

# Higher *Education* in Taiwan

2015-2016



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Prepare for the

# Future

with Innovation  
and Creativity

**In** 2015 the MOE launched the Education Innovation Action Year. This is centered on policies and measures to vitalize teaching and learning to give students even better education services, and more importantly, to help bring about changes in students' thinking and action.

Taiwan's development has undergone an era of challenges. The government has responded by investing in educational development over a long period. Taiwan's investment in education is 5.7% of total GDP, which surpasses the 5.1% spent in Japan, and higher education expenditure amounts to 1.9% of total GDP, which surpasses the 1.5% average of OECD countries. Taiwan's higher education sector is characterized by its excellent facilities and resources, teaching staff, and climate of academic freedom. We are very proud of the increasing international recognition that this is drawing.

In the 2014–2015 Global Competitiveness Report compiled by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Taiwan ranked 13th overall out of the 144 economies reviewed, and 12th for Higher Education and Training, one of the 12 pillars used to compose the Global Competitiveness Index. The 2013 Essential Science Indicators (ESI) ranked Taiwan's top universities in the global top 100 in the fields of information sciences, engineering, material sciences, ecological and environmental science, chemistry, pharmacology, toxicology physics, and agricultural sciences, and in the top 1 % in 19 fields. These results reflect the quality and achievements of Taiwan's higher education sector.

Taiwan's overall social environment has been experiencing steadily increasing prosperity, and education is no longer simply considered a means to achieving a comfortable standard of living. Seeking education for the pursuit of knowledge is now a factor influencing the quality of education. Nevertheless, in recent years Asian countries have experienced a fermenting problem of students abandoning their studies. They fail to gain a sense of achievement from exams, and by the same token, any sense of achievement they do gain from exams has little meaning in their lives. Despite the excellent higher education environment, in recent years we have observed an annual drop in the number of students going overseas to study for a degree, along with more students postponing starting a career, or lacking clear goals. Any large-scale investment must effectively improve student learning. We want educational innovation to bring about changes in students' thinking and motivation. Well-educated highly skilled people are a country's hope for the future, and the goal of Taiwan's educational innovation is to nurture highly skilled, articulate people, with a global vision.

The MOE has formulated a policy vision for 2015 with the following guidelines for the further development of our universities and colleges:



### **Strive for Teaching and Research Excellence**

Taiwan's universities and colleges have been focusing on developing high-end research, new approaches to teaching, and industry-academia collaboration, under the guidelines of two government higher education initiatives: the Aim for the Top University Project (launched in 2006), and the Promoting Teaching Excellence Program (launched in 2005).

The innovation, accumulation, rapid dissemination, and effective application of knowledge on a large-scale enable a nation to be globally competitive. Universities have abundant capacity to lead students to develop their skills to undertake cutting edge research, to experiment with different ways of teaching and learning, and to engage in industry-academia cooperation. So, in the course of their studies, students can identify personal areas of interest where they can establish expertise, as well as strengthening their logical and critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Ensuring that the potential of all students is properly catered for and tapped is an important goal of higher education (including post-secondary vocational education). To achieve this, training and education focuses on meeting the different needs of students in three separate categories: 1. fundamental skills training and education, 2. high-level specialist skills training and education, and 3. R&D elite training.



### **Nurture World-class Skilled Professionals with A Global Outlook & Mobility**

Taiwan is working together with international universities and research institutions, undertaking joint training, education, and research collaboration, to increase our students' and researchers' global mobility. In addition, universities in Taiwan are encouraged to recruit greater numbers of outstanding international students. Interacting with international students will strengthen the foreign language proficiency of our local students, heighten their awareness of very different cultures, and nurture an awareness of being global citizens, international vision and perspectives. These skills and outlook will greatly enhance their employability.

Universities and colleges are working to create an international, friendly learning environment, and at the same time they are offering their local students more opportunities to study abroad, for example as part of a student or research exchange, or institutional research collaboration. The government provides student loans, scholarships, and other incentives to give outstanding students who wish to study abroad an opportunity to realize their dreams. This also serves to nurture outstanding people of international stature and promotes Taiwan's international profile.

### **Construct A Diverse Multi-faceted Range of High Quality, Innovative Higher Education Environments**

Skilled professional people are a nation's capital. Taiwan needs to create friendly environments that will

strongly attract world-class people who will interact with and spur on the motivation and efforts of our own outstanding people. Our colleges and universities present a diverse range of environments, and they maintain excellent interactions with international research institutions and specialist organizations.

A noteworthy feature is how strongly the development of the university sector is linked with Taiwan's economy. Universities are well-placed to draw on their own research strengths, and establish close mutually supportive links with the industrial sector. The universities themselves become producers of national innovation, creating the people and technology that form the driving force behind technological and intellectual innovation.

At the same time, the Ministry of Education is guiding universities to shed traditional working models, and to innovate administrative operation modes, curricula, and teaching. The goal is to reshape the university paradigm and create a diverse multi-faceted range of high-quality innovative university environments, meeting different educational requirements. Moreover, universities must exercise their social responsibility more strongly. This will prepare us to take on the challenges of the future: in particular, the impact of lower birthrates, strong competition in the cross-border education sector, and other unpredictable approaches to learning conditions.

The arena where competition plays out for the skilled people nurtured at our universities is not confined to Taiwan, Taiwan's higher education strategy is to nurture professionals to international standards who see themselves as global citizens. Our focus is on developing excellence, enhancing global mobility, and increasing international interaction to nurture students who can, and do, reflect, adapt and innovate as they meet the challenges the future holds for us all. Similarly, our educational institutions will continue to present themselves to the world, open to positive change and improvement.



