

01 September 2019

Welcome letter and important information

Dear Students,

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.

Various events take place during Welcome Week (23-27 September 2019).

ALL *MA [Discipline] and Intensive Japanese* students must attend the following events on **Monday 23 September**:

- **Departmental Talk:** 13.00-14.00 in BGLT = Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre
- **Programme specific orientation meetings:** room S211 in the Paul Webley Wing of the Senate House buildings
 - 14.00-14.30 for all *MA [Discipline] and Intensive Japanese*.
 - 14.30-15.00 for *MA [Japanese Studies] and Intensive Japanese* only.
 - Students enrolled in *Intensive Japanese MA* with other [*disciplines*] (e.g. *MA Social Anthropology*, *MA Art and Archaeology*, etc.) please find the relevant orientation meetings in the respective departments.

Japanese section registration and placement tests:

Between 11.00-13.30 on Monday 23, September, please come to room B102 at the Brunei Gallery for section registration and placement tests. Here you will briefly meet your language teachers and receive detailed information on the Welcome Week schedule. In addition, you will be asked to write the 46 *hiragana* symbols and *katakana* symbols (see explanation on the following page).

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 placed into the class that suits your needs best.

Additional orientation meetings will follow the placement test:

- If you are placed in *Intensive Japanese 1* (MA), please attend the orientation meeting on Thursday 26 September from 11.00 to 12.00, in room G3 of the main building.
- If you are placed in *Intensive Elementary Japanese 1* (MA), please attend the orientation meeting (J100 EJ Course Orientation), on Thursday 26 September from 10.00 to 11.00 in SWLT (=Wolfson Lecture Theatre) in the Paul Webley Wing of the Senate House).

Academic Japanese Induction session

- If you have *no prior experience* of studying Japanese you must attend the Academic Japanese Induction Class, on Tuesday 24 September from 13.00 to 15.00 in S209 (Paul Webley Wing in the Senate House).
- If you have *some prior experience* of studying Japanese, you must attend the Academic Japanese Induction Class on Wednesday 25 September from 13.00 to 15.00 in S211 (Paul Webley Building in the Senate House).

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 lecturers will give you guidance about using and writing Japanese scripts, but memorizing Hiragana and Katakana before you arrive at SOAS (and ideally, being able to read and write the 46 Hiragana and 46 Katakana characters) will give your studies a great boost. Even if you have some previous knowledge of written Japanese, please revise and consolidate your knowledge before you arrive. 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 on the following site, taking 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. However, 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 **Dr. Seiko Harumi** (sh96@soas.ac.uk), who is in charge of Intensive Elementary Japanese 1 (MA).

Textbook purchase

The textbooks can be purchased from the following website of JP Books in London.

<https://shop.jpbooks.co.uk/en/>

In the first term, you will use the following two textbooks from Week 1.

For MA [Discipline] and intensive elementary Japanese 1 students:

1. Minnano Nihongo Shyokyu Vol.1: Textbook with CD (2nd version).
2. Minnano Nihongo Shyokyu Vol.1: Translation & Grammatical notes. (2nd version).

For MA [Discipline] and intensive Japanese 1 students:

1. Minnano Nihongo Shyokyu Vol.2: Textbook with CD (2nd version) (from Chapter 45)
2. Minnano Nihongo Shyokyu Vol.2: Translation & Grammatical notes. (2nd version)

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

Dr. Griseldis Kirsch

Head of the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures