas of Seoul, think of e.g., Gangnam (fancy stores), Myeongdong (streetfood), Hongdae (shopping and partying), etc.

South Korea has beautiful nature, as well as an interesting history, so it can also be really fun to explore parks and historical sites such as the palaces in Seoul.

I would also recommend trying the noraebang (karaoke)! It's really fun to do and close to Ajou there are a few cheaper karaoke places where you can sometimes even sing 5 songs for less than 1 euro.

You should also definitely take pictures in the photobooths/"self-photo studios". There are a lot of them everywhere in Suwon and in Seoul as well of course. Personally, I had a lot of fun taking pictures with friends after we went somewhere or had dinner together. And now I can make a mini photo album with just those pictures :)

#### suggestions/tips

I would definitely recommend going to the Han river. With the metro you can easily go to Ttukseom park and sit next to the river. When the weather got a bit better it was really nice to get some noodles or fried chicken and just sit next to the river or in the park nearby.

The Gwanggyo Lake close to Ajou is also very nice. I believe it was a 30/40 minute walk there and you can walk around the whole lake, or just sit close by and have some food in one of the café's there.

## CONCLUSIONS



would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend Ajou University and Suwon/South Korea in general! I had an amazing experience, met a lot of great people, and learned a lot about myself.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
<p>I went during the spring semester and I would really recommend this! When we got there at the end of February the snow was already gone and although it was still a bit cold, spring came pretty quickly. Being in South Korea during spring means being able to see the cherry blossoms during their very short bloom at the end of March/beginning of April! Ajou University has many of these trees so the whole campus will feel magical during this time.</p> <p>Ajou University also organises two festivals a year, one in each semester. In the spring semester we had the cherry blossom festival (although the festival took place after the blossoms already disappeared..). During these festivals there are food trucks, stalls with all kinds of knick-knacks you can buy and most importantly performances by famous Kpop idols. I believe this was their first cherry blossom festival again after Covid and it was amazing. Three days in a row every night there was a concert in the big amphitheatre on campus and it was completely free for students. (I got to see PSY perform Gangnam style 😊)</p> <p>Something else that not a lot of exchange students knew was that you can send stuff home using the on-campus post office. Because I went during the spring semester I had to bring winter clothes as well as summer clothes with me. At the end of the semester I send my winter coat and other bulky sweaters home in a box, which made it so my suitcase could actually fit all of the souvenirs and clothes I had bought. The price for sending something home highly depends of what you send and its weight. I paid around 100 euros, but I felt like this was worth it considering the alternative would be to buy another suitcase and pay a fee for that at the airport, which gets expensive really quickly.</p> <p>Feel free to contact me if you have any questions, I would love to help!</p>



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Science
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Biology

destination city & country	Suwon, South-Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	21 / 08 / 22 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	21 / 12 / 22 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

Be prepared, it takes a lot of preparation, time and effort to go on an exchange. You have to arrange a visa, vaccines and numerous other things. It is advised to start preparing as early as possible.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

Again prepare very well and in advance. The main coordinator of the exchange was absent at a crucial point in my arrangement. This was something I didn't anticipate and it caused a lot of unnecessary stress. Make sure you have all your documents and other arrangements ready months beforehand if possible.

#### academic preparation

Some universities require a certain GPA. You can try and raise your GPA beforehand to achieve this requirement. Most universities aren't that strict though I believe. For myself, my grades were not particularly high, but enough to enter. Furthermore your English has to be on par.

#### language preparation

Most universities abroad require a high level of English, something that's often already enforced here in Utrecht. Furthermore I had a CPE English certificate which sufficed. So make sure your English is up to the required exchange universities level/

#### finances

I severely underestimated the costs. Not only in the country itself but also beforehand. A visa, flights, vaccines and other travel necessities can be very costly. If you go in September I highly recommend taking up a summer job to prevent unnecessary financial stress when you do go abroad.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

In my situation the academic level wasn't too high, even though Korea is known for its high academic stress on its citizens. The classes itself however were enjoyable and interactive. The teachers spoke well enough English. Although some of the content did not match my academic field (biology), it did broaden my horizon, so I recommend choosing classes outside your comfort zone.

#### academic quality of education activities



Most of my classes did not provide any activities. However one of my classes required recording a video which was a fun educational activity. Furthermore the university did arrange an outing to some famous Korean buildings. This was definitely a fun educational experience.

counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not find myself needing any help. However I do know that there are many spokespeople you can talk too. There are also a lot of council/help/informational buildings on campus and some health buildings just outside campus, like a dentist or doctor's office.

transfer of credits

Beforehand you have to get your study plan approved by the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie). You state which courses you want to take and they will approve you. Afterwards you have to again contact the Dutch Examencommissie to get your grades transferred.

## STUDENT LIFE

welcome & orientation programme

In my case there was only an online information lecture. We did not get any introduction on the campus itself or about the dormitories. However most information I needed could be found on the websites provided by the university so I did not feel I lacked information.

accommodation

I lived in dormitories which I shared with one roommate. This took some getting used to but accommodation overall was really nice. Everything except your own room was cleaned for you and security was present during the day.

leisure & culture

The culture is amazing. I absolutely enjoyed the food, the music, the scenery and the friendship with international students. I regularly wish I could go back to the country. I do highly recommend taking your own initiative into planning events since the university did not provide many outings.

suggestions/tips

Do your research, bring an extra suitcase, or leave room. Make sure you have enough money and ways of paying in the country itself. Korea only accepted credit card and cash. Without credit card the only option was to get a Korean bank account. Lastly, most importantly, enjoy the experience and don't let academic focus overshadow the magic of an exchange!

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, it was a great university that provided adequate housing, courses and activities. Because of the lack of educational pressure, because the classes weren't too difficult, I was able to experience a lot of the country. It was an amazing experience.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you have doubts, please do it anyways. It is an amazing opportunity and you'll become a different person because of it. And as I said, prepare your documents and other necessities far in advance and keep in mind that money can be an issue so make sure you have enough!





## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info available at the IO.
faculty/college	Social sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Psychology

destination city & country	Suwon, South Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	01 / 09 / 2022
end date	30 / 12 / 2022

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

For the application process I submitted my top 3 of destinations at Utrecht University. This was my second choice and I was very happy to be able to go. After this I had to wait on the host university to email me with further information, this took quite some time, but eventually everything was on time. I recommend you to already book an appointment at the Dutch embassy for getting a visa pretty early. I waited with this till everything was certain for going, but because of this I could only visit the embassy very late. Which made everything very tight on schedule with my flight.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

I did not use any counselling or support at Utrecht University.

#### academic preparation

For the courses I took, I did not do any preparations.

#### language preparation

Before going to South Korea I already learned Hangeul (The Korean alphabet). This made it a lot easier for me when I arrived in Korea, cause I could already read. I also learned some basic words and sentences. I recommend you to try and learn the alphabet too, even if it is just a part of it. It really helps you out and it is also a lot of fun if you are able to use it in texts and reading. But there were also people who did not know how to read, and they had a fun and easy time too. You can always use translate apps, like Papago. Some basic words as thank you and hello are always used so I would definitely recommend you to study that!