# The Strengths of Taiwan's Higher Education

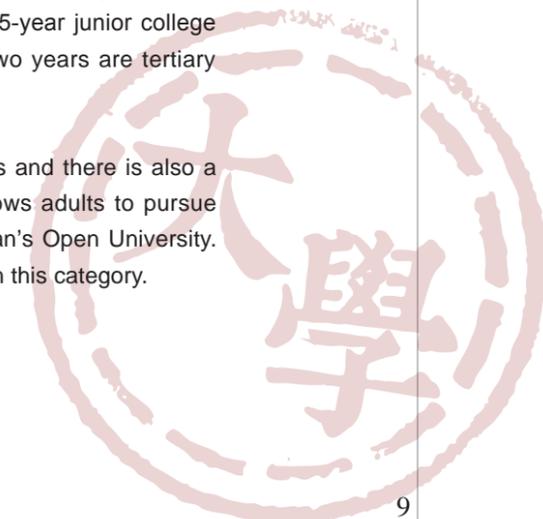
# Environment

## ○ Taiwan's Education System

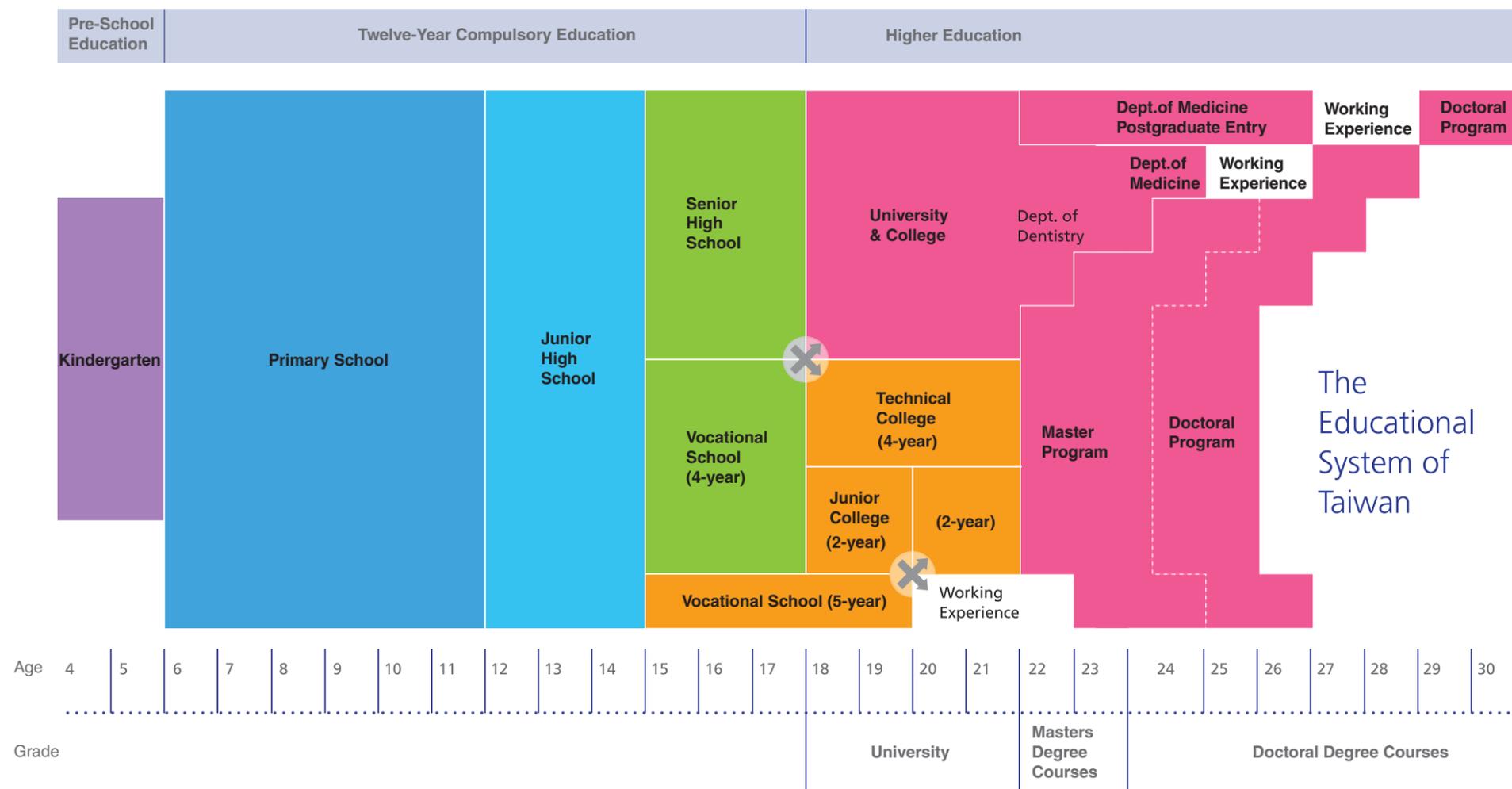
Taiwan's formal education system is divided into the following levels, with some overlap in the postsecondary and higher education stage:

1. Pre-school education - 2 years of kindergarten.
2. Compulsory education - 12 years of compulsory education, consisting of 6 years of elementary school, 3 years of junior high school, and 3 years at a senior high school, senior vocational school, or other specialist study area school.
3. Higher education – In Taiwan, this term encompasses post-secondary education as well as tertiary education. Junior colleges offer vocational education and training in vocational areas. 5-year junior college courses represent an overlapping area: the first 3 years of a 5-year junior college course are post-secondary education, and the last two years are tertiary level.

Taiwan considers education and learning a life-long process and there is also a strong adult continuing education sector, part of which allows adults to pursue studies in the higher education sector, for example in Taiwan's Open University. Statistics provided in this document do not include students in this category.



**Fig.1 The Current Education System of Taiwan**



Higher education is offered by: junior colleges with 2-year courses; tertiary colleges; universities; institutes of science and technology; and other tertiary educational institutions. There are currently 161 higher education institutions in Taiwan, with more than 2,000 departments.

Taiwan's compulsory education offers separate streams. After completing junior high school, students enter the general senior secondary education stream, or the vocational and technical education system, as illustrated in Fig.1. Students in the general education

system enter general universities after their senior secondary education; those in the vocational and technical education system acquire specialized technical skills in senior vocational schools or in five-year junior colleges, and after graduation can pursue higher studies at a technical college.

Senior secondary school students generally enter university by one of two channels: by recommendation and screening, or through examinations. Students who take the recommendation and screening route must take the General Scholastic Ability Test (GSAT), and

then apply to individual universities. Admission is based on their performance in secondary school and GSAT results. In 2014, 68.3% of students entered university this way. Students can also take the College Entrance Examinations Center's Department Required Test (DTR) instead. In 2014, 31.7% of students did this.

Bachelor's degree programs generally require four years to complete. A second bachelor's degree in another major may then be completed in 1 or 2 years, and usually in 2 years. Some programs also require an internship lasting between 6 months up to two years.

Master's degree programs vary from 1 to 4 years, and doctoral programs generally take between 2 and 7 years to complete. In the 2014 academic year Taiwan had 1,037,000 undergraduate students, 173,000 master's degree students, and 31,000 PhD students.

Taiwan's higher education dual track system allows free switching between the general and technical education channels in either direction, thereby catering to the widest range of students' interests and aptitudes, and society's needs.

## ◦ The Four Great Strengths of the Higher Education Environment in Taiwan

### High Investment in Higher Education Allows Universities and Colleges to Develop Areas of Specialization

Government funding of higher education falls into two major categories: basic needs funding—including regular budget allocations, and subsidies toward private universities' scholarships and stipends, and national universities' operation funds; and strategic policy funding—including the Aim for the Top University Project, the Promoting Teaching Excellence Program, and plans for enhancing economic growth and expanding public construction. In the past, the main focus was on basic needs funding, featuring equal access, but in recent years, there has been an adjustment towards competitive injection funding of universities featuring excellence in teaching and/or research. This is designed to encourage universities and colleges to develop their particular strengths and areas of expertise to increase their competitiveness and performance focus (Fig.2).



Education in Taiwan enjoys strong government support. Total education expenditure rose by almost 20% from 11% of total government expenditure in 2008, NTD196.3 billion, to 12.5% in 2011, NTD235.5 billion, and Ministry of Education expenditure rose from 9% to 10% of total government expenditure. In the same period, Taiwan's GDP rose by 16%, from US\$400.1 billion to US\$464 billion. This clearly demonstrates the very great importance attached to education in Taiwan. (Fig. 3)

