COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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In 2007, the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) invited the OECD Secretariat to undertake a thematic review on recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
The review was organised within the framework of the OECD's education policy reviews. Following preparation of this Country Background Report by the KEDI, a team of OECD examiners visited Turkey from 4 to 7 September 2007 and prepared a report published by the OECD in 2008.
This Country Background Report was prepared by the KEDI to provide the examiners with background information on Recognition of non-formal and informal learning in South Korea. It is available at http://oecd.kedi.re.kr/ and on the OECD website at www.oecd.org/edu/recognition

2007

Foreword

Commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and the Korean Educational Development Institute, this research was conducted as part of the OECD project on Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning. The information necessary for this report was gathered in the period of January-December 2006. The research was carried out by literature reviews, seminars, and meetings of experts on recognition of non-formal and informal learning in South Korea. The country background report has been set up according to the format developed by OECD.

The research team for this project is composed of several experts on recognition of non-formal and informal learning in South Korea including Sang-Duk Choi (Head of the Research Team, KEDI), Eun-Soon Baik (KEDI), Tae-Joon Kim (KEDI), Ki-Soo Jeong (Hanyang University), Jong-Soo Shin (KEDI), and Taek-Seok Moon (KEDI). And Jeung-Yun Choi (KEDI) participated in preparing the English version of the Country Background Report.

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Summary of the Report

The purpose of this research was to prepare a country background report according to OECD guidelines for participating in the joint OECD project on "Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning." To this end, the practices of recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Korea were examined in accordance with the OECD framework for international comparative analysis.

The analytical framework for non-formal and informal learning is based on the OECD framework. Chapter 1 presents research purposes, the definition of non-formal and informal learning, the scope and level of non-formal and informal learning, and research methodology.

In Chapter 2, the increasing importance of recognition of non-formal and informal learning (RNFIL) is examined in relation to five environmental changes: demographic changes, internationalization, ICT, economic development and skills mismatch, and changes in a knowledge-based society. The context of non-formal and informal learning is reviewed in these five different aspects. Regarding demographic changes, analysis is focused on the significance of the rapidly aging population in Korea and of increasing immigration, which is expected to reach one million in 2006. Several immigration policies have been implemented: a preferential treatment policy for foreign high-skilled labor forces and the Employment Permit System for Foreign Workers; the Study Korea Project; and the Project to Recruit Overseas Technical Labor Forces. With regard to globalization and internationalization, Korea has made multi-pronged efforts to address the challenges posed by globalization, some examples of which include: opening the doors of the Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS) to foreigners; joining the Washington Accord, which is part of our effort to facilitate mobility of human resources between countries; and the promotion of mutual recognition of international qualifications in the IT sector.

Regarding new information technology, this report examines the "modulization" of standardized curricula, and credit transfer based on a recording system, both of which have been utilized in cyber universities and academic credit exchanges with overseas colleges and universities through e-learning. Further, e-learning systems such as the e-portfolio have been developed at the national level, and will be employed in industries as well as in colleges and universities.

Recently, many projects in lifelong learning have been implemented in Korea, operated by local governments in close connection with national governmental initiatives for balanced regional development. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development; the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy; the Ministry of Construction and Transportation; the Ministry of Culture and Tourism; the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs; and the Ministry of Labor are involved in these projects, all of which have multiple purposes. That is, they were proposed not only to revitalize regional development in Korea but also to mitigate the polarization of the labor market, to address problems of skills mismatch more appropriately, and to enhance equity in society. In order to accomplish these purposes, a couple of fundamental questions should be addressed, namely, how to

support and nurture people's lifetime competencies and key competencies so that they can cope with the demands of a knowledge-based economy; and how to connect these competencies with the recognition system of non-formal and informal learning.

Chapter 3 examines the institutional arrangements of recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Specifically, it examines legal regulatory frameworks and policies concerning RNFIL, its historical background, and the governance and role of government in recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Korea.

There are two representative systems that recognize non-formal and informal learning in Korea: the 'Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS)', which is based on the 'the Act on Recognition of Credits, etc[*].' and 'the System of Academic Degree Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*)', which is based on 'the Act on the Acquisition of Academic Degrees through Self-Education'. These two systems embody the idea of lifelong learning, as they provide learners with an opportunity to acquire Bachelor's degrees, and encourage learners' self-advancement and individual contributions to the development of society. The authority and responsibility for the systems belong to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE), but the actual operation and management of the system is delegated to affiliated public organizations by the MOE: the ACBS to the Korean Educational Development Institute, and the System of Academic Degree Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) to the Korean National Open University. Given this, Korea comes under the category of 'predominance of public authority' in relation to the governmental role in recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Besides the MOE, several ministries are involved in the operation of the system of RNFIL, including the Ministry of Labor, which controls and supports policies on recognition of qualifications and credit, and the Ministry of Defense, which controls and supports policies on credit recognition for various training and education in the military[**].

Chapter 4 examines technical arrangements of RNFIL, centering around the ACBS and the System of Academic Degree Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*). Outcomes of non-formal and informal learning through the ACBS can be recognized and used as prerequisites for enrollment in higher education institutions and for vocational qualification acquisition, and for academic credits in higher education institutions. Learners who participate in the ACBS are increasing and many of the learners are entering regular colleges and universities, using recognized outcomes of non-formal and informal learning through the ACBS. And, if they acquire qualifications through non-formal and informal learning, these qualifications also convert into academic credits through the ACBS, which shows a linkage between vocational qualifications and academic qualifications in Korea.

Chapter 5 explores stakeholders' behavior and the benefits of recognition of non-formal and informal

[*] The official name of 'the Act on Recognition of Credits, etc.' in Korean is: 'Hak Jum In Jung Deung-e Guan Han Bup-Ryul.'

[**] Currently, the Ministry of Commerce is not involved with recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Korea.

learning. Specifically, attention is given to: mutual stakes of stakeholders in RNFIL, accessibility of recognition of non-formal and informal learning, participating status of learners, background characteristics of learners, and factors motivating and impeding RNFIL.

It is difficult to use a uniform standard to categorize the various types of non-formal and informal learning in Korea, because of their unique characteristics. Various kinds of non-formal learning can be categorized according to providers, and different kinds of informal learning can be grouped on the basis of learning outcomes. Representative examples of non-formal learning in Korea include the ACBS, the exemption program of the System of Academic Degree Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*), and the Company-based Learning Credits System. Representative examples of informal learning in Korea include the education and training program in the ACBS targeted on Skills and Arts Inheritance of Important Intangible Cultural Properties, the Examination Program of the System of Academic Degree Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*), qualifications, and on-the-job training in corporations.

This report concludes with Chapter 6, where policy directions and agenda for RNFIL are discussed. For mid-term and long-term policy directions for RNFIL, the following recommendations are made: first, the academic qualifications system and the vocational qualifications system should be linked to each other; second, a national qualifications framework should be established; third, the ACBS should be expanded to cover the primary and secondary education sectors; and finally a 'System of Learning Credit Account' should be implemented in order to recognize various non-formal and informal learning. As policy agenda for 'Lifelong Learning for All' and 'Open Learning Society,' the following recommendations are made: first, efforts should be made to decrease the generation gap by recognizing primary and secondary schooling through various non-formal and informal learning; second, changes in the labor market are necessary to enhance social recognition of lifelong learning after employment; and third, flexible and various learning routes in both formal and non-formal/informal learning need to be presented to learners.

1. Introduction

1.1 Necessity of Research

Learning activities are being done in various forms such as formal learning, non-formal learning, and informal learning. However, there is a lack of recognition of learning experiences through non-formal and informal learning, in contrast to formal learning. Therefore, learning experiences through non-formal and informal learning are limited in their possibility to move and develop further. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) pointed out the 'recognition of non-formal and informal learning and credit transfer' as a key issue in the promotion of lifelong learning, in its report titled "The role of the national qualification system in promoting lifelong learning" (OECD, 2005c).

In 2001, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE) amended the Act on Recognition of Credit, etc. This includes the plan to recognize non-formal and informal learning such as the intangible cultural properties inheritance program through the Academic Credit Bank System. Also in August of 2006, the MOE started a two-year pilot project on 'standardization of lifelong learning outcomes,' which allows individual learners' credits from completion of various lifelong learning including non-formal and informal learning to be systematically managed and accumulated based on certain standards.

Korea participated in the OECD's 'recognition of non-formal and informal learning' project under these circumstances. We hope that our participation in this project will provide an opportunity to overview and examine current practices in recognition of Korea's non-formal and informal learning in the international context and to contribute hereafter to theoretical and systematic developments in the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Korea.

So as we analyze the social and economic background and current practices in recognition of non-formal and informal learning in this research, we wish to present a policy plan for systematic recognition of non-formal and informal learning, which is a key to constructing a lifelong learning system in Korea.

1.2 Purpose of Research

Since the OECD proclaimed 'lifelong learning for all' in 1996, the demand for lifelong learning has showed an unprecedented increase internationally. In this light, the OECD has, during the past two years (since 2006) implemented the project 'recognition of non-formal and informal learning' in order to present an effective, beneficial, and fair recognition system for non-formal and informal learning. In the first year, 2006, participating countries in the project need to prepare a Country Background Report in accordance with the guideline provided by the OECD. This research was conducted in order to prepare the Country Background Report of Korea.

The purpose of the OECD project is not only to promote efficient policy making but also to propose a beneficial and fair system of recognition for non-formal and informal learning to partners who are participating in system operations. Specific goals of the research are:

1) To present an institutional and technical system for managers, providers and users of recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Korea.
2) To present the gains, obstacles and dangers faced by partners who are participating in system operations for recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
3) To present factors being executed and other factors that are not under the current system of non-formal and informal learning.
4) To explore and present an adequate recognition model that reflects efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness in recognizing non-formal and informal learning.

1.3 Definition of Non-formal and Informal Learning

The concept of 'non-formal' and 'informal' learning is defined diversely, depending on countries and scholars. The definition of formal, non-formal, and informal learning referred to in this research is derived from 'The Role of National Qualification Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning' (OECD, 2005b), which is a report for another recent project of the OECD[1]. It is as follows:

Formal learning refers to learning through systematic educational programs in educational institutions, adult training institutions or in the workplaces, which is officially recognized in the form of qualifications or certificates that are socially recognized. Non-formal learning refers to learning activities through educational programs that are not assessed officially and does not lead to certification. Informal learning refers to learning resulting from daily work-related, family or leisure activities.

Yet non-formal learning in Korea typically refers to learning in institutions that can not award academic qualifications or degrees officially. For example, it includes learning activities in institutions such as private educational institutions, vocational training institutions, and cultural centers. In addition, there is a tendency that non-formal and informal learning are not differentiated clearly. Therefore, in this research, we will basically follow the definition of the OECD but also will consider classification of different types of learning in Korea.

1.4. The Level and Scope of Non-formal and Informal Learning

1.4.1. **Level**

[1] This is defined the same way in research activities by related organizations. (Examples: EC, Centre European pour le Development de la Formation Professionnelle: CEDEFOP)

This research focuses not only on credit recognition of non-formal and informal learning but also on credit accumulation and transfer[2]. Credit accumulation and transfer include connections between non-formal and informal learning and between formal learning and non-formal and informal learning. However, this study does not deal with the accumulation and transfer of credit in formal learning.

Thus, this research includes cases that provide flexibility for the operation of formal learning systems such as enrollment and transfer into formal education institutions and the reduction of learning periods for graduation through the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, or cases that strengthen the execution of job activities in schools such as internships and volunteering services. This study also examines the national system that recognizes skills, knowledge and other competencies that individuals acquire not only through formal learning but also through non-formal and informal learning.

1.4.2. Scope

Lifelong learning encompasses all the experiences 'from cradle to grave.' Considering the feasibility of research, policy relevance, and timeliness, this research focuses on the learner who attends a post-secondary institution that is 'out of school,' regardless of age.

1.5. Analytical Method

In this research, we conducted data collection, literature review and case studies, and experts' meetings in order to analyze the social and economic background and current practices of 'recognition of non-formal and informal learning' in Korea.

1.5.1. **Data collection**

In order to analyze the social and economic background and current practices of recognition of non-formal and informal learning, we collected basic data on the execution of recognition systems, primary sources of which include: population and housing census and social statistics investigation from the National Statistical Office, educational statistical bulletins and employment statistics from the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI); and the National Human Resources Development Index from the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education Training (KRIVET).

1.5.2 Literature review

[2] The original title of the OECD project"Recognition of non-formal and informal learning" was "Recognition of non-formal and informal learning and credit transfer."

In order to analyze the system of non-formal and informal learning in Korea, we conducted a literature review of domestic and international research materials related to non-formal and informal learning. Also, after collecting basic statistical data, we collected and analyzed findings from various empirical research to supplement limitations in the basis statistical data.

1.5.3 Case studies

We conducted case studies on the Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS) and the system of Bachelor's degree examination programs for self education, both of which are representative recognition systems of non-formal and informal learning in Korea. Additionally, we partially described cases of recognition of workplace learning and internship programs in relation to credit accumulation and transfer and the reduction of learning periods.

1.5.4. Experts' meetings

Experts' meetings were held seven times to discuss the research and to help in the preparation of the report. The Research Advisory Committee[3] met three times to prepare the Country Background Report. In order to reflect opinions of other professionals in related sectors, we organized questions and answers in writing through e-mail with professionals in relevant academic communities.

[3] The Research Advisory Committee is formed of five members: Choi, Unsil (President of the Korea Lifelong Learning Society), Kim, Hyunsoo (Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education Training, Qualification Research Headquarters), Yoon, Yeogack (Professor of the Korean National Open University), Kim, Joosub (Korea Labor Institute, Labor Market Research Headquarters), and Song, Choonhwan (the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Lifelong Learning Policy Department)

2. Background of Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning

2.1 Demographic Changes

2.1.1. Changes in learners' characteristics

Higher Education

According to 2006 higher education statistics prepared by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in 2006, the higher education enrollment rate increased rapidly in the 1980's and the 1990's due to the enforcement of the graduation quota system and high enthusiasm for education. The enrollment rate continuously increased, to reach 67.8% in 2006. The immediate college enrollment rate continuously increased as well, recording 82.1% in 2006.

Due to a sharp rate increase for women from 47.8% in 2000 to 62.2% in 2005, the admission rate into higher education by gender indicates a decrease in the gender gap. According to 2006 investigation results from the OECD Education at a Glance's indicator, 31 percent of the population aged 25-34 attained tertiary-type B or tertiary-type A education and advanced research programs, which is the third best behind Norway (37%) and the Netherlands (32%). Meanwhile, the proportion of foreign students to the total number of students enrolled in higher education increased from 0.1% in 1998 to 0.2% in 2003. In 2005, a total of 22,526 foreign students were enrolled in higher education institutions in Korea. Among them, 15,577 were enrolled in degree programs and 6,949 were enrolled in language programs. Looking at the racial composition of foreign students in Korean higher education institutions, based on 2005 degree programs, Asians were at the top at 88.7% (19,969 students) followed by North Americans at 4.9% (1,106 students) and Europeans at 4.1% (915 students). Among the foreign students who entered Korea for language study, there are 4,477 Asians who were the highest in proportion at 85.9% followed by 6.0% Europeans, and 5.9% North Americans (KEDI , 2005).

Lifelong Learning

The lifelong learning participation rate, which indicates the rate of population who have participated in lifelong learning at least once during the previous year, increased 4.2% from 17.4% in 1996 to 21.6% in 2004. Looking at the participation rate of lifelong learning by gender, 23.8% of males and 19.5% of females have participated in lifelong learning (E-national index, 2006). On one hand, degree acquisitions through the ACBS show a rapidly growing trend because of its easy access and diverse sources of credit. In the year 2001, 42,536 learners registered in the ACBS, and 4,259 of them received a degree; by comparison, 17,540 of 193,760 registrants received degrees in 2005. On the other hand, during the same

period, the number of degree holders through the BDEP (Bachelor's Degree Examination Program for Self Education) system decreased. For the BDEP in 2001, among the 42,480 registered students, 755 obtained degrees; in comparison, 610 of 53,893 registered learners obtained degrees in the year 2005. Based on the year 2005, lifelong learning through academically recognized lifelong education facilities at the secondary level embraced 7,404 learners and 22 schools in the secondary school curriculum; and 6,697 of these 7,404 students were females. In the case of the upper-secondary school curriculum, there were 45 schools and 23,443 students; 14,615 of those students were females, and the proportion was steadily growing (KEDI, 2005).

Vocational Education and Training

Meanwhile, the participation rate in vocational competency development training was 12.7% in 2004. The distribution of training participants, among a total of 4.8 million people, was 3.4 million current workers (2.45 million in small and medium companies), 1.33 million young men, 610,000 aging, 430,000 temporary workers, 1.59 million women, and 250,000 unemployed (The Presidential Committee on Job Strategy, 2006).

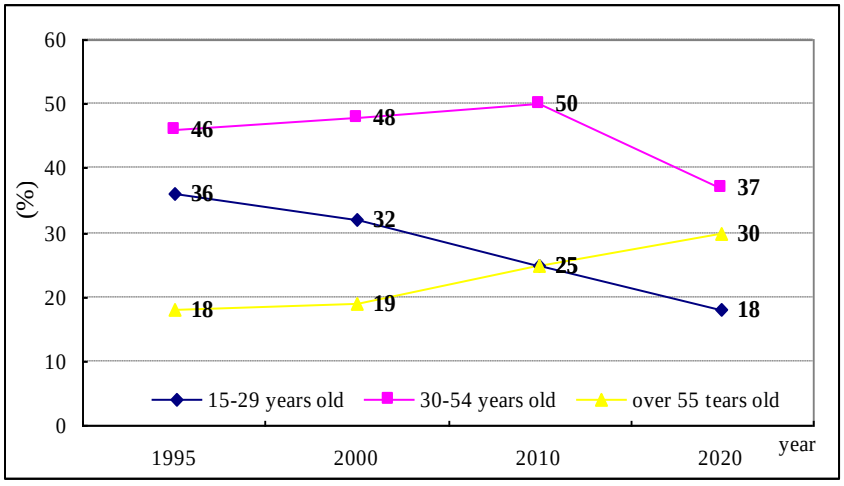
One of the features of the learner distribution in the vocational education and training sector is that because vocational training placed much more emphasis on age groups in the 20's (47.7% of total) and 30's (41.3% of total) in the case of 2005 registrants training, people above 40 comprised only 9.9% of the total, and the under-educated group (less than high school graduation) comprised only 0.5%. Also, as for training access, regular employees of large corporations comprised 26.8% and special skilled workers comprised 22.6% of the total. On the contrary, daily workers amounted to only 5.0%, and unemployed persons to just 4.8%. This illustrates the large gaps in training participation rates among different groups of people (KRIVET, 2006a).

