

## **Response of the Republic of Korea to the Questionnaire on Norms and Standards for Quality of Education**

### **1. List of existing national laws, regulations and policies establishing norms and standards for quality of education in your country. Guidelines on the quality of education**

- Universities are obliged to meet certain requirements to maintain the quality of education under the Article 4 of the Higher Education Act and the Rules on the Establishment and Operation of Universities. Therefore, degrees granted by accredited universities are guaranteed of their quality. The Korean Government introduced various quality-enhancing measures to raise the competitiveness of its higher education and meet international standards.
- The Government amended the Higher Education Act in 2007 in order to establish an autonomous quality management system of higher education institutions. There have been private-level quality evaluations conducted by the Korea Council for University Education or other program evaluation institutions since the 1980s, but the 2007 amendment introduced government approval of evaluation institutions and linked evaluation results of universities to government's administrative and financial support. The newly amended act also requires all universities to announce self-evaluation results once every two years.

「Higher Education Act」 Article 11-2 (Evaluation) (17 October 2007)

- (1) Schools shall inspect and evaluate education and studies, organization and operation, facilities and equipment or such of the relevant institutions of their own accord and announce the result thereof publicly.
- (2) An institution approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology may, at the request of a university, evaluate or authenticate the overall management of a university and management of curricula.
- (3) The Minister of Education, Science and Technology may designate a related specialized evaluation institution, a school consultative body, an institution or organization or such for the promotion of sciences as an approved institution.
- (4) In cases where the government intends to give administrative and financial support to a university, it may utilize the result of evaluation or authentication under paragraph (2).

- The Government also introduced the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Disclosure of Information by Education-Related Institutions (26 May 2007), putting in place the School Information Disclosure System where schools are required to disclose relevant information voluntarily whether or not there is a request for disclosure.

**2. Applicable norms and standards and minimal requirements, especially with regard to the following:**

**a. School infrastructure**

- The guidelines and minimum standards of primary and secondary school facilities are set forth in Article 3(School Buildings), Article 3-2(Complex Facilities), Article 4(Sites of School Buildings), Article 5(Playgrounds), and Article 6(School Sites) of the Rules on the Establishment and Operation of High Schools and Under. Other than minimum requirements set forth in the above mentioned Articles, municipal or provincial superintendents can set their own standards taking into account the different circumstances of each school district

**b. Class size and pupil-teacher ratio**

- As of 2008, Korea's pupil-teacher ratio was 24.1 in elementary schools, 20.2 in middle schools, and 16.5 in high schools. The Government aims to bring down the ratio to the OECD average level by 2020 through the introduction of measures to improve education environment.

Pupil-Student Ratio (2008)	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
OECD Average	16.4	13.7	13.5
Korea	24.1	20.2	16.5

- There is no specific target class size set by the Government, but class size will also grow smaller as the pupil-student ratio decreases.

**c. Teacher qualification (Teacher Training and Qualifications)**

- There are separate training institutions for elementary school teachers and secondary school teachers to ensure a high level of teaching expertise. In Korea, there are 13 teachers' colleges that train elementary school teachers, and 46 colleges of education that train secondary school teachers. Other than these specialized teacher training institutions, there are 165 universities and colleges that have department of pedagogy for secondary school teacher training. The Government is taking various measures to enhance quality assurance systems of education and ensure elementary and secondary school teachers' competency.
- Students of teacher training institutions are required to meet specific requirements in order to become elementary and secondary level teachers. However, such students can earn teacher certification at graduation without additional testing. All students have to complete a minimum 50 credits of subject courses and 22 credits of pedagogy courses. Of 22 credits of pedagogy courses, all student teachers have to take 14 credits of theory courses, 4 credits of grounding courses (Special Education, Class Management), and 4 credits of practice courses (Student Teaching Practice, Voluntary Service in Education).

#### d. Working conditions for teachers and their professional development

##### • Working Conditions for Teachers

- In Korea, a school year consists of 34 weeks, and the number of annual class hours is comparable to the OECD average.