Fig.2 MOE Higher Education Budget Allocations 2004–2014

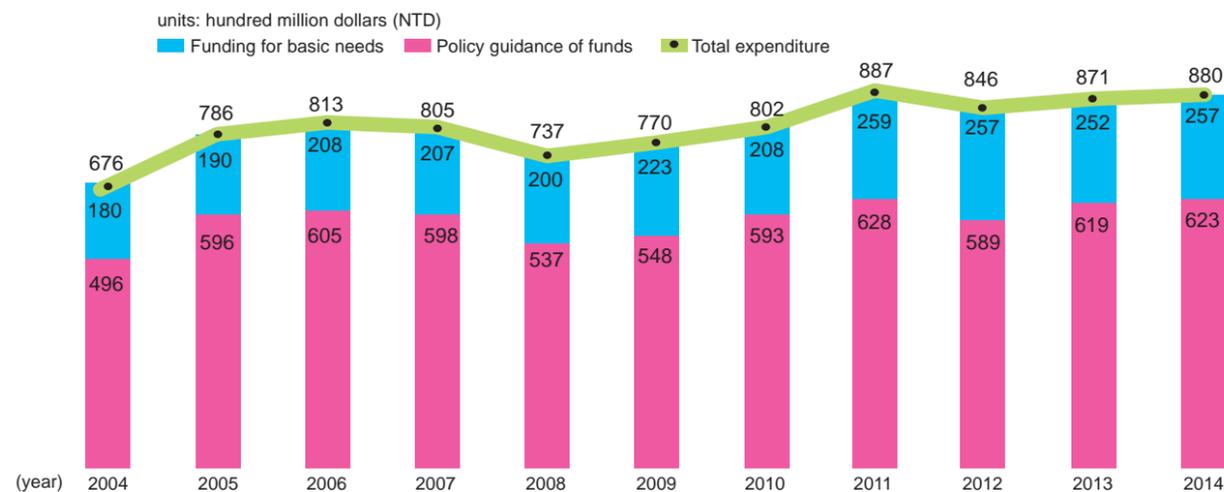
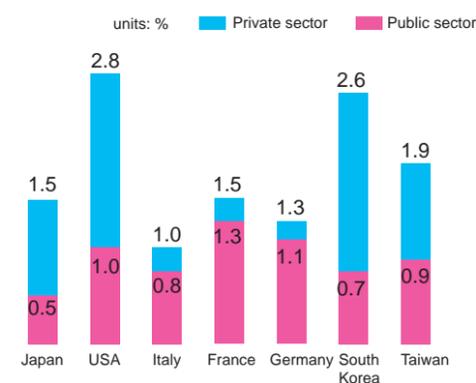
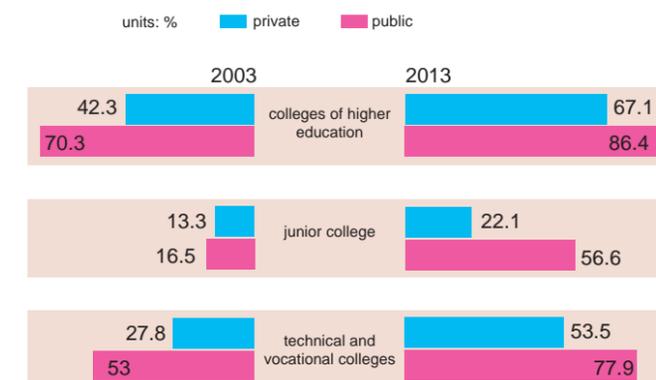


Fig. 3 National Higher Education Expenditure as % of GDP in Major Countries



Note:  
1. Taiwan domestic GDP data applies the Executive Yuan Central Accounting Bureau income tax statistics published in February 2014  
2. data from Germany in the year 2009

Fig. 4 Percentage of Tertiary Institutions with Teaching Staff with a PhD



Note: 'Teachers' refers to full-time teaching staff, not including assistant teaching staff

### International Affirmation of Excellent Teaching Staff

Upgrading the qualifications of teaching staff has been an important element of making quality tertiary education widely available to all of Taiwan's citizens. The policy guidelines and the associated assessment systems have noticeably improved the quality of teaching in universities, and a very high percentage of teaching staff have studied at top universities in the United States. Professors make up one third of all teaching staff.

By 2013, over 80% of the teaching staff in Taiwan's public universities had a PhD.(Fig.4) This represents a substantial increase of 15% in ten years, and professors made up one third of all teaching staff. In the Asian region, Taiwan is ahead of China and Hong Kong with the quality of its highly qualified university staff and has received considerable affirmation. This in turn has given universities in Taiwan an international vision, and innovative thinking and highly creative approaches to teaching.





### Enhance Students' Global Mobility and Provide Resources to Internationalize Campuses

Taiwan's higher education is highly integrated with higher education overseas, and so the range of opportunities available to study or work overseas is much broader for students with academic records or degree from a university in Taiwan. This is particularly the case for students who have completed a graduate program in Taiwan, who are applying to undertake a second master's degree or doctoral program or at a top university in Europe or the United States. They find that this gives them a distinct advantage. The Ministry of Education has put forward the following recommendations for ways to help students to quickly adapt to the cultural and language barriers international students often encounter.

- **Enhance students' cross-cultural experiences:** 46 universities in Taiwan have formal cooperative agreements and interaction with universities overseas, and the number and range of interactions continues to grow.

- **Improve graduates' English language skills:**

The majority of universities requires all undergraduates to pass English language testing, and more and more courses are taught in foreign languages, including English. This benefits foreign students and local students alike.

- **Subsidize universities' planned expansion of international student recruitment and their internationalization efforts:**

recent years have seen clear growth in the numbers of visiting international scholars and students. The number of international exchange students has grown by 115% in the last 5 years, and the number of degree students has grown by 83%. There are currently 32,216 from 134 countries or regions.

- **The Industrial Technology R&D Master's Program:**

This is a joint government – industry - universities initiative, designed to maintain the international standing and innovative drive of Taiwan's hi-tech sector, and help it enlist leading people from around the world. It features industry-university cooperative master's programs for foreign students, taught completely in English. After getting their degree,

students can step straight into jobs in industry.

- **Initiate international research study programs:**

The Taiwan International Graduate Program (TIGP) was set up by Academia Sinica in collaboration with a consortium of key national research universities. It offers interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs designed to provide an ideal scientific training and research environment for people from around the world who want to conduct advanced research in a superior academic setting. Academia Sinica is an extremely prestigious research organization; 7 of its academicians are Nobel laureates. TIGP graduates have been snapped up to work in prestigious bodies and companies, such as UC Berkeley, Stanford, Scripps Research Institute, Bruker Daltonics, and various research units at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

- **The Foundation for International Cooperation in Higher Education of Taiwan (FICHET):** FICHET was established in 2005 to support Taiwan's internationalization of its tertiary sector, and represent Taiwan internationally in higher education related activities.

### Outstanding Quality Higher Education and Affordable Fees Make Taiwan the Premier Choice in Asia

Higher education in Taiwan is diversifying. As well as giving the ever-important attention to imparting specialized knowledge and skillsets, and nurturing character and ethical behavior, it has a strong focus on linking education with business and industry through internships, and on international academic exchanges and cooperation. As a result it performs outstandingly in many fields. To give just 2 examples, papers by Taiwanese researchers ranked in the top 1% in 20 of the 22 Essential Science Indicators (ESI) fields of research in 2012, and National Taiwan University tied with MIT, ranking sixth in the field of IC design, ahead of Stanford University and UC Berkeley at the International Solid-State Circuits Conference (ISSCC) in 2010.

Taiwan's higher education offers students high-quality, world-class higher education at a relatively low, and affordable cost. Public and private universities charge fees, but university fees in Taiwan are significantly lower than in other developed countries. On average, public universities charge about USD\$1,925 per year, and private universities cost about USD\$3,550 per year. The costs vary depending on the department and course. Incomes in the United States and Japan are 2.5 to 3 times higher than in Taiwan, and the public university fees in these two countries are approximately 3 to 7 times higher, while their private university fees are 4 to 12 times higher. Among the four little Asian dragons: Taiwan's university fees and associated costs are only about 14% of those in Singapore, and 35% of those in Hong Kong, and medical school fees in Taiwan are 30% of the fees charged in Korea.

## ◉ Taiwan's Outstanding Higher Education Departments

University science and technology departments attract the highest number of students. This is understandable because science and technology are closely related to the demands of industry development in Taiwan. These are followed by departments in the arts and humanities. The most popular departments are in the humanities, biomedical science, electrical engineering and computer science, and business studies and management. These are outlined below.



### Humanities and Arts

The humanities and arts—education, arts, humanities, design, and so on—provide the all-important education and training in modern-day core competencies, which are vital for the healthy development of society. This is indispensable for developing the high value-adding service industries and innovative industries which our knowledge economy age demands. Internationally, the Chinese language and culture teacher training courses, art and design courses enjoy a high reputation.

