Study Abroad

AJOU UNIVERSITY,
SUWON CITY, SOUTH KOREA
2021

Program Guide
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Congratulations on being accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire study abroad tuition exchange program with Ajou University. Living and studying in a new culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

- Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field
- Increasing understanding of different cultures
- Enhancing personal development
- Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture
- Gaining self-confidence and independence
- Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in your BlugoldsAbroad account. While this guide contains the information available at the time of publication, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email information throughout the semester, and we encourage you to do your own research, also, using the web resources listed towards the end of this guide, as well as others that you find. Contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff or your peer advisor with your specific questions.

Questions only you can answer include:

1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, and wish to challenge yourself in a new environment?

2) How can you best prepare to meet your goals within the context of this program? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Korean culture, yet you are going with a group of American students, how can you ensure that you do not spend too much time with other Americans?

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.
ACADEMICS

The Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook has more information on:

- registration at UW-Eau Claire and abroad
- class attendance
- credits & course-load
- integrative learning
- transcripts
- service learning

Pre-departure Planning

Please see the Ajou University, South Korea brochure page, for details on how to plan your courses including information on finding courses, credits and course-load, and grade conversion.

Registration at Ajou

You will receive a confirmed list of courses prior to the start of the semester. You will fill out an online course selection form within a given period. **If you fail to register in the appropriate time slot, you will have to wait until you arrive in Korea to find courses.** This means that you may not get into courses. If you register during the time you are supposed to, you have a higher chance of getting into those courses. Keep in mind that registration will occur while you are in the US but it will be in Korean time, so you must do the math to figure out when that is for you.

Dropping/Adding Classes

Once the registration period closes, you cannot make changes to your schedule until you arrive in Korea. During orientation, you MAY have a chance to change courses, however that isn’t guaranteed, as the courses you may want could still be full.

Class Schedule & Attendance

Attending class is a requirement. You will have classes Monday-Friday. Don't anticipate having many long weekends as faculty will expect you to be present.

Transcripts

Please see the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for important information if you are graduating, transferring or applying for a competitive major such as Nursing or Education at the end of your term abroad.

An Ajou transcript will be sent roughly two-three months after the end of the semester. Because this is later than the end of the UW-Eau Claire semester, your MyBlugold CampS account will initially indicate “NR” (not reported). This will be changed once the transcript arrives. **If you are a senior studying abroad for your last semester, you will need to delay your graduation by one semester following your return from South Korea.**

If you are asked to complete a transcript release form by Ajou, have the transcript sent to the Center for International Education (see Contacts page for full address). UWEC cannot post grades that were first sent to a student.

Korean Academic System

The language of instruction at Ajou is Korean or English. There is a list of courses offered in English and the list is distributed to international students before arrival and on orientation day.

These lists will give you an idea of the courses that will be offered while you are there since the same courses tend to be offered each semester. Students with high Korean language proficiency may, with permission, select
courses offered in Korean. The final list of courses for fall semester will be posted to Ajou’s website in late spring. The final list of courses for spring semester will be posted to Ajou’s website in late fall.

**Assessment:** Assessments usually include one or two exams and a paper or presentation. Exact requirements will vary by class. If you have concerns or questions in any of your courses, ask your professor. They are more than willing to help.

**Student/Professor Relations in Korea:**
Most of the professors teaching in the program are Korean but have studied in an English-speaking country. Koreans follow Confucian principles, and one of the most important aspects of this is respect to elders. At UWEC, if you disagree with a professor, you might raise your hand and express this disagreement openly. Students never challenge professors in Korea; it simply is unacceptable.

Regular attendance is expected, and eating is not necessarily allowed in the classroom. Beverages, if brought, usually sit on the floor. When you hand in your assignments, hold the paper or notebook by TWO hands. Holding it by one hand and just sticking your arm out, though completely acceptable and normal here, is very rude in Ajou.

Korean professors generally assume that foreigners, especially Westerners, do things differently and will not immediately correct them. They will, however, be very appreciative of your efforts to be culturally appropriate. More than anything, the Korean professors want to impart on the students a sense of Korean culture. They are excited to teach and will help students in any way possible. Unlike professors at UWEC, they do not hold regular office hours, but there is time during breaks and after classes to ask questions.

**MONEY MATTERS**

**UWEC information about**
- making payments
- when they are due
- withdrawal, cancellation and refund deadlines
- financial aid,
- general scholarships
- budgeting
- ways to bring money abroad

**is found on the following websites:**
[Fund Your Experience](#)
[Study Abroad Handbook: Money Matters](#)

**Cost Estimate**
The most current Cost Estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [Ajou Brochure page](#). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. The cost estimate includes what you pay to UWEC, what you pay to Ajou University and what you pay directly to other vendors.

**Exchange Explanation**
UWEC students go to Ajou as tuition exchange students. On tuition exchange program, each participant pays the tuition costs they would normally pay at their home school – so UWEC students pay UWEC tuition costs and Ajou students cover tuition costs at Ajou and they switch places.

No money is exchanged between the schools, and there is no direct monetary correlation between what you pay in Eau Claire and what you receive at Ajou University.
What is exchanged is not actual payment, but rather benefits. You should receive the same benefits a typical Ajou student receives, and the Ajou student receives the benefits a typical UWEC student receives. This type of arrangement allows students to participate in programs abroad at a cost similar to what they would pay to attend their home university.

**Meal Costs**
You are responsible for purchasing/cooking your meals.

**Housing Costs**
Housing costs are NOT included in the fees you pay to UWEC. You will need to pay all housing fees directly to Ajou University. Ajou will give you a period of time to make your housing payment to the bank on Ajou’s campus. They will also provide the details if you need to wire the money. You do need to pay the whole amount at once; installments are not allowed.

