

# Analysis of Foreign Student Trends in Korea (2019-2023)

## 1. Introduction

### Background

South Korea has become a popular destination for international students due to its **high-quality education system, affordable tuition, and strong job market**. However, many universities are facing **declining domestic enrollment** and are now shifting their focus to attracting international students.

A **local university in our city** has approached our team for insights on **which academic programs would be most appealing to international students**. To support their initiative, we analyzed **foreign student enrollment trends from 2019 to 2023** to identify **high-growth degree programs** and provide **data-driven recommendations** for new program offerings that align with market demand.

### Objective

This case study aims to analyze the growth trends of foreign students in Korea from 2019 to 2023, identify popular degree programs, and provide recommendations on which programs the university should prioritize.

## 2. Data Overview

### Source

The data for this analysis was collected from the **Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS)** under the category "Status of Foreign Students (2010-2023)."

### Dataset Description

The dataset includes foreign student enrollment numbers across various programs:

- **Associate Degree (D-2-1)**
- **Bachelor's Degree (D-2-2)**
- **Master's Degree (D-2-3)**
- **Doctoral Degree (D-2-4)**
- **Exchange Students (D-2-6)**
- **Korean Language Training (D-4-1)**
- **Total Enrollment**

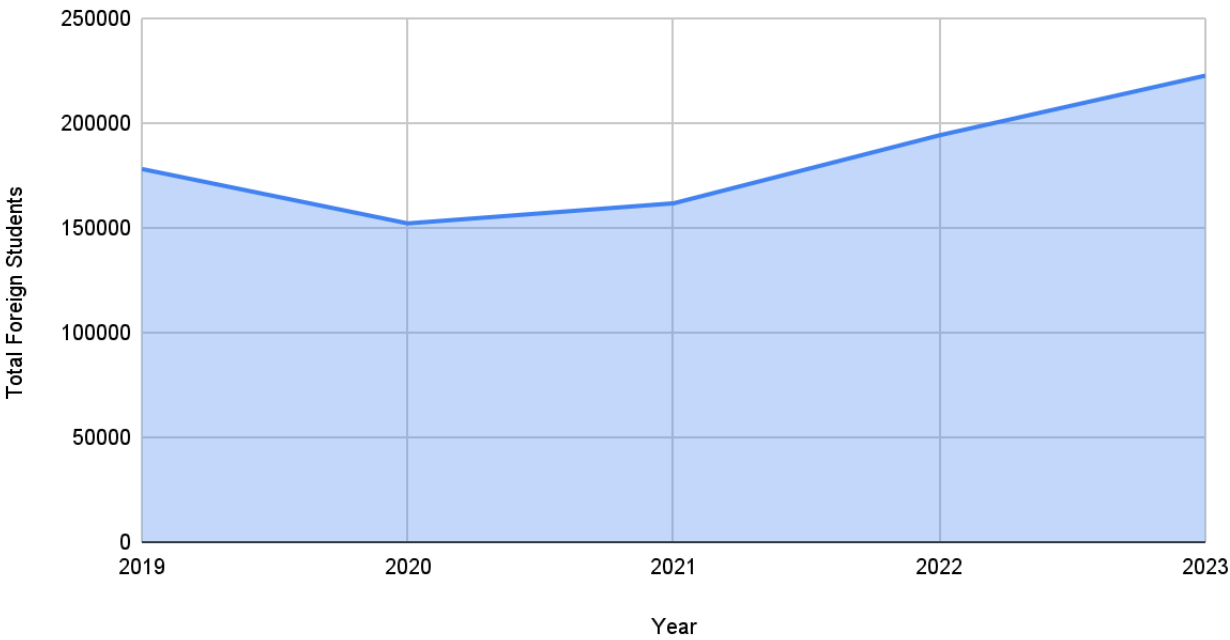
### Data Cleaning and Processing

- Focused on **2019-2023** data for relevance.
- Removed unnecessary columns.
- Checked for missing values and standardized formats.
- Calculated growth rates and ratios for analysis.