#### ● Chinese language teaching

Mandarin Chinese and English are among the world's most widely spoken languages, and both are included among the United Nations' six official working languages. Taiwan offers a vibrant modern Chinese language learning and cultural environment, with lively teaching methods and materials, including digital learning, and excellent teachers. As a result, Taiwan is becoming a global destination for learning Mandarin Chinese.

#### ● Arts and design

Taiwan has performed very strongly in international competitions in the past few years in the arts and design field—including fine arts, music, theater, dance, visual arts, general design, product design, and spatial design. Arts education in Taiwan has developed beyond learning to create and appreciate. More emphasis is now being put on a multi-dimensional learner-centered approach, integrating

students' school-learning with their life experiences. There is also a focus on developing students' appreciation of their own distinctive local culture on the one hand and an international vision on the other.

### Biomedical Science

Biomedical engineering and agricultural technology are the two most popular subjects in the field of biomedical science. The Foundation for Higher Education Accreditation Center established the Taiwan Medical Education and Accreditation Committee (TMAC) in 2000 to undertake the accreditation of medical education in Taiwan, to increase international recognition of Taiwan's medical education, and to ensure that it meets leading international standards. TMAC has received international recognition of its quality: it has been recognized and accredited by the US National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA).

Biomedical industries are closely associated with the human body and health, and so expenditure in Taiwan dedicated to biomedical R&D has surpassed NT\$7 billion, more than 5% of Taiwan's total education budget. The biomedical sciences account for almost 50% of all the published Taiwanese scientific research papers that have been listed international in the Science Citation Index (SCI). This reflects the very high caliber of the people working in biomedical sciences in Taiwan.



## Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

Taiwan's vigorous development of hi-tech industries in electrical engineering, electronics and information technology has spurred active investment in related fields by every university. Electrical engineering and computer science is a very broad discipline, generally divided into approximately ten departments: computer science, control technology, electric power, electronics, electro-optics, electromechanical engineering, information and communications, integrated circuits and

systems, and semiconductors. A succession of series of policies targeting further development of information and communications have been rolled out since 2001. These have promoted putting more focus on innovation, tackling key issues, spurring development of information services, and continuing to train world-class professionals in these disciplines. This will attract more overseas students to Taiwan to study in these fields, and increase Taiwan's competitive position in the global information and communications services markets.



## Science and Engineering

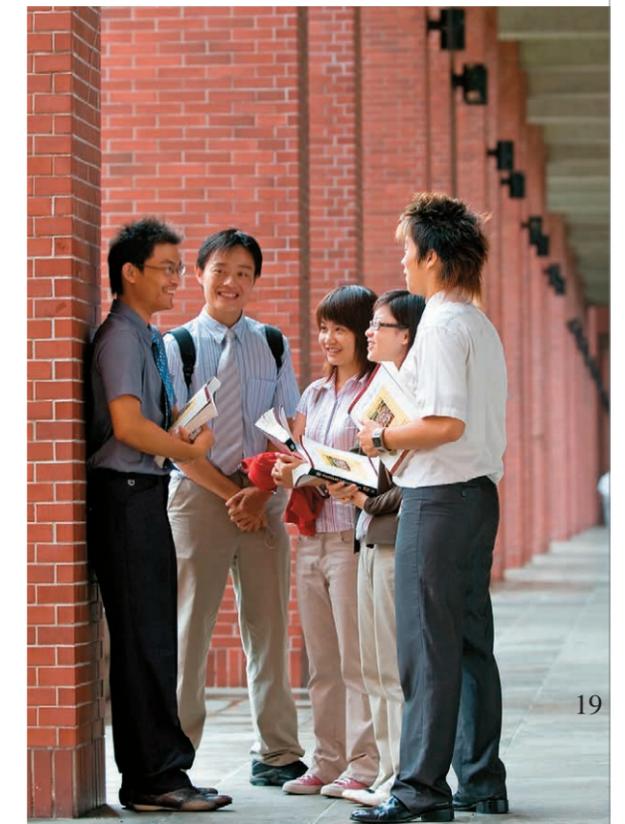
The broad field of science and engineering covers both studying the basic theories and their practical applications in the life sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, statistics, and computer science. The applied technology area includes training in engineering, industrial design, and construction. The people trained in these areas make an enormous contribution to research and industrial development. The Ministry of Education founded the Institute of Engineering and Education Taiwan (IEET) to improve the professional standards of people working in science and engineering, in 2003, along with the Engineering and Technology Education Accreditation process which IEET undertakes. Several universities in Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong ranked among the global top 500, and over 70 universities and 450 departments in Taiwan have received IEET accreditation.

## Business and Management

Business and management studies include accounting, banking and insurance, basic document management, business administration, business marketing, finance, logistics and distribution, and other aspects of management.

In recent years, the government has vigorously promoted accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the most prestigious US-based international body, to raise the quality of business administration education in Taiwan's universities and higher education colleges; to raise the international profile of Taiwan's business schools; and to extend opportunities for international cooperation.

By the end of 2014, 727 universities around the world and 30 in Taiwan held AACSB membership, and so far 12 of these 30 have obtained accreditation. Many more universities and higher education colleges are working to obtain accreditation, a reflection of Taiwan's higher education sector's determination to continue improving.



## ○ Taiwan's Major Higher Education Policies

Taiwan's higher education has seen vigorous development within its academic system. The main mission of higher education is to educate and train highly skilled professionals and maintain and improve national competitiveness. The policy initiatives outlined below are guiding the ongoing development of our higher education, to ensure that our higher education environment is open, capable of growth, and internationally user-friendly.

### Ensuring A Quality Higher Education Structure

Taiwan's Ministry of Education and universities jointly pooled resources to found the Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Association of Taiwan. This is responsible for ensuring the quality of higher education, and it has established cooperative relations with international professional evaluation and accreditation organizations. Its assessments are recognized by the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

The Ministry of Education announced a plan to reform the evaluation of universities from 2014, and authorized them to carry out their own evaluations. Each university can form evaluation committees to do so. This is designed to stimulate diversified development at both university and department level, and more closely align the relationships between evaluations and the university and its students. Evaluations can be followed by an immediate review of current teaching. At the same time the Ministry offers assistance to the academic associations associated with different disciplines to become professional accreditation bodies.

It has established specific accreditation criteria suited to each field. In due course such newly established professional accreditation bodies will be able to link up with associated international bodies. Taiwan already has a number of professional accreditation bodies that have links with international professional accreditation and evaluation organizations: for example, IEET in the engineering field, and AACSB for management. The number of such connections is expected to continue to increase, and this will help establish a high quality, highly professional, and independent higher education environment.

### Aim for the Top University Plan - Creating World-class Universities

Taiwan's Aim for the Top University Plan (ATUP) began in 2006, with the principal goal of creating internationally recognized top-level universities. It is now in its second phase with a NTD50 billion 5-year budget. The focus is on investing in 12 universities to help them reform and invigorate operational management structures, research development, training and recruitment of outstanding professionals, industry-academia cooperation, and international cooperation, and achieve the twin goals of building and fully exploiting the capacities of leading research centers at outstanding universities, and training and educating outstanding highly skilled people.

In the 2015 Best Global Universities Rankings, 5 of Taiwan's 161 universities and colleges are ranked in the global top 500. One is in the Asian top 10, and 5 are in the Asian top 100. Taiwan's higher education institutions are committed to meeting international benchmarks, and are engaging competitively in the region and the international arena, along with the world's finest universities.



Photo Provided :  
National Taiwan University Library





### Promoting Teaching Excellence Program - Making Universities Student-Centered Learning

The MOE extended its Promoting Teaching Excellence Program for upgrading the quality of teaching in universities, to support further improvements to teaching and learning, and curricula. This program is now in its third phase (2013–2016). The first two phases, between 2005 and 2012, were part of Taiwan's Golden Decade National Vision for turning Taiwan into a cultural super power and a higher education hub of Eastern Asia, and building up Taiwan's future competitive strengths. The Promoting Teaching Excellence Program was designed to help universities focus on their central fundamental task of teaching and institute their own mechanisms to optimize their efforts.

