

Global Immigration alert

April 2025

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea introduces new F-2 visa for skilled foreign nationals in high-tech industries

Executive summary

Effective 2 April 2025, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Korea introduced a top-tier visa for skilled foreign nationals who work in high-tech industries. This includes sectors such as semiconductors, biotechnology, secondary batteries, displays, robotics and defense.

Key developments

The new F-2 visa aims to attract skilled professionals in high-tech industries. Applications for the F-2 visa can be submitted at designated immigration offices or through the Ministry of Justice's official website. Eligible applicants can sponsor their dependents and apply for an Immigration VIP Card for fast-track immigration processing and priority security checks. Qualifying dependents include spouses, underage children, parents, parents-in-law and housekeepers. To qualify for the F-2 visa, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- **Income:** Applicants must have an annual income of at least three times the gross national income (GNI) per capita for the previous year (i.e., KRW 149,865,000 for 2024 or approx. USD 104,500.86).
- **Education:** Applicants must hold a master's degree or higher from a university ranked in the top 100 by World University Rankings in the last five years.
- **Korean proficiency:** Applicants must either complete the Korean Immigration and Integration Program (KIIP) or obtain a Level 1 Certificate in the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK).
- **Recommendation:** Applicants need verification and a recommendation from the head of a relevant ministry.
- **Experience:** Applicants must have worked for either a:
 - "Global company" for at least three years (and have at least eight years of total work experience). A "global

company" is defined as one ranked in the top 500 of the Forbes Global 2000, Fortune Global 500, or Times 100 World's Most Influential Companies in the last three years.

- "Global research institution" for at least three years and have more than five years of research experience in advanced fields after obtaining a Ph.D. A "global research institution" includes research institutes affiliated with universities ranked within the top 100 of global university rankings in the last five years, research institutes of global companies, and government-led research institutes.

Individuals who hold an F-2 visa for more than three years, maintain an annual income of at least three times the GNI per capita, and complete the KIIP program will be eligible for an F-5 visa for permanent residency. Those who meet the educational, experience and Korean language requirements but have an income of at least twice the GNI per capita may receive a recommendation from the relevant ministry for a top tier E-7 (Local Employment) Visa, which is valid for up to three years and can be renewed. Additionally, individuals who meet the educational criteria but are unemployed may qualify for a D-10 job-seeking visa as top-tier talent.

Impact on employers

The new development will expand local employers' access to foreign workers and provide additional pathways for attracting and retaining skilled talent.



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Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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