#### finances

Before going I saved money from working over the years. The housing is not that expensive, for my year it was about 900 euros for the whole semester (I stayed in the international dormitory). You will eat a lot at restaurants which is cheaper than buying at a grocery store, but of course more expensive than cooking for yourself in for instance the Netherlands. Still, eating at restaurants is not expensive at all and of course very delicious! You will also want to have money for making fun trips and doing fun things with friends. If you want to travel within Korea or to other countries in Asia, which a lot of people did, you will need some more savings. I think in total I used something around 5000-6000 euros, but it really depends on how much you want to spend and travel. I did not travel outside of Korea, but only within Korea (to Busan and Jeju Island). The transportation is not expensive at all, for one ride it costs about 1250 won (0,90 cents). If you are going to Seoul, which you will definitely be doing a lot! It costs a little more (around 2300 won).





## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I took 5 courses which gave me 30 erts. If it is the same this year, then every course gives you 3 credits, which are 6 credits at Utrecht University. You will automatically get an email with all the explanations and content about the courses you can take as an exchange student. If you apply for the courses you have to be really fast, because it is on a first come first serve basis. I was able to get into enough courses and most of them were the ones I wanted. So, for me there were not really any issues.

### academic quality of education activities

I find the courses easier than at Utrecht University. You take more courses at once and they take the whole semester instead of 2 per block, but still you have plenty enough time to do fun things next to your school schedule. I had classes for 3 / 4 days a week, but it depends on your schedule. The exams are not too difficult if you study the literature well, it also depends per course. The language course you will easily pass, it is fun and everyone will eventually be able to speak a little Korean.

I personally did not really like all of my courses, the thing is that you do not really have a lot of choice for English courses. Because of this I had to choose some political or economic courses, which is not really my thing. Then again, a lot of other people did really like their courses, so it depends on your choices and what is available.

### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

I did not need any counselling or support, but one of my friends got a sick and they easily helped her and she could go to the Ajou university hospital.

### transfer of credits

This all happened quite easy and automatically. When I got back to the Netherlands, in something like 2 months, I got an email that the results were received by our international office. After this you will have to email to the email address they give you and they will put it in Osiris for you.

## STUDENT LIFE

### welcome & orientation programme

At Ajou University there is an international office and international program. We got a welcome talk from the coordinator. There is also a buddy program, you will get matched with a Korean buddy, which is really fun. Unfortunately, my buddy was very busy and eventually dropped out, but some of the other internationals really hang out with their buddy's and of course you can ask them anything if you have a question. Next to this there are also all kind of university clubs where you can sign up for and meet new people :).

### accommodation

I stayed at the international dormitory, and it was a real nice room. You will have to share it with one more person. Most of the time this is someone from the same country or even university as you (at least that was in our semester the case). You both have a bed, desk, and lots of closet space. There are also other dormitories where you can apply for, like Hwahong hall. Here you share a room with 4 people, and it is a bit cheaper. I would really recommend the international dorm, because I heard from more people that the Hwahong hall was not always that clean and most of the students wanted to go to the international dorm. When you apply for a dormitory, I would do this as fast as possible. The spots are taken quite fast, and a lot of Koreans want to go to the international dormitory as well, because it is a new building.

### leisure & culture



Korean culture is really amazing! The people are very kind, only a little shy. Especially when it comes to their English. Their language is really fun to learn and they love it when you try to speak Korean with them, even if it is just a few words. Korea is a really beautiful country with lots of places to visit. There are so many cultural things to see, like the palaces and hanok villages. There are also beautiful places of nature to go to or you can go hike a mountain. Even though I was there for 5 months I still haven't seen everything I wanted. There are plenty of things to do in your free time, especially in Seoul you can do a lot. In Suwon there is a fortress which I recommend you to go to, there is also a lake which is very beautiful and at Suwon station there are a lot of nice shops, street food and malls. If you travel from Suwon to Seoul it takes about 45 min-1,5 hours. It sounds long, but you will get used to it, and it is totally worth it to travel within Korea to see more of Seoul too.

#### suggestions/tips

Take as much as you can out of this exchange! Korea is an amazing place to be and explore. It is sometimes difficult to socialize with Koreans, because they all have a very busy life of their own, but there are always Koreans who want to make some foreign friends or practise more with their English. Try socializing, they will open up more after a while.

I would also recommend you to try and make some trips to Jeju island and/or Busan. These are really beautiful places to visit. Busan is a little different than the busy Seoul city, there is another dialect, and it is a city at the coast with some beautiful beaches. Jeju island is a must visit, it is a holiday destination for a lot of Koreans. There are lots of things to do there and beautiful sceneries.

Also, Seoul Han river is a must visited place in summer, there will be a lot of young people hanging out there on blankets picnicking, with street performances, street food and amazing scenery.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes! Definitely. I really had an amaaazing time at Ajou University and Korea in general. As I said It is a beautiful country, with a super interesting culture. Ajou university is very well organized, and I would recommend this destination to everyone.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If you end up choosing this destination, I hope you will have just as great of a time as I had or even better!



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

	Contact info available at the IO.
faculty/college	Humanities (Geesteswetenschappen)
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study program	English Language & Culture

destination city & country	Suwon, South Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	01 / 09 / 2022
end date	31 / 12 / 2022

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The application process is relatively easy and straightforward, but a little slow at times. The Korean websites will have problems with loading sometimes or look weird if you're still in the Netherlands, but with patience it should be fine.

In my case, it took a little while for the Korean University to respond and give me the documents that were required for my visa, but I was not the only one. Because of this I was almost not able to fly on the date I intended since I couldn't pick up my visa in time at the embassy. I had to call multiple times and fight for an earlier spot. I would recommend already making a visa appointment – even if you don't have the documents yet – and plan that date to be about 3 weeks before you leave, since you need to come back later to pick up your visa. The application is a little stressful, but worth it in the end :)

For signing up for courses, be prepared to stay up until 3 a.m. to immediately sign up on the website. The places are gone FAST and if it's full, it's full.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

I had some issues with my courses while in Korea. I could easily email the International Office and they would contact the people in Korea to help me. Even after the issue was resolved, they emailed me again to ask if everything had gone okay. So great support!

#### academic preparation

It really depends on your faculty and studies on how you will have to prepare. I wasn't allowed to do any English courses since they were not of the required level, so I had to resort to courses outside of my studies. I mostly did sociology courses and a Korean class. I didn't prepare for the courses and had no problem keeping up with the classes. The materials were provided for me digitally, except for the book for Korean class. You can buy schoolbooks for your courses at a cute little bookstore on campus, so you don't have to bring any materials that might make your suitcase unnecessarily heavier.

#### language preparation

I would recommend at least learning how to read hangul (the Korean writing system) beforehand. It will make your life so much easier, even if you don't know what the sounds mean together yet. If you'll follow Basic Korean 1 (or Basic Korean 2 if you feel adventurous) you'll learn it easily as well. Most people on campus speak quite a bit of English, but you'll be surprised by how many people in the city don't (even in Seoul), so definitely try and learn how to say simple things.

