

International Cultural and Educational Exchanges



The MOE has long been viewing international academic and cultural exchanges as effective ways for promoting understanding of peoples of different nations. The MOE considers these opportunities helpful in cultivating education, which serves as the foundation of any nation, and in producing educated individuals, who make up the cornerstone of national development.

The MOE established the Bureau of International Cultural and Educational Relations (BICER) in 1947 to promote academic and cultural exchanges at both the domestic and international levels. Since its establishment, BICER has set up

four sections, overseeing the evaluation of foreign studies. A total of 22 overseas service offices were created. Two special representatives were appointed to help raise the MOE's global educational and cultural goals.

To promote international cultural and educational collaboration, BICER assists colleges and universities to enter into academic cooperation with other foreign institutions of higher learning.

BICER also sponsors international scholar exchange programs, organizes bilateral conferences on higher education, encourages Taiwan specialists, academics and doctoral students to



International educational exchanges offer foreign students a variety of activities that enable them to know Taiwan's history, language, customs and food.

participate in international academic conferences abroad, promotes the activities of the Southeast Asian Academic Association and participates in exchanges involving major international academic organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), and Education International (EI).

Overseas Study on Government Scholarships

To broaden the perspective of Taiwanese students, the MOE has been promoting two-way overseas study programs. It offers government scholarships to encourage Taiwanese students to study abroad. At the same time the Taiwan Scholarship Program seeks to attract foreign students to study in Taiwan.

To encourage Taiwanese students to study abroad, the MOE set a budget of NT\$280 million in 2004 and over NT\$450 million in 2005 for government scholarships. Moreover, the MOE offers

government loans with low interests to students from lower-income families to encourage them to pursue postgraduate studies abroad.

Study in Taiwan

Before foreign students come to study in Taiwan, they should understand the advantages of studying in Taiwan. One of the MOE's most important tasks is to make known the advantages of seeking education in Taiwan.

Taiwan is an open and free society. Thus, it provides a better and more comfortable learning environment both on and off campus.

Taiwan's learning environment should be the most important reason why foreign students choose to study in Taiwan. Many students indicate that they like studying in a much more westernized and free society, which Taiwan offers.

Also, the friendliness and warmth of the people of Taiwan have contributed to attracting foreign students to study in Taiwan. Such invisible advantage can help foreign students and local students as well as residents build good relationships.

The MOE also subsidizes local colleges and universities, allowing them to establish scholarship programs to attract more outstanding foreign students to study in Taiwan. The MOE's subsidies reached NT\$26 million in 2004 and NT\$56 million in 2005.



Another one of the biggest advantages worth citing is that Taiwan possesses a strong information technology industry base and has a reputation for excellent software design. This also helps Taiwan dominate in Mandarin language digital learning.

Above all the advantages is the quality of teaching. Lots of students openly express their preference for Taiwan's quality of teaching. They are convinced that they are more likely to receive 'individualized' teaching in Taiwan and their relationships with the teachers in Taiwan tend to be more like friends, since Taiwan's teachers are more willing to help students solve problems related not only to their studies but also to their life. Contacts after classes tend to be more commonplace.

Taiwan Scholarship Program

Currently, BICER offers 'Taiwan Scholarships' to encourage exceptional foreign students to study in Taiwan. The purpose of the Taiwan Scholarship Program is to encourage promising students from foreign countries to pursue studies in Taiwan and to enhance educational and academic exchange. The scholarships fall under these categories:

- Undergraduate Scholarships: A stipend of NT\$25,000 per month per student will be provided.
 - Master's and Doctoral Program Scholarships: NT\$30,000 per month will be offered to qualified foreign students who want to pursue their master's and Ph.D. degrees at Taiwan's universities/colleges.
- Those applying under the Taiwan Scholarship Program must meet the following requirements:
- Must have an outstanding academic record and be of good moral character;
 - Must not be overseas Chinese students or foreign students who are concurrently holding Taiwan nationality; and
 - Must not be exchange students.

The Taiwan Scholarship Program jointly funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), National Science Council (NSC), the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) gave 555 foreign students opportunities to study in Taiwan in 2004 and 713 students in 2005. The MOE promises to keep increasing the designated number, reaching over



1,000 students by 2007.

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The MOE also provides incentives other than scholarships to attract more foreign students. For example, it encourages local colleges and universities to offer more courses that suit the needs of foreign students.

The MOE likewise engages in building a bilingual living environment for foreign students, including offering subsidies to allow schools to recruit bilingual instructors, offer more accommodations, simplify the visa application procedure,

and ease up regulations for foreign students to find work in Taiwan after they graduate.

