



Fachbereich Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften Nürnberg FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

Erfahrungsbericht Auslandsstudium

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Studiengang an der Gastuniversität:	International Industrial Information
Aufenthaltszeitraum (Semester und Jahr):	Sommersemester 2020
Darf der Bericht veröffentlicht werden?*	(Nicht zutreffendes löschen) JA
Wenn JA, dürfen Name und E-Mail veröffentlicht werden?	(Nicht zutreffendes löschen) Beides JA

*Veröffentlichung unter: <http://ib.wiso.fau.de/outgo/partneruniversitaeten/>

Themenbereiche:

1. Bewerbung und Auswahlverfahren an der FAU

The application and selection procedure at the FAU is relatively easy – you just need to gather the necessary documents and submit them at the International Relations Office of the university before the deadline. You need to explain your motivations about choosing this university very well, as KGU only offers 2 exchange semester spots for students from the FAU.

Following the submission of documents, it took roughly a month and a half until I received an interview invitation. The interview at the FAU was held in a small group with several candidates. We were asked about our motivations, our goals, our plans for the exchange semester and how it would be beneficial for us. In my case, as an IBS student, a semester abroad is mandatory for me, so I talked about that along with my own motivations for choosing South Korea and Kyonggi University. We were also asked some specific questions about Korean culture, so



it would be good if you take some time and look into that aspect of the country as well. The interview took place in the morning, and only several hours later I received the confirmation for the exchange semester spot per email.

It is important that you do some research on the partner universities you choose and their offered curriculums, if possible. That would then make it easier to arrange your Learning Agreements with the university. To do that, you can either check the partner university's website, or get in touch with students who had already attended the institution in previous semesters (which is what I did). Contact information was provided by the International Relations Office.

2. Bewerbung / Anmeldung an der Gastuniversität

After passing the interview round, the department responsible for the partner university will forward your application to the host institution, aka KGU. This was the point which took longest. However, we are not expected to do much – we just need to wait until the information arrives.

KGU sends out guidelines for the application, including application forms (personal form, study plan, university dorm, cover letter). They also send a list of all available subjects that will be taught in English in the semester during which you will be attending the university.

3. Vorbereitung auf das Auslandsstudium

Once your application has been screened, the university will provide further information about the visa and necessary medical assessment and examinations

that you need to submit. The medical examinations include a chest X-ray for tuberculosis, blood tests for Hep A, Hep B and HIV, as well as a general physical evaluation by your doctor.

Everything is coordinated through Mrs. Kuka and the department of Prof. Holtbruegge. They will be forwarding the necessary information to you.

4. Anreise / Visum

Unfortunately, the acceptance letter from KGU arrived quite late. That makes applying for a visa quite stressful (time-wise) However, all the documents you need will be sent to you per email, and you can simply bring them to the Korean Embassy (read what documents you need to bring to the embassy for the visa application! It is important to have everything listed on their website, and maybe prepare some of the things they need earlier)

5. Unterkunftsmöglichkeiten (Wohnheim, privat)

Exchange students at KGU are required to stay at the on-campus dormitory. Normally, the rooms are shared – two people in the same room. The rooms are quite small, fitting 2 beds, 2 desks, 2 wardrobes. There is a bathroom for you and



your roommate. There are also single rooms, however, the price is higher, and it is not sure whether one will be given to you as an exchange student. The rent for the entire semester is paid upfront, once you arrive in Korea, and in cash, so make sure you prepare South Korean won to pay that.

Living in a dormitory in South Korea comes with various rules. There are two towers – one designated only for female students, and one for male students. Entering the tower of the opposite sex is forbidden. There is also a curfew, 2am to 5am. If you come back during this time, you will get a points deduction. However, if you simply pull an all nighter outside and come back after the curfew hours are over, you're gonna be fine. If you break the rules of the dormitory, points will be deducted from your „account“, but that is really not that big of an issue (unless you reach 0).

The dormitory is at the corner of the campus, it takes roughly 10 minutes to reach the different lecture halls that you will be attending. The dormitory building itself has a cafeteria (about 2,50 – 4 Euro per meal ticket, depending on the menu that day), a little supermarket, a coffee shop, a fitness studio, a copy shop, as well as a stationary shop. There are also kitchens and laundry rooms for common use in each tower.

In the vicinity of the dormitory, there is also a massive supermarket, as well as tens of different Korean restaurants.

6. Fachliche und administrative Betreuung an der Gastuniversität (International Office, Fachstudienberater, Buddy-Programme, studentische Initiativen, etc.)

All activity of the foreign students is administered by the International Office of KGU. The coordinator of the program will be getting in touch with you once all documents are screened. She will send information about the course registrations, as well as any other information you may need. The International Office also takes care of your local health insurance.

Before your arrival in Korea, you will be assigned a K-Buddy, a student from Kyonggi University who will be helping you with the things you need – course registration, Korean bank account, phone contract (if you decide to get one), etc. The buddies are all incredibly kind and fluent in English.

The International office organizes several events for the exchange students during the semester, including trips and celebrations. It is a great way to connect to more buddies and find more Korean friends to show you around 😊 Personally, I did not hang out much with my assigned buddy, however I got to know another few of them during those get-togethers and we became really close.



7. Lehrveranstaltungen / Stundenplan an der Gastuniversität

Along with the forms for application, KGU will send you a tentative plan for the offered subjects. They will ask you to submit a study plan, but that is not the final registration. You will later receive log-in information for KGU's platform, as well as detailed instructions on how to register for the classes.

I personally took 5 courses while in KGU, 4 courses for my IBS „semester abroad module“, as well as an additional course with a Learning Agreement from the FAU. You need to secure your Learning Agreements before you register for the classes. However, be advised that a lot of the information for the courses had changed from the first plan to the day of registration. Some courses had been cancelled, new courses had been added. The times for the courses had also changed, which caused some problems for me (overlapping times). I needed to get in touch with the IBS coordinator and figure that out after I was already in Korea. Thankfully, we were able to find another course I could take and it didn't become a bigger issue.

There were weekly assignments for most of the courses. There are also mid-terms and finals, as well as some presentations you need to take. Overall, the classes were relatively easy to understand, the grades were also very fair. It is also very nice to receive the individual feedback from the professors after each session/assignment. It made studying a lot more engaging and interesting.

8. Sprachkurse an der Gastuniversität (kostenlos, kostenpflichtig)

KGU offers intensive Korean language courses, and they come with a big discount for the exchange students (I think it costs about 400 Euro for the semester). Those intensive courses take about four to five hours a day. Unfortunately, they overlapped with most of the courses I needed to take. I was

not able to attend that, but from my observations, other exchange students who did were only able to take 1 or 2 courses in addition to that, at most. It really takes a lot out of a person's free time.

9. Ausstattung der Gastuniversität (Bibliothek, Computerräume, etc.)

The campus of KGU is relatively big. They have two libraries, computer rooms, and various lecture buildings scattered on the campus. There is also a bank, a post office, as well as a hair salon on campus. There are three different cafeterias, two restaurants and several supermarkets.

There are also running tracks, two football fields, tennis courts and basketball fields as well (maybe 5-6 minutes away from the dormitory).

10. Freizeitangebote und Stadt (Sehenswürdigkeiten, Feste, Museen, etc.)

KGU is located in the outskirts of Suwon. Suwon itself is a nice city, there are several things to see there, including their historical fortress (Hwasong Fortress) and the Haenggung Palace, among others. There are also various museums,



including Samsung's Innovation Museum. The markets downtown are very busy and lively, the streets are always full.

There are also very good connections from KGU's dormitory to Seoul's center. It takes about 40 minutes with the subway to reach Seoul's Gangnam Station, or 30-50 minutes with the bus, depending on the time of day. We travelled to Seoul very often, at least three times a week after we were done with our assignments for the classes. There is a lot more to do there. South Korea in general is a nation very rich in history in culture, and Seoul is a massive city that will give you the opportunity to discover all its different aspects. From old palaces, to quirky museums, from traditional villages to skyscrapers, Seoul is fascinating with the diversity of sights it has to offer. My tip is to really research what you want to do before travelling there, because the city is massive and it becomes overwhelming when you try to do a lot of things at once. It might not seem like much, but travel within the city itself can take hours when you haven't planned it out well.

Koreans are very friendly, albeit shy people. Not many will talk to you freely in English, but they will try their best to help you nonetheless. Whether you make friends elsewhere, or simply hang out with the K-buddies of KGU, there are a lot of things to do together. Korea is very famous for its karaoke rooms (noraebangs), so that is definitely something to try at least once. Other fun things to do in Suwon/Seoul is trying on traditional Korean clothes (hanbok; and hey! If you wear it, it grants you free admission to the palaces!), visiting traditional food markets and exploring Seoul's countless shopping districts.

Travelling to other cities is also very convenient – there are either low cost flights within the country, or connections with busses. We were able to travel for several weeks after our exams, to Jeju Island (the flight cost less than 10 Euro from Seoul), to Busan, and to several other smaller cities throughout the country.

