

NAOME Student Transitions - International Activities

Background

Naval architecture is an international business and the **Department of Naval Architecture, Ocean and Marine Engineering** has a long history of attracting international students to its Undergraduate and Postgraduate taught programmes. The Department realised that the success of these activities depended on a number of factors including:

- nurturing close co-operation with institutions abroad
- meeting personally with potential students in their home institutions before they travel to Glasgow, to ease their academic and personal transitions.



NAOME has developed an approach whereby current and former students from the Department have taken part in international visits, partly to prepare incoming students for their studies at Strathclyde. In addition, a large number of NAOME students have gained vital international experience by participating in projects in China and Korea.

Why it was developed.

The Department was aware that some Chinese students in the articulation programme with **Harbin Engineering University** (HEU China) found it hard to adjust quickly to the academic and lifestyle differences involved in studying at Strathclyde University. Particular areas of concern were the students' unfamiliarity with English terminology and jargon, their relative weakness in some areas such as engineering mechanics and structures, and their experience in report writing. The Department decided to send representatives to ease this transition through a pre-school in China, which also served to solidify the initial decision of the students to come to Strathclyde.

In 2008, two undergraduate NAOME students from Strathclyde were sent to Harbin; in 2009, we sent a research student plus one senior academic; and in 2010, we sent a research student plus more academic staff, for about a month at a time.

Lessons learned: Initially, the undergraduate students found it challenging to work in a different culture and relied upon assistance and advice from more experienced researchers and staff. Overall, the initiative was found to have benefited all incoming HEU students in terms of their better integration as students and clearer expectations of Strathclyde.

India: In 2010, a member of research staff (and NAOME graduate) travelled to India with an undergraduate student and a senior academic to carry out similar activities as those undertaken at Harbin.

Lessons learned: Greater awareness was developed around different cultural norms and overall it was a successful exercise.

India, Vietnam, the Philippines: A member of research staff (and NAOME graduate) has visited universities in these countries in the course of a field trip with Maersk. An agreement has subsequently been set up with a Vietnamese university.

The Department has continued to promote international activities for existing students and this has developed into Summer School activity in which our students collaborate with students in our articulation partners at HEU.

Summer School in China:

Twenty-three undergraduate students participated in a four- week summer school in China jointly organised by NAOME and Harbin Engineering University during July 2013. Of the 23 students, 10 were non-Chinese and 13 were Chinese. They spent one week in HEU, visiting the laboratories, teaching and research facilities in the campus and studying some fundamental courses in ship design, 3D ship motion simulations as well as joining the local students at the HEU for various activities. Non-Chinese NAOME students also received two days' Chinese language training.

The following three weeks were spent in Shan Hai Guan shipyard, one of the largest shipyards in China.

Students also spent time visiting Harbin city; famous Songhua River and the Sun Island in Harbin.



They also visited the famous tourist spots in Qin Huangdao near Shan Haiguan. The non-Chinese students spent their final days in China accompanied by the Chinese students visiting Beijing.

Benefits to Students

Students' feedback on the Summer School has been extremely positive. They learned ship repair processes and gained practical shipbuilding knowledge which is not possible to gain from the classes in the University. HEU arranged two members of staff to take care of the students for the whole period, advising, organising activities, booking tickets and making all the necessary arrangements to ensure that the students had the most beneficial and enjoyable stay in China. Both the shipyard and HEU staff were highly complementary of the performance and discipline of the students. In addition to the shipyard knowledge and experience, they learned about Chinese history, visited three different cities and became more familiar with Chinese culture. They established long-lasting friendships with Chinese students at HEU and contacts with the HEU staff and Shan Hai Guan shipyard staff.



The friendship among the non- Chinese and Chinese students themselves became very strong indeed, and the preparedness of the latter to study at Strathclyde University was greatly enhanced.

For 2015, six NAOME students will be spending six weeks in China under the BP travel scholarship scheme.

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