UCEAP Korea Advising Notes

Objective

This document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad advisor to review program specific details that may impact a student’s decision to apply for an UCEAP program. The document is **not** a summary of eligibility requirements, academic, housing, application and other logistical details freely available to students on the UCEAP and BSA website. The best source of detailed program information are the UCEAP webpages for Korea. If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website or this Advising Notes document, please contact the BSA Advisor for this program.

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COVID-19 Information

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges related to health concerns and international travel. UCEAP has been updating their website’s Coronavirus Notice with up-to-date information on program cancellations for the 2021-2022 cycle (which ranged from Summer 2021 to Spring 2022). All programs for the 2022-23 cycle (which ranges from Summer 2022 to Spring 2023) are scheduled to proceed at this time.

Last updated August 4, 2021

Quick Links

Below is a summary of the 2022-2023 UCEAP Korea programs available to Berkeley students:

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Video Resources

There are a number of videos provided by UCEAP to help students learn about their study abroad options. Here are some you can check out:

- 2021: Study Abroad in Asia and Oceania | UCEAP Open House
- 2020: Study Abroad in Korea, Singapore, and Thailand | UCEAP Study Abroad Fair 2020
Newer UCEAP Korea Programs

Seoul National University and Korea University will be running for the first time in Spring 2022. Since these are both new programs, some details are still unknown, but all currently available information is on the UCEAP website.

Citizenship and Passport Considerations

For all UCEAP Korea programs, students cannot be accepted to a Korean university without a valid passport. Your UCEAP application will state how long your passport must be valid after the end date of the program and when a photocopy of it will be due. If you do not have a passport or need a renewal, please review the Passport Information section of the COVID-19 Information for Berkeley Study Abroad Students page, and take action immediately.

Students who are in the process of applying for U.S. citizenship or making any legal name changes are not eligible to apply unless the changes will be completed before application to the UCEAP program. There are no exceptions to this.

Students who have American citizenship but whose parents were born in Korea will be considered Korean citizens by the Korean Embassy. Students should contact the Korean Embassy regarding their ability to obtain a Korean visa. Start the process right away as it can be lengthy.

If you have Korean citizenship you must apply for this program as a Korean citizen, even if you have dual nationality with another country.

Male students who have Korean citizenship either by birth or blood can be conscripted into the Korean military if they are 18-36 years old and have not satisfied their Korean military service requirement. Check with the Korean Embassy for more information.
Impacted Programs

All immersion programs in Korea (i.e., KU, SNU, & Yonsei) have a limited number of spaces allotted to Berkeley students. Given this, it is possible that we receive more eligible applications than allotted Berkeley spots. Students should not be discouraged from applying to their first choice; however, all applicants are encouraged to consider other programs for suitable alternatives. If you intend to apply for either of these impacted programs, contact the adviser for this program to discuss if you may obtain permission to apply to a back-up choice.

The selection criteria we will use for this program include:

- Previous nominations (displaced due to COVID-19)
- Class Standing
- GPA
- Statement of Purpose: priority will be given to students who successfully convey why the host university in particular is a good fit for them and how the program will benefit them academically, professionally, and/or personally.
- Completeness and thoroughness of application. Incomplete applications without sufficient reason could be denied immediately.

Because all immersion programs in Korea are considered potentially impacted, contact the adviser for this program to discuss if you may obtain permission to apply to a back-up program. If you are seeking an application to a back-up program, you will need to choose a non-competitive program as your back-up option (which means you cannot apply to two programs in Korea for the same term). Contact the BSA Adviser for the relevant program of interest to inquire if it is considered competitive or not.

Program Considerations – Summer

Seoul Summer
On this program students have the option of taking two or three courses, each valued at 3 semester units. Certain financial aid students will receive more aid if they take three courses for a total of 9 semester units. All applicants to the Seoul Summer program will need to designate if they intend to take two or three courses in the BSA Application. Regular university courses taught in Korean are not available during the summer.

Prior to being packaged for UCEAP summer aid, students’ answers will be given to the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office (FASO), and students will be packaged according to the intentions they tell us. If a student is packaged by the FASO for 3 courses based on their answer and then enroll only in 2 courses upon arrival at Yonsei, they will be required to pay back a portion of the summer financial aid to the FASO. Students who are packaged for 2 courses and later decide to take 3 courses once at Yonsei will not be repackaged for additional aid. Please deliberate carefully before indicating how many courses you intend to take. You may find a more detailed explanation of this here.

Attendance is very important. For example, summer students will be given an F if they miss three classes.
It is possible to do an internship during the Seoul Summer program, but there are a few important considerations:

1. This internship is competitive, with only ~15-20% of all UC applicants typically selected.
2. The internship counts as one of your two courses and earns 3 semester units. Students doing internships are allowed by Yonsei to take only one regular course for a total of 6 units. Keep this in mind if you were keen to do 9 semester units for financial aid.
3. There is an application process completely separate from the UCEAP application and even the host university application. The deadline to apply is typically late April, and notifications typically go out in early June.
4. If the internship is a make-or-break aspect of your decision to study at Yonsei in summer, please note that if you do not get chosen for an internship and then decide to withdraw from Seoul Summer, you will have to pay the $500 late withdrawal penalty to UCEAP, because you will receive the internship notification long after the deadline to withdraw without financial penalty.

