



Mason Korea Student Profile and Welcome Survey Highlights Spring 2016 New Students

STUDENT PROFILE¹

In Spring 2016, Mason Korea enrolled a total of 244 students, including 137 women and 107 men. Of the 244, 227 are international students, primarily South Korean citizens. There are 91 new students at Mason Korea this semester; 75 of whom are first-time freshmen and 16 are transfers. In spring 2016, seven students from Mason Fairfax are studying at the Incheon campus and 16 Mason Korea students are studying with their Patriot peers, including five Mason Korea students in their first Fairfax semester. See Table 1 in the Appendix for enrollment data.

Of the 244 new and continuing students who matriculated at Mason Korea,

- 35% have declared Management; 32% have declared Global Affairs; and 12% have declared Economics as their intended majors
- 66% reported Korean as their native language, with English as the second most commonly spoken language (34%)
- The average age of new students is 19.5 years old

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 before 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 91 students who matriculated in spring 2016 at Mason Korea. The students were encouraged to complete the survey during the campus pre-orientation period. The survey included questions about their academic experiences, expectations, and plans for college. The survey was open for six weeks. Altogether, 73 students completed the survey, yielding an 80% 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

- 66% of respondents have lived in an English-speaking country and 63% have attended an English-speaking school for any length of time
- 45% used an English language tutor during their school years
- The top four favorite subjects in high school were: Languages (19%), Social Sciences (15%), History (15%), and Mathematics (11%).
- 73% respondents (n=53) studied abroad for an average of 4.3 years; 59% of those who had studied abroad (43 out of 53) had at least one of these experiences in an English-speaking country

College Expectations

- **Academic Engagement.** 66% of the respondents expected to discuss course topics and ideas with faculty members outside of the classroom often or very often, and 64% were very certain that they would ask instructors for help if they struggle with course assignments. More than two-thirds also indicated that they will work with other students on course projects/assignments and when preparing for exams (68% and 71%, respectively).

¹ Student profile data from Mason Korea Admissions application file

- **Academic Preparation and Education Commitment.** 44% worry about their ability to succeed academically, while more than three-fourths of respondents feel prepared or very prepared to write or speak clearly and effectively. 86% reported that getting a college degree is very important to them, and 64% said they were willing to do whatever it takes to stay in college.
- **Expected Academic Difficulty.** 89% expected it to be somewhat or very difficult to learn course material, and 79% of respondents expected it to be somewhat or very difficult to manage their time. On the other hand, only 41% 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 (97%)
 - an academically challenging experience (96%)
 - opportunities to interact with diverse students (97%)
- **Campus Engagement.** 79% of respondents reported that they want to feel a part of Mason, and 64% planned to take part in campus social activities.

Academic Goals

- 93% reported that getting good grades is important to them, and 81% said that graduating from college is necessary to achieve their academic goals
- 81% of the respondents expect to graduate from Mason, and 19% were uncertain; among the uncertain, six reported that they may transfer to another school.
- In terms of the highest level of education to complete, 55% aspire to a bachelor's degree, 32% plan on earning a master's degree, and 8% expect to complete a doctoral or professional degree.

Student Comments

Students were asked 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 think it is a great opportunity for me to study for America's education which I don't need to be so far away from my family.*
- To take advantage of Mason's diversity: *I believe that George Mason university is a very promising school and also there are diverse students gathered from all around the world.*
- For the academics: *George Mason provides very good courses which I want to take for my future career and goals; I have deep interest in solving global problems and I thought that Mason Korea is perfect university for me.*
- To improve English skills while getting a college degree: *From George Mason Korea, I thought I could learn a lot of advanced education as well as advance in English skill.*

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

- Global perspective, diversity and cultural experience: *It's [international experiences] valuable because to formal Korean students, the international experience in study is not usual; sharing various cultures with others and keeping myself in the global field; meeting various people from different cultures and backgrounds.*
- Social activities: *Club activities and the collaboration with friends and professors; studying, joining in club, and hang out with people would be the most valuable to me.*

- Academic challenge and English: *Learning more deeply about my major; getting good grades; I believe courses in English because it will help my English skills more than the past.*
- Enriching educational programs (e.g., internships, presentations, clubs): *internships and any activities in relation to my major helps to figure out what I want for the future.*

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

- Sports and other recreation activities (e.g., sport events, dancing, music festival, choir)
- Community service/volunteer work: *I am dreaming of volunteering in different countries, and I wish George Mason offers a chance to volunteer.*
- Events or activities to promote social interaction: *I wish to have club activities. In that club I will be able to meet new people and make friends. I always exited making new friends and build new relation with others.*
- Activities or events related to major or job preparation (e.g., internships, meeting with alumni): *Having various experience to real environment of different jobs and many consulting experience to help students to find what they really want to do; studying together for extra curriculum activity such as earning a license for the future which might be helpful for us to get a job.*

What is your biggest worry about starting college?

