

National Cheng Kung University
Higher Education Continuing Education
Program Study Abroad report



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Abstract

The exchange program that National Cheng Kung University have gives opportunity for students to explore knowledge and culture beyond. The aim of this program is to give opportunity for students to explore the culture of other countries and also gain more knowledge from other point of view to have new insights on education, culture, and also society. Since I was 12, I always dreamed about pursuing my higher education at KAIST, and this program gives me the chance to fulfill my wish list. NCKU has gives me the experience of studying abroad and how to adapt with it, which now become one of my advantages on stepping out of my comfort zone to try exploring knowledge in other countries. During the application process, NCKU OIA helped me a lot by always checked on me during the process, which I am very grateful at. During my exchange period in KAIST, I feel very welcome and also excited to study new culture and knowledge. There, I made a lot of new friends from all around the world and their backgrounds really amazed me. Furthermore, Korean culture really amazed me with how hard they study and how important being creative and innovative is in the society. Moreover, the professor is very humble, approachable, always encourage us and provide us with constructive feedbacks. Although, I faced some hardships such as culture differences and language barrier, my friends helped me went through it. Overall, this program helped to open a new window with tons of knowledge out there, especially about biotechnology, where in South Korea, they are advanced in neuroscience, cancer, and also stem cell research which align with my future goals. In addition, it taught me how to stepped out of my comfort zone and also the diversity of culture and knowledge.

摘要

國立成功大學的交換學生計畫，為學生開啟了探索異國知識與文化之窗。此計畫旨在讓學生有機會深入體驗他國文化，並從多元視角獲取新知，從而對教育、文化及社會產生嶄新見解。自十二歲起，我想在韓國科學技術院（KAIST）讀書，所以這個交流項目讓我的夢想契機。申請過程中，國際事務處同仁持續關心我的進度，給予諸多協助，令我由衷感激。在 KAIST 交換期間，我感受到滿滿的歡迎之情，對吸收新文化與知識充滿期待。我結識了來自世界各地的朋友，他們多元的背景令我驚嘆不已。韓國文化中對勤奮學習，創造與創新的重視，深植於社會之中，令我印象深刻。儘管曾面臨文化差異與語言障礙等挑戰，在朋友的扶持下，我順利克服了困難。總體而言，此計畫為我開啟了一扇滿載知識的新窗，尤其在生物技術領域韓國於神經科學，癌症及幹細胞研究的先進發展，與我的未來目標高度契合。此外，這段經歷更教會我擁抱文化與知識的多樣性，學會勇敢邁出舒適圈，拓展了生命的廣度與視野。

Purpose

The purpose of my exchange program to KAIST, South Korea is to deepen my understanding in Biotechnology as South Korea is one of the leads in this field, especially in neuroscience and medical applications. I want to know the technology that other countries have other than Taiwan, which is the strong reason of me to apply for an exchange program in KAIST. Furthermore, I always dreamed of studying abroad since I was 12 years old, especially KAIST, which is my dream university since I was 12 years old. I chose KAIST as my top pick for exchange program because they are well-known to heavily focused on STEM and research. They emphasize on practice than just theory which align with my vision of studying. With this opportunity I am able to fulfill my childhood dream and able to learn more about Korean culture and their history. Moreover, the other reasons why I would like to do an exchange program at KAIST is because I am intrigued in pursuing my master program in South Korea, so I would like to know the bigger picture of it and get to know the professors there. In addition, my other purpose of doing program is to step out of my comfort zone once more because I had felt that Taiwan is becoming one of my comfort zone now and I need to challenge myself once more to step up my game. My study at National Cheng Kung University has made me learned a lot of life lesson and achieve my life goal for now, which shaped me now and become more ready to study abroad outside of my comfort zone.

Application Process

The application process through NCKU is easier than I thought. The hardest part is I need to submit my documents for my application to the sister university because KAIST demand to have my bank statement and everything needs to be apostilled, meanwhile other universities in South Korea don't be a mandatory. Moreover, I need to have the document apostilled and I need to go to Taipei and Kaohsiung often to get it. However, I learned a lot from this process and OIA also helps me to sent my document to the sister university which I am very grateful until now. Also, OIA keeps me on tab with my progress which I am very satisfied with the application process. Moreover, after I got selected and got my Letter of Acceptance, I quickly take care of the documents that I needed.

Furthermore, I also applied for the scholarship of exchange program and I am honored to be one of the awardee of the scholarship. I think the application process for this scholarship is manageable. The application process also has a lot of stage and the period is quite long which makes students feels less pressured and I think it shows that the university sincerely wants to help the students to get the chance to study abroad and succeeded.

Exchange Period

The exchange period in KAIST for this fall semester is 1st September 2025 – 19th December 2025. During this period, I gain a lot new knowledge, insights, and friends. There, I took 5 classes, 3 is related to my major and the other two is Korean language and Korean history class to understand more about Korean Culture. For my academic studies in KAIST, I think that the materials that they taught to the students are more advanced and hard to understand because they briefly introduce the theory and quickly jump into daily applications

which is a culture shocked for me but I managed to follow the pace during class. Also, the teaching method that they offered reflects the school value of wanting to teaching students with practices. For example, during my Korean class, the professor voluntarily made an event for her students to go to a Jeonju trip that she managed by herself with the help of School of Language department to immerse in Korean culture and language deeper than just study in class. Moreover, the professor also offers a Korean language and culture competition for foreigners to utilize our Korean skills in real life, which I joined and won in second place. Furthermore, the professor often gives us Korean traditional snack and food for us to experience the taste of Korean snacks and foods.

