

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Study Abroad



**SOUTH KOREA
FALL 2017**

Program Guide

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CONGRATULATIONS on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire semester or year exchange program with Ajou University in Suwon City, Republic of Korea (South Korea). Living and studying in a foreign culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

Building upon existing foreign language skills
Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field
Increasing understanding of different cultures
Getting to know oneself
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 experience!

This program guide is to be used together with the general Study Abroad Handbook. The handbook has information that is valid for all UW-Eau Claire study abroad programs. This guide will provide you with information specific to the South Korea exchange program. It is designed to complement the study abroad orientation and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Please realize that although this guide was written to help you better prepare for your time abroad, and that all of the information available at the time of publishing has been used, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer adviser will email additional information throughout the semester. We also strongly encourage you to contact your peer adviser and South Korean students on campus with your specific questions. You should also make use of the additional written and web resources listed towards the end of this guide.

Basic questions only you can answer include:

- 1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Common goals of student travelers include advancement in a future profession; desire to expand personal and academic horizons; need for a change; and wish to challenge oneself with immersion in a new culture.
- 2) Given the way the program is set up; how can you best prepare to meet your goals?

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Program

The Ajou University - UW-Eau Claire summer exchange program began in summer 2005, and the semester/year program began fall 2012.

Ajou is one of the top ten universities in South Korea. They have an extensive network of exchange partners around the globe. Not only will you have the opportunity to learn from South Korean students, you will be interacting with other exchange students from around the world.

The Location

The Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the surrounding area is a region of growing economic and geopolitical importance to the U.S. and the world. South Korea is now the United States' sixth-largest trading partner and the 11th largest economy in the world.

Suwon, a city of approximately 1 million people, is located in northwestern South Korea and is only a half-hour drive from the capital city, Seoul.

The University

Since it was founded in 1973, Ajou University has been nationally recognized for its excellent programs in engineering, medicine, business, computer engineering, and international studies. The University provides a cozy academic and residential atmosphere for its roughly 14,000 students on the main campus of 130 acres with 35 buildings. Visit the Ajou website at <http://www.ajou.ac.kr/en/>.

Academic Calendar

Ajou University's academic year consists of two semesters. Generally, each semester consists of 16 weeks. The normal academic year at Ajou runs from March to December. Semester one runs March to June and semester two runs September to December.

However, Ajou allows their North American and European exchange students to study on the western academic calendar from September to June to accommodate the differences in academic calendars. Students studying on the western calendar will study September to December (semester two), stay for winter break, and study from March to June (semester one). Students studying on the western academic calendar must apply for housing during the break after they arrive at Ajou University.

Please do not book your flight until you have been accepted by Ajou University and the finalized calendar is available.

Dates for Fall Semester 2017

Arrival	TBD
Orientation	
Semester Begins	
Mid-term Exams	
Final Exams	
Semester Ends	
Move out of housing	

Dates for Spring Semester 2017

Arrival	TBD
Orientation	
Semester Begins	
Mid-term Exams	
Final Exams	
Semester Ends	

Move out of housing	
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The 2016 program dates have gone from August 27- December 21; March 2 – June 21. Dates will be confirmed later in the spring semester.

For the full schedule visit the Ajou site:

http://www.ajou.ac.kr/en/international/inter20_02.jsp

ACADEMICS

There is additional information on academic topics such as registration, class attendance, credits and course load, grades, transcripts, and accessing the UW-Eau Claire library while abroad in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Program Prerequisites

To participate in this exchange program, you must be **in good academic, conduct, and financial standing and have the minimum 2.5 GPA required.** The Center for International Education (CIE) will check your grades at the end of the semester prior to departure. If you are not in good academic and conduct standing at that time, we will need to check with Ajou to see if you will be allowed to participate. If you have been suspended, you will not be allowed to participate in the program. This means that cancellation may happen very shortly before your planned departure date.

Credits and Course Load

UW-Eau Claire policy requires study abroad students to take a minimum of 12 semester credits and a maximum of 18 credits. Please be aware that Ajou University rules are different. Ajou has no minimum credit requirements but

recommends that students take a minimum of 12 credits. Ajou allows students to take a maximum of 19 credits (usually six courses) during the regular semester. **You are required to follow UW-Eau Claire guidelines for your credit load. Going under 12 credits could require you to pay back your financial aid and lose your health insurance. Going over 18 credits will require you to pay additional UW-Eau Claire tuition.**

Any change to your credit load must be approved in advance by the CIE at UW-Eau Claire.

The credits you earn abroad are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits. The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation, and grades will be figured into your UW-Eau Claire GPA.

The Academic Program

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 foreign students before arrival and on orientation day. Please refer to past lists of "Courses Offered in English" at

<http://www.ajou.ac.kr/en/international/inter21.jsp>.

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.

Registration: You will receive a confirmed list of courses prior to the start of the semester. You will fill out an online course application form within a given period.

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 UW-Eau Claire, 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 UW-Eau Claire, they do not hold regular office hours, but there is time during breaks and after classes to ask questions.

Grades

Ajou awards letter grades A+ through F. Ajou grades are transferred to UW-Eau Claire as they appear on the Ajou transcript, except that Ajou awards A+ grades and UW-Eau Claire does not. An A+ from Ajou will be posted as an A on your UW-Eau Claire transcript. Here is how Ajou grades will appear on your UW-Eau Claire transcript:

Ajou	UW-Eau Claire
A+	A
Ao	A
B+	B+
Bo	B
C+	C+
Co	C
D+	D+
Do	D
F	F

Note: UW-Eau Claire students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail, and that grades from Ajou are included in your UW-Eau Claire GPA.

Transcripts

IMPORTANT: at the end of the program, **you must request that Ajou University send your transcript to the CIE.** They will also send one to your home address if you like, but the Registrar's Office at UW-Eau Claire cannot accept transcripts directly from students. Transcripts will be sent approximately 4 weeks after the end of the program.

MONEY MATTERS

Information about how payments are made, when they are due, withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, budgeting, and how to bring money abroad is in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Estimated Fall Costs Paid to UW-Eau Claire

You can find the most current Cost Estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [CIE South Korea - Semester webpage](#). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. Remember that the cost estimate includes what you pay to UW-Eau Claire, what you pay to Ajou University, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

Personal Travel

Personal travel varies greatly from student to student. It depends on your budget and your priorities. Students who want to be involved in their host community generally spend less time (and money) traveling. Others travel every weekend with correspondingly high costs and fewer close connections in their new home.

Summer 2009 participants who responded to our money survey reported spending an additional \$200 - \$500 on travel within South Korea.

Spring 2013 participants reported spending \$200 - \$2,000 on additional travel.

Spring 2015 participant said that they spent “more than one expected to by traveling to other countries, like Japan.”

In addition, one student took trips to Japan, Hong Kong and Macau. This person reported spending \$2,500.

Currency Exchange

Korean money comes in these denominations:
10,000 ₩ (won)
5,000 ₩
1,000 ₩
and various coins.

The exchange rate as of December 2016 was \$1 USD = 169 ₩. You can check current exchange rates at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

Korea is a cash oriented society meaning that a lot of places will only accept cash (no credit/debit), especially market and food stands. It is recommended that you always have cash on you.

Cost of Living in South Korea

In general, you will find prices for food and local transportation in South Korea to be cheaper than they are in the U.S. Products from the U.S. will be as expensive, if not more so, than they are here at home.

Credit Cards

In South Korea, credit cards are accepted at major hotels, larger restaurants, department stores, and at big retailers such as Costco. You can also use your major credit card to receive a cash advance at most banks and some ATMs. Remember that most credit card companies begin charging interest (9-18%!) immediately on cash advances.

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.

Debit Cards

Debit cards from banks outside of South Korea are accepted at very limited locations within South Korea. Such ATMs will have a button that says "Foreign Card" among its options. These machines are difficult to find outside of major cities. There are a few near the Ajou University campus, including one in Family Mart. There is one bank on campus with an international ATM that accepts foreign cards. There is an employee with minimal English to help you out if you have problems with the ATM.

Please note that we have had reports that Royal Credit Union (RCU) debit cards do not function in South Korea. It is very important to check with your bank to see if your card will work in South Korea.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use. They generally must be cashed at a major bank, although in some countries, post offices offer this service, and **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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Additional information on these issues, as well as on CISI insurance, is included in the Health Issues and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Immunizations

You received an update on health and safety through the *Learning Content* section of your online study abroad application. You were encouraged to visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) site to learn what immunizations are recommended for travel to South Korea.

In addition to having all routine immunizations up-to-date, you should discuss the CDC recommended immunizations with your doctor. The current CDC recommendations for South Korea can be found here:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/south-korea>.

CDC immunization recommendations should be taken very seriously since there are very few required vaccinations anywhere in the world for travelers. Requirements can only be placed by the government of the particular country, and because such requirements often discourage tourism, governments are reluctant to establish them.

