

How to Apply for the GKS Scholarship in 2026?

Step-by-step process to maximise your chances of successfully applying for the fully funded scholarship to study in South Korea for free as an international student.



You must be excited about the idea of studying abroad in Korea with a fully funded scholarship, and yes, it's possible through the Global Korea Scholarship, a Korean government-funded programme that covers all expenses from the start, including tuition and airfare.

Many ask if it's possible to study in Korea for free, and the answer is absolutely yes.

The scholarship offers several benefits, even though it is highly competitive.

Having a genuine passion for learning the Korean language, adapting to Korean culture, and being motivated to build a bridge between your country and Korea can significantly improve your chances of being selected.

The basic requirements are strong grades and the necessary documents, just like with any scholarship.

If you have completed high school and have your certificate and transcript in hand, you are ready to apply, whether you're a high school graduate applying for the undergraduate programme or a degree holder aiming for the graduate, research, or doctoral programme.

All applicants have the opportunity to receive the scholarship and study in Korea, an incredible chance to experience the culture, learn the language, and strengthen their profile.

Completing your studies under this scholarship can open doors to greater opportunities and improve your career prospects both in Korea and internationally.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that could be your golden ticket to much bigger opportunities.

If you're wondering what benefits you get and whether you're eligible and whether this scholarship is right for you, then keep reading.

Content

[> Why should you choose GKS over other scholarships in other countries?](#)

[> Who it's for and why it's a life-changing opportunity](#)

[> Step 1: Understand the Scholarship](#)

[> Step 2: How to Apply for GKS](#)

[> Step 3: Increasing Your Selection Chances](#)

[> What to do next?](#)

[> GKS FAQs](#)

Why should you choose GKS over other scholarships in other countries?

Have you ever wondered why so many students choose the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) over other scholarships like Erasmus, Chevening, or DAAD?

The answer is simple: GKS is unique. Unlike other programmes, it focuses entirely on academic performance.

There's no need for a long list of extracurricular achievements. If you've got the grades, you're already off to a strong start.

This focus on academics makes GKS stand out, especially for students familiar with the Asian education system, where grades matter most.

While scholarships like Erasmus and Chevening assess leadership and extracurricular activities, GKS levels the playing field for academically strong students who prefer a simpler approach.

Now, you might think, "But isn't GKS highly competitive?" True, it is. But here's the good news: the competition pool is smaller than you'd expect.

Why? Not everyone is ready to step outside their comfort zone and adapt to a non-English-speaking environment.

That's where you have the edge. If you're willing to embrace the language and culture of South Korea, your chances improve significantly.

Another reason GKS shines is its **all-inclusive financial coverage**.

Unlike most European scholarships, which only cover part of the costs, GKS takes care of everything from tuition, airfare, housing, and health insurance to even a monthly stipend.

No surprises. No hidden costs. With GKS, you can focus entirely on your studies without worrying about money.

Compare this with Erasmus, where students often have to budget for extra expenses like housing or insurance, and the choice becomes clear.

There are few things that GKS does differently that make Korea a perfect destination to study abroad.

A decorative horizontal band with a light blue background. It features a repeating pattern of stylized white flowers and leaves. The text "Industry-linked education" is centered in a dark green, sans-serif font.

Industry-linked education

GKS offers the opportunity to study at universities that work closely with industry-specific companies.

This means that what you learn in the classroom is directly applicable to the field in which you plan to work.

Universities in Korea collaborate with top companies in their respective industries, allowing students to gain hands-on experience and apply their knowledge in real-world situations.

Korea's human resource demand

Korea is facing a serious human resource crisis due to its declining birth and fertility rates.

The population is ageing rapidly, and the country needs talented young people to join its workforce.

The latest article by Korea herald says, [Korea requires 1 million more international students to increase its GDP by 6%](#)

By studying in Korea, deserving students can apply their knowledge and skills for the benefit of Korean society while also building their careers in a country that genuinely needs them.

Affordable education

University tuition fees in Korea are much lower compared to many other countries.

Even without a scholarship, you may still be able to afford the costs, which are significantly less than those of a Western education.

Comprehensive support for scholars

Once you receive the scholarship, you are provided with accommodation in a dormitory, health insurance, assistance in opening a bank account, and even a bank card.

You don't have to worry about these arrangements; they are taken care of as soon as you arrive at your Korean university.

