

LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Prospects for Educational Cooperation Between Korea and Azerbaijan

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Abstract. This article examines the prospects for educational cooperation between the Republic of Korea and Azerbaijan through a structured review of recent research and institutional evidence. It argues that the next stage should move from isolated mobility and assistance projects towards a coordinated partnership portfolio. The strongest opportunities are joint and dual-degree education, Korean and Azerbaijani studies, digital and artificial-intelligence literacy, teacher development, industry-linked engineering education, and collaborative research. Evidence from Azerbaijani higher education highlights the importance of quality assurance, student engagement and multilingual internationalization, while Korean studies underline the need for language preparation, intercultural support and meaningful roles for international staff. An author-developed cooperation model links strategic alignment, co-design, delivery, measurable outcomes and feedback. The article proposes shared governance, transparent indicators and student-support safeguards for implementation during 2026-2030.

Keywords: educational cooperation; Azerbaijan; Republic of Korea; higher education; academic mobility; digital education; quality assurance.

Introduction. Educational cooperation has become a strategic form of international relations because it creates durable networks among students, universities, public institutions and employers. For Azerbaijan, partnerships beyond its established European and regional connections can diversify knowledge flows. Research on the Caucasus shows strong support for cross-border cooperation, but also warns that partnerships remain shaped by national priorities and institutional capacity [1]. Korea offers relevant experience in technology-intensive education, engineering, digital learning and international student recruitment.

The bilateral relationship already contains practical foundations. The BEU-INHA dual-degree programme demonstrates that shared curricula and cross-border study can operate at scale, and its second phase extends cooperation into information technology, artificial intelligence, data science and electrical

LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

and electronics engineering [11]. A KOICA-supported teacher-capacity project also created an e-learning portal, a content-production studio and Azerbaijani-language professional resources [12]. The central question is how these achievements can become an integrated and sustainable educational ecosystem.

Methodology. The study applies a structured integrative review and conceptual design method. Twelve English-language sources published from 2023 to 2026 were selected for direct relevance to Azerbaijani higher education, Korean internationalization, student adjustment, digital competence, or bilateral programmes. Ten are scholarly studies and two are primary institutional documents. Sources were coded by cooperation level, beneficiary, mechanism, expected outcome and implementation risk.

The synthesis is analytical rather than evaluative: it does not claim causal impact for existing bilateral projects. Instead, evidence is converted into design principles and measurable proposals. Particular attention is given to quality assurance, student engagement, language, intercultural adaptation, staff participation and ethical digitalization because these factors determine whether mobility and joint programmes generate lasting capacity [2–10].

Current cooperation architecture. The present architecture combines programme-level partnership and development assistance. The dual-degree model supplies a tested route for curriculum alignment, admission, language preparation and a study period in Korea [11]. The teacher-capacity project shows a different mechanism: infrastructure, local-language content and professional development implemented with public-sector ownership [12]. Together they reveal a useful division of labour between university partnerships and intergovernmental capacity building.

However, a portfolio built only around separate projects may produce uneven continuity. Azerbaijani research identifies quality assurance as a reform priority and recommends clearer standards and institutional responsibilities [2]. Student-success evidence also shows that supportive environments, productive student-faculty interaction and high-quality academic challenge are closely connected [3]. Future bilateral initiatives should therefore evaluate learning, support and institutional change, not simply count agreements, visits or devices.

Strategic complementarities. Azerbaijan contributes a multilingual higher-education environment, growing English-

LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

medium provision and a policy interest in international competitiveness. English-medium instruction can support mobility and joint curricula, yet it must be connected to academic literacy and local knowledge rather than treated as a prestige marker [4]. Korea contributes mature engineering institutions, advanced digital ecosystems and expanding international programmes. Complementarity is strongest where both sides co-produce curricula and research instead of transferring a fixed model.

Human support is equally important. Studies of international students in Korea identify Korean-language proficiency, cultural affinity and institutional support as significant conditions of academic adjustment [5, 6]. Research on international faculty shows that formal internationalization does not guarantee professional inclusion; ambiguous roles and weak post-arrival support can limit contribution [7, 8]. Bilateral programmes should consequently finance mentoring, language learning, intercultural preparation and staff integration as core academic components.

Priority directions. First, joint education should progress from a successful engineering base towards carefully selected master's pathways, co-supervised theses and short credit-bearing modules. Expansion should follow demonstrated labour-market and research demand. Shared learning outcomes, assessment rubrics, credit recognition and external review must be agreed before recruitment. This protects students from administrative uncertainty and makes the qualification portable across both systems [2, 11].

Second, digital and AI cooperation should combine technical capacity with pedagogy and ethics. Korean university evidence shows high student interest in AI but uneven competence linked to prior software education [9]. A joint programme could pair Korean expertise in AI-enabled learning with Azerbaijani teacher-development infrastructure, producing bilingual open modules, faculty micro-credentials and small applied projects. Access, privacy, academic integrity and teacher judgement should be built into every pilot [9, 12].

