

# Compulsory Tai Chi for top Chinese university



Students play Tai Chi Chuan at school. [File Photo]

The ancient Chinese martial art of Tai Chi Chuan has been a must-take class in Xi'an Jiaotong University, one of the most prestigious universities in China, for almost 20 years. Students there have been required to take the class before receiving their degree since 1998.

The news of Tsinghua University linking swimming ability with bachelor's degrees has made waves on Chinese social media recently. But Tsinghua is not the first or the only university in China that sets up special compulsory courses.

Apart from Tsinghua, several other Chinese universities, including Peking University, Xiamen University and Sun Yat-sen University, have at least once made swimming a prerequisite for graduation.

However, some of them have changed it to optional due to an increased number of students and the shortage of swimming space.

While listing swimming as a required course may lead to campus swimming pool overload, Tai Chi Chuan class is convenient to promote, because it requires limited teacher and special resources.

Prof. Wang Yunbing, director of Xi'an Jiaotong University's sports center, said, "Tai Chi Chuan is not only a sports exercise to help keep fit, but also a tradition embodying ancient philosophical ideas. Moreover, students can

practice it with little space”.

“The once-a-week class teaches the basics of Tai Chi Chuan, namely, the simplified 24 forms. Most of the students are interested in learning them. When the test approaches, we practice the movements all around the campus,” said a senior student surnamed Tang from the university’s foreign language school.

Located in northwest China’s Shaanxi Province, Xi’an Jiaotong University is a comprehensive university which traces back to 1896.