

Korea (Republic of)

STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Description:

The South Korean higher education system, including public and private institutions, is relatively centralized under the government and the Ministry of Education, Science, & Technology despite a general trend toward greater autonomy. There are 5 main types of institutions: universities (public & private), junior colleges (public & private), industrial universities (public & private), education universities (public), and graduate school universities (private). There are also several online universities, ecclesiastical universities, and a public correspondence university in South Korea. The majority of these (over 80%) are privately owned, rely mostly on private funding, and tend to have higher tuition rates and a somewhat greater degree of autonomy from the government than public institutions, which are mainly managed by the Ministry of Education.

Stages of studies:

University level first stage: Undergraduate universities: confer general and specialized baccalaureate degrees

The majority of South Korea's higher education students enter universities that include 4-year programs across a range of fields in science, humanities, engineering, business, etc. A few universities focus on technical subjects. Some fields require students to pass licensing exams in addition to regular coursework. Industrial universities train in 4-year programs focused on technological areas but may also include many of the same fields as universities; priority is generally given to graduates of vocational schools. Law students currently study for four years and must pass a licensing exam; a US-style system with specialized law studies following regular undergraduate studies is likely to be adopted in the future.

University level second stage: Graduate schools (independent and attached to universities): confer master's degrees

Graduate schools provide 2-3 years of study beyond the baccalaureate degree in the same field of study for students to obtain a master's degree. Most graduate schools, including medical schools, are attached to universities. Students must submit a thesis and/or pass licensing examinations in addition to completing regular coursework. Presently medical students complete a total of 6 years of higher education and must pass a national medical examination in addition to specialized clinical practice and training. This is likely to change soon to require 8 total years of higher education.

University level third stage: Graduate schools (independent and attached to universities): confer doctoral degrees

Graduate schools also provide 2-3 years of training beyond a master's degree to obtain a doctoral degree. Students must submit a doctoral dissertation and pass an oral or equivalent examination in addition to required coursework.

Distance higher education:

Korea National Open University, a public institution, provides distance education programs at the national level. It offers courses for Bachelor's degrees. There are also 17 private online universities across the country offering baccalaureate-level educational programs taken through the internet.

ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to non university higher education studies:

Name of secondary school credential required: High School Diploma

Admission to university-level studies:

Name of secondary school credential required: High School Diploma

Alternatives to credentials: Credit Bank System : people can accumulate credits to earn the degree equivalent.

Admission requirements: Korean scholastic achievement test (suneung).

Other requirements: Access to higher education is based on the composite score of the CSAT, high-school academic records, an essay test, and an interview.

Foreign students admission:

Definition of foreign student: Students from foreign countries or overseas Koreans with foreign nationality taking up courses, doing research or language studies in an accredited university or graduate school (including industrial universities, universities of education and junior colleges). However, students enrolled in distance education or evening schools are not included.

Quotas: None

Admission requirements: Foreign students must hold qualifications equivalent to full secondary or high school certificate or its equivalent for graduate studies. Requirements include the following: application form, certificate of graduation, grade points average (records), two references, proof of Korean language proficiency, study plan, curriculum vitae and portfolio (for applicants in arts/physical education).

Entry regulations: Foreign students must secure standard admission issued by the president or the dean of the university where they intend to study and submit the documents to the Ministry of Justice or to an overseas Korean diplomatic mission.

Applicants should secure a D 2 visa for degree programmes and D 4 visa for language studies.

Health requirements: None

Language requirements: Although an increasing number of universities teach classes in English (quantity and quality vary by university), students are advised to have a good knowledge of Korean.

RECOGNITION OF STUDIES

Quality assurance system:

Current quality assurance mechanisms in South Korean higher education are generally less homogenous and less compulsory than many other countries. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology indirectly accredits institutions through evaluations of individual universities' compliance with government regulations and policies and provides funding accordingly. Also, evaluations of institutions and specific academic fields are conducted by several organizations, such as the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) and the Korean Council for College Education (KCCE). The privately-owned Joongang Daily also annually publishes independent rankings of schools and specific academic fields (available in Korean at <http://univ.joins.com>). Individual schools also have quality assurance mechanisms such as department reviews and less-formal student evaluations.

Bodies dealing with recognition:

Gyoyuk Gwahak Gisulbu (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology - MEST)

Central Government Complex, 77-6 Sejong-no, Jongno-gu

Seoul 110-760

Tel: + 82(2) 6222 6118-9

Fax: + 82(2) 2100 6133

WWW: <http://www.mest.go.kr/>

Services provided and students dealt with: Development policies related to the promotion of student exchanges, production of information resources, recognition of degrees, diplomas and certificates of higher education, foreign students in higher education institutions.

Hanguk Daehak Gyoyuk Heopuihoe (Korean Council for University Education - KCUE)

KGIT Sangam Center 11th Fl.

Mapo-gu Sangam-dong 1601

Seoul 121-270

Tel: + 82(2) 6393 5225

Fax: + 82(2) 6393 5220

EMail: intl@kcue.or.kr

WWW: <http://www.kcue.or.kr>

Special provisions for recognition:

Recognition for non-university level studies: The Korean Council for College Education conducts voluntary accreditations of its member junior colleges each year by academic field. Three or four fields are chosen each year and the relevant academic divisions of participating colleges are evaluated and given a grade of A+, A, B, or C. The first round of accreditations took place 1999-2003, and the second round began in 2004 and is presently ongoing. Evaluation results can be viewed in Korean at http://www.kcce.or.kr/si/html/p_business/index.jsp?mainMenu=3&subMenu=0.