#### finances



Going to the other side of the world is costly, that's the sad truth. In some regards, Korea is cheaper than the Netherlands, but also more expensive in others. I saved up about €4000 and had a decent amount left (this included my flights, dorm and hotels), but I also had parents that pitched in a little. If you really want to make the most out of your trip and not worry about money, start saving up the moment you know you want to go abroad.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### study programme (content and organisational issues)

As I mentioned before, I applied for sociology courses and Basic Korean 1, all very fun and at a nice level so you'll learn something valuable but still have enough free time for activities. I would recommend Basic Korean 1 for sure, although the level differs per class depending on what professor you have. And I absolutely loved Consumption & Popular Culture; you get to watch movies for homework and it's really interesting :) My issue with one course that I signed up for was that, despite that it was listed under courses in English and for exchange students, I still couldn't do it because it was for Korean students only. If you doubt something, always email someone or talk with your peers to make sure.

### academic quality of education activities

Admittedly, the quality of the courses differed per course. Some were fairly simple even without any pre-knowledge, and with others you definitely had to put in the work. Generally, I think the courses were a little below average of what we deal with at UU, pressure wise. The homework isn't really that tough and the focus is mostly on attendance. Even if you do very well, you will fail the course regardless if you don't come to classes enough times. I think the way the classes work and what is expected of you is just very different and needs some getting used to, but I didn't mind it. Because of the low pressure, I had more free time to experience the country, while still genuinely learning something from courses I hadn't done before.

### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The university is a little slow with communication, but they will help you very nicely if you need it. For different issues you need to speak with different people and go to different offices across campus, which can be a little confusing sometimes, but once you've figured out the layout of the campus, you'll be fine :) One thing that was a little ridiculous to me was the registration for the ARC, basically your Korean ID card. You can't do a lot of things without it, but it took months for us to finally receive them. As said multiple times, the university is quite slow with important stuff, annoyingly so, but they do help you. For physical issues such as illness, there's an on-campus nurse that'll help you free of cost. I had an allergic reaction and she gave me medicine immediately.

### transfer of credits

I finished my courses at the end of December and received my grades beginning of January. The transfer to UU happened halfway through February. Not super-duper quick, but relatively decent timing. If you need UU to receive them sooner, just email the Korean coordinator (Daian Lee in my case) and she'll take care of it. Also contact your International Office at home and your department in case you want the grades to be submitted sooner as well.

## STUDENT LIFE

### welcome & orientation programme

Even before you leave you'll be put in a KakaoTalk group (download the app beforehand) with all the exchange students that semester from around the world, plus all the Korean buddies. You can get information on activities, chat with everyone for fun or just ask people to hang out if you want to make friends. The orientation was online, so it was more to know all the info and rules. Later on you'll have lots of opportunities



and parties to get to know everyone. I would recommend becoming part of the Friends Club (for a fee) to know about all the parties. Any other clubs that suit your interest would be good too!
accommodation
<p>I was in the International Dorm, which is the fanciest and most expensive building out of the options. It was cleaned regularly, spacious enough and I had only one (really nice) roommate. It also has an elevator which the other cheaper building has not. The only true downside was that you had one kitchen with one fridge per floor that you have to share with around 50-60 people. I had to make difficult choices with food because I was unable to use the fridge since it was full from beginning to end, and when I tried to use it my eggs, for instance, would be broken by others.</p> <p>The other building I didn't live in, but I do know that you have two options for rooms: one for two people and one for four people, the second being even cheaper than the first. There is one kitchen in the basement for everyone with six fridges.</p>
leisure & culture
<p>There are many opportunities to hang out with other internationals or Koreans if you go to events hosted on campus, which you'll be notified by in the KakaoTalk group. There are also moments you can go to Seoul with them, but you should go there yourself as many times as you can! Don't forget about Suwon though. In the end, I actually prefer Suwon over Seoul as it's still a gigantic city but a lot less overwhelming. I wish that I spent more time in Suwon to explore, it's so beautiful. Go to the local markets, go climb the wall and visit little stationary stores. It's fairly easy to do so by bus and subway if you have a T-Money card. This will be your best friend, so don't lose it. You can get them at most convenience stores (7 Eleven has the cutest cards, for shopping CU is the way to go, just trust me on this lol) and you can only put cash on them. That's another thing. Have cash on you ALWAYS, or get a Korean bank account. There's an on-campus bank to help you with that. Sadly, you can only get a bank account if you have your ARC which... can take a while, as is per usual with the university.</p>
suggestions/tips
<p>I'm quite an introverted person and was a little scared to do things by myself in the beginning. Please, don't be like me and just explore! If you're afraid of the language barrier, learn as much beforehand and, otherwise, Google Translate is good enough for some situations. Download Naver Maps too, you can't be without it (Google maps is sadly not always accurate).</p> <p>I would also recommend a safe space to hang out by yourself if you feel overwhelmed. So, not your dorm room where you can't be alone. It can be a place on campus or a café nearby. My spot was a café called The Coffeebean on France Avenue (it's a branch, so they're everywhere though). If you go there, so hi to her and tell her I miss her :(</p>

## CONCLUSIONS

would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
<p>Whether you're going to a faraway country in Asia or a neighboring one in Europe, I would always recommend going abroad. It might not be lifechanging all the time, but you do learn a lot about yourself. As for Ajou University, it has fun courses and a gorgeous campus (especially in Fall). South Korea is great and beautiful, even with its faults. There are often minor things that irritate you or that you might miss from the Netherlands, but generally the people are nice and the culture shock is not that big.</p>
do you have any additional advice or comments?
<p>It's absolutely fine if you miss home sometimes or are a little sad. Instead of beating yourself up about it because 'I'm in Korea, this is amazing so I should be happy' just do something fun by yourself or with your friends, or go to your safe spot :)</p>



**Universiteit Utrecht**

You're not alone in your feelings, and you're there for a longer time than you think. Of course, your time is limited and you should make the most out of it, but you don't have to do all the exciting stuff every day. Sometimes it's just nice to experience the culture with a book in café and plan the cool stuff for another day.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<b>bachelor's</b> master's
name study programme	Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology

destination city & country	Suwon , South-Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	01 / 03 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	30 / 06 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

There are several informative meetings being held by the International office which I recommend attending to get a good idea of what you need to apply for an exchange. The application process went fairly easy through Osiris. You just have to be prepared and on time to apply for an exchange semester. After applying the UU will select you for one of your top three school choices. The process will be carried on by your host university abroad.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

The support is really good. You can just send an email and get a quick response. For example, I had to ask someone to sign a document for me and I got a response within a few hours.

#### academic preparation

You really do not need any academic preparation. Except for when the class you are going to take explicitly says so. This was not the case for me.