Faster visa process

Korea offers a relatively quick and straightforward visa process for most countries, often taking less than a month.

This is much faster compared to many Western countries, where visa processing can take six to nine months or more.

For all these reasons, Korea should be a top destination for your study abroad plans.

Whether you apply with or without a scholarship, South Korea stands out as one of the best options available, and GKS gives you the quickest route to study and get the best of it has to provide.

Who it's for and why it's a life-changing opportunity

The GKS scholarship is for anyone who has completed high school and holds a graduation certificate and transcript.

Applicants must also be from a country that maintains good relations with Korea and have a genuine passion for learning the Korean language, engaging with its people, and adapting to the culture.

In addition to these general requirements, the scholarship has specific eligibility criteria, including minimum grade requirements and age limits depending on the programme you are applying for.

Eligibility

You have to:

1. Be a citizen of a country designated by the National Institute for International Education (NIIED) of Korea
2. Be under 25 years of age (for undergraduate applicants)
3. Be under 40 years of age (for master's, doctoral, and research applicants)
4. You must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.64/4.0, 2.80/4.3, 2.91/4.5, or 3.23/5, or, alternatively, a score of 80% or higher on a 100-point scale, or be ranked in the top 20% of your class
5. Be in good physical and mental health

Benefits

The scholarship takes care of almost everything you'd normally worry about. Here's what it covers:

1. Covers your full tuition fees So you don't have to pay anything from your pocket.
2. Pays for your complete accommodation During your entire academic stay in Korea
3. Provides a monthly stipend. To cover your living expenses every month
4. Covers round-trip airfare So your flight to and from Korea is paid for
5. Include full medical insurance. For your time as a student
6. Offer language training for one year. Before your degree starts if you don't speak Korean
7. Reimburses your Test of Proficiency in Korean exam fee If you already have TOPIK Level 5/6 at the time of application.
8. Gives thesis support (for graduates) And even a graduation grant once you finish your studies

Considering the benefits, it's clear that this is a life-changing and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

You not only receive extensive support but also get the chance to study in one of the world's best countries for higher education, known for its strong investment in research and development.

Step 1: Understand the Scholarship

The very first thing you need to do is understand the guidelines and what the scholarship entails. There are several steps in the application process, but this is the first and most important one.

Start by reading the complete guidelines thoroughly. Next, explore the list of universities and their available majors. Both of which you can get from gkssupport.com or visit the official website studyinkorea.go.kr

Finally, review the actual application form so that when you're ready to apply, you already know exactly what's required and can complete it smoothly.

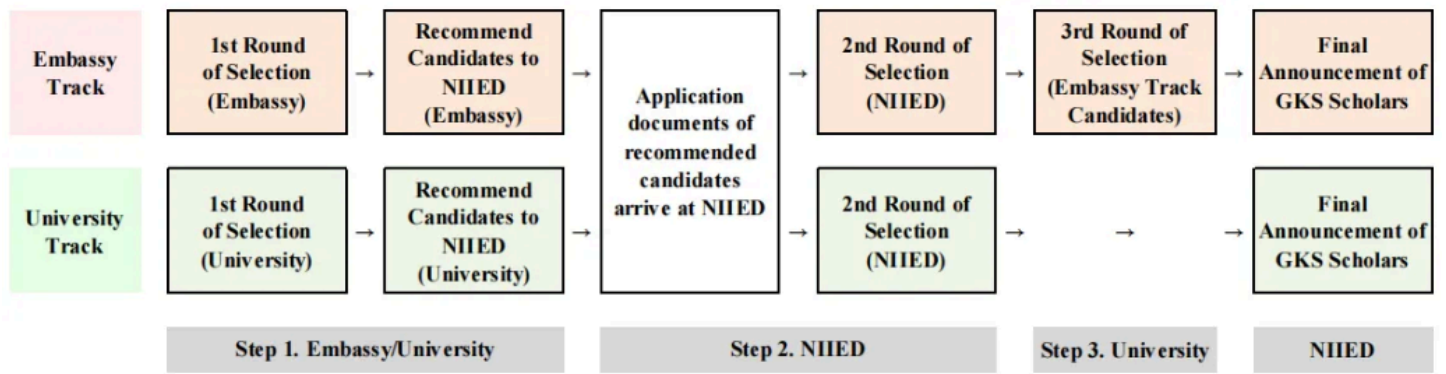
Once you've got all the information in hand, the next thing is to check the timeline for how the application process actually works.

