

# SEP Report

## 1. Student Information

Faculty/Major	School of Computing, Information Systems
Host University	Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology
NUS Semester and Year of Exchange (eg. AY14/15 Semester 1)	AY15/16 Semester 2

## 2. Study at Host University

Please provide information on the academics at your host university:

- Studying or learning culture at your host university. How were classes conducted?
- What did you like most or dislike most about the academics at your host University?
- Advice on module registration and module mapping

KAIST is a very academically-inclined school, after all it is one of the prestigious top universities in Korea. You can expect courses here to be academically rigorous, especially for science, engineering and computing courses.

There's a wide range of degrees offered in KAIST – from undergraduate to post-graduate courses. In fact, there are more post-graduate students in KAIST than undergraduates, as such the environment is ideal for academic research and study.

Classes are billed through an online portal much like NUS system – except without the CORS points. There is also an online portal called KLMS which is like our NUS IVLE where teaching materials and homeworks are uploaded. The international relations office in KAIST will brief exchange students on how to use these portals, so not to worry.

The average courseload in KAIST varies from person to person. 4 or 5 modules are the norm but I managed to take 6 modules. Engineering and computing courses especially have heavy workload (like programming assignments every 2 weeks) so be advised not to overload if you can help it.

Classes are pretty similar to NUS – but perhaps more stringent. Attendance, quizzes and homeworks actually count towards the final grades, so it is more of a continual assessment. Lecture size is much smaller than NUS though with average of 20 students per class. This allows for more focused teaching which is better in my opinion.

Unlike NUS, the professors in KAIST actually have a say in class registration and exam matters. So there can be some flexibility and freedom in academic matters. For instance, in one of my modules, I have an exam that is 6 hours long, open book and take home. This can be a good or bad thing depending on how you look at it.

**Please list the courses that you took during SEP.** *(Please take note that the list of modules available to exchange students at the host university are subject to change. This table merely serves as reference.)*

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Host University			NUS Equivalent		
Module code	Course title	ECTS Credit	Module code	Course title	Modular credit
CS341	Introduction to Computer Networks	4	IS2105	Introduction to Computer Networks	4
CS448	Introduction to Information Security	3	CS4236	Cryptography Theory and Practice	4
HSS006	Basic Korean I for Foreign Students	3	LAK1201	Korean 1	4
MSB204	Technology Management	3	IS3243	Technology Strategy and Management	4
MSB230	Principles of Accounting	3	ACC1002X	Financial Accounting	4
MSB337	Information Technology Management	3	Dummy		4

## 2. Accommodation

**What kind of accommodation did you stay in during your exchange (eg. on campus / off campus)?**

**Would you recommend this accommodation to future outgoing students?**

**Do you have any other suggestions?**

On campus. KAIST has its own accommodation arrangements for all international students, and it is relatively cheap, so exchange students do not have to fret about finding accommodation.

The dormitory is clean and spacious, shared between 2 students. It is comfortable and convenient as classes are all within walking distance.

## 3. Activities during SEP

**Were there any activities organized by school/student group/external organizations at your host university which you would like to recommend to other students?**

The KAIST international relations team organized buddy orientation programmes and field trips for international students. I will recommend going for these field trips as it is a good opportunity to mingle around with other exchange students.

During spring time, students in KAIST can also look forward to student concerts. There will be food, music and even kpop idol groups invited to perform for the concerts. We got GFriend and TWICE performing on stage for the KAIST concert during my time. It was certainly a memorable experience not

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to be missed!

## 4. Cost of Living

**Please provide an estimation of how much money you spent during your SEP?**

**Please list travel expenses separately.**

Food expense (per meal): 3,000krw to 10,000krw  
Accommodation (on campus KAIST): 620,000krw for 1 semester  
Air tickets (2 way): 800,000krw  
Public transport (Subways,buses): 1,250 krw onwards – distanced based  
Travel: Varies

Total expenditure for exchange: SGD\$ 4,200

## 5. Challenges

**Did you face any challenging issues during your SEP stint? How did you overcome it/them?**

Language barrier was the biggest hurdle. I came to Korea without knowing Korean language, so it was difficult to adapt. Thankfully I took up Korean classes here and managed to pick up basic conversational skills. It does help if you can read and speak basic Korean in daily life. Also, note that occasionally professors and students can lapse into Korean too during classes so do not be too surprised there.

## 6. Overall SEP Experience

**Please write one paragraph about your exchange experience and attach some photos that represent your exchange experience.**

My exchange in KAIST was fun because I got to study in an academically excellent school while travelling around Korea. KAIST was located in Daejeon which is the transportation hub of Korea – that made travelling much easier too. During my exchange, I also got to meet new friends from Korea and other countries as well. It was interesting to hear about their perspectives and learn from their culture. This is something that I would not be able to experience daily in a local university. Lastly, exchange is more than just a vacation because you get much more insights from staying long term in a foreign country. For example you will get a true taste of a Korean student life as well as gain some local perspectives on world issues from the different points of view. All these will help in shaping a global perspective and enriching your life experience.

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## 7. Suggestions for future outgoing students

Please share any other suggestions for future outgoing students.

Be positive, be hungry, be bold!