

# Travel Report for Inha University in Incheon, South Korea

**Host University:** Inha University, Incheon, South Korea

**Study Programme at ITU:** Global Business Informatics, 5<sup>th</sup> semester

**Exchange agreement or Free mover:** Exchange agreement

**Courses studied abroad:**

- Database Management and Practice
- Operations Management
- Six Sigma Quality Management
- International Business and Trade Issues
- Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises
- Cultural Studies and Cyberspace

**Exchange period:** Autumn of 2023

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## 1. Your stay abroad

### 1.1. Overall experience of studying at Inha University

I spent the summer of 2022 as an exchange student at Hanyang University in South Korea, so I had some experience with life as an exchange student there. In comparison, studying at Inha University was quite different from my time at ITU, especially from the GBI program.

At Inha University, attending classes was mandatory, and in four out of six of my courses, there was weekly homework. Grades were based on attendance, participation, weekly quizzes, assignments, midterm exams, and final exams. These factors made the class environment more interactive, with the chance of being called on to answer a question even if you hadn't raised your hand.

Despite these challenges, my experience at Inha University was pleasant. The international center at the university provided guidance, the academic level was manageable, and there were plenty of opportunities to meet other students, making it an overall positive experience.

### 1.1.1. Courses

Choosing courses was a bit stressful, almost like trying to get concert tickets – it's first come, first served. You have to pick your courses in early August (at 4am Danish time), adding pressure to make sure they get pre-approved by ITU. The process involves dealing with a new and unfamiliar system, but Inha University provides helpful guides to navigate it.

The biggest challenge was selecting courses that fit the GBI program and ensuring I didn't have classes every day. I preferred a schedule where I could focus on school the first three days and explore Korea the remaining four days. Aligning my courses' time schedule with this preference was tough. Inha University has deadlines for dropping or exchanging courses if they don't meet expectations. After some effort, I managed to arrange my six courses to span over Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, giving me a lot of free time to explore on other days.

All six courses were pre-approved by ITU, and they were understanding even though I passed their deadline. It was only in early September that I was sure of all my courses. I stayed in touch with ITU's program coordinator, Anna Elizabeth Thomsen, who promptly responded to my emails, especially when SAP was slow in approving my courses.

I was part of Inha University's Business Administration department and could choose courses from there and other departments. Below are my courses at Inha and the corresponding ITU courses they replaced:

Host University		ITU Course to be replaced		
Course name	ECTS	Course type	Course name	ECTS
Entrepreneurship & Social Enterprises – Business Administration	3 Credit = 5 ECTS	mandatory	IT, Globalization & Culture	(15 ECTS)
International Business & Trade Issues – International Trade	3 Credit = 5 ECTS	mandatory	IT, Globalization & Culture	(15 ECTS)
Cultural Studies and Cyberspace – Media & Communication (APPROVED)	3 Credit = 5 ECTS	mandatory	IT, Globalization & Culture	(15 ECTS)
Operations Management – Business Administration	3 Credit = 5 ECTS	mandatory	IT-enabled Supply Chain Management	(7,5 ECTS)
Six Sigma Quality Management – Business Administration (APPROVED)	3 Credit = 5 ECTS	mandatory	IT-enabled Supply Chain Management	(7,5 ECTS)
Database Management and Practice - International Trade	3 Credit = 5 ECTS	elective	Elective	(7,5 ECTS)

I will now explain my experience with each course thoroughly:

#### **Entrepreneurship & Social Enterprises (ESE):**

In this class, we did a lot of group work, which involved group presentations, individual presentations, and some lectures. Our homework usually involved meeting with our group to prepare

for the next group presentation, where each person also had to do an individual presentation on a relevant topic. Instead of a midterm exam, we had to write a final report that was 12 pages long. The professor, who was Korean Canadian, spoke English in a way that was easy to understand. He was a pretty good professor who always gave interesting lectures.

However, there was a downside to the class because most of the French exchange students, who all came from the same university, were not respectful. They would constantly talk to each other in the back of the class, interrupting the professor. This created a negative atmosphere, and the professor had to keep telling them to be quiet.