According to the HRD-net statistical data of the Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS), among the total of 1,269,747 current working candidates for vocational competency development training in 2005, the foreign labor force comprised 8,614, approximately 0.7% of the total.

2.1.2. Changes in Demographic Structure

Aging

The extent of aging in Korea is still moderately favorable in comparison with that of other developed countries; however, it is progressing rapidly in a unique way. Usually it takes between 40 to 115 years for a society to move from an 'aging' society (where 7% of the total population is 65 years old and above) to



[Figure 1] Changes in Population by Age (Economically Active Population Research, 2005)

an 'aged' society (where 14% of the total population is 65 years old and above), Korea is expected to transform into an 'aged' society in only 18 years. For that reason, we can predict that the age of the production-capable population will change, passing through bell shaped form in the 2010's, to inverse trapezoid form in the 2020's (MOE, 2006d).

Aging in demographics directly explains the rate increase of the elderly population, caused by both a decreasing birth rate and increasing average life span. This relates to two points in education. First, the low birth rate indicates an absolute decrease in the younger population. Accordingly, the demand for education will diminish at the primary and secondary levels, which will lead to a decrease in the number of students in each class. Second, as the economically active population decreases, the demand for quality improvement of the labor force, to supplement the shortage of workforce, will increase, and education and training will become more important. However, despite the unparalleled rate of aging, the participation rate of the middle aging group, 50 to 64 years old, is a very low 9.6% (OECD, 2005b). Possible explanations for this include that corporations are avoiding investments for the aging group due to the low productivity of this group, and that the aging group is not active in developing its competency, compared to the younger group.

Immigration

The number of foreigners staying in Korea is increasing rapidly: 270,000 in 1995, 740,000 in 2005, 800,000 in March of 2006 and a projected 1 million by the end of 2006. According to the Supply and Demand Plan for Foreign Labor Forces, Korea is planning to bring in 105,000 foreign workers in the year 2006 (E-national index, 2006).

Each year, an average of 20,000 foreign professional workers enter the domestic labor market for

various reasons. In 2004, a total of 19,807 professional laborers registered at the Ministry of Justice. Some demographic characteristics of foreign workers in Korea are as follows: Looking at the gender distribution of the professional labor force, men make up 61.4% of the foreign labor force while women account for only 38.6%. Looking at purposes of residence, statistics indicate that 53.8% of the total professional labor forces had entered for the purpose of teaching English. The percentage of persons entering for specific occupations (16.5%) and entertainment (15.3%) were relative high but the proportion in professional occupations (1.7%) including professors (4.9%) and technical teaching (1.0%) was very low. Looking at distribution by age, we can see that the average age is 35.2 years; females are approximately six years younger than males - 31.2 years and 37.6 years of age respectively (KLI, 2005a).

As the numbers of foreign laborers increase, the entry of foreign laborers' children into public education has become a social issue as well. Among marriages of foreign residents, which comprise 13.5% of overall marriages, 35.9% are between men from rural communities and foreign women. Currently in 2006, there are 7,998 children from internationally mixed-marriage families in schools (85% in primary, 11.6% in lower secondary school, and 3.5% in upper secondary schools). Of those 7,998 students, the majority (83.7%, 6,695 students) are from foreign families where the mother is a foreigner.

There are a total of 17,287 school-aged children (7-18 years old) with at least one foreign parent, registered with the Ministry of Justice. Among them, only 1,574 are enrolled in regular Korean schools and 7,800 are enrolled in international schools. This shows that about 8,000 school-aged children of foreign labor forces do not benefit from public education. (MOE, 2006c).

2.1.3. Immigration Policies

Preferential Treatment Policy for Foreign Professional Human Resources

With reference to the Engineering Technology Promotion Act, foreigners with resident cards issued by the Ministry of Science and Technology permitting them to work in the engineering field, or those foreigners who receive a gold card* from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Energy recognizing them as professional human resources are entitled to receive a visa or a certificate of visa issuance without prior recommendation process. Also, in accordance with Article 8 and Article 10 of the Immigration Control Act and Article 22 of the Enforcement Decree, foreign professional laborers, unlike foreign low-skilled laborers, fall under the Preferential Treatment Policy for their immigration and their sojourn status. By virtue of these legal provisions, they are exempted from restrictions such as the visa issuance quota, the restriction on sojourn period, or the Labor Market Test process, which recommends employment of foreigners to those companies who have made efforts to hire domestic laborers (KLI,

* 'Gold Card' is a system that offers preferential treatment in visa issuing for foreign workers employed by high-tech industries. The 'Gold Card System' was first introduced in 2001 to attract foreign workforces in the field of information technology and e-business.

2005b).

Employment Permit System for Foreign Workers

In March 2006, the Foreign Work Force Policy Committee, chaired by the Minister of the Office for Government Policy Coordination, decided to import 105,000 foreign laborers, which is slightly less than the 116,000 laborers imported in 2005, and ten countries were selected as recipients of the work permit system. This decision was made in consideration of the domestic labor market conditions, current supply and demand of workforce by industry, and possibilities of Korean substitution. Also, the government maintains a general principle of not importing more foreign laborers than 2% of the economically active Korean population, so as to avoid incurring social expenses associated with domiciliation, racial conflicts, and cultural and religious tension; furthermore, the government only recruits foreign workers in such areas as there is a shortage of Korean laborers. After the enforcement of the Work Permit System in August 2004, the actual employment of foreign laborers was rather low at the beginning. But since the reform of the system to simplify foreigners' employment and courtesy services in March 2005, the actual inflow of foreign laborers continues to improve gradually. The import of foreign workforces through the work permit system averages 8,816 laborers per month since January 2006, and is being promoted normally. It appears that these trends will be maintained (KRIVET, 2006c).

Study Korea Project

The Korean government plans to enhance its national image as a desirable destination for studying abroad, and to utilize the current Korean Wave phenomenon[*]. In accordance with the plan, the government launched a policy initiative called the 'Study Korea Project,' a primary goal of which is to attract excellent students. The government hopes to increase the number of foreign students from 22,526 students in 2005 to 50,000 students by 2010.

Support for Project to Draw Overseas Technical Labor Forces (Small and Medium Business Administration)

The Small and Medium Business Administration (SMBA) is planning to invest 3.3 billion won (equivalent to about 3.5 million US dollars) in importing 370 highly skilled foreign workers to support small and medium corporations, which are in great need of highly skilled labor forces. Since Korea has a

[*] The Korean wave refers to the recent surge of popularity of South Korean popular culture in other countries, especially its Asian neighbors. It is also referred to as "*Hallyu*", from the Korean pronunciation of the term. The term was coined in China in mid 1999 by Beijing journalists startled by the growing popularity of South Koreans and South Korean goods in China.

sufficient supply of labor forces in the field of applied science, such as IT, Korean corporations will employ foreign workers in basic science fields. Highly skilled laborers from overseas will be supported on the basis of their sojourn period: short and long terms. For short-term employment, less than three months, the government supports up to 60% of the total expenses associated with foreign experts' consulting. Only in the case of small corporations with 20 or fewer employees does the government support up to 70% of the associated expenses. For long-term employment, more than three months, the government provides round-trip airline tickets and up to 40% of the annual salary (40% for manufacturing industries, 30% for knowledge-based service industries). SMBA is planning to support an additional 10% for local corporations.

2.1.4. College Admission Policy for Foreigners

On the basis of article 29 (2) of the Enforcement Decree of the Higher Education Act, higher education institutions are allowed to recruit foreign students without limit and beyond the admission quota as long as the candidates are 1) North Korean defectors 2) foreigners whose parents are both non-Korean or 3) foreigners or Koreans abroad who have completed curriculum equivalent to the Korean primary, and secondary school curriculum. To apply to college through this special admission program, students are required to submit to the school a certificate of completion from each of the related overseas institutions (corresponding to the certificate of Korean primary and secondary school completion) as well as Korean transcripts and a copy of the confirmation of academic recognition forms. In addition, if the applicant is a citizen of a foreign country, he or she is required to submit a copy of residence registration or a foreigner registration card. This policy suggests that the Korean government recognizes formal qualifications as admission requirements, rather than outcomes of non-formal and informal learning such as credit recognition.

2.2 Globalization and Internationalization

2.2.1. Policies to Promote Mobility among the Nations

Expansion of Washington Accord Affiliation

In order to support both accreditation of engineering education and labor force exchange, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy and the Ministry of Information and Communication are planning to expand Korea's affiliation with the Washington Accord. The system of engineering education accreditation was first introduced by the U.S. Engineering Council for Professional Development (ECPD) in 1932. As of 2006, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), a federation of 31

professional and technical societies, is in charge of accrediting engineering education. By signing the Washington Accord in 1989, the accreditation institutions of engineering education in many countries have formed the International Federation, which now comprises nine countries including the U.S.A., Japan, Canada, England, Australia, and New Zealand. Korea joined the Washington Accord as a reserve member in 2005 and is planning to apply for regular membership in 2007.

Mutual recognition of international qualifications in the field of IT

Cross-border mobility of labor forces in the IT field has increased rapidly. Accordingly, domestic demands for internationally recognized qualifications continue to increase. Despite these demands, mutually recognized international qualifications in Korea still remain at the basic stage. Because Korea lacks social understanding of the equivalent currency of IT qualifications, the mutually accredited system of qualifications is operating in a greatly restricted way. As of 2006, Korea, together with China and Japan, is implementing the system of mutual recognition of qualifications in the IT field only. The qualifications mutually recognized by the three countries are limited to two types only: the data-processing industrial (associate) and the data-processing technician. In addition, the Ministry of Labor (MOLAB) in Korea and the Human Resources Development Service of Korea are playing a major role in revitalizing the APEC Engineer System. Korea is in the process of promoting a mutual exemption agreement with countries participating in the system, including Australia.

2.2.2. Opening the Doors of ACBS to Foreigners

In April 2005, the ACBS opened its doors to foreigners living in Korea. In 2006, two foreigners, one from Japan and one from France, acquired degrees through the credit bank system[*]. A forty-year-old Japanese citizen who is an assistant professor at East-West University became the first degree recipient in information and communication technology since the ACBS opened its door to foreigners.

2.3 ICT

2.3.1. Credit Transfer System

In order to modulate learning programs and to promote credit transfer among many educational institutions by employing the Learning Management System (LMS), there is great need for a system that promotes high compatibility and standardization of e-learning contents and technology. The central

[*] In 2007, three foreigners, including a Chinese, a Japanese, and a Kazak, acquired degrees through the credit bank system.

government encourages its ministries to develop standards appropriate to their relevant fields in order to increase re-usability, compatibility, and mutual applicability of e-learning contents and technology; however, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy is in charge of developing the Official Standard Accreditation (KS, ISO submission) (E-learning Industry Development Act, Article 11). Also, to strengthen joint research and cooperation with overseas standard delivery institutions, the Korea Electronic Trade Agency signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2005 to undertake a cooperation project with the Alexandria Co-Lab under the Architecture Description Language (ADL) Initiative. And from the end of 2006, it is planned to operate SCORM accreditation in Korea. Despite all these efforts by the government, however, these standardized modules for learning objects and for the LMS are not fully utilized to promote credit transfer among the various educational institutions. But a credit transfer between quantitatively expanded cyber universities' cyber campuses is becoming more active. As a joint development of LMS, the case of Won-Gwang University and Yanbian University in China is the sole example up to now of universities who have attempted international credit transfer. Meanwhile, the MOE is promoting credit transfer through its building of a comprehensive information system toward an advanced credit bank system.

Establishment of a Comprehensive Information System for ACBS

The project to establish a comprehensive information system for ACBS has been implemented since 2004. According to the action plan of the 2006 White Paper on Educational ICT, this project will facilitate the transition from an off-line-based operation of academic affairs in ACBS to an on-line based operation in which students will be able to enroll in classes, and submit applications concerning registrar affairs through an on-line system. In addition, the procedures of assessment and recognition will be switched to on-line basis. The MOE is also planning to set up a portal website of ACBS, thereby establishing a learning design system tailored to the needs and competencies of individual learners. In order to provide quality information, the portal website will be linked to the websites of qualifications-related organizations and colleges and universities that provide educational services for part-time students. The portal website will function as a data bank that contains information on qualifications acquisition, recognition of non-formal and informal learning, and data on Important Intangible Culture Properties (e.g., artists or artisans with Important Intangible Culture Properties, approximate time for acquiring a specific IICP, etc).

Academic Credit Exchange with Overseas Higher Education Institutions through E-Learning

Academic credit exchange with overseas higher education institutions through e-learning is a program through which students in domestic higher education institutions enroll in on-line classes provided by

overseas higher education institutions and get recognition of their credits for these classes. This program makes it possible for students to benefit from diverse educational programs provided by foreign colleges and universities without studying abroad. Table 1 presents Korea's sister relationships with overseas cyber universities as of 2006.

[Table 1] Sister Relationships with Overseas Cyber Universities, 2006

Country	University	Data
The Netherlands	Dutch Open University	April 17, 1987
Taiwan	National Open University	December 7, 1994
Malaysia	Open University Malaysia	November 15, 2005
USA	Mississippi State University Continuing Education	April 12, 1984
UK	The Open University	June 11, 1996
Israel	The Open University	May 17, 1995
China	Jilim Broadcast Television College	August 26, 1996
China	Yanbian University	April 7, 1993
China	Shanghai TV University	November 7, 2000
Thailand	Ramkhamjaeng University	June 26, 1985
Thailand	Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University	April 8, 1997
Pakistan	Allama Iqbal Open University	October 30, 1986

Source: MOE (2006). Adapting Education to an Information Age.

Academic Credit Exchanges among Domestic Institutions through Cyber Campuses

Development of ICT facilitates academic credit exchange between cyber universities and traditional universities. Hanyang University and Kyunghee University, for instance, have both an off-line campus and a cyber campus. Students in these universities enroll in classes provided by both campuses; that is, students of the cyber campus can enroll in classes provided by the off-line campus and vice versa. Credit exchanges among cyber campuses have become active as well.

2.3.2. Technical Qualifications System

It seems that the Vocational Qualifications System in Korea has not been able to play a major role in resolving academicism, which puts excessive emphasis on diplomas and degrees. That is because the Vocational Qualifications System has emphasized testing as a method to evaluate and recognize learning outcomes; but now it is considering other methods of evaluation and recognition, such as emphasis on the completion of educational training courses, and recognition of prior learning as an accompanying method (Lee, D. et al, 2006). In the reality where information and communication technologies are continually and rapidly changing, professional qualifications in the IT field, rather than academic achievement or

majors, have established themselves as the signal of evaluation and indexing that determines whether or not someone is competent to perform occupational duties. In addition, when large firms hire a competent person, they conduct various screening processes, including testing, interviewing, examining applicants' CVs, etc. At that time, one's personal qualifications, along with academic achievements, provide the most important evidence of competency and function as the primary screening device. According to the nucleus of operation, these qualifications in the IT field are grouped into National Technical Qualifications, Private Qualifications, and Internationally-recognized Qualifications.

National Technical Qualifications

Depending on the requirements for application and the degree of difficulty in acquiring them, qualifications can be categorized into four grades (levels): engineer, technician, industrial technician, and certified operator. Among these, qualifications for data processing engineers are most recognized. If someone acquires the data processing engineer qualification, he or she will receive a commensurate annual salary and the status of a doctoral researcher.

Private Qualifications

Since the year 2004, government-recognized private qualifications have been treated the same as National Technical Qualifications. The e-test of Samsung SDS, the Information System Supervisor test of the National Computerization Agency, the PC Application Competent Assessment test of PCT, and the Internet Information Searcher test of the Communications Promotion Association of Korea are four qualifications that have received the first governmental recognition. Typically, private qualifications do not help one gain employment, but they help individuals enter corporations that manage such qualification tests or related corporations.

Internationally Recognized Qualifications

Internationally recognized qualifications are certificates supervised by mega-corporations in the IT field, corporations such as the Cisco Systems, Microsoft, Oracle, Sun Microsystems, IBM, etc. For the time being, they have been the most widely recognized. Even though they are qualifications awarded by a single corporation, internationally recognized qualifications include various kinds, depending on the degree of difficulty and the field of technology; they are exceptionally useful for employment in related corporations. Qualifications awarded by multinational corporations are considered by most as an avenue to a lucrative job in the IT field or in corresponding corporations. They also aid in securing jobs in Korea or overseas.

2.3.3. E-Learning System

Construction of e-Learning System

In 2005, the MOE presented the construction of the e-Learning System as one of seven tasks to revitalize higher education e-learning, at the policy forum for the National Human Resources Development. The e-portfolio in the e-Learning System signifies the electronic storing of the learner's learning history, information on various activities and characteristics. There are three specified tasks connected with the e-portfolio. First, in order to manage the accumulation of each learner's curriculum, activities outside of learning, and personal information, the e-portfolio model needs to be developed with due consideration to mutual operations and transmissibility. Second, through dissemination of the newly developed model, there is a need to support the present system, which fits the circumstances of universities. Third, in order to revitalize operation of the e-portfolio, it is important to expand connections between industry and higher education through development of a standardized valuation index that allows the e-portfolio, which is built individually, to be utilized as an evaluation basis in industry. Furthermore, it is very important to pursue expansion to lifelong learning.