**Currency Exchange**
The currency of South Korea is the South Korean won. There will be bank notes (bills) in 1,000 ₩, 5,000 ₩, 10,000 ₩ and 50,000 ₩. In addition, there are coins in the form of 10 ₩, 50 ₩, 100 ₩ and 500 ₩.

You can find current exchange rates at http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/.

**Cost of Living**
For an idea of what everyday costs you may encounter, check out this website: https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Suwon-South-Korea

**Money on Arrival**
A general recommendation is to travel with the equivalent of $100-$200 dollars in your host country currency when you arrive. Obtaining Korean won may be hard while in the states, so you should find an ATM shortly after arriving to withdraw some yen.

**Money in Korea**
Korea is a cash-oriented society meaning that a lot of places will only accept cash (no credit/debit), especially market, some public transport and food stands. It is recommended that you always have cash on you. Most merchants won’t accept a credit card for a payment less than 10,000₩ (about $10USD).

**Credit Cards and ATMs**
In South Korea, credit cards are accepted throughout and at most major hotels, larger restaurants, department stores, and at big retailers such as Costco. Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted.

Not all ATM’s will accept foreign cards. To use a Visa or MasterCard at an ATM, you must find an ATM that displays both the credit card logo and a "Global Service" logo. You will need your PIN (personal identification number). Be sure to bring it with you and be sure it is valid in South Korea. Most ATMs have instructions in Korean, but there are several in small convenience stores around campus that have instructions in English. Most ATMs also shut down after 11pm, so be sure to plan in advance.

Please note that in past years, students have mentioned that their Royal Credit Union (RCU) debit cards didn’t work in South Korea. Be sure to check with your bank to see if your card will work abroad.

**Traveler’s Checks**
Traveler’s checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use so it is not recommended. They
generally must be cashed at a major bank, although in some countries, post offices also offer this service. You must have your passport with you. Most banks charge a fee for cashing the checks; it can vary widely. Before cashing a check, **ASK** what the fee is.

Make sure you record your check numbers and keep the numbers separate from the checks in case you need to get them replaced.

**Scholarships**

**Freeman-Asia Scholarship:** Freeman-ASIA accepts applications from U.S. citizens or permanent residents studying at the undergraduate level at a two-year or four-year college or university who demonstrate financial need to study abroad in East or Southeast Asia. The application system usually opens in February for all terms that following academic year. For more information visit: [http://www.iie.org/Programs/Freeman-ASIA](http://www.iie.org/Programs/Freeman-ASIA).

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

**General information about:**
- **CISI Insurance**
- **Preparing to Go**
- **Staying Healthy**
- **Traveling Safety**
- **Emergency Protocols**

and links to additional health and safety resources are found on the following websites:
[Health + Safety](Health+Safety)
[Study Abroad Handbook: Health & Insurance and Safety Abroad sections](StudyAbroadHandbook).

**Centers for Disease Control**
The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, food/water safety, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to Korea. You can review the [CDC site for South Korea](CDCsite). Due to an increasing measles and mumps cases worldwide, we strongly encourage all students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.

**Insect Bites**
Insect borne diseases, particularly from mosquitoes, are present worldwide. See the CDC recommendations on [avoiding bug bites](AvoidingBugBites) for detailed information.

**Malaria**
Per the Center for Disease Control, malaria risk in South Korea is limited to the months of March–December in rural areas in the northern parts of Incheon, Kangwon-do, and Kyônggi-do Provinces, including the demilitarized zone (DMZ). While you will not be living in an affected area, you may visit the DMZ on a brief field trip or during personal travel. You should therefore consult with your health care provider for recommendations.

You should discuss your malaria prevention strategy with your doctor. The decision about what you will do about malaria risk is one you must make yourself. Neither the CIE nor Ajou University can make this decision for you. If you decide to take anti-malaria medication, follow the instructions from your physician carefully. Remember that malaria is rarely acquired if you’ve taken the proper precautions.

The best way to avoid malaria is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes! To minimize mosquito bites:
- Cover up with clothing. Wear garments with a high neckline (or a bandana around the neck), long sleeves, and long pants.
• Use a DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin AND permethrin, an insecticide, on clothing.
• Avoid shiny jewelry and perfumed cosmetics, as they attract mosquitoes.
• Remain indoors at dusk or after dark.
• When traveling on your own, choose accommodations with tidy grounds and air conditioning or with windows having well-fitting screens. Use mosquito netting elsewhere.
• Check that bed netting has no holes or rips. Tuck netting under your mattress.
• Avoid local preventatives. Many are unproven, such as mosquito coils or Avon Skin-So-Soft. While these are popular folklore insect repellents in the U.S., they perform poorly in scientific studies.

If you become ill: Early treatment is essential if you do acquire malaria. Consider any flu-like illness with fever in a malarial area to be malaria until proven otherwise.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever and chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and dizziness. See a physician promptly! Delay in seeking medical care and delay in diagnosis increases the chances of complications. Per the CDC, “Malaria symptoms will occur at least 7 to 9 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Fever in the first week of travel in a malaria-risk area is unlikely to be malaria; however, you should see a doctor right away if you develop a fever during your trip. Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice. Malaria infections with Plasmodium falciparum, if not promptly treated, may cause kidney failure, coma, and death. Despite using the protective measures outlined above, travelers may still develop malaria up to a year after returning from a malarious area.

