



Mason Korea Student Profile and Welcome Survey Highlights Fall 2015 New Students

STUDENT PROFILE¹

In fall 2015, Mason Korea enrolled a total of 191 students, including 101 women and 90 men. Of the 191, 173 are international students, primarily South Korean citizens. There are 87 new students at Mason Korea this semester; 75 of which are first-time freshmen and 12 are transfers. In fall 2015, 6 students are visiting the Incheon campus from Mason Fairfax. This semester marks the first time for Mason Korea students to study on the Fairfax campus; 11 Mason Korea students are living and studying with their Patriot peers. See Table 1 in the Appendix for enrollment data.

Of the 196 new and continuing students who matriculated at Mason Korea,

- 51% have declared Management; 31% have declared Global Affairs; and 17% have declared Economics as their intended majors
- 93% reported Korean as their native language, with English as the second most commonly spoken native language (about 7-10%)
- The average age at admission was 19.8 years old, and the oldest students were 26

MASON KOREA WELCOME SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The Mason Korea Welcome Survey combines items from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement, the Beacon student survey (both with permission), and locally-developed items. The survey is administered to new students at Mason Korea at orientation each semester. The Office of Institutional Assessment collaborates with Mason Korea staff to administer the survey online.

The Mason Korea Welcome Survey was sent to 73 students who matriculated in fall 2015 at Mason Korea (the incoming class was not quite complete at the time of survey administration). The students were encouraged to complete the survey during the campus orientation period. The survey included questions about their academic experiences, expectations, and plans for college. The survey was open for three weeks. Altogether, 54 students completed the survey, yielding a 74% response rate. This report presents the highlights of the results. Data tables are presented in the Appendix. Survey reports for past semesters are available at assessment.gmu.edu.

Past Educational Experiences

- 70% of respondents have lived in an English-speaking country, and 74% have attended an English-speaking school for any length of time
- 65% studied English in school, or in a private institution such as a Hagwon
- 35% used an English language tutor during their school years
- The top four favorite subjects in high school were: Mathematics (24%), languages (17%), Visual and Performing Arts (9%), and History (9%)
- 72% respondents (n=39) studied abroad for an average of 4.8 years (based on 38 of the 39 respondents); 69% of those who studied abroad (27 out of 39) had at least one of these experiences in an English-speaking country (United States, Australia, Canada, or New Zealand)

¹ Student profile data from Mason Korea Admissions application file

College Expectations

- **Academic Engagement.** 56% of the respondents expected to discuss course topics and ideas with faculty members outside of the classroom often or very often, and 52% were very certain that they would ask instructors for help if they struggle with course assignments. About two-thirds of them also indicated that they will work with other students on course projects/assignments and when preparing for exams (69% and 63%, respectively).
- **Academic Preparation and Education Commitment.** 61% worry about their ability to succeed academically, and about a quarter of respondents do not feel prepared to write or speak clearly and effectively. Nevertheless, 89% reported that getting a college degree is very important to them, and 70% said they were willing to do whatever it takes to stay in college.
- **Expected Academic Difficulty.** 91% expected it to be somewhat or very difficult to learn course material, and 78% of respondents expected it to be somewhat or very difficult to manage their time. On the other hand, only 35% agreed or strongly agreed that they manage stress well. Students reported that it is somewhat or very important that Mason Korea provide:
 - learning support services (98%)
 - an academically challenging experience (94%)
 - opportunities to interact with diverse students (95%)
- **Campus Engagement.** 80% of respondents reported that they want to feel a part of Mason, and 65% plan to take part in many campus social activities.

Academic Goals

- 96% reported that getting good grades is important to them, and 89% said that graduating from college is necessary to achieve their academic goals
- 89% of the respondents expect to graduate from Mason, and 9% were uncertain; the uncertain students reported that they may transfer to another school (2 students), get a job (1 student), or decide pending first year experience (1 student).
- In terms of the highest level of education to complete, 41% aspire for a bachelor's degree, 50% plan on earning a master's degree, and 7% expect to complete a doctoral or professional degree.

