

Mason Korea Research Writing Competition

Fall 2024

George Mason University Korea announces its biannual Research Writing Competition, comprising both a First-year and Open Division. This competition is open to all current Mason Korea students.

The purpose of the First-year Research Writing Division of the competition is to promote and recognize excellence in first-year student research and writing as well as to provide an audience for first-year student writers. The competition is open to MK Way students, all first- and second-semester Mason Korea First-year students, as well as third-semester PPP students.

The purpose of the Open Research Writing Division is similar — to provide an audience and venue for student research and writing within the various disciplines at Mason Korea. Papers submitted to the Open Division should come from students who are enrolled in 200-level or above courses, and should demonstrate a more rigorous level of preparation compared to the First-year Division.

This is a research competition and, therefore, each entry should answer a research question or at least be grounded in research and inquiry.

First-year Research Writing Division

Working individually, and (ideally) with the guidance of their instructors, students will develop a popular or scholarly research paper. Papers must include sourced information from a minimum of five (5) sources, of which at least two should be academic in nature, and appropriate in-text citations for the chosen *genre* of writing (popular or scholarly). Students should provide in-text citations and a list of references.

Finalists will be required to attend a Q&A session with a panel of 3–5 judges and prepared to answer questions from the judges about their topic and research and writing process.

Prizes will be awarded in the form of Mason Korea scholarship support for the Spring 2025 semester:

1st place: \$500 USD 2nd place: \$300 USD 3rd place: \$200 USD

DEI award: \$200 USD*

*This special award will go to the paper that the judges feel promotes understanding and discussion related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The DEI award can be given to a paper that also places in the top 3, or it can be given to a paper that isn't included in the top finalists.

First-year Research Writing Division Rules

- Who can enter? Any Mason Korea First-year student and third semester sophomore PPP student can apply regardless of major. MK Way students are also eligible to apply.
- Topics should be chosen after consultation with an instructor. Scholarly papers written using in-text citations similar to APA documentation should be at least 1,500 words before references; popular texts written with hyperlinked in-text citations should be a minimum of 1,300 words.
- Due date for entries: Monday, November 25. Finalists will be required to attend a Q&A on Tuesday, December 10.
- To enter the competition, email your research paper to Prof. Jason Kifer (jkifer@gmu.edu)

Open Research Writing Division

Working individually, and ideally with instructors within their academic major or professors of a major or core class that they are taking, students will develop scholarly research papers. Papers must include synthesized research from a minimum of six (6) sources. Examples of appropriate sources include academic journals, government and non-governmental organization reports, and trade journals. Students should provide in-text citations and a list of references.

Finalists will be required to attend a Q&A session with a panel of 3–5 judges and prepared to answer questions from the judges about their topic and research and writing process.

Prizes will be awarded in the form of Mason Korea scholarship support for the Spring 2025 semester:

1st place: \$500 USD 2nd place: \$300 USD 3rd place: \$200 USD

DEI award: \$200 USD*

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Open Research Writing Division Rules

- Who can enter? Any George Mason University Korea student can apply regardless of major.
- Research topics should be chosen after consultation with an instructor. Papers should be a minimum of 2,000 words before references, footnotes, appendices, etc.
- Due date for entries: Thursday, November 21. Finalists will be required to attend a Q&A on Wednesday, December 4.
- To enter the competition, email your research paper to Prof. Jason Kifer (jkifer@gmu.edu)

Research Writing Competition Rubric

Judges for the First-year and Open Divisions of the Mason Korea Research Writing Competition are asked to use the following rubric when scoring student submissions. Please use the criteria below to come up with a score out of 100 for each paper. The point totals in the right column represent the maximum number of points that should be given for that aspect of the paper. What you'll notice, when viewed as a whole, is that more emphasis is placed on developing a thesis and supporting it with evidence than on grammar and formatting.

Introduction Paragraph(s): The introduction paragraph effectively introduces the topic of the paper and gives background information that leads the reader to the thesis. The thesis is clear, specific, and easy to identify as the main idea of the writing.	15 Points
Body Paragraphs: The body paragraphs begin with a topic sentence that shows the reader the main idea for that paragraph. The main idea of each body paragraph supports the thesis for the paper. Body paragraphs must show a good balance of student writing and information from sources. As a whole, the body paragraphs fully support the thesis presented in the introduction paragraph.	20 Points
Concluding Paragraph(s): The concluding paragraph summarizes the ideas from the body paragraphs and re-states the writer's main idea from the thesis. The essay concludes with a sense that the topic has been sufficiently covered and analyzed, or points to future research that could be done on this topic.	10 Points
Comprehension/Use of Texts: Writer demonstrates accurate comprehension of sources, and works with a variety of textual evidence to explain, support, and develop the thesis. The writer uses at least 5 outside sources, to effectively support their ideas. Of these sources, at least two should be scholarly/academic in nature.	25 Points
Coherent Essay Organization: The thesis is connected to supporting ideas throughout the essay, and evidence provided supports those ideas. The ideas in the essay are cohesive and unified – the essay stays on topic and the ideas connect throughout the essay to form a coherent picture of the chosen topic and main idea.	20 Points
Correctness: The essay has been proofread. <i>First-year Judges Note on Grammar:</i> Please keep in mind that these are first-year student papers, the majority of which come from ESL writers. Try your best to 'read through the grammar' for the intended meaning of the sentence. Significant grammar trouble will make it difficult to see the writer's intended idea, and points should be deducted accordingly.	10 Points