Community Service/Volunteer opportunities abound – UCEAP students have served as interpreters for adoption agencies, tutored North Korean refugees in, and helped children during hospital stays in the Yonsei affiliated hospital right on campus. Summer students do not get academic credit, but can still use this opportunity to meet people and add it to their resume. Students are not required to speak Korean to participate.

Students who want to maximize the academic value of their experience in Korea are urged to apply for a semester or year rather than just a summer. In summer, regular Yonsei students do not attend classes, so you will be taking your courses only with UC and other international students. Once the thousands of summer students depart, the UCEAP students who remain for Fall or Year get to experience the regular student life at Yonsei University. Financial aid also is typically more favorable during a semester or year program compared to summer.

Please note that Yonsei University (which sponsors the Seoul Summer program) has an “exclusivity agreement” with UCEAP such that UC students are only allowed to participate in the Seoul Summer program via UCEAP. UC students cannot apply to the Yonsei International Summer School program independently.

Program Considerations – Semester & Year

Yonsei University

Five types of courses are available to exchange students at Yonsei University during the regular semester or year:

1. Office of International Affairs courses in English for exchange students
2. Underwood International College’s Division of International Education courses taught in English (instructor permission is required)
3. Regular Yonsei University courses taught in English (limited selection)
4. Regular Yonsei University courses taught in Korean
5. Korean language courses.
The maximum number of language units allowed per semester is 10 semester units. Most UCEAP students take courses taught in English.

Business and Economics are impacted at Yonsei. Therefore, students in Business and Economics-related majors are allowed to take a maximum of three business or economics courses. Even if the online enrollment system allows students to enroll in four or five such courses, the Yonsei Office of International Affairs will drop two courses without notice. Take this into consideration before choosing Yonsei if you need more than three such courses.

Students who can read, write, and comprehend university-level Korean may enroll in Yonsei courses taught in Korean during the Fall and Spring semesters, but should be cautioned that these courses require fluency.

If you want to fulfill breadth requirements, Yonsei offers a few courses that have been pre-approved by L&S, CED, and Rausser College. See BSA’s College Advising Webpage to view the Database of Pre-Approved Breadth and for further information about the evaluation process for courses not in this database. For other colleges, contact the college adviser directly.

Community Service/Volunteer opportunities abound – UCEAP students have served as interpreters for adoption agencies, tutored North Korean refugees in English, and helped children during hospital stays in the Yonsei affiliated hospital right on campus. Semester and year students can get one UC credit for this service and have it on their transcript and can then add it to their resume. Students are not required to speak Korean to participate.

University-arranged housing is limited and offered to UCEAP students on a first-come, first-served basis. Prior to departure, Yonsei requires a deposit (in some instances the full housing payment) to confirm a housing arrangement. Students receiving financial aid are not exempt from making the payment to guarantee university housing and will need to make arrangements to make this payment on time. Some students borrow the money from family or friends until they receive their financial aid near the official start date of their program, and then reimburse their lender. Yonsei will help arrange on-campus housing, but not off-campus housing.

It is possible for students who attend the Fall program to extend their participation to the Spring semester. All Fall applicants are urged to submit the Departmental Pre-Approval to Extend (DPA) form, even if they are not sure yet if they wish to extend. This form will be available in the UCEAP Application. Submitting this form does not bind you to extending your participation; rather, it pre-approves the option for you to do so. Without these signatures on the form, students who decide they’d like to extend once in Korea will have to initiate a Petition to Extend at the study center, then wait many weeks while it is routed to UCEAP and UC Berkeley to find out if their department and college approve of the idea. Getting pre-approved during the application process can reduce your stress in Korea if you end up deciding you’d like to extend. Many students do choose to extend because of the extensive course offerings taught in English and because Seoul is such a remarkable city.

If you want to spend both Summer and Fall (or Year) at Yonsei, you must apply to the Summer and Fall (or Year) options via separate applications at the outset.
Please note that Yonsei University has an “exclusivity agreement” with UCEAP such that UC students are only allowed to participate in the Yonsei University exchange program via UCEAP. UC students cannot apply to direct exchange at Yonsei University independently.

Eligibility note: Applicants to the Yonsei program who entered UC Berkeley as Freshmen must have completed 2 UC semesters at time of nomination (no exceptions). This refers to the timing of when nominations decisions must be processed, which typically occurs a couple months after the application deadline. The pattern for the earliest you could go abroad is as follows:

- Fall 2021 admits are eligible for Spring 2023 and beyond.
- Spring 2022 admits are eligible for Fall 2023 and beyond.

## Calendar Considerations

Previous students have been interested in enrolling in Berkeley’s Summer Session A prior to departure for the Seoul Summer program at Yonsei. Please be aware that late arrivals for UCEAP are not permitted, so check the end date of Summer Session A and the official start date of the UCEAP program for Seoul Summer to see if they overlap. If they do, you will have to choose between the two.