Since many of the recommendations depend on the type of travel you anticipate doing, or the length of time you are staying, you need to meet with a doctor to determine what's best for your individual situation. Make sure to bring your itinerary with you to the appointment. You can also **visit UW-Eau Claire's Student Health Services, which offers immunizations** (IG, tetanus, Hepatitis B, etc.) and health education

on international travel. Student Health Services can be reached at (715) 836-5360.

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."

Medical Care in Suwon

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 new 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.

Water

Tap water is not safe to drink in South Korea. Although it is chlorinated in major cities, 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.

Food

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!

Bringing Medications to 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."

Safety in South Korea

Per the U.S. State Department Consular Information sheet, "The crime rate in the Republic of Korea is low. However, pick-pocketing, 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. Exercise caution when traveling alone at night and use only legitimate taxis or public transportation. Reduce the likelihood of becoming a crime victim by exercising the same type of security precautions you would take when visiting any large city in the United States."

The complete Consular Information Sheet with information on crime, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in South Korea is [found here](#). More information about safety will be covered upon your arrival in Suwon.

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. However, tensions between North and South Korea are on the rise following events that have taken place during Kim Jong-un's reign. In January 2016 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 casualties, 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.

The death of Kim Jung-il, the longtime leader of North Korea, also increased the tensions and uncertainty around future relations with North Korea. Kim Jong-un now rules North Korea and while things have been quiet in North Korea, the world still keeps a close eye on any activity going on.

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

Travel to North Korea

As of September 2012, the U.S. State Department has issued a travel warning for North Korea (DPRK) and advises U.S. citizens to avoid travel to this country.

According the travel warning, "The North Korean government will detain, prosecute, and sentence those who enter the DPRK without first having received explicit, official permission and an entry visa from its government. **Travel by U.S. citizens to North Korea is not routine, and U.S. citizens crossing into North Korea, even accidentally, have been subject to arrest and long-term detention.**"

For the full warning, please visit the U.S. State Department site:
<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/north-korea-travel-warning.html>

Emergency Contacts

General emergency procedures are described in the *Study Abroad Handbook* and Ajou staff are

available if difficulties arise. You received an emergency contact card at orientation; be sure to keep it in your wallet at all times. The information is also on the [Contact Names and 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.

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of [911 numbers abroad](#). Please note that in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

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 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:

<http://usa-chicago.mofa.go.kr/english/am/usa-chicago/visa/issuance/index.jsp>

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

General passport and visa information is found in your Study Abroad Handbook.

General Information on Visas

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. The CIE will provide you with information regarding entry requirements and visa regulations. **However, it is ultimately your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for your host country, and if required, to apply for and receive a visa from your host country's consulate or embassy.** 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.

Visa for South Korea

U.S. citizens do not require a visa for a stay of up to 90 days in South Korea. Since the

semester and year programs at Ajou will exceed 90 days, you will be required to apply for a visa. You will receive a handout from your Study Abroad Coordinator, Jenna Krosch, with information about how to apply for a visa. You cannot apply for your visa until Ajou officially accepts you.

If you are NOT a U.S. citizen, contact the Consulate-General of Korea for instructions on how to apply for a visa. It is your responsibility to obtain a visa from the South Korean government, the CIE cannot advise on that process.

If you plan to travel to other countries while you are abroad, you should verify visa requirements for each country by contacting the nearest consulate or a travel agency.

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.

PACKING TIPS

In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about South Korea.

Climate

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.

Clothing

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.

Shoes

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 pantyhose for women taller than 5'5".

What to Pack

Your Peer Adviser will give you a suggested packing list at our program group meeting in April.

Appliances

The standard electric current in South Korea is 220 volts. If you plan to bring a hair dryer, razor, etc., with you from the U.S., **you will need to buy a voltage converter and plug adapter to bring with you**. The other option, of course, is to buy the necessary appliances after you arrive.

ARRIVING IN SOUTH KOREA

There is also information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the Study Abroad Handbook.

Travel Arrangements

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Suwon. See "[Academic Calendar](#)" for the arrival date. There are two airports in Seoul. **Ajou University expects students to arrive at Incheon Airport** as this is the international airport in Seoul. Gimpo (sometimes spelled "Gimpo"), the other airport, is largely used for domestic flights.

Immigration/Customs

When you arrive in South Korea, you will clear immigration where you will have your passport stamped. Clearing customs is a straight-forward process. Remember, South Korean immigration officials will require you to submit your biometric data upon arrival. Please refer to the "[Required Documents](#)" section to learn more about what biometric data will be collected upon your arrival.

Arrival Information

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 Ajou will send you additional pick-up information that you will need to return directly to Ajou. Airport pick-up is only available for students who apply for it in advance.**

All students need to have 12,000 Korean won for a limousine bus 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.

Early Arrivals

If you 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. 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.

You can also make your way to Ajou by following these directions provided by Ajou:

From Incheon International Airport by bus:

1. Arrival at Incheon Airport (International Arrival, 1F)
2. Go to EXIT No.7 (International Arrival, 1F)
3. Take the airport limousine (Suwon) at 7A Bus Stop (Gyeonggi) (12,000 won/US \$12)
4. Stop at East Suwon (Hotel Castle, the last bus stop)
5. Take a taxi to Ajou University from Hotel Castle (about 3000 won/US \$3)

The bus from Incheon to Hotel Castle leaves every 15-20 minutes from 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The bus ride takes about 90 minutes and costs 12,000 Won.

From Hotel Castle, you should take a taxi to your hotel. Taxis should be available at any time. The taxi ride from the hotel to Ajou University is about 5-10 minutes and costs about 3,000 won.

Ajou will send you information on how to arrange your own transportation to campus, if you do not utilize the pick-up service.

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.

GETTING INVOLVED

Activities

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 (traditional costumes and food festival - Ajou recommends that you bring a "traditional costume" for this day), rafting the Dong river, DMZ tour, and a temple stay.

Korean Buddy

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. He or she 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.

HOUSING

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, one of the student dormitories.

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. One sheet and one heavier blanket are provided and can be changed weekly. You may want to bring a blanket or two from home, or purchase an additional one there. 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 work out 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. There are washing machines in the dorm and washers and dryers in the Student Union but you will need to provide your own detergent.

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 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 or paying for your housing expenses (either in the hall or elsewhere traveling) over the break.

MEALS

Students can buy various styles of meals on and off campus, and also cook some instant snacks in the shared kitchen in the dormitory. 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 fries, 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 3,500 won (approx. \$2.25-\$3.15) per meal at campus cafeterias and about 5,000 won (approx. \$4.45) 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.

COMMUNICATION

Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address, which you need to check while abroad, is in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Snail Mail/Mailing Address

Snail mail between the U.S. and South Korea generally takes 7-10 days (or more!). When you need to receive or send something in a hurry, you can use express mail (DHL) or a fax at a private telecommunications center. Friends and family should send mail to:

Student's Name
Office of International Affairs
Ajou University
Yulgok Hall 152
206, Worldcup-ro,
Yeongtong-gu, Suwon 443-749
Republic of Korea

Packages which are sent through airmail take approximately the same amount of time as letters to arrive. Be advised, however, that the package will probably be opened, and its contents examined, by customs.

Cell Phone

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 in over 93% of cell phone users in South Korea.

Computer Technologies

Skype: Skype is a computer-based phone service that can be downloaded for free off the Internet. All you need to make a phone call is your computer, a headset, and a microphone. You can call anywhere in the world for about two cents a minute. Plus, if you call another computer that has Skype, the call is free. If you have a camera for your computer, you can also video chat.

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.

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 Hangeul. 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: *annyeonghaseyo* (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.

CULTURE NOTES

Population

The Republic of Korea's population is 50.22 million. Except for a small Chinese minority, the people are all ethnic Korean, making Korea one of the most homogeneous countries in the world. About 80% of the population lives in urban areas.

Language

"The Korean language plays an important role in the identity of the Korean people. Korean is spoken in both North and South Korea and is written in *Hangeul*, a phonetic alphabet created in 1446 because classical Chinese (the only written language available) was difficult to master....*Hangeul* also instilled a national pride in Koreans that helped them preserve their culture during long periods of foreign occupation."

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): Barbecued 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."

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."

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."

All information in these sections above (*Population, Language, Religion, General Attitudes of Koreans, Family*) were taken from Sims, S. M.; Ralph, L. M.; and Bay, A.T. (Eds.) (2000). *South Korea. 2000 Culturegram*. Brigham Young University.

TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD

In addition to the general travel information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you will want to know the following.

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:

<http://www.ajou.ac.kr/en/international/inter22.jsp>

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://www.visitkorea.or.kr/intro.html>. 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/language/english/main.jsp>), 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.

