

LATEST NEWS

Welcome to new students in IFCELS

The Director of SOAS, Valerie Amos, welcomed IFCELS students at the start of year reception on the first day of the teaching term. She also awarded prizes to 2015-6 students, two of whom were able to attend the reception to receive the prizes in person. See below for a full list of prize winners.

"ICC was a great first step into my academic studies as an international student. The course was very welcoming from the beginning and staff support was attentive and available throughout the year, helping students adapt to the new environment. A wide range of topics are available in each subject and can open up further possibilities of study and research. Being at and around SOAS allows contact with people from various cultural and personal backgrounds, which made this experience dynamic and widely inspiring."



Luisa Karman, ICC Achievement Prize Winner

No application fee until May

Once again there will be no application fee for students applying for ICC and FDPS before the end of April. From 1st May, the £90 fee will be re-introduced so get your application in early and save.

IFCELS scholarships for 2017 applicants

We are delighted to announce that we will be running the IFCELS Scholarship scheme for the third time for students applying to FDPS and ICC for 2017 entry.

Three of our first group of FDPS scholars went on to Master's degrees at SOAS last month and received the £1000 reduction in fees.

This year there will again be 12 scholarships (6 for ICC and 6 for FDPS) for students who accept a place on ICC or FDPS and then go on to a degree at SOAS.

Scholarships will be awarded in June 2017 and to be eligible students need to accept an offer by the end of May.

Full details of the scholarships can be found at www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels/scholarships

IFCELS Prize Winners 2015-16

Each year we award prizes to recognise achievement and progress on our year-round programmes. Congratulations to the following, who each received a cheque for £250.

Luisa Karman – ICC Achievement Prize
Now studying BA History of Art (Asia, Africa, Europe) at SOAS

Shangda Yang – ICC Progress Prize
Now studying BSc Mathematics with Finance at the University of Manchester

Hyun Jeong Seol – FDPS Achievement Prize
Now studying Graduate Diploma in Archaeology at UCL

Taishi Kato - FDPS Progress Prize
Now studying MA Japanese Studies at SOAS

Kanako Hiyama – ELAS Bhasi Panikker Progress Prize
Returned to Japan to prepare for further study abroad

Student Destinations 2016

The latest destinations lists of our students are now posted on the FDPS and ICC webpages.

Once again our ICC students did really well, with 33 going on to SOAS, 10 to UCL and a further 11 are now at other University of London colleges. Outside London, Manchester was most popular with 9 students taking up places there and students have also gone on to degrees at Durham, Essex, Glasgow, Kent, Lancaster, Reading and Warwick, among others. You can find a full list at www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels/ugfoundation/destinations.

The FDPS list is never as complete as the ICC one as we rely on the students themselves to let us know where they are studying. However we have received confirmation of over 50 placements so far, including 22 at SOAS and 7 at other University of London colleges such as UCL, KCL, Cass Business School and QMUL. Outside London students have chosen Master's programmes at Bristol, Exeter, Newcastle, Reading and Warwick, among others. Check the full list at www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels/pgfoundation/destinations.

Entrance tests and interviews in 6 Chinese Cities



This year we'll be running entrance tests and interviews in 6 cities across China, the most ever! As well as the usual venues - Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou – there will be tests in Shenzhen, Chengdu and Wuhan.

The schedule is as follows (exact dates to be confirmed):

- Late November/Early December: Beijing and Shanghai
- March: Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Guangzhou and Chengdu
- May: Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen
- July: Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou

We will also be encouraging applicants who already meet our English language entry requirements to be considered by Skype interview and (if required) emailed essay tests. So we can deal with applications quickly at any time throughout the year.

Full details of entrance tests and interviews in London and around the world are posted at www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels/testdates. Check for up-to-date information.

"FDPS gave me the great opportunity to study in an exceptionally cosmopolitan and vibrant environment. I received world-class research and teaching expertise in cultural fields to broaden my horizons and apply my knowledge and perspectives. In particular, the lectures required me to think how we can tackle the issues about the growing contradictions of greater global connectivity. The experience I gained on the programme has helped to shape my future in an international context."