Difficulties in implementing the e-portfolio

The portfolio helps individuals to access the outcome of prior learning they have acquired in a holistic way. Moreover, it provides individuals with an opportunity for self-examination and reflection upon that learning during the preparation process. However, the use of the portfolio has not become popular yet because of several problems including time-consuming assessment, high expenses, difficulties in securing specialists and uncertain reliability. This is especially true when the portfolio is applied to vocational qualification acquisition. Because of the effort and the high expenses associated with the operation of the portfolio assessment, there are concerns that it might impede flexibility of qualifications.

There are increasing calls for utilizing of the e-portfolio in the college curriculum, considering its usefulness in building course data, improving learning and learners, providing space to save information, saving the teaching achievements of professors, and improving professors' competency. Several limitations are expected in introducing the e-portfolio into the actual curriculum in universities. We must solve the following problems. First is the problem of curriculum reform; the subjects need to be formed and modularized according to their function and knowledge. Second, the connection of various databases needs to solved. There are Portfolio Builders that help with this, but a plan for systemic and practical use is still required. Third, many expected problems have been pointed out with regard to introduction of the e-portfolio, such as those associated with copyrights, required construction time, effort, financial

problems, whether to introduce it gradually or all at once, and standards problems (Park, Inwoo, 2006).

2.4 Economic Growth and Skills Mismatch

2.4.1. Lifelong Learning Policy at the Regional Level

Currently the Korean government is planning or implementing multi-pronged projects focusing on regions and learning. This reflects the idea of Balanced Development of the Nation, the basis of the current Roh Administration. Since President Roh Moo-Hyun took office, many projects have been designed and implemented as lifelong learning policies at the regional level, some examples of which include the Regional Innovation System Project of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy, the Business and Innovative City Project of the Ministry of Construction and Transportation, the Culture City Project of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Small Districts Promotion Project and Information-Oriented Model Village Project of the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs, the Culture Village Creation Project and the Agriculture and Fishery Experience Village Project of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; and the Learning Community Creation Project of the Government Information Agency. Also, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development is promoting the Regional Human Resources Development and Local University Promotion Project and the Lifelong Learning City Project.

Among the various projects for the development of regions and learning, the Lifelong Learning City Project has been supported by the central government. Beginning with selection of three local governments in 2001, the central government was supporting 57 lifelong learning cities[*] by 2006. Because the Lifelong Learning City Project placed great emphasis on the spread of lifelong learning cities and the increase of social interest in lifelong learning, and because the project was initiated by the central government, the project was successfully expanded to the national level in a relatively short time. Even though the project is evaluated as successful in term of quantitative expansion, there are strong calls for continuing examination with regard to recognition of technology, experience, and knowledge of residents, expansion of human and social capital at the regional level, and the effects of the project on regional economic development. Currently, the MOE continues to focus on policies of regional development, sustainable development of lifelong learning cities, and voluntary participation of local residents in reaching the appropriate goals for citizen development through the Lifelong Learning City Project.

2.4.2. Skills Mismatch

Skills shortages and mismatches in Korea can be summarized as follows. First, the massification of

[*] Please refer to Appendix A for details about the 57 lifelong learning cities.

higher education, which was achieved during a very short period, caused both labor shortages and unemployment--the phenomenon of job mismatch. New entrants into the labor market are highly educated but the problem is that those highly educated persons do not have the skills and knowledge demanded by corporations (MOE, 2005).

As we move towards a knowledge-based economy, the demand for a higher value-added labor force increases rapidly. However, there is a shortage of labor forces in the knowledge industry and the highly skilled service industry, which supports the highly value-added labor force. Between 2003 and 2010, it is estimated that jobs in the manufacturing industry will decrease by 80,000 but jobs in the service industry will increase by 2.56 million. Looking at the estimation of job demand by occupation, it is expected that professional positions will increase from 7.7% in 2003 to 8.2% in 2010 but the demand for low-skilled laborers, such as operators and assemblers, will decrease (KLI, 2002).

The volume of professional jobs in Korea is relatively small compared with other OECD countries. Primarily due to the policy focus on the manufacturing industry, there are insufficient highly skilled labor forces in the service sectors, including law and culture. Accordingly, estimates show that the new technology and high technology industries will find it greatly challenging to secure highly skilled core labor forces in the near future. Also, it is predicted that a shortage of workforces in the film, games and broadcasting industries will increase and that there will be an increasing shortage of labor forces with master and doctoral degrees in science and technology. A portion of the core labor force is unemployed or temporarily employed and most of the doctoral-level labor force is concentrated in the universities.

Under the deliberation of each government ministry, the government selects the sectors needed for strengthening of national competitiveness as “national strategy sectors” and forecasts the supply and demand of the labor force for these sectors. Accordingly the government will also need to establish training for the labor force and a plan for their practical use (the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development).

2.4.3. Inequality of Society

Korea’s Gini coefficient is 0.310, which is a little higher than the OECD average 0.307 and places Korea 12th out of 28 nations (KLI, 2006b).

In the case of low-skilled workers, the change in the Gini coefficient is reflected in data on academic attainment levels (KLI, 2005a). For the last 20 years, at in five year intervals, the changes in the Gini coefficient by academic attainment level generally suggest a trend of increase. Between 1988 and 2003, graduates of two-year colleges experienced the greatest increase of inequality in wage earning, followed by those with less than high school graduation, and then university graduates. High school graduates suffered the least. Most of the increase in wage earning inequalities is concentrated in between 1997 and 2003.

In terms of wage earning inequalities within the younger generation, such inequality increases as the age group becomes older. The 25-29 year group indicated a large gap of Gini coefficient between persons with education beyond university and high school graduates (KLI, 2005 a). Compared to this, there is no research outcome or evidence of increase in the economic and social inequalities index for immigrants or aged workers; it is a sector that needs to be managed seriously from now on.

The poverty issue, caused by polarization of the labor market, is not only the problem of the poor class that was excluded from the labor market, but also the problem of labor poverty. Thus, it is recommended that not only do we need to provide jobs for the poor, but we need to increase the quality of jobs being provided to the poor, thereby increasing quality in employment and productivity of lower-ranking jobs at the same time. The desirable direction is as follows.

First, as policies to improve living standards at the labor-poverty level, there are various income assistance policies, citizens' basic living guarantees, labor income tax exemptions and exemptions from community welfare expenses.

Second, the government has attempted to promote social mobility by creating medium-level jobs through various methods and decreasing low-wage jobs. There are policies like minimum wage systems and subcontract structure improvement policies to restrain the occurrence of low-wage jobs. For creation of medium-level jobs, there are the policies of public sector and social service sector employment, provisions for education training investment incentives by large corporations in the manufacturing industry, and policy for the formation of a positive social atmosphere.

Third, in order to increase the provision of skilled labor, the policy of education and training needs to be strengthened. In other words, the education system needs to be built by the method of helping low-income levels to move upward through education and training.

Finally, from the social side, in order to promote both safety and flexibility in employment, each agency is promoting methods of dealing with these problems at the social level, such as increase of internal flexibility through duty reform in large corporations and public sectors, improvement of the informal job employment system, employment safety services, and enlargement of unemployment pay (KLI, 2006a).

2.5 Transition to a Knowledge-based Society

Looking at the life competencies required by the advancing knowledge-based society, Korean society is facing some challenges. First, as income level increases, social values are in the process of developing toward an emphasis on higher-level desires affecting individual motivations, such as cultural desires and desires for self attainment. And these high-level social values contribute to motivating individuals to build up certain competencies through education. In this regard, higher levels of literacy training including self-guided learning competency, foreign language ability and ICT as well as basic literacy (the 3Rs – read,

write and arithmetic) are increasingly demanded by the society.

Second, aging and massification of higher education will be continue. Accordingly, older citizens will have to possess job competency and play a role in the labor market. On one hand, women's participation in the economy is growing steadily, and thereby calls for development of women's workforce competencies are rising. On the other hand, the rise of knowledge-based industries intensifies the demand for technologically and professionally competent labor forces. And, in accordance with the increase in economic restructuring, individuals' adaptability to an ever-changing job market has become essential for adults in our society.

Third, the advance in globalization demands individuals' ability to accommodate diverse values. In addition, the demand for good citizenship including morality, a law-abiding spirit, and social identity has increased in preparation for expanded materialism, evasion of the law, and increased individualism. In this context, lifetime competencies can be divided into four major categories: basic and arithmetic literacy; key competencies; citizenship; and job-specific competencies.

2.5.1. Basic and Mathematical Literacy

Basic and mathematical literacy is comprised of the 3Rs (Read, wRite, aRithmetic) and means the basis competencies required for overall learning and enhancing other major competencies. These are the most fundamental competencies a nation takes the responsibility of developing for its people. Recent government efforts to administer basic academic assessment indicate that a nation is in full charge of nurturing individuals with basic literacy and mathematical ability. It can be safely said that such literacy is a very important life competency for primary and secondary education.

2.5.2. Key Competencies

Key competencies are newly demanded with the transition into a knowledge-information society. Contents and standards of key competencies are contingent upon societal changes. The Industrial Society, for example, demanded social, scientific, artistic, and physical competencies as well as the 3Rs that were the key competencies in the Agricultural Society. The new knowledge-based industry is demanding new key competencies including the ability to utilize information-oriented machinery and tools, familiarities and acquisitions of information and knowledge, and self-guided learning ability. These key competencies have an identical context to Peter Drucker's 'universal literacy and arithmetic literacy,' which generalized the concept of the knowledge-based society. According to Peter Drucker, mathematical abilities, a basic understanding of sciences and technologies, foreign languages and skill competencies, as members of an organization, are included in the concepts of universal literacy and arithmetic. And the concept implies the knowledge-for-learning method of 'process-oriented knowledge,' not the traditional 'contents-oriented

knowledge' concept.

2.5.3. **Citizenship**

We can consider citizenship as another important element of life competency. Citizenship signifies behavior factors that nurture social capital. Social capital, which can be reflected in morality, ordered consciousnesses and/or socially responsible behavior, can be seen as the competencies of social members to establish effective synergy by networking individuals' human capital. Though it is hard to connect the limited human capital each individual possesses, with national competitiveness, social capital is indivisibly connected with national competitiveness. As research findings continue to reveal that the production of social capital can reduce social costs, its significance has increased. Citizenship is not only a competency factor in community life but also is a salient factor for corporations. Because a cooperative consciousness in social capital is closely connected with the ability to accomplish tasks by teamwork, cooperative consciousness is ultimately related to the previously mentioned key competencies. Behavioral characteristics of employees in the corporation such as vocational ethical consciousness and sense of responsibility are included in the broad meaning of citizens' consciousnesses.

2.5.4. Job-Specific Competencies

Job-specific competencies include specific competencies demanded in specific occupations, apart from the three kinds of competencies just mentioned above; in other words, they are job-achieving competencies such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to carry out specific occupations. We can see that these competencies need to be emphasized especially during vocational education, two-year college education, and higher education after the basic common learning stage.

In Korean corporations, we can find some successful cases of learners who develop careers, specialize in their specific occupations, and achieve competency through learning and recognition. The necessity of restructuring and securing global competitiveness of corporations due to the IMF economic crisis has given the Korean corporations the opportunity to convert from the traditional seniority system to the merit-based advancement system.

Recently some Korean corporations have implemented competency-based human resource management to cultivate competent personnel. These corporations are employing terms such as key competency, leadership ability and job ability. The concept of competency in Korean corporations is equally associated with improvement of production . For example, competency-based human resource management means the use of competency modeling in general human resources management, such as employment and arrangements, education and training, nurturing and developing careers, management of outcomes, compensation system, etc. Competency modeling deduces competency categories, competency

definitions and typical actions through the use of the Key Performance Indicator (KPI), depending upon business strategies based on visions, missions and goals of businesses.

The Career Development Policy (CDP) system based on competency modeling is a system that aligns the individual's career goals with the demands of an organization (i.e., maximizing human resources) and of personnel (i.e., personal growth, motivation, competency development); to accomplish this, the CDP system systemizes and operates career structuring and channeling. Korean corporations are making efforts to import career development systems that are based on capacity in order to prepare for changes in operations such as dismantlement of the seniority system, corporation reform, labor force shortages, specialization of the labor market, and affinity.

In Korean corporations, HRD and HRM, which are based on capacity-building modeling, remain at the initial stage. Furthermore, application of HRD and HRM targeted to individual career development is almost nonexistent. This is because Korean corporations tend to promote the competency-based HRM, focusing on productivity or competitiveness improvement rather than promoting each individual's competency development. Given this situation, Korean corporations need to make diverse efforts to introduce the competency-based HRM, which brings mutual benefits for individuals and organizations, in order to solve the problems that chronically beset Korean society: problems such as labor-management conflicts, early retirement and unemployment.

3. Description of Institutional Arrangements

3.1 Political and Legal Framework

3.1.1. Legal regulatory frameworks and policies concerning RNFIL

In Korea, the legal system consistently regulates the contents of lifelong learning, which is the basis of non-formal and informal learning. According to Article 31 of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, the government is responsible for promoting lifelong learning and setting up legal provisions related to lifelong learning. Article 10 of the 'Education Act,' which is the basis of all educational policies in Korea, stipulates the promotion of lifelong learning for the people. The 'Lifelong Education Act' stipulates all provisions related to the promotion of lifelong learning.

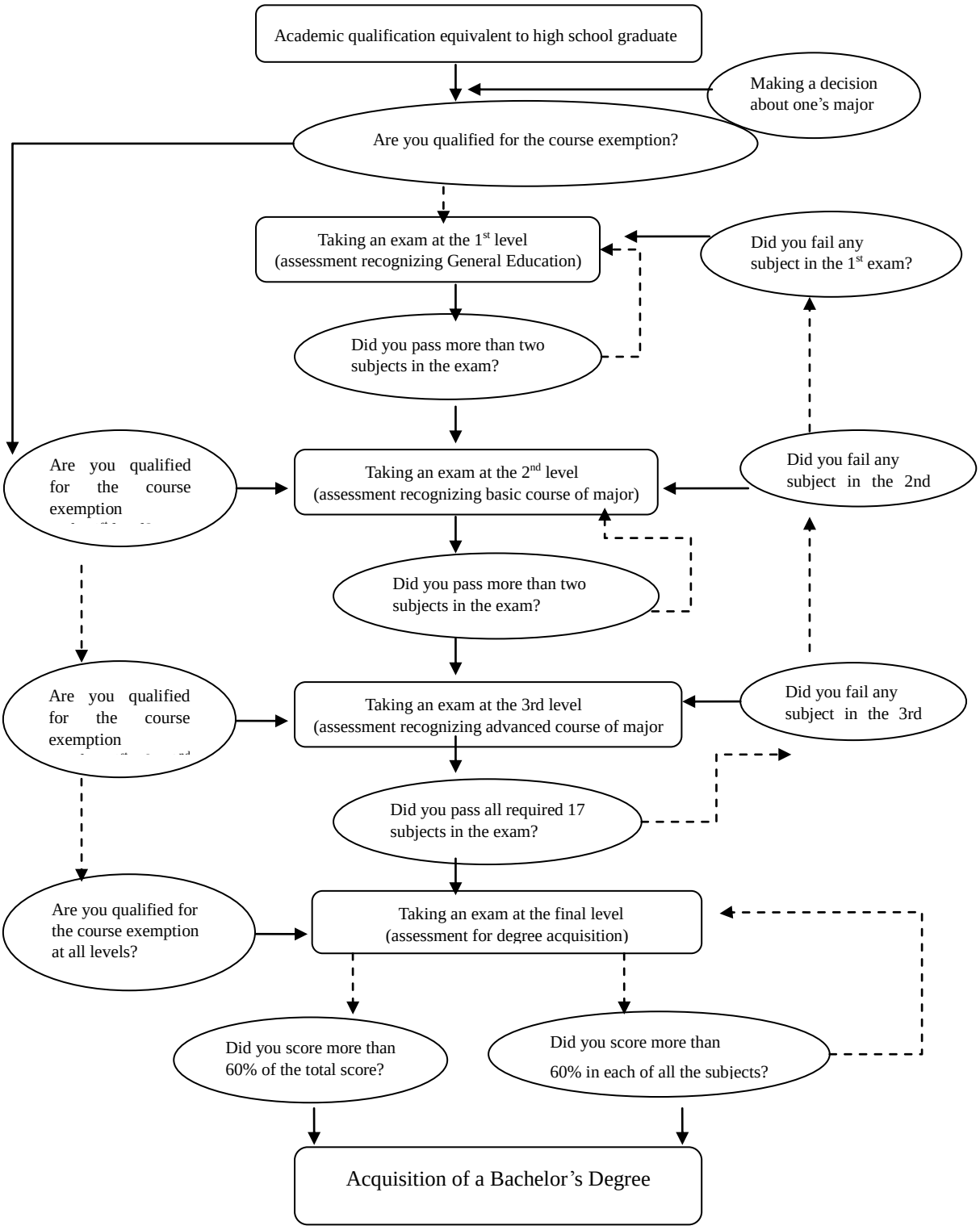
Regarding the laws directly related to recognition of non-formal and informal learning, the Act on the Acquisition of Academic Degrees through Self-Education provides a legal basis on which the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) has been implemented since 1990. And based on the Act on Recognition of Credits, etc., the Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS) has been implemented for those who have not taken formal learning but want to obtain academic credits and degrees by completing programs and course-work at diverse types of lifelong learning agencies. Currently, two public organizations are involved with the operation of the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) and the Academic Credit Bank System, respectively. Korean National Open University is commissioned to manage the Bachelor's Degree Examination Department, which is in charge of operating the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*); and the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) is commissioned to manage the Academic Credit Bank System.