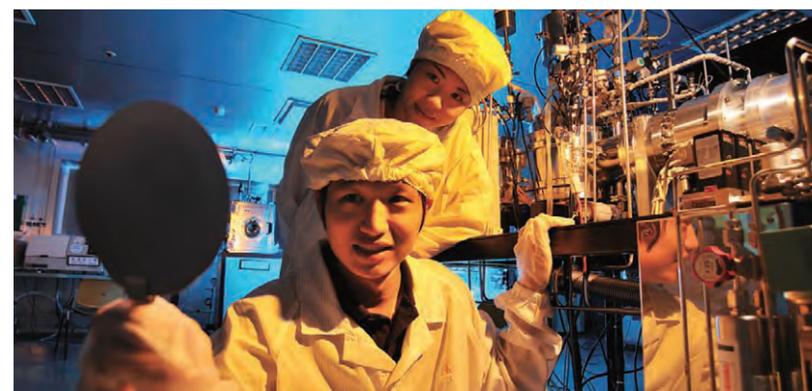
There are various industry-academia collaboration models in universities in Taiwan. All emphasize the substantial contribution that the academic sector can make to industry, and focus even more strongly on training highly skilled imaginative people for the workplace. Bachelor's and master's degree programs put great emphasis on nurturing entrepreneurship.

A comprehensive Innovative Entrepreneurship Taking Root in Higher Education Plan was launched in 2013. The plan covers everything from establishing and developing courses to cultivate innovative entrepreneurship, which integrate mentoring and tutoring by people in industry; investment of universities' entrepreneurial capital; technological support for R&D; and on-campus activities such as post-start-up incubators; to setting up entrepreneurial innovation centers in universities and colleges. Its goal is to see an entrepreneurial culture take root in campuses. 10 campuses have received subsidies to do so in 2014, and an innovative entrepreneurial approach is becoming standard practice.

The Industry-Academia Collaborative R&D Elite Training Plan launched in 2014 offers a 5-year combined master's degree and doctoral studies program. Students spend the first 3 years taking courses on campus, and the following 2 years involved in R&D work in an industry setting and completing their thesis. The PhD programs are closely aligned with actual industry needs, and this in turn has increased industry willingness to collaborate with universities and tap the R&D capacity these students have to offer. This industry-academia collaboration is a strong component of the development of Taiwan's higher education.

### Increase Government and Academic Involvement in Technological R&D, and Accelerate Industry Development and Transformation through Industry Academia Collaboration

Taiwan launched the Academia-Industry Collaboration Performance Incentive Program in 2007. This established models for operational systems, and mechanisms for determined theme-based R&D, project management, and sequences of processes for technology transfer, and the sharing of R&D results. Industry-academia cooperative education centers have been set up at 11 universities, with professional managers engaged to integrate the university's R&D resources, and technology transfer and incubation centers which provide a friendly and professional service platform for the industry sector. In the 3 years 2011–2014 the monetary value of university technology transfers to enterprises grew by 43%, and the associated R&D income grew by 15%. This is a great incentive, stimulating further industry development and transformation.



## ○ Taiwan's Higher Education Innovation Strategy

The knowledge-based economy is the new wave sweeping the globe, underlying and driving economic development. Science and technology and knowledge can be described as its fuel, and innovation is its driving spirit. Taiwan's higher education services compete strongly in the highly competitive international higher education market. Taiwan's universities offer high quality teaching staff and curricula, academic capacity, and facilities.

Liberalization and internationalization are the Ministry of Education's primary overall goals to innovate and transform Taiwan's higher education sector. Since the 2010 academic year, over 20,000 international students have been attracted to come to Taiwan to learn Chinese or study for a degree each year, and this number continues to rise annually.

### Liberalization

- Innovate education models, encourage universities to think about transforming teaching methods, and provide experimental education the

flexible legal framework it requires.

- Develop new frameworks for collaboration between universities in Taiwan and foreign universities in Taiwan. There are currently 4 types of educational delivery for bilateral university collaboration to establish and operate: 1. a branch university (or branch division) 2. an independent tertiary institute (generally specializing in one area) 3. professional degree courses, and 4. professional courses and/or programs (Fig. 5). The proposal is to broaden the regulatory space governing establishing and operating joint venture higher education collaborations, to thereby encourage Taiwanese universities to enter such collaborations with prestigious foreign universities, and make use of their existing resources.

### Internationalization

- Exporting Higher Education - Action plan to Expand Foreign Student Numbers  
Taiwan's universities can enrol foreign students

within their existing quotas. And to attract more, they are introducing mechanisms to internationalize their campuses, for example creating international programs as part of changing their current teaching and learning models, making programs more flexible, and entering collaborations and exchanges with foreign universities. There were 78,261 international students in Taiwan, in 2013, and it is estimated that the number will reach 100,000 by 2016, and 150,000 by the year 2021, comprising over 10% of the total higher education student population.

### • Higher Education for Students from South-East Asia

Taiwan's strengths in many academic fields, departments, and programs, its established research centers and institutes providing high quality research centers and institutes, and its well-established cooperation with countries in South-East Asia make Taiwan the choice of many students from South-East Asia. Taiwan's higher education has become an international education export commodity, with much interaction with the higher education systems in South-East Asian countries.

### • Facilitating Higher Education Interaction with the Mainland Area, and Becoming A Hub for Western Countries Entering Asia

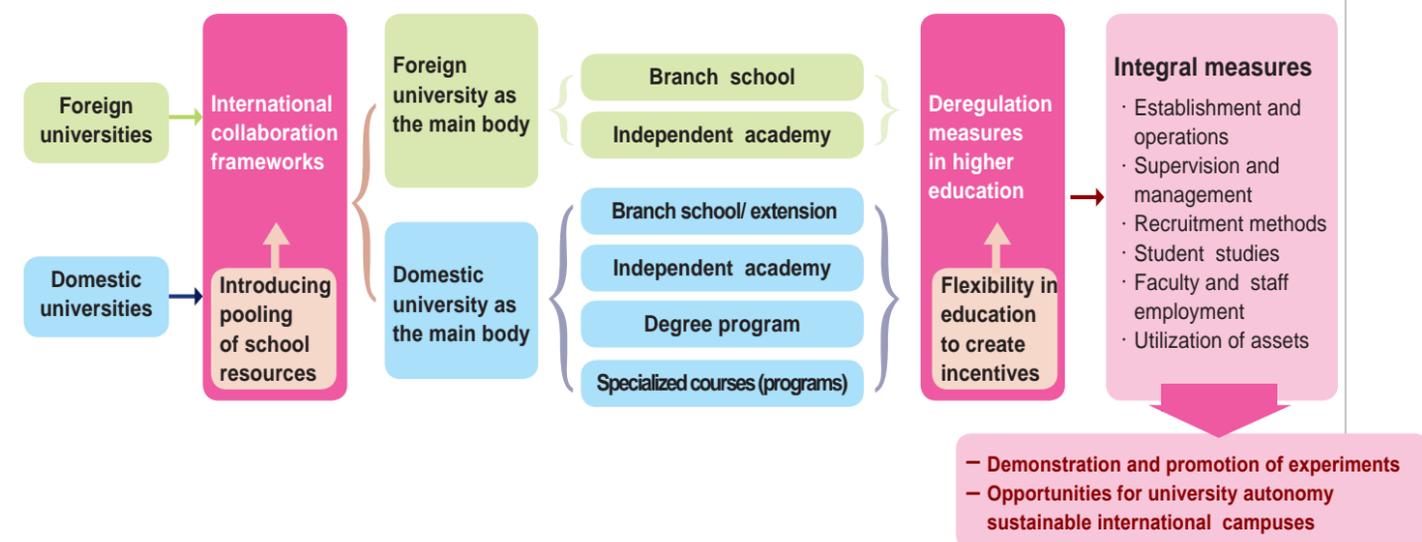
Taiwan has been working together with the higher education sector in mainland China, for example by recognizing academic records and awards from educational institutions there, and admitting students to study in Taiwan's universities. Cooperative interactions continue to expand, and in this way Taiwan is becoming a hub for Western higher education to enter Asia.