You should see a doctor immediately if you develop a fever anytime during the year following your return and tell the physician of your travel."

**Common Health Concern: Traveler’s Diarrhea**

The most common health problem for U.S. Americans when traveling is intestinal upset. The change in diet, the different meal schedule, and organisms unfamiliar to your system are possible causes.

A very common ailment is traveler’s diarrhea. Prevention includes being careful about where and what you eat and avoiding dairy products if they are not pasteurized. If you do get it, the following suggestions can help speed recovery and guide your decision to seek formal care:

1. It will usually run its course in three to five days. The worst symptoms usually occur the first day. Bed rest may help relieve cramps.
2. The main risk is dehydration. Maintain fluid intake. An excellent source of fluid replacement is ORS or Oralyte, a prepackaged liquid sold in many countries. If unavailable, the following recipe provides similar value: one-liter carbonated water, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda (not baking powder), 4 tbsps. sugar.
3. An over-the-counter medicine like Pepto Bismol may help relieve nausea and vomiting.

If nausea and vomiting persist for more than 24 hours, if you develop a fever over 101ºF, or if you develop severe abdominal pain, contact a physician immediately.

**Water in Korea:**

Tap water is not safe to drink in South Korea. Although it is chlorinated in major cities
(and the CDC advises it is okay), there are still many reports of stomach upsets. There are water purifiers in the Ajou dormitory kitchens, academic buildings, in restaurants, etc. Most people do brush their teeth with tap water, but you may wish to use bottled water for this as well. There are conflicting messages as to whether or not the water is safe to drink but when in doubt, we suggest you drink bottled/filtered water.

**Medical/Mental Health Availability in South Korea**

Adequate medical care is available in South Korea. If you have health problems, you have two choices. For minor health problems such as colds or indigestion, the Ajou international staff strongly recommends you visit the infirmary located in the student union building. There you can see the pharmacist during office hours and buy basic medicine.

For serious health problems or medical check-ups, you can go to the Ajou University Hospital, one of the top five hospitals in South Korea. Visit the Office of International Affairs before you go to the hospital. They will make the proper arrangements with the hospital for you.

If you would like to see an English-speaking therapist while in Korea, it is best to work with CISI insurance and the CIE to help identify those therapists. The CIE can obtain a list of English-speaking therapists and then you can directly contact those people and inquire about services. It is best to start this process before you go, but if you are abroad and want these services, you can either directly contact CISI or the CIE and they can assist.

Ajou has recently begun a counseling program on campus. There are services for English speakers. To learn more, see the [Counseling Program website](#) (scroll to bottom for English translation).

**Restrictions on Medications in South Korea**

Per the U.S. State Department, you should be aware that South Korea's customs authorities enforce strict regulation about importing and exporting items such as narcotics and prescription drugs as well as non-prescription health supplements. These regulations apply to prescription and non-prescription medications that are brought in with travelers as well as those sent through the mail. *Since the same strict regulations apply to items mailed to and from the Republic of Korea, several U.S. citizens have been prosecuted for participation in drug smuggling via international mail.*

Amphetamines are illegal in Korea and even prescription amphetamines and other prescription narcotics will not be permitted into the country without advance permission from the Korea Food and Drug Administration (KFDA) in the form of a “bring-in permit letter.”

Please work with CISI insurance to determine what you must do to bring your prescriptions into South Korea.

**CISI Insurance in South Korea**

If you have an accident or become ill while studying in Korea, you may have to pay the price of the medical service up front. You will then file a claim through CISI, the insurance provided through the UW System for partial or full reimbursement in accordance with plan coverages.
Services for Students with Disabilities

If you have a significant mobility or sensory disability, you should inform your study abroad coordinator right away.

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in South Korea in general. To find more information on the topic, please see the “Laws and Special Circumstances” tab on the U.S. State Department Country page.

Safety in South Korea

Information on crime, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in South Korea can be found in the State Department Consular Information Sheet. Safety in-and-around Korea will be discussed during orientation on-site.

Just as you need to do in any U.S. city, you will need to take safety precautions while walking and traveling around Korea. Using your common sense at all times will aid you well. Avoid unlighted areas at night when you are walking around the city, and do not walk or take buses alone at night – especially women. Don't take any unnecessary risks!

The crime rate in Korea is low. However, pickpocketing, purse snatching, assault, hotel room and residential burglary, and residential crime occur more frequently in major metropolitan areas, such as Seoul and Busan. Itaewon, Shinchon, Myeongdong, and Hongdae are well-known entertainment and shopping districts in Seoul in which crowds, alcohol, and a higher prevalence of drug activity can also present a higher risk for crime. Please use caution in all crowded entertainment, nightlife, and shopping districts throughout Korea.

Recently, a small number of incidents involving U.S. citizens have included allegations of physical and sexual assault, drugs slipped into drinks, and thefts of purses or wallets. Bar and street fights, as well as occasional harassment of Westerners, have also been reported in nightlife districts in Seoul.

**NOTE:** Both men and women should be aware of their safety at all times. In the past, men have been just as susceptible as women to potential risks. As U.S. Americans, you may stick out as "foreigners." The best advice is to be aware of your surroundings, listen to your instincts, and use your common sense.

Pick-Pocketing: Pick-pocketing is common on public transportation and at popular tourist sites. To reduce the risk, do not have your phone or other valuables out in public spaces. An iPhone is a target for pick-pocketers. If you carry a purse, make sure it is across the body and has zippers. Keep your wallet in a front pocket, not a back pocket. Only carry small amounts of cash on you to minimize loss. Using a money belt under your clothing is another way to prevent valuables from being stolen.

