

Study in Taiwan

The number of international students in Taiwan has more than doubled from around 8,000 in 2004 to 29,776 this year, according to the latest statistics issued by the Ministry of Education (MOE) for the SY 2008-2009. This includes those who have come to Taiwan to learn Mandarin, those working towards a degree and students on exchange programmes.

The MOE established the Bureau of International Cultural and Educational Relations (BICER) in 1947 to promote international academic and cultural exchange and provide foreign students wishing to study in Taiwan with services relating to applying for government scholarships and obtaining more information about Taiwan.

The MOE considers internationalisation to be a significant part of higher education and recruiting greater numbers of international students as a more conventional and direct approach for creating an internationalised environment on school campuses.

The number of English-taught programmes and courses in Taiwan is on the increase, with most universities now offering such classes. For example,



National Taiwan University, National Chengchi University, National Tsing Hua University, National Chiao Tung University and National Sun Yat-sen University have all put together programmes in a variety of subjects ranging from science and literature to social science and other courses for foreign students to choose from.

At the same time, the Foundation for International Cooperation in Higher Education of Taiwan (FICHET) touts Taiwan as an ideal study destination. Reasons for this include Taiwan being a highly democratic country in the Chinese-speaking world and also a society rich in both cultural heritage and advanced technology, as well as the convenience brought by an integrated transportation system which enables accessibility to nearly all corners of the island.

The physical environment in Taiwan can be roughly divided into two parts: the flat to gently





rolling plains in the western third of the island, where 90% of the population lives; and the mostly rugged, forest-covered mountains in the eastern two-thirds. There are seven national parks showcasing the diverse terrain, flora and fauna of the archipelago.

In addition, Taiwan is rich in terms of the diversity of its biological species, boasting more than 50,000 endemic species, or 2.5 percent of the world's total, according to a survey released by the Council of Agriculture (COA) in July 2009.

The hospitality of the Taiwanese people is widely recognised among foreign students and visitors and therefore forms an integral part of the life experience of those who have spent time in Taiwan.

The following pages introduce the major scholarships awarded and present stories from foreign students of different cultural backgrounds, who share their views upon education in Taiwan.

Scholarships

Taiwan Scholarship

Since 2004, four government agencies, the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) and the National Science Council (NSC) jointly established the Scholarship Programme of Taiwan to encourage outstanding international students to undertake degree programmes in Taiwan.

Types of Taiwan Scholarship

A. MOFA Scholarship (for undergraduate or postgraduate programmes)

- Recipients are from countries which have diplomatic relations with the R.O.C. (Taiwan), or from those countries specified as diplomatically favourable by MOFA.
- R.O.C. Embassies or Representative Offices can award a pre-degree Mandarin Language Enrichment Programme (LEP) Scholarship upon application by scholarship recipients.
- International airfare for economy-class, direct-route and round-trip flights, plus a monthly stipend of NT\$ 30,000 (approximately US\$ 882).

B. MOE Scholarship (for undergraduate or postgraduate programmes)

- Recipients are from countries other than those specified under the MOFA Scholarship.
- R.O.C. Embassies or Representative Offices can award a pre-degree Mandarin Language Enrichment Programme (LEP) Scholarship upon application by scholarship recipients.
- A monthly stipend of NT\$ 25,000 (approximately US\$ 735) for undergraduate or LEP study, or NT\$ 30,000 for a postgraduate programme.

C. NSC Scholarship (for postgraduate programmes)



- Recipients are from countries other than those specified under the MOFA Scholarship.

- A monthly stipend of NT\$ 30,000.

D. MOEA Scholarship (for postgraduate programmes in areas involving science and technology; for example, physics, chemistry, mathematics, engineering, medicine and agriculture)

- Recipients are from countries other than those specified under the MOFA Scholarship.
- A monthly stipend of NT\$ 30,000.

Application

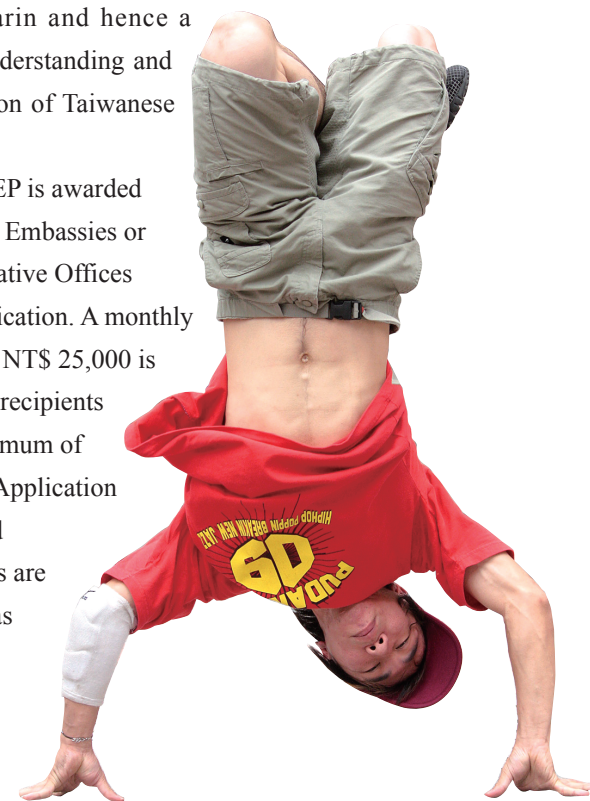
The application period is from February 1st to March 31st each year, unless individual Taiwan Representative Offices specify otherwise. For application guidelines and forms, scholarship types and quotas, as well as information about the selection process and outcome announcements, applicants may contact a Taiwan Representative Office directly at the end of January. Applicants must send their completed documents to the Taiwan Representative Office closest to the country of their permanent residence.