The academic level of this class was on the manageable side, as most of the classes consisted of presentations regarding entrepreneurship in a given industry. One drawback was that the class took place every Monday from 3 pm to 6 pm, making it three long and tiring hours of lectures.

### **International Business & Trade Issues (IBTI):**

I really liked this class because it was easy. The lectures were short, about 20-40 minutes, and the professor talked about different issues in the world of international business. After each class, we had to write a 200-word assignment on a given topic related to international business or trade issues. The professor was American and pretty fun and laid-back.

For the mid-term and final exams, we had to write reports. The mid-term report was 10 pages long, and the final exam report was 12 pages long. We could choose our own topics as long as they were related to the course, so we had a lot of freedom and flexibility.

### **Cultural Studies and Cyberspace (CSC):**

I didn't like this class mainly because of the professor. He seemed to have had bad experiences with students cheating in the past, which made him act passive-aggressively in our classes. In the first class, we had to sign a contract saying we knew English, among other things. The classes mostly involved watching old movies that had nothing to do with cyberspace or cultural studies. Sometimes he would give lectures, but it was always unclear what his main points were.

Both the midterm and final exams were the same. We had to answer three questions about the movies he showed us in class. The academic level was okay, but the classes were extremely boring and almost unbearable to sit through.

### **Operations Management (OM):**

This class was definitely the most challenging one. It was very theoretical, with lots of different theories and practices to learn. The professor was Korean and had a bit of an accent when speaking English, but it wasn't too hard to understand him. He was strict and would pick

students to answer questions even if they didn't raise their hand. We also had weekly quizzes that influenced our final grade a lot, adding stress.

In class, the professor went through slides without reading them, which was good. However, there was a downside – a lot of math. We had to memorize many equations for the quizzes, midterm, and final exam. Speaking of exams, they were tough. We had 1.5 hours to answer 50 complicated multiple-choice questions, full of math and such.

The experience was made less pleasant by some French students who kept interrupting the professor by talking in the back, being late, and answering back to the professor in a rude way. This made the professor mad, put him in a bad mood, and sometimes even made him shout. Not the most enjoyable class.

### **Six Sigma Quality Management (SSQM):**

The same professor who taught Operations Management also taught this class. It followed a similar structure, just like OM, but without the weekly quizzes. Instead, we had weekly assignments. Both the midterm and final exams had the same format – we had 1.5 hours to answer 50 difficult multiple-choice questions, filled with math and requiring a lot of memorizations, as we couldn't use anything except a calculator.

Unfortunately, the French exchange students displayed the same rude behavior in this class, making the professor constantly in a bad mood. I don't blame him, though; I've never seen worse student etiquette.

### **Database Management and Practice (DMP):**

This class was my favorite because my main goal for going on exchange was to improve my technical skills a bit. Here, I learned more about data modeling, and it was really enjoyable. My professor was Persian and spoke English well, making it easy to understand. The classes had lab sessions where we did coding, and online theoretical classes where he taught us about new topics. He gave us weekly assignments, and for the midterm, we had a week to create a database for an imaginary receiver. The final exam was a bit more complicated; it was a group assignment that included elements like video presentations, a database, individual code parts, and more. Overall, it was a super fun and educational class.

## **1.2. Academic level**

The classes were easier than those at ITU, but the workload was much higher than what I'm used to at GBI. Be ready for weekly tests, assignments, mandatory attendance, and a busy schedule with midterms and final exams. Classes are interactive, so check the course

descriptions before picking one. Also, watch out for prerequisites. I brought a calculator since the professor said it's needed for OM and SSQM courses.

Some classes like ESE, IBTI, and CSC were really easy, while others like OM, SSQM, and DPM were harder. The challenging ones involved learning lots of theories, practices, and math. Another advice: don't take more than 6 courses. Take the minimum as you don't want to put yourself through more stress. Enjoy exploring the country instead.

