

Distribution

Dec. 10, 2024 (Tue), 10:00

Publication

**(Online)** Dec. 10, 2024 (Tue), 19:00**(Print)** Dec. 10, 2024 (Tue), 19:00

## Key findings from the Second cycle of the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

- Korean adults (ages 16-65) have a mean score of 249 in language proficiency, 253 in numeracy, and 238 in problem-solving, which is lower than the OECD average.
- When the analysis is limited to 16-24-year-olds, mean scores for language skills (276) and numeracy (273) are in line with OECD averages (273 for language skills and 272 for numeracy).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) will release the results of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) on December 10, 2024.

The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) is a cross-national comparison of adults (aged 16-65) in core information processing skills\*—language, numeracy, and problem-solving—and their use of these skills in everyday and work life. It is conducted every 10 years.

\* Core information processing skills: skills needed to effectively access, understand, analyze, and use information in a variety of forms, including text or numbers.

In the second cycle\* of the survey, following the first cycle (released in 2013, 23 countries analyzed), approximately 160,000 adults from 31 countries, including the United States, Japan, and Germany, participated. In Korea, 6,198 individuals participated in the survey.

\*The second cycle of the survey was postponed by one year due to COVID-19.

## Overview of PIAAC

- **[Survey cycle]** 10 years ※ Cycle 1: 2011-2012; Cycle 2: 2022-2023
- **[Number of participating countries]** 31 countries, including the United States, Japan, Germany, and Canada. ※23 countries were analyzed in Cycle 1 (2011-2012)
- **[Survey Target]** Adults aged 16 to 65 (6,198 respondents in Korea)
- **[Survey method]** Tablet-based in-home interview survey
- **[Scope]** Three domains (language skills, numeracy skills, and adaptive problem-solving skills) measured on a 0-500-point scale, and a personal background questionnaire.

The average score for adults aged 16-65 in Korea was 249 for language skills, 253 for numeracy, and 238 for adaptive problem-solving, all of which were lower than the OECD average\*.

\*[OECD average] Language skills: 260, Numeracy: 263, Adaptive problem-solving: 251

The mean score for language skills decreased by 24 points from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. However, among the 27 countries that participated in both Cycle 1 and 2, only Finland and Denmark saw increases in their mean language skills scores. For numeracy, the mean score decreased by 10 points from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2, but this difference was not statistically significant.

※[Language skills] Cycle 1: 273 points; Cycle 2: 249 points (a decrease of 24 points)

[Numeracy skills] Cycle 1: 263 points; Cycle 2: 253 points (a decrease of 10 points)

**Problem-solving skills** are not directly comparable between the two cycles due to the change in scope from "Problem-solving skills in a computer-based environment" in Cycle 1 to "Adaptive problem-solving skills" in Cycle 2.

When the analysis is limited to 16-24-year-olds, the mean scores for language skills (276) and numeracy (273) are in line with OECD averages (273 for language skills and 272 for numeracy). Overall, younger adults tend to have higher competency levels.

According to the education mismatch survey, 65.0% of adults aged 16-65 in Korea have the right level of education for their current job ("appropriate

education") compared to their actual education. 31.3% of Korean adults aged 16-65 are overeducated, and 3.7% are undereducated.

According to the skills mismatch survey, 65.1% of adults aged 16-65 in Korea have the right skills for their jobs ("right skills") compared to their actual skills. 23.9% are overskilled, and 11.0% are underskilled.

The Ministry of Education (led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Lee Ju-Ho) and the Ministry of Employment and Labor (led by Minister Kim Mun-soo) stated, "We will work together to expand customized lifelong learning and vocational training programs in response to the rapidly changing social environment brought about by digital transformation. Our goal is to ensure that all citizens can participate in lifelong learning and vocational skill development."

Contact Point	Ministry of Education Lifelong Learning Support Division	Acting Director	Lee Woonsik	(044-203-6907)
		Deputy Director	Kim Bohyun	(044-203-6384)
	Ministry of Employment and Labor Vocational Skills Policy Division	Director	Keum Jungsu	(044-202-7269)
		Deputy Director	Hwang Eunjin	(044-202-7271)
	KRIVET Center for Tertiary and Continuing Education Reseach	Center Head	Jang Juhui	(044-415-5303)
		Researcher	Lee Suyeon	(044-415-3731)