- Transition to college and meeting academic demands: *I am very worried if I can adjust well in college life which is much advanced and harsher than high school.*
- Making friends: *Meeting new people and getting to know them.*
- English proficiency and its impact on learning: *I haven't learned English abroad so I worried about lack of my English skill than other students.*
- Affordability: *Tuition fee will be the biggest worry. Tuition fee of George Mason is quite expensive than any other Korean university. George Mason tuition fee is almost three times higher than that.*
- Time management

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

- Making good grades and building relationship with professors and peers: *Having good relationship and maintaining good GPA is a successful college life*
- Getting involved in college: *Being passionate and participate in school activities; participating in every events in college; enjoying college life*
- Time management: *Time management is the most important to have a successful college life.*

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

- *I chose Mason Korea because I believe that this university will provide numerous opportunities to the students to achieve their goals. Moreover, it is beneficial to interact with various people who have different cultures and backgrounds.*
- *I believe that George Mason University is a very promising school and also there are diverse students gathered from all around the world.*

APPENDIX

Table 1 shows enrollment trends for Mason Korea since its inception. Tables 2-9 present summary results from the survey respondents (n=73). 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– Spring 2016 semesters

	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016
Mason Korea Students (New)	34	35	87	87	91
Mason Korea Students (Returning)	NA	27	45	98	146
Mason Fairfax Students Studying at Mason Korea	6	7	10	6	7
Mason Korea Total Enrollment	40	69	142	191	244
Mason Korea Students Studying at Fairfax	NA	NA	NA	11	16

"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*	15.1%	50.7%	31.5%	2.7%
Explain course material to one or more students*	11.0%	41.1%	46.6%	1.4%
Prepare for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students*	21.9%	49.3%	26.0%	2.7%
Work with other students on course projects or assignments*	24.7%	43.8%	30.1%	1.4%
Discuss course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class*	20.5%	45.2%	32.9%	1.4%

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*	21.9%	67.1%	11.0%
Managing your time*	17.8%	61.6%	20.5%

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*	23.3%	60.3%	16.4%
Speak clearly and effectively*	26.0%	50.7%	23.3%
Think critically and analytically*	20.5%	67.1%	12.3%
Analyze numerical and statistical information*	26.0%	56.2%	17.8%
Learn effectively on your own*	38.4%	54.8%	6.8%

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*	58.9%	39.7%	1.4%
Participate regularly in course discussions, even when you don't feel like it*	43.8%	53.4%	2.7%
Ask instructors for help when you struggle with course assignments*	64.4%	34.2%	1.4%

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*	63.0%	32.9%	4.1%
Opportunities to interact with students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.) *	71.2%	26.0%	2.7%
Learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.) *	64.4%	32.9%	2.7%

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. ^	64.4%	35.6%	0.0%
Getting good grades is important to me. ^	93.2%	6.8%	0.0%
Graduating from college is necessary for me to achieve my career goals. ^	80.8%	19.2%	0.0%
I worry about my ability to succeed academically. ^	43.8%	46.6%	9.6%
I am hesitant to ask questions in class. ^	20.5%	56.2%	23.3%
Getting a college degree is very important to me.	86.1%	13.9%	0.0%
I see value in completing a college education. ^	86.1%	13.9%	0.0%
School is a priority for me. ^	69.4%	30.6%	0.0%
I am sure that a college education is the right goal for me. ^	79.2%	19.4%	1.4%

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. ^	79.5%	19.2%	1.4%
I plan to take part in many campus social activities. ^	64.4%	34.2%	1.4%
I intend to join campus clubs. ^	70.8%	29.2%	0.0%
I want to feel a part of the college I attend. ^	79.2%	20.8%	0.0%

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

	Strongly Agree-Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree-Disagree
I manage stress well. ^	41.1%	53.4%	5.5%
Little things upset me. ^	19.2%	58.9%	21.9%
I am a worrier. ^	23.3%	56.2%	20.5%
I am easily frustrated. ^	11.0%	58.9%	30.1%
I am comfortable in groups. ^	46.6%	50.7%	2.7%
I tend to work well with others. ^	57.5%	38.4%	4.1%
I consider myself to be shy. ^	30.1%	43.8%	26.0%
I never know what to say when meeting new people. ^	13.7%	54.8%	31.5%
I enjoy meeting new people. ^	49.3%	46.6%	4.1%
I avoid social events. ^	5.5%	46.6%	47.9%

* 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.