Hiking: If you decide to hike, please make sure you hike with a buddy and let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return. While hiking, be aware of the weather as it can turn very quickly.

Tensions between the Two Koreas: The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (also known as North Korea or the DPRK) and the Republic of Korea are legally still in a state of war. There is peace on the Korean peninsula because of an agreement that has lasted for close to 60 years. There are ever changing dynamics of the Korean peninsula. At the time
of editing, the relationship seems to be mending and looking up, but you should always be aware how quickly relations can change. In 2017 tensions between North and South Korea flared again due to North Korea testing nuclear weapons. In August 2015, tensions flared as North Korea fired shell on the city of Yeoncheon. While they were no causalities, both sides went into pre-war status and began talks. Talks ended after a few days and tensions eased. In February 2013, North Korea conducted a nuclear weapon test that was widely condemned internationally and set off a series of threats from North Korea.

At the time of publication, the U.S. State Department has not issued any travel advisories discouraging travel to South Korea.

**Food in Korea:**
Generally, food in Suwon is safe. You should be sure to eat hot foods hot, and cold foods cold. Fresh fruit is available cut up and is generally safe. If in doubt, buy fruit that is not yet peeled. While most food is safe, use your judgment, is the vendor’s cart clean? Do they have the food kept cold until it is cooked? Etc.

Don't take unnecessary risks with your health. You may find yourself in a situation where it would be culturally offensive not to eat something that is offered to you. You will have to decide what to do in those situations on an individual basis. There is no one right answer, but one suggestion might be to say that you like something ELSE that is being offered better than the dish you think would be unsafe to eat. That way, you'll be given more of the dish that you do like. Just be careful!

**Travel to North Korea**
The US State Department has placed a Travel Advisory, Level 4: Do Not Travel on North Korea. The CIE strictly forbids any UWEC student traveling to North Korea.

The State Department lists that U.S. passports are not valid for travel to, in or through North Korea, unless they are specially validated by the Department of State.

To read the full travel advisory, see here.

**LGBTQIA+ Traveler**
The U.S. State Department has information on their LGBTI Travel Information Page. In addition, you can view the CIE’s Gender + Sexuality page for further resources.

**Resources for Victims of Sexual Violence**
General information and resources are on the Health & Safety section of the study abroad website.

**Emergency Contacts**
General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook, and the Ajou international staff is available if difficulties arise. The information is on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

**911 Equivalent in South Korea**
If you are in an emergency situation in South Korea, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line in South Korea is 112 for the police and 119 for ambulance or fire. We suggest you save these numbers in your cell phone in case you need to use them quickly.
Marijuana and other Illegal Drugs

The possession and use of marijuana is illegal. Even carrying it on your person can be considered drug trafficking. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in South Korea are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. U.S. citizenship offers no protection if you break a Korean law. There is NOTHING the CIE, Ajou or the U.S. government can do if you are found in violation the law.

In addition to legal penalties, you are putting yourself at risk of robbery or assault, or you may get a much more dangerous combination of drugs than you thought you were buying.

Special Note for Korean Adoptees

Military Duty for Korean Adoptees

The Korean government requires that all Korean male citizens serve military duty when they are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. However, there are exceptions for certain cases, one of which involves Korean male adoptees.

Men who were born in the Republic of Korea but adopted by parents of United States citizenship are not subject to military duty in the Republic of Korea, but only if they were naturalized before the age of eighteen. However, in order to prevent the Korean Military Manpower Agency (MMA) from mistakenly imposing conscription, these individuals must register the loss of their Korean nationality in their own family register through the Korean Consulate General.

If an individual was not naturalized before the age of eighteen, he must apply to postpone his military duty.

For further information on the postponement process and the registration of the loss of Korean nationality, please check the website of the Korean Consulate General in each area according to jurisdiction or the MMA website. http://www.mma.go.kr/eng/index.do

Required Documents

General passport and visa information is in the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the CIE for more information about the following topics.

Visa

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country.

Although the CIE will provide information, it is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for Korea, and to apply for and receive a visa in a timely manner. Please read the “Visa” section of your Study Abroad Handbook for more information about what you should do to keep up-to-date on visa requirements.

U.S. citizens, who want to study South Korea, will need to obtain a visa prior to arrival in South Korea. Note that you cannot apply for your visa until you are 90 days out from your program, and you have the necessary paperwork from Ajou University.
Visas generally take three-four weeks to obtain by mail (including mail time). Be sure to have all of your other documents ready to send and send everything immediately upon receipt of your Ajou documents.

You cannot enter Korea under a tourist visa, so you must have your student visa prior to traveling.

**Collection of Biometric Data**

Per the U.S. State Department, the Republic of Korea began collecting the biometric data of foreign visitors at ports of entry (international airports and seaports) effective January 1, 2012. "U.S. citizens entering the Republic of Korea will have their two index fingerprints electronically scanned at the same time a digital photograph is taken of their face by a Korea Immigration Service inspector. This process will take place while the traveler’s passport is being inspected at an immigration booth. Children under the age of 17 and foreign government and international organization officials and their accompanying immediate family members are exempt from this requirement." If you have any questions or concerns about this requirement, please contact your study abroad coordinator.

**Alien Registration**

Foreigners who want to stay in Korea for more than 90 days needs to register with the local immigration office to receive an Alien Registration Card (ARC). It is illegal to stay in Korea for more than 90 days without being registered, regardless of your visa. There will be a fee of about 30,000 won. You will need to do this shortly after you arrive and the Ajou international office will provide more information during your on-site orientation and in pre-departure materials they send you. Just note that when you go through this process, you will need to leave your passport with the immigration office, which will prevent you from exiting the country, so be sure to plan any optional travel around this process.