#### language preparation

Ofcourse it's good to know atleast some basic words and phrases but actually learning Korean beforehand is not necessary. Knowing a bit of hangul can be helpful too since not all signs have english translations or writing in the alphabet we grew up with. Ajou University offers basic korean courses which you can take to make your daily life a little bit easier. However ,if you decide to not follow any korean classes, apps like papago are life savers.

#### finances

Unlike stated in previous experiences we did have to pay for the dorms. About 900 euros for a stay from february 20<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. However, I lived in the International dormitory which was the most expensive. You can stay at the campus for a cheaper price. We also had to pay about 800 euros for a 7 day quarantine but hopefully that's something the students after us do not have to experience anymore. When it comes to basic living costs I think I spend around 10,000 to 20,000 won per day (which is around 15 euro's) and my budget was around 700 euros per month. However, if you want to make the most of your time here I think you would have to make that budget a bit bigger since I also could not keep myself limited to 700 euros when doing a lot of activities. In total I saved about 5000 euros and I also got money from Duo.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD





study programme (content and organisational issues)
<p>Please, please, please be prepared to fight for classes you want to take during the course registration. It is insanely competitive and a lot of students had trouble with signing up for their classes. Some people had to take particular classes during their exchange semester and failed to get into some of them or did not even get into one at all. <b>If classes are full, be quick and email the professor immediately!!!</b> This shows them that you are eager to take the class and if enough people email they might open up some more spots. During the course registration period I would advise to check the site CONTINUOUSLY to see if more spots opened up. At Ajou you get 3 credits for each class, these credits will be of the same worth as about 6ECTS and you have to take atleast 2 classes and max 6. All classes will be taught through the entire semester with midterms after about 7/8 weeks and finals at the end of the semester.</p>
academic quality of education activities
<p>Most classes are structured very differently from what we are used to at the UU. You definitely do not have to study all the time but do expect to put atleast some effort into homework (as it often is graded) and ofcourse tests. Moreover, do not expect to have a lot of interactive classes. The way of teaching in Korea is mostly professors just talking the whole class while they expect you to just quietly listen. Even if you ask a question, most of them answer them very shortly with not that much actual explanation. Most classes do have mandatory attendance and you can miss a few. Attendance will also be part of your grade. What maybe is also important to note, is that there are no resits. You get one chance to take a tests and that's it.</p>
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
<p>The OIA is very helpful when it comes to helping you with life in Korea. You can go to them with questions about your visa, health insurance, ARC etc. What they are less helpful with is complaints about the classes or professors. There was this one class (Understanding Korean Society) that was supposed to be taught in English but it turned out that the professor could barely speak English at all and just started teaching in Korean. We went to the OIA to complain and they said they would warn the professor that he had to teach in English but in the end nothing changed.</p>
transfer of credits
<p>This process hasn't started yet since I did not receive all of my grades yet</p>

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
<p>Sadly our orientation was online since the pandemic was still very much ongoing in Feb 2022 so there is nothing really noteworthy to say about this. It was basically a online zoom meeting where the OIA told us some information about the school, classes and life on campus. This is also where the AGA members introduced themselves. The AGA members are all buddies to a group of exchange students and they will try to guide you throughout the semester and will answer your questions if you have any. Everyone gets assigned a buddy at the beginning of the semester and you will also have a few meetings.</p>
accommodation
<p>If you decide to live on campus try to get into the International dormitory. The rent is higher than the other dorm (Hwahong hall) but its worth every penny. The rooms are good, there is AC, an elevator, clean bathrooms, lots of storage is available and most of the internationals stay there (aka your most of the friends you will make). Hwahong hall is very dirty according to the stories I've heard from people who lived there. Some people had cockroaches in there rooms and they were also spotted in the kitchen. To add to this, the showers were not clean and there is no AC in your room. If you are not able to secure a spot in the international dormitory, you can also choose to live off campus. However, this is much more expensive than staying in the dorms. The room application is first come first serve so be very alert and quick. Your room won't be cleaned by</p>



staff unlike the bathrooms and kitchen (which is to be expected ofcourse but I thought I'd let you know just to be sure) so you need to keep your own room tidy. Lastly, you cannot choose your own roommate. You will be assigned one. Personally I had a weird roommate at first but she moved out because she couldn't handle the construction noises outside. I got a very nice roommate in return but others were not as lucky with their roommates. It can happen that your roommate will completely ignore you. When this is the case or you just completely hate each other, you are allowed to switch rooms or roommates but only in accordance with the other students/residents involved. However, you cannot do this too often as it will inconvenience the person who will do the registration for you.

#### leisure & culture

Korea is an amazing country with a lot of stuff to do. It is so different from anywhere I've ever been before. The food is super good and (most of) the people are really nice and understanding. In clubs I would watch out for Korean guys though. Some of them are very keen on getting with foreign people and this can be the cause of some very unpleasant experiences. I would urge you to go to and see as many things as possible because there is always something to do. Suwon is also a very nice city to study in. It's very close to Seoul but just a tad bit more relaxed and calm, which I personally liked very much.. Because of the pandemic I sadly could not visit any other foreign countries but if you get the chance you should totally do so. It also seems like Korea never sleeps. People are awake at any time of the day and there are so many restaurants and bars open until deep into the night. Trying the noraebang and the pcbang is also a must for the ultimate student life experience. But overall just enjoy every little moment you have because it will be over in a flash.

#### suggestions/tips

I would suggest going to Busan, Yeosu and ofcourse take lots of trips to Seoul. Don't be afraid to approach other exchange students because you're all there for the same exact reason and that is to have fun and make friends (and study ofcourse haha). Making friends with Koreans is a bit hard because you only have a short time to get to know them and they are pretty shy most of the time. Many conversations will not really go beyond the superficial level. If you really want to be friends with a Korean person it will take time. Also, do not forget to take many pictures!! This is such a unique experience so capture all of it.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

I recommend studying at Ajou because it has really become like a second home to me. The school and campus are both really nice and Suwon is such a great city to study in. Trust me when I say you won't miss out on not living in Seoul. This has been such a cool experience and even though it cost me a lot of money, I would go again in a heartbeat.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

You can always message me if you have questions! ☺



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Law
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Law

destination city & country	Suwon, South Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	11 / 02 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	24 / 06 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The application procedure is quite simple and straightforward. The UU website gives you all the information you need. It is important that you keep an eye on all deadlines yourself, because nobody will really remind you of them. But if you start on time and read the information carefully, it should be fine.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

I didn't need much guidance or support from the UU. But every time I sent an e-mail, they responded quickly. If something is unclear, it's best to just ask a simple question and not strain yourself trying to figure it out.

#### academic preparation

I did not do any academic preparation. I almost finished my bachelor prior to leaving which allowed me to take less courses. That was nice, because I had more free time. But this probably does not fit into everyone's study plan.

#### language preparation

I could recommend you start with Duolingo or Drops or another language app to learn Korean characters (Hangul) before you go to Korea. However, I personally did not do that and it was still fine. I really recommend you to take a Korean course. I took Basic Korean 1. After the first few weeks of classes, you can already read enough Hangul to recognise important words.