	Class Hours		
	Elementary School	Middle School	General High Schools
OECD Average	786	703	661
Korea	840	616	604

- The Government is implementing measures to minimize non-teaching duties and unnecessary paperwork for school teachers. Now, many schools have administrative offices that provide administrative assistance to teachers so that they can concentrate on teaching.

##### • In-service Teacher Training

- Purpose: Acquisition of Qualifications and Capacity Building of In-service Teachers<sup>1</sup>
- Responsible Bodies: In-service teacher trainings are implemented by educational superintendents and supervised by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology
- Target: Teachers in national/public/private kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools
- Training Schedules: Group training during summer and winter breaks, distance training during semesters
- Training Institutions: Government-approved institutions<sup>2</sup> are allowed to run group trainings and remote training programs
- Methods: Offline group trainings, online remote trainings, combination of online and offline trainings<sup>3</sup>
- Types of Trainings: Qualification Acquisition Trainings<sup>4</sup> and Capacity Building Training<sup>5</sup>, including Education Theories, and Methodologies

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<sup>1</sup> Relevant laws Regulations on the Training of Teachers, etc. (Presidential Decree), Enforcement Rule of the Regulations on the Training of Teachers, etc. (Ministerial Decree of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)

<sup>2</sup> Universities, industrial colleges, teachers' colleges, air and correspondence colleges, Education Offices, and other institutions approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology

<sup>3</sup> Education Offices' training programs are free of charge. The Government encourages teachers to participate in trainings voluntarily by providing them with training allowance of 60,000 to 150,000 KRW per year as of 2011.

<sup>4</sup> 180 training hours to qualify as Grade I Teacher, Master Teacher, Assistant Principal, and 360 training hours for Principal

<sup>5</sup> No mandatory training hours set by the Government. Average capacity building training hours of national and public school teachers was 67.9 in 2010.

## **e. School curricula content and pedagogical materials**

### **• School curricula content**

- To achieve the goals and objectives of elementary and secondary education, the Minister of Education, Science and Technology determines the basic matters on national standards and basic guideline of elementary and secondary school curriculums, in accordance to Article 23 Paragraph 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. They cover educational objectives, contents, teaching methods, curriculum administration, and assessment.

「Elementary and Secondary Act」 Article 23 (Curriculum, Etc.)

- (1) Schools shall administer a curriculum.
- (2) The Minister of Education, Science and Technology shall determine the basic matters on the standards and contents of a curriculum as provided under Paragraph (1), and the Superintendent of the Office of Education may determine the standards and contents that are appropriate for local situations within the education category determined by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology. <Amended by Act No. 6400 on Jan. 29, 2001; by Act No. 8852 on Feb. 29, 2008>
- (3) School curriculums shall be determined by the Presidential Decree.

### **• Curriculum Organization**

- There are common curriculums (1<sup>st</sup> grade elementary school – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade middle school) and elective curriculums (1<sup>st</sup> grade – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade high school). By grouping school years, programs of different school grades are interlinked, making curriculum organization and operation more flexible. In addition, subjects of common curriculums are reorganized into different subject groups according to the proximity of the educational objective, subjects or methods of study and the correlation with actual lives. For elective curriculums, the government divides them into four subject groups and sets up compulsory completion units, in order to make sure that students fully learn basic subjects while also receiving proper education for their career and aptitude. The government is expanding the Intensive Course Completion System in order to reduce the number of subjects to be completed in a semester, which reduces study loads and enriches learning activities. In addition, Korea newly established the “creative experiential activities” by combining existing autonomous activities and extracurricular activities.

### **• Pedagogical materials<sup>6</sup>**

- Schools are required to use textbooks approved and authorized by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology, or textbooks for which the copyright is held by the Government.
- The Regulations on the Curriculum Books regulates the scope, authorship, authorization, publication, supply, selection, and determination of prices of curriculum books.