**Visas for Travel to Other Countries**

If you plan to travel outside your host country while abroad, you should verify visa requirements for each country you will visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country, or your travel agency. China does require U.S. citizens to have a visa for tourist travel.

**Packing Tips**

General packing information is in the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section. A country-specific packing list will be released through your BlugoldsAbroad account a few months prior to departure.

**Weather**

South Korea has four distinct seasons: spring from mid-March to the end of May; summer from June to August; autumn from September to November; and winter from December to mid-March. Of course, the actual weather does not always fit these neat categories.

Temperatures vary hugely between mid-summer and mid-winter, with August being very hot and sticky (71 °F to 90 °F), while December and January are literally freezing (19 °F to 33 °F). Winters in the north are colder than in the more southerly Busan or Jeju. Heavy rainfall always arrives with the summer monsoon season (late June to mid-July), but you can expect some heavy rain in March-May.

**Packing**

If you are going to be abroad during the winter months, you will want to make sure you pack...
accordingly. You will have heat in your accommodations, but you may find buildings to be drafty and cooler.

In general, take clothing that is washable and does not wrinkle easily. Because of the temperature variation, bring garments that can be worn interchangeably and that you can layer. Past participants suggest choosing one color scheme and note that dark colors show less dirt and are warmer.

Avoid clothes that are too revealing. In particular, tank tops and short shorts or short skirts are not appropriate for women. Also, you don’t need to bring a lot of dressy clothes with you since it is okay to go out at night wearing regular clothes.

Bring a good pair of walking shoes, one pair of good sandals and a pair of comfortable "dress" shoes. Men's size 9 and larger, and women's size 6 and larger are hard to find in South Korea, as are tights for women taller than 5'5".

**Do Not Bring**

Do not bring expensive cell phones, jewelry, or other luxury items that can be lost or stolen. If you do decide to bring items that are expensive to replace, you may want to consider personal property insurance for your time in Korea.

**Getting To South Korea**

*There is information on booking flights in the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section.*

**Travel Arrangements**

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to South Korea. Airline tickets are not included in your program fees.

**Ajou University expects students to arrive at Incheon Airport** as this is the international airport in Seoul. Kimpo (sometimes spelled "Gimpo"), the other airport, is largely used for domestic flights.

**We recommend that you do not make your travel arrangements until Ajou has accepted you to the program and dates have been confirmed.** If you feel that you can't wait until you get your visa, we recommend that you purchase a ticket with a low cancellation and change fee.

**Buying a Changeable Ticket**

We strongly recommend that you buy a roundtrip ticket with a low change fee. Note that trip insurance does not cover flight changes if you buy a non-changeable, non-refundable ticket.

**Early Arrivals**

Arriving early is not recommended as you won’t have access to the international staff. If you do arrive early, you will need to make your own way to Ajou University and stay in a hotel until the dorms open. Ajou has indicated that there is an inexpensive hotel near the university where international students sometimes stay while they are waiting to check into their housing. Ajou may be able to help you make a reservation at this hotel if you want and provide instructions on how to get to campus. If you come to Ajou University by yourself, please go directly to the International Dormitory and contact the dormitory officer at the entrance of
the hall. They will assist with your dormitory check-in.

Airport Pick-Up Service
Pick-Up Dates
When you arrive in South Korea, you will first arrive in Seoul. In the past, Ajou University has had an airport pick-up service for students arriving on the designated arrival day. In the event they have it again this year, Ajou University will arrange for Korean buddies (Ajou students) to meet students at the airport holding a sign labeled "Ajou University" so that you will recognize them. They will be located inside Exit No. 7 on the first floor. Note that after your Ajou acceptance, Ajou will send you additional pick-up information that you will need to complete in a timely manner. Airport pick-up is only available for students who apply for it in advance.

Pick-Up Fees
All students need to have 20,000 Korean won for transportation from the airport to Suwon and about 4,000 won for a taxi from the bus stop to the university dormitory whether you request a pick-up or not.

Late Arrivals-Expected and Unexpected
If you don't arrive as scheduled, for any reason, you will be responsible for arranging and paying for your transfer from the airport. Again, watch for detailed instructions in your arrival information from the Ajou international staff. They will send you detailed information.

Important reminder: Write down your address or campus address, on a piece of paper, in case you need to give it to a cab driver on arrival.

Leaving Your Host City
Return airport transportation isn't included in your program fees and you will need to find your own way to the airport on your last day.

SETTLING IN
Orientation
You will have a two-day mandatory orientation right away. During orientation, important information such as academic schedules, tips for living in Korea, alien registration, etc. will be discussed. A campus tour and welcoming reception will also be held.

On-Site Support
The Ajou University international office will provide support should any questions or concerns arise. They are there to assist you, but they will not actively seek you out to make sure everything is going okay.

In addition, if any events or outings are planned, they will make you aware and you can participate in them for a small fee. They will also help you get paired with a Korean Buddy if that interests you.

Local Transportation
Taxis and trains are also plentiful and relatively inexpensive. If taking a taxi, be sure to watch the meter to make sure it is being used properly. Many taxis wait at taxi stands around the city, but you can also hail one if it drives by.

Getting Involved
In addition to the formal orientation at the beginning of the program, the International Office hosts a number of special events for exchange students such as International Day (fall semester only) (traditional costumes and food festival - Ajou recommends that you bring
a "traditional costume" or artifacts from your home country for this day). There are also trips to a variety of cultural places and an optional temple stay. During field trips, you may need to purchase your own meals.