#### finances

Save a lot of money, I cannot stress this enough. The more you save before you leave, the less you have to worry about money. And then you can do everything you want without worrying about finances. But if you are not in a position to save thousands of euros, just save as much as you can! I had never used my DUO loan before, but I started using it when I was in Korea. It allowed me to make ends meet and the 5-6 months loan shouldn't be too much of a burden to pay off later in life and it will be worth it 😊

Even if you don't have a lot of money, don't be discouraged, if you live on campus and eat in the campus canteen and cheaper restaurants, it might just be cheaper than living in the Netherlands. It just depends on your personal spending habits.

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I followed: (I) Introduction to psychology, (II) Current issues in Korean society, and (II) Basic Korean 1. The courses were good, I felt that the level was just right. Personally, I had the feeling that it was easier than at the



UU. However, you need to put in some work. The content was interesting and the courses were well organised. They also use blackboard, so it's not much different than at home.
academic quality of education activities
Professors are kind and qualified. They usually speak English pretty well, so it's easy to communicate.
counselling & support at receiving university abroad
I did not really need counselling or support.
transfer of credits
I have not yet received my final grades, so the transfer of credits is still unknown to me.

STUDENT LIFE
welcome & orientation programme
Personally, I did not participate in many activities, so there was no real welcome or orientation programme that I took part in. But I did see that many activities were organised for students who were interested in them.
accommodation
I did not get a room on campus, and only found out 1-2 weeks before departure. Because of the pandemic, many students postponed their previous semesters to the spring semester. As a result, there were more students than housing, which is not normally the case at Ajou. It sucked at first, but I found really nice housing in Seoul. I was very happy that I didn't live on campus because all my friends lived in Seoul and I could go out every weekend. The only downside is that living in Seoul was much more expensive than living on campus. If you don't care for campus life and the commute, I would recommend living in Seoul. Because of the online classes, I only had to travel to Suwon once or twice a week. But if you want the real 'university student' experience, I would recommend living on campus. Especially because we don't have real campus living at UU and this could be the perfect chance to experience it.
leisure & culture
Korean culture is very interesting and fun to experience. Just be respectful and you will do fine. If you are not used to travelling far, you might have to prepare yourself for a possible culture shock. The country is safer and more accessible (metro and buses take you everywhere cheaply) than the Netherlands so that's nice. My favourite part of Korean culture is the drinking and club culture. But also the restaurants and cafes are a nice part of the culture to experience. I also recommend trying to make Korean friends because it makes the experience more fun.
suggestions/tips
Save a lot of money, do a little research beforehand and just have fun. Don't take studying too seriously, as it is the least important part of studying abroad.

CONCLUSIONS
would you recommend this university/destination abroad to others? please explain
I would definitely recommend this university to others. Even though I lived in Seoul and didn't go to Suwon very often, I was happy with Ajou University. It allowed me to get to know two cities at the same time. If you do want to live on campus, Ajou campus is very nice and spacious and there is plenty to do in Suwon.
do you have any additional advice or comments?
Apply for your visa on time.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Faculty of Medicine
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Biomedische Wetenschappen (Biomedical Sciences)

destination city & country	Suwon, South Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	01 / 09 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	29 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	<p>The application process was quite easy since Utrecht University and Ajou University both explained everything clearly and notified us about important deadlines. It was quite a lot of work as you need to prepare a lot of paperwork (especially for a visa) and arrange quite a bit before you get to go on an exchange. However, everything is very doable even when you also have a high workload from your studies, so definitely don't let it discourage you but keep in mind to keep track of all the deadlines. When something is unclear or you've stumbled upon a problem, you can always contact Ajou University and they will be happy to help.</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>The International Office helped me out greatly every time I approached them with questions. Because of the covid pandemic it was of course more challenging to plan an exchange, but they always tried their best to inform me about what the expectations and possibilities were. Don't hesitate to reach out to them when you need help. It was also great that Utrecht University organises pre-departure meetings so you could get in contact with other students that are going to the same host university. Planning the exchange with these students made everything a lot easier.</p>
academic preparation	<p>I did not need to prepare for any of the courses I followed there because I could only choose them after I had already arrived in the country. The courses I wanted to follow did not require any specific prior knowledge about the discussed topics.</p>
language preparation	<p>I studied a bit of Korean before I left so that I could understand hangul. This is not necessary per se, but I would definitely recommend either studying Korean by yourself before or once you're there or taking the course 'Basic Korean 1'. This course teaches you hangul and basic Korean phrases and numbers. English is not frequently used everywhere in Korea so knowing a bit of Korean always helps. But you'll also be fine with no prior knowledge of the language.</p>
finances	<p>I got a scholarship from my faculty for transportation and living expenses. Other than that, I had saved money for the exchange and my parents paid some of my expenses. Also make sure to submit the form for 'Ov-vergoeding buitenland' on DUO to get money monthly since you will not be using your student-OV. In the end, I myself spend around €4000. The dormitory of Ajou University was relatively cheap to stay in. Groceries were</p>

not that much more expensive except for some products like fruit and cheese. Eating out is not that expensive in most places.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### study programme (content and organisational issues)

Ajou University has a list of courses for undergraduate students taught in English that exchange students and Korean students can sign up for. This list can be found on their website and contains information about how many spots are available for exchange students. They also have descriptions of these courses so you can get an idea of what you will learn. You can use these lists to make your study plan. Keep in mind that these courses have different levels (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) and some of the higher-level courses might require you to have some prior knowledge about the subject. It's important to have back-up courses ready when you are signing up for courses, because it's a first come, first served principle. Some courses only have a few seats for exchange students so if they are popular, there is a chance you will not be able to follow this course. A lot of exchange students were business students, so business courses were popular. I'm not sure if this is the case for every semester. When we had to sign up for courses we were already in South Korea and in a group chat with all the other exchange students so everyone helped each other out, but the sign-up process can still be a bit chaotic and stressful. But don't worry, it will all work out in the end and there is also time during the sign up to switch courses and choose new ones that others have dropped. And after that, there is a period when you can drop one course. It could be the case that you are not in Korea when you have to sign up for courses so then you will have to sign up during the night in the Netherlands.

### academic quality of education activities

The courses are generally easier than courses in the Netherlands. Most courses are very doable, and you will still have enough spare time to enjoy your stay in Korea. Due to the pandemic, the courses were all online for most part of the semester. At the end, some courses changed to offline which was nice. The quality of the courses online and offline was great. Some were more interactive than others but they were all interesting in my opinion. The English of the professors was great and good to follow. Opposed to what I'm used to with my major at UU, is that (almost) all lectures from my courses at Ajou were mandatory (you were allowed to miss 3 lectures). But since the courses did not have a very high workload, this was not a problem for me and helped with keeping up with the courses. Some courses had midterms while others only had final exams. Some had homework/essays and Basic Korean 1 had a speaking exam as final exam for which you had to answer some basic easy questions in Korean.

### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The international office of Ajou was very helpful and made sure we were always up to date about what was required of us. They did their best to make us feel welcome and I did not have any issues at Ajou University. The pandemic made everything a bit more difficult, especially because we also had to quarantine for 14 days but it all went smoothly. It was also really helpful that three to four exchange students were assigned to a Korean buddy that we could always turn to for questions about studying at Ajou and life in Korea. We were also added to a group chat with all the exchange students at Ajou and all the buddies. That's where we all shared useful information about what to do in Korea.

### transfer of credits

My transcript was sent by post to my home address. It took around a month and a half before I got the transcript and certificate of completion. I then sent the transcript to the board of examiners of my faculty at UU for the transfer of credits. Most courses at Ajou are 3 credits and 1 credit generally translates to 2 ECTS at UU. You can find the number of credits for each course at Ajou in the list of courses that I mentioned before and UU has a credit conversion table with information about the credits and ECTS for each university.



STUDENT LIFE	
welcome & orientation programme	
<p>Due to the pandemic, the orientation programme was held on zoom. In this meeting they welcomed us and shared some important information about studying at Ajou and life in Korea. In the first week, everyone met up with their buddy group to get a tour around campus.</p>	
accommodation	
<p>I stayed in the international dormitory of Ajou University. There was also another dormitory at which exchange students can stay, but most exchange students stayed in the international one. This one is newer and therefore a bit more modern and feels cleaner. The international one only has rooms for two people, while the other dormitory also has rooms for four people. However, because of covid only two people were allowed in the rooms for four people. The international dormitory has different floors for men and women. Most floors have a kitchen, and all floors have two bathrooms with eight showers. You have to buy your own pans and kitchen items, so I recommend sharing this with other students on the same floor. The kitchen and bathrooms are cleaned by staff, but you have to clean your own room together with your roommate. They did a check-up approximately once a month to see if there was anything in your room that is not allowed (like alcohol or certain electrical devices). Make sure you know what is allowed and not allowed in the dormitory because they have a system in which you get penalty points for when you break certain rules. When you get a certain amount of these, you will have to move out. But don't worry, these rules are easy to follow and there is not a high chance you will break them. Some students decided to stay in an apartment in Suwon or Seoul, but I don't know how they arranged this, so I can't really provide information about this.</p>	
leisure & culture	
<p>Suwon itself is a big city with some great places to visit. On campus there were two cafeterias and a cafe where you can get great and relatively cheap food and drinks. Close to campus there is a lively big main street with lots of food places and shops. This is where most students got food at night. It's really nice to study there in the special study cafes. I would also recommend visiting the Hwaseong fortress in Suwon. It's really beautiful (and on the UNESCO World Heritage list) and only around twenty minutes distance from Ajou. I also visited a couple of different parks in Suwon for a walk on days I didn't have enough time to go to Seoul. Seoul is around a 40 to 45 minutes bus ride from Suwon (sometimes longer depending on where in Seoul you want to go to). I have been to Seoul during a lot of weekends as there is so much to see in Seoul. I have also been to two amusement parks (Lotte World and Everland). These were easy to get to from Suwon. We did go to Everland by taxi because it took quite a lot longer by bus, but of course a taxi is more expensive (though not that expensive at all in Korea). Because we only had online lessons in the beginning of the semester, we could go on a trip to Jeju island and Busan for a week and a half in the summer and follow our courses there. Jeju island is absolutely beautiful so if you have the chance to go there, you definitely should. Busan is also one of my favourite cities in Korea as I really loved the coastal areas and beaches. During Chuseok you have a couple days off so that's a great time to do some traveling as well. I was hoping to travel to some other countries in Asia after the end of the exchange but unfortunately this wasn't possible because of travel restrictions so I stayed in Korea a bit longer to travel around before going home.</p>	
suggestions/tips	
<p>In the beginning of the semester, try to socialize with the other students as much as possible to make friends and find people you want to hang out with during the exchange. It is a lot of fun to go on trips and activities with other students. In the group chat I mentioned before, a lot of students invited others to activities or suggested fun things to do so I would recommend joining others. In the beginning everyone is forming groups they will most likely hang out with during the entire semester. Additionally, since fruit and butter are quite expensive there, I would suggest taking some vitamins (C and D) with you or find some drinks rich in vitamins there to make sure you get enough vitamins. Of course, it's still important to also buy fruit but just in case you</p>	





want to buy less to save money. The first day/week in Korea I would recommend buying a T money card for transportation. You can buy it at any convenience store (like 7-eleven and GS25). This card is used for the bus and metro. You need to scan the pass to check in and check out just like in the Netherlands. The card can only be charged with cash, and this is possible at any convenience store or at a machine in a metro or train station. The pillow that you get in the dormitory is a bit hard so most people will probably buy a new pillow in the first week. However, keep in mind that you will either have to take this pillow back home in your suitcase or have to throw it out after the semester. Of course, this doesn't just apply to the pillow but everything you buy there. Therefore, it's best to leave some space in your suitcase for the things you will want to take back home. You could also buy an extra suitcase there, but make sure to check that the airline you are flying with does not charge a lot of money for an extra suitcase (Qatar airways charges a lot for example). You can also decide to send some things back home by post. For this, you can buy a box at the post office and send it to your home address there. This of course also costs money but might be cheaper or easier.

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would definitely recommend Ajou University and South Korea. I really wanted to study in Korea because it's my favourite country in Asia and I wanted to study far away from home. Ajou University is a really nice university. I felt very welcome and appreciated there. It's small enough so that you don't feel too anonymous and it's large enough for it to feel international and give you a great idea of what studying in Korea is like. I loved the campus as it had plenty of places to hang out with friends and it had some sport fields which made the campus feel livelier. South Korea is a wonderful country with lots of beautiful cultural sights to visit and gorgeous parks, beaches, and mountains.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

No matter what university or country you will go to, an exchange is an amazing experience. You'll definitely have a great time.



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Social Sciences
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Pedagogische Wetenschappen

destination city & country	Suwon , South Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	30 / 08 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	27 / 12 / 2021 (dd/mm/yyyy)

PREPARATION	
exchange application process	<p>The exchange application process went smoothly for me. On the UU website you can find all the steps you have to go through in order to apply. After I got chosen for Ajou University I received emails with information and deadlines, which made clear what I had to do. I was really excited to go on an exchange so I just wanted to do everything as quickly as possible. I would recommend to write everything down and to make a schedule for all the deadlines. There are a lot of things you have to do, so don't underestimate it and above all: start on time!</p>
counselling & support at Utrecht University	<p>The International Office was very helpful. When I emailed them with questions, they would respond very quick! There was a situation when I had a lot of stress regarding the visa application and the International Office really tried to help and to think with us to solve our problem! Besides that, you can also email Ajou University if something is not clear.</p>
academic preparation	<p>I didn't do any academic preparation. The only thing I can think of is that you have to choose the courses you're going to follow. You have to make a study plan and the courses have to be approved by the 'examencommissie'. Other than that, I didn't do any academic preparation.</p>
language preparation	<p>Before I went to Korea I decided to learn the Korean alphabet. It's really easy and fun to learn and it definitely helps you during your stay in Korea!! Because of the covid situation and the regulations in Korea, I had to quarantine in Korea for two weeks. I also used these two weeks to study Korean, which was time-consuming and very helpful!</p> <p>Knowing a little bit of the language really helps you and it's fun: it's nice if you at least can say 'hi' 'bye' or 'thank you' when you enter/leave a shop. Also, Koreans will be very surprised when you show them you know some Korean words, which will help you to make new friends!</p>
finances	<p>Before I went to Korea I saved some money, but I also borrowed some money from my parents. Korea isn't that expensive as other countries, but don't expect it to be super cheap. I went on a lot of trips, spend a lot on fun activities, food, clothing, skin care etc. When you're on an exchange, you really don't want to hold back. Especially not if all your friends are doing fun things, you'll definitely want to join.</p>



I would recommend to make a budget beforehand, so you will have a view of how much you want to spend, but keep in mind that you probably have to be flexible.

## STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

### study programme (content and organisational issues)

The study programme was fine in general. I followed five courses: Basic Korean, Social Psychology, Current issues in Korean society, Sociology and Chinese society and culture. Overall it was well organized. Once you get into Ajou University, you will use blackboard, just like in the Netherlands. I think it depends on your professor how organized the course will be. Most of the courses were very structured, I could find everything on blackboard. Despite the covid situation that caused us to have online classes, it was generally well organized. One thing that bothered me was the fact that for some courses, we didn't get to know the exact exam date until around a week before. At Utrecht University you will get to know all the exact exam/deadline dates at the start of the semester, but at Ajou University it could take a while. In addition, I could see the hierarchy being reflected in the Korean education system. Teachers could easily decide on what they thought would be important for the test, or decide on the form of the test etc. That's something that was very interesting to me, but it's part of the culture, so it was also a good experience.

The course registration is also important to mention. It's really competitive so you have to be fast! I would recommend you to sign up for more courses if possible. Keep in mind that you might not get all the courses you want to follow, so make a back up plan! I got 4 of the 5 I wanted and signed up for another course that was not planned, but it turned out to be a nice, interesting course.

### academic quality of education activities

The academic quality of education is definitely lower than in the Netherlands, but I also think it really depends on the courses. For example, Basic Korean was pretty easy. It felt more like high school, because you're in a class with only internationals and you're just a beginner, learning a foreign language. While 'Chinese society and culture' was closer to the education level in the Netherlands. In addition, I feel like the Korean education system is also more focused on reproduction, which means you have to memorize a lot. But don't expect to study all day, you will have a lot of free time as well. The teachers know you're an exchange student, so you will have enough time to explore Korea!

### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

The International Office at Ajou University was very helpful. Koreans in general are very helpful. Their English was good and they helped me whenever I had questions.

### transfer of credits

I received my official grades and I brought it to STIP. They processed my results in the system.

## STUDENT LIFE

### welcome & orientation programme

The first welcome I received was when I was added to a Kakao (Korean whatsapp) group. It was the groupchat with all the Korean buddies and all the international students. We talked a lot in the groupchat and helped each other to survive the two weeks of quarantine in Korea. After we got out of quarantine we met our buddies by a campus tour and that was really nice! We also did some zoommeetings with our buddy group (Koreans and internationals), but that was honestly a little bit awkward. But I spend a lot of time with my buddies and they became my good friends! I was so happy about this buddy program, because it helped us to connect with Koreans, and they also helped us a lot with all the questions we had. Unfortunately, there wasn't a welcome party because of covid, but despite that, I managed to make a lot of friends. We would hang out at the terrace on campus at night or eat together and you would also get to know them during class. The groupchat was



helpful, because in the first weeks people would ask to eat together/to visit a city in the groupchat and that is how plans were made.

#### Accommodation

I stayed in the International dorms and that was a really good choice! The International dorms are clean and pretty new as well. I always saw the old ladies in the morning cleaning.

You will have to share your room, but I thought that was fun. What worked for me and my roommate was that we discussed some 'rules' and we tried to express our thoughts and feelings about living each other as much as possible. It helped us to understand each other and to make living together as comfortable as possible.

Besides that, almost all the internationals stayed in the international dorms, so you could easily meet up and you would see each other around in the bathroom, kitchen or just in the building, which helps you to connect more with each other. You have a shared kitchen, which is not the best, but it is manageable.

#### leisure & culture

South Korea is so much fun!! It's a 1-1.5 hour bus ride from Suwon to Seoul, so I loved to go there in my free time. There's so much to do in South Korea! Personally I loved to visit a lot of aesthetic cafes and I also studied a lot there (there are some nice cafes around campus as well). Besides that, there's a lot of sightseeing you can do: go on hikes, go to the Han River and enjoy the view with your friends, some beer and chicken. I loved to walk around in Seoul and see the busy, lively streets, especially at night. There are a lot of nice clubs in Seoul, so it's really fun to go clubbing. I would recommend to go to a pocha first (it's like a tent/bar where a lot of Koreans eat food and do predrinks) and after that you can go clubbing! I also loved to do karaoke (noraebang) with friends, which is really cheap. What I also really liked were the convenience stores: small supermarkets that were opened 24/7 and just shopping in general. Lastly, I really enjoyed the Korean food! The food is so good and relatively cheap! On campus, go to Dasan Hall and order 'cheese buldaek', it's super cheap and so delicious!

About the culture: Koreans are very friendly and very helpful. Keep in mind that hierarchy and respect is very important to Koreans, so handle that well. Immerse yourself in the culture and respect it!

#### suggestions/tips

Make a list of things you want to do and visit! This is how you avoid forgetting things you want to do/places you want to visit. Also, don't hold back and don't be scared. You're only here for half a year, so explore Korea to the fullest! Whenever you have the option to go or to travel somewhere, go for it! Also, don't be scared. I felt insecure and a bit frightened at first, but don't worry about that. You're on the same boat as all the other internationals, so you will make a lot of friends if you put effort in it! I would also recommend to befriend Koreans. Most of them are a bit shy, but they're amazing people. They are sincerely kind and friendly and they will give you all the insights in the culture which is amazing :)

## CONCLUSIONS

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

Yes, I would definitely recommend this university!! At first I was a little bit disappointed because I wanted to study at a big university in Seoul, but when I look back now I am more than grateful and happy that I got into Ajou. Ajou University is smaller, which makes it easier to connect with other students! I almost knew all the internationals and the university and the campus are still big in comparison to the Netherlands! Suwon is also a really nice and fun place to stay. It's not too far from Seoul, still a big city, but because it's smaller and less crowded, I could 'relax' more and it felt more like coming home from Seoul if that makes sense. In addition, I really loved the campus and the dorm life. The campus is so pretty, with a lot of fun places where you can chill with your friends, study or just relax. Walking around campus made me sincerely so happy. Besides that, Korea is just the perfect country for students in my opinion. There are so many fun places to visit and especially at



night Korea starts to live for some reason. There are a lot of people outside: meeting up, walking around, eating, drinking etc. The night life in Korea is amazing!

do you have any additional advice or comments?

