



MORRISON ACADEMY

NEW EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

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PLEASE PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE SECTIONS IN RED.

TAIWAN OVERVIEW

Taiwan is an island equal in size to the area of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut combined. The name Taiwan means, "*terraced bay.*" With its population of over 23 million people, it is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Two-thirds of the island is a sparsely populated, mountainous region, and one third is a coastal plain. It is bordered on the west by the Taiwan Strait, to the east by the Pacific Ocean, to the north by the East China Sea, and to the south by the South China Sea.

Four main groups of people live in Taiwan. The aborigines, descendants of the first or original people on the island, live mainly in the mountain regions and number about 250,000. The largest group of people is the Taiwanese, descendants of the Chinese who migrated to Taiwan between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, mainly from Kwangtung and Fukien Provinces. Another group are also descendants of Chinese who came from the mainland, but they speak a different dialect. They are known as Haaka. The most recent arrivals are Mandarin Chinese who mostly arrived as they fled to Taiwan during the Communist takeover of China in 1949. Although each of the four groups has a separate language, the official language of Taiwan is Mandarin Chinese, but the majority of the people speak Taiwanese in their homes. English was also made a national language recently and is taught in public schools. However, English is still not commonly heard on the streets or in homes.

Rural and undeveloped areas of Taiwan are lush and beautiful and provide many opportunities for hiking, touring, and photography. In small, out-of-the-way farms and villages people can still be found living in a "fairly" traditional fashion but this is becoming rarer.

Taipei, the capital city, is located in the northern most part of the island. Other major cities include Taichung in the center of the island, Tainan and Kaohsiung to the south, and Hualien on the East Coast. While evidences of traditional Taiwan are still seen in these urban areas, more and more, modernization and Western influences are reshaping the environment and way of life.

CLIMATE

The climate of Taiwan is subtropical. There are two seasons: a hot summer season (from May through October) with temperatures normally ranging from 80 to 105 degrees F (27-35 degrees C) throughout the island, and the cool, winter season (November to April), with mild temperatures normally ranging from 50 to 70 degrees F (10 to 20 degrees C).

Occasionally, colder or hotter temperatures occur, but not for extended periods. The heat and the cold are intensified by the relative humidity which remains high throughout the year, about 70-95%. Therefore, it may seem much hotter or colder than what the thermometer indicates. Taiwan lies in the Pacific typhoon belt and receives its share of these storms during the summer and fall. However, they are seldom devastating, and their effect is usually minimal.

HOUSING AND UTILITIES

The school provides housing for head-of-household expatriate staff. Major appliances are provided, but the apartments are normally not furnished (there are some exceptions in non-Morrison owned apartments). **We will have the bare necessities in place in order for you to “get by” until Oct. so you can get your own furniture but your apartment will not have a “homey” look when you arrive.**

Some of our staff members live in homes with Western style layouts. However, many of our teachers live in apartment buildings with very small kitchens. Depending on the location of the residence, you might have to get used to the noise of traffic, people, construction, fireworks, and religious celebrations.

There is a real variety in housing units. Some are much newer than others. Some have bigger kitchens. Many have the laundry outside on a porch. Some people will have more space than others. **Some will only have a small, counter top oven.** We will do the best that we can but some people will always like their apartment better than others. We're sorry about that, but it is a reality we have to live with. We will do the best we can. **This is an area where you need to go to the Lord to ask Him for the humility to live contentedly with less than someone else may have.**

WHAT TO BRING TO TAIWAN

This question is not an easy one to answer since what is considered essential varies from person to person. However, here are a few guidelines to follow:

Taiwan stores have most of the household and personal things you will need. Towels, bedding, and linens here are not necessarily of the best quality or are expensive, so you may wish to bring these but they are increasingly available. An electric blanket is nice if you have one (not applicable for Kaohsiung) for times when the temperature is cold and the humidity is high.

Often in the spring, you will find expatriates selling some of their used household goods, and you can usually find some good bargains. There is less available in the Fall when you first arrive however.

Be sure to bring your camera.

If you are on prescription medication, it would be a good idea to ask Sabrina sabrina@mca.org.tw to find out if that medication or its equivalent is available here. Very likely it will be, but you will want to know for sure. (Please refer to HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE.)

You may want to bring small electrical devices such as your toaster, iron, mixer, blender/food processor, electric fry pan, crock pot, blow drier, curling iron, electric blanket, etc. if you already own these things. These are available on the market here however, so if you don't already own them, it's probably not worth it to buy and bring them new unless you are putting things into the container. Then it would probably still be worth your while to buy them before coming. Microwaves generally cost more here and directions are not typically in English so you might want to buy one to bring if that is important to you. Some things cost more and some less. The electric current here is the same as in the U.S. - 110 Volts/60 cycle.

