

Higher Education



In the current era of globalisation, cultivating dedicated and creative talents in each field is the key and solid foundation to reinforcing the competitive edge of Taiwan, a small, densely-populated nation with limited natural resources.

To achieve this goal, the MOE has revised its policies and launched reforms to help universities and colleges strengthen their international ties, earn international recognition, and assume a leading position in the international academic community.

One of which is a post-bachelor programme, 4+X project for short, helping citizens to develop a second speciality and also an opportunity of cross-field study as well.

The MOE hopes such programme would enhance learners' advantages in the employment market and strengthen national competitiveness eventually.

1.College and University Entrance Exams

Since 2000, the MOE has utilised a modified multi-channel college/university admission system to attract high school and senior vocational school students with diverse specialties and personalities.

These channels include recommendations from schools, individual applications and examination and placement. Under the first option high schools make a list of students whom they feel are highly qualified for specific college or university departments.

Under the second option, high school students may apply to a maximum of five departments prior to testing. Under the third option, high school students take an entrance exam set by the College and University Entrance Examination Centre. Students can then apply for admission to colleges or universities based on their test results.



2. Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Degrees

University undergraduate programmes typically require four years of study. Students who are unable to complete their course of study within that time may be granted extensions of up to two years.

Universities focus on academic studies and research, whereas technology-oriented universities focus on practical, specialised skills training. Programmes such as dentistry or medicine generally require six to seven years, including an internship period of one year.

Graduate programmes leading to a master's or doctoral degree require one to four years and two to seven years respectively. Students who enter graduate school as a part of on-the-job training may be granted extensions if they do not finish the required courses or do not complete their thesis/dissertation on time.

The MOE launched a 10-year programme, funded with a budget of NT\$ 10 billion every year, aiming to boost selected universities' international competitiveness.

The programme is divided into two phases. The first is the Aim for the Top University and Excellent

Research Center Project, from 2006 to 2010 and the second is the Aim for the Top University Project, from 2011 to 2015.

This programme has identified eleven universities in Taiwan that have the potential to break into the top 100 universities in the world, or to be among the best in the Asia/Pacific region in key research areas. Each year these universities receive funding from the MOE; they in turn have to update their research proposals on an annual basis and develop international links, improve infrastructure



and enhance research and teaching. Rich fruit has seen yielded from such effort as National Taiwan University ranks as the top 94 on the world according to the latest survey released by UK's Quacquarelli Symonds Limited early September 2010.

Quality Enhancement of Higher Education

1. Increasing Numbers of Higher Education Institutions

The number of higher education institutes in Taiwan, including junior colleges, colleges and universities, has nearly doubled in the past decade. In SY 1998 there were 137 colleges and universities in Taiwan. By SY 2010 this number had gone up to 165, including 112 universities and 53 colleges. There was also a rapid increase in the number of private colleges through upgrading of junior colleges to colleges.



2. College and University Evaluation

To maintain the quality of higher education following this massive expansion, the MOE established the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) in 2005 and encouraged schools to establish their own self-evaluation systems.

The HEEACT evaluates colleges and universities on their administrative and management systems, academic performance and computer resources. The evaluation sets objective standards, enhancing the quality of higher education. In the future, the MOE will evaluate higher education institutions on a regular basis.

3. Quality Enhancement Policies

In recent years the MOE has instituted a number of policies, including the Excellence in Teaching and Learning Project as well as the Aim for the Top





University Project, that re-allocate educational resources and help colleges and universities establish their own characteristics and strengths in order to be able to compete with internationally renowned universities.

Fostering a Global Vision 1. Understanding Taiwan in the Curriculum

Twenty years ago, there were hardly any educational materials on the subject of Taiwan. In 1990, the MOE began encouraging colleges and universities to introduce courses at all education levels that would enable students to increase their knowledge of Taiwan. Those courses were based on the educational principles of local cultures and self-awareness. Because of Taiwan's geographical features, courses that centre on Taiwan's ocean culture are available to students. Some universities now teach courses such as oceanic science and culture, ocean literature and deep-sea diving.

2. Courses Taught in English

With the increase in the number of foreign students studying in colleges and universities in Taiwan, the MOE has encouraged both public and private colleges and universities to offer courses in English in order to build a bilingual environment on campus. Many schools have also established foreign student affairs departments to assist students from abroad with visa applications and extensions and to help students adjust to life in Taiwan.

Fashion design programmes help Ku's dream come true

Johan Ku, 31, London



Alumnus of the Fashion Design Department, Shu-te University in Kaohsiung, and the Graduate Institute of Textiles and Clothing, Fu-jen Catholic University in Taipei

Johan Ku, a fashion designer who won the top prize in the avant-garde design category at the 2009 Gen Art's Styles International Design Competition, has proven that higher education in Taiwan can make a celebrity out of a struggling artist.

His initial goal was to become a comic artist because he was a big fan of Jen Cheng-hua, a noted Taiwanese female comic artist. He studied advertising design in high school and began working as a freelance graphic designer at the age of 17. After graduation, he entered Shu-te University in Kaohsiung and majored in fashion and textile design.

Ku considered transferring school after one year, but reading Coco Chanel's biography became a turning point in his life -- he made up his mind to be a fashion designer rather than a graphic designer.

While writing his master's thesis at Fu-jen Catholic University, the young designer completed a hand-knitted wool series that highlighted the versatility of yarn and displayed creative patterns. "Emotional Sculpture" won third place in the 2004 Taiwan Fashion Design Award created by the Taiwan Textile Federation. Another series that Ku called "Re-Sculpture" won first place in the Donghua Cup, the 2005 International Design Contest in Shanghai.

"Sculpture-like knitwear in white is my signature design style," he said.

In September 2009, he continued his postgraduate study in knitwear fashion at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, London.



Creativity has no deadline for Taiwanese youths

Liu Bang-yao, 25

Taipei National University of the Arts Graduate School of Art and Technology

Creativity is without borders. Liu Bang-yao, a student of the Graduate School of Art and Technology (now Department of New Media Art) at Taipei National University of the Arts, has proven the point by reaching a record 2.2 million hits globally for his online video “DEADLINE post-it”.

“DEADLINE post-it’ is a stop-motion video, a school assignment,” says Liu, who never imagined that his first-ever online post would inspire such tremendous interest from the public.

Liu used more than 6,000 post-it notes – small squares of note paper with reusable gum sticker on the back - to create frame shots, along with a real actor, to reproduce the scene of young people being chased by work deadlines.

The amusing video catches the eye and has given Liu the opportunity to stand on the world stage for a brief while.

After winning an award in the Scholarship Programme for Overseas Study in Arts and Design from the Ministry of Education in 2008, Liu enrolled in the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Georgia, USA, for one year, where he had an opportunity to sharpen his skills.

“The experience gave me new ideas in defining art and creation,” says Liu. He goes on to say that he has also learned a lot in terms of international vision and global insight.

Having received several project offers from well-known institutes such as CNN Hong Kong and Microsoft, Liu is now brainstorming to create a video for a local post-it note brand.

And that is exactly what he wants to keep doing, for this young man says his plans for the future are simple—keep on creating.



3. Internationalisation

In response to globalisation, the MOE has put forward projects that aim to develop Taiwan’s international interaction. These include the following four policies.

•Boosting International Competitiveness

In 2002 the MOE launched the Enhancing Global Competitiveness Plan, which was aimed at fostering more international exchange activities; improving students’ foreign language abilities; increasing appreciation for the arts, science and mathematics; and developing top-tier universities and research centres.

•Promoting International Exchange

The MOE will provide more opportunities and scholarships for local students to study abroad and gain broader world views. It will also promote local culture in foreign communities and expand the number of foreign

students studying in Taiwan. In addition, it will create a global learning environment that allows both teachers and students to develop global perspectives.

•Calling for International Service

The MOE aims to encourage local students to participate in international community service projects and volunteer work during summer and winter breaks, in the hope that students will become more responsible and develop new perspectives.

•Pushing for Cross-Strait Interaction

The MOE will continue to encourage academic exchange between Taiwan and China by allowing Chinese students to enrol in Taiwan’s universities and graduate schools. Academic credentials from certain mainland institutions will also be recognised.

