



# INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP FORUM (ISF)

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## Transcript of Lecture [ISF Forum 2]:

### Korean Government Scholarship Program (KGSP)

Saturday 18th January, 2020; 0600 WAT

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### Lecture Agenda

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### About the Korean Government Scholarship Program (KGSP)

KGSP (now the Global Korea Scholarship, GKS) refers to the Korean Government Scholarship Program. It has Graduate and Undergraduate aspects. This presentation deals with the Graduate component and will be based on my experience with the process. The KGSP has a duration of 3 years for Masters programmes and 4 years for PhD programmes. If your scholarship application is successful, you get a monthly stipend of 900,000 KRW. It will soon be increased to 1,000,000 KRW.

The first year is spent in Korean language school. You must pass the Korean language proficiency test at a level 3 or higher within the one year. While the learning process can be quite a challenge, only very few people fail to pass the minimum requirement. Although people may tell you it's hard to get to an advanced level in the Korean language, yours sincerely got it by April 2017 after having started from scratch in September 2016. It's certainly doable.

There are two sites maintained by Korean Government which contain information about relevant study programs and scholarships in South Korea, including the Korean Government Scholarship Program:

[[https://www.studyinkorea.go.kr/en/sub/gks/allnew\\_invite.do](https://www.studyinkorea.go.kr/en/sub/gks/allnew_invite.do) & <http://www.niied.go.kr/eng/main.do>]. Study the two links for detailed information.

I suppose all of us on the ISF platform have a decent amount of academic excellence, as do thousands of other people. Yet, scholarships always select a few people. This simply implies that academics and grades are not enough. This is especially true for KGSP. I don't know any other scholarship body that has turned down as many First-class holders as KGSP.

## Application Guidelines for the Korean Government Scholarship Program (KGSP)

### ➤ Method of application:

There are two methods of applying for the KGSP. You can apply through the Korean Cultural Centre in Abuja or directly to the University of your choice. You can't select your language school, that is determined by NIIED. You can only choose your target graduate program. Applying directly to the university is slightly less competitive as there are more slots. The Embassy method is more rigorous because you are invited to a live interview. There is a unanimous agreement amongst people known to the speaker that the Embassy method is tougher. Your choice should depend on what you perceive to be the level of your strength.

Application for the KGSP begins on February 1 every year. Once it hits February 1, start checking those websites above. Allow me clarify: If you intend to study at elite Korean schools (such as Seoul National University, Korean University) apply through the Embassy. These schools receive many applications from the western world and other top places within Asia. Thus, when competing with our contemporaries on equal grounds, emerging successfully becomes harder. Applying through the embassy gives one a better chance of obtaining the scholarship.

### ➤ Selection of programs:

When the scholarship is announced on February 1 or whenever, the government gives a list of available schools and programs. Please endeavour to check if the school you wish to apply to is listed and confirm that your program is also available under KGSP for that particular round of call.

**Example:** A University may have departments of Biomedical Engineering, Food Biotechnology and Biochemistry but decide for some reasons to put only Biotechnology on the list of available courses for the KGSP (as often occur if they need international students in a particular area). If you apply to Biomedical Engineering under KGSP, your application will not be honoured whether you applied via Embassy or directly to the University.

We all have leadership experiences, community building experiences, research experiences, internships, publications, future plans, aspirations and ambitions. BRING ALL THESE TOGETHER INTO A STORY. It must be a unique to you, of your admirable journey so far and the promise of an even greater journey ahead.

### ➤ Ensuring you are selected:

1. Follow the application instructions, guidelines and requirements to the letter. If you can't do everything asked, forget about the scholarship application.
2. If the prestige of the University you are applying to isn't your main concern, apply to Regional Universities (the application documents always indicate which ones are Regional). If you study the files well, the Regional schools receive preference because the government is trying to give the schools international attention.
3. Do not be preoccupied with not knowing Korean. It doesn't matter much except if you are going to study the Korean language itself. Don't even mention not being fluent in Korean in your application essay. What they need from you is how you will be able to cope, adapt, thrive and contribute to international scholarship in Korea.

Finally, the magic of getting accepted is in your story. KGSP asks for some writings like letter of self-introduction, study plan, language plans, etc. These are not exactly motivational letters. They delve more into your personality and personal experience. Now this is not hard to do if you are willing to work hard. Let me show one way of doing it:

- *Why did you do that internship?*
- *What does it mean to you (contribution to your personal life)?*
- *Why and how is this information relevant to the scholarship you are applying for?*
- *What does this show about your potential?*
- *How does it show you can even be more and do more with KGSP?*
- *What is the significance of that in your evolution so far?*

By answering all these questions for each research, conference, publication, internship, etc you've been involved in, you already have several paragraphs standing alone.

Then, you bring all these paragraphs together by showing how they are relevant to your KGSP application. Each one either shows that:

- *you are prepared or;*
- *you will succeed or;*
- *you will make impact or;*
- *the KGSP will take you to the next level where you can impact the world.*

After this, emphasize leadership, community and your vision for yourself, your career and your discipline. At this point, you have exceeded the word count. Now start reading what you have aloud removing redundancy, weak arguments and repetitions. When you manage to get reduce the word count to the required number, you have a neat, powerful, written essay anyone would want to read. Also ask knowledgeable friends to help proof-read it and recommend improvements and removals.

**Parting tip:** Also check out University of Science and Technology, Korea. They have scholarship for Masters and PhD and it pays better than KGSP.

**Good luck!**

## Questions & Answers

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| <b>Q:</b> Can you explain better the study plan and language plan? What are the expectations from the KGSP end? | <b>A:</b> Think outside the box or throw away the box entirely. Come up with a unique personal plan your study will follow and your plan to learn Korean Language. For example, if you have learned a different language before how did you do it? How will you do it this time around? If you haven't learnt a language before, how do you plan to undertake this new adventure? |
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| <b>Q:</b> Beyond the first year (devoted to Korean Language), what is the subsequent language of instruction and assessment? | <b>A:</b> That depends on your school, your department and sometimes on who is teaching you. I must add that eventually, many courses might be taught in Korean. |
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| <b>Q:</b> I saw that KGSP sponsors Undergraduate, Associate Degree and majors in Engineering and Science. What is meant by Associate Degree? | <b>A:</b> Associate Degree are two-year programs like National Diploma in Nigeria. Nigeria is not among the eligible countries for Associate Degrees. |
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- Q:** When applying directly to the university, is there any need to secure a potential supervisor for recommendation?
- A:** There's no need but it can be helpful sometimes. Try to contact professors but if no one responds, it shouldn't stop you from applying if you like the program. From my experience, the schools where contacting professors' matter are where professors' answer emails well. If no one answers your email, take it that it doesn't matter.
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- Q:** Apart from the essays expected from us, are there any other documents required (apart from transcripts, curriculum vitae, passports)?
- A:** Documentation requirements' will be clearly stated in the call for application. You can get check past calls from the links shared earlier.
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- Q:** Can one stay back after the program?
- A:** Yes. If you find a job. You have 2 years or so to search for a job.
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## Attached Documents

Kindly find attached the 2019 Korean Government Scholarship Program, KGSP (now the Global Korea Scholarship, GKS) refers to the Application Guidelines for Graduate Degrees.



2019 GKS-G  
Application Guidelir