



The Woojungwon Dormitory, Global Campus

# Winter Move-out Policy at Global Campus Dorm Leaves International Students Scrambling for Housing

International students say the central question remains whether cost-saving goals can be balanced with basic housing stability during academic breaks.

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Students living in dormitories on Kyung Hee University (KHU) Global Campus must leave campus housing for about a month each winter under the dorms' policy. The Woojungwon Dormitory, which mainly houses international undergraduate and graduate students, required year-round residents to move out by January 24 this year. Re-entry begins on March 1, with early move-in available from February 22, leaving students to find housing off campus or leave Korea for roughly 30 days. International students and local housing experts say that the policy creates sudden costs while leaving few realistic options to students. Despite the burdens, Woojungwon has stated that it does not plan to allow students to remain on campus during the winter break.

## Majority International, Limited Winter Access

According to the dormitory, international students account for 550 to 600 of its approximately 1,000 residents. Despite this, winter residence is permitted only for participants in limited programs, including the KHU & Higher School of Economics double degree program and the Economic Development Cooperation Fund program, where academic activities continue during the break.

For international students in particular, the move-out period is more than a temporary inconvenience. Tarek Hamdan, a student at the Graduate School of Pan-Pacific International Studies, said he returned to Canada after failing to find short-term housing. "The flight cost around \$1,300, which is a huge burden for an international student," Hamdan said.

He also said leaving Korea temporarily created another challenge: what to do with belongings. Woojungwon offers luggage storage during the

closure, but Hamdan said the service is limited to one box per student, which he described as "far less than what many residents need."

Hamdan said he saw other students struggle in similar ways. "My roommate could not easily return to the U.S. due to circumstances there," he said. "He had to struggle to find a place to stay with a local family in Korea."

## Woojungwon Cites Maintenance and Costs



Early check-ins available from February 22, 2026

A Woojungwon Dormitory official said the winter vacancy period is necessary for "comprehensive facility management," including cleaning and maintenance of rooms and shared spaces before the new semester.

The official also pointed to financial considerations. "Renting out vacant rooms during the break helps offset operating costs and reduce the financial burden on students," the official said, adding that dormitory fees for Woojungwon and the 2nd Dormitory were frozen for the 2026 academic year.

When asked about the possibility of offering the 2nd Dormitory as temporary housing, the dormitory stated that both facilities operate under the same maintenance schedule, making such an arrangement difficult.

Woojungwon has mentioned that demand for winter residence is limited, as many international students reside in the dormitory during the semester and return to their home countries during breaks. However, as of February 2026, the dormitory has not conducted a survey to gather student opinions on the move-out policy.

## Seoul Campus Dormitory Allows Winter Stay

The winter move-out policy from Woojungwon differs from practices at the University's Seoul Campus.

At Sewha Hall, international undergraduate and exchange students accounted for 302 of the dormitory's 432 residents in fall 2025, along with 34 graduate students—bringing the proportion of international residents to approximately 78%.

Sewha Hall allows students confirmed for the following semester to apply for winter residence at the end of each term without requiring them to move out.

A Sewha Hall administrative official said that when students remain during the break, facility management and administrative operations continue within the existing operational framework, and no "significant

operational difficulties" have been reported.

For some Global Campus students, this distinction raises questions about whether alternatives could be considered.

Hamdan said he was disappointed by what he described as a "unilateral notification" from Woojungwon.

"I understand it may have been a necessary evil, but I wish it had been handled in a way that offered international students more support and better options," he said. "It honestly felt like we were just told to leave and figure it out on our own."

He added that short-term housing can raise living costs beyond rent. "It wasn't just the housing that was expensive—the entire cost of living would have gone up," Hamdan said. "If I stayed outside the dorm in an Airbnb, hotel, or short-term rental, my food costs would jump too, because I would lose access to the school cafeteria."

## Short-term Rentals Are Rare, Expert Says

Experts also point to the limitations of short-term rentals. Yang Hee-hyun, a licensed real estate agent at Yeongtong Jeil Real Estate, said short-term leases are uncommon in nearby neighborhoods. "We do have foreign students who ask to rent for just one or two months, but nearby landlords generally do not accept short-term tenants," Yang said.

The expert added local governments are aware of the issue but options remain limited. "The Suwon City government has asked for cooperation to allow short-term residence for foreigners, but if landlords refuse, there is little we can do," he said.

Students echoed the need for the University to explore alternative measures. Hamdan suggested that if winter residence remains unavailable, the University should consider arranging agreements with local hotels or other accommodations to provide discounted housing during the closure.

## University Cites Limits, Students Call for Options

Woojungwon has said coordinating winter housing in cooperation with the 2nd Dormitory would be difficult because both dormitories conduct renovation and maintenance during academic breaks. As the Global Campus dorms continue the winter closure policy, international students say the central question remains whether cost-saving goals can be balanced with basic housing stability during academic breaks.