3.1.2. Aims and Principles of the Systems

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Dok-Hack-Sa)

Article 1 of the Act on the Acquisition of Academic Degrees through Self-Education states the aim of the law as follows:

"The law aims to provide self-education participants with the opportunity to obtain Bachelor's degrees and thereby embody the principle of lifelong learning and contribute to enhancing individuals' competence as well as development of the nation.



[Figure 2] Process of Academic Degree Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*)

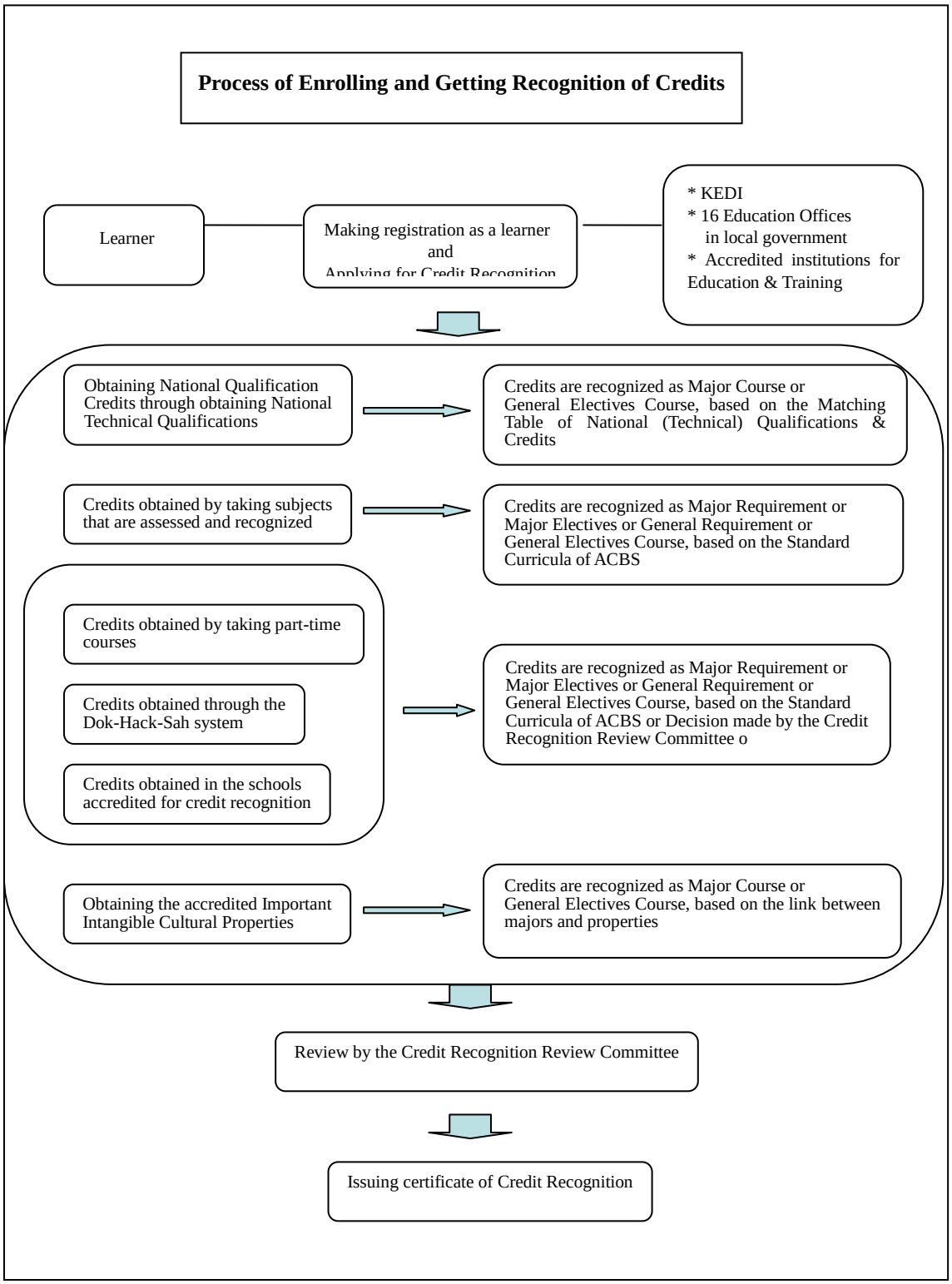
The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) is comprised of two courses: the exemption course and the examination course. We can say that the exemption course has the characteristic of non-formal learning in that participants in the course are required to complete the course instead of taking examinations. On the other hand, the examination course has a characteristic of informal learning because it has no teaching materials or curricula designated by the government; as long as learners pass the exams, they are entitled to a Bachelor's degree recognized by the government. The examination of the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) is administered by the Bachelor's Degree Examination Department in the Korean National Open University.

Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS)

In Article 1 of the Act on Recognition of Credits, etc., the aim of the Academic Credit Bank System is stated as follows.

"This law aims to provide those who have completed recognized curricula with the opportunity of degree acquisition through credit recognitions and thereby embody the principle of lifelong learning and contribute to national and individual development."

The Academic Credit Bank System is the system that documents and recognizes outcomes from various informal learning activities as a form of granting credits and confers degrees when certain numbers of credits are accumulated. Currently, there are six kinds of sources of credits recognized by the Academic Credit Bank System: 1) Credits from formal higher education institutions; 2) Credits from the recognized non-formal education and training institutions; 3) Credits obtained by completing the accredited Important Intangible Cultural Properties Curriculum; 4) Credits obtained by taking part-time courses (six or less credits per semester); 5) Credits obtained by acquiring national skill/qualifications (above the level of industrial technician); 6) Credits acquired through exemption course or passing exam course in the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*).

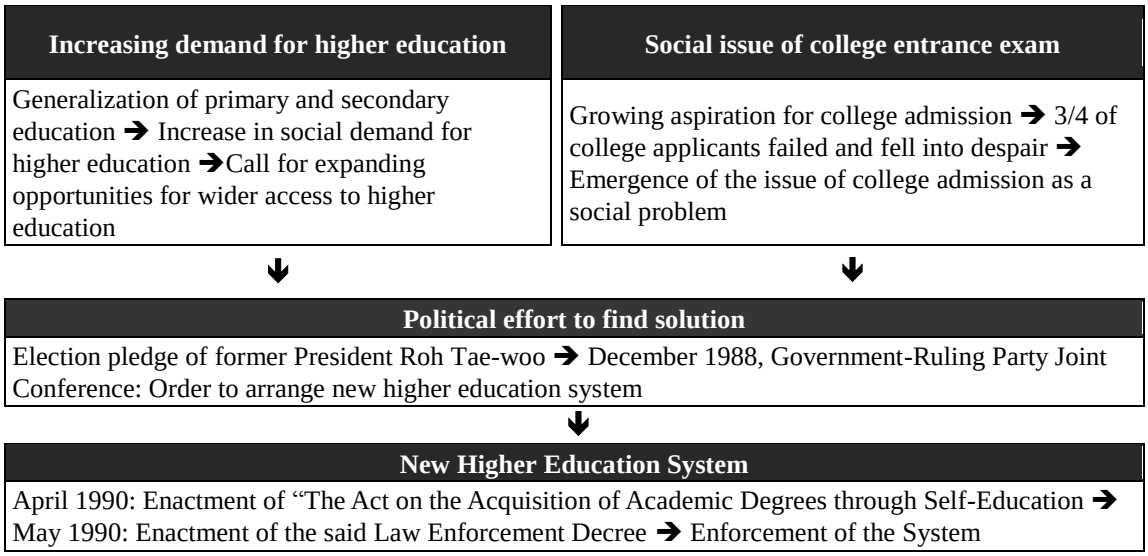


[Figure 3] Process of Enrolling and Getting Recognition of Credits in ACBS

3.1.3. Historical Background of the Systems

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Dok-Hack-Sa)

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) was introduced with political considerations. From the early 1970's, Korean people desired more access to higher education, as primary and secondary education became generalized. At the time, about 800,000 students applied to universities each year, but about seventy five percent of them failed to get college admission because of the limited supply of higher education, and many fell into despair. Especially students from poor families had great difficulty in pursuing higher learning, and their unfulfilled aspirations for higher education became a social problem.



[Figure 4] Backdrop of Introduction of the System of Academic Degree Acquisition through Self-Education

If the growing public demand for higher education had remained unmet, the unmet demand would have led to a distrust of politics. Thus the government was compelled to respond to this social demand. In this context, in order to enforce a new higher education system—which had been a presidential election pledge—former president Roh Tae-woo ordered a concrete and practical plan to be enforced at an early stage, through approval from the Presidential Educational Advisory Council, launched in 1989. Because the government could not allow an unlimited number of colleges and universities to be established, it introduced the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) in response to the social demand for higher education.

Academic Credit Bank System

The Academic Credit Bank System was introduced in 1998, eight years after the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) had been set up. The ACBS was created at a time when the social demand for lifelong education was increasing, compared to the time when the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) was implemented. In this social setting, the civil government's Presidential Commission on Education Reform recommended a new educational vision and system in the Education Reform Proposal presented to the President on May 31, 1995. The main idea of the Education Reform was the 'construction of an open educational society and a lifelong learning society' that would allow anyone to get education anywhere at anytime. The Commission recommended the introduction of the Academic Credit Bank System as a feasible plan to embody the idea and explained the reason for its introduction as follows:

With the advent of globalization and "informatization" the quantity of knowledge and information has increased enormously and the cycle of production and destruction of knowledge moves rapidly. In order to help each individual cope with the ever-changing environment; it is very important and urgent to guarantee opportunities for lifelong learning to everyone. Therefore, it is the request of the time that we establish an open education system that allows anyone to study what they want, anywhere and anytime.

As an institutional foundation for establishing a lifelong learning society, the Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS) was introduced to award degrees by assessing the curricula each individual has completed from all sources and recognizing them in the form of credits. With the ACBS, the Part-time Enrollment System was introduced to allow students to conduct their studies whenever they want (The President's Commission on Education Reform, 1995).

Compared to the introduction of the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*), the idea of the ACBS as a way to enhance lifelong learning was rather clearly presented by the Presidential Commission on Education Reform. In addition, the political concerns of the government and the political parties were harmonized with scholarly efforts to promote open learning systems, and led to creation of a system that recognizes various experiences as credits and connects them with degrees. The government promoted the ACBS system not only in order to expand lifelong learning opportunities but also to satisfy the social demands for higher education of the people. In this regard, the Academic Credit Bank System also offers individuals who could not enter college for various reasons[*] an alternative opportunity to acquire a degree.

3.1.4. Governance and the Role of the Government

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Dok-Hack-Sa)

[*] Some examples of the reasons include financial constraints or low level of academic preparation.

In relation to the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*), the Minister of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE) has all legal authority over the management of examinations and conferring of degrees. But in practice, that authority is delegated to the President of the Korean National Open University (KNOU). Also, the President of the KNOU, if necessary, can delegate part of the administration of examinations to the superintendents of provincial offices of education.

[Table 2] Distribution of Authority in the System of Academic Degree Acquisition through Self-Education

Governing Agency	Authority and Duty	Contents	Remarks
The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development	◦ Awarding of Degree	Conferring degrees on those who pass a comprehensive exam for degree acquisition	Act 1) Chapter 6
	◦ Delegation of Authority	Duty in execution of exam, academic affairs, management, etc.	Act Chapter 7
President of Korean Nat'l Open Univ.	◦ Exam Management	Management and execution of the examination for the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*)	Enforcement Decree 2) Chap 4
	◦ Duty and Delegation	Delegating partial business for execution of exam to the superintendents of provincial offices of education	Enforcement Decree Chap. 4

1) The Act on the Acquisition of Academic Degrees in Self-Education

2) The Enactment Decree of The Act on the Acquisition of Academic Degrees in Self-Education

Academic Credit Bank System

Legally, the authority over the operation of the ACBS belongs to the Minister of the MOE. Part of the authority can be delegated or commissioned to superintendents, directors of education and training institutions, or directors of related agencies appointed by the President. In practice, however, most of the affairs related to management and operation of the ACBS are delegated to the president of the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI). (Please refer to Table 4.)

Since 2005, a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing has been awarded through the Academic Credit Bank System. The regulation regarding the recognition of the Bachelor's Degrees of Nursing is explained in Table 3.

[Table 3] Legal and Public Regulation related to Recognition of Professional Area

Professional area for recognition	Regulation
Bachelor's Degree in Nursing	◦ In reference to the ACBS, the Korean Accreditation Board of Nursing, in advance, assesses the operational stability of all educational institutions that want to be assessed and recognized and then grants an application opportunity for assessment and recognition by KEDI

[Table 4] Distribution of Authority in the Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS)

Government Agency	Authority and Duty	Contents	Remarks
The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development	◦ Assessment and Recognition	Assessment and recognition of educational programs provided by individual educational institutions	Act[3] Chapter 3
		Issuing a certificate of accreditation to an educational institution that passes the due processes of assessment and recognition	Act Chapter 4
		Withdrawing accreditation if accredited educational institutions violate the law	Act Chapter 5
	◦Granting Credits	Granting corresponding credits to those who complete assessed and recognized educational programs	Act Chapter 6.1
		Granting credits to learning activities designated by law	Act Chapter 6.2
	◦ Awarding of Degree	Awarding degrees to those who fulfill the requirements designated by the law	Act Chapter 9.1
	◦Delegation of Authority	Delegating partial authority	Act Chapter 11
President of Universities/Colleges	◦Awarding of Degree	Awarding degrees to those who fulfill the requirements designated by the law	Law Chapter 9.2
President of KEDI	◦ Operation and Management of ACBS	All affairs of management and operation of the system	Enforcement decree[4] Chapter 4, etc.

3) The Act on Recognition of Credits, etc.

4) The Enforcement Decree of the Act on Recognition of Credits, etc.

3.1.5. Management and Operation

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Dok-Hack-Sa)

The Bachelor's Degree Examination Department in the Korean National Open University is in charge of operating the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*)**.** Accordingly, the president of the Korean National Open University (KNOU) oversees the constitution of its organization. The Bachelor's Degree Exam Department is comprised of two teams; the major roles of each team are as follows.

[Table 5] Organization of the Bachelor's Degree Examination Department in KNOU

Organization of Team	Roles
Management by Examination Team	* Planning and administering exams * Examining application requirements and exemption of subjects * Managing students' study records * Publishing 'Degree Acquisition' newsletter * Providing information on academic records and exemptions * Providing consultation and information on Self-Study for a Bachelor's Degree * Accounting * Organizing a ceremony for conferring of Bachelor's degrees
Management by Exam Team	* Making decisions about subjects and areas of assessment * Developing questions for exams * Evaluating and analyzing test results * Selecting and editing questions for each subject * Marking exams and inspecting successful candidates * Operating the Governing Body of the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*)

Academic Credit Bank System

The Center for the Academic Credit Bank System in KEDI oversees the operation of the ACBS. The president of the KEDI sets up the organization of the center. The Center for the Academic Credit Bank System is composed of five teams; the major functions of each team are as follows.

[Table 6] Organization of the Academic Credit Bank System in KEDI

Name of Dept.	Task
Planning Team (7)	*Planning new systems related to the ACBS *Promoting innovations in the system *Building networks between KEDI and other institutions *Producing various marketing materials *Operating the governing body of the ACBS
Assessment & Recognition Team (7)	*Administering assessment & recognition *Preparing reform plans for assessment & recognition *Approving changes in assessed and recognized matters *Managing regular and irregular inspections *Investigating demands of education & training institutions regarding assessment & recognition *Consulting with educational institutions *Developing and publicizing new standardized curriculum and teaching syllabus *Developing and publicizing standards for credit recognition of qualifications

Academic Affairs Team (12)	*Selecting degree candidates *Organizing a ceremony for conferring of Bachelor's degrees * Registering learners and application for credit recognition *Operating the sub-committees *Reviewing certificates of credit recognition and notifying them to learners *Managing public and private institutions related to the ACBS *Developing and managing database of education subjects * Issuing certificates
Consultation Team (7)	*Consulting with learners (visit, telephone, on-line, fax) *Publishing Webzine (Web magazine) *Consulting on system innovations with related institutions *Collecting information on how to improve support for learners *Consulting with learners regarding overseas educational institutions *Supporting on-line learning plan *Analyzing consultation statistics
Computerization Team (3)	*Planning and managing the ACBS homepage *Providing computer training *Maintaining and managing homepages for institutions *Producing statistical data on ACBS *Providing technical support for institutions

Note: The number in parentheses represents the number of staff on each team.

3.1.6. Assessment

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Dok-Hack-Sa)

Systematic assessment for the Bachelor's Degree Examination Department in the Korean National Open University has not been conducted yet. Instead, a general assessment is conducted through an audit by the Audit Department of the MOE and, if necessary, an additional audit is performed by the National Board of Audit and Inspection.

Academic Credit Bank System

The assessment of the operations of the ACBS in KEDI is conducted through internal self-assessment. The KEDI examines how the annual plan of the Center for the ACBS is accomplished in accordance with the detailed plan by teams, and publishes the results of the examination in form of an annual report. Additional assessment can be conducted by the audit department of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and, if necessary, by the National Board of Audit and Inspection.

3.1.7. Public Relations

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Dok-Hack-Sa)

The Bachelor's Degree Examination Department, which operates the System of Academic Degrees

Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*), performs the following activities to publicize the system.

- Distributing PR Materials: By displaying PR materials that explain the system in information centers located in public libraries across the nation, efforts are being made to expand public understanding and utilization of the Bachelor'ss' Degree Examination Program for Self-Education.
- Conducting Presentations and Surveys: PR efforts are being increased to expand the system, providing presentations and seminars for small and medium-sized corporations that employ individuals participating in higher education.
- Operating Customer Service Centers: Consultation about learning as well as the overall system for learners is being provided through customer service centers located in all regional campuses of the Korean National Open University.