It's not just about applying; there's a whole journey from the announcement of the scholarship right up to the moment you land in Korea.

You need to know exactly what happens at each step and what you're supposed to do, one thing after another, so nothing catches you off guard.

Now let's look at the timeline overview of how the GKS application begins and moves through to the final selection.

- **Announcement Release** – The official guidelines, university list, and application forms are released (usually in March for Graduate and September for Undergraduate).
- **Document Preparation** – Gather and prepare all required documents according to the checklist.
- **Submission** – Submit your documents through either the Embassy Track (to the Korean embassy in your country) or the University Track (directly to your chosen Korean university).
- **First Round of Selection** – Conducted by the Korean embassy or the university.
- **Second Round of Selection** – Reviewed by NIIED (National Institute for International Education).
- **Third Round / Final Confirmation** – Final selection is made, and successful candidates receive their acceptance notice.
- **Visa Application and Pre-departure** – Apply for a Korean student visa, arrange travel, and prepare for departure.
- **Arrival in Korea** – Orientation, Korean language course (if applicable), and start of the academic programme.



While you prepare all the documents, you need to choose the track through which you will submit your application. You can apply either through the Embassy Track or the University Track.

Through the Embassy Track, you can apply to three Korean universities by sending all your documents to the Korean embassy in your country, which will handle the scholarship process.

In the University Track, you apply to only one specific Korean university by sending all your documents directly to that university in Korea.

I have created a complete guide specifically for undergraduate applicants, as they might be unsure about which major to choose or whether the university they are considering offers the major they want.

It can be quite challenging to align your academic background with your future goals while also identifying universities that match your values and offer the opportunities you're seeking.

You should also understand how your choices can impact your chances of acceptance. Avoiding mistakes when selecting your major could actually be the key to securing the scholarship.

I have compiled all my advice into a single guide, which you can get a copy of for yourself.



[Get a copy](#)

This guide is also useful for graduate applicants who plan to change their major from what they studied in their undergraduate programme, as it helps you explore all available options and find the best fit.

If you are facing any difficulty in choosing the right university, major, or track, you can go through the guide, which contains all the information and advice you need to make an informed decision.

Step 2: How to Apply for GKS

1

Start with official guidelines

The first thing you need to do is download the official GKS application guidelines. These are available as a PDF and include all the key details.

This one document will explain the full eligibility criteria, the required documents, the timeline, and even give you access to the official application forms.

It also includes a list of all the participating Korean universities and the majors they offer under this scholarship.

2

Choose an application track

There are two choices to either choose University Track or Embassy Track for scholarship applications.

You can choose up to three universities under the embassy track, the chosen major should be consistent across the universities you list.

On the other hand, if you decide to apply through the university track, you can apply to only one university. You cannot apply through both tracks in the same year.

So once you choose your preferred track, you also decide how many universities you will be applying to. This step is critical, so take your time to research properly.

3

Choosing Your University and Major

On the official NIIED website, studyinkorea.go.kr, you can download not only the application guidelines but also a separate file that contains the complete list of participating universities and their details.

This file is provided in a zip folder, which, once extracted, gives you access to a spreadsheet.

The spreadsheet includes information about each university, the majors they offer, the language of instruction for those majors, and links to the respective departments.

By reviewing this file, you can explore and select the major that best suits your academic goals.

If you find the process overwhelming or difficult to navigate, I have also created a guide designed to simplify this step and help you make an informed decision.

You can get a copy for yourself if you would like additional support.



[Get a copy](#)



[Get a copy](#)

4

Write your Personal statement and Study plan

Once you have selected your Korean university and the major you intend to apply for, the next step is to begin working on your personal statement and study plan.

Both should be closely aligned with your chosen major, highlighting what you bring to the table as a candidate.

In your personal statement, you will present your past achievements, while in your study plan you will outline your future goals.

Together, these documents should demonstrate clearly why you are a strong candidate for the scholarship and what value you can contribute.

The process begins with understanding exactly what the GKS committee expects from these documents and how they should be presented.

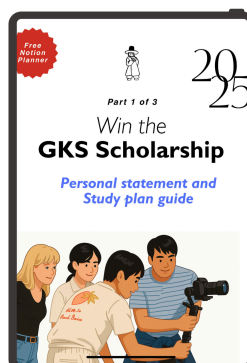
While a format is already provided, along with the main points to address, transforming these into a genuine and compelling narrative is not straightforward.