### • Becoming A Major Exporter of Chinese Language Education

Taiwan has an 8-year (2013–2020) plan in place to promote Chinese language education globally, to assist our allies and other friendly countries develop Chinese language education locally. This includes a "three-in-one" comprehensive export model, set up to support this: Chinese language teachers, teaching materials, and Chinese language proficiency testing are provided to learners all around the world.



Fig.5 Operational Model for Collaborative Educational Innovation





# Living & Studying Environment in Taiwan

## ◦ Studying in Taiwan

International students may encounter difficulties dealing with various matters in a different cultural environment, so the MOE and the universities and colleges have made available many resources toward helping overseas students deepen their understanding of Taiwan and acclimatize culturally, so that they can enjoy their studies in Taiwan. In recent years the government has also strongly invested in industry-academia collaboration, and relaxed the regulations governing overseas student internships in Taiwan, in order to attract outstanding students to stay in Taiwan after they graduate.

### Four Features That Make Taiwan An Attractive Overseas Study Destination

#### • Influence on Overseas Chinese Communities

An irreplaceable aspect of Taiwan's higher education is the valuable contribution it makes to training and education people from overseas Chinese communities. There are some regions in Asia where there are limited opportunities to enter university, or which have anti-ethnic Chinese policies in place, and many ethnic Chinese are therefore unable to attend university. The ROC has had strong proactive overseas Chinese policies in place since its founding, and there are many supportive measures for overseas Chinese students who want to pursue



collaboration mechanisms. This ensures their studies are well aligned with the needs of the workplace.

### High-quality Chinese Language Teaching

Taiwan has established a Chinese culture and language teaching education services industry, in order to spread understanding of Chinese culture, and Mandarin Chinese language teaching. Chinese language teaching is offered by: Chinese language departments and courses in universities, university Chinese language centers, foundations, non-profit organizations, short-term language schools, and Taiwan's representative offices overseas. Taiwan sends highly qualified Chinese language teachers overseas to assist secondary and tertiary institutions, and offers scholarships for students to come to Taiwan to learn Chinese.

Teaching Chinese as a foreign language differs from traditional Chinese education because the main clientele it caters to are foreigners who are not native speakers of Chinese. For example, materials and TOCFL proficiency testing are available in both the traditional character script and the simplified form to cater to overseas students' needs. One advantage of this is that foreign students who complete a Chinese language course in Taiwan will be able to use similar approaches to teach Chinese language courses in their own countries. They will also have gained a deeper understanding of many features of Chinese society which they can share with their students.

### A Friendly Multicultural Learning Environment

Taiwan is a multicultural society, made up of its indigenous peoples, and Chinese, Hakka and other immigrants, primarily from South-East Asia. As a result Taiwan has a diverse range of languages, cultural and religions, and multicultural education. Cultural tolerance is deeply rooted from childhood and there is a high level of acceptance of different ethnic cultures. Students of all nationalities participate enthusiastically in campus events, students clubs, societies, and cultural expos at every higher education institution. This further promotes mutual understanding among students, and gives international students a deeper appreciation and understanding of Taiwan's typical hospitality and friendliness during their time studying here.

their higher education in Taiwan. For example, reserved admission quotas, high quality education at a low cost, and accommodation assistance. Of course the Chinese-speaking learning environment is another attractive feature. Policies enable young overseas Chinese to attend university in Taiwan, and many outstanding ethnic Chinese elite professionals and leaders have emerged as a result.

### A Wealth of Industry-academia Collaboration Resources

Taiwan's pluralistic, multicultural, open economy and society, and its close economic ties to countries in Asia give it a strategic position in international trade. Taiwan has an extremely vibrant and energetic entrepreneurial culture: small and medium enterprises make up 98% of businesses. Universities are well-placed to attract business resources through industry-academia collaboration, and to transfer their R&D prowess and provide human resources to the industry sector. So, students have opportunities to establish connections with the industry sector while attending university, through internships and other industry-academia



### Admission Channels for International Students Coming to Study in Taiwan

#### • Degree Course Students

A wide range of universities and colleges welcome international applicants. Applicants can choose a university based on their personal interests and the courses offered. A list of universities and colleges, both public and private, can be found at the Study in Taiwan website: [www.studyintaiwan.org](http://www.studyintaiwan.org).

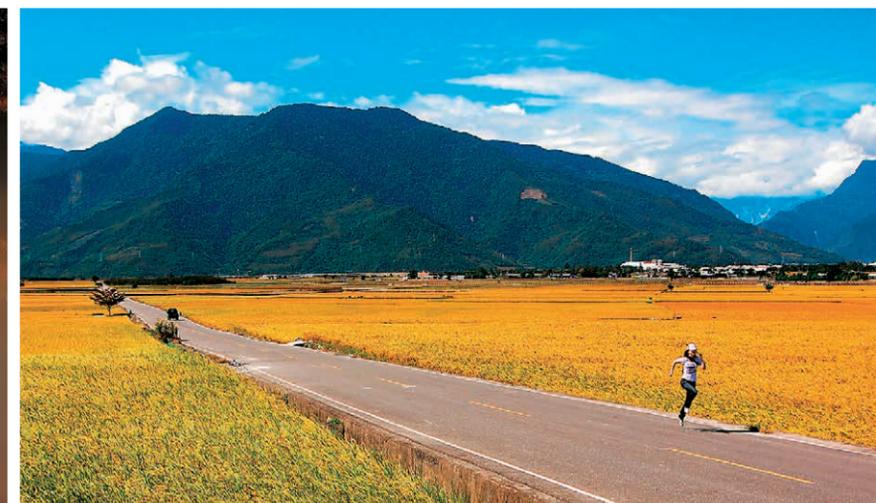
Students can submit their application for an undergraduate, master's degree, or doctoral program all year round. The deadline for applications to begin studies in the first semester of the academic year varies between institutions, but usually falls in March.

Please note: each institution has its own eligibility criteria, and its own procedures and standards for determining whether to admit applicants. Students who are offered a place must show proof they have medical and personal accident insurance or national health insurance cover at the time of registration.



### Documents for Application Submission

- Application form
- Photocopies of your academic records and awards (if these are not in English or Chinese, you must provide an English or Chinese translation)
- Financial statement
- Statement of purpose
- Letters of recommendation
- Application fee
- Any other required documents, specified by the university or college



### • Exchange Students

Most universities in Taiwan have undergraduate exchange student programs. Each university determines the nature of its exchange programs, when they are available, and their duration. International students with an interest in coming to Taiwan as an exchange student should make enquiries about such programs directly to the university they wish to attend.

### • Students Wanting to Learn Mandarin Chinese

With its wonderful blend of tradition and modernity, Taiwan truly is an ideal place to learn Mandarin! Imagine being able to practise what you've just learned, talking with native speakers on campus, in coffee shops, in convenience stores, or in dance clubs!

There are 30 Chinese language centers located at colleges and universities throughout Taiwan, offering classes year-round. These learning centers provide a variety of courses for students with all levels of proficiency. The instruction and teaching materials are designed to help students achieve their language goals. And students have innumerable opportunities to practice reading Chinese characters and speak Mandarin with the friendly citizens of Taiwan outside of class. Students can submit an application to take a course to learn Chinese all year round. Centers usually offer courses in four terms a year: spring, summer, fall, and winter.