Academic Credit Bank System

ACBS employs various methods to publicize information about the institution and operations of the ACBS. The diverse publicity activities of ACBS include operating the Customer Service Team, producing and distributing informational materials, supporting learners, administering Private-Appeal Administrative Affairs, and producing and disseminating webzines. The specific contents of these activities are as follows:

- Operation of Consultation Team: The team provides ACBS information and materials for learners and for education and training institutions. In addition to the production and dissemination of brochures about the system, the team also holds workshops for staff in charge of consultation material in sixteen regional Offices of Education across the nation. They consult variously, by phone, fax, visitation or on-line.
- Production and Distribution of Information Materials: Learners' informational materials are published, such as the "Academic Credit Bank System Guidebook" and the "Credit Acquisition Method of the ACBS," which provide up-to-date information about the ACBS and ways of credit recognition that may change yearly.
- Support for learners and Private-Appeal Administrative Affairs: Proposals related to the Academic Credit Bank System are administered through various channels (such as on-line consultation, on-line advertisement, and electronic public complaints of the MOE) and proposals are accepted for necessary system improvements through internal discussions in the KEDI.

- Production and Distribution of Webzines: From June 2005, in order to deliver accurate and fast information about continuous system changes in the Academic Credit Bank System, ACBS webzines have been produced and delivered through e-mails to all learners who are registered with the ACBS; the rate of present delivery of these webzines approaches 50,000 recipients* each month.

3.2. Role of the Government

3.2.1. Policy Decisions and System Management

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Dok-Hack-Sa)

The MOE, the Korean National Open University, the Bachelor's Degree Examination Department, and designated educational institutions are the organizations that are in charge of operating the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*). Table 7 highlights the role of each organization for the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*).

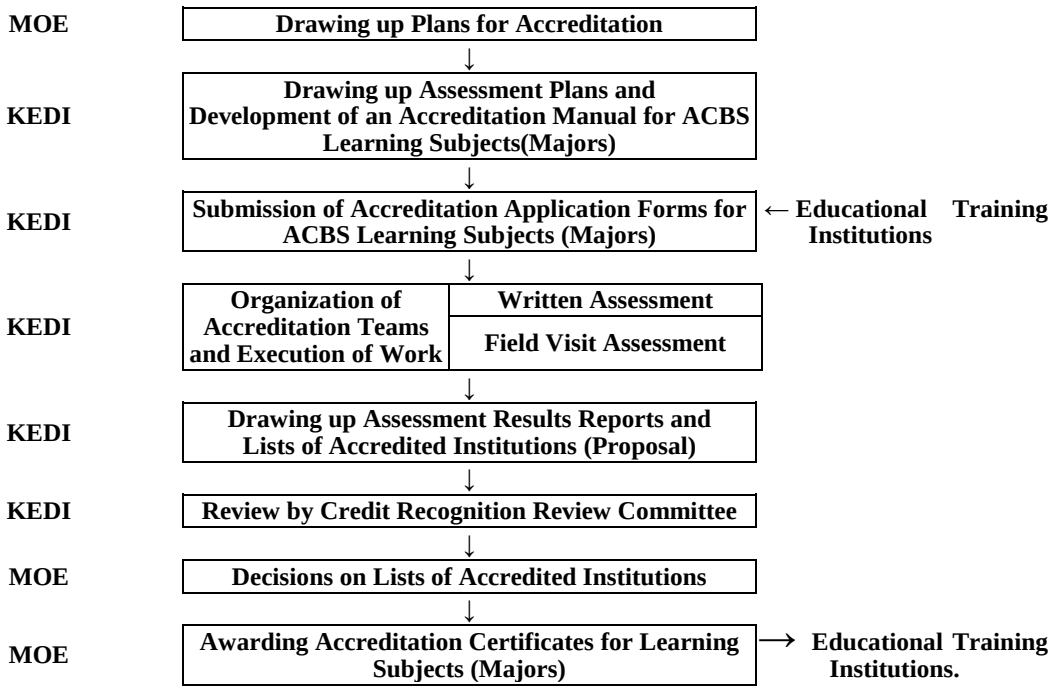
[Table 7] Governance of the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education

Institutions in Charge	Roles
MOE	Maintaining and Improving the System Awarding of Degrees
KNOU Bachelor's Degree Examination Dept.	All Affairs related to Managing and Operating the System
Designated Educational Institutions	Operation of Exam Exemption and Educational Programs

Academic Credit Bank System

Legal responsibility for the ACBS belongs to the MOE. However, daily operations of the system are delegated to the Center for Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS) in the Korean Educational Development Institute. The MOE basically determines policies for the ACBS and establishes fundamental plans to implement the policies. The KEDI conducts research on policies and systemic improvement of the ACBS and provides policy recommendations. The major role of the KEDI with regard to the ACBS includes implementation of policy based on fundamental plans as well.

* Detailed information on age and gender of the recipients is not available.



[**Figure 5] Procedure of Learning Subject Accreditation by the ACBS**

As seen in Figure 5, the MOE draws up accreditation plans including organizations in need of accreditation and number of learning subjects (or majors). After assessment is completed, the MOE determines the list of accredited institutions proposed by the KEDI and it delivers accreditation certificates of learning subjects (majors). On the other hand, the KEDI, in accordance with the accreditation plan of the MOE, draws up an assessment plan and develops the "Assessment Manual for ACBS Learning Subjects (Majors)" including accreditation standards and holds meetings to explain the assessment manual to Educational Training Institutions. After the Educational Training Institutions prepare and turn in accreditation applications, the KEDI must organize Accreditation Teams with organizational specialists and specialists for assigned learning subjects (majors) and perform written assessments and field visit assessments with reference to the "Assessment Manual of ACBS Learning Subjects (Majors)." The KEDI draws up the report of assessment results according to the outcomes of assessment and the Credit Recognition Review Committee reviews the list of accredited institutions drawn up, with reference to the report.

Higher Education System

The main body of management of formal higher education is the MOE and higher education

institutions (universities and colleges). Table 8 summarizes the roles of the organizations in charge of regular higher education.

[Table 8] The Role of Government in Higher Education

Institutions in Charge	Roles
MOE	Implementing and Improving Policies on Higher Education Institutions Management and Support of Higher Education Institutions Permission of HE Institutions, Academic Departments; and Quotas
Higher Education Inst. (Colleges)	Operation of Curricula and Credit Recognition Awarding of Degrees

3.2.2. Model of Recognition of Learning in Korea

Korea comes under the model of predominance of public authority. In the case of the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*), the Bachelor's Degree Examination Department in the Korean National Open University, a public institution, operates and manaes the system. Also in the case of the ACBS, the Center for the Academic Credit Bank System in the Korea Education Development Institute, also a public institution, exercises control over all related affairs.

3.2.3. Current Policy Practices in Each Ministry

Several ministries including the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of National Defense, with responsibilities for the Academic Credit Bank System, are involved in the policies and practices of the system of non-formal and informal learning. Current policy practices in each ministry are summarized below.

Policies through Cooperation with the Ministry of Labor

The Ministry of Labor presently recognizes certain credits from various government-recognized qualifications. The Ministry of Labor expects that by recognizing learners' efforts in acquiring qualifications as academic credit, the Academic Credit Bank System will not disregard their actual lives. The Ministry of Labor also expects that the ACBS will take root as a system that is incorporated into the learning of the participants and that ultimately contributes to establishing a qualifications- and competency- centered society. However, there are growing concerns that excessive credit recognition will be misused simply as a way to acquire credits more easily and quickly, rather than to build up competency.

Policies through Cooperation with the Ministry of National Defense

The Ministry of National Defense recognizes credits obtained through various education and training in the army related to military science. They are also planning a policy that will recognize and grant credits for education and training of soldiers during their service period.

3.3. Resources

3.3.1. Financial Support for Recognition

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Dok-Hack-Sa)

The National Budget supports the required budget for the System's operations, as detailed below:

[Table 9] Budget of the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education

Unit :

Budget Items	Year 2004		Year 2005	
Daily Use Wages	KRW34,015,000	€28,345	KRW 28,359,000	€23,632
General Consumption Expense	KRW 463,617,000	€386,347	KRW 412,900,000	€344,083
Public Utility Expense & Tax	KRW 23,330,000	€19,441	KRW 10,036,000	€8,363
Overtime Food Expense	KRW 14,540,000	€12,116	KRW 10,540,000	€8,783
Management Bonus	KRW 395,549,000	€329,624	KRW 456,780,000	€380,650
Rental Expense	KRW 107,330,000	€89,441	KRW 123,200,000	€102,666
In-country Travel Expense	KRW 33,926,000	€28,271	KRW 36,733,000	€30,610
General Business Expense	KRW 56,693,000	€47,244	KRW 51,392,000	€42,826
Property Acquisition Fee	KRW 5,000,000	€4,166	KRW 5,000,000	€4,166
Benefits	KRW 5,600,000	€4,666	KRW 5,600,000	€4,666
Business Promoting Expense	KRW 29,300,000	€24,416	KRW 16,680,000	€13,900
Total	KRW 1,168,900,000	€974,083	KRW 1,157,220,000	€964,350

Note: KRW 1,200 = 1 Euros.

Academic Credit Bank System

Fees from learners and educational training institutions cover the budget required to operate this System.

[Table 10] Budget of the Academic Credit Bank System

Unit : Thousand Won

Budget Items	Year 2005	
Planning Team	KRW 697,962,000	€581,635
Research Team	KRW 195,000,000	€162,500
Accreditation Team	KRW 593,000,000	€494,166
Academic Affairs Team	KRW 674,000,000	€561,666
Payroll	KRW 1,100,000,000	€916,666
Office Security Deposit	KRW 455,400,000	€379,500
Total	KRW 3,715,362,000	€3,096,135

Note: KRW 1,200 = 1 Euros.

3.3.2. Accreditation Agency

Table 11 presents the accreditation agencies for the Bachelor's Degree Acquisition System by Self-Education and the ACBS.

[Table 11] Accreditation Agency for the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education and the ACBS

Items	Dok-Hack-Sa	ACBS
Accreditation Agency	Bachelor's Degree Examination Department in KNOU	Center for Academic Credit Bank System in KEDI
Assessors	• Managers and Management Staff of the Exam (1,149 persons) • Examiners, Reviewers, Markers of the Exam (304 persons)	• Written Assessment Committee Member • Field Assessment Committee Member • Deliberation Committee Member
Location of the Assessment Agency	Seoul Metropolitan City	Seoul Metropolitan City
Training Programs for Assessment	-	Presentation for Assessment Committee Members

Source: Internal data of the Bachelor's Degree Examination Department

4. Description of Technical Arrangements

4.1. Qualifications, Qualification Systems, Qualifications Framework

4.1.1. Links between Qualifications System and Recognition Systems

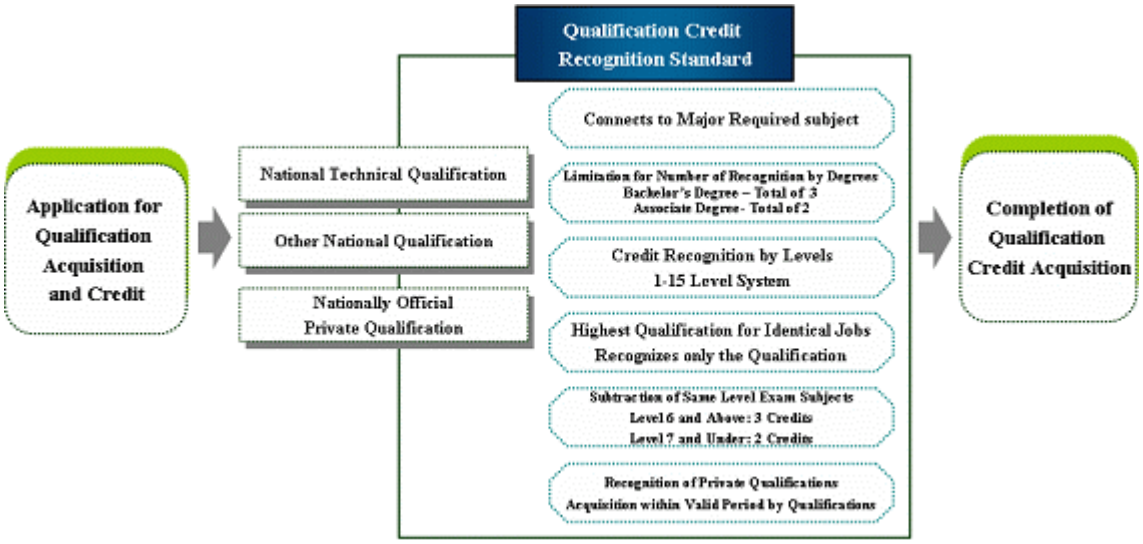
Links between Non-formal and Informal Learning and Qualification systems

Currently, the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is connected rather loosely with qualification systems. The connection between non-formal and informal learning and qualification systems can be categorized into two parts: the academic qualification system and the vocational qualification system.

The qualification systems in Korea are enforced as they are classified into National Qualifications and Private Qualifications.

[Figure 6] Qualification System in Korea

At present the ACBS is the representative system that connects outcomes of non-formal and informal learning with qualifications. The kinds of qualifications that are recognized as credits in the ACBS include national technical qualifications and national technical qualifications in reference to domestic law. On top of that, other national qualifications and nationally recognized private qualifications are those that can be recognized as credits equivalent to college credits. Currently there are a total of 563 qualifications that can be recognized in the form of credits: 378 national technical qualifications, 139 national qualifications, and 46 nationally recognized private qualifications.



[Figure 7] Procedure for Qualification Acquisition and Credit in Korea

When an individual acquires qualifications that can be recognized as credits, the level of credit recognition by qualification is determined according to the National Technical Qualification Credit Recognition Computation Standard. Depending on the connection between qualifications and standard curricula in majors, the credits that are converted from the qualification are classified into major credits or general education credits. The credits are recognized in accordance with the Credit Recognition Standard, such as setting limitations on the total number of qualification credits recognized per individuals, off-setting duplicated same-level exams, and recognizing only the highest qualification in same occupations. The connections between non-formal and informal learning and the qualification systems can be grouped into two: those connected with the Academic Qualification System and those connected with the Vocational Qualification System.

Connection with the Academic Qualification System

Credits of non-formal and informal learning can be: acquired from different colleges on their own merit; recognized as credits through the Academic Credit Bank System and used for entrance into the higher education system; or used as additional credits at the time of entering the higher education system. Credits obtained from non-formal and informal learning can be utilized in the following three ways.

First, many universities and colleges are currently recognizing experience-based learning such as internships as credits. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development actively encourage higher education institutions to recognize credits obtained from experience-based learning. For example, in selecting participants in the "Project to Promote Industrial Two-year College Cooperation' sponsored by the Ministry of Education Human Resources Development, special weight is placed upon indices

showing that a college recognizes internship for academic credit. Consequently, two-year colleges selected as beneficiaries of the project came to introduce a policy that recognizes up to 8 credits for participation in internships.

Second, through the ACBS, non-formal and informal learning is converted into academic credits under certain conditions, and learners can accumulates these credits to acquire an associate or a Bachelor's degree. Learners also use these credits to get admission to regular universities or even graduate schools after receiving degrees (associate and Bachelor's degree) through the ACBS.

Third, when individuals apply for colleges and universities, their qualifications or field experiences which have been obtained through non-formal and informal learning and are recognized by the ACBS, may give the applicants an edge as a form of additional credits. In such a situation that demand for college entrance is larger than supply, these additional credits can be of considerable benefit to learners.

In Korea, non-formal and informal learning connects more closely with academic qualifications than with vocational qualifications because academic qualifications are socially recognized as more important.

Connection with the Vocational Qualification System

The link between recognized non-formal and informal learning and the vocational qualification system is observed in two aspects: exemption of part of the subjects in the Vocational Qualifications Examination and gaining the qualification to apply for the Vocational Qualifications Examination.

First, when an individual acquires a vocational qualification through non-formal and informal learning, the acquired vocational qualification itself gives the individual complete or partial exemption from the subjects in the examination leading to other vocational qualifications. For National Qualifications, relevant laws stipulate detailed standards for the exemption. For Private Qualifications, standards of the exemption are presented by the Qualifications Management Operating Provisions, which are prepared by the Staff of Private Qualifications Management. However, it should be noted that no exemption will be made if the applicant does not have the proper qualifications, regardless of how much non-formal and informal learning s/he has undergone.

Second, as for prerequisites for application for exams for vocational qualifications, the limiting of such prerequisites is one of many ways to enforce non-direct connections between qualifications. And the way of placing limitations on these prerequisites determines the way of recognizing both formal learning and non-formal and informal learning. In other words, in the case of formal learning, prerequisites to apply for exams place more emphasis on academic background, while in the case of non-formal and informal learning, prerequisites place more emphasis on various life experiences such as employment history in the industrial field.

The vocational qualification system in Korea can be categorized into National Technical Qualifications, National Qualifications, and Private Qualifications (including National Official Private

Qualifications). Looking at the prerequisites necessary to apply for the National Technical Qualification Exam, the oldest and the most systematic qualifications amongst the three, we can see that both academic background and various non-formal and informal learning outcomes such as experience and skill qualification acquisition are recognized. We can see that informal learning outcomes are being recognized as prerequisites to apply for vocational qualifications acquisition.

