



# SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

*Taiwan's senior secondary education system includes senior high schools and senior vocational schools for students 15 to 18 years old. Students acquire academic knowledge and develop their interests through either track, which offers a great variety of educational content, vocational skills and extracurricular activities.*

## Senior High Education

Attending 3 years of senior high school is part of Taiwan's mainstream educational system. Prior to the implementation of multi-channel admission into colleges and universities, in 2001, senior high schools focused on preparing students to pass the Joint University Entrance Examination (JUEE).

More recently however, admission into colleges or universities is through the system of recommendation by senior high schools, by taking a test given by the departments of colleges and universities, or by taking the JUEE.

Senior high schools also encourage their students to take part in extracurricular activities such as student councils, NGOs

and international competitions. Acceptance into better universities partly depends upon involvement in such activities.

For students who are undecided on whether to follow an academic or a vocational track for their secondary education, the MOE established several experimental comprehensive high schools in 1996, offering the usual secondary school academic content as well as vocational skills courses.

Students who complete 160 credits can continue their studies at 4-year technical colleges, 2-year junior colleges, or at universities. They can also choose to work, as they would have gained adequate vocational training.

## 1. Promotion of 12-year Compulsory Education

Currently, Taiwan mandates 9 years of schooling from 6 to 15 years old. In order to actively enhance the national and international competitiveness of junior high school students, the MOE promotes 12-year compulsory education, which extends compulsory education from 9 to 12 years. This began in 2008.

In January 2011, President Ma Ying-jeou stated that Taiwan was to provide students with as many learning opportunities as possible to prepare them for 21st century living. The MOE thus established the current 12-year compulsory education phase to be completed by 2014. By August 2011, 300,000 students entering junior high school will benefit from this policy.



With a more flexible college/university entrance system, high school students are encouraged to pass the entrance exam with high scores, and to cultivate versatility by strengthening their foreign language capabilities.

## 2. Promotion of Second Foreign Language Learning

The MOE has taken two important steps to incorporate the principles of global competitiveness into senior secondary education. First, the Ministry designed a global learning environment in 2002 that includes well-structured English courses. Second, the MOE encourages high school students to participate in international math and science competitions.

In 1999, the Ministry designed the five-year Senior High School Second Foreign Language Education Plan. During the first phase of this plan, 22,623 high school students took lessons in a foreign language. Eleven years later, the number of students learning a foreign language climbed to 89,306.

The MOE announced the third phase of this plan in 2010, encouraging students to participate in language and cultural exchange



and take foreign language proficiency tests. In 2010, 248 students took and successfully passed foreign language proficiency exams in Japanese, French, German and Spanish. This was an increase of 2.8 times the number of students who took exams in 2008.

### 3. Nurturing Talent in Math & Science

From 1992 to 2011 Taiwan high school students taking part in the International Mathematics and Science Olympiads (IMSO) won 217 gold, 251 silver and 176 bronze medals as well as 89 honorable mentions. The outstanding achievements of contestants from Taiwan always make international headlines.

To further promote science education, the MOE offers a project to cultivate talent through science competitions. In July 2011 Taiwan hosted the 22nd International Biology Olympiad (IBO), finishing second in the final standings with four gold medals.

### Senior High Vocational Education

#### 1. Unified Tuition Fees for All Students

Vocational students are now able to attend, previously, unaffordable schools thanks to unified tuition. Created to ease financial burdens on lower income households, this new policy also benefits students attending senior

vocational high school with family incomes under NT\$1.14 million, who are exempt from tuition.

### 2. Industry-Academia Partnership Program

Technological and vocational education is offered at senior vocational high schools, junior colleges, colleges and universities of technology. Students at the senior vocational level develop vocational skills and career aptitudes; college-level students acquire a more advanced vocational education based on theoretical principles; and students at universities of technology sharpen their vocational skills and receive training to help them to write and produce quality academic papers.

Students who graduate from senior vocational high schools or junior colleges are generally prepared to start a business, hold employment or to pursue a degree at a university of technology.

To narrow the gap between industry and academia, in 2008 the MOE expanded the industry-based content of school curricula to intensify cooperation between private firms and schools and help students find a job at the partner companies after they complete their professional training.



## Secondary Education Helps Taiwan Students to Excel

### Huang Kai-chi, 16, Taipei Sophomore, Taipei Municipal Jianguo High School

In December 2010, six Taiwan students won four gold and two silver medals at the International Junior Science Olympiad (IJSO), a competitive examination open to students 15 years old or younger from all over the world. Basic math and science subjects (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Earth Science) had representatives from Taiwan, in them.

These students' outstanding performance pushed the Taiwan Team to finish first among the 35 countries, that sent a total of 180 students to compete in the event. Taiwan's performance caught the world's attention.

Among the participants, Huang Kai-chi, then 15, won the most awards – a gold medal, the “Best Theory Winner,” and “Overall Winner Award.”

Huang explained that he had been interested in math and science since childhood.

After entering secondary school, he began to acquire more and more knowledge about math and science, and ended up participating in many science contests, which further developed his interest in the world of science.

To prepare for the 2010 Nigerian IJSO exam, Huang and other students trained as a team coached by Lo Pei-hua, an associate research fellow for the Science Education Center at National Taiwan Normal University.

According to Lo's observation, Huang was always focused and showed an exceptional ability for critical thinking and problem solving. His perseverance was outstanding.

“Taking part in this IJSO test helped me broaden my horizons and gave me an opportunity to challenge myself,” noted Huang, with a broad smile.





## Young Amateur Golfer Shows Professional Potential

**Hung Chien-yao, 19, Amateur Golfer  
Alumnus of the New Taipei Municipal San-chong High School**



Taiwan amateur golfer Hung Chien-yao, was 18, when winning a bronze medal at the Men's Individual at the 16th Asian Games, which took place November 17-20, 2010,

in Guangzhou, China. His outstanding performance helped the Taiwan team to finish third behind South Korea and India.

“Taking part in international tournaments has helped me to learn a lot from other pro golfers, especially on how to control my emotions when under pressure.”

While studying in high school, Hung had to juggle many tournaments with his schoolwork. “My teachers and my father kept encouraged me, I was lucky because of the interest they took in me. Also, many of my classmates were specializing in sports, like tennis, taekwondo and fencing. We all supported each other.”

“Someday,” Hung said, “I hope to be able to play professional golf like Yani Tseng, who held the world’s number 1 ranking in women’s golf. She is my role model.”