

# Higher Education

In an era of globalisation, it is necessary for a small, densely-populated nation with limited natural resources like Taiwan to cultivate dedicated, innovative intellectual and industrial talent. This is an indispensable foundation for continued national development. The Ministry of Education has launched a series of policies and reforms to help universities and colleges strengthen international ties, earn international recognition and assume a leading position in the international academic community.







**Lee Wei-ling,  
21, Taipei**

**Teacher training equips  
me with the tools to  
educate young children**

#### **The Department of Child and Family Studies, Fu-Jen Catholic University**

I am really fond of children. Studying in the department not only enables me to understand the mentality of children, but also equips me with the knowledge to design useful and interesting courses beneficial to preschool children.

Students in my department are required to fulfil a one-year internship in kindergartens or child-related institutes in the junior year. For this, I have to write my own teaching plans, decorate the classroom and create teaching aids. Thankfully professors are always very kind and help me with problems and questions that arise.

Preparing teaching plans takes a lot of time and

effort, but it is always gratifying to see children smile when they learn useful phrases from me.

Fu-Jen teachers are passionate about sharing their knowledge and the school offers students a wide variety of academic subjects from which to choose. I plan to take courses in the Department of Textiles and Clothing during my senior year, so that I can be a designer and a teacher in the future.

Fu-Jen Catholic University is one of 28 universities that received the Excellence in Teaching and Learning award from the Ministry of Education in SY 2008.

The MOE launched the Excellence in Teaching and Learning Project in 2005 with the goal of upgrading the quality of teaching and the quality of higher education. In SY 2008, eleven public universities and seventeen private universities received grants from the MOE.



#### **1. College and University Entrance Exams**

Since 2000, the MOE has utilised a multi-channel college/university admission system for senior high school students and senior vocational school students. The channels include school recommendation, individual application and examination and placement. In the first option, high schools make a list of students whom they feel are highly qualified for specific college or university departments. In the second option, high school students apply to a maximum of five departments prior to testing. In 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 into colleges or universities based on test results.

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

University undergraduate programmes 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, while universities of technology focus on practical, specialised skills training. Programmes such as dentistry or medicine 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 part of on-job training can be granted extensions if they do not finish the required courses or do not complete their thesis/dissertation on time.



# Sung Ya-ping, 28, Taipei

**Diligent professors  
increase students'  
knowledge of ancient  
Chinese writing**

PhD Programme in the Graduate School of Chinese Literature,  
National Chengchi University

I have always been interested in old things. History and Archaeology have long been my favourite subjects at school.

I was first drawn to Etymology during my senior year at Chengchi University and developed a keen interest in studying and analysing oracle bone inscriptions, or Jiaguwen, of the Shang Dynasty (16th to 11th century B.C.) The records of Jiaguwen suggest that words have existed in China for more than 3,000 years.

I am constantly inspired by my diligent professors, who encouraged me to devote myself to academics wholeheartedly. Some professors in my department do not leave their research laboratories

until midnight every day. I think the positive learning environment is one of the reasons that I love studying at Chengchi University so much.

Seeing international students who are also interested in the field of Jiaguwen also encourages me to study harder. Their passion for Chinese culture may be stronger than that of some local students.

I feel that I have good colleagues in my academic pursuits and I hope to see more like-minded people take up the study of Jiaguwen.

National Chengchi University is among the eleven schools included in the MOE's Aim for the Top University Project.

The MOE launched the Aim for the Top University Project in 2005 and invested NT\$50 billion over five years in selected universities to boost their international competitiveness.

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

## Quality Enhancement of Higher Education



### 1. Increased Numbers of Higher Education Institutions

The number of higher education institutes, 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 2008, the number had gone up to 162, constituting 102 universities and 60 colleges. There was also a rapid increase in the number of private colleges due to the upgrade 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 policies, including the Excellence in Teaching and Learning Project as well as the Aim for the Top University Project, that reallocate educational resources and help colleges and universities establish their own characteristics and strengths so as to compete with internationally renowned universities.





## Fostering a Global Vision



### 1. Understanding Taiwan in the Curriculum

Twenty years ago, there was hardly any educational material about Taiwan. In 1990, the MOE started 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 offered. Some universities now teach courses such as oceanic science and culture, ocean literature and deep-sea diving.



### 2. English-Taught Courses

With the increase of foreign students studying in colleges and universities, 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.

### 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 aimed to foster international exchange activities; improve students' foreign language capability; increase appreciation for the arts, sciences and maths; and develop 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 broad 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.

## Celebrities from Technological Education



Wei Te-sheng, left, and Ni Fu-te, right, have gained global fame and brought honor to Taiwan.

Many people with a technological and vocational education background have become successful in the business, sports and film industries. Wei Te-sheng, Director of Taiwan's most famous and well-received movie, "Cape No.7", studied electrical engineering at the Far East Junior College of Technology (which was granted university status and changed its name to Far East University in 2006). Wei's interest in history prompted him to make films that featured Taiwanese historical themes.

Ni Fu-te, the first local baseball player to have made the jump to the U.S. Major League Baseball after starting his career with Taiwan's Chinese Professional Baseball League, attended National Chiayi University (which the MOE upgraded from National Chiayi Junior College of Technology in

2000). Ni is the sixth major-leaguer from Taiwan. The left-handed relief specialist signed with Detroit Tigers in 2009.

Kuo Hong-chih, another player in the MLB, studied at Nan Ying Vocational High School of Business & Technology. He is the first Taiwan-born left-handed pitcher who has made it to the big league and the first Taiwanese player to hit a home run in the MLB.

These celebrities have become models for students considering developing a professional skill through vocational education. The MOE has earmarked further funds and resources to assist vocational schools in upgrading their facilities and teaching content.