[Table 12] Prerequisites to Apply for National Technical Qualification Exam

Type	Technical Qualifications Holders	Academic Background	Experiences
Technician	• Engineer w/ 4 years of experience • Industrial engineer w/ 6 years of experience • Technician w/ 8 years of experience • Overseas qualifications equivalent to domestic standards	• College graduates w/ 7 years of experience • 2-year college graduates w/ 9 years of experience • Persons who have completed the technical training course corresponding to technician level of educational training institutions approved by the Ministry of Labor and w/ 7 years of experience • Persons who have completed the technical training course corresponding to an industrial engineer level from educational training institutions approved by the Ministry of Labor and w/ 9 years of experience	11 years of experience
Head Mechanic	• Industrial engineer w/ 6 years of experience • Technician w/ 8 years of experience • Overseas corresponding qualification of the same class and type	• Industrial engineers or persons who have completed (candidates) head technician course in technical college after acquiring mechanic qualifications	11 years of experience
Engineer	• Industrial engineer w/ 1 year of experience • Technician w/ 3 years of experience • Engineer in different field • Overseas corresponding qualification of the same class and type	• College graduate (college graduate candidates and persons who have finished 3 years) • The rest are omitted.	4 years of experience
Industry Engineer	◦ Mechanic w/ a year experience ◦ Industrial engineer in different field ◦ Overseas qualifications corresponding to equal level and type in Korea	• 2-year College graduate (2-year college graduate candidate and a person who has finished 1 year) • The rest are omitted.	2 years of experience
Mechanic	◦ No restrictions	• No restrictions	No restrictions

4.1.2. Types of Qualification Systems

In Korea**,** the types of qualification are categorized into academic qualifications and vocational qualifications; academic qualifications weigh much more heavily than do vocational qualifications.

As we already presented earlier in the section on ‘types of qualification systems connected with non-

formal and informal learning,' the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is connected to both academic and vocational qualifications, though rather loosely. In addition, given that vocational and academic qualifications themselves are connected with more focus on academic factors, it is hard to say that the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is more closely connected with any one of the four qualifications including certificates, diplomas, degrees, or licenses. Yet, we can say that the lower-graded Competency Recognized Vocational Qualifications among vocational qualifications in the form of license is more closely connected with non-formal and informal learning.

4.1.3. Differences in Connections

It is difficult to differentiate between professional recognition and academic recognition primarily because the recognition of non-formal and informal learning does not directly connect to the acquisition of vocational qualifications and academic qualifications; rather, the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is connected with the exemption from subjects in examinations, with the recognition of prerequisites to apply for exams, or going through a third system.

The recognition of non-formal and informal learning linked to qualifications endows working life and the educational system with legitimacy. In the case of working life, however, more careful explanation is necessary.

First, when an individual attains a higher-grade qualification that is hard to acquire through the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, he or she has a better chance of gaining a job than do other jobseekers. But when an individual acquires only a lower-grade qualification that is not socially recognized, the acquisition of the lower-grade qualification does not give him or her an edge in the job market.

Second, in working life, the connection between qualifications and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning can bring economic benefits, such as increased salaries and incentives. When individuals acquire certain qualifications, there is a better chance for them to receive higher salaries at the time of employment because they also receive qualification-specific incentives. Qualification-specific incentives, however, vary widely according to different companies and qualifications. Frequently the incentives are nominal, normally twenty to thirty thousand won, but when individuals attain or possess many preferable qualifications, they can earn additional incentives upwards of two to three hundred thousand won in general private corporations.

4.1.4. Limitations in Connections

Barriers to the close connection of non-formal and informal learning with qualifications are undeveloped recognition systems and a social atmosphere that places too much weight and value upon school and academic backgrounds. There are ongoing discussions and research on revamping the national

qualification system. Although the underdeveloped national qualification system is one of the factors that impede close links between non-formal and informal learning and qualification systems, it is difficult to say that the demand for recognition of non-formal and informal learning can directly stimulate the construction of a qualification system. Rather, the call to overhaul the national qualification system is spurred by other factors including relatively low social recognition of vocational qualifications compared to academic qualifications, and the reality that current vocational qualifications do not reflect skills and knowledge demanded by industries. The recognition of non-formal and informal learning is in the process of development in conjunction with the development of the national qualification framework. However, the linkage between the two systems is still weak.

4.1.5. Limitations in Connections between Recognition and the Field of Higher Education

The recognition of non-formal and informal learning is not perceived as a significant threat to colleges or employers. Higher education institutions in Korea are not yet used to recognizing various academic credits obtained from other institutions, or non-formal and informal learning, or other examinations. Rather, colleges and universities persist in following the traditional way of accepting regular students and granting diplomas from their own institutions. In general, many higher education institutions are unaware of non-formal and informal learning itself, and thus there is little resistance to recognizing it,

However, it is expected that regional colleges and universities may perceive as a threat the increase in learners who use the ACBS, which recognizes non-formal and informal learning, and be dissatisfied with the expansion of non-formal and informal learners. Primarily due to the decrease in traditional learners, it is getting hard for less-competitive regional colleges and universities to find customers and there is a tendency of dissatisfaction associated with reduction of financial support for regional colleges and universities. But the dissatisfaction of local colleges and universities is basically related to the decrease of learners, so it is hard to say that it is focused on the connection between non-formal and informal learning and the qualification system.

4.2. Accumulation and Transfer of Academic Credit

4.2.1. Operating Principle of the Academic Credit System

The Academic Credit Bank System is an institutionalized system that recognizes non-formal and informal learning as regular credits. The ACBS system carries same profile as regular college credits through recognizing non-formal and informal learning which corresponds to higher education standards. Moving away from the idea that colleges are the only places that grant higher education credits, the ACBS was begun with the purpose of promoting an open-learning and lifelong learning society by

recognizing equally the learning outcomes from colleges and from assessed, recognized educational institutions. This system recognizes various learning outcomes with equal quality as learning from regular higher education institutions, and the system has various regulations and principles that enable the recognition of various learning outcomes.

4.2.2. Major Operating Agency of the Academic Credit Bank System

By the related law, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources manages non-formal and informal learning credits through the ACBS, but practically, the Korean Educational Development Institute is in charge of business operations.

As previously mentioned, we need to pay attention to the term "formal" as limited to schools in Korea when considering the differences between non-formal and informal learning. Individual colleges and universities manage regular learning credits whereas a designated agency (KEDI) manages non-formal and informal learning credits.

4.2.3. Credit Calculation Method

Credits are calculated basically according to learning time. Usually, one credit is equal to 15 hours of learning. But in case of actual training, twice the amount of time is required to acquire the same amount of credits.

[Table 13] Conversion of National Qualifications Grade into Credit Recognition

Preexisting Grade	New Grade	Recognized Credits	Comparison of Academic Background Standards
A	1	45	• Requirement of field experience after obtaining master's degree in graduate school
A-	2	42	
B	3	39	• Graduate school master's degree recipient (including candidates)
B-	4	34	• Requirement of field experience after graduating 4-year college
C	5	30	• 4-year college graduate (including candidates)
C-	6	27	• Field experience after graduating 2-year college
D	7	24	• 2-year college graduate (including candidates)
D-	8	18	
E	9	12	• A person who has completed 1 year in a 2-year College
	10	9	
E-	11	8	
E2-	12	6	
E3-	13	4	
	14	3	
	15	2	

If an individual acquires a qualification as the outcome of non-formal and informal learning, he or she can convert the acquired qualification into credits. At that time, the grade of the qualification becomes the standard of conversion. In other words, in cases where people acquire higher-standard qualifications, they acquire many more credits; in cases where they acquire lower-standard qualifications, they acquire fewer

credits. However, in the case that the qualifications do not meet the minimum higher-education standard, no credit can be recognized even though qualifications are acquired. For example, in the case of the National Technical Qualifications, 563 qualifications are recognized for credits, as of October 2006.

4.2.4. Benefits of the Academic Credit System

Academic credits are the single most accepted currency in the educational market and therefore symbolize the relative academic wealth of an individual. Participants who acquire and accumulate credits are able to acquire degrees, and degrees help individuals succeed in various areas in society such as employment, and in further higher education.

Participating institutions that grant credits will benefit from increased recruitment and subsequent financial gains. The participating institutions must grant credits to have easy learner recruitment because learners want their learning outcomes recognized. Granting credits can therefore become an important and powerful method for institutions to recruit learners.

4.2.5. Connection with the Vocational Qualifications System

The way to get recognition of non-formal and informal learning within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) System was presented previously (see Section 4.1.1). In sum, the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is connected with qualifications acquisition through the VET system, with partial subject exemption at the time of qualification acquisition, and with qualification prerequisites to apply for the exam.

4.2.6. Connection with the Higher Education System

Connection between non-formal and informal learning and the higher education system can be presented in two parts: 1) the increase of recognized learners in non-formal and informal learning (learners in the ACBS) and 2) the ACBS learners transferring into the regular higher education system and entering graduate schools.

Increase of Learners with Recognized Non-formal and Informal Learning

Learners with non-formal and informal learning recognized by the ACBS are increasing. Looking at the yearly learners' registration in the ACBS, we can see a sharp increase in the numbers of learners: 11,489 students registered in 1999 compared with 42,105 students registered in 2005.

[Table 14] Changes in Numbers of Academic Credit Bank System Learners (1999-2005)

Unit : Person

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Numbers of Registrants in the ACBS	11,489	11,732	19,315	21,446	24,924	27,971	42,105

Transfer of Learners in ACBS into the Regular Higher Education System

Not only can ACBS learners acquire degrees through the ACBS, but they can also use the acquired credits to obtain degrees as regular students in regular higher-education institutions. They can transfer into regular colleges and enter into graduate schools. The status of the ACBS learners transferring into regular colleges is as follows:

[Table 15] Academic Credit Bank System Learners Entering Regular Colleges

Year of Class	Students in ACBS Entering Graduate School	Entering 2-year College	Regular Admission	Students Getting Bachelor's Degree Admission	Others	Total
2001	111	-	236	17	-	364
2002	242	-	517	114	-	873
2003	582	-	1,177	306	-	2,065
2004	785	-	1,079	773	-	2.637
2005	1,097	63	634	1,781	421	3,996

4.3. Method and Procedure of Assessment

4.3.1. **Assessment System**

Assessment for non-formal and informal learning is conducted through the ACBS. The organization in charge of managing the ACBS (i.e., KEDI) makes a public announcement regarding assessment criteria and assessment methods for institutions providing non-formal learning; the institutions then prepare an application according to the guidelines provided with the announcement. Assessment is conducted once or twice per year and an assessment committee usually is comprised of professors from regular colleges and universities. The assessment period normally is two to three months from application submission to assessment completion.

Decision about the recognition for non-formal learning depends on to what extent the quality of the non-formal learning is equivalent to the standard of colleges and universities. Among the many educational activities being done in non-formal educational institutions, the committee determines which educational program should be recognized for college credits. Given this, the assessment of the educational institution for non-formal learning is an assessment for academic programs rather than institutional assessment. The committee assess the educational activities on the basis of purpose of

program, quality of classes, quality of instructors, educational conditions including experimentation facilities, curriculum, operating conditions, and requirements asked of participants. If the assessment committee is satisfied with the quality of education and determines that the education corresponds to higher-education standards, a certificate of accreditation is issued to the institution in the name of MOE.

When the educational institutions providing non-formal learning service receive this certificate of accreditation, they then need to send documents* showing students' learning outcomes in the accredited academic program to KEDI, the organization responsible for operating the ACBS; KEDI manages students' credits on the basis of the documents and applications for credit recognition submitted by the educational institutions.

When participants in non-formal learning complete educational programs provided by the institution accredited by ACBS, they can apply to KEDI for credit recognition. Furthermore, if participants successfully accumulate credits enough to meet the requirement for degree acquisition, they can obtain a degree. In the case that an applicant acquires qualifications recognized by the ACBS, credits corresponding to the qualifications can be recognized regardless of the track of acquiring qualifications. In order to have these credits recognized, learners must prepare proof of reference, pay their fees within a designated period, and apply for the credit recognition on the provided form.

4.3.2. Assessment Method and Type of Assessment Procedure

The ACBS assesses non-formal and informal learning in two ways: First of all, it assesses and recognizes learning outcomes from institutions providing non-formal learning; Second, the ACBS assesses and recognizes qualifications or test results obtained by individuals. The ACBS does not recognize credits by assessing field competency or by using portfolios. In the early days of the ACBS, a thesis or preparation of portfolio was required as a prerequisite to conferring a degree. However, because such demands strain time and expenses for administration, the thesis and portfolio were dropped from the requirements for degree acquisition .

As previously mentioned, how to recognize the learning outcomes from non-formal educational institutions is conducted by assessment of academic programs of the institutions, focusing on educational conditions, curriculum, quality of instructors, etc. In addition, how to recognize qualifications and test results is conducted by setting standards for recognizing qualifications and test results and then converting the qualifications and test results into credits.

Because there are some differences in the target groups for recognizing learning outcomes from educational institutions and qualifications and test results, different methods are applied to the recognition of each domain.

* A transcript is one of the main materials showing a student's learning outcome.

4.3.3. Assessment Standard, Main Actor of Recognition and Management of Recognition

The law stipulates the levels of schools that are representative institutions of formal learning. The official classifications of schools are primary, secondary, and higher education levels. By law, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development has the authority to make decisions about academic standards—standards of curricula—for each level of school. On the other hand, the Ministry of Labor has authority to make decisions about the testing criteria for some vocational qualifications. Also, several ministries make decisions about testing criteria for some vocational qualifications in cases where the qualifications are related to the ministries. In addition, private organizations set up testing criteria for private qualifications.

Regarding qualifications, there is great variance in the extent to which a qualification has social recognition and recognition in the labor market. That is, even though two different qualifications are placed in the same grade by the public or private actor of qualification recognition, each of the two qualifications has a different level of social recognition or recognition in the labor market. For instance, among various vocational qualifications, a license gets more social recognition than do competency-recognized vocational qualifications. The acquisition of a license is an essential condition for serving in specific professional areas because relevant laws stipulate where and how the license is utilized, which may explain why the license is socially recognized more than other vocational qualifications.

4.3.4. Quality Assurance of Recognition

In order to assure the quality of non-formal learning, the ACBS is strengthening the assessment standards for non-formal learning institutions. The ACBS also provides training for the staff of non-formal learning institutions, and courtesy management to confirm compliance with standards for teaching time, and execution of teaching. KEDI and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development are responsible for ensuring the quality of management in the ACBS.

5. Stakeholders' Behavior and Benefits of RNFIL

5.1 Characteristics of Stakeholders

Because non-formal and informal learning are different with regard to learning provision, recognition, administration and participation, different analytical methods should be applied to each area of non-formal and informal learning. In the case of non-formal learning, the provider of learning should be the subject of the analysis of the stakeholders, in that the provider of learning can be easily identified through the concrete educational programs for non-formal learning. On the other hand, opportunities for informal learning are usually created by individuals and thus the provider of informal learning does not exist. Accordingly, the analysis of informal learning should be based on learning outcomes (OECD, 2006)

5.1.1 Stakeholders of Non-formal Learning.

Sometimes there can be subtle tension among providers, learners, and regulators and operators of the system. Providers (i.e., institutions for education and training), for example, must enhance the participation and satisfaction of learners, and at the same time they should meet the demand for quality requested by regulators and operators of the system (i.e., the government and KEDI) as well. What should be noted is that the demand for enhancing the participation and satisfaction of the learner and the demand for quality assurance can sometimes conflict. If providers manage an institute strictly to maintain the quality of learning, many learners tend to avoid such strict management.

Learners sometimes make contradictory demands. They want to avoid strict quality control while they expect a quality learning experience. Sensitive issues may arise if the academic management of an institute is poor due to participants avoiding strict quality control together with providers' poor quality of teaching. In this case, the managing body taking responsibility for system management must actively seek solutions. However, solutions to the problem are usually prepared afterwards, and in many cases the problem remains and requires a new solution. In the case of the ACBS, for example, it is important to develop the partnership between the government and the KEDI because they need to work together in relation to quality control of the system.

There is relatively little chance for tension in the case of learning recognition by the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*), because learners acquire degrees mainly by sitting for exams. Also, there is little chance that tension is generated among providers, participants, and the system manager in the Company-Based Learning Credit System. Contents of learning are organized based on job-related learning, and participation in learning is mainly motivated by the needs of workers on the job. In addition, there is little demand for academic management because the learning outcome is easily assessed in the process of performing duties on the job.

[Table 16] Stakeholders in Non-formal Learning

Classification	Institutions of Education and Training	Main Body of Learning Recognition and Degree Award	Contents of Learning Recognition	Main Body of Management and Operation of the System	Major Participants in Learning
The Academic Credit Bank System Course of Education and Training	Accredited Institutions of Education and Training	The Government (The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development	Academic Credits	The Center of ACBS in Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)	2-year College Graduate/College Drop-out
	Lifelong Education Centers in Colleges				No Specific Major Participants
	Computer Institutes in Colleges				No Specific Major Participants
	Advanced Programs in 2-year Colleges				2-year College Graduates
	Private Institutes				High School & College Graduates
	Technical Training Institutions				Hourly Workers/ Unemployed
	Government-Affiliated Institutions				Public Officials/Local Residents/Military Personnel
	Press-Affiliated Institutions				No Specific Major Participants
	High Technical Schools				High School Graduates
	Special Schools for the Disadvantaged				Vision Impaired
	Lifelong Education Centers				No Specific Major Participants
	Distant Education Institutions				General Workers
The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) (Course of Exemption)	Korea National Open University	The Government (The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development)	Academic Credit	Academic Degrees Exam Department in KNOU	No Specific Major Participants
Education and Training in Corporations (The Company-Based Learning Credit System)	Corporations	Corporations	Company-based Leaning Credits	Corporations	General Employees

Because of its unique characteristics, only learners have actual interests at stake in the case of informal learning. Learners' interests at stake, if any, can be observed in the relationship between

participation and recognition. However, considering that learners' participation is voluntary and that methods for recognizing informal learning are objective ones, it is difficult to say that learners' interests are intense. Unlike non-formal learning, management of informal learning involves only managing accumulated learning outcomes, so conflicting interests between the main body of learning recognition and the main body of learning management rarely appear.

