



UiO • **Faculty of Humanities**
University of Oslo

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Obligatory stays abroad at the Faculty of Humanities



Obligatory stays abroad

Part of Programme of African
and Asian Studies:

- Arabic
- Chinese
- Farsi
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Japanese
- Sanskrit
- Turkish
- South Asian Area Studies

- Quality: Students get on-site knowledge of culture and language

- Saves teaching hour resources in the programme

- But: This creates other costly types of activity: Quality assurance of the stays abroad

Numbers

- Chinese:
30 students per year
- Japanese:
40 students per year
- Arabic:
30 students per year

The other languages:
Only small numbers



Tokyo 2007 – Photo: B. Skov

Quality assurance ... delegations

Typically 3-4 persons:

1 teacher

1-2 dept. administration

1 from Faculty secretariat

- Damascus and Cairo 2006
- Tokyo 2007
- Beijing 2008
- Nanjing 2009
- Dushanbe 2011
- Tokyo 2011



Beijing University 2008 Photo: B. Skov

Delegations' tasks

- Visit the institution
- Meet those who receive our students
- See student housing facilities
- Teachers meet teachers
- Discuss curriculum
- «Problem solving»
- Student interviews
- Visit Norwegian embassies and consulates



Delegation to Tokyo - Student meeting - 2007 - Photo: Mona Bjørnbæk

Example: Chinese

- Summer + one full semester:
BA students' 3rd semester
- The course is 40 credits (1+1/3 semester):
Students get classes and supervision at home in their fourth semester to «wrap up» and finalise the course
- Requirements:
80% participation in the courses in Beijing
«pass» on the final language test offered in China
Oral examination in Oslo in January
Written examination in Oslo in May
- Students will not get their degree without it



The «exotic» language - Sanskrit

- Deemed to be «extinct» as a spoken language
- In certain villages in Southern India people do speak Sanskrit
- Our students go to «The Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute» in Chennai



Children learning Sanskrit – Photo: Ute Hüsken

The case of Farsi (Persian)

PROBLEM

- Situation in Iran is deemed unstable and insecure
- Reception of students is not satisfactory

CONSEQUENCE

Stays in Iran have been discontinued

REMEDY

- Farsi is also spoken in Tajikistan
- Delegation to Tajik State National University in Dushanbe
- Will we get it in place till autumn 2011?



Other challenges for autumn 2011

- Arabic:
No-one to Damascus because of war – a month ago Cairo was the place not to go
- Chinese:
One of the students is a journalist and gets no student visa due to the Peace Prize conflict
- Hindi:
Problematic to find universities which can give quality language education for our small numbers – so this time they will go to Benares University through the Nordic Center of India
- Japanese:
We do not know whether we can send anyone to Tokyo area in September (decision will be taken in August)

Conclusion

- Obligatory stays - in general a good solution for language studies – students benefit
 - language
 - Culture
 - Saves teaching hours
- But:
 - Quality assurance demanding and costly
 - Requires preparedness for unseen circumstances
- Questions? => Hanne Skramstad, Dept. of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages:

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