### 3. Key Trends & Analysis

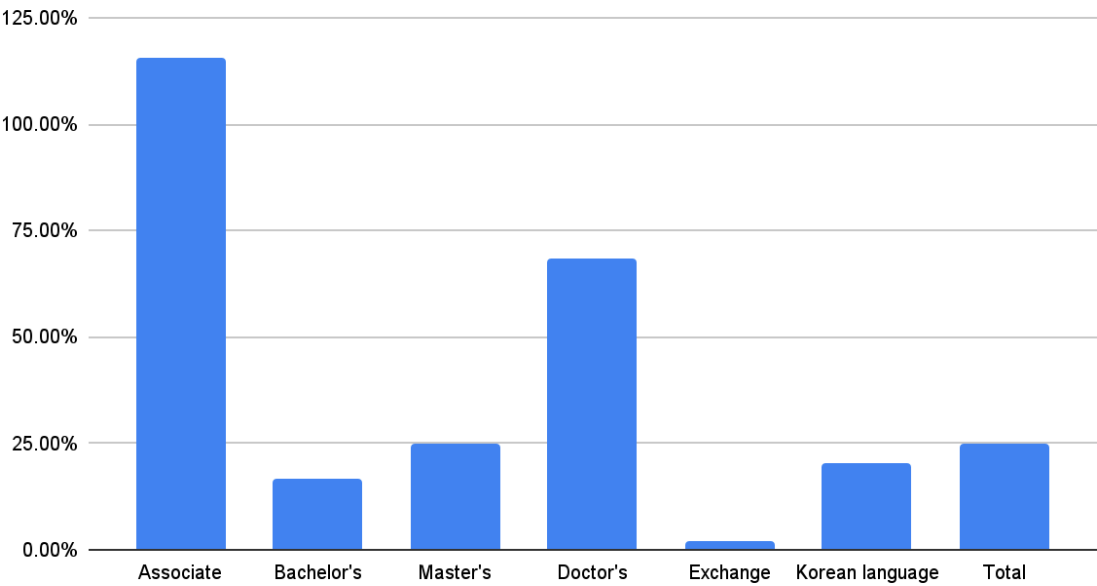
#### Overall Growth in Foreign Student Enrollment (2019-2023)

Total Foreign Student Growth (2019-2023)



The total number of foreign students in Korea **has grown significantly** from **178,055 in 2019** to **222,621 in 2023**. The line chart above illustrates this upward trend over the last five years.

Growth over 5 years

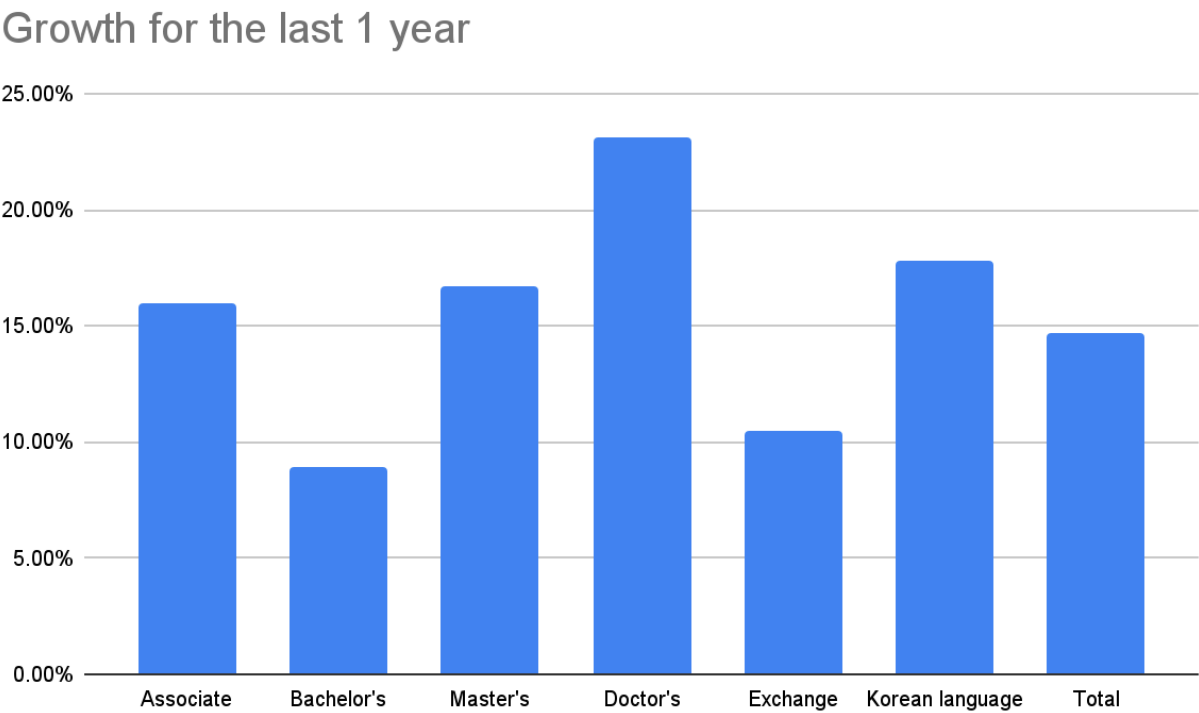


Among all degree types, the Associate Degree program showed the highest growth (115.74%), while Doctoral programs also experienced a significant increase (68.49%). The bar chart above compares the growth rates of each program.

- The total number of foreign students in Korea grew by **25.03% over the last five years**, reaching **222,621 students in 2023..**
- The **highest growth was in Associate Degrees (115.74%)**, indicating rising demand for career-focused programs.
- Doctoral program enrollments surged by **68.49%**, reflecting a **growing demand for advanced academic research and specialization.**

1-Year Growth Rate (2022-2023)

Over the past year, **Doctoral and Master’s programs** saw the **highest** growth rates, with **23.15%** and **16.75%** increases,respectively. The column chart below compares enrollment numbers for each program in 2022 and 2023.

