



# Chinese

Study languages: Make the world your place

“I believe that changes in Asia, particularly in China, will continue to have a huge impact on New Zealand. Our success depends on having a sound understanding of the region, including language skills.”

Anne-Marie Luke  
BA(Hons) (Chinese), BSc (Physiology)  
Project Officer, Asia New Zealand  
Foundation

China is the most populous country in the world, with the fastest-growing economy. The Chinese language is the world's most widely spoken language, used by over one billion people as their native language worldwide. Chinese speakers are found not only in China's mainland, in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, but also in Southeast Asia, and in other countries throughout the world.

The Chinese programme at Otago offers a broad range of papers on Chinese culture, including history, society, literature and cinema, and on the Chinese language, from introductory level to advanced level. We also arrange in-country study for students in our partner universities in China.

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## Why study Chinese?

Today, China is the world's biggest trading nation and the second largest economy. Its culture is both rich and far-reaching. Learning Chinese will give you the edge over other candidates for a wide variety of jobs.

Following the New Zealand and China free trade agreement, there has been a major increase in links between New Zealand and China not only in economic areas, but also in educational and cultural areas. There is a definite need for people who understand Chinese culture and who can communicate effectively with Chinese speakers.

### Learning Chinese

- is an essential first step towards understanding China's culture, history, and political and economic systems
- enables you to access original Chinese documents (which are often not available in English translations) in your chosen profession – for example, law, medicine, business, information science, journalism
- improves employment opportunities in business, diplomacy, communication and education, and many other professional areas
- allows you to study this fascinating and immensely useful Asian language within a supportive environment, and to gain the opportunity to continue your studies in China via a number of scholarships and exchange programmes.

## No background required

You can enrol in our beginner level course (CHIN 131) with no previous knowledge of Chinese. If you already have some knowledge of Chinese (e.g. have studied it at secondary school, lived in China, or have been exposed to Chinese in a family setting), you may be able to enrol in a more advanced course (such as CHIN 132, CHIN 231 and CHIN 250).

## Career opportunities

A Bachelor of Arts (BA) with a major in Chinese language and culture will give you a better chance of finding jobs in tourism, education, trade, banking, mass media and non-profit organisations, as well as in foreign affairs and other government agencies.

Combining another degree with Chinese as a minor or as a diploma also increases your options in the job market.

If you want to teach Chinese at primary or secondary school you need to have a BA in Chinese and a qualification in teaching.

If you are thinking about a career in diplomacy, you could consider including Chinese in a degree in Law, Politics, History or Geography.

If you are interested in teaching English in mainland China or Taiwan you will find English or Linguistics useful subjects to go along with Chinese.

A career in media and journalism will also greatly benefit from an additional proficiency in Chinese language.

Another attractive option that has become increasingly popular among our students is combining Chinese with a degree in Commerce or Science, which opens up employment opportunities in companies that have links with China.

## Chinese at Otago

We teach Chinese language with communicative methods and at the same time develop students' skills in speaking, reading, listening, writing and translating. Interactive tutorials are provided to help students practise in small groups with native speakers.

We teach Chinese culture through Chinese media, literature, politics, history, society, anthropology and translation activities. There is a good balance between lectures taught by teachers and seminars involving student discussions and presentations.

## Degrees

Chinese is a major for the Bachelor of Arts. You can also complete a minor, or a diploma in Chinese language while completing your degree in a different major. Chinese is also available as part of Global Studies and Tourism, Languages and Cultures majors, which both have language acquisition as their core component. If you are considering teaching Chinese, a minor in Linguistics can help you understand the mechanics of languages and how we learn them. If you are keen to take your studies of Chinese language and culture to a further level, you could join our honours, master's and PhD programmes. Chinese papers may be taken for interest, and will count towards your degree.

## Student exchange

The University of Otago offers an international exchange programme that is of particular benefit to language students. You may spend one or two semesters at one of Otago's partner universities in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Besides enabling students to strengthen their language skills and deepen their cultural understanding, the exchange programme allows many students to gain important insights and preliminary contacts for their future career opportunities.

## PROFILE

### Charles Rowe

BA (Japanese and Asian Studies), BSc (Food Science), DipLang (Chinese)

I first started the DipLang endorsed in Chinese midway through my BSc in Food Science and BA in Japanese and Asian Studies. I had been interested in New Zealand's food exports to Asia, and so it was clear to me that a working knowledge of Chinese language would be helpful in pursuing a career in this area. I had no prior knowledge of Chinese, and so taking my first course at the Otago Summer School was a challenging but immensely rewarding experience.

I went on to take papers on Chinese literature and society. In my final year I participated in the Otago Exchange programme, visiting Tsinghua University in Beijing.

The advanced listening and speaking courses I completed during my exchange contributed to my DipLang in Chinese, and two master's level courses I attended at the Tsinghua School of Economics and Management provided valuable credits for my BSc.

A calligraphy course, which was taught by a retired professor (the "old master") provided me with some of the fondest memories of my student life.

After graduation I went on to receive grants and a scholarship to undertake research and further study in China, where I completed a Masters of Law in International Relations at Peking University.

I'm now working in Tokyo with Japanese fishing company Nissui, which jointly owns Sealord with Te Ohu Kaimoana, the Māori Fisheries Trust.

I intend to continue working in this area, doing my part to add value to New Zealand's exports to Asia. My advice to anyone considering Chinese at Otago: mastering Mandarin opens doors!



For questions about  
Chinese  
[otago.ac.nz/chinese](http://otago.ac.nz/chinese)

