

## SOUTH KOREA – Kookmin University

### Agenda<sup>1</sup>

|      |                                                       |   |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------|---|
| I.   | Your overall feeling after your semester abroad ..... | 2 |
| II.  | Before the travel .....                               | 2 |
| A.   | Preparation.....                                      | 2 |
| 1.   | Visa .....                                            | 2 |
| 2.   | The flight.....                                       | 2 |
| 3.   | My luggage .....                                      | 2 |
| 4.   | Bank account.....                                     | 3 |
| 5.   | Insurance .....                                       | 3 |
| B.   | Housing .....                                         | 3 |
| 1.   | Where to live.....                                    | 3 |
| 2.   | Find a flat or a room .....                           | 3 |
| 3.   | Cost.....                                             | 3 |
| III. | When I arrive at the university.....                  | 3 |
| A.   | Inscription at the university .....                   | 3 |
| B.   | Information on the university.....                    | 4 |
| 1.   | Class .....                                           | 4 |
| 2.   | Organization of the Class .....                       | 4 |
| 3.   | List of courses and recommendation .....              | 4 |
| 4.   | Exam .....                                            | 5 |
| IV.  | When I live there.....                                | 5 |
| A.   | Safety .....                                          | 5 |
| B.   | Phone and Internet .....                              | 5 |
| C.   | Events .....                                          | 5 |
| D.   | Sports.....                                           | 5 |
| E.   | Eating .....                                          | 5 |
| F.   | Go to the university : bus, car, bike .....           | 6 |
| G.   | Travels.....                                          | 6 |
| V.   | After your semester abroad .....                      | 6 |
| A.   | What are you planning do to? .....                    | 6 |
| B.   | In which master was you accepted.....                 | 6 |

<sup>1</sup> To update the agenda just click right on your moose

## I. Your overall feeling after your semester abroad

GRADE: 5

I truly think I ended up in the best destination I could have ever chosen for myself. Looking back, I cannot imagine spending my exchange anywhere else. It was so much more than just studying abroad, it completely changed me and the way I see the world.

Time went by so fast, yet somehow it felt like I had lived there for years. The strangest part is how quickly Seoul became home, even though everything was so different from France. The culture, the language, and the way of life were all new, but I never felt out of place.

For the first time, I felt a sense of freedom I had never experienced before. I explored the city without thinking twice, met incredible people from all over the world, and created memories that I know will stay with me forever. Those people became such an important part of my experience, and I will always be grateful for them. Living in Seoul also made me more independent, more confident, and more open minded. It pushed me out of my comfort zone in the best possible way.

If I could go back in time, I would make the exact same decision again. Maybe not the same university, but without a doubt the same city. I miss Seoul all the time, now sometimes I miss the city itself, and sometimes I simply miss the version of myself that I became while I was there. It will always have a special place in my heart.

## II. Before the travel

### A. Preparation

#### 1. Visa

Yes you do need a visa, specifically the D-2-6 study visa. Honestly, it is quite hard to get and I ran into some annoying problems with the process. Some friends didn't have any issues, so I guess it just depends on your luck, but you should definitely take your time to make it and don't do it last minute. Also, you should know that it's only processed in Paris, which adds a bit of stress.

#### 2. The flight

I took Air China from Paris CDG. It was honestly a great experience and the prices were not so expensive compared to others. I chose to leave around the beginning of February because I wanted to get some time to travel around Asia before classes started, which was the best decision.

#### 3. My luggage

You should literally leave with the least things possible in your luggage, haha! Seriously, because once you are in Korea you are going to spend a lot of money (on clothes especially, the shopping is insane). You don't need to pack any specific or crazy things since everyday life is pretty similar to France.

#### 4. Bank account

You don't really need to change your bank, however I would highly recommend to create an account like Revolut before you leave just to limit the international fees as much as possible.

#### 5. Insurance

I already had international coverage included with my current insurance in France, so I actually didn't need to do anything else or sign up for a new one.

### B. Housing

#### 1. Where to live

I would highly recommend living in the center of Seoul, Mapo-gu especially. Since it's in the center, you are right in the middle of most things and close to all the different vibrant neighborhoods. It is really alive, but at the same time you have a lot of more residential parts, so it's quite peaceful and calm and you will actually be living among locals.

Alternatively, the dorms could be an option. A lot of my friends were living in them. In the dorms, you make friends so easily and you are of course right next to the university. So it's good if you want to be included quickly and if you have concerns about making friends. But you have to know that you can confront some weird roommates who are not organized like you, the dorms are quite old, you have absolutely no kitchen, and you have to share a room with 4 people. Also, there is a strict curfew that could really limit your hangouts and nights out since the university is like an hour away from the "center".

#### 2. Find a flat or a room

As I explained, if you come to Korea with friends, I would definitely recommend to rent an apartment together in the city. But if you are alone and want to be directly included and close to the uni, then definitely go to the dorms. Concerning a single private room only (like a goshiwon), I would not recommend it at all as they can be really small, like 9 square meters or even less, so it's quite uncomfortable and depressing.

#### 3. Cost

You should plan for around 450-500 per person without electricity. Also, you have to know that sometimes the caution (deposit) can be really high in Korea, and you need to be careful of scammers trying to target foreigners.

### III. When I arrive at the university

#### A. Inscription at the university

It was actually really easy as the university staff were responding quite quickly to emails, even though it was the very first year of the bilateral agreement with the University of Montpellier (MOMA). Something you really need to be careful of, though, is the course registration. It is fiercely competitive and stressful, and you might not have the courses you originally chose or wanted to have.