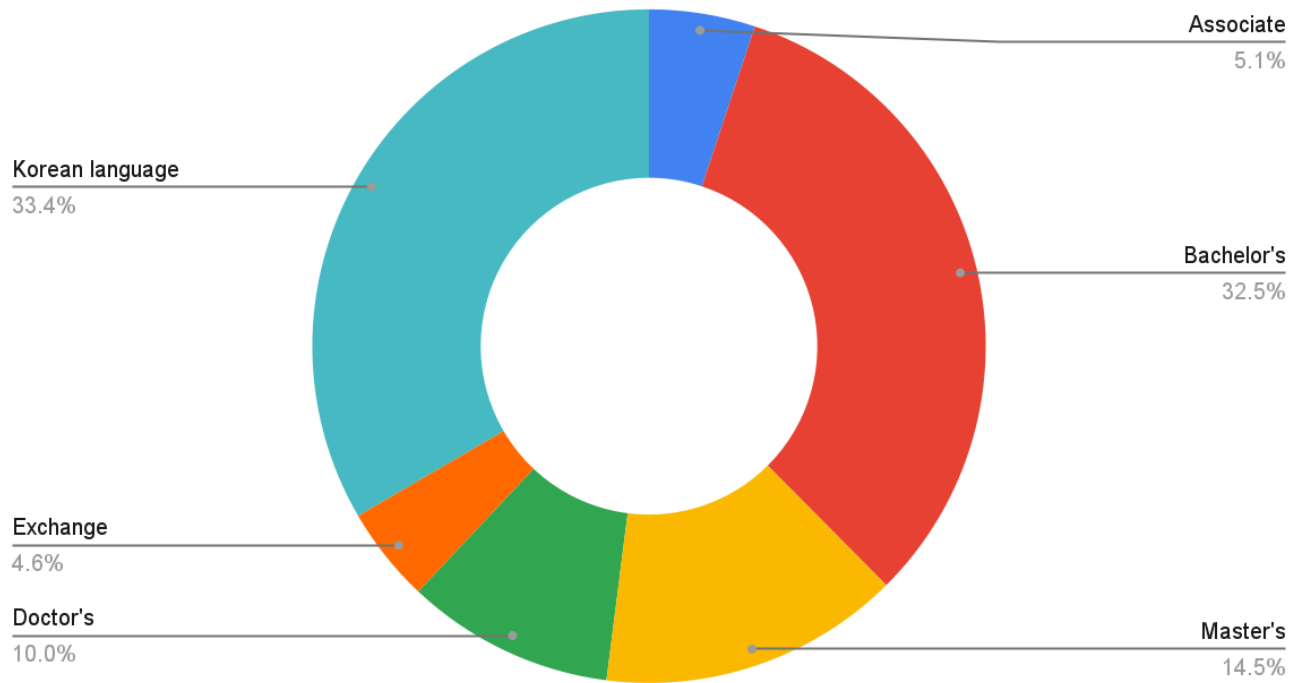


- **Doctoral Degrees:** +23.15%
- **Master’s Degrees:** +16.75%
- **Associate Degrees:** +15.99%
- **Korean Language Training:** +17.76%

Student Ratio by Degree Type (2023)

In 2023, the largest proportion of foreign students were enrolled in Korean Language Training programs (33.40%) and Bachelor's Degree programs (32.46%). The pie chart below shows the distribution of students across all degree types.

## Student Ratio by Degree (2023)



- **Korean Language Training:** 33.4%
- **Bachelor's Degree:** 32.5%
- **Master's Degree:** 14.5%
- **Doctoral Degree:** 10.0%
- **Associate Degree:** 5.1%

## 4. Recommendations

Based on our findings, we recommend the university focus on the following programs:

### Expand Associate Degree (D-2-1) Programs

**Why?** Associate programs showed the **highest growth (115.74%)**, indicating strong demand for **short, career-oriented courses**.

**Suggested Fields:** IT, Business, Hospitality, and Healthcare.

### Increase Master's & Doctoral Programs

**Why?** Both degrees have **steady growth**, especially in specialized fields.

**Suggested Fields:** STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and Business Administration (MBA).

### Develop Korean Language + Degree Pathway Programs

**Why?** Many international students start with Korean Language Training before enrolling in a full-degree program.

**Suggested Strategy:** Offer integrated programs where students first complete language training before transitioning into degree studies.

## Promote Scholarships & Partnerships

Provide **scholarships** for international students in high-growth fields.

Establish **partnerships** with foreign institutions to encourage student exchanges and direct enrollment.

## 5. Conclusion

The steady rise in foreign student enrollments presents a **strategic opportunity for universities** to expand their international programs. By **prioritizing high-growth degree programs**, establishing **pathways from language training to full-degree enrollment**, and strengthening **scholarship and industry partnerships**, universities can effectively attract and retain international students.

### Action Plan:

- **Short-term (6 months):** Launch targeted marketing campaigns for Associate Degree and Master's programs.
- **Mid-term (1-2 years):** Develop structured language-to-degree pathways.
- **Long-term (3-5 years):** Expand partnerships with industries for job placement and internship opportunities.

This analysis provides a **data-driven approach to decision-making**, ensuring the university meets the growing demand for quality education among international students.