Third, mobility should be redesigned as a supported learning pathway. Pre-departure language preparation, peer mentoring, academic advising, credit mapping and career reflection should connect the periods before, during and after travel. Recent Korean evidence presents adjustment as an active process shaped by both structural support and student

LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

agency [10]. Reciprocal short schools, virtual exchange and visiting teaching can widen participation when full-year mobility is financially or personally inaccessible.

Evidence-to-action matrix. Table 1 translates the synthesis into a concise cooperation portfolio. Instruments are designed to reinforce one another while retaining separate outcome indicators.

Table 1

Evidence-to-action matrix for Korea-Azerbaijan educational cooperation

Priority	Evidence base	2026-2030 instrument	Indicator
Joint degrees	BEU-INHA platform [11]	Selected master's tracks; co-supervised theses	Completion; recognised credits
Digital capacity	AI literacy and teacher systems [9, 12]	Bilingual modules; faculty micro-credentials	Certified staff; reused modules
Mobility support	Adjustment evidence [5, 6, 10]	Language, mentoring and academic advising	Retention; satisfaction; inclusion
Research and QA	Regional and quality evidence [1-3]	Seed grants; joint review panel; shared data	Projects; outputs; improvements

Source: developed by the author from references [1]–[12].

Author's cooperation model. The proposed model begins with shared needs and trust, proceeds through co-design and supported delivery, and ends with measurable educational and research outcomes. Two horizontal enablers operate throughout: student and language support, and transparent quality assurance. Evaluation feeds directly into redesign, preventing a pilot from becoming permanent before evidence of value is available.

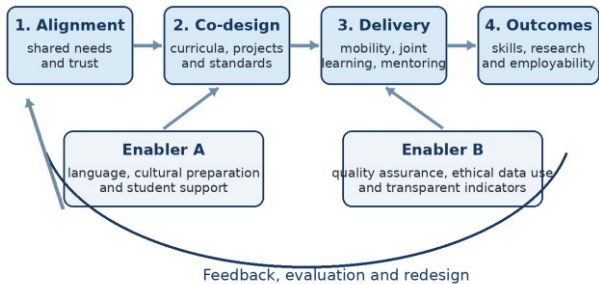


Figure 1

Author-developed model of sustainable bilateral educational cooperation

LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

The model treats cooperation as a cycle rather than a list of agreements. Shared governance should include ministries, partner universities, students and relevant employers. A small bilateral steering group can approve priorities, while programme teams retain academic authority. Annual public reporting should combine outputs with evidence on learning, equity, workload and graduate pathways.

Governance and implementation. A phased approach reduces risk. The first phase should map existing agreements, curricula, staff expertise and student demand. The second should pilot two or three initiatives with common rubrics and modest seed funding. The third should scale only those activities that demonstrate learning value and feasible workload. Joint ownership is essential: imported content should be adapted, translated where necessary and reviewed in both contexts.

Funding should distinguish mobility costs, curriculum development, research support and student services. Each line requires a responsible institution and continuation plan. Digital collaboration can lower travel dependence, but it should complement rather than replace relationships. Staff mobility is most productive when participants produce a revised module, research protocol or teaching resource that remains usable after the visit.

Quality, inclusion and risk. Quality assurance must be embedded at design stage. Partners should agree admission criteria, learning outcomes, assessment moderation, complaint routes, data protection and procedures for recognising study periods. Student feedback should be collected at several points and linked to action. Azerbaijan's quality reforms and student-engagement research both support a shift from compliance towards evidence of the learning environment [2, 3].

Key risks include unequal decision-making, dependence on short grants, language barriers, symbolic internationalization, digital exclusion and weak reintegration after mobility. Korean studies show that international students and staff may remain peripheral even when recruitment grows [5–8]. Mitigation therefore requires bilingual information, named advisers, inclusive teaching, transparent workload, mental-health referral and meaningful participation in curriculum and research teams.

Roadmap and indicators. For 2026–2030, progress can be monitored through recognised credits, completion, student-

LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

support use, joint publications, co-taught modules, staff certification, employer participation and graduate destinations. Indicators should be disaggregated by gender, programme and mobility type. Numbers require qualitative interpretation: a smaller programme with strong learning, inclusion and durable institutional change may be more valuable than rapid expansion without support.

Discussion. The evidence favours selective depth over ceremonial breadth. Korea-Azerbaijan cooperation can be distinctive if it links Korean technological and organizational capacity with Azerbaijani multilingualism, regional connectivity and reform priorities. The strongest partnership is not a one-way transfer of a Korean model, but reciprocal co-design in which both sides test assumptions, share knowledge and create programmes that neither could produce alone [1, 4, 9].

Limitations. This conceptual study uses published research and institutional documents, not interviews, financial data or direct outcome evaluation. Because bilateral evidence is concentrated in a few programmes, the model requires consultation, baseline measurement and independent review before scale.

Conclusion. Educational cooperation between Korea and Azerbaijan has a credible base for expansion. Its future value depends on a coordinated portfolio of joint education, digital capacity, supported mobility, research and cultural learning. Shared governance, language support, ethical technology use and measurable quality are the conditions of sustainability. A phased 2026–2030 agenda can deepen bilateral relations and create practical benefits for learners, teachers, universities and innovation systems in both countries.

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LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

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