

Team Taiwan clinches 4 Golds and 1 Silver at the 2021 International Earth Science Olympiad

(Photo/Text: Chen Yi-ling, Division of Academic Senior High Education)



Team Taiwan flew Taiwan's flag high in the 14th International Earth Science Olympiad, which saw the participation of 199 students from 33 countries. Besides winning 4 Gold Medals and 1 Silver Medal, the 5 student representatives from Taiwan also clinched the National Team Field Investigation Silver Award to tie for First Place with Australia in the international ranking. The Gold Medalists are, respectively, Chen Yu-Jen from National Experimental High School at Hsinchu Science Park, Li En-Chi from The Affiliated Senior High School of National Taiwan Normal University, Tseng Ying-Fang from Kang Chiao International School, and Tsai Ming-Che from National Hualien Senior High School. The Silver Medalist is Chen Tse-Yu from Taipei Municipal Jianguo High School.

This year, the International Earth Science Olympiad committee decided to hold the event online in view of the pandemic. Each country's participating team thus had to identify suitable venues in their own countries that meet the criteria stipulated by the organizing committee, as well as set up the venue and train invigilators in accordance with the competition rules and

regulations. A consultation committee made up of more than 10 professors from various universities was formed to train the 5 Team Taiwan representatives, who were selected from among 504 students after an intra-school preliminary round, a national-level selection round, a pre-Olympiad boot camp, and a 2-stage selection camp.

Professor Chen Hui-Hsuan from National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) led the Olympiad team as the Team Captain, supported by Vice-Captain Professor Yeh Meng-Wan, also from NTNU. Other members of the consultation committee include Professor Wu Chau-Ron and Assistant Professor Patty Lin Pei-Ying from NTNU, Professor Lin Pay-Liam from National Central University, Professor Kuo Hung-Chi from National Taiwan University, Associate Professor Su Shih-Hao from Chinese Culture University, Assistant Professor Chin Yi-Nan from Tamkang University, and Associate Professors Chen Bing-Chih and Kung Hui-Chen from National Cheng Kung University. Together, the committee assisted the team with the translation of questions and the arbitration of results during the competition from August 23rd to 29th. The results were announced on August 30th, after which a closing ceremony was held.

This year, the IESO committee introduced a National Team Field Investigation (NTFI) component, in which the teams were tasked to conduct presentations on their respective countries' geological features and environmental issues, with the objective of allowing the different delegations to learn from one another. Besides NTFI, this year's IESO also included an Earth System Project (ESP) and a Mission To Mars (MTM) project, which were to be completed by students in groups with representatives from different countries. As the students took on these challenges online and worked with their international counterparts, they also grew their literacy in teamwork and scientific inquiry.

The Ministry of Education has set up the "Priority Scheme for University Enrollment for Students with Outstanding Achievements in International Mathematics and Science Olympiads and International Science Fairs" to reward students who achieve Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medals in such events. These students will be guaranteed admission to various undergraduate departments or receive special recommendations to the department of their choice. In addition,

Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medalists can also receive scholarships worth NT\$200,000, NT\$100,000, and NT\$50,000 respectively. Those who have won multiple medals for either the same subject or across different subjects within the same year will receive the highest scholarship among the ones they are eligible for. K12EA expressed that the Ministry of Education will continue to select and train outstanding students to partake in international competitions, so as to facilitate international exchanges at the same time that the students do Taiwan proud.