11. Alltag (Geld-Abheben, Handy, Jobben)

If you have warned your bank that you will be residing in Asia, there shouldn't be any problems. Paying with a card is possible almost everywhere, and I never had an issue with it. Withdrawing money, however, is another thing. Most ATMs won't

recognize your foreign card, only Global ATMs will. There are two of those on campus, so whenever you need cash you can use them. There are also usually ATMs at the shopping districts because of the number of foreign tourists. When we arrived in KGU, the K-buddies helped us open Korean bank accounts so we can deposit the money for the dormitory. I personally put a lot of the cash I was bringing with myself in that account and used the card whenever I was in the city. I never had a problem with it, and I could use it on any ATM I found, because it was a Korean card.

It's important to always have cash on you, because loading your T-Money Card (transportation card) is only possible with cash. Also, if you are headed for the food markets, cash is the only way to pay at the stalls.



If you decide to get a phone plan in Korea, the K-buddies will help you with that. I personally did not find the need for one. Communication with the international office and the buddies is mostly held on Kakao (a South Korean messaging app). Wifi is available in most public spaces, as well as every cafe and restaurants. It's also available on busses (but not subways). I personally found that enough to be able to get around the city without a problem, so I did not get a Korean number during my stay there.

12. Finanzielles (Lebenshaltungskosten, Stipendien)

The dormitory cost about 1300 Euro for 4 months. My plane tickets cost about 750 Euro.

Shopping at a supermarket might be a little cheaper if you are buying Korean ingredients. However, fruit is generally more expensive. Besides, the students at the KGU dorms have limited space in the shared fridges to store their food, which meant we didn't really shop a lot from the supermarkets. The small markets sell instant microwavable food (for those late study nights) which is really cheap, you can get a whole meal for less than 2 Euro. Eating in the cafeteria costs about 2,50 – 4 Euro per meal ticket. Eating out in South Korea, however, is generally cheaper (and also boosts your social life a bit). You can get a very big and filling meal for about 8-10 Euro. Most restaurants will also pack up your leftovers if you ask, that way you can store that for later as well. On a daily basis, I think I gave out between 10-15 Euro for food, but of course, that is very individual.

Transportation is also not that expensive. You need to scan your card when you enter and leave the bus/subway, and it will deduct money accordingly from your account. Travelling to Seoul with the subway costs about 2 Euro in every direction with the subway, or about 1,50 with the bus.

If you do not have an insurance from your own country that covers South Korea, they provide a health insurance for you during your stay, it is very cheap, about 30 Euro for the entire semester. I needed to go to the hospital once because of an eye infection, and I needed to pay 75 Euro for the exam and the eye drops that I was given. However, within 2 days, they had returned over 60 Euro in my bank account, so I suppose the coverage of that one is also quite good.

Overall, I spent about 4500 Euro for 5 months, including flight tickets, accommodation and about 3 weeks in Jeju/Busan/Seoul (with flights and hotels/airbnbs).

For financial support, I have heard German students are eligible to receive the PROMOS scholarship. I personally applied for FAU's Resiekostenstipendium and received that.

13. Wichtige Ansprechpartner und Links



The person who helped me the most was one of the K-Buddies, so make sure you save their contact information once you receive it from the coordinator in KGU 😊

The website of Kyonggi University is not really useful, there is not that much helpful information. For questions it is best to turn to the coordinator in the International Office. During my semester, that was Ms. Geuna Park (geuna_loves_you@naver.com), but that might have changed since then.

In FAU, the coordinator was Ms. Heidrun Kuka from the International Relations Office, who helped me prepare my documents and send everything to KGU.

14. Fazit (beste und schlechteste Erfahrung)

My semester abroad started just when COVID-19 was starting to spread outside China and South Korea was the second worst affected country in the world. Naturally, that was a little worrying at first. My flight tickets were cancelled last moment, the start of the semester was abruptly pushed back. It was very chaotic at first.

However, by the time I arrived in Korea in March, things were already getting under control. Korea proved to be very efficient when it came to the handling of the outbreak, so I was able to really experience the university and the country properly. Nothing was closed, restaurants, museums and even pubs were open.

Everything is simply so different from Europe, every moment I spent there felt wonderful in its own way. I was lucky enough that my roommate was also someone I got along with well and someone I could travel with. I was able to meet people from different countries, to get to know more Koreans and to experience the rich culture of the country while having the most fun I've ever had. I can easily say that the semester abroad in South Korea was one of the best times in my life, and I dearly wish to return someday.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Unterstützung!