

HOPE Updates – 2022 No.1

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News and editorial from HOPE

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Highlights from local media

Nothing special! 😊

International schools conference focuses on new policy, new challenge, while HOPE sees new opportunities as well

New policy, new challenge but new opportunities as well! The year of 2021 is destined to be an extraordinary year for education in China! With the release of the corresponding policies, the education business environment changed dramatically. The renewed version of “Regulations on the implementation of Non-government Education Promotion Law of PRC” has cooled down the enthusiasm of private education segment. A trend of returning-back-to-state-education is beginning to rise. Meanwhile, the introduction of “Double Reduction Policy” arouses great shocks to thousands of training institutions overnight. The stock price of K12 education dropped sharply resulting closures, unemployment and transformation. At the same time, quality-oriented education and vocational education might have an unprecedented new era.

With the above background and focusing on future education trend, 2021 Education Innovation and Development Conference was held in Suzhou on 17-18 December 2021 with over 300 international schools, bilingual schools and education service providers attending this annual two-day event. The event included a main forum, seminars, workshops and exhibitions, and widely discussed the following topics and showcased the relevant services available: school development and operation innovation, global competency and international talent training, quality education development, international vocational education, curriculum fusion and construction, education technology, university application counselling, physical and mental health, and holistic education.



the panel discussion during the forum

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HOPE was invited to attend the conference both as a guest company and an exhibitor. In the past 3 years, HOPE has developed a package of services for local international and bilingual schools, including university applications, teacher recruitment, teacher development and training, students online tutoring, linking with overseas school and summer/winter camps. With the new “double reduction” policy, HOPE is also developing more extra-curriculum programme with international elements for schools in China using our abundant institutional resources in the UK. Vocational education is possibly another potential sector we plan to work with our UK partner FE colleges and universities to develop link with Chinese institutions. This is a sector Chinese government is keen to develop, including international links.



UKTI representative is delivering a presentation on UK FE sector and its int'l links



Sherry, Alice and Daniel at HOPE stand during the conference.

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HOPE annual test strengthens staff professionalism

HOPE is not a university, but staff still need to take written and oral test under invigilation each year like students. The result is not leading to an academic certificate but the grade of annual performance and the amount of end-of-year bonus! More importantly, as part of annual staff assessment, this tradition has been kept for more than 15 years, and it is how HOPE keeps staff more professional for their service to students as well as to our partners.



A standard test paper

written test invigilated by "Sherock Holmes"

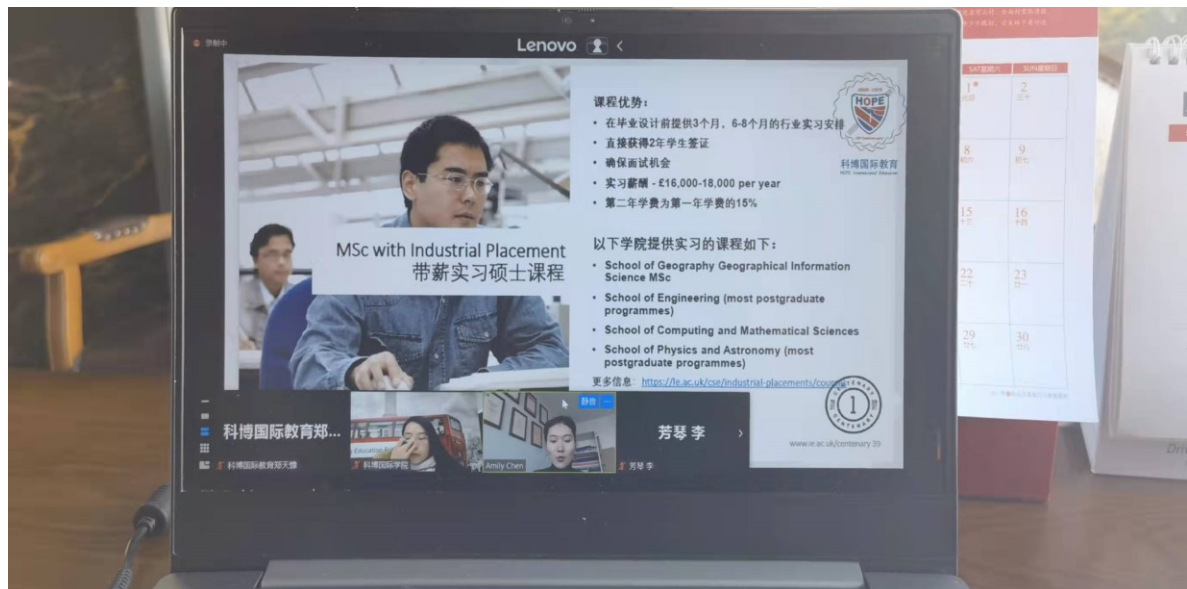
This year's written test was held on 27th December. Staff from different offices sat the test at the same time. The 60-mins test included multiple