**Korean Buddy Program:** Once at Ajou University, you can sign up to get paired with a Korean buddy. The buddies are students who volunteer to be paired with an international student, so you will have a better chance to learn more about Korean culture with your buddy. They may take you to visit places, eat with you, or help you work on your Korean language skills. In addition to assigning your official buddy, Ajou will host gatherings for international and Korean students.

**Extracurriculars:** There are many clubs and student associations that you can join. They range from sports to art to volunteer. There are more than 130 to choose from and this is a great way to meet local students. Some clubs may only be in Korean, but you are still welcome to join.

**Housing**

**Living Situation**
International students studying for the semester or year at Ajou, as well as a few Korean students, typically live in a double occupancy room in the new international dormitory.

The dorms differ from American dorms in that **males and females are not allowed into one another's wings.** If you need to get a hold of a member of the opposite sex, it is recommended that you call them. There are common rooms that you will be allowed to meet in, but they are not open all the time and you must follow the rules. There is also no alcohol and no gambling allowed in the dorms.

A security guard walks the halls, and he is known to be especially vigilant when he suspects the rules are being broken.

**Housing Application**
After you are officially accepted by Ajou, they will send you a pre-arrival email that contains information on how to compete the dormitory application. **There will be a short window of time where the application is open, and you MUST complete the application at that time.** Failure to do so could result in you not receiving housing and you would need to find your own. The housing application usually opens in January (for spring students) and late June (for fall students). You usually don't find out your placement until shortly before you depart.

On your application, if you want to have a Korean roommate, you will need to note that. While it isn't guaranteed, Ajou will do their best to accommodate. In general, any preferences you request may not be accommodated.

**Housing over Break**
If you are planning to stay for the academic year, you are required to pay extra for housing over the break. For a two-person bedroom in the international dormitory, you can expect to pay around $690 USD for the break housing. Many past academic year students have opted out of this housing and instead used the time to travel around Asia. Either way, you are responsible for paying for your housing expenses (either in the hall or elsewhere traveling) over the break.

**What's Provided?**
Each room in student housing is equipped with a bed, desk, chair, and closet for each student, as well as a telephone. Each room also has an
Ethernet hook-up, so you can bring your laptop if you feel it is necessary. A LAN cord can be purchased at the convenience store in the hall (wireless internet is not available in your room). One sheet and one heavier blanket are provided on a temporary basis to use when you first arrive, but then you will need to purchase your own. Towels are not provided. Wireless Internet is available in the study room and lobby.

You will share shower/bathing and kitchen facilities on each floor. There are also common computer rooms; study rooms; a workout area with treadmills, weights and a ping pong table; and TV lounges.

There is a little convenience store in the lobby of the hall. You can buy sandwiches, ice cream, drinks, and candy, as well as more common things like school supplies, Ethernet cords, and cleaning supplies, including laundry detergent.

**Laundry**
There are washers/dryers and an ironing board in the basement, but you will need to pay to use them and provide your own detergent.

**Shopping**
If you forgot to pack something, don’t worry. You can find everything you need fairly close to campus.

**Meals & Snacks**
Students can buy various styles of meals on and off campus, and also cook some instant snacks in the shared kitchen in the dormitory. No meal plan is provided. Students usually use the kitchen to cook noodles, toast, and small snacks or to keep their own food in the refrigerator. You may purchase meal coupons to eat at a student cafeteria located just in front of Hwa-Hong Hall or in other cafeterias around campus. Dasan Hall has a cafeteria in it where you can find classic Korean food. Another dorm on campus has a cafeteria that has American classics like spaghetti, French fires, and burgers. You can also grab quick snacks from the dorm convenience store or go into the city, onto “the street” outside of campus where there are many restaurants.

Normal meal prices range from 2,500 to 4,500 won (approx. $2.25-$5) per meal at campus cafeterias and about 7,000 won (approx. $6.25) per meal at off-campus restaurants. Students pay individually in Korean won for each meal they purchase (note that Korea is a cash-oriented society, so you will want to always have some won available).

See the Cultural Notes below to learn more about Korean Food.

**Internet Access**
Each room is equipped with Ethernet hook-ups; however, you will need to buy a LAN cable when you arrive (the convenience store on campus has them). Wireless Internet is available on campus, so you will be able to access it with your laptop computer or smartphone. You will be given an Internet ID once you arrive at Ajou and you will use that to access the wireless.

**COMMUNICATION**
See the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section for information on:
- *Communication with UWEC*
- *Calling, Texting & Other Communication*

**Time Difference**
South Korea is 14 hours ahead of Eau Claire. For example, when it is 9:00 AM on a Thursday
in Eau Claire, it is 11:00 PM on Thursday in Korea.  
https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/south-korea/suwon

**Email/Internet Access**

Korea has Internet just about everywhere, so Internet communication will be easily facilitated, although you will need to pay for it. Each room is equipped with Ethernet hook-ups; however, you will need to buy a LAN cable when you arrive (the convenience store on campus has them). Wireless Internet is available on campus, so you will be able to access it with your laptop computer or smartphone. You will be given an Internet ID once you arrive at Ajou and you will use that to access the wireless.

**Cell Phone Information**

South Korea is known for its cell phone usage. Most local students your age will have a cell phone and want to use that to communicate with you. You can purchase a cheap pay-as-you-go phone when you arrive, or you can have your U.S. phone unlocked and then purchase a new SIM card abroad.

KaTalk (Kakao Talk) is a popular, free text messaging app (similar to WhatsApp) that you can download and use to communicate with your friends. It is used by over 93% of cell phone users in South Korea.

**Calling from the U.S.**

**From the U.S. to Korea:** First dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you must dial the country code for your host country, which for Korea is **82**. Country codes can be found in the front of phone books or online at http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/. Then you dial the rest of the number.

**Snail Mail**

International airmail typically takes 7-10 days (or longer) to reach most locations. It is not recommended to send or receive anything of real value, as customs may put a hefty customs fee on it. Know that anything you send or receive is subject to being searched by customs.

**Language**

English is used in the classroom and usually for socializing with other international students. You will encounter Korean and international students with varying levels of English. It will be interesting for you to observe how speakers of English as a second language use words. You'll find that communicating across cultures, even in English, isn't always easy.

As you might have guessed, the main language in Korea is Korean, or Hanguk. If you have the opportunity to learn some basic Korean phrases before you go, take it! Or make the opportunity by connecting with some of the Korean students on campus for language exchange.

The written alphabet is called Hangul. The alphabet is phonetic. If you want to look at it and practice before you go, here is a helpful website with language lessons in general: http://korean.sogang.ac.kr.

Before you go, it might help you to learn a few common phrases.

- Hello: *annyunghaseyo* (on nyung ha say o)
- Thank you: *kamsahamnida* (kahm sa ham nee da)
- Goodbye when you are leaving: *annyeonghi gyeseyo* (An-nyeong Hi-gye-se-yo)
- Goodbye when someone else is leaving: *annyeonghi gaseyo* (Annyeong Hi-ga-se-yo)
I am American: Miguk Salem (mee gook sah lam)

Please give me: juseyo (chu say yo) Use it with food, at a restaurant

How much: olmayeyo (ole ma yay yo) usually the response is typed out on a calculator - don't worry if you haven't got the numbers figured out!

Student: haksein (hock sane)

Ajou University: Ajou Tehakyo, or just Ajou Te (pronounced “tay”). This is useful when you get into a taxi and need to get back to campus.

Even if you learn a few phrases before you go, you won't be fluent in Korean. But don't panic - some of the basics will be easy.

Most public transportation, such as buses and subways, have English translations on the signs. Taxi cabs in major cities have free English translators via phone, so foreign travelers can easily communicate with the driver.

Some of the bigger restaurants will have English menus. T.G.I. Friday's and Outback Steak House are also big chains in Korea. At the school cafeterias, there are usually three dishes you can choose from. Also, there are food-of-the-day displays so that you can see the choices before you buy a meal coupon.

**Field Trips**

Ajou University offers a number of field trips to international exchange students. For a tentative list of the field trips, please visit the Ajou website: [https://www.ajou.ac.kr/mb/mb_incoming/cultural-activities.do](https://www.ajou.ac.kr/mb/mb_incoming/cultural-activities.do)

**Additional Travel**

Before or after the program, you may want to take advantage of being in South Korea and do some traveling. **Please note that you should not plan weekend trips and activities until you arrive in South Korea and receive your schedule, as Ajou may require activities on the weekend.**

The Korea National Tourism Organization (KNTO) has a useful website in English at [http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/en/index.kto](http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/en/index.kto) The KNTO also operates a telephone information service in Korea, which can be reached by calling 1330 (02-1330 from mobile phones) anywhere in the country. This telephone service has English speakers and is available 24 hours a day.

**Sites in Seoul**

You can get from Ajou University to Seoul in about 30 minutes by bus. Once you’re there, a past participant recommends the following sites:

The National Folk Museum of Korea ([http://www.nfm.go.kr/home/index.do](http://www.nfm.go.kr/home/index.do)), the only national museum in Korea devoted to the history of traditional life. A must-go place!

Coex Mall is one of the fanciest shopping malls, and it has big theaters, restaurants, and game places.

**TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD**

General information on guidebooks, maps, hostels and more is in the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section.
Another popular shopping area in Seoul is Myeongdong Shopping District. It’s the #2 most tweeted location in the world!

The Blue House (Korea’s White House) is a beautiful building. Day-pass tours are held every Friday and Saturday.

If you’d like a taste of home/anything international, Itaewon is the expat/international district of Seoul. You will find most everything in English and the only Taco Bell!

North Seoul Tower is a communication tower that rises 479.7 meters above sea level and has a revolving restaurant and good views of the city!

Korea has been invaded many times and the War Memorial of Korea is the best place to learn about its troubled history, especially its relationships with its near neighbors. Though it calls itself a war memorial, this is really a huge military history museum ($3 admission), with tanks, planes and guns on display. Given that the peninsula is still technically at war with North Korea, this place seems very relevant. Take subway line 4 to Samgakji Station.

Read more: Seoul: 10 Things to Do – TIME.

Air/Bus/Train Travel
There are many Asian airlines that fly to/from Seoul. If you book domestic flights or flights around Asia, be sure to know the luggage restrictions as every airline is different.

This website is a good resource to learn about transportation options. In addition, Ajou University has this information about public transportation around the university.

CULTURE

Food
Korean food is generally spicy. Rice and kimch'i (a spicy pickled cabbage) are staples at almost every meal. Various soups are common. Rice is often combined with other ingredients, such as red beans or vegetables. Bibimbap is rice mixed with bits of meat and seasoned vegetables. Chicken and beef are common meats. Koreans also eat large amounts of fish and dok (pounded rice cake). Barley tea is served with most meals. Soju and magulli are common alcoholic drinks for socializing before meals. Fruit is popular as a dessert.

