



Employment outcomes for Australian-educated graduates in the Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea (South Korea) is the third largest source country of international students for Australia after China and India. In 2011, there were almost 30,000 enrolments by students from the Republic of Korea contributing 5% of all international student enrolments in that year. In 2012, AEI Republic of Korea undertook a survey of 300 Australian-educated graduates, who were living in the Republic of Korea to investigate their employment outcomes after graduation. Most respondents (93%) reported having an Australian higher education qualification. This research also included a survey of 75 local employers, known to employ internationally-educated graduates, to investigate their perceptions of Australian-educated graduates. The employers surveyed were from a range of industries, employing graduates in a variety of roles, the most common role (43%) being within commerce, finance and professional services.

Status	Proportion (n=300)
Working (or accepted job offer)	91%
Studying and not working	3%
Not working but seeking employment	2%
Not working or studying	3%

At the time of the survey it was found that 91% of the Australian-educated graduates surveyed were working and 2% were unemployed and actively-seeking employment (Table 1). Of those graduates who were working at the time of the survey, the majority (76%) indicated they were working in a job related to the major field of education of their highest Australian qualification. The top 3 reasons indicated by respondents who were not working in a job related to their field of study were:

- chose not to work in that field; or
- lack sufficient work experience in the industry.
- poor salaries offered in that field.

Satisfaction with employment outcomes

The majority of employed Australian-educated graduates (80%) were satisfied with their job. Of those working, 69% of respondents said that their position met the expectations that they had at the start of the job. More than half of the graduate respondents (58%) perceived that employers in the Republic of Korea valued an Australian qualification. Around 61% of Australian-educated graduates reported that skills they had developed during their course of study, relevant work experience, internship and traineeship while studying in Australia had helped them to get a job related to their field of study.

Networking

Almost half of the respondents (46%) kept in contact with Australian students they had studied with at least once a year, 45% kept in contact with other Australians in the wider community and 62% kept in contact with other international students they had studied with at least once a year.

Employer perspectives on Australian-educated graduates

Employer respondents from the Republic of Korea indicated that the main reasons they would choose an Australian-educated graduate over a locally-educated graduate were their English language competency (87%) and enriched life experience (52%). The most common reason for employers preferring a locally-educated graduate was their understanding of local culture. Overall, 79% of employer respondents from the Republic of Korea would recommend recruiting Australian-educated graduates, with most others (20%) either unsure or didn't respond to the question. The employers' satisfaction with various aspects of Australian-educated graduates is shown in Table 2.

In general 92% of employer respondents were satisfied with Australian-educated graduates they had employed. Very few employers not satisfied indicated it was because Australian-educated graduates either moved on too quickly (4%) or their ability to adapt to work environment (4%). When asked for their perceptions of an Australian education, 52% of employer respondents indicated that Australia should place more emphasis on providing practical work experience and 41% supported linking education with business to provide internships, apprenticeships or traineeships for students.

More than half of the Korean employer respondents (56%) were facing or expecting to face skill shortages in the near future. Of those, 20% anticipated a skill shortage in engineering and science area. Around 48% of the Korean employer respondents expected to see an increase in the number of international graduate employment opportunities in their organisation in the future.

Skill type	Employer satisfaction (n=75)
English language competency	87%
Local language competency	80%
Effective oral and written communication skills	63%
Ability to work independently	72%
Ability to work as part of a team	61%
Relevant work experience	39%
An international perspective	84%