

Republic of Korea (South Korea)

Demographics for Republic of Korea (South Korea)

Population:	48,422,644 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$925.1 billion
Currency (inc code):	South Korean Won (KRW)
Language(s):	Korean, English widely taught in schools
Internet country code:	.kr

Elementary and secondary education

Korea has a single-track system which maintains a single line of school levels. Students mostly spend six years in elementary grades, which may be preceded by one to three years in nursery school or kindergarten. Elementary education is followed by a secondary school program lasting another six years. The secondary education program normally includes three years of middle school (i.e. grades seven through nine) and another three years of high school (i.e. grades ten-12). Students usually complete grades one-12 by 19 years of age. In 2003, total enrollments in elementary, middle and high school were 4,175,731, 1,859,265 and 1,787,541 respectively.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development is the central government body responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies related to academic activities. This body plans and coordinates educational policies, formulates policies governing educational institutes at every level, publishes and approves textbooks for elementary and secondary schools, provides administrative and financial support for all levels of the school system, supports local education offices and national universities, operates the teacher training system and is responsible for overseeing lifelong

education and developing human resource policies. Therefore, regardless of funding or governance of elementary and secondary schools, Korea has highly standardized educational content in general.

Since 1991, however, local-level educational autonomy has been promoted for operational aspects. The Ministry of Education delegates much of its budget planning and major administrative decisions to local authorities. District education offices, distinct from the general regional administration, make decisions regarding education of which board members supervise local school district offices.

Higher education

Graduates of high school may continue their education in two or three-year junior colleges, or via four-year college or university and graduate programs. Technical or vocational institutions offer postsecondary technical training leading to specific careers, such as computer-aided design. Two-year community colleges typically offer associate degrees, usually designated as Associate of Arts (AA) degrees. As of 2003, there were a total of 162 junior colleges in Korea. Among them, seven colleges are national, and local governments run nine public ones and the remaining 146 are private.

A Bachelor's degree normally requires four years of college-level coursework. Undergraduate studies leading to a Bachelor's degree are generally divided into two phases: a set of general course requirements in a broad range of subjects and a concentrated (or major) program of study in one or more subjects, such as business, biology, sociology, and education. Applications to a four-year college or university may require completion of a main entrance examination score, a Korean version of the SAT score, and high school transcripts. The scholastic aptitude test for college entrance consists of five areas: language (Korean), mathematics, foreign language (English), social studies/science/vocational training, and second foreign language/Chinese characters. Admission into the second phase (a concentrated program of academic study) within an institution will sometimes require a separate application near the end of the first phase. Distance learning colleges (so-called Cyber universities) are a recent addition to this level of education. Out of a total of 218, the number of private institutes is 172 and 44 are national and established by the central government. Only two are run by state governments such as Seoul City.

Graduate education includes programs of study leading to a Master's or Doctor's degree. Master's degrees require at least two years of coursework beyond the Bachelor's degree. A Doctor's degree usually requires a minimum of three to four years beyond the Bachelor's degree. Policies and standards for admission into graduate programs usually include an entrance test, application, high performance in undergraduate studies, and letters of recommendation. More programs require tests of English such as TOEFL as

globalization attracts more attention even in education. Most graduate programs exist within universities but there exist a small number of institutes that offer only graduate programs (25 as of 2003).

Most institutions in Korea operate using a semester academic calendar. In Korea, an academic year generally consists of spring and fall semesters. The spring semester usually is a period of time from March to June and the fall semester runs from September to December. Between the two semesters, students have summer and winter breaks. Some institutes offer courses during these periods. A credit hour is a unit of measure representing an hour (50 minutes) of instruction over a 16-week period in a semester system. It is applied toward the total number of hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, which varies by institution.

Management education

Management education in Korea is provided by a wide range of organizations as in other countries. Business programs within colleges and universities are usually managed and delivered by an academic unit often referred to as a business school. There is only one college attached to an industrial firm in Korea.