### **1.3. Social life on campus**

The social life at the campus was surprisingly good. The university assigned each exchange student a Korean buddy to help with questions and introduce them to Korean culture. Unfortunately, my buddy wasn't very active, and I never got to meet her despite trying to stay in touch. However, my roommates had fantastic buddies who treated me like a friend. We explored Seoul together, and they taught us about Korean culture.

The university's international center organized trips for all exchange students to different cities, sightseeing, and activities like hiking, badminton, or sailing on the Han River. It was a great way to meet students from around the world.

To connect with Korean people, there were various university clubs like InhaMate and AZIT, organizing weekly activities to eat or explore new places in Korea. This provided an excellent chance to meet fun and friendly people. Language wasn't a problem as most people knew some English and tried to improve their language skills.

## **2. Motivation**

I had a great time in Korea during summer university, so I wanted to go on exchange again. At first, I thought about going to another country like Singapore, but after looking into it, finding an affordable place to stay there seemed almost impossible. That's when I decided to stick with Korea since I was already familiar with it, and I wanted to get better at Korean. Plus, going on exchange seemed like a nice way to spend my 5th semester at GBI, improving my social skills, academics, and personal growth.

### **3. Results of going on exchange**

Going on exchange helped me grow a lot personally. I discovered that I enjoy eating out and exploring on my own, something I don't do often in Denmark. I also learned to say no, stick to my opinions, and worry less about what others think. Spending time in the gym led me to a healthier lifestyle, which was a pleasant surprise.

My social skills improved too. I'm usually a bit awkward when I first meet people, but this trip to Korea encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and approach others first – a useful skill in life.

Academically, my main goal was to take a technical course, and I did. I enhanced my coding and data analytics skills, which is valuable for my future goal of specializing in big data during my masters. I also gained insights into different management approaches, which is crucial for my plan to study DIM. Overall, the courses aligned well with my future plans.

### **4. Arranging the stay**

Since Inha University is a partner of ITU, applying and getting admitted was easy. I started the application process around January, collecting documents like my study plan. The first step is applying to ITU, and once approved, you can apply to your desired partner university. A program coordinator, like mine, Anna Elizabeth, helps with the application and required documents. These include a bank statement showing at least 5000USD, a photo, English proficiency confirmation, grade transcript, and an application (if I remember correctly). Don't stress too much; Anna will guide you through the process.

I read travel reports about going to Korea to learn from others' experiences, which helped me prepare, like getting a bank statement. Once admitted, Inha University asks if you want to stay in their dorm or find housing off-campus. Choosing the dorm is a straightforward process – just let Inha University know, and the dorm contacts you later with a guaranteed spot. It's super convenient.

To stay in the dorm, you need a paper from your doctor saying you don't have tuberculosis. I did it too late, so it's better to plan with your doctor months before and do the test after August 1st. I got stressed because I did it last minute. Regarding the food at the dorm then it is super delicious, so delicious that I got addicted to kimchi. If you do not eat pork like me, then just tell them that and then they are always sweet to make you an alternative.

Start the visa application right after you get into the university. You can find all the info you need on the Korean embassy's website in Denmark. It's a quick and easy process.

If you take a professional passport photo in Denmark, make sure your ears show, and the background is white. These are rules for photos in Korea. Take a few with you; you might need them for the Foreign Registration Card in Korea. The process is simple. The university arranges a day for all exchange students to apply together. But if you only plan to stay for four months, like I did, the card might not be very useful. It takes a long time, and I got mine just a month before leaving, so I couldn't use it much. For example, you can't order delivery or buy things online without this card, or go to another country if you wish to do that and come back to Korea.