Taishi Kato, FDPS Progress Prize Winner

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Entrance Tests and Interviews for ICC and FDPS (by prior arrangement)

- Tokyo, Japan: late October/ early November
- Bangkok, Thailand: November
- China (various cities): late November/ early December
- Seoul, Korea: October and March

For the latest test dates, see www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels/testdates

STUDENT PROFILE

Maria Ester Sgambato



Maria Ester Sgambato is from Naples (Napoli) in Southern Italy and studied a degree in English and Arabic at "L'Orientale", the oldest university in Europe specialising in the study of Asia with a history going back more than 350 years. She joined our FDPS Pre-Master's in September to extend her subject knowledge with a view to going on to an MA in Gender Studies at SOAS.

Here are her first impressions of SOAS:

'Leaving my family, friends and home to come and study at SOAS was probably the most difficult step I ever took. But I did it, because I was expecting to attend well-structured classes in a prestigious university, to find capable lecturers, to live a new experience and, why not, to make new friends.'

'Truth is, I found so much more than that. SOAS is the most multicultural, stimulating, creative, enriching place I've ever been to. At SOAS, I found that passion is fully encouraged, and talent and hard work rewarded. I found that I could learn something from each and every person I met and that I could confront realities I could have never otherwise known about. I discovered that I could share my interests with people as driven as me, and that I could feel welcome in the most friendly, student tailored environment. Those first weeks at SOAS have been as amazing and surprising as I could ever have hoped for, and I can't wait to see what's next.'

AROUND SOAS

Paul Webley Wing in Senate House North Block Opens



Regular readers of IFCELS Connect will remember our progress reports on the "new" SOAS building, the £30 million refurbishment of the Senate House North Block, which brings SOAS together on one campus for the first time in twenty years.

On 7 September, the new Paul Webley Wing, named after our former Director who died earlier this year, was officially opened and classes, including those for IFCELS students, are already taking place there in the new term. Inside, the building has a mixture of informal and formal teaching spaces that can of course be used by IFCELS students. Creative areas where students can meet and discuss ideas are complemented by up to date multi-media lecture theatres and seminar rooms. As you enter the building you will see the Student Hub where SOAS students can get all the information they need on accommodation, course registration, student finance, careers and student advice and well-being services.

The Senate House is one of London's most famous and iconic buildings and was London's first skyscraper when it was built in the 1930s. It is the administrative centre of the University of London and houses the world renowned University of London library, which IFCELS students have access to. It is also, owing to its Art Deco architecture, a popular location for films and television, including standing in for Gotham City in two of the Batman movies.

STAFF PROFILE

Samuel Martin, English for Quantitative Methods Teacher



I have been teaching English on our Quantitative Methods (QM) course for 13 years, and it is one of the most fascinating and rewarding parts of my work. The interest really centres around the question "what language do mathematicians need and use?" Because mathematics is a universal language, mathematicians can usually communicate very well without speaking at all. In fact, English is ambiguous; mathematics is not.

For example, an expression like $\left(\frac{3+a}{x^2}\right)$ is said as "three plus a over x squared", but

$$3 + \left(\frac{a}{x^2}\right), \quad \left(\frac{3+a}{x}\right)^2 \quad \text{and} \quad 3 + \left(\frac{a}{x}\right)^2$$

are all said the same way! To overcome this problem, our students focus on their spoken intonation and timing until the ambiguity is minimised. This exercise is energetic and great fun - I look forward to it every year!

Another interesting aspect of teaching QM is that there are no essays on the course, and so it is possible to score 100% without writing a single word of English. We are careful to ensure that students do not neglect their writing skills, and try to find the correct balance between the time spent on language and on mathematics. To do this we encourage students to be reflective about their learning, and to work on their weaknesses: in every class there is a handful of students who are brilliant at writing but find QM harder, and some with the opposite situation. We can be flexible on the course, and decide with individual students what their needs are. By term 3 it is not unusual to have some students working on QM papers, while others write essays in class.

English for QM is a slightly unusual subject, but we know that the students really enjoy it, and the results are usually very good - for the students and the teachers.

IFCELS STAFF VISITS

William Hetherington

- Seoul, Korea: 17 - 20 October
- Tokyo, Japan: 20 - 23 October

Graham Davies

- Wuhan, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Shanghai (China): 20 - 30 October

Matt Murphy

- Tokyo, Japan: 31 October - 6 November

Rachel Humphreys

- Bangkok, Thailand: 8 - 14 November

Full details of staff visits can be found at www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels/visits. Check for up-to-date information.



The next edition of IFCELS Connect will be published in December 2016. If you are not on the mailing list and would like to be, please email us at ifcels@soas.ac.uk