Student Comments

Students were asked several open-ended questions about their expectations and concerns for their education at Mason Korea. Below are summaries of the most common responses, with sample comments. Comments are in italics and are displayed verbatim from the survey transcript.

Why did you choose Mason Korea?

- To get an American or international education while staying in Korea, or to be close to family: *I always have been wanted to study go abroad but, Mason Korea is perfect environment for me. It is locating at Korea, teaching high quality of material and speaking in English.*
- To improve English skills while getting a college degree: *If I study in this college, I not only learn [in the] management department but also improve my English skill.*
- Good programs: *I wanted to pursue a study in Global affairs...Attending Mason with a good Global Affairs program in Korea would be the perfect opportunity.*
- Mason diversity: *I thought that it would be a great opportunity for me to really be involved in such a globalized place. People from various backgrounds and countries come and meet in one place sounded very special to me.*

Which experiences at Mason Korea do you think will be the most valuable to you, and why?

- Global perspective: *Being on a global campus will expose me to international mindsets and global leaders.*
- Diversity and cultural experience: *Meeting diverse people... A new cultural experience, new ways of learning and critical thinking, further language development skills.*
- Enriching educational programs (e.g., Internships, presentations, clubs): *A lot of internship programs... frequent presentations and speeches during lectures in George Mason will improve my speaking skill.*

What do you most look forward to at Mason Korea?

- Discovering personal passions and interests: *Learning what I am really interested about, and being part of the Mason society.*
- Gaining knowledge and skills: *Academically being challenged. I want to learn college-level writing. In addition learn about managing business.*
- Building relationships with professors and peers: *I look forward to build[ing] good relationships with professors and friends. Making friends and getting involved.*

What kinds of activities or events do you wish to have at Mason Korea?

- Events or activities to promote social interaction: *Social activities with different people. Fun activities or events that can make George Mason students able to unite together.*
- Sports and other recreation activities (e.g., concerts, sport events, yoga, dancing, music festival, hiking adventures)
- Community service/volunteer work: *I want to involve in community service club. I wish to do volunteer work and humanitarian work.*
- Activities or events related to major or job preparation (e.g., internships, meeting with alumni)
- Programs or services that help students academically or financially (e.g., scholarships, tutoring)

What is your biggest worry about starting college?

- Transition to college and meeting academic demands: *My largest worry is that college work is far more complicated than I previously thought, and therefore will not be able to keep up and stay in. GPA is my biggest worry about starting college.*
- Time management: *I actually worry about my time management, because I have to create my own schedule.*
- English proficiency and its impact on learning: *Cannot communicate well with professor in English and listen carefully in the lecture... speak and think in English.*

What do you think is most important to having a successful college life?

- Making good grades and building relationship with professors and peers: *keep the grades up and have personal connections with professors and mentors. Cooperate with other students. I think it is more important than just studying for grades.*
- Time management: *Time management is the most important to have a successful college life.*
- Taking initiative and perseverance: *Determination and initiative. To not give up on anything and enjoy the challenge.*
- Getting involved in college: *I believe that it is important to be active with the community which this college while holding onto a decent GPA.*

The following quotes elegantly summarize students' hopes as they start their college education at Mason Korea:

- *I chose Mason Korea because it is a very unique program that not every country has. I thought that it would be a great opportunity for me to really be involved in such a globalized place. People from various backgrounds and countries come and meet in one place sounded very special to me.*
- *I cannot wait to learn about the world in depth. Ever since I had taken International Relations from my high school, I found my passion in learning about all the conflicts and real life issues.*

APPENDIX

Table 1 shows enrollment trends for Mason Korea since its inception. Tables 2-9 present summary results from the survey respondents (n=54 except where noted). Because of the small number of responses, 6-point scales have been collapsed into 3-point scales in Tables 3-9 to make the data more meaningful.

Table 1. Student Enrollment at Mason Korea: Spring 2014 - Fall 2015 Semesters

	Total Enrollment Spring 2014	New for Fall 2014	Total Enrollment Fall 2014	New for Spring 2015	Total Enrollment Spring 2015	New for Fall 2015	Total Enrollment Fall 2015
Mason Korea Students	34	35	62	87	132	87	185
Mason Fairfax Students Studying at Incheon	6	4	7	8	10	6	6
Total	40	39	69	95	142	93	191
Mason Korea Students Studying at Fairfax	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	11

"Mason Korea" and "Mason Fairfax" labels indicate campus where students matriculated

Table 2. During the coming school year, about how often do you expect to do each of the following?