## B. Information on the university

### 1. Class

For Negotiation, it was a really good class. There was a lot of interaction since it's all about negotiating. We were doing live simulations to get into the role. Although it was quite hard sometimes because you have to argue with other students and some of them are quite eloquent, it really is a course I would highly recommend.

For Digital Marketing, it was a good class also. The professor was really nice and explained interesting subjects by trying to use very recent examples and new topics.

For Capstone Marketing, this might be the most interesting class I had, indeed this is not a usual class. Here you face a real problem with a real client from a real Korean company who comes in the first lessons to present where he struggles in his company. The lectures themselves were kinda boring though, but we learned a lot of theory and also skills about software to analyze data, so this is really great.

For Korean Culture, this course was really interesting as it provides a deep understanding about Korea since its very beginnings. The professor was so nice; she organized some hangouts at museums and she really tried to turn the course interactive and interesting.

For Korean Tea Culture, this is such an original course and also so beautiful. You can experience everything about the tea ceremony here—and by experiencing, I mean doing it yourself! You first learn all the steps and then practice to showcase a final ceremony with traditional clothes (hanbok) on. At the same time, you have lectures about the philosophy of tea and tea around the world, and for each tea, you will make it and analyze it from the dry leaves to the actual taste.

### 2. Organization of the Class

Each class works in sections of 50 minutes. Some courses are 1, 2, or 3 sections, meaning the class lasts 1, 2, or 3 hours, but you have a break every 50 mins. Most professors don't do manual attendance because you have to scan a QR code when you enter the room, and after 10 mins you are automatically considered as late. The attendance is graded, so you can manage your absences if you want, you can have 2 absences, but after that your grade lowers, and after 3 absences you straight up fail the course.

### 3. List of courses and recommendation

The courses are definitively easier than at MOMA, but it's really different—it's a completely different way of learning and assessing. Professors don't really have the same expectations than in France, they really focus on the actual content of what you provide. Classes are really organized; they will never go over the time but you might finish earlier, and since the campus is really big they provide enough time for you to change buildings. For all the courses I listed, I really recommend them all! However, I would also highly recommend to take a beginner Korean lesson if you don't already speak it. It will be really useful, as Korean people don't speak English most of the time... Also, the content is important but so is the way of working, like in project groups for

example. You will have peer evaluations at the end as they are trying to erase the passenger (free-rider) effect.

#### 4. Exam

The exams were going well for me. It's divided in 2 parts: midterms and finals. Midterms are a bit less important if you think about the percentage of the final grade, but it's the exact same difficulty. Concerning the duration, it depends actually, but for me each exam period lasted about 3-4 days. I had really good grades but I don't think the professors are over-grading, they are just fair.

### IV. When I life there

#### A. Safety

Korea is known to be very safe, and I feel like it truly is. Indeed, all the city (if we talk about Seoul) is filmed with CCTV everywhere, so even if something happens, it's caught on camera, I think this is why we hear less about dramatic stories. Korean people really trust each other; like, you can leave all your belongings in cafes or public places to go to the toilets or anything, and you will find it back just where it was because they all do it. However, it's not a perfect country and there are some really dark sides, especially for foreigners, about people getting drugged in clubs, so still be careful..

#### B. Phone and Internet

*It depends on your operator, but you can get really affordable network. I recommend Chingu Mobile; it's a prepaid SIM card but it works perfectly, though you can go with any company actually. You have to know also that in Seoul there is high-speed Wi-Fi everywhere, in the subway, buses, cafes, university, literally anywhere.*

#### C. Events

*To know about events, you can first follow accounts on different social media that list all the events and important days in Korea. Then, you can enter exchange student group chats on WhatsApp or KakaoTalk, and you can also join clubs at the university. But honestly, the best thing is just to have a lot of friends, haha, because they will always know where and when the best events are happening.*

#### D. Sports

At the university, you can literally join any sports club, there are so many and I think all sports are represented. But you can also join non-student sports, private studios, or outdoor clubs, like for running, for example, there are group chats that tell you "on this day we will run this many kilometers." You can easily find these sports clubs to try on social media.

#### E. Eating

*I This again depends on your personal taste, some of my friends really enjoyed the food in Korea, some others did not. For me, I am a bit mixed. On one side, it was so good, like everything felt fresh, lots of vegetables, but also a lot of amazing street food, traditional dishes, and even eating late at night at the convenience store. But on the other side, Koreans are obsessed with sugar in savory food, so you might have some weird surprises sometimes. I don't have one specific recommendation, all the trendy places you see on*

*social media are good but sometimes they are a bit overpriced, which is why you should look for the small places with locals in it.*

#### F. Go to the university : bus, car, bike

For me, I lived quite far from campus since I chose the center, so I took the bus for an hour every day. But there are a lot of buses to go there so it's fine. There is the subway, but the station by foot from the uni is about 15-20 minutes away, so you will have to take a short bus after the subway anyways.

#### G. Travels

highly recommend going outside of Seoul a lot since the landscapes in Korea can change really fast. I recommend Jeju, for example, it's a gorgeous island where you can experience the best food of Korea, swim, and it's just really pretty. Busan is also really a good place to go. And if you have the time and money, you have to go to Japan, China, and all the countries around, as the travel time is short and flights are quite cheap from Seoul.

### V. After your semester abroad

#### A. What are you planning do to?

Next year, I am officially starting my Master's degree in Fashion Management.

#### B. Did you apply for master?

Yes, I did apply and I got accepted! It was honestly quite hard and stressful to manage from abroad, which is exactly why I recommend preparing for it early and not doing it last minute while you are trying to enjoy your semester.