Beside my Korean professor, other professors from other class also gives me a warm welcome and they take really take care of the students. To illustrate, my neuroscience class professor treats students to eat at a hotel restaurant and also treat us for dinner every class because the class is up to 7pm. Moreover, they happily give me a constructive feedbacks on my final report and checked up on students whenever they have time. This small gesture makes me feel welcomed and comfortable studying at KAIST. Despite those perks on KAIST, there are also some drawbacks such as their study culture where students usually crammed for a whole day nonstop which is very unhealthy due to the difficulty of exams.

Beside my academic life, I also get the chance to experience Korean culture by taking on a vacation to Jeju Island and other cities in South Korea during big holiday and weekends such as Chuseok(추석). Korean culture is very mesmerizing and they are very modernized. Moreover, they usually worked on a very fast pace as they believed that the world evolved very fast, so they need to adapt fast and be flexible, which one of the things that I learned from my exchange journey. Furthermore, South Korea culture emphasized on etiquettes and manners, which is amusing for an advanced country. I learned a lot about etiquettes there from my Korean friends and it becomes a good habit for me now.

I made a lot of friends with locals and also foreigners. I managed to joined some event that KAIST provide for students such as KAIST Festival called KAMP, which at the end of the day, they invite K-pop singers and we all enjoyed it. Moreover, I also actives on Indonesian organizations there that are similar with Taiwan-Indonesia organization which is called PERPIKA. There, I met a lot of Indonesian and made friends with them. This organization feels like home and made me feel less homesick.

Other than Indonesian organization, I also joined volunteering club here called Silver Lining. It is a volunteering club that helped orphanage to learn science and English using Korean. From this club, I gained confidence in speaking Korean, learning the technique on how to teach children, and also learn how to be confident with my own skills. I also joined event such as networking event and church event which introduce other people with Taiwan and National Cheng Kung University. There, I tell them about my experience in Taiwan and they promised that someday they would visit Taiwan and want to know about Taiwan culture.

Reflection and Suggestions

In my short exchange period, I learned a lot of academic knowledge, as well as life lessons. In my point of view, this exchange program helped to be able to achieve my childhood dream and makes me able to open a new chapter in my life. Moreover, this exchange program gives me character and personal development by making my mind clearer on which career path I would take in the future after I graduate. I realized that this program not just about learning new insights about our academic studies, but also about how we seek for our true self and what we want for our future. Through this program, I feel more matured and more ambitious for my future. I feel liked this also widen student perspectives about world phenomenon. Moreover, learning new culture and languages through communication with locals and made friends with other students boost my confidence. Therefore, it also improved my networking skills and widen my network from all over the world. Moreover, I can also immersed in Korean culture by trying new things such as going to school festival concert, trying Korean traditional foods, and joined their event.

Lastly, the opportunity that I get from exchange program make me realized that friendship is the important things that I gained because when I left Taiwan for exchange program, all my friends in Taiwan contacted me daily and ask about my condition. Although I make new friends there, my friends in Taiwan always try to include me in every occasion they were in which made me grateful to know them and also the thing that I always remember is how good everyone treats me, which become an unforgettable memory for myself.

Although, I have gained a lot of benefits from this program, I still have some difficulties such as feeling homesick in a new environment, and hard to understand the materials of the lecture. To resolve those problems, I got helped from my friends all across the world by joining organizations like volunteering to adapt with the new environment and increased my Korean skills. Moreover, I also tried to joined Indonesian organization to makes me feel less homesick and gain more friends. Moreover, because National Cheng Kung University provide us with finding materials from paper-based materials AI (Perplexity AI), I could easily understand the paper and materials that they discussed easier. All of this makes me feel comfortable and delightful during my exchange program.

Suggestions that I might give from this experience is maybe increased the quota per university with minimal 2 students because I sometimes feel struggle if I do not know any information, but gladly, with the help of my senior and friends, I could the handle the documents by myself. In my point of view, University office has helped what they could help and I am very grateful for them to help me achieved my dream. It will always be the greatest experience in my whole life.

Appendix



Figure :

- A. Going to KAIST KAMP with exchange friends from Indonesia
- B. Taking our last picture in KAIST front gate
- C. Trying korean street food
- D. Won Second Place in Korean UCC Language contest 2025
- E. Taking picture with Korean 3 language class
- F. Silver Lining Club photo
- G. Going to explore Udo Island, South Korea
- H. Went on Jeonju trip with korean class professor and friends
- I. Trying songpyeon and sikhye from korean class professor
- J. Indonesian organization (PERPIKA) winter gathering
- K. Trip to Seoul with my friends from Taiwan who went to South Korea for holiday (at Gyeongbokgung palace)