Undergraduate education leading to a Bachelor's degree in business and management is provided by colleges and universities. Generally, these programs involve two years of general studies and two years of specialized studies in business. The most commonly offered degree title is Bachelor of Business Administration. Most degree programs allow students to select a major emphasis within business, which usually requires specialized courses in the area of emphasis. The number of required courses for a major varies widely among universities and majors.

Graduate business education includes Master's and Doctoral-level education. Master's level business education includes programs leading to a general business Master's degree (e.g. Master of Business Administration (MBA)) and programs leading to a specialized Master's degree (e.g. Master of Accountancy, Master of Information Systems, e-Business and so on), which provide specialized training within a specific field. Substantial variation has developed within each type, especially general business Master's degrees. Master's level programs in Korea usually require 30-40 credit hours but recently a small number of institutes have adopted programs comparable to MBA programs in the USA requiring 50-60 credit hours to complete the degree. Recently a small number of business schools have started Executive MBA (EMBA) programs for working executives with significant management experience, many of whom are company sponsored. The Minister of Education requires two-year education for MBA degrees.

Most business Doctoral programs in Korea are very similar to US PhD programs. They train candidates to conduct highly specialized scholarly

research. Most PhD programs require completed Master's degrees. After completing preliminary courses and passing a battery of written examinations, Doctoral students advance into the candidacy stage. The Doctoral student then participates in advanced seminars, selects a subject for the dissertation, forms a dissertation committee, and initiates research. The student enters an independent research phase once the dissertation advisor accepts the research design and proposal. Independent research and writing of the dissertation can take several years. Once acceptable to the advisor, the student must defend the dissertation before the committee and invited guests. In a typical defense, the student must establish mastery of the subject, justify his or her research findings, and answer questions. A successful defense results in the awarding of the degree.

Faculty

A larger proportion of new full-time business faculty members are now hired out of Doctoral programs in business and management. New Doctorates are usually hired into tenure-track positions at the rank of assistant professor and are normally considered for tenure and promotion to associate professor and to full professor normally occurs after a certain number of years of successful teaching and research. Generally, full-time tenure-track faculty are expected to conduct research, teach, and to provide service to the school, institution, and their discipline. The relative emphasis on each of these responsibilities is determined by the mission of the school. Business faculties also include practicing managers and retired executives. Some are hired as part-time or adjunct faculty members and teach one or two courses a semester, while others have been hired into full-time positions under the banner of visiting faculty or lecturer.

Students

In Korea, some institutes offer combined programs of business administration and economics. Hence, the exact number of narrowly defined business school students is not to be obtained exactly. In 2003, there were about 238,000 undergraduate students which represented about 16 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment of 1.5 million students. Most four-year universities have Master's programs, representing a total enrollment of about 29,000 students in 2003. About 3,400 students were pursuing Doctoral degrees in business programs in 2003.

Accreditation

The Department of Education is the body for any official accreditation regardless of the level of education. A small number of Korean business schools have also recently obtained accreditation from AACSB International:

- The estimated number of institutions with undergraduate business degree programs: 218.
- The estimated number of institutions with business Master's degree programs: 210.
- The estimated number of institutions with business Doctoral degree programs: 130.

Issues facing business schools

Business schools in Korea are currently faced with a diverse set of issues, including shortages of faculty, shifting funding sources, intensifying global competition and increasing pressures for diversity.

Many business school administrators complain of the burden of unnecessary red tape from the Ministry of Education as industry demands for flexible and customized business education is rapidly escalating. Also, the university community in Korea still does not seem to embrace differences among many disciplines. Hence, business schools in Korea often face steep competition from global business schools with more flexibility and greater resources.

Another issue is the lack of diversity in faculty. In Korea, female faculty consists of less than only 5 percent of business school faculty members while the student population is rapidly becoming more gender balanced.

However, the most significant issue is the quality of education. Firms in Korea still often express their doubts on the quality of business education in Korea. In addition, many Korean universities prefer new faculty candidates who have completed their Doctoral degrees at institutions abroad. Hence, producing high quality new PhDs is a very serious challenge to dealing with the significant shortage of faculty.

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