

Exchange Student Experience in Japan

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Unfortunately, due to the situation with the coronavirus pandemic, I was not able to come to Japan when my exchange started in October. Still, I wanted to take advantage of the situation, so I made a plan with my friends. Since Japan's borders were closed, I decided to go to a country in a similar time zone. At the end of September, my friend and I left the UK to travel to Korea for three months. I had never left Europe, so I was pretty worried about moving to a new country. The flight from London to Seoul lasted more than 10 hours, after which we had to pass immigration at the airport in Seoul. I was very stressed! Due to the Korean covid

regulations, I had to quarantine at a hotel for 2 weeks. It was very strange to spend two weeks alone, but I was excited to leave the hotel and explore Seoul. In fact, I attended my Ochanomizu orientation while I was at the quarantine hotel. Then, after two long weeks, I was finally able to leave.

I was very nervous when I started my classes, but my teachers and classmates were all very kind. I really enjoyed my time in Korea. All my classes were in the afternoon, which I liked because I didn't have to get up early. In the evenings and holidays, I would explore Seoul with my friends. My friends from my home university, SOAS, were there so it was a lot of fun. I also became friends with Korean language students from other universities. Sadly, after three months, my visa ran out and I had to go back to my home country. It was very upsetting to leave my friends behind, but at least I had good memories in Korea. I returned to London in December and it was very difficult to manage the time difference. My classes now started at 4am! Fortunately, Christmas was coming soon, so I didn't have to do too many lessons while I was in London. When classes restart after the spring vacation, I definitely want to go back to Korea if I still can't come to Japan. But still, my hope is to come to Japan by April.



Despite the difficulties caused by the coronavirus, I really enjoyed my first semester at Ochanomizu University. The Japanese classes were very useful and I think my

level of Japanese has really improved. The Japanese culture classes were also very interesting and I learned a lot. Thank you to the teachers at Ochanomizu University, my academic advisor, and the staff of the International Affairs Division for their kindness. I especially want to give thanks to Matsuda sensei, Hagiwara sensei, and Ohno san. I can't wait to continue learning in April!