Mandarin Language Enrichment Scholarship

The MOE established the LEP Scholarship in

2005 to encourage students and individuals to learn Mandarin in Taiwan. While providing language study opportunities for Mandarin Chinese and Taiwanese culture at university or college-affiliated Mandarin training centres, this programme also aims to help scholarship recipients acquire a better command of Mandarin and hence a greater understanding and appreciation of Taiwanese culture.

The LEP is awarded by R.O.C. Embassies or Representative Offices upon application. A monthly stipend of NT\$ 25,000 is offered to recipients for a maximum of one year. Application period and procedures are the same as above.





Amandine Dubois (26)

Journalism Department, National Chengchi University

Amandine Dubois received her Master's degree from the Journalism Department at National Chengchi University (NCCU) this summer. Her thesis is a documentary film recording the international collaboration of a play by French and Taiwanese puppet companies.

The play, entitled "The Box" (La Boite), tells a love story in and around a huge box on stage. Dubois' film chronicled their collaboration in both Taiwan and Lyon, France.

"My non-fictional film depicts the encounter between people from both cultures and tries to give some insights into the exchanges and the process of mutual understanding," says Dubois.

"In addition to showing part of the representations and rehearsals from both sides, my work tries to offer the audience a context in which to look at two long-standing puppetry traditions," she continues.

Dubois started filming in January 2008. The time she spent with crew members from both puppet

companies allowed her to observe both cultures closely. Therefore, the documentary film also reveals the problems facing this heritage in terms of carrying on in modern times.

"I think I am lucky to have met people who were very enthusiastic towards my project and to whom I am very grateful," she says.

"Montage is the most time-consuming part of the whole process," she muses. "I had to listen to the dialogues repeatedly before I could decide which parts to keep or leave out."

"Overall it was a great training experience for me," she adds.

Dubois came to Taiwan five years ago after taking Chinese Literature as her major at university back in France. She received an LEP scholarship for the first year in Taiwan and continued her Master's studies in journalism with support from the Ministry of Education.

"I started learning Chinese in France during

my high school days," she says. "After years of dedication, I still think my Chinese is not good enough."

"The wish to pursue further studies in Chinese is the reason that brought me to Taiwan."

Dubois said she enjoys the location of NCCU, which is at the foot of Chihnan Mountain; in addition, the equipment and facilities provided have definitely made life on campus very comfortable.

"In my experience, the school faculties have always been helpful whatever I needed," she says. "I am particularly grateful for the secretary in my department, who helped me out with a lot of administrative formalities."

Dubois thinks that in terms of education, Taiwan is attractive because of the diversity of programmes in which foreign students can enrol for Bachelor's or Master's degrees. Meanwhile, she feels her life at the university has become more cosmopolitan due to the exchange and scholarship programmes offered by the NCCU and the MOE.

Besides school work, Dubois likes to travel. She made use of the breaks between semesters to visit

different parts of Taiwan, as well as offshore islands such as the Orchid Island.

Her adventures include one summer when she and a friend took their bicycles and went all the way from Taipei to Kenting in Southern Taiwan to attend a music festival.

"Taiwan is a truly beautiful country," she explains. "Every trip I made around the island and the nearby islands has become a great memory full of interesting anecdotes."

"Living in Taiwan not only allowed me to discover and learn more about Taiwanese culture, but also, because of my interactions with people of other nationalities, it has broadened my vision and my understanding of the world."



Dubois, six from left, enjoys a group outing to Yilan with her classmates in NCCU.

Samantha Daniel (24) Saint Kitts

Department of Life Sciences,
National Chung Hsing
University

Samantha Daniel is a bright young lady who has just finished her Bachelor's Degree in Life Sciences at National Chung Hsing University, Taichung City, this June.

"I have known where Taiwan is on the map since I was a child," says Daniel, "but studying here is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The 24-year-old Taiwan Scholarship recipient from Saint Kitts explains she has been lucky in that whenever she needed help, there was always a Taiwanese classmate willing to offer a hand.

"My university is famous for Life Science and Agriculture," she says. "Because of the diplomatic ties between Saint Kitts and Taiwan, my education is fully covered by the Taiwan Scholarship."

Daniel signed herself up to compete in the Mandarin and Taiwanese Speech Contest for Foreigners this May. Out of almost 100 contestants, Daniel impressed the judges by showing absolute confidence in the delivery of her speech. She was selected for the finals and won second place in the end.

"I told myself to do something before graduation," said the young and lively woman after she finished her speech, "and this is it."

"I felt nervous about the competition, but once I was on stage, I felt relaxed."

When Daniel is not busy learning Chinese or running experiments in the lab, she likes to sing. Karaoke is rare in her native hometown; thus

spending a couple of happy hours singing with friends has become her favourite pastime in Taiwan.

"I always learn a new Chinese or Taiwanese song each visit," she says. "Sometimes my friends would show me lyrics in advance so that I could learn them before singing."

After her graduation ceremony, in which she delivered a speech on behalf of the foreign students in her school, Daniel is moving on to pursue further studies in medicine in the U.S.

"I know I am going to miss the people, how friendly and passionate they are," she says, "because I have enjoyed spending my past five years in Taiwan."

She added that she would start packing only a week before leaving, to prevent her from crying too much.

"I think it is better that I cry after I board the plane for home."