Korean meals (including breakfast) are almost always accompanied by a bowl of rice and bowl of hot soup or stew. A traditional meal contains a variety of vegetables. Korean foods are seldom deep-fried; they are usually boiled, broiled, stir-fried, steamed, or pan-fried in vegetable oil.

Koreans use a spoon to eat rice, soups and stews, and chopsticks for rather dry side dishes. They do not use a spoon and chopsticks simultaneously, nor do they hold their bowls and plates while eating.

Koreans generally believe that sharing food from one bowl makes a relationship closer. However, if you are not comfortable with this, you can politely ask the host for an individual bowl or plate.

A few dishes you will encounter:

Bap (boiled rice): Boiled rice, or rice mixed with barley, corn or other grains, is the staple of the Korean diet. There are many ways to cook rice, and different ingredients can be added to it.
**Kuk or T'ang (soup):** Soup will be served at most Korean meals. Ingredients commonly used in soup include meat, vegetables, fish, and seaweed.

**Bulgoki (barbecued beef):** Barbequed beef is one of the most popular dishes in Korea. Bulgoki literally means "fire beef," but it is generally called "Korean barbecue." Thin, tender slices of beef are marinated in a sauce and cooked over a hot charcoal grill.

**Kimch'i:** Kimch'i is Korea's staple side dish, which along with rice, accompanies almost every meal. It is a salted, pickled vegetable dish, often including cabbage, cucumber or radishes. It is hot and spicy, and often an acquired taste for foreigners.

**Religion**
"Confucianism permeates all aspects of Korean society. It encourages such practices as worshipping at shrines and ancestral tombs. In addition, Confucianism orders social behavior, stressing righteousness and filial piety (family relationships) especially between father and son. More than one-quarter of the people follow the traditions of folk religion called Shamanism. Important to Shamanism are geomancy, divination, avoiding bad luck or omens, warding off evil spirits and honoring the dead. Nearly 30 percent of the population is Christian. More than 15 percent of Koreans practice Buddhism."

**Family**
"The family is the foundation of society and is bound by a strong sense of duty and obligation among its members. The father is the head of the family; he and the oldest son receive the greatest respect. In the extended family, the oldest members are paid the greatest honor. Although, the nuclear family is now more common, especially in the cities, sons still expect to care for their aging parents."

**General Attitudes of Koreans**
"The Confucian ethic is evident in the general attitudes of Koreans. Many rituals of courtesy, behavioral formalities, and customs regulate social relations. Hard work and filial piety are valued. Koreans often use extreme modesty when speaking about themselves. They are reluctant to accept honors and graciously deny compliments. Open criticism and public disagreement are considered inappropriate because they can damage another person's reputation. Out of respect for the feelings of others, Koreans may withhold bad news or adverse opinions or express them in an indirect way."
### CONTACT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ajou University</strong></th>
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https://kr.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulate/seoul/seoulinfo@state.gov | Remember that in most cases, local contacts are best in local emergency situations. |
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After-Hours Phone: 011-82-2-397-4114  
Fax: 011-82-2-397-4080  
https://kr.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulate/seoul/seoulinfo@state.gov | If you have an after-hours emergency that can be helped on the U.S. side, please call University Police at the number above. Calls can be made to this number 24 hours a day. You may get an answering machine; however, an officer is alerted as soon as you have left your message. Be sure to give the officer the phone number you can be reached at, as well as what type of assistance you require. |
## WEB INFORMATION: SOUTH KOREA

### City
Britannica: [https://www.britannica.com/place/Suwon](https://www.britannica.com/place/Suwon)

### Culture
Korean Language: [http://korean.sogang.ac.kr](http://korean.sogang.ac.kr)
Culture/Customs/Language: [http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student.php?id=110](http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student.php?id=110)

### Country
AskAsia Korea: [http://asiasociety.org/education](http://asiasociety.org/education)
Lonely Planet-South Korea: [http://www.lonelyplanet.com/south-korea](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/south-korea)
Korea National Travel Organization: [http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto](http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto)
When past participants of the South Korea program were asked to sum up their experience, here is what they said:

I would say I learned a lot about myself while abroad. Seeing life from another perspective and spending time with people from all over the world really helped me to grow as an individual. The intense amount of diversity from around the world challenged me at first and ended up developing my identity while also confirming and strengthening other parts of my identity.

Don't be afraid to be confused about your identity while abroad. You'll end up learning a lot about yourself, and it's actually a really good thing.

I wish I knew more of the language before going. I improved a lot while I was there though.

I genuinely love South Korea. To me it is a place that brought me fulfillment in ways America never could. The university was beautiful and has so many programs available for students. I made so many friends and learned about places all over the world.

This was one of the best experiences of my life. The classes were appropriately challenging. Campus life was enjoyable and it was easy to get to know other international students as well as local Korean students. I would say I was able to get a good cultural experience while in Korea and was also able to improve my Korean language skills. This experience has also confirmed for me that I would like to return after graduating with my degree from UWEC.

My identity greatly impacted my study abroad experience being that my identity was a big factor in why I choose South Korea. Being Asian American I wanted to experience being in a predominately Asian country and I would say my experience would not have been the same if not for my identity.

It is what you make of it while you are there and I felt like every day I went out of my way to try and make the best of my experience.

The time adjustment was so hard because it was 15 hours when we first got here (to Korea). Also adjusting to the hierarchical respect culture has been an adjustment, I've been afraid of accidentally offending someone.

The best things is the passionate Ajou University students who want you to join clubs and they are curious about life outside of Korea. Also, the food is amazing and the socializing culture that exist here.