It is particularly challenging if English is not your first language, as conveying your ideas effectively while maintaining a natural and personal tone can be difficult.

Furthermore, the use of AI tools is strictly prohibited, as the committee can detect such content and enforces this rule strictly.

To help with this, I have prepared a guide designed to assist you in starting your personal statement and study plan specifically for the GKS.

It is particularly useful for first-time applicants but equally relevant for those applying to either the undergraduate or graduate programme.



[Get a copy](#)

[Need help in proofreading your GKS Personal statement and study plan?](#)

Once you're done with your statements, the next step is to prepare all the required documents.

This is where the actual application work begins. Download the application checklist from the official guidelines and use it to make sure you gather everything that is needed.

5

Prepare and Organize Your Documents

Each document must match the format and requirement laid out by GKS.

These include personal identification documents, academic transcripts, proof of citizenship for both you and your parents, recommendation letters, and more depending on your academic level.

Make sure to organise and arrange the documents in the correct order, especially if you're applying through the embassy track where multiple copies are required.

6

Submit to Korean Embassy or University

Once your documents are complete and properly arranged, you'll submit them either to the Korean Embassy in your home country or to the Korean university you're applying to, depending on your chosen track.

Be sure to track deadlines carefully for each route, as they are different and very strict.

7

Screening and Interview Process

After submission, the evaluation phase begins. If you applied through the embassy track, the Korean Embassy in your country will screen your documents and conduct interviews with shortlisted candidates.

If you applied through the university track, the university will assess your documents and directly recommend selected candidates to NIIED, which is the Korean government body managing the GKS program.

At this stage, shortlisted names are forwarded for final consideration.



[Get a copy](#)

8

Final Selection by NIIED

Once the NIIED completes the evaluation, the final results are announced. If your name appears on this list.

From this point, you'll receive further instructions on visa processing, university enrolment, and travel arrangements.

Step 3: Increasing Your Selection Chances

Let's be honest, applying for the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS) is not as easy as it sounds. If you've ever sat down to start the application and immediately felt stuck or stressed, trust me, you're not alone.

There's so much to figure out, and it becomes even more overwhelming when you don't have anyone to guide you and you're doing everything by yourself.

I've seen many students face this, and unfortunately, some end up making mistakes in the parts of the application that matter the most. Many people believe it's all about grades, but that's not true.

In fact, you can still make it even if you don't have a top-class GPA. This is where GKS gives you the opportunity to show who you are beyond just your academic numbers.

There are several ways to increase your chances of selection apart from your grades.

What increases your chances of selection?

There are a few specific things that really help boost your application beyond just your academic grades:

1. TOPIK Score (Korean Proficiency Test)

One major factor is your TOPIK score or other Korean language proficiency results. While Korean proficiency isn't mandatory, having TOPIK level 3 or above immediately puts you in a stronger position.

It shows that you are genuinely committed to adapting to the Korean academic environment and earns you bonus points during evaluation.

Plus, universities naturally prefer students who are already familiar with the language; it's less work for them.

2. English Proficiency Test (IELTS/TOEFL)

Another important factor is your English proficiency test results, such as IELTS or TOEFL.

If the course you're applying for is taught in English, submitting these scores not only proves your communication skills but also reassures the reviewers that you can easily keep up with lectures and assignments once selected for GKS.

It's a smart way to balance out weaker areas in your academic record.

Even if your grades aren't outstanding, strong IELTS or TOEFL results show that while you may lack in one area, you excel in another, and you'll have no problem carrying on with your

studies successfully.

3. Extracurricular Activities Related to Your Major

Having extracurricular activities specifically related to your major can significantly put you in a competitive position.

These aren't just "extras"; they're proof of your genuine interest and active engagement in your field.

If you've participated in competitions, joined clubs, volunteered, or taken part in any activity connected to your area of study, it shows initiative and passion.

A professional background related to your major is an even bigger advantage, as it demonstrates practical, real-world experience.

Including these experiences in your Personal Statement and Study Plan highlights that you're not just a good student; you're someone who lives and breathes your subject beyond the textbook.

This can greatly boost your chances of selection.

4. Internships or Work Experience in Your Field

If you have internship experience or have worked in any company related to your field, that's a definite bonus.

Whether you've worked on a project, interned at a company, or contributed to a research team, it's worth mentioning.

Real-world exposure strengthens your Personal Statement and adds weight to your interview answers.

It shows that you're not just planning to study the field; you've already started exploring and applying it in practical settings.

5. A Strong Recommendation Letter

Those were the documents fully within your control to ensure they are up to the mark and make you stand out as a competitive applicant.

However, there's another document that isn't entirely in your hands but can still give you a significant edge if you work towards it: a strong recommendation letter from a professor who has taught you in your field and knows you well, both personally and academically.

Such a letter should come from someone who can vouch for your skills, character, and potential as a student, highlighting your academic strengths and professional qualities.

A well-written recommendation letter from someone who truly understands your abilities can tip the scales in your favour when applying to a Korean university.

6. Your Personal Statement & Study Plan

Your personal statement and study plan are your golden ticket to securing the GKS scholarship.

They allow you to present yourself as more than just your academic grades, showcasing your personality, ambitions, and the unique qualities that make you a strong candidate.

GKS gives you the opportunity to convince the selection committee of your motivation, your goals, why you have chosen Korea, why you have selected your specific major, and what you plan to do both during your studies and after completing them.

This is your chance to reveal your true self, as they are looking for more than just numbers on a transcript.

It's not only about writing well; it's about writing smart. Your personal statement and study plan must align with what the university wants and, more importantly, with what the GKS programme and the Korean government expect from the students they fund.

This part of the application is crucial and requires precision.

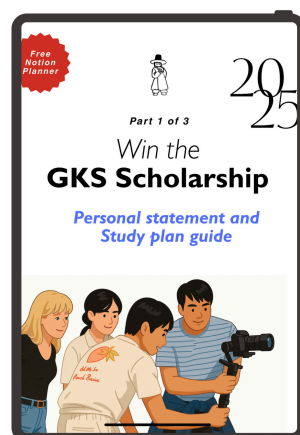
Many students struggle here, especially if English is not their native language.

To make it more challenging, GKS strictly prohibits AI-generated content.

They have systems to detect it, and submitting such work could lead to instant rejection.

So crafting a strong, authentic personal statement and study plan can be tricky.

If you're struggling to start, I've compiled all my advice in one guide that will give you a clear, step-by-step idea of how to begin.



[Get a copy](#)

If you've already written your draft, I also offer a feedback service for students; book your slot using the link below.

[Need help in proofreading your
GKS Personal statement and study plan?](#)

7. Interview

The very last step, but also one of the most important, is the interview.

Once your documents are approved and everything is in order, you will be invited for an interview.

This could take place online via Zoom, in person, or through another format, depending on the embassy or university.

The interview can feel overwhelming, but it is your golden opportunity to directly convince the committee.

This is your moment to showcase your personality, communicate your motivation, and answer their questions smartly and authentically.

It is a crucial stage and sometimes even more decisive than your written application.

I have compiled a list of real questions that have been asked of previous scholars, along with strategies on how to structure your answers so they make you stand out.

If the interview process feels intimidating, my guide will walk you through everything, from understanding the interview format and the panel's expectations to handling tricky or unexpected questions.

It also covers strategies for projecting confidence while respecting Korean cultural nuances.



[Get a copy](#)

What to do next?

Now that you know what the scholarship stands for, whether you are eligible for it, the benefits you get after applying, how to apply, and ways to increase your chances of selection, the next step is to start preparing early.

The earlier you prepare, the better your chances of having strong, well-prepared documents.

This will put you ahead of applicants who rush at the last moment and risk making mistakes.

If you want to know more about the GKS scholarship, what is expected of you, what you need to do, and the next steps, I recommend going through my e-book.

It gives you everything in detail to help you fully understand the GKS and reduce the stress of the application process. It will also guide you step-by-step on how to approach it.

The e-book covers all the important strategies for maximising your chances of selection and explains each stage of the process, making it perfect for beginners to the GKS. It also lists other key resources that can further improve your application. You can find it below.

If you are looking for feedback on your personal statement or have questions, I can help save you time by reducing mistakes and making your application stand out in a competitive pool.

You can book your slot for the feedback service through the link below.

[Proofreading and Feedback Service](#)



Global Korea Scholarship Application FAQs

What fields of study are available under the Global Korea Scholarship (GKS)?

The GKS programme covers a wide range of academic fields, ensuring that students from nearly every background can find their place.

Whether you're from a STEM discipline like Engineering, IT, Natural Sciences, or Medical studies, or from non-technical fields such as Business, Hotel Management, Education, Humanities, or Social Sciences, GKS has something for you.

It even includes Language and Cultural Studies.

To explore the full list of available majors and departments, always refer to the official University Information file available on studyinkorea.go.kr, the official Korean government website.

Do not rely on third-party lists.

Some universities are better known for certain subjects. This means competition may vary depending on the university and your chosen field, so choose wisely based on your strengths and goals.

List of available Universities

◆ Available Universities by Type

Classification	Available Universities
Type A (33 institutions)	Academy of Korean Studies, Ajou University, Chung-Ang University, Dankook University, Dongguk University, Duksung Women's University, Ewha Womans University, GIST (Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology), Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Hanyang University (ERICA), Hanyang University (Seoul), Hongik University, Incheon National University, Inha University, KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology), KDI School of Public Policy and Management, Konkuk University, Kookmin University, Korea University, Kyung Hee University, POSTECH (Pohang University of Science and Technology), Seokyeong University, Seoul National University, SeoulTech (Seoul National University of Science and Technology), Sogang University, Sookmyung Women's University, Soongsil University, Sungkyunkwan University, Sungshin Women's University, Tech University of Korea, UNIST (Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology), University of Seoul, Yonsei University
Type B (41 institutions)	Busan University of Foreign Studies, Changwon National University, Cheongju University, Chonnam National University, Chosun University, Chungbuk National University, Chungnam National University, Daegu Catholic University, Daegu University, Daejeon University, Dong-A University, Dongseo University, Gangneung-Wonju National University, Gyeongbuk National University (Andong National University), Gyeongsang National University, Hannam University, Hoseo University, Inje University, Jeju National University, Jeonbuk National University, Kangwon National University, Keimyung University, Kongju National University, Konyang University, KOREATECH (Korea University of Technology and Education), Kumoh National Institute of Technology, Kunsan National University, Kyungpook National University, Kyungsung University, Mokwon University, National Korea Maritime & Ocean University, Pai Chai University, Pukyong National University, Pusan National University, Semyung University, Silla University, Soonchunhyang University, Sun Moon University, Sunchon National University, University of Ulsan, Yeungnam University

What are the selection chances for GKS, and how tough is the process?

The GKS process is highly competitive, with only about 15% of applicants selected. It is heavily grade-focused, but grades aren't the only factor that matters.

Many applicants have been selected despite not having top-tier marks simply because they submitted a strong personal statement and a well-aligned study plan and performed well in the interview.

If you'd like to improve your chances, I've created resources specifically designed to help you stand out in the selection process.

What are the main evaluation criteria and preferences in GKS selection?

The main evaluation points for GKS include both document screening and interviews. Here's how it works:

1. The selection committee examines your documents to verify your citizenship, education level, and academic grades to determine whether you are qualified for the programme and the major you selected.

2. You will also be assessed on your overall competency, which includes both your submitted documents and your interview performance.
3. If you have a TOPIK Level 3 or above, you receive an additional 10% in your evaluation score.
4. If you are a descendant of a Korean War veteran who served in the war through a foreign military, you are awarded an additional 5%.
5. If you do not submit a language proficiency certificate, then your personal statement and study plan become crucial evaluation components.

Evaluation Preferences for GKS Applicants

In addition to the standard screening and interviews, the GKS selection process includes preference-based evaluation. Here's who gets priority:

1. Overseas Koreans are given the highest preference.
2. Applicants from low-income families or underprivileged backgrounds come next.
3. Those applying to Natural Science and Engineering majors at regional universities (Type B) are prioritised.
4. Current academic professors applying to Natural Science and Engineering fields are also preferred.
5. Applicants with strong English or Korean proficiency certificates receive additional consideration.
6. Postdoctoral research applicants in the Natural Science and Engineering fields are favoured too.

This preference system helps the committee choose candidates who align with the long-term goals of the scholarship, bridging academic, cultural, and professional growth across borders.

Learning Korean - www.sejonghakdang.org

Korean Portal - www.korea.net

Ministry of Foreign Affairs - www.mofa.go.kr

Visa and Immigration - www.immigration.go.kr, www.hikorea.go.kr

Higher Education in Korea - www.academyinfo.go.kr