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<sup>6</sup> Relevant Regulations and Standards: Article 29 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Regulations on the Curriculum Books (Presidential Decree) under the Article 55 (Use of Books for Text Purposes) of the Enforcement Decree of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

#### **f. Teaching –learning processes**

- In Korea, the government announces the national curriculum by subject and provides details such as objectives, scope and standard of contents, teaching and learning methods, and assessment criteria.
- Teaching and learning process is mainly composed of the establishment of teaching/learning plan, exercise of the plan, and assessment.
- During the first phase of planning, teachers assess to what degree students are prepared for learning new curriculum and what they have learned previously. Teaching and learning methods are developed to address the educational gap between individual students.
- In the second phase of teaching and learning in practices, teachers inform students of the learning objectives and contents in order to induce active learner participation. By adjusting the difficulties of tasks to learners' capacity, teachers encourage them to solve problems in a creative way.
- Lastly, assessment is done with adequate methods according to each subject's objective and content. Teachers make a balanced selection of areas to be tested and take into account the learners' academic level when evaluating them. The results of the assessment are used to grasp the level of achievement and development of learners, and improve teaching/learning methods, materials, and assessment tools.

#### **g. School management, including student and parents participation**

##### **• Student participation**

- Korea introduced a grading system for students' school life called the "Green mileage." It aims to create an atmosphere where students receive educational life guidance for orderly school life and comply with school regulations. In addition, the "Regulation on Student Life" was revised according to the opinions of students and parents throughout elementary, middle, and high schools and was promoted widely.
- The Enforcement Decree of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was also revised to promote student participation. Before establishing or revising school regulations, principals of elementary and middle schools must reflect student opinions to ensure democracy in the procedure. (Article 9.4 revised on 18 March 2011) Also, "in the event of providing the guidance . . . . ., the head of the school shall use the method of discipline and admonishment so not to inflict physical pain to the students except during unavoidable situations." (Article 31.8 revised on 18 March 2011)
- Educational life guidance has been expanded as well. Schools are guiding students in non-violent methods of discipline and admonishment, and are expanding counseling and special educational assistances for students with problematic behaviors. In addition, curriculums for character development have been strengthened, and efforts to encourage students to respect and comply with school regulations through autonomous school management activities – student court, group and club activities – are under way.

## • **Parent Participation**

- The policy on supporting parents of students aims to provide parents with the necessary information on children's education and to enhance the quality of school education by encouraging parent involvement in schools. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) created the "Parents Support Team" in May 2009 which takes charge of supporting school parents. The status of the team was raised to "Parents Support Division" in 2010. Details of the policies of MEST on supporting school parents are as follows:
- First, MEST has carried out the "Support Program on Parent Involvement in Schools" to facilitate parent engagement in schools. In 2011, MEST announced a call for proposals of parent involvement in schools. Associations of parents in elementary, middle, and high schools across the nation filed applications and MEST selected 3,200 parents' associations among them. The program provides KRW 3.3 million or USD 3,000 to each parents' association for them to channel parent engagements, such as school education monitoring, parent education, and voluntary activities.
- Second, "Parent Monitors on Education Policies" visit schools to see how education policies are reflected and implemented on site and submit opinions to improve the policy implementation. As such, the parent monitors facilitate communication between the government and the public. In 2011, MEST selected 500 offline monitors and 3,200 online monitors - approximately 30 people for each of the 16 provincial and municipal offices of education - through public recruitment. They are to monitor how education policies are being practiced and are to respond to surveys on major educational issues. Each education office in 16 areas gives parent monitors information on the policies, which are the target of monitoring, and holds policy debates for them. Afterwards, each monitoring team observes how the policies are practiced for two months. The monitoring results are delivered to MEST. Then, the department responsible for the policy reviews the outcome, decides whether the monitoring results will be reflected, and informs the decision to monitors.
- Third, municipal and provincial education offices and schools have run parent education programs on education policies and school education in order to help parents get enough, quality information on education without depending on private educational channels. In particular, Minister and Vice Minister of Education, Science and Technology themselves have given presentations on the education policies to parents. This nationwide "Education Policies Presentation for Parents" has been held more than 20 times as of November 2011. In addition, parent support centers and major educational institutions in each region are offering various programs to nurture parenting capabilities such as communication skills, methods of career guidance, and preventive measures of internet addiction.
- Fourth, the National Parent Support Center (NPSC) under the auspices of the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) was established in October 2010. It aims to support the development of policies for parents, to provide trustworthy educational information, to disseminate best practices of parent involvement in schools, to establish a network among municipal and provincial parent support centers, and to support

counseling services for school parents. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, the website of the NPSC ([www.parents.go.kr](http://www.parents.go.kr)) was launched for all education consumers in Korea. This website is purposed to address the weakening educational functions at home due to the increasing number of households of both parents working and nuclear families by offering online educational information for parents. From this website, people can get useful information, such as online lecture on self-directed learning. It also serves as a channel of 76 municipal and provincial parent support centers operated by 16 provincial and municipal offices of education.