### Documents for Application Submission

- A completed application form
- A photocopy of the photo page of your passport
- An original copy of your personal financial statement, issued within the last 6 months as evidence of sufficient finances to study in Taiwan (details of specific requirements will be provided by each center)
- Secondary school or higher level graduation diploma and/or admission letter (varies from center to center)
- Research proposal or study plan (varies from center to center)
- 2-4 photos (see each center's website for details of the size & number required)
- Health report
- Insurance certificate
- Application fee
- Any other required documents, specified by the center

### Excellent Learning Resources

#### • University Resources

Every university has units responsible for teaching, research and development, student services, counseling, and international affairs, which all offer international students comprehensive academic

and care resources. Almost all universities have established a tutor system to help international students adapt to Taiwanese culture and life, and offer them learning resources appropriate to their discipline.

#### • Online Resources

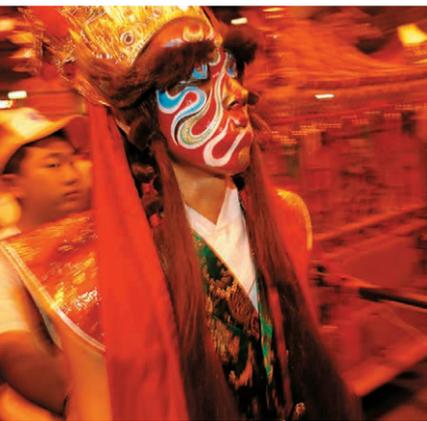
- **Ministry of Education official website (English language version)**  
<http://english.moe.gov.tw/mp.asp?mp=1>
- **Elite Study in Taiwan program office online application platform**  
<http://www.esit.org.tw>
- **Study in Taiwan**  
<http://www.studyintaiwan.org/>
- **University List Website, Listing All Universities**  
<http://ulist.moe.gov.tw/Home/Index>
- **Ministry of Education Taiwan MOOCs site**  
<http://taiwanmooc.org/>
- **Foreign Embassies and Missions in Taiwan**  
<http://www.mofa.gov.tw/en/default.html>
- **Ministry of Education Department of Higher Education**  
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<http://www.edu.tw/Default.aspx?WID=409cab38-69fe-4a61-ad3a-5d32a88deb5d>

## ◉ Living in Taiwan

### Cultural Features

Taiwan is a free, open, tolerant and highly accepting society. Taiwan's geographical position, together with different waves of immigration over the past 2,000 years, have created a largely immigrant culture made up of a diversity of ethnic groups. The influences of the foreign cultures of America, Korea, Japan, and South-East Asia can all be clearly seen, and tasted, in Taiwan. It is a vibrant cosmopolitan place where many cultures converge.





Cultural ingenuity has seen Taiwan become a torchbearer of Chinese cultural industries. Three distinctive aspects of Taiwan make it an innovator within the global ethnic Chinese world:

- **Taiwan has a seafaring culture and the all-embracing tolerance of an immigrant society, and so its people have free and open hearts and minds, a sweeping global outlook, and the willingness, courage and energy to innovate.**
- **Taiwan maintains its profoundly rooted Chinese cultural traditions, and universal education, and it values and maintains the temperate gentle spirit central to Confucian culture, all of which creates the humanistic foundation for innovation.**
- **Taiwan is a vibrant democratic country in the ethnic Chinese world. An environment of free production, and a free and open spirit is the lifeblood of cultural creative industries and the source of Taiwan's creativity.**

There are multiple levels and aspects to the culture of any society, and anyone who wants a deeper appreciation of Taiwan's culture needs to experience and explore its folk customs, values and ways of looking at things, religious beliefs, ways of living, its institutional systems, and cultural artifacts. Taiwan has preserved its profoundly rich orthodox Chinese cultural heritage. This is one of many important elements of education. Chinese culture and history remain compulsory subjects in all university liberal arts programs. Taiwan remains the only country in the ethnic Chinese cultural world that continues to use the traditional forms of Chinese characters as its official writing system. Overseas students who want to become translators or undertake research will need to master both traditional characters and the simplified forms. Chinese characters originated in Chinese society during the Shang dynasty and the traditional script which has been in use for over 3,000 years is an irreplaceable key to understanding Chinese culture.

### Religions and Cultural Festivals

Taiwan is a country with many different religious faiths: Buddhism, Christianity, I-Kuan Tao, Islam, Mormonism, Unification Church, Hinduism, and Taoism. Taiwan is a place where traditional faiths are maintained but which is open to religious thought from outside. The main traditional religious faiths are Buddhism, Taoism, and folk religions; the religious faiths from overseas include Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, and extend to Baha'i, Islam, and Tenrikyo. All of these have a space in Taiwan with its high religious tolerance.

Traditional temples, folk religious ceremonies and festivals are part of Taiwanese people's way of life, and their associated emotional and religious aspects have been, and continue to be, passed down through the generations. Today's profoundly distinct local Taiwanese folk customs are a testimony to this. Folk religious ceremonies are held all over Taiwan from North to South, all year-round, even in the largest cities.

The often lavish folk religion celebrations have an intellectual, artistic and entertainment role. They educate people, unite hearts and minds, and safeguard distinct local community flavor and identity. Another important aspect is their role in promoting and maintaining arts, and folk theater and traditional performing arts. Folk religious culture is like a microcosm of Taiwanese folk culture, featuring the many facets of Taiwanese religion, arts and culture. The celebrations offer visitors cultural experiences essential for understanding and learning about Chinese culture. Taiwan has also embraced all kinds of festivals from overseas, such as Halloween, Christmas, Songkran, Valentine's Day, and Indian cultural festivals, and these have gradually become very popular. Their exotic styles enable Taiwanese people to experience the diversity of various different cultures, and also cultivate a cosmopolitan global outlook.



### Humanistic Features

The most attractive feature of Taiwan is its warm, friendly people. Many foreigners are pleasantly surprised by the high degree of acceptance of Taiwanese people to foreign visitors. Their genuine kindness and warmly welcoming nature makes visitors feel they can be themselves in an unfamiliar and new country. Taiwan's vibrant commercial buzz and cultural creativity are also very refreshing. From the six-star hotels to the bubble milk tea shake outlet to be found on every street corner, and the highest density of convenience stores in the world, and the infusion of popular culture into traditional puppet are just a few examples of energetic commercial growth, constantly creating new variations of cultural styles and approaches to living which are unique to Taiwanese society.

Taiwan has a wealth of cultural treasures worth exploring, including the world famous National Palace Museum, the National Museum of History, the National Museum of Taiwan with its distinct local Taiwanese culture, the National Center for Traditional Arts, the Taiwan Indigenous Peoples Culture Park, and the Yingge Pottery museum. These are just some. All are important doorways to better understanding the distinct features of Taiwan and its humanistic culture. And as well as these wonderful places to visit, Taiwan has a flourishing local arts and cultural scene, for example the internationally renowned dance troupe Cloud Gate Dance Theater is from Taiwan. For more information on artistic events, exhibitions, and performances in Taiwan, please visit the following website: <http://event.moc.gov.tw/mp.asp?mp=1>.



# Regulations on *Admission* and Scholarship Applications

**In** addition to the scholarships offered by individual universities, the government also provides a range of scholarships and grants that international students and researchers can apply for, to attract more international students to study in Taiwan.

## • Application Eligibility Criteria

The Regulations Regarding International Students Undertaking Studies in Taiwan outline the procedures and time line for international students to submit an application, and assessment and recognition of foreign academic records and credentials. These are set out briefly below.

