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Welcome letter and important information

Dear Student,

Congratulations on gaining a place at SOAS to study from this September on the *MA [Discipline] and Intensive Japanese*. In order to ensure that the start of your study at SOAS goes as smoothly as possible, please note the following important matters.

During the Welcome Week (25-29 September 2017), ALL *MA [Discipline] and Intensive Japanese* students must attend the Departmental Talk / Orientation meeting on Tuesday 26 September, from 10:00 to 11:00, in B102 (on the first floor of the Brunei Gallery).

The language placement tests are scheduled for Wednesday 27 September from 9.30 to 11.30, in room MB DLT (on the ground floor of the Main Building).

If you have any previous knowledge of Japanese (including self-study), you must sit these tests. Copies of past placement tests are not available, but the exam is a written test only (testing grammar, vocabulary, scripts, reading, and translation etc.). It is a good idea for you to refresh your memory so that you can show what you have learnt. The results will be sent to you via e-mail as soon as your test has been marked. The purpose of the placement test is simply to ensure that you are put into the class that suits your needs best.

If you are placed in Intensive Japanese 1 (MA), come to an additional orientation meeting on Thursday 28 September from 11.00 to 12.00 in SWLT ((S)WLT is the Wolfson Lecture Theatre in Paul Webley Wing, Senate House).

If you are placed in Intensive Elementary Japanese (MA), come to an additional orientation meeting, EJ Course Orientation, on Thursday 28 September from 15.00 to 16.00 in S209 (Paul Webley Wing). Also, if you are a student with no prior experience of studying Japanese, you must attend two Academic Japanese Induction Classes, one on Tuesday 26 September from 13.00 to 15.00 in MB G3, and the other on Thursday 28 September from 10.00 to 12.00. If you are a student with prior experience of studying Japanese, you must attend one Academic Japanese Induction Class, either Wednesday 27 September from 12.00 to 14.00 in MB G51a, or Thursday 28 September from 12.00 to 14.00 in MB G51a.

Failure to attend may result in you falling behind your studies.

No prior knowledge of Japanese was required when you applied to SOAS. However, from the first day of the teaching term, you will need to be able to read and write the Hiragana and Katakana scripts (not Romanization). Of course our lectors will give you guidance about using and writing Japanese scripts, but memorizing Hiragana and Katakana before you arrive at SOAS will give your studies a great boost. It would be a good idea to reach the point where you can at least read and write the 46 Hiragana symbols and 46 Katakana symbols. Even if you have some previous knowledge of written Japanese, please revise and consolidate your knowledge before you arrive. You will be asked to write the 46 Hiragana symbols and 46 Katakana symbols. The following websites will help:

1) You can learn about Hiragana and Katakana from these sites:

<Hiragana>

- http://www.omniglot.com/writing/japanese_hiragana.htm
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiragana>

<Katakana>

- http://www.omniglot.com/writing/japanese_katakana.htm
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katakana>

2) You can practice and learn how to read and write Hiragana and Katakana using the appropriate models of Hiragana and Katakana on the following site and take great care to follow the correct stroke order and stroke direction. Please don't worry if your writing feels clumsy as we will run a script writing induction class after your arrival. But the more you can do now, the easier your start to the programme will be.

<Hiragana>

http://japanese-lesson.com/characters/hiragana/hiragana_writing.html

<Katakana>

http://japanese-lesson.com/characters/katakana/katakana_writing.html

- HIRAGANA/KATAKANA Memory Hint

The Japan Foundation, Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai developed this app to provide a fun way to study hiragana/katakana using mnemonic pictures.

<http://www.jfkc.jp/en/news/2015/10/just-released-the-smart-phone-app-hiragana-katakana-memory-hint-english-version-indonesian-version.html>

You might enjoy exploring the many useful links for Japanese language study which you will find on Nihongo-e-na (<http://nihongo-e-na.com>).

If you have any specific questions about learning Hiragana and Katakana, please e-mail **Mrs Miwako Kashiwagi (mk56@soas.ac.uk)**, who is in charge of Intensive Elementary Japanese (MA).

Discount coupons for the textbook we use will also be distributed, so there is no need to buy a textbook in advance.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the SOAS Japanese Section.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials 'NH' followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Nathan Hill
Head of the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures