



# WUR Goes Abroad

## 1. Student Information

<b>Field of study in Wageningen</b>	Bachelor Food Technology
<b>Study period exchange (dd/mm/yyyy)</b>	01/03/2022 until 01/07/2022
<b>Country (exchange)</b>	South Korea
<b>City (exchange)</b>	Seoul
<b>University (exchange)</b>	Seoul National University
<b>Faculty (exchange)</b>	

## 2. Motivation for study exchange destination

### What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

I've always been interested in East-Asian countries and wanted to experience living and studying there. I could already understand some basic Korean and wanted to learn more about the culture see the country.

## 3. Accessibility to reach destination

### Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

When you arrive at Incheon Airport, you can take the subway to Seoul. You have to buy a T-money card at a convenience store (like 7-11, GS25 or CU, you can just ask for it at the counter) or vending machine. It is only a couple of euros and you can use it for the subway and bus. Don't forget to put some money on it first, you need cash for this! You can charge your card at the convenience store or with the help of a machine in the subway station.

## 4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience	12	This course will introduce fundamental ideas and principles in the study of cognitive development and its neural basis. We will discuss the innate developmental origins of domain-specific	4	Because it was a graduate course, it definitely took up more time and energy, but it was doable. I personally really liked the course, but a basis

			cognitive abilities and examine how they change over the course of brain maturation, experience, individual differences, and neurological dysfunction.		knowledge of cognitive Neuroscience was needed, so before the course started I studied some basic cognitive neuroscience by myself.
2	Introduction to psychology	6	This course offers a comprehensive survey of psychological research and methodologies, helping students to possess a profound and objective understanding of human behavior.	4	This course was quite easy and directed mostly to international students.
3	Physics 1	6	This is an introductory physics course for students majoring in natural science or engineering. Topics discussed include gravitation, fundamentals on the motion of particles, energy, wave motion, and thermal physics.	1	Nothing got explained during lectures, only the working out of exercises, which was really boring and I didn't understand what was happening. A lot of self-study and the exams were really difficult.
4	Introduction to Chemical Biology	-	This course introduces students to our current understanding of life processes at the molecular level, which is the basic concept of chemical biology. This course covers various topics related to the structure and function of proteins, nucleic acids as the storage molecules of genetic information, the functions of biopolymers, the dynamic nature of cell membranes, and generation of biological energy. This course provides the foundation for students to learn more advanced subjects such as neuroscience, gene therapy, development of new crops, drug discovery, and protein engineering.	2	Dropped the course, because I couldn't follow and because of RSI issues.

### How is the study formalized?

*E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material.*

It differs greatly per course. Some courses are really easy, from what I've heard courses that are focused towards international students (like cultural courses) are quite easy and scientific courses are much more difficult. With most courses they expect you to do a lot of independent studying. For the introduction to Cell Biology course we had to give presentation in duos and we had groupwork for the introduction to Psychology course. I didn't have any lab classes since those are not that common and are offered as separate courses. The difference between undergraduate and graduate

courses is quite big in terms of study forms. Undergraduate courses are more individual-focused, memorizing facts and classic lectures, while graduate courses are more focused on discussing lesson material together, not following a course book, but reading recently published articles and knowledge from the professor.

When the semester started I was quite stressed out from the workload and I couldn't understand what they were saying during the physics and cell biology courses. But after talking to some students they said that you have to be really bad to not pass the course, since they are quite easy with the grading. For example, I totally messed up my midterm and final exam for physics but since it was graded on a curve and many people dropped out, I eventually got a B+.

### **What is the culture of the university?**

*E.g. How approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students? What are the differences with the WUR?*

Local students aren't approachable except for the student from the buddy program (although not all of them). Koreans are not that open to new friends and often keep their friend group the same, especially at Seoul National University since they are mostly focussed on studying and afterschool activities, usually their schedules are packed. Lecturers are quite approachable, but there is a clear hierarchy present. I would advice to sign up for the SNU buddy program, you can make a lot of friends that are also exchange students and some Korean students that are open to meet foreigners.

### **What does the university offer the student additionally?**

*E.g. catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities?*

There are school lunches and dinners for very low price, but I never went there because I was scared. Everything at the university is catered towards Korean students and very little people (especially workers) speak decent English. So there are lots of clubs and sports facilities its just difficult for foreigners to get in or understand how it works, since nobody helps or explains it to you. Of course you can ask someone or your Korean buddy to help and it should be possible. I heard some people that were in a badminton club (if I remember correctly) that were very enthusiastic about it. But unfortunately the university doesn't really offer anything to international students, you pay more but you get less.