### **Eligibility**

The Regulations Regarding International Students Undertaking Studies in Taiwan define an “international student” as someone in one of the following four categories:

1. A foreign national who has never held Republic of China (R.O.C.) nationality and who does not have Overseas Chinese Student status at the time of their application.

2. A foreign national who also holds, or has formerly also held, R.O.C. nationality who meets the following criteria:

- They have never studied in Taiwan as an Overseas Chinese Student and have not accepted a place given by the University Entrance Committee for Overseas Chinese Students in the current academic year.
- They have formerly been an R.O.C. national but do not hold R.O.C. nationality at the time of their application. There must be at least 8 years between when annulment of their R.O.C. nationality was approved by the Ministry of the Interior and their application.

3. They are of foreign nationality and concurrently have permanent residence status in Hong Kong or Macao.

4. They are from mainland China and hold a foreign nationality.

Applicants in the categories 2 to 4 above must satisfy two additional criteria:

- They must have never had household registration in Taiwan.
- At the time of application, they must have resided overseas continuously for at least 6 years (or for at least 8 years continuously, if they plan to apply to study in a university department of medicine, dentistry, or Chinese medicine).



### Admission Procedure

International students considering attending a university or college in Taiwan should first enquire directly whether it admits foreign students, and if it does, ask for details of admission quotas and regulations, and how to apply.

International students are restricted to one successful application with international student status (i.e. being included in that part of the admission quota). After completing their program at the institute they applied to, they may apply for a master's degree or doctoral program. These applications are subject to rules set up by each university or college offering them. If they apply for another program at a level they have already completed as an international student, they have to follow the same admission procedure as local students.

International students applying for admission to a university or college must submit their application directly to the university or college of their choice during the designated application period. Successful applicants will be issued an admission letter, which they can present to apply for a student visa at an overseas representative office of Taiwan. When they enroll, new international students must present proof of medical and injury insurance cover valid for at least

4 months from the date they enter Taiwan, and they must join Taiwan's National Health Insurance Plan after 4 months. Please see the box listing the documents normally required to include in applications.

### Regulations Regarding the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Academic Credentials for Institutions of Higher Education

Applicants should ask the university or college they are applying to whether verification of documents included in their application is required. Please consult R.O.C. overseas consulates, representative offices, agencies, or other authorized bodies about verification of foreign academic records and credentials.

For more information about document verification, please visit the website of the Bureau of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.boca.gov.tw/mp?mp=2>.

For contact details of R.O.C. overseas consulates, representative offices, and related agencies, please visit the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.taiwanembassy.org/dept.asp?mp=2&codemeta=locationIDE#1>.

## ◉ Scholarships and Internship Opportunities

### Scholarships

Individual universities and colleges, and the government provide a range of scholarships for international students and researchers. For more information about scholarships and how to apply, please visit <http://www.edu.tw/>

### Internship Opportunities

The popularity of academic-industry cooperation has led to a great number of internship opportunities in Taiwan. International students who want to work part-time or do an internship in Taiwan, on-campus or off-campus, must first apply for and obtain a work permit. The Executive Yuan released the Action Plan to Keep Outstanding Foreign and Overseas Chinese Students in Taiwan to Work, and in mid 2014, the Ministry of Labor launched the New Appraisal System for Overseas Chinese and Foreign Students Remaining in Taiwan to Work, and began handling applications.

University graduates who wish to stay and work in Taiwan will now be assessed over 8 categories, and given a score. The categories include their education details, work experience, income, language proficiency, and professional area. Applicants with a total point score of 70 or more are eligible to be granted a work permit by the Ministry of Labor. A quota of 2,000 work permits was set for the first year of this new system. Please visit the website of the Workforce Development Agency for more information ([www.wda.gov.tw](http://www.wda.gov.tw)).

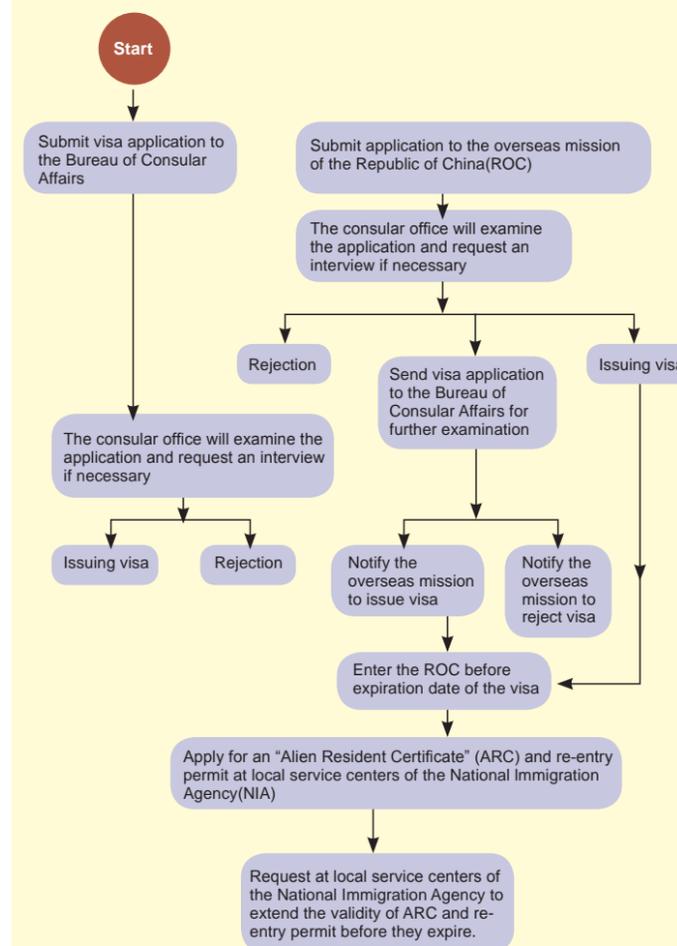
### Part-time Work Opportunities

Overseas Chinese and international students undertaking a degree program who want to undertake part-time work will have to first obtain a work permit by applying to the Workforce Development Agency. They are permitted to work for a maximum of 16 hours per week during the semester. This restriction doesn't apply during the winter and summer vacation.



## ► Studying in Taiwan: What You Need to Know

### Q1 How do I apply for a visa to study in Taiwan?



### Q2 What type of health insurance should I apply for in Taiwan?

Under the regulations of the Ministry of Health and Welfare it is compulsory for foreigners who hold a resident visa who have resided in Taiwan for more than 4 months to enroll in the National Health Insurance Plan. For more information about insurance, please visit the website of the National Health Insurance Administration (<http://www.nhi.gov.tw/>).

### Q3 What accommodation is available while I'm studying in Taiwan?

It is recommended that international students live on campus in the early days of their stay. If you want to rent an apartment, it's best and safer to search on rental websites that your university or college endorses, or go through a rental agency that provides a specialized service for foreigners. International students should ask the landlord for a bilingual contract in Chinese and English, and/or ask a friend from Taiwan to accompany them. Before signing any contract, students should read all the terms carefully to minimize the possibility of any future dispute. The rights of both parties will be further protected if the rental contract is notarized.

### Q4 How do I get around and handle daily matters in Taiwan?

Taiwan has extremely convenient public transportation. Bus stops, and the train, and Mass Rapid Transit system stations are all well-signposted in Chinese and English, and the High Speed Rail and domestic flights connect major cities. From Taipei in the north to Kaohsiung in the south is just a two-hour High Speed Rail trip. Taiwan boasts the highest density of convenience stores in the world, so daily needs are easy to meet. And the enormous range of delicious local dishes and treats also leave a deep impression on foreigners. International students find tuition and living costs in Taiwan are relatively cheap. They can enjoy high quality education and affordable high living standards. For more information about living in Taiwan, visit <http://www.studyintaiwan.org/>

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