Table 16 highlights the stakeholders of non-formal learning. As presented earlier, two systems represent the recognition of non-formal learning in Korea at the national level: the ACBS and the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (exemption program). And at the corporation level, the Company-Based Learning Credit System represents the recognition of non-formal learning in Korea. There is more than one learning provider in the ACBS; major providers of non-formal learning include lifelong learning centers affiliated to colleges and universities, private educational institutes, government-affiliated institutions, press-affiliated institutions, high technical schools, schools for the disadvantaged, lifelong education centers, and distant education institutions. Among these major providers of non-formal learning, lifelong education centers in colleges and universities are worthy of note as leading providers of non-formal learning, while colleges and universities are representative of formal learning. A distant education institution differs from a cyber university, which is one of the formal learning providers, in that credits acquired in cyber universities are recognized as regular credits whereas credits acquired in distant education institutions can be recognized as regular credits only when they are recognized through the ACBS.

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) grants degrees legally equivalent to those conferred by colleges to learners through self-study who pass nationally recognized examinations. The system has dual characteristics. Learners can acquire a Bachelor's degree through examinations. Also, participants in the Self-Study as an Alternative to a Bachelor's Degree can take the exemption course. Examinations leading to degree acquisitions consist of multi-leveled examinations and the final-level examination is usually difficult to pass. If a participant passes all the examinations except the final-level one, s/he cannot get a degree. But all the examinations that the participant passes can be recognized as academic credits through the ACBS.

As presented earlier, the Company-Based Learning Credit System is the representative system of recognizing non-formal learning at the corporation level. The recognition of non-formal learning through this system is recognized only by corporations, not by the government. In order to obtain national recognition of non-formal learning, learning programs provided by this system need to be assessed and recognized by the ACBS. Samsung Heavy Industries and Hyundai Heavy Industries are good examples of corporations who have followed this method. When corporations provide educational training programs that correspond to the standards of accreditation by the ACBS, they offer employees the opportunity to acquire degrees through recognized non-formal learning.

5.1.2 Stakeholders in Informal Learning

As mentioned earlier, informal learning can be examined by focusing on learning outcomes.

[Table 17] Stakeholders in Informal Learning

Classification	Learning Outcomes	Main Body of Learning Recognition	Forms of Learning Recognition	Main Body of Management and Operation of the System	Major Participants in Learning
Education & Training Programs in the ACBS	Important Intangible Culture Properties (Skills, Arts)	The Government (MOE)	Credits	The Center for the Academic Credit Bank System in KEDI	Holder/Inheritor
The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (Exam Course)	Academic Attainment Equivalent to College Degree	The Government (MOE)	Degree (Dok-Hack-Sa)	Bachelor'ss' Degree Examination Dept. in KNOU	No Specific Major Participants
Qualifications	Competency Recognized by Competent Qualifications	The Government and Public Sector	Credits	The Center for the Academic Credit Bank System in KEDI	No Specific Major Participants
On-the-Job Training	Competency on the Job	Corporation	Credits	Field Associates, etc.	Employees

Artists and artisans who possess Important Intangible Cultural Properties (IICP) are a good example of informal learning in Korea. If a person comes to possess certain skills and arts in Important Intangible Cultural Properties through voluntary self-learning, the Korean government grants him or her IICP status. The person who is appointed to IICP status also earns a qualification equal to a Bachelor's degree through the ACBS. A person who inherits skills and arts from an IICP holder gets their credits recognized by the ACBS in accordance with ranks such as assistant to instructor and inheritors. Inheritors' credits are recognized based on their period of inheritance.

The System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) managed by the Korean National Open University is divided into two programs: an exemption program that has characteristics of non-formal learning and an examination program that has characteristics of informal learning. In the Examination Program, learners can acquire nationally recognized degrees when they pass the examinations.

Qualifications also contain the two natures: the nature of non-formal learning and the nature of informal learning. It has the characteristic of non-formal learning if the related training institution requires completion of specific subjects as prerequisites to acquire qualifications. If individuals acquire qualifications through voluntary self-learning and examinations, it has informal characteristics. Qualifications in Korea are categorized into national (technical) qualifications and nationally recognized private qualifications, depending on the main body recognizing the qualifications. Acquired qualifications

can be transformed into academic credits through the ACBS.

On the-job-training has the characteristic of informal learning. It does not have required courses; rather, it aims to upgrade the employee's occupational competence as demanded by his/her job through the support of associates and supervisors. Competence acquired in this way is assessed and recognized as credits by the companies without regulated criteria.

5.2 Access

5.2.1. **Eligibility to Participate in the Academic Credit Bank System**

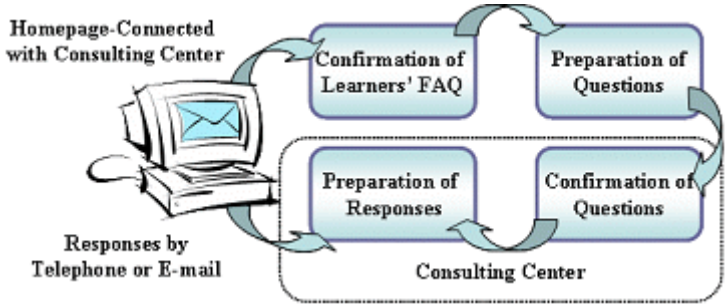
In order to have credits from the ACBS recognized as equal to regular college credits, participants in non-formal and informal learning, without exception, must have an academic background equivalent to a high school graduate. Only they are eligible to participate in the ACBS and the Self-Study System as an Alternative to a Bachelor's Degree. When it comes to qualifications, different standards of eligibility are applied to different types of qualifications. Those with IICP status are not required to have a certain academic background in order to get the official recognition of IICP by the government; however, in order to acquire degrees through the ACBS, they must have an academic background equal or above to that of a high school graduate. Those who want to have their education and training in corporations (e.g., Company-based Learning Credits) recognized by the ACBS also must have an academic background equal to or above that of a high school graduate. However, because the On-the-Job program is not the subject of national recognition, specific eligibility is not necessary and any individual who works in the field is eligible to participate in the program.

5.2.2. Application of Academic Credit Bank System

The ACBS is the exemplary case where official recognition of non-formal and informal learning is linked to eligibility for college admission. Credits recognized through the ACBS are, in reference to the related law, accumulated for academic degrees. Most typical in the use of the ACBS is that an individual who has a qualification equivalent to high school graduate acquires an Associate Degree and then a Bachelor's Degree through the ACBS. A person who obtains a Bachelor's Degree through the ACBS is eligible to enter a Master's degree program in college or university. Usually the ACBS is used as an alternative avenue to enter advanced courses in colleges.

5.2.3 Application of Information-Communication Media in RFNIL

Publicity and Consultation System



[Figure 8] Flow of Internet Consultations in ACBS

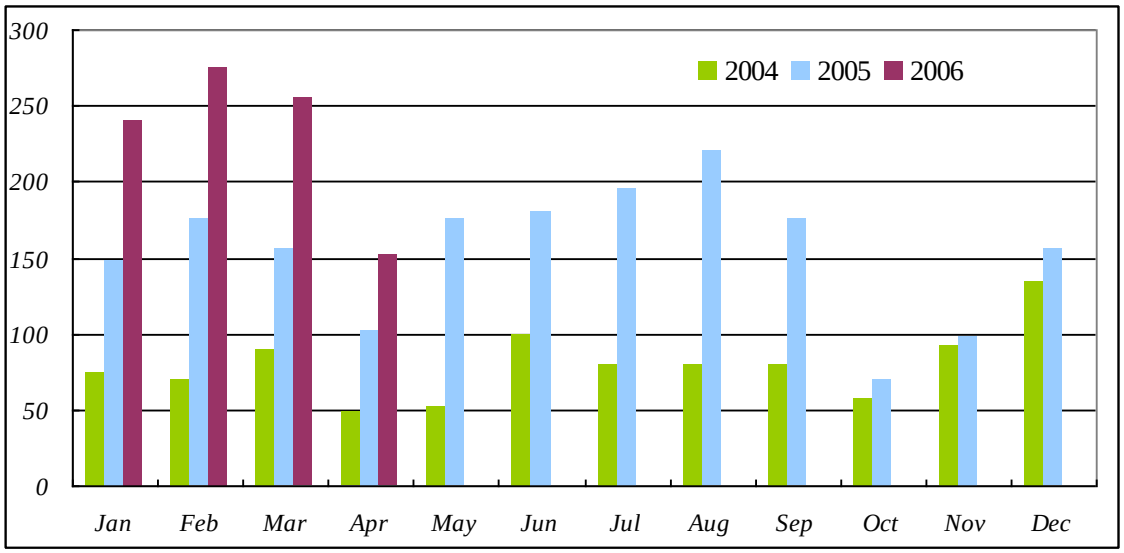
The Consultation Team in the ACBS is in charge of publicity and consultation for the ACBS. But in specific cases, other departments in the ACBS handle publicity and consultation. The planning team supports and promotes publicity by itself and the accreditation team specifically targets consultants in educational training institutions. In practice, the Consultation Team takes responsibility for publicity and consultation for learners and performs these duties through site-visits and by telephone, internet and fax, though learners typically request consultation through telephone or internet. Figure 8 presents the flow of internet consultations.

Reflecting the ever-growing social interest in lifelong learning, the volume of telephone consultations related to the ACBS is increasing rapidly. As you can see in Table 18, the demand for telephone consultations is exceeding the consulting capabilities of the center. Internet consultations are also increasing, reflecting Korea's rapidly developing ICT. Most basic, relevant information is now being offered through internet; we can also issue various certificates through the internet.

[Table 18] Numbers of Consultation Calls and Reception Rates (April 2005-April 2006)

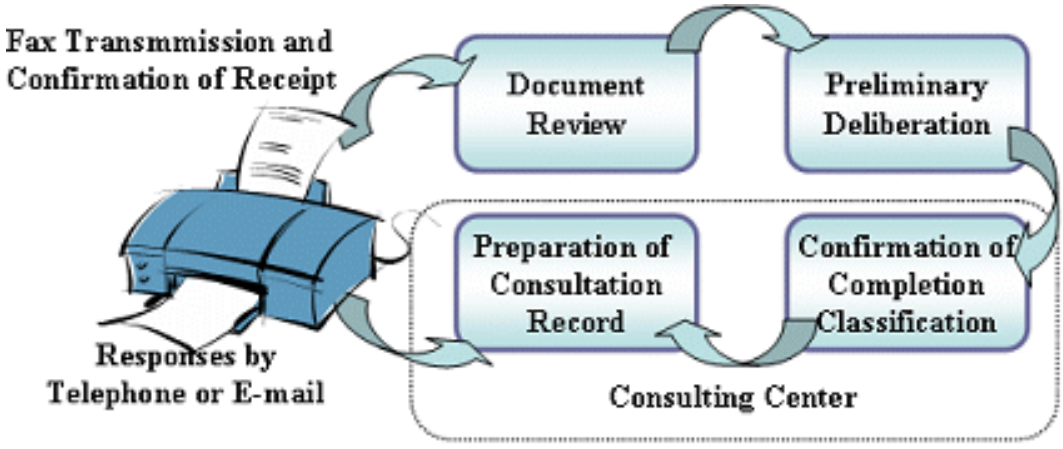
Classification Month	Total Calls	Consultation Center Calls	Actual Consultation Calls	Reception Rate(%)
2005, April	13,134	5,917	4,816	81
May	7,531	4,264	3,959	93
June	11,348	6,402	5,696	89
July	8,479	16,859	9,935	59
August	24,880	17,979	6,453	39
September	17,475	10,563	2,980	28
October	18,840	9,992	7,005	70
November	11,933	6,744	4,437	68
December	23,646	14,097	7,914	56
2006, January	64,354	39,927	7,772	19
February	48,208	39,759	3,801	10
March	28,584	21,328	6,246	29
April	24,101	15,813	4,782	30

The majority of the learners request consultation on specific learning plans, so in many cases learners' basic information (such as paper transcripts, etc.) must be sent to the Consultation Team for personalized consultation. For this reason, fax consultation is an indispensable part of the consultation process, and, as such, consultation through fax is gradually increasing. Figure 9 shows the changes in fax consultations.



[Figure 9] Fax Consultation Statistics by Month

In addition, Figure 10 presents the flow of fax consultations.



[Figure 10] Flow of Fax Consultations in ACBS

Direct consultation is the most comprehensive method of consultation. The ACBS is presently creating a system to connect the Education Offices in local governments nationwide and to build

consultation rooms in each Education Office. The ACBS also holds regular training programs for consultants from city and district offices in order to improve the quality of consultation related to ACBS.

5.3 Participation

5.3.1 Current Practice in Participation in RNFIL

Table 19 displays the trends in numbers of degree recipients in the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*). After 1993, when 147 people obtained Bachelor's Degrees through this system for the first time in Korea, the number of recipients more than doubled in 1994. From 1995 to1998, the number of recipients marginally but continually increased. The year 1999 witnessed the greatest number of degree recipients, 1,011. After an unexpected drop in degree recipients in 2000-2001, the number of recipients again turned to a steady increase up to 2004 before experiencing another rapid decrease in 2005.

[Table 19] Trends in Numbers of Degree Recipients in the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education

Year	Number of Degree Recipients	Increase Rate Compared to Previous Year (%)	Accumulated Numbers of Degree Recipients
1993	147	-	147
1994	514	249.66	661
1995	458	-10.89	1,119
1996	594	29.69	1,713
1997	789	32.83	2,502
1998	744	-5.70	3,246
1999	1,011	35.89	4,257
2000	618	-38.87	4,875
2001	508	-17.80	5,383
2002	755	48.62	6,138
2003	904	19.74	7,042
2004	944	4.42	7,986
2005	603	-36.12	8,589
2006	610	1.16	9,199

In the ACBS, there are two ways to grant degrees: by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and by the presidents of colleges. More learners acquire degrees in the first semester than in the second. As seen in Table 20, the number of degree recipients gradually increased from 1999 up to now; and the number of recipients has reached 12,254 in first half of 2006.

[Table 20] Degree Recipients in the Academic Credit Bank System (1999-2006.2)

Unit : Persons

Year	The Ministry of E&HRD			Presidents of Colleges			Total
	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Sub total	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Sub total	
2nd half of 1999	9	25	34	-	-	-	34
1st half of 2000	539	111	650	-	-	-	650
2nd half of 2000	227	143	370	-	-	-	370
1st half of 2001	1,462	267	1,729	7	2	9	1,738
2nd half of 2001	334	396	730	4	7	11	741
1st half of 2002	2,562	718	3,280	4	15	19	3,299
2nd half of 2002	561	609	1,170	11	108	119	1,289
1st half of 2003	4,398	1,288	5,686	63	153	216	5,902
1st half of 2003	847	1,267	2,114	37	190	227	2,341
1st half of 2004	3,980	2,236	6,216	121	277	398	6,614
2nd half of 2004	686	1,855	2,541	53	312	365	2,906
1st half of 2005	2,982	4,751	7,733	276	376	652	8,385
2nd half of 2005	568	4,443	5,011	74	424	498	5,509
1st half of 2006	3,737	7,562	11,299	365	590	955	12,254
Total	19,155	18,109	37,264	650	1,864	2,514	39,778

Table 21 presents the distribution of registrants in the ACBS[4] by age. About 35 percent of the learners in the ACBS are 21 to 24 years old and another 34 percent are 25 to 29 years old. The numbers indicate that the age groups who are entitled to regular higher education comprise the majority of the participants in the ACBS. This pattern demonstrates that non-formal learning has become an increasingly popular alternative to formal education. The relatively low ratio in the 40-year-old age group confirms this conclusion.

[Table 21] Distribution of Registrants of the Academic Credit Bank System by Age

Based on February, 2005, Unit: Persons

	20 years of age and younger	21~24 years old	25~29 years old	30~39 years old	40~49 years old	50 years of age and older	Total
Status by Age Group	1,381 (1%)	41,347 (35%)	40,136 (34%)	25,000 (21%)	8,690 (7%)	2,872 (2%)	124,431 (100.0%)

Source : ACBS Internal Data

Table 22 presents the distribution of learners across different types of educational institutions.

[4] The table shown below is based on a survey based upon the following contents.

[Table 22] Distribution of Learners across Different Types of Educational Institutions

Institution Type	Total Number of Institutions	Actual Registered Learners	Number of Copies Distributed	Number of Valid Participants
Lifelong Education Centers in Colleges	113	19,536	1,900	1,487(31.8%)
Lifelong Education Centers in 2- year Colleges	85	5,658	400	247(5.7%)
Computer Accounting Institutes	2	2,018	200	193(4.5)
Educational Institutions	81	6,235	550	405(9.3%)
Technology Labor Force Training Institutions	76	11,905	1,250	925(21.3%)
Government-Affiliated Institutions	21	3,169	350	244(5.7%)
Press-Affiliated Institutions	3	1,162	100	83(1.9%)
Higher Technical Schools	3	1,991	200	66(1.5%)
Special Education Schools	4	77	-	-
Lifelong Education Centers	7	1,868	150	95(2.2%)
Important Intangible Cultural Properties	16	253	-	-
Distant Education	5	1,509	-	-
Individual Learners	ACBS Center	10,302	600	562(13.0%)
Total	444 (Except. Center)	46,086	5,800 Copies	4,311(100%)

Information drawn from national surveys provides a picture of the personal background of learners (e.g., parents' education level, parents' occupation and income) and participation in recognized non-formal and informal learning. Table 23 displays the distribution of learners by family income level.

[Table 23] Distribution of Learners by Family Income Level

Unit : %

	In-College	Educational Institutions	Tech. Labor Force Training Institutions	Other Institu-tions	Individual Learners	Total
Above 3.5 M won	42.4	24.5	14.4	25.7	38.3	31.9
Between 2 M won and 35 M won	35.8	49.5	37.6	43.0	37.6	38.7
Below 2 M won	21.7	26.1	48.0	31.3	24.1	29.4
$\chi 2$: 310.448*** df: 8						

***p≤.001, **p≤.01, *p≤.05

5.3.2. A Case Study on Connections between Learning and Training

After acquiring degrees through the ACBS, many individuals experience epochal turning points as they begin to play more important roles in society. After a 52-year-old car mechanic acquired a Bachelor's Degree in Automobile Engineering through the ACBS, he was able to attain positions such as College Instructor and Head Consultant of the Korea Managing Consulting Group as a specialist in the

Automobile Sector. He explained his learning experience and its significance to him in the following interview:

Q: How did you get information about the ACBS?

