

South Korea

UCEAP 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 South 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.

Updated August 2024

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Quick Links

Below is a summary of the 2025-2026 UCEAP South Korea programs available to Berkeley students:

	Summer 2025	Fall 2025	Year 2025-26	Spring 2026
<i>Immersion</i>				
Korea University		X	X	X
Seoul National University		X		X
Yonsei University		X	X	X
Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, KAIST		X	X	X
<i>International</i>				
Yonsei University Summer	X			

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](#)

Citizenship and Passport Considerations

For all UCEAP South 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 (typically 6 months after return) 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 [UCEAP How to Apply 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 United States of America citizenship but **whose parents were born in South 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. Students of Korean heritage may experience difficulties with the visa process. They either need to apply for a Korean passport or remove their name from the Korean registry. Both take time.

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.

Scholarship Opportunities

All UCEAP students are encouraged to apply for a [UCEAP Scholarship](#), which offers a \$1000 award for summer programs. For more information, visit the UCEAP Scholarships page.

US Citizen Pell Grant recipients are encouraged to apply for the Gilman Scholarship, which offers a possible award of up to \$5000. For more information, visit gilmanscholarship.org. Another scholarship to explore is the [Freeman-ASIA Scholarship](#).

More information on financial aid and scholarships can be found on our website:
<http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/finances>

Financial aid students can request a financial aid estimate for the program here:
<https://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/finances/financial-aid-advising>

Yonsei Summer program students are eligible to apply for the [Kim Suk-Hi and Do-Sim scholarship](#), and the [Scholastic Award](#). For the Scholastic Award, results are typically announced in mid-July or after the program is over. For more information on Yonsei Summer scholarships, please email the program at summer@yonsei.ac.kr.

Programs That Typically Fill Before Deadline

The Korea University, Seoul National University, and Yonsei University immersion programs have a limited number of spaces allotted and are considered capacity constrained. These programs usually receive more applications than we have allotted spots on the program, and typically fill before the application deadline. Nominations are on a first come first serve basis. Students should not be discouraged from applying to their first choice; however, all applicants are encouraged to consider programs in other countries for suitable alternatives as a backup.

The selection criteria we will use for impacted programs include:

- Prerequisite or major requirements (if applicable)
- Class Standing
- GPA
- Student's coursework background and training in relevant areas
- Completeness and thoroughness of the UCEAP and Berkeley online applications. Incomplete applications without sufficient reason could be denied immediately.

In the event you are denied from your first choice program, the BSA Adviser will work with you to find an alternative UCEAP program or discuss other options. Review the UCEAP program page's "dates and eligibility" section for a full list of eligibility requirements. For the full list of programs that typically fill before the deadline, see the [How to Apply](#) page.

Application Note - Qualified students will be nominated on a **'first come first serve basis'** based on their UCEAP application submission date/time up until the program's application deadline or until the program has filled. On the BSA website's [Explore](#) tool, you will be able to see that application filing period for specific programs.

All students, regardless of what term they are applying for, must submit both the UCEAP and Berkeley Study Abroad applications to be considered. Please consult the [application instructions](#) and your BSA Adviser if you have questions about the application process.

Program Considerations – Summer

[Yonsei University 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 [Yonsei University 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. Courses offered in the four-week program are not open to UCEAP students. This program does not have any capacity constraints.

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 Yonsei University 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 Yonsei University 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 Yonsei University Summer program) has an “exclusivity agreement” with UCEAP such that UC students are only allowed to participate in the Yonsei University 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 2024 admits are eligible for Spring 2026 and beyond.
- Spring 2025 admits are eligible for Fall 2026 and beyond.

Transfer and graduate students are required to show 2 semesters from any college, but must have at least 1 UC semester listed on their official transcript by submission of the campus application deadline.

[Seoul National University](#)

Eligibility note: Applicants to the [SNU](#) program must have completed at least 1 UC semester by the time of the campus application deadline.

Some Korean language courses at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels are offered every semester at SNU, but enrollment is competitive and not guaranteed. Students that are interested in a program to focus on Korean language study, should consider Yonsei University instead.

Eligibility note: Applicants to the SNU program must have completed at least 1 UC semester/1 UC quarter completed by the time of the UCEAP application deadline. 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 2024 admits are eligible for Spring 2026 and beyond.
- Spring 2025 admits are eligible for Fall 2026 and beyond.

[Korea University](#) (Fall and Year 24 Full/Closed)

Eligibility note: Applicants to the [KU](#) 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 2024 admits are eligible for Spring 2026 and beyond.
- Spring 2025 admits are eligible for Fall 2026 and beyond.