If you are fond of cooking and baking, bring your bakeware and cooking utensils. You can now find these things but they are not normally as cheap as in your home country. China or plastic dishes are available at a reasonable price.

Plan on bringing an inexpensive set of flatware (fairly expensive here) and serving pieces.

Tupperware, Rubbermaid, or other storage containers with tight-fitting lids are nice for sealing out moisture and keeping food safe from ants. Good quality plastic containers of all sizes are available locally at good prices.

You will not need to bring plastic food wrap, aluminum foil, paper towels, or plastic bags. These things are available at most grocery stores.

Bring a small supply of your favorite men's and women's toiletries, cosmetics, ladies' sanitary items, first aid sundries, and over-the-counter medicines. Most people find that they can get by with what is available locally, so you shouldn't have to bring much. Taiwan has many imported things of this nature - too numerous to list - though brands that you prefer, **especially deodorants and tampons**, may not be available.

FOOD AND WATER

Many stores are stocked with local and imported foods and household supplies. Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and processed cheeses are readily available. Many other cheeses are available at Costco. Fresh fruit and vegetables are abundant. Snack foods abound although the flavor of chips might not be what you are accustomed to. Some western brands of processed or prepared foods (cereals, cake mixes, packaged sauces or seasonings, flavorings, Jello, pickles, etc.) while sometimes available in small local supermarkets, are often only found in specialized grocery stores that cater to Westerners and are not always conveniently located. In recent years Costco stores here have some items of this nature. Shortening is not readily available (but butter is).

Imported items may be about 2 times more expensive than in the U.S. and you may not be able to find the brand that you prefer but it is possible to find many Western convenience foods. Your cooking and eating habits will probably change some to fit your budget and what is available, but you will be able to have tasty Western meals as much as you wish. In addition, Taiwan has some of the best Chinese food and cooks in the world, and it is a wonderful place to explore a new cuisine.

Tap water is **not** guaranteed to be safe except on the Taichung campus which has its own well. Therefore, except for the few who have faculty housing on the Taichung Campus, you must boil the tap water for drinking, use a purifier, or buy bottled water. Because of the heavy metals in the Kaohsiung water, we provide Reverse Osmosis filters in Kaohsiung apartments.

CLOTHING

Summer clothing is worn between April and November (or longer). Sweaters and moderately warm jackets may be needed from December to March. Apartments and houses are not centrally heated. Although winter lows do not often go below 50 degrees F, the dampness from the high humidity makes it seem much colder. By the same token, the humidity can make summer temperatures uncomfortably hot. Therefore, bring clothing for both extremes. Because of the humidity, clothing made of natural fibers that breathe is preferable to clothing made from synthetic fibers, although many people do wear synthetics. Taipei weather in winter is often cold and rainy, so if you are easily chilled, bring long winter underwear. Kaohsiung weather is normally warmer than Taichung and Taipei.

Ready-to-wear clothing in women's sizes through about size 8, sometimes size 10, are easily found here, although the fashions are not always to Western tastes. If you like particular

styles or colors, bring most of your clothes with you. Prices here are similar to North America. There are some great bargains and some very expensive shops.

Larger sizes are found at a few stores specializing in clothes made for export. The prices are good, but the variety is limited and availability is inconsistent. Be sure to bring a good supply of undergarments and lingerie in your size. Sizes and styles in Taiwan are limited.

Men's clothing in small and medium sizes is readily available and styles for sports wear are generally acceptable to Western tastes. Clothing for men in large and extra-large sizes can also sometimes be found in the export clothing outlets, but variety and availability is limited. It would be best to bring your undershirts and shorts with you. A light-weight business suit is recommended, though you may only wear it occasionally (once or twice a year).

Children's and baby clothes are also available, but not always in styles and colors that appeal to Western tastes. If you or your children are particularly fashion conscious, you will probably want to bring clothes from your home country.

It is recommended that you bring shoes in a variety of styles with you. Shoes here do not always fit well and you may or may not find your size. Shoes larger than men's size 9 and women's size 7 are not easy to find. Sports shoes of most major brands (Nike, Adidas, etc.) are available locally up to men's size 12, and prices are about the same as in the U.S. Warm slippers may be wanted during the winter.

Fabrics are available locally, though you may not always find a great variety (prints are easier to find than solids and permanent press cotton is not easy to find). If you enjoy sewing, you might consider bringing your sewing machine, clothing patterns, and certain of your favorite kinds of fabrics. Most notions are available; however, local thread is not of the best quality.