## 5. Expenses and Finances

A quick overview of my expenses:

Expense (for all 4 months)	Amount ≈
Tuberculosis document	600DKK
Dormitory fee	5588DKK
Books	0DKK
Flight ticket	- 3910DKK
- One-way to Seoul	- 3338DKK
- One-way to CPH	
Insurance from home (Tryg)	224DKK
Korean mandatory insurance	1280DKK
Visa application (D-2-6 type)	420DKK
Foreign Registration Card application	200DKK
Sim card and data	600DKK
In total	<u>15930DKK</u>

These were all the costs I had to cover. Apart from these, I had to buy some things for my dorm room like hangers, organizer boxes, table lamps, and a table mirror, which I found at a cheap store called Daiso. Other expenses included weekly trips to the convenience store for breakfast food, clothes, meals, transportation fees (get a T-money card at the convenience store), and visits to cafes.

South Korea is quite affordable compared to Denmark. Almost everything costs about one-third of the price here, so it's super budget-friendly. Even activities are inexpensive. A coffee is around 20 DKK, eating out won't cost more than 90 DKK, and one trip with the subway is also around 8 DKK, if I remember correctly.

### **5.1. Applying to scholarships or grants**

I didn't apply for any scholarships. I did try applying for grants, but you get your admission letter from the university quite late (which you need to apply for a grant), around mid-June if I remember correctly. By then, most grant deadlines have passed. I still tried for the few remaining ones, but unfortunately, I wasn't successful.

## **6. Some advice for your stay**

### **6.1. Apps**

Download useful apps such as:

- Use a currency converter to check Korean prices in Danish currency like "Currency".
- Try "Papago" to take pictures of Korean text and translate it to English. It's especially helpful for understanding menus in restaurants where most of the text is in Korean.
- For navigation, use "KakaoMap" or "NaverMap" instead of Google Maps, as Google Maps doesn't work well in South Korea. The others are more accurate.
- KakaoTalk as Koreans use that as their messenger app.
- Kakao T for ordering a taxi. Taxi rides are super affordable, e.g. a taxi ride from the airport to the dormitory is just 200DKK and your revolut card will work in the taxi.
- Register yourself on "Rejseklar" to be on Danskerlisten, so the Danish ministry can reach you if there's any danger in South Korea.

### **6.2. Credit card**

Consider using Revolut as your bank. I had Revolut and got their physical card as my credit card alongside my Danish credit card (Nordea debit card). My Revolut card almost always worked in Korean stores. With Revolut, you can easily convert your Danish money to Korean won without paying extra fees. They also have a user-friendly app for transferring money from your Danish bank to Revolut. Seriously, get it! It's really useful. I didn't need to get cash often because my card worked most of the time.



### **6.3. Language**

Korean people may not be great at English, and sometimes they might seem a bit distant to foreigners. Learning their language or a few words can be a big help and a simple way to connect with them. At the very least, try to learn how to say hello, thank you, how much is this, excuse me, and this is delicious. These basic phrases can go a long way.

I find it easy to understand the language because of some classes I took before, and it has helped me a lot. I've had many nice conversations with taxi drivers, workers at the food markets, and fellow students.

Also, it's good to learn how to bow as it's a way to show respect in South Korea.

You can learn a lot about the Korean language and culture from apps like Duolingo or Korean shows on Netflix such as Singles Inferno, Knowing Brothers or K-dramas.

### **6.4. Away from Seoul**

Be aware that Inha University is not located in Seoul but in South Korea's 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest city Incheon. By public transportation, you can get to Seoul in 1h and 20min, which may seem like a lot, but it really does not feel that way. My roomies and I went to Seoul almost every week, several times and in the end, it will feel like nothing.

Furthermore, Incheon has great places on its own such as the Songdo area, Wolmido, Culture Street and a big shopping mall close to the university. The area around the university is also known to have the best restaurant which is true, many different cuisines to choose from and food is cheaper than in Seoul.

### **6.5. Do not hesitate – do it**

If you want to go to a place with super affordable prices, kind people, amazing food, beautiful nature and an easy application process then choose anywhere in South Korea! Overall, I was very pleased with my stay.