The Spring semester at Yonsei and SNU begins in mid-February and ends in mid-June. The Spring semester at KU begins in early-March and ends in late-June. Students are not permitted to depart early from the program.

## Medical Marijuana

Marijuana is not legal in Korea, even if you are approved for medical marijuana use in California. Please consult with your primary care physician for a legal substitute before applying to the program.

## Considerations for Transfer Students

Transfer students should review BSA’s I am a Transfer Student webpage for an overview of considerations. As a general rule, transfer students are eligible to apply for study abroad programs that take place after the student has completed one term at UC Berkeley (i.e., if their first term at Berkeley is Spring 2022, the earliest they could study abroad is Summer 2022. If their first term at Berkeley is Fall 2022, the earliest they could study abroad is Spring 2023). This applies for the following Korea programs:

- Seoul Summer
There are some exceptions to the timing listed above. Applicants to the following programs must have a UC GPA at time of nomination. This refers to the timing of when nominations decisions must be processed, which typically occurs a couple months after the application deadline. The pattern for the earliest you could go abroad is as follows:

- Fall 2021 admits are eligible for Fall 2022 and beyond.
- Spring 2022 admits are eligible for Spring 2023 and beyond.

The pattern listed above applies to the following Korea programs:

- Korea University
- Seoul National University
- Yonsei University

**Considerations for LGBTQ+ Students**

Korea is **not** included on UCEAP’s list of LGBTIQ-tolerant countries, which was compiled using information from the Spartacus Gay Travel Index. Information from the U.S. Department of State’s 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices is as follows:

The law that established the National Human Rights Commission prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and authorizes the commission to review cases of such discrimination, although its recommended relief measures are nonbinding. The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. The Military Criminal Act’s “disgraceful conduct” clause criminalizes consensual sodomy between men in the military with up to two years’ imprisonment.

Despite the National Human Rights Commission’s repeated calls for the National Assembly to adopt a comprehensive antidiscrimination law that would penalize with imprisonment or fines discriminatory practices on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, or sexual orientation, among others, the bill was stalled in the legislature. More than 88.5 percent of those surveyed in June supported passage of an antidiscrimination law, but politically powerful conservative Christian groups that reject LGBTI rights vehemently opposed such a law.

NGOs noted the Military Service Act’s prohibition on sexual activity between men led to abuse of LGBTI soldiers. In its 2019 report, Amnesty International stated the military code institutionalizes discrimination, reinforces systematic disadvantages for LGBTI persons, and risks inciting or justifying violence against them inside the military and in broader society.
In August the navy discharged a gay service member as a result of what the Center for Military Human Rights Korea called a “crackdown” on LGBTI service members. According to the center, in 2019 the navy sought out LGBTI service members under the pretext of counseling and in at least one case interrogated a person within earshot of other service members. Investigators asked for detailed accounts of sexual interactions between soldiers and searched soldiers’ cell phones for evidence of same-sex relationships. The navy stated it regretted the leaking of sensitive personal information but held that it has the authority to conduct investigations of disorderly conduct under the Military Criminal Act and Defense Ministry policy.

Considerations for Graduating Seniors

Graduating seniors must enroll in a full course load while abroad, even if they do not need the courses or units for graduation. Requests by DSP students who provide documentation may be considered for a reduced course load.

If you are a graduating senior who is applying to a year or spring semester program, please be advised that the program runs until mid-June. Returning to Berkeley to walk in a commencement ceremony is an unrealistic expectation for year and spring participants. If walking in graduation is very important to you, we recommend that you apply to the National University Singapore, as there is a better chance that the program will end before commencement. As an alternative to walking in a Spring ceremony, there is also a UC Berkeley "December Graduates Convocation" if you would like to have the experience of walking in graduation (not department-specific). Similarly, you can wait and walk in the following Spring departmental ceremony.

Graduating seniors participating in a spring semesters program should ensure that they are on the Spring degree list. If you are not yet on this degree list, you should contact your UC Berkeley College Adviser to petition to move your expected graduation term. However, spring program grades are often not reported to UCEAP until August, so your grades will not arrive in time for your degree to be processed with the spring degree list (which occurs in mid-July). You will be automatically removed from the spring degree list and placed onto the summer degree list, which is processed in October. Thus, your diploma would display a summer graduation date rather than a spring graduation date. This policy is subject to change. For all students, after your UCEAP grades arrive and you are waiting for the next degree list to be processed, you can request a "Certificate of Completion" from the Berkeley Registrar that can serve as "proof" of graduation.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

If you receive accommodations at UC Berkeley and would like to know if they are also available in the program abroad that interests you, it is a good idea to email your BSA adviser to inquire about your specific needs. That way, if your needs cannot be accommodated in that program, you can investigate other programs that might.
Diversity Abroad Resources

BSA recognizes that there are many nuances to exploring your identities abroad, and these articles may not be representative of all identities and experiences. Diversity Abroad’s resources, however, are a great starting place for your exploration. You can find a variety of articles to help you prepare for your study abroad experience.