



Frequently Asked Questions

? Why study at AMES?

At AMES we offer a distinctive degree comprising **rigorous language tuition** and **immersive content courses** in a range of subjects taught by leading specialists in these fields. We are a small and supportive community based on the central Sidgwick site with excellent facilities including our popular library, all to help you get the best out of yourself and your studies.

? Can I apply to any college to study an AMES subject?

Yes, you can apply to any college to study in our department. There can be advantages to choosing a college that has a Director of Studies (DoS) in AMES since they will understand the course and be able to offer guided academic support. However, your college becomes your home for the four years of your degree programme so it is also important to consider what else matters to you, such as location and facilities.

? How large are language classes in the Faculty?

This will depend on the language. Typically, we have a cohort of around 20 students for our largest language subjects. Classes will therefore be split into **groups of no more than 10**, and this will be supplemented by supervisions, most often in groups of two.

? What type of Chinese will I learn?

Students learn **Mandarin Chinese**, the most widely spoken language today – by around one billion people! As well as studying the modern language, students gain a strong grounding in classical and literary Chinese.

? Who teaches languages?

We have a number of dedicated language teachers in the Faculty, formed from a mixture of native and non-native speakers, and with many years of experience between them! They will conduct your classes and supervisions.

? What other subjects can I learn, and who teaches them?

Everything from premodern East Asian history to Literature to Cinema. Lectures, and most often supervisions too, are delivered by lecturer, specialist in the subject.

? When will I write a dissertation?

Students begin thinking about a dissertation topic in their second year of study and approaching potential supervisors. On the year abroad, they will carry out wider reading and/or fieldwork. **Students then write up their work in their final year under the guidance of a supervisor.**

? Where will I go on my year abroad and what activities can I do?

All students study at either Ocean University of China in Qingdao, or Peking University in Beijing. The content of the programmes are the same, as is the standard of teaching at each University. Beijing is the capital city of China, and Qingdao is a medium-sized city (according to the Chinese standard) located on the east coast of China. Students plan their year abroad in the second year in consultation with the Faculty's dedicated Year Abroad Coordinator, who will also be one of their language teachers. The Faculty takes seriously the safety of all students travelling abroad and regularly assesses plans in accordance with UK FCO advice.

? Can I apply to study Chinese even if I have never studied the language before?

As an *ab initio* language course, **we do not expect students to have any previous experience of studying Chinese before they arrive**. However, it is a good idea to do some research so that you are informed when you apply. Experience of studying another language can be useful experience and show evidence of your interest in language study, but be mindful that Chinese grammar can be very different to that of European languages.

? I have already studied some Chinese at A-level/ IB. Can I enter the programme at an advanced stage?

All students sit a placement test on their first day and are placed in a class with students who have a similar level of language. We have admitted many students who already had an A-level in their chosen language before they arrived. However, it is unusual that these students begin in Year 2 of the programme for two main reasons. First, our language course is fast-paced and by the end of Year 1 students will have surpassed the expected A-level standard. Second, a second vital component of the first year course is a comprehensive paper that teaches fundamental knowledge about the history, literature, society and politics of East Asia (Japan, China & Korea), without which progressing through second-year content papers can be challenging.

? Can I apply to study both Chinese and Japanese together?

Students can only apply for EITHER Japanese OR Chinese. Both languages are grammatically very different and pose distinct challenges so our courses are necessarily immersive and demand concentration. In some cases, students have taken up the second language from the third year of study. However, this is not usual and requires special permission from the Faculty Board. By beginning a second language in Year 3 students must forego their year abroad, which is hugely valuable for promoting language acquisition and gaining insight into the country they are studying.

? Can I combine Chinese with another European language or another subject?

For the same reasons explained above, combining Chinese with an MMLL language is not possible. This course remains very varied, however, by the range of content we offer.

? What does the Faculty offer beyond my formal studies?

Both the Department of Middle Eastern Studies and the Department of East Asian Studies hold weekly public talks, delivered by specialists working within many diverse fields. Undergraduate students are greatly encouraged to attend, and, indeed, to offer suggestions for speakers. Beyond the Faculty, students can get involved in setting up and running their own societies and talks, while colleges offer many opportunities for sport and other extracurricular activities.

? Where do students end up after graduation?

Our graduates have gone on to have varied and illustrious careers in industries including journalism, academia, and international banking.