Recognition for university level studies: The Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) conducts voluntary accreditations of its member universities, which include all four-year higher education institutions in the country. Two rounds of accreditations, 1994-2000 and 2001-2006, have been completed and included both comprehensive and field-specific evaluations. Although an English translation is not yet available, results can be viewed in Korean at <http://eval.kcue.or.kr/>. The results of the first round of evaluations were valid for seven years and the results of the second round for six years. It was intended for universities to request another evaluation once the previous one expired. Accreditation is lost if the expiration passes without a further evaluation or if the institution fails to pass the second evaluation. As of the end of 2007, the KCUE's is reviewing and improving its accreditation process in anticipation of beginning regular accreditations again in the near future.

For exercising a profession: A system of licensing exists parallel to college and university degrees in many fields of study leading to professional practices. In colleges such fields include electric engineering, cosmetology, and auto mechanics, and in universities such fields include government civil service, law, medicine, elementary and secondary teaching, engineering, and architecture. In most cases students must pass a rigorous licensing examination after completing a degree program. For the most part university degree programs do not specifically prepare students for licensing exams, and thus many students spend considerable amounts of time in private tutoring during their third and fourth years of university to prepare.

NATIONAL BODIES**Gyoyuk Gwahak Gisulbu (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology - MEST)**

Minister: Ahn Byong Man
 Chief, University & Research Institute Support Bur: Hong Gyu Hwang
 Director: Un-woo Lee
 Central Government Complex, 77-6 Sejong-no, Jongno-gu
 Seoul 110-760
 Tel: +82(2) 6222 6118-9
 Fax: +82(2) 2100 6133
 WWW: <http://www.mest.go.kr/>

Role of national body: Oversees and coordinates human resources development policies and governs matters related to school education, lifelong education, and other academic affairs.

Hanguk Daehak Gyoyuk Heopuihoe (Korean Council for University Education - KCUE)

Chairman: Sohn Byungdoo
 Secretary General: Chong Yul Park
 Director: Dong Kwang Kim
 KGIT Sangam Center 11th Fl.
 Mapo-gu Sangam-dong 1601
 Seoul 121-270
 Tel: +82(2) 6393 5225
 Fax: +82(2) 6393 5220
 EMail: intl@kcue.or.kr
 WWW: <http://www.kcue.or.kr>

Role of national body: The KCUE is responsible for: 1) professional research on the management of colleges and universities, 2) professional research on and implementation of the college entrance system, 3) provision of admissions information, 4) development of policies to increase financial support to universities, 5) development of college curricula and teaching methods, 6) conducting university evaluations, 7) making recom-

mentations to the government on university education, and 8) implement projects commissioned by the government.

Gungnip Gukje Gyoyukwon (National Institute for International Education - NIIED)

President: Soo-Taek Rhee
Yeongjae Shin
Director: Namjo Jeong
43 Ihwajang-gil Jongno-gu
Seoul 110-810
Tel: + 82(2) 3668 1300
Fax: + 82(2) 742 1064
EMail: chongmu@mest.go.kr
WWW: <http://www.niied.go.kr/>

Role of national body: Major areas of oversight of the NIIED include education of overseas Koreans, international education exchange and cooperation, overseas training of teachers and university students, selection and management of government scholarship recipients, and support services for overseas study.

Hanguk Haksul Jinheung Jaedan (Korean Research Foundation - KRF)

Director General: Jaechang Wu
Director: Jea-Dong Choi
304 Yeomgok dong
Seocho gu
Seoul 137-748
Tel: + 82(2) 3460 5500
Fax: + 82(2) 3460 5680
WWW: <http://www.krf.or.kr/KHPapp/eng/maina.jsp>

Role of national body: The KRF establishes and implements programs to support research activities, manages academic research funds, provides subsidies for operating academic research organizations, supports domestic and international academic exchanges, provides scholarships and education loans, and conducts evaluations on the management of research conducted in universities.

Hanguk Gukje Gyoryu Jaedan (Korea Foundation)

President: Sung-joon Yim
Director, Planning & Coord. Dept.: Hoe-Kil Kim
Director: Jeong-Eun Yim
Diplomatic Center Building, 10th-11th Fl.
2558 Nambusunhwanno, Seocho-gu
Seoul 137-863
Tel: + 82(2) 2046 8500
Fax: + 82(2) 3463 6076
WWW: <http://www.kf.or.kr>

Role of national body: The Korea Foundation promotes international understanding through creative exchanges by supporting Korean studies development overseas; providing fellowships; supporting museums, exhibitions, and performances; and organizing international conferences, forums, and other exchange programs.

Asia-Pacific Association for International Association - APAIE

President: Doo-Hee Lee
Seoul
EMail: apaie@korea.ac.kr
WWW: <http://www.apaie.org/>

Role of national body: The aim of APAIE is to achieve greater cooperation among those responsible for international activities in Asia Pacific institutions of higher learning, and to promote the quality of international programs, activities, and exchanges for the harmony and advancement of the Asia Pacific region worldwide.

Data for academic year: 2008-2009

Source: IAU from the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE), 2008