For those who don't sew or don't have the time to, seamstresses or tailors can make clothes to your specifications. This service may be more available in some locations than in others, and it will be relatively expensive.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

In each of the cities Morrison has a campus, public bus transportation is available in most places throughout the city. Buses come once every 15-45 minutes, depending upon the route. The bus fare is between NT\$15.00 and NT\$30.00, depending upon the city. Occasionally, if you pass a certain zone, you must pay an additional fare; however, overall, the buses are a very inexpensive transportation option if you live near a bus stop. This option works best in Taipei. Bus stops are not near to the MAK campus and the service near the Taichung campus is not always reliable.

Taxi service is always available almost anywhere on the island, and one may either hail a cab along the roadside, or call a cab to come to your address. Taxis are **very** reasonably priced.

In Taipei, many residents choose to ride the MRT (Mass Rapid Transit System). This public transportation starts at NT\$30 and is very efficient and convenient. There is a limited MRT in Kaohsiung as well.

Some teachers use motor scooters for convenience and to save time. New and used scooters are everywhere, and you can purchase one for as little as NT\$8,000 for a well-used one or as much as NT\$90,000 for a small brand new one and of course prices go up from there. Generally, mid-range priced scooters are not hard to find.

Bicycles are nice to have for quick errands or to get back and forth from school. It won't be hard to find used or new bikes for sale, and the prices will range from NT\$1,400 to NT\$5,000 (more if you are purchasing a bike for distance riding or mountain trails).

Many of the teachers in Taichung and Kaohsiung choose to have a car. This involves not only the purchase of the car (a minimum of NT\$60,000 for a well-used one), but also license fee, gas tax (twice a year), inspection fee (twice a year for older cars), and insurance (which is very cheap).

CHURCHES

Worship services in English are found in most of the areas Morrison teachers serve. Taipei has English services in various parts of the city. Taichung has at least four English options plus some Chinese churches that provide translation to English. In Kaohsiung, there are at least three English options.

While in Taiwan, you may wish to become involved in a ministry with a Chinese church. Very likely, your partnering mission (which you need by Christmas) will be able to link you up with a church fellowship. English teachers for evening classes at churches are always in great demand, and it is a terrific way to meet Chinese students and adults, and form friendships and ongoing relationships. Camps, Bible studies, and other ministry opportunities are also available.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

Living in a foreign culture presents unique physical and emotional situations. It is assumed that all teachers/administrators will be in good health. Physical needs, controllable through medication, etc., normally will not hinder one's effectiveness in Taiwan.

MEDICINES: Pain relievers, vitamins, cold remedies etc. are available at Western drug stores but are often much more expensive than in the U.S. Taiwan has a vast array of pharmaceuticals and prescription medication. If a prescription medicine is fairly common, it will probably be available in Taiwan. It is advisable to come under a doctor's care in Taiwan as soon as possible, if you are being treated for an ongoing condition. In that way, you can continue your treatment without interruption.

Please note: Prescriptions from outside of Taiwan are not covered under Morrison's medical benefits but if you get a Dr. in Taiwan to prescribe the same thing then it may be covered if you go to the right pharmacies. Not all drugs are covered however. If you have questions, please check with the Director of Human Services.

DENTAL SERVICES: Dental services are available. Reliable Orthodontic care is available in Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung. Chinese dentists with U.S. training have practices in all the major city centers. Not every street corner dentist is reliable, so check with a fellow teacher or missionary before choosing a dentist.

OPTOMETRISTS: Eyeglasses and contacts may be bought for a reasonable price. Optical shops abound. Check with a fellow teacher or missionary for a shop they have been satisfied with. It would be wise to know your prescription. U.S. brand wetting solutions and cleansers are available but you may wish to bring a supply with you. They tend to be more expensive in Taiwan.

HOSPITALS AND CLINICS: There are many major hospitals that give good health care. Although medical care is above average to good, the approach and manner of the medical personnel and the Chinese system takes some getting used to.

INOCULATIONS: Inoculations are generally not required for coming to Taiwan from North America, but it is advisable to have a tetanus booster before coming. Hepatitis B is very common here and many choose to have this series of shots. Some also choose to get Encephalitis B shots. Children's inoculations should be brought up-to-date before coming but all normal vaccines for children are available here.

INCOME TAX

All staff are required to file a Taiwan tax return. Morrison will assist the tax filing process and pay for the additional income taxes relating to the new staff's non-resident status (staying less than 183 days in Taiwan). Most home countries have exemptions on foreign earned income.

Every U.S. citizen must file a tax return even though he/she may be exempt from paying taxes while living overseas. Tax forms and instructions are available on line at the IRS website. It is wise to seek assistance from someone who has done it before the first time you file taxes.

Citizens from countries other than the U.S. should be careful to check on their tax liability prior to coming to Taiwan. Certain declarations may need to be made in order to avoid extensive tax liability on income that is earned in Taiwan.

