

Consumer Adviser Certification Program In Korea

A Consumer Adviser is defined and the related certification process is discussed. Career prospects for Consumer Advisers are considered.

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Consumer Advisor and Certification Process

As businesses, government, and civil organizations seek to improve consumer decision-making and satisfaction, the need for highly trained consumer professionals to identify and meet consumers' real needs and concerns becomes increasingly apparent. These groups can benefit from the consumer adviser certification program, which can provide qualified consumer professionals trained to provide a consumer's perspective.

The tasks of consumer advisers are threefold. First, they are expected to provide consumer counseling and education services. Second, consumer advisers consult with business to help maintain a consumer focus in the process of product and service development. Third, consumer advisers help resolve consumer problems and complaints. To successfully fulfill these tasks, consumer advisers need knowledge of: 1) consumers' legal rights and responsibilities, 2) consumer related laws and regulations, 3) consumer product and service characteristics, 4) product use, 5) banking and insurance, 6) consumer credit, 7) marketing and advertising, 8) retailing structure, and 9) other elements such as life style, special language and culture. In addition skills related to counseling, communication, consumer research, use of modern technologies, and problem-solving techniques are needed. It has also been noted that consumer advisers must be patient and have optimistic, generous, responsive and outgoing personalities. To be a certified consumer adviser, applicants should have graduated from a university and meet the requirements noted in Table 1.

Table 1

Consumer Advisor Certification Requirements

<i>Required Courses</i>	Introduction to Consumer Science, Consumer Laws and Policies, Decision Making for Consumers, Consumer Research Methods, and Consumer Counseling
<i>Select Two Courses</i>	Introduction to Business, Household Economics, Food and Nutrition, General Economics, Personal Finance, Consumer and Housing, Marketing, Clothing and Textiles, and Study of Consumer Goods
<i>Internship</i>	Candidates must complete 40 hours of internship experience in a related field.
<i>Credentialing</i>	The Korean Consumer Education Committee of the Korean Society of Consumer Studies examines candidates' GPA, course completion, and internship experience. Candidates meeting all standards are certified as a consumer advisor.

Prospects for Consumer Advisors

As the demand for consumer professionals increases, certified consumer advisers will find increasing opportunities for employment. While it is too early to determine the effect of the Consumer Advisor Certificate on employment opportunities, the program has resulted in the following: courses needed for certification have been instituted at several universities; interaction and reciprocal relationships between universities and consumer related organizations (e.g. the Organization of Consumer Affairs Professionals), businesses, and government agencies have been initiated, and Consumer Science is becoming an increasingly popular major among university students. In addition to student interest in the certification program, other fields are using the Consumer Advisor Certificate program as a benchmark.

Endnotes

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