## 7. Few pictures of my stay



Jeonju



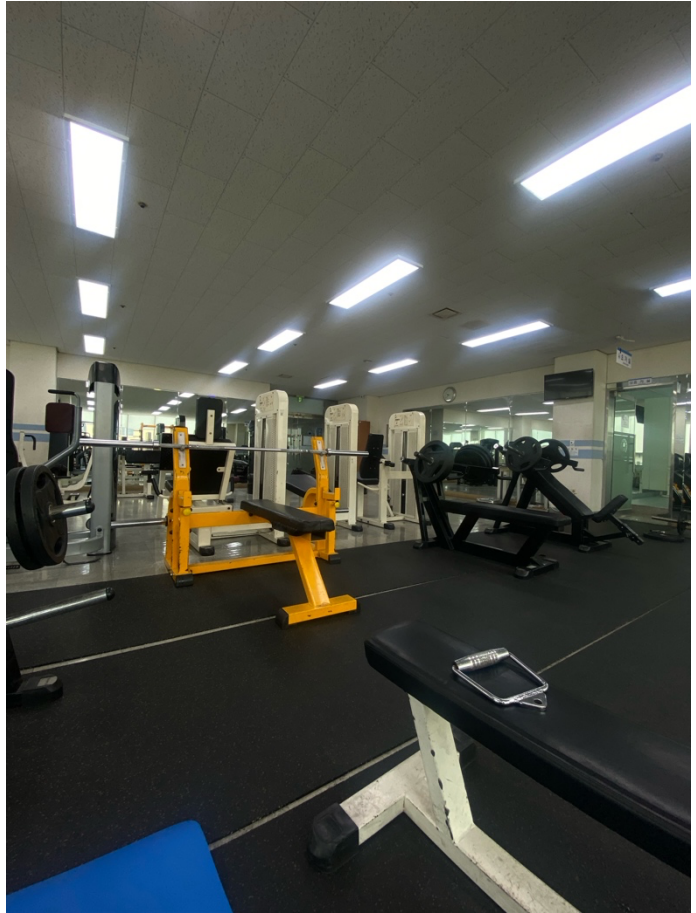
InhaMate meetings



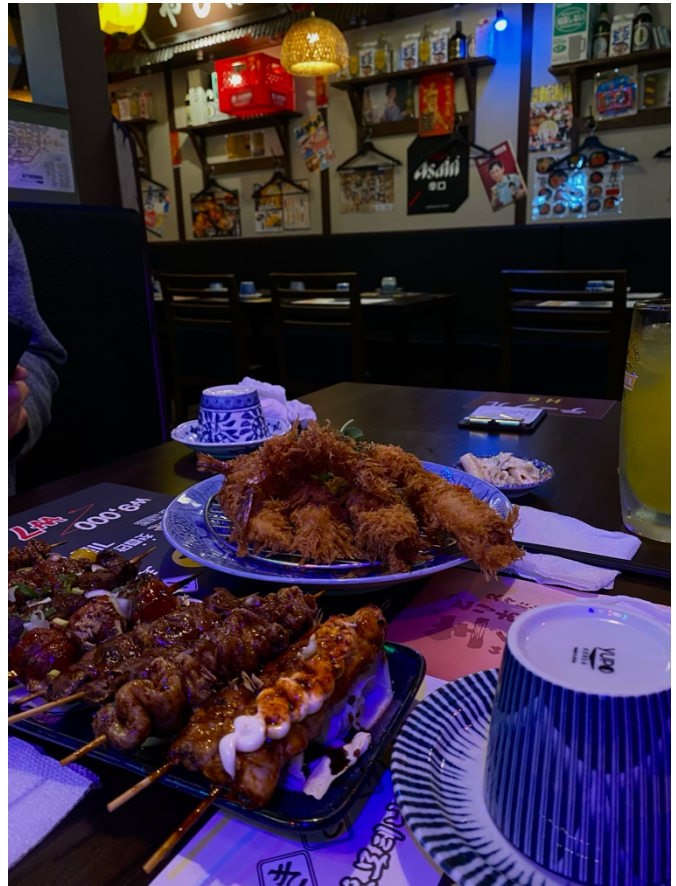
Hike at Bukhansan



Dormitory



Restaurants + Cafes



Rush-hour



Buddy time