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Ask another student to help you understand course material*	16.7%	33.3%	46.3%	3.7%
Explain course material to one or more students*	14.8%	33.3%	51.9%	0%
Prepare for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students*	16.7%	46.3%	37.0%	0%
Work with other students on course projects or assignments*	14.8%	53.7%	29.6%	1.9%
Discuss course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class*	14.8%	40.7%	40.7%	3.7%

Table 3. During the coming school year, how difficult do you expect the following to be?

	Very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Not at all difficult
Learning course material*	31.5%	59.3%	9.3%
Managing your time*	20.4%	57.4%	22.2%

Table 4. How prepared are you to do the following in your academic work at this institution?

	Very prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not prepared
Write clearly and effectively*	13.0%	63.0%	24.1%
Speak clearly and effectively*	16.7%	59.3%	24.1%
Think critically and analytically*	13.0%	63.0%	24.1%
Analyze numerical and statistical information*	22.2%	64.8%	13.0%
Learn effectively on your own*	24.1%	61.1%	14.8%

Table 5. During the coming school year, how certain are you that you will do the following?

	Very certain	Somewhat certain	Not at all certain
Find additional information for course assignments when you don't understand the material*	51.9%	44.4%	3.7%
Participate regularly in course discussions, even when you don't feel like it*	42.6%	51.9%	5.6%
Ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments*	51.9%	44.4%	3.7%

Table 6. How important is it to you that Mason Korea provide each of the following?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important
A challenging academic experience*	50.0%	44.4%	5.6%
Opportunities to interact with students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.) *	70.4%	24.1%	5.6%
Learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.) *	53.7%	44.4%	1.9%

Table 7. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following items:

	Strongly Agree-Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree-Disagree
I am willing to do whatever it takes to stay in college. ^	70.4%	27.8%	1.9%
Getting good grades is important to me. ^	96.3%	3.7%	0%
Graduating from college is necessary for me to achieve my career goals. ^	88.9%	11.1%	0%
I worry about my ability to succeed academically. ^	61.1%	35.2%	3.7%
I am hesitant to ask questions in class. ^	37.0%	37.0%	25.9%
Getting a college degree is very important to me.	88.9%	11.1%	0%
I see value in completing a college education. ^	88.9%	11.1%	0%
School is a priority for me. ^	77.8%	22.2%	0%
I am sure that a college education is the right goal for me. ^	88.9%	11.1%	0%

Table 8. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following items:

	Strongly Agree-Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree-Disagree
It is important for me to be involved in the school I am attending. ^	68.5%	27.8%	3.7%
I plan to take part in many campus social activities. ^	64.8%	31.5%	3.7%
I intend to join campus clubs. ^	83.3%	14.8%	1.9%
I want to feel a part of the college I attend. ^	79.6%	20.4%	0%

Table 9. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following items:

	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree
I manage stress well. ^	35.2%	53.7%	11.1%
Little things upset me. ^ (n=53)	22.6%	52.8%	24.5%
I am a worrier. ^	38.9%	44.4%	16.7%
I am easily frustrated. ^ (n=53)	17.0%	50.9%	32.1%
I am comfortable in groups. ^	50.0%	44.4%	5.6%
I tend to work well with others. ^	53.7%	42.6%	3.7%
I consider myself to be shy. ^	37.0%	46.3%	16.7%
I never know what to say when meeting new people. ^	27.8%	44.4%	27.8%
I enjoy meeting new people. ^	61.1%	38.9%	0%
I avoid social events. ^	9.3%	42.6%	48.1%

* Items marked with an asterisk (*) are used with permission from the *Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement*, National Survey of Student Engagement, Copyright 2001-14 The Trustees of Indiana University.

^ Items marked with the (^) symbol are used with permission from the *Beacon* student survey, Campus Labs.