#### **h. Methods to evaluate student performance and assess learning outcomes**

- Korea has been administering the National Assessment for Educational Achievement (NAEA) on 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 9<sup>th</sup> graders (3<sup>rd</sup> year in middle school), and 11<sup>th</sup> graders (2<sup>nd</sup> year in high school) nation-wide, under the goal of leaving no child left behind.
- The NAEA comprehensively diagnoses each student's academic achievement in order to ensure that all students develop basic academic skills. For example, the government supported 2,427 assistant teachers and provided KRW 60.9 billion to schools in need of academic achievement improvement in 2011.
- As a result, the share of underachieving students decreased continuously with sustained improvement in overall students' academic performances<sup>7</sup>. The government aims to reduce the share to below 2% by 2012.

### **3. Please identify the institutional mechanisms in your country used to collect and process information and to assess adherence to norm and standards established to ensure quality of education**

#### **• Assessment/Accreditation System**

- Assessment/accreditation agencies apply for government recognition to MEST, which designates them accordingly. The recognition is renewed every five years and the recognized agencies conduct assessment and accreditation upon receiving application from universities. The results of accreditation are taken into account when the government runs various administrative and financial programs. Again, the recognized agencies assess and accredit universities which applied for such assessment and accreditation, and their accreditation is normally effective for five years. When a university applies for assessment and accreditation, it must submit its own evaluation report. Afterwards, it can file a complaint or request re-evaluation on the results of the assessment and accreditation.

#### **• Self-evaluation**

- Universities must evaluate their own operation once every two years and disclose the results on the "Information Service of Higher Education in Korea," a website on university information, as well as their own website. MEST provides funding to the

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<sup>7</sup> Share of underachieving students: ('08) 7.2% →('09) 4.8% →('10) 3.7% →('11) 2.6%

Korean Council for University Education so that it can train and educate university personnel, reviews how they are evaluating their operation by monitoring the websites mentioned above, and analyzes and discloses the results of their self-evaluation once a year.

**4. Please provide information on other relevant initiatives and developments aiming to promote quality in education**

- Korea has established a close cooperative system with neighboring China and Japan for cross-border collaboration in the area of higher education. The system has two pillars; one is the “Korea-China-Japan Committee for Promoting Exchange and Cooperation among Universities” and another is the “Korea-China-Japan Council for Quality Assurance.” The former is a government-level body while the latter is a cooperation framework among public institutions established to improve the quality of higher education.
- The Korea-China-Japan Committee for Promoting Exchange and Cooperation among Universities is composed of high-ranking officials (at least Director-general level), representatives of accreditation institutes, university presidents, and business representatives. The Committee has two technical groups under it for exchange programs and quality assurance. The Committee adopted an initiative to prioritize student exchange for trilateral cooperation in higher education, the **CAMPUS Asia** (Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students in Asia.) The program aims to exchange equal number of students for at least three months among Korea, China, and Japan. The three countries conducted a joint review on the program in November 2011, and started with about ten projects. The development of the exchange programs and the funding of students’ living expenses will be supported by the three governments at their disposal.
- The Korea-China-Japan Council for Quality Assurance consists of representatives of accreditation agencies and experts in higher education assessment from three countries. It has three technical groups for “mutual understanding and information sharing,” “guideline,” and “mobility.” The main interest of the Council is to make sure that the quality is ensured for trilateral exchange and cooperation in higher education. Seminars and forums are held in the three countries in turn to enhance the mutual understanding on assessment and accreditation of universities and to develop a guideline for quality assurance. The Council also works on improving the expertise of evaluators by exchanging personnel among accreditation agencies.

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