A: In the beginning, I didn't know about the system, but I got the information about the ACBS from the Vice Director of Korea Auto Mechanics Institute, whom I was meeting once in a while. I enrolled in learning programs in the System because I heard it would grant credits for qualifications that I already had. Also, while working, I could take classes nearby, and it was possible for me to manage my time as I needed...

Q: If the degree attainment through the ACBS was beneficial to you, could you tell us in what ways that was true?

A: As I took diverse subjects such as education and arts electives, my vision in related sectors became broader. And in conversation with my kids, I heard them say how proud they were of me studying at my old age. Also, I came to feel satisfied with my life thanks to my learning in the ACBS.

Q: Do you have any advice or suggestion to those learners wanting to use the ACBS?

A: (Beginning part omitted) My advice for future learners with the ACBS is to make a plan and move on it step by step. And it will be more beneficial to you if you study in programs linking to qualifications. Then you can get your credits recognized and get your qualifications at the same time… If we want to work in knowledge-based industries or in advisory roles such as consultant, we need to make efforts to acquire degrees because still 99.9% of employers want to know first about our majors and academic background.

5.4. Factors Motivating and Impeding RNFIL

5.4.1. Influences on Learning and Job Activities

It is difficult to present empirical data or concrete examples showing how the recognition of non-formal and informal learning affects deepening of learning, the reduction of learning period, employment, job changes, or salary increases. Instead, we present available data on how recognition of non-formal and informal learning is motivated.

There can be many motives for acquiring degrees through the ACBS and the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*). The various motives can be divided largely into two groups: motives before acquisition and motives after acquisition. In motives before acquisition, one can have different motives for entering the ACBS or the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*); ease of acquiring a degree and the social recognition associated with having a degree are the most typical examples. However, motives after acquisition are ultimately the same. Table 24 presents learning motivations by age groups.

Looking at the major motives for participation in RNFIL by age group, they vary by age. It is observed that college enrollment is a major motive for learners who are 20 years old or younger, and acquiring a degree is a major motive for learners aged 21-30 years old. Acquiring a degree works identically as a major motive for learners over 30 years of age. The point at which acquiring a degree itself becomes the major motivating factor reflects the point at which it becomes more socially important to have an appropriate academic background.

[Table 24] Learning Motivations by Age Group

Unit : %

Age	College Enrollment	Graduate School Enrollment	Degree Acquisition	Qualifi-cation Acquisition	Employment	Promotion	Self Attainment
20 years and below	38.9	9.3	27.7	6.9	12.3	0.1	4.7
21~25 years	28.1	16.7	31.0	5.3	9.8	2.4	6.8
26~30 years	14.3	25.8	30.6	9.8	6.9	1.3	11.3
31~35 years	4.8	35.6	20.1	14.5	3.5	0.7	20.8
36~40 years	5.3	31.1	23.4	18.7	4.3	0.0	17.2
41 years~ and above	2.9	24.3	23.6	23.2	1.7	0.7	23.6
Total	23.2	19.1	28.3	9.5	8.4	1.3	10.2
$\chi 2$: 817.140*** df : 30							

***p≤.001, **p≤.01, *p≤.05

Looking into learning motivations by occupation (Table 25), the importance of social status is confirmed. For students, high-ranking professionals, office workers, and military personnel, degree acquisition itself works as a major motive. In the case of learners who are in service or simple labor industries, college enrollment is initially their major motive, but this eventually changes to degree acquisition.

[Table 25] Learning Motivations by Occupation

Unit : %

	College Enrollment	Graduate School Enrollment	Degree Acquisition	Qualifica-tion Acquisition	Employ-ment	Promotion	Self Attainment
Students	23.9	17.6	28.3	10.3	8.5	1.4	9.9
High-ranking Professionals	26.1	21.5	25.5	7.9	8.6	0.9	9.5
Office Workers & Military Personnel	18.0	19.7	29.5	11.0	6.8	2.3	12.7
Service Industry	28.0	16.8	26.6	10.5	10.5	0.7	7.0
Simple Labor Industry	23.2	21.7	17.4	11.6	11.6	1.4	13.0
Total	23.5	18.6	27.7	10.0	8.4	1.4	10.2
$\chi 2$: 35.357 df : 24							

***p≤.001, **p≤.01, *p≤.05

There is an expectation that follows the motive to acquire degrees. In most cases, learners expect to make more money after they acquire a degree. Table 26 illustrates levels of education and expected starting salary of individual learners after they have acquired such degrees.

[Table 26] Expected Starting Salary after Acquisition of Degree

Unit : Persons(%)

Classification	1M won and Below	Above 1M won ~ 1.5M won	Above 1.5M won ~ 2M won	Above 2M won ~ 2.5M won	Above 2.5M won
Associate Degree	104 (8.4)	434 (35.2)	387 (31.4)	134 (10.9)	80 (6.5)
Bachelor's Degree	110 (4.3)	745 (28.8)	869 (33.6)	338 (13.1)	212 (8.2)
Total	214 (5.6)	1179 (30.9)	1256 (32.9)	472 (12.4)	292 (7.6)

In contrast to these motivations, there are factors impeding participation in non-formal and informal learning. Table 27 highlights various kinds of impeding factors such as difficulty of learning contents, lack of learning interest, economic burden, etc. Without exception, however, the lack of social recognition is the single most consistent impeding factor. This corresponds to the explanation of motives. It seems that because of the Korean social atmosphere, which emphasizes academic background, lack of social recognition may impede participation in non-formal and informal learning just as degree acquisition itself motivates participation.

[Table 27] Factors Impeding Individual Learning through RNFIL

Unit : Persons (%)

Classifi-cation	Difficulty of Learning Contents	Lack of Learning Interest	Lack of Learning Time	Burden of Tuition	Lack of Family Understand-ing	Lack of Support from Work Place	Lack of Social Recognition	Others
Associate Degree	239 (10.8)	131 (5.9)	365 (16.5)	401 (18.2)	114 (5.2)	178 (8.1)	709 (32.1)	70 (3.2)
Bachelor's Degree	339 (6.8)	187 (3.7)	966 (19.3)	876 (17.5)	312 (6.2)	522 (10.4)	1665 (33.2)	147 (2.9)
Total	578 (8.0)	3,180 (4.4)	1331 (18.4)	1277 (17.7)	426 (5.9)	700 (9.7)	2374 (32.9)	217 (3.0)

5.4.2. Reduction of Learning Period

Currently, empirical data indicating the effects of RNFIL on learning period reduction is not available. However, it can be expected that learners want to acquire degrees in the least possible amount of time that the system and the individual's situation allow. Looking at the degree acquisition period that learners anticipate, we can find examples of learning period reduction. Table 28 indicates the kinds of educational training institutions and the Degree Acquisition Period that individual learners anticipate according to their situation.

[Table 28] Anticipated Time to Obtain Degrees

Unit: Person (%)

Classifi-cation	1 year or less	Over 1 year ~ 2 years	Over 2 years~ 3 years	Over 3 years ~ 4 years	Over 4 years ~ 5 years	Over 5 years	No intention of degree acquisition
Associate Degree	115 (9.0)	678 (53.1)	365 (28.6)	83 (6.5)	14 (1.1)	14 (1.1)	7 (1.5)
Bachelor's Degree	460 (17.1)	886 (32.9)	728 (27.0)	417 (15.5)	123 (4.6)	46 (1.7)	34 (1.3)
Total	575 (14.5)	1564 (39.4)	1093 (27.5)	500 (12.6)	137 (3.5)	60 (1.5)	41 (1.0)

Looking at the anticipated period for degree acquisition, it is observed that learners in more than half of the cases wish to acquire a degree within two years. In the case of the ACBS, learners anticipate needing a shorter period of time than is required to acquire regular degrees; credit recognition for qualifications works as a large factor here.

5.4.3. Increase in Social Benefits

As seen in Table 29, participation in non-formal and informal learning compensates learners in many ways, but social judgment (an intangible compensation) is a most important effect we cannot neglect. Other effects are enrollment in colleges, the enrollment in graduate schools, and qualification acquisition; there are also effects related to occupation, such as employment and promotion within companies.

[Table 29] Effects of Degrees in the Academic Credit Bank System

Unit : Point

Classifica-tion	Social Judgment	Enrollment in Colleges and Enrollment in Graduate School	Recognition of Degree at Time of Employment	Promotion within Company	Qualification Acquisition
Associate Degree	3.20 (1.05)	3.43 (0.97)	3.15 (1.08)	3.12 (1.05)	3.40 (0.99)
Bachelor's Degree	2.96 (1.07)	3.30 (1.01)	2.89 (1.04)	2.85 (1.00)	3.25 (1.03)
Total	6.16 (2.12)	6.73 (1.98)	6.04 (2.12)	5.97 (2.05)	6.65 (2.02)

( )= Standard Margin

5.4.4. Strategy for Enhancing Social Recognition of RNFIL

Considering how Korean society emphasizes academic background, it is understandable that social judgment greatly affects non-formal and informal learning. Yet, social recognition of degrees acquired through non-formal and informal learning is lower than that of degrees from regular colleges. This holds true regardless of degree type; however, social recognition of an Associate Degree is higher than that of a Bachelor's Degree. Considering the characteristics of associate degrees, it can be said that degrees

through non-formal and informal learning are getting relatively high social recognition for their competence development. Table 30 and Table 31 indicate this point very well.

[Table 30] Social Judgment of Associate Degree in the ACBS by Registered Degree

Unit : %

Classification	No Difference from High School Graduate	Halfway between High School and 2-year College	Similar to 2-year College in District	Similar to 2-year College in Metropolitan Area
Associate Degree	16.8	37.9	33.7	11.7
Bachelor's Degree	17.8	37.4	29.0	15.8
Total	17.5	37.6	30.6	14.4

χ^2 : 16.127*** df : 3

***p≤.001, **p≤.01, *p≤.05

[Table 31] Social Judgment of Bachelor's Degree in the ACBS by Registered Degree

Unit : %

Classification	No Difference from High School Graduate	Similar to 2-year College	Similar to 4-year College Graduate in District	Similar to 4-year College Graduate in Metropolitan Area	Halfway between 2-year College Graduate and 4-year Graduate
Associate Degree	14.4	41.2	27.6	6.5	10.3
Bachelor's Degree	12.9	33.4	27.7	9.0	17.0
Total	13.4	35.9	27.7	8.2	14.8

χ^2 : 46.542*** df : 4

***p≤.001, **p≤.01, *p≤.05

5.4.5. Case of Partnership Recognition

The Dream Academy of Samsung Heavy Industries provides a good example of partnership promotion between public and private sectors in the labor market through the recognition system. It supports 100% of the tuition for employees who are acquiring associate and Bachelor's degrees. The Refund according to Employment Insurance Fund also partly supports employees' tuition. The learners' burden is diminished and, at the same time, the corporation enjoys the support of the government.

6. Policy Directions and Agendas for RNFIL

6.1. **Medium and Long-Term Policy Directions for RNFIL**

As the growing interest in non-formal and informal learning indicates, recognition of non-formal and informal learning is very important in promoting adults' lifelong learning.

In Korea, the Academic Credit Bank System and the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) are the exemplary systems that are operated by the government. On the other hand, company-based learning credits and company-issued qualifications are the systems being operated by the private sector.*

The ACBS and the System of Academic Degrees Acquisition through Self-Education (*Dok-Hack-Sa*) are the open lifelong learning systems that provide alternative ways to those who have not had the opportunity to acquire degrees through regular higher educational institutions. Especially in the ACBS, one can acquire an associate degree and a Bachelor's degree through learning in various types of institutions that provide non-formal learning and through accumulation of credits converted from recognized qualification acquisition. As these systems have expanded the opportunity to select educational institutions and learning subjects according to individual learners' strategies and plans, they have made a great contribution to promoting lifelong learning driven by individual learners.

Because the standardized curriculum for accreditation by ACBS is based on curricula of traditional higher education institutions, the ACBS is still limited in recognizing various learning experiences in workplaces and in local communities. For example, considering the lack of a national qualification framework in Korea, it is hard to establish a firm standard for recognizing credits for qualifications and it is not easy to recognize learning experiences in workplaces using portfolios and other methods.

In order to overcome these limitations in the long term, we need to establish a national qualification framework that combines academic and vocational qualifications systems together. Currently, two noteworthy studies are being conducted: one is research commissioned by the Ministry of Labor to establish National Occupation Standards; and the other study, being conducted to establish Korean Skill Standards, is commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

For its mid-term policy agenda, the ACBS should be expanded to cover the primary and secondary education sectors. In addition, 'the System of Learning Credit Account' should be implemented in order to recognize various non-formal and informal learning. For execution of the 'the System of Learning Credit Account,' the project of 'Standardization of Learning Outcomes' is being conducted between 2006-2007.

For the short-term plan, multi-pronged efforts should be made to recognize various learning activities

* As of 2007, there is only one corporate university, establishment of which was approved by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources (Samsung Corporate University).

in the community and workplaces for academic credits through the ACBS. For example, to connect lifelong learning in companies to credits, flexible application of standard curricula and assessment recognition by major has been introduced. Also, credit recognition of military educational training is expanding. Introduction of the ACBS at state and local levels of government has been actively supported as well.

6.2. Policy Agenda for 'Lifelong Learning for All' and 'Open Learning Society'

As of 2006, Korea has reached the higher education enrollment rate of 82.1%, which has made Korea rank first in the rate of immediate transition from upper-secondary education to higher education. However, the expansion of access to higher education has been made primarily through formal learning and by the school-aged population, and thus Korea is one of the countries with the biggest schooling gaps. For example, in 2000, people in their twenties average 13.1 years of education; by contrast people over 50 average only 7.2 years (The National Statistical Office, 2000). Also, in 2004, the participation rate of adults in lifelong learning was 21.6% (Society Statistics Investigation), which is far below OECD countries' average of 29.6% (OECD, 2005a). In addition, when it comes to the participation rate of lifelong learning, primary school graduates outnumber college level graduates (or higher) by a factor of 10; this shows that the gap in schooling is deepening.

So in order to realize an open learning society that provides 'lifelong learning for all,' the following policy efforts should be made.

First, for adults with low academic background, efforts should be made to decrease the generation gap by recognizing primary and secondary schooling through various non-formal and informal learning. In the case of Korea, it is impossible to acquire secondary (middle and high) schooling without first acquiring primary schooling; therefore, recognition of primary and secondary schooling for adults can be a stepping stone for continuing promotion of lifelong learning.

Second, changes in the labor market are necessary to enhance social recognition of lifelong learning after employment. Typically in Korea, the learning participation rate is high before employment but the participation rate after employment decreases because one's academic background at the time of employment remains valid throughout one's whole life. Therefore, competency-centered personnel policies that place emphasis on outcomes of lifelong learning should be introduced.

Third, in order to actualize an open learning society, flexible and various learning routes in both formal and informal/non-formal learning need to be presented to learners so that they can acquire knowledge and skills according to their stages in life. Especially to promote adults' participation in lifelong learning, adult learners should be given diverse options to select an appropriate learning route that integrates both learning and working. This will not only increase their employment possibilities but will also make our society more competitive.

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Appendix A. Lifelong Learning City Designation *

Year	Number of Cities	Designated Local Governments
2001	3	Gwangmyeong-si, Gyeonggi-do; Yuseong-gu, Deajeon Metropolitan City; Jinan-gun, Jeollabuk-do
2002	3	Haeundae-gu, Busan Metropolitan City; Bucheon-si, Gyeonggi-do; Jeju City, Jeju-do
2003	5	Yeonsu-gu, Incheon Metropolitan City; Suncheon, Jeollanam-do; Andong-si, Gyeongsanbuk-do; Geochang-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do; Seogwipo-si, Jeju-do
2004	8	Gwanak-gu, Seoul; Icheon-si, Gyeonggi-do; Cheongju-si, Chungcheongbuk-do; Geumsan-gun, Chungcheongnam-do; Jeonju-si, Jeollabuk-do; Mokpo-si, Jeollanam-do; Chilgok-gun, Gyeongsangbuk-do; Changwon-si, Gyeongsangnam-do
2005	14	Seongbuk-gu, Seoul; Yangcheon-gu, Seoul; Bupyeong-gu, Incheon Metropolitan City; Nam-gu, Gwangju Metropolitan City; Guri-si, Gyeonggi; Suwon-si, Gyeonggi-do; Danyang-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do; Jecheon-si, North Chungcheong-do; Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do; Iksan-si, Jeollabuk-do; Dalseo-gu, Daegu Metropolitan City; dong-gu, Daegu Metropolitan City; Gimhae-si, Gyeongsangnam-do; Namhae-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do
2006	24	Youngdeungpo-gu, Seoul; Yeonje-gu , Busan Metropolitan City; Nam-gu, Icheon-si; dong-gu & Gwangsan-gu, Gwanak-gu; Ulju-gun, Ulsan; Hwacheon-gun & Samcheok-si, Gangwon-do; Ansan-si & Yongin-si & Pyoungtaek-Si & Siheung-si, Gyeonggi-do; Jinchoen-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do; Asan-si & Seosan-si & Taean-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do; Gimje-si & Namwon-si & Jeongeup-si, Jeollabuk-do; Gokseong-gun & Yeosu-si & Gwangyang-si, Jeollanam-do; Yangsan-si & Hadong-gun; Gyeongsangnam-do

* The Lifelong Learning City Project was initiated in 2001 in line with the objectives of the Comprehensive Lifelong Learning Promotion Plan