BANKING

It is recommended that you keep a checking account set up in your home country. This will be far easier than trying to use a bank here. The school can issue US\$ checks; however, it normally takes a few days to process. The school will assist you in setting up an account at the local post office, and after the first month, your pay will be directly deposited into that account. These postal accounts work in much the same way as a bank account except that you can not write checks from this account. You use an ATM to get cash out and to update your passbook. Utility bills can also be paid directly out of this account. This is a fast, convenient, and efficient way to bank your local money and it earns a small interest.

EXCHANGE RATE

The exchange rate usually varies between 29 and 33.5 NT dollars to 1 US dollar. Because the exchange rate does fluctuate slightly, it is wise to check online or check with the school for the current exchange rate.

CORRESPONDENCE

Personal mail may be sent to the campus where you will be assigned. Correspondents should be advised to send letters airmail. Aerograms are convenient and readily available. Don't have mail sent to your housing address. The following addresses can be used:

Morrison Academy
216 Si-Ping Rd.
Taichung 406, TAIWAN
Tel: (04) 2292-1171
Fax: (04) 2295-6140

Morrison Academy
Ting Zhou Rd. Sec. 3, #97
Taipei 100, TAIWAN
Tel: (02) 2365-9691
Fax: (02) 2365-9696

Morrison Academy
#42 Chiacheng Rd., Dashe District
Kaohsiung 815, TAIWAN
Tel: (07) 356-1190
Fax: (07) 356-1189

PETS

If you bring pets from home, you should know that many expatriates do not think that quarantine and shipping are worth the trouble. It is possible to acquire a pet in Taiwan, although many landlords do not allow them. If you are going to live in a Morrison owned building you will not be allowed to keep a dog or cat. Because yard space is minimal, your pet must be confined indoors most of the time. We really do not recommend pets that live outside a cage.

PASSPORTS

A passport should be applied for well in advance of your anticipated departure. It often takes 4-6 weeks to acquire one and you will need this several weeks in advance of getting a visa to live in Taiwan so if you do not have a passport yet, please apply for one asap. A passport application can often be acquired at your nearest Federal Courthouse or Post Office.

VISAS

A separate packet of information will be sent to you regarding the application process for an ROC Resident VISA. Every resident of Taiwan must get a resident certificate from the National Immigration Agency of the city in which you reside. Your campus' office will help you with the necessary paperwork to apply for your resident certificate. Your resident certificate is the document that serves as your identification paper and proves you to be a bona fide resident and not an illegal alien. It is important that you carry your resident certificate with you (or a front/back photocopy) at all times. This visa does not allow you to work in Taiwan. For that you must also have a work permit. Morrison will help you to acquire this as well.

CUSTOMS CLEARANCE

According to the Inspectorate General of Customs, most personal goods *"are passed free of duty if they are already owned and used by the passenger abroad, and are of a quantity and value considered reasonable and appropriate for the passenger's personal use, not for sale nor being carried on behalf of others."* This includes clothing, bedding, cosmetics, jewelry, furniture, electronic items (just one of each type), housewares, etc.

CURRICULUM

All of the Morrison curriculum documents can be found on our web site at <http://www.mca.org.tw/academics/curriculum-overviews/>. Contact the Director of Learning (Missy Basnett) at basnettm@mca.org.tw if you have questions about the curricula you will teach. A teacher/mentor will be assigned to you by your principal. The mentor will support and guide you throughout the year as you learn the expectations for planning, teaching, and assessing the Morrison curriculum you teach.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY

Morrison Academy is keenly interested in the ongoing education and professional learning of its teachers. It is important that we keep abreast of issues and trends in education and other fields. With this in mind, the Trustees have set aside funds for assisting teachers in covering some of the cost of further education and professional learning. Several opportunities exist.

- A. The East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools ([EARCOS](#)) offers a limited number of weekend workshops on current educational topics and issues.
- B. Faculty members are encouraged to form professional learning community teams (PLC) or study groups to learn more about specific topics and how to incorporate that new learning in their instructional strategies.
- C. Morrison staff members may apply to receive a Professional Learning Scholarship to attend a college summer course or an online course, either in Taiwan or another country.
- D. Morrison staff members may also apply for PL funds to attend on and off island applicable conferences.
- E. Language Study funds are also available for staff members and their family who want to study Mandarin beyond the nine-week survival language study.
- F. For more details, please refer to [Procedure 160 Professional Learning Funds](#) and/or contact Missy Basnett.

All staff (0.5 FTE and above) are required to participate in system-wide and site-level professional learning meetings. Monthly staff meetings and biannual system-wide curriculum meetings offer other opportunities for professional learning. See the following procedures for details:

- [156 Professional Learning Schedule](#)
- [154 Professional Learning and Team/Department Meetings](#)