Aside from establishing the website (<http://www.studyin-taiwan.org>), which offers foreign students useful information, the MOE has also published handbooks for their convenient use, during their period of study in Taiwan. Moreover, the MOE has also set up Taiwan Educational Information Centers in countries like the U.S., U.K., Japan, Korea, Thailand, France, Russia and Australia. By 2006, more information centers will open.

Interested students can log on to the MOE's web-





site (<http://www.edu.tw/english>) for the latest information and latest program guidelines about the scholarships. Or they can visit the official government website at <http://www.studyintaiwan.org> for advice on how to study in Taiwan.

Educational Exports

Taiwan's rich Chinese-language educational experience and its excellent teachers in Mandarin education have driven several countries to request Taiwan to export teachers. This means that the MOE offers incentives to attract and "import" foreign students to study in Taiwan, but also works at providing educational "exports" by sending teachers overseas.

The exported teachers take care of planting the seeds, which will sprout overseas. This is how Taiwan contributes to the international society through education, calling the whole process education diplomacy.

This past September in 2005 Taiwan signed a contract with the Thai government, to run a program organized by the National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) to export Mandarin teachers to

high schools and universities in Thailand.

In the near future the MOE is going to promote Taiwan's exclusive Mandarin education to the world, cooperating with universities in different countries in offering intensive Mandarin programs, setting up education programs for related degrees as well as dispatching more recruits to give Mandarin instruction overseas.

International Competitions

The MOE has been regarding Taiwanese students' participation in international competitions as a very important priority. Thus far, Taiwan has been performing very well in the international arena.

At the First International Junior Science Olympiad in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2004, six Taiwanese junior high school students collected five gold medals, one silver medal and a special award. The Olympiad attracted 173 students from 30 countries. At the 16th Olympiad in Informatics (OII) held in Athens, Greece, in 2004, four Taiwanese high school students won two gold and two silver medals.

Minister Tu said, “Taiwan has been participating in the OII since 1994. Since then, Taiwan’s performance has been improving every year. This year, Taiwan has proved to the world that it is No. 1 in both individual and group rankings, in such keen competitions.”

This not only demonstrates that the Taiwanese students’ performance in physics is improving every year, but also shows that the MOE’s effort in emphasizing the study of physics is bearing fruit. Above all, the MOE has successfully internationalized Taiwan’s education.

Learn Mandarin in Taiwan

Taiwan is the most advanced country in the world in terms of resources, options and the environment to learn Mandarin.

The MOE has made available the Taiwan Scholarship for foreign students interested in studying their bachelors or masters degree in Taiwan. Under the Mandarin Enrichment Scholarship Program, foreign students could receive NT\$ 25,000 per month that also covers the pre-requisite one-year Mandarin course before university. This program is expected to benefit 270 students from over 37 countries this year.

There are also incentives for groups who come to learn Mandarin in Taiwan during winter or summer vacations. Each group can have 10 to 15 people going through 6 to 8 week language courses. MOE will subsidize US\$ 5,000 per group.

In order to promote Mandarin in other countries, the MOE will subsidize the tuition fees and accommodations of Mandarin teachers of foreign primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. MOE will also help foreign educational institutions that need proficient Mandarin teachers to link up with overseas agencies to collaborate with them. MOE will provide Mandarin teachers employed overseas with US\$1,000 for living expenses and US\$300 for educational materials (in addition to the salary paid by the foreign educational institution).

Starting May 2006, MOE will subsidize overseas teaching apprenticeships of Mandarin Education majors with US\$500 per month, for a period of one year. The aim is to encourage students gain overseas teaching experience that would benefit their actual teaching or research in the future.

MOE and education authorities of other countries have signed mutual exchange memorandums for Mandarin and English teachers. They include education authorities of England, Canada, Australia, Thailand and the U.S. states of Iowa, Ohio, Michigan and Indiana.

Since past Mandarin educational systems have not been systematic, this year MOE has stressed Mandarin teaching as a priority policy. Besides the above projects, MOE also intend to establish within the educational system a certification of Mandarin abilities, verification of Mandarin skills and a certification of Mandarin teachers.

Take Mandarin teacher certification for instance. In the future MOE will award the certificate to those who qualify and pass a test. There will be standard proficiency test for foreign students who come to Taiwan to learn Mandarin. MOE also encourages Taiwan educators to compile attractive and practical Mandarin materials to assist Taiwanese educators in promoting Mandarin courses overseas.

For more information for foreign students to study in Taiwan, please visit the MOE’s website at <http://www.studyintaiwan.org/>.