If I would give advice I would say: don't worry too much about studying. I know it is important but keep in mind you're on an exchange. I could be so stressed about exams, and would skip fun activities because I thought studying was more important, but eventually it was so unnecessary.

Besides that, make a lot of friends! It's so nice to meet new people from all around the world and to learn about their culture and life. It will really help you to broaden your view and I really learned a lot from it! Also, make a lot of Korean friends. They are so nice, so fun and they will help you to understand the Korean culture more. It's also fun to travel with your friends: go to Jeju, Busan, Sokcho. These are places I visited and I loved it!

In addition, plan some me-time in Korea. I could be so overwhelmed (especially the first weeks) because I would meet a lot of people, I wanted to see everything of Korea, kind of like FOMO. But it is important to care about yourself as well. Go on dates with yourself, get yourself a good coffee, get a good rest as well!

Lastly, enjoy your time and don't take anything for granted. Make the best out of the time in Korea. I can promise you it will be one of the best experiences of your life. If you're still hesitating to go or not, please go!

You won't regret it 😊



## UU Study Abroad Report Form

faculty/college	Geesteswetenschappen
level	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> master's
name study programme	Liberal Arts and Sciences

destination city & country	Suwon, South Korea
name university abroad	Ajou University
start date	23 / 02 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)
end date	20/ 06 / 2022 (dd/mm/yyyy)

### PREPARATION

#### exchange application process

The explication went through the home university. I had to write an essay and send multiple documents such as my study plan. For Ajou I had to also send a motivation essay, but I could use the same one as for my home university. I think I also had to send my grades from back home and what courses I wanted to take at Ajou. All in all this was a lot of work, but not very difficult.

#### counselling & support at Utrecht University

Utrecht University takes care of most of your application for Ajou, which was convenient. But I did not really need their support once I arrived in Korea. For support at home I would recommend talking to students who had been to Ajou before. They gave the best tips and knew everything about my destination. So definitely talk to other students who went to your exchange destination before. I also had to do quarantine before starting my semester and Utrecht did not really help with any covid related things, so keep this in mind. But hopefully, in the future this will not apply for you.

#### academic preparation

I made sure to have taken courses at home that needed to be done before I left. For my major there were no courses at Ajou. So, most of the courses here were extra courses. Keep this in mind when you go on exchange that they might not have courses for your major.

#### language preparation

I did not prepare anything. I would recommend learning a little bit of basic Korean, because not a lot of Koreans talk English. At Ajou I took a Korean course which really helped me to learn a little bit Korean.

#### finances

I saved enough money to travel around Korea and do fun stuff and pay for quarantine in Korea. I would recommend doing this. Maybe plan a few weeks after the semester to travel. You could also save to travel to Japan or China, which are really close, if covid allows you to travel there in the future. Luckily, food and living expenses are cheaper than the Netherlands. So living in general is cheaper, but keep in mind you will spend more money on doing fun stuff. So, save enough money!

### STUDY ABROAD PERIOD

#### study programme (content and organisational issues)

I followed courses outside of my major for fun. Such as Basic Korean 1 and Current Issues in Korean Society. They were really fun and very different from any courses at Utrecht University. Especially Basic Korean 1 I



would recommend if you don't really have any knowledge of the Korean language. **For the course registration you really have to be on time, because if you are not there will be no places left.** It feels like buying concert tickets for your favourite artist. The Korean students got to PC room to have faster internet, so that they can get into the courses they want. Luckily, if you really want to get in a course but you could not because it was full, you can always email your professor and they might still let you into the course. But be prepared to be disappointed and not get into all your chosen courses.

#### academic quality of education activities

I thought the English courses were easier than the courses in Utrecht. The work pressure is low and it is quite easy to get an A. But this really depends on the course! Some are more difficult and some are easier.

#### counselling & support at receiving university abroad

Ajou University is really helpful during your exchange. The international office speaks English and you can email them about everything. They will really help you out during your stay. Your buddy's are also really nice and Koreans in general are very helpful! Some things will be confusing at first, because everything is in Korean and different, but you get enough support from Ajou to figure everything out.

#### transfer of credits

Ajou university sends your grades at the end of summer to your home university. So, if you want to graduate that year you would have to keep this in mind.

## STUDENT LIFE

#### welcome & orientation programme

The orientation programme was a bit underwhelming this year, because of Covid. Usually there would be party, I think. I later joined 'The Friends Club' and they held a welcome party which was really fun. Overall the buddy programme is really fun and they organise a lot of activities for the international students. You also get a lot of information from the International Office. I also got a campus tour at the beginning of the semester and you get put into a big group chat with all the internationals which is really fun and helpful.

#### accommodation

I stayed at the International Dormitory on campus and I would really recommend this. **Be sure to apply to the International Dorm really fast though, before all the places are gone!!** So the moment you hear you can apply do it. Or else you would have to stay at Hwahong Hall and it is not the best. I heard stories about cockroaches and dirty showers. The International Dorm, on the other hand, is really clean and gets cleaned every day. The inspector office is really helpful and the rooms are great. You also have a gym and you can do your laundry at the dorm. It is also really nice to stay on campus so you can avoid the busy rush hours in Korea in the morning when you have to get to class. The campus also has a bank, a post-office, a library and two convenient stores (which are amazing for us students). The campus is really pretty and has a lot of nature. Also, all the events, like festivals during the cherry blossom season, are on campus. All in all, Ajou organizes a lot of activities on campus for its students which were so much fun!

#### leisure & culture

There is so much to do in Korea. Korea has amazing food, nature, clubs, shops, café's, amusement parks and travel destinations. I think the culture is super interesting, because it is so different from Dutch culture. Koreans are in general really nice, curious in you and very helpful. I would really recommend joining a club on campus like 'The Friends Club', because it is quite hard to meet Koreans at first. Most Koreans are shy to speak English to foreigners. At these clubs you can make some Koreans friends and they can really show you a different side of Korea you would miss as a foreigner. Such as good hidden restaurants, bars or travel destinations. They also love to share things about their culture, like good food. Food in Korea is pretty cheap and really good. Also be aware that much of the food in Korea is a bit spicy, but I got used to it pretty quickly. The public transport in





Korea is amazing and cheap. So it is really easy to travel around. Also Suwon it is an hour travel to Seoul and Seoul is so big and rich you will probably never have enough time to explore it completely. A downside is that most people don't speak English so it might be hard at first, but if you study a little Korean you will get around. All in all Korea is a really convenient and fun place to travel as a student.

suggestions/tips

So my biggest tip is study a little Korean before you come to Korea and save enough money to travel around. Places like Busan are really worth visiting and a little Korean will get you very far. Also be prepared for very cold winters and very hot summers!!

## CONCLUSIONS

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

I would definitely recommend Ajou university and Korea in general. Korea is a beautiful country with and amazing culture and history. There is so much to explore! From museums, nature to weird café's. The university is really nice and well organized. Like everything in Korea. I learned a lot from my exchange in Korea and I had the best time.

do you have any additional advice or comments?

Do not be scared to contact me about any questions! I am happy to help.