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
http://content.time.com/time/travel/cityguide/article/0,31489,1848378_1848364_1848280,00.html#ixzz2oh77hdUx

CONTACT NAMES & ADDRESSES

GENERAL UW-EAU CLAIRE & CISI CONTACT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK.

Ajou University

Ms. Sera Lee
Incoming Program Manager
Tel.: 011-82-31-219-2923
incoming@ajou.ac.kr

Office of International Affairs
Yulgok Hall 152
Ajou University
206
Worldcup-ro, Yeongtong-Gu
Suwon 443-749
Republic of Korea
Fax: 011-82-31-219-2924

<http://www.ajou.ac.kr/en/international/inter17.jsp>

Your Mailing Address at Ajou

Student's Name
Office of International Affairs
Ajou University
206 Worldcup-ro
Yeongtong-gu, Suwon 443-749
Republic of Korea

Other Resources

The U.S. Department of State offers useful travel information on the "Travel and Living Abroad" section of their website:

<http://www.state.gov/travel/>. Check the "Highlights" section.

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Center for International Education

Jenna Krosch
Study Abroad Coordinator
kroschjm@uwec.edu

3 Schofield Hall
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54702
Phone: (715) 836-4411
Fax: (715) 836-4948

UW-Eau Claire After Hours Numbers

(715) 577-9045

South Korean Consulate in the U.S.

NBC Tower Suite 2700
455 North City Front Plaza Drive
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: (312) 822-9485
Fax: (312) 822-9849

<http://usa-chicago.mofa.go.kr/english/am/usa-chicago/main/index.jsp>

U.S. Embassy in Seoul, South Korea

188 Sejong-daero, Jongno-gu
Seoul 110-710, Rep. of Korea
Phone: 011-82-2-397-4040
After-Hours Phone: 011-82-2-397-4114
Fax: 011-82-2-397-4080

<http://seoul.usembassy.gov/seoulinfo@state.gov>

We suggest that you copy this page and leave it with your emergency contact and/or parents.

WEB RESOURCES: SOUTH KOREA

SOUTH KOREA	CULTURE	TRAVEL
Homepage http://www.ajou.ac.kr/en/international/inter24.jsp	Korean Language http://korean.sogang.ac.kr	South Korea Travel Guide http://www.travelnotes.org/Asia/sth_korea.htm
AskAsia Korea http://asiasociety.org/education	Culture/Customs/Language http://guide.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student.php?id=110	Korea National Travel Organization http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto
South Korea on Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Korea	Life in Korea http://www.lifeinkorea.com/	BBC South Korea Country Profile http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15289563
City of Suwon http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/TR/TR_EN_5_5_13.jsp	Korean Alphabet http://www.indiana.edu/~korean/nrs/hangul.html	Korean News, Info, Government http://www.korea.net/
Lonely Planet-South Korea http://www.lonelyplanet.com/south-korea		Newspapers <i>Korean News (in English)</i> <i>The Korea Herald:</i> http://www.koreaherald.com/ <i>The Korea Times:</i> http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/index.asp

When we asked past South Korea students to sum up their experiences, here is what they said:

"It isn't easy to immerse yourself in a culture that is so different from home, but the rewards of such a challenging act are great. South Korea is full of a very unique culture, there's always something to do and something to learn here. One of my favorite parts was that it is an international program, so not only did I learn about Korea, but I learned about many different countries." Erin L.

"I loved South Korea. It was a completely different academic setting and it was awesome to hear people's opinions about things going on all over the world. Everyone comes from different backgrounds and families, and that makes for such interesting conversations or discussions. I can really say I have friends all over the world now, and I will never forget all these wonderful people! :) Come to Korea!" Magan W.

"My time spent in Korea was wonderful. There was so much to do and yet so little time to see everything there is. The international students made dorm life so much more comfortable. It really felt like home." Amy P.

"My experience abroad was so eye opening and enjoyable. I made so many new friends from all over the globe! Plus I learned so much about my host country and myself!" Alethia M.

"I loved my experience! It's great to meet people from everywhere in the world that are in the same program as you. You build relationships with people and will probably stay in contact with them when you leave. You learn a lot about the culture and see the similarities and difference compared to your country. Not only do you have a lot of time focusing on school, but you have a great amount of time to explore the country and visit beautiful places!" Khue Vang

"I now have a much better sense of the world, from the perspective of an outsider, and I believe that will crucially help me to understand my future patients. I can speak the language with basic fluency now and I have made many, many friends from all over the world. I feel completely satisfied with my experience here!" Seth S



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