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11 November 2013   [Universität Mainz](#)

The Institute of Sports Science at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU) will be collaborating with three Chinese universities in the fields of research and teaching. The agreements cover such as aspects as research projects in high-performance sports to health care courses for students. One joint project in the field of high-performance sports is planned with the Chinese Institute of High-Altitude Medical Science Research in Xining, Tibet. Teaching and learning methods are to be analyzed in cooperation with the University of Wuhan, known for the numerous Olympic medal winners in martial arts, gymnastics, and water sports it has produced. A third agreement has been signed with the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). This will enable students studying Sports Science in Mainz to receive additional training in TCM in the form of block courses to be held in Germany and Shanghai.

"By means of these joint projects based on agreements with the individual universities, we are intentionally gaining access to new teaching and learning methods and the eastern philosophies on which they are based," said Professor Wolfgang Schöllhorn of the Exercise and Movement Science section at JGU's Institute of Sports Science.

The first project in cooperation with the Chinese Institute of High-Altitude Medical Science Research will examine the question of what impact exercising at altitudes of 2,500 to 4,500 meters can have and how altitude training can be specifically used to improve performance. The project will compare athletes born and bred at such high altitudes with those born in lowland areas and examine the relevant genetic aspects. Working in collaboration with sports medicine specialists, various training scenarios will be tested within this altitude range. The specialists in exercise and movement from Mainz also intend to try out innovative procedures such as differential learning and new analytical methods.

The second project will involve collaboration with the University of Wuhan and will look at how training can be made more effective and to what extent training methods influence performance. "Wuhan is one of China's true gold medal factories, particularly when it comes to wrestling and the martial arts, gymnastics and rowing," explained Schöllhorn. "What interests us is the extent to which athletes in the classic sports disciplines can profit from additional Qigong exercises and the use of differential learning techniques."

One of the main focuses of the third program will be on the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine in health care. Students who are not studying medicine will have the opportunity to take part in an intensive three-month course in TCM. The theoretical part of the course will involve Chinese teachers coming to Mainz for about one month; the course participants will then go to Shanghai for practical and theoretical training in TCM. The first course is scheduled to start in March 2014.

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