## **5.Housing-travelling-living**

### **What are the possibilities for housing?**

*E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates?*

A lot of my friends stayed in the dorms, which is really cheap and you share a bedroom with another person. Unfortunately the results are out very late, right before the semester starts and if you don't get in you have to find a place to stay on really short notice. I stayed at a share house close to Campus with two other exchange students which I personally preferred. A friend of mine stayed in a goshiwon, which is a very small room with kitchen and bathroom included. They are quite cheap but not so comfortable and since you live alone it may become lonely.

**What is the culture of the country like?**

*E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners?*

Quite a big difference in culture, but Seoul is Westernized so not as big as you may expect. They have a big variety of restaurant literally everywhere in the city with amazing food for very little money. I went out to eat almost every day. Asian food typically being on the cheaper side and Western food more expensive. Koreans have amazing manners, they are quiet in public transport, don't push or cut in line (except for some grandma's), very customer friendly and don't steal your stuff. I've never felt this safe while walking alone during the night.

**Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?**

I paid around 400 euros per month for a shared house with two other students. Dorm rooms are around 100-200 euros per month, depending on the building and room, you usually share a bedroom with one other and a house with 6 in total.

**Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure?**

*E.g. Cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university?*

The subway and bus system works great and is really cheap. You buy a T-money card at a convenience store for a couple euros, which you charge with cash. When you use the subway an automatic payment of around one euro is done (1,250 won) and a few cents can be added if you travel far. If you take the bus before/after the subway you pay nothing or almost nothing. Subways stop running around midnight and continue again around 5:30 am. Use the app 'Naver map' or 'Kakao map' for directions, Google maps doesn't work there. Taxis are quite cheap as well and there is an app with which you can put in the place you want to go to and they assign you a taxi, which makes it a lot easier because you don't have to communicate it in Korean.

## 6. Free time

**What are must-sees in the area?**

*E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan?*

You can go anywhere in Seoul easily by public transport so I highly recommend to see as much of Seoul as possible.

- I highly recommend going to Gyeongbokgung palace and rent a hanbok in one of the shops nearby.
- Hongdae for shopping and busking
- Going to Namsan tower at night for the night view is also nice.
- You can take bus 7770 to Suwon, to see the fortress and visit some nice cafes.
- Busan and Jeju
- During cherry blossom season: Seokchon lake, Yeouido hangang park, route van campus naar seoul nat'l univ. station (nakseongdae park)
- Dongdaemun design plaza
- Lotte world (buy a pass with which you can cut the lines or go when its not busy because we could only do 2 rollercoasters because of the enormous waiting lines)
- Nami island

### **What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?**

We went to Gangneung, which is the east coast. Even though the weather wasn't that good, we were pleasantly surprised. Would recommend walking along the beach, light some fireworks and listen to the busking performances.

### **Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time?**

*E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out?*

There is a street close by Seoul Nat'l Univ. station where all the students go to eat.

Recommendations: jjajangmyeon and fried pork at Hongkong 0410, sushi at 동경산책, fusion food at 나의 식탁, take out is best and cheap at LaBab and 싸다김밥, great Japanese ramen at 멘쇼우라멘 and 로향양꼬치 for lamb meat. The most delicious food I ate during the whole trip was at Haidilao, close to Hongik Univ. station.

There is great food and cute cafes everywhere in Seoul and I would recommend trying as much as you can. Ikseondong is a very cute traditional Korean looking area with many cafes and restaurants. Seongsu (close to Seoul forest) is a trendy area at the moment with many themed cafes.

Going out is best in either Hongdae or Itaewon, you can also try going out in Gangnam, but there is an overwhelming amount of Koreans there and they don't always let in foreigners.

## **7.Challenges & best moment abroad**

### **What was a challenge you have experienced?**

Communication with locals was really an issue. I knew some basic Korean before going, which helped a lot but I was still struggling. There is a whole technology system in Korea which connects everything and makes life really easy and high-tech, but if you're a foreigner it's nearly impossible to enter this system. You need a Korean phone number, Alien registration number, Korean bank account and know Korean to be able to order delivery food, order stuff online or make reservations. I never managed to be able to do this, since you get your Alien registration card a few months after arrival and the workers at the Korean bank couldn't really understand English or were willing to help me.

### **What was your best memory abroad?**

Seoul Tower sky bridge. You pay quite a bit of money but for me it was definitely worth it. The view was so pretty during golden hour and it wasn't that scary to walk over the bridge. Visiting Jeju and Busan was also one of my best memories.

## **8. Contact details (optional)**

<b>Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?</b>	yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
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