Transfer and graduate students are required to show 2 semesters from any college, but must have at least 1 UC semester listed on their official transcript by submission of the campus application deadline.

Some Korean language courses at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels are offered every semester at KU, but enrollment is competitive and not guaranteed. Students that are interested in a program to focus on Korean language study, should consider Yonsei University instead.

[Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, KAIST](#)

The [KAIST](#) fall and year program ran for the first time in fall 2024. More information will be added as it becomes available.

Eligibility note: Applicants to the KAIST 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 2024 admits are eligible for Spring 2026 and beyond.
- Spring 2025 admits are eligible for Fall 2026 and beyond.

Transfer and graduate students are required to show 2 semesters from any college, but must have at least 1 UC semester listed on their official transcript by submission of the campus application deadline.

The KAIST program option is not considered capacity constrained.

Calendar Considerations

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

The academic calendar in Korea is not a direct match to UC Berkeley's. Programs that have a significantly different calendar compared to the Berkeley academic calendar are listed below:

Yonsei University

- Fall: late August to late December
- Spring: mid February to late June
- Year: late August to late June

Korea University

- Fall: late August to mid December
- Spring: early March to late June
- Year: late August to late June

Seoul National University

- Fall: late August to mid December
- Spring: early March to mid June

KAIST

- Fall: Late August to mid December
- Spring: Late February to mid June

- Year: Late August to mid June

All courses taken abroad on UCEAP will report back to students' Berkeley transcript. However, whether this fulfills graduation requirements such as major, minor, or breadth should be discussed with College and/or Major advisors as each department is different. A petition process may be required in order to fulfill graduation requirements abroad. The standard processing time for UCEAP grades to post back to a students' CalCentral is around 3 months (subject to change). Grades are posted from the host institution abroad to UCEAP for processing and then to each UC. If students are planning to pursue graduate school, an internship, or job immediately after a UCEAP program ends, please coordinate with the graduate school or job prospect directly to discuss whether an updated transcript can be provided at a later date. More information can be found on the [BSA Academics page](#).

Medical Marijuana

Marijuana is not legal in South 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 (one semester residency requirement). For example, if a student's first term at Berkeley is Fall 2024, the earliest cycle to apply is either Spring 25 or Summer 25. This is dependent on application deadlines and the program eligibility requirements. Students should consult with their academic department to confirm College and/or Major study abroad requirements and to confirm when study abroad can fit into their academic plan.

Considerations for LGBTQ+ Students

South Korea is **not** included on UCEAP's [list of LGBTIQ-tolerant countries](#), which was compiled using information from the [Spartacus Gay Travel Index](#). For additional information, review BSA's [I am a LGBTQIA+ Identifying Student webpage](#) for an overview of considerations.

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 it's recommended relief measures are non binding. 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 anti discrimination 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-late 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.

More information can be found in the [I am a Senior page](#).

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

Students seeking accommodations should review BSA's [I am a Student With Disabilities webpage](#) for an overview of considerations. 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.

Students with emotional support animals or service animals will need to request accommodations from their UCEAP Program Specialist prior to departure on their UCEAP program. Emotional support animal accommodation requests are not guaranteed. Below are additional resources to consider:

Traveling Internationally with a Guide Dog or Service Animal

Pros and cons, legal and health considerations for going abroad with your service animal

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/serviceanimal>

10 Steps to Bring Your Service Animal or Guide Dog to Another Country

Start planning early and consider international quarantine and vaccination laws

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/10steps>

Should I Take My Guide Dog or Service Animal?

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/guidedogdecisions>

Caring for Your Guide Dog or Service Animal Abroad

Learn tips for supplies to take along, climate preparations, and animal health while traveling internationally

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/preparingyouranimal>

Considerations for Undocumented Students

Berkeley Study Abroad is committed to supporting undocumented students in their pursuit of study abroad programs. The BSA Office collaborates with the [Undocumented Student Program](#) and the [East Bay Community Law Center \(EBCLC\)](#) to support undocumented or DACA students interested in studying abroad. We also partner with the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office to support students on this journey. We have sent undocumented students on Berkeley Study Abroad programs internationally and domestically since DACA's inception in 2011. The Advance Parole processing timeline can take anywhere from 10-13.5 months to process and it is highly encouraged that students interested in studying abroad reach out to the BSA office as soon as possible to discuss the next steps to submit an early application. For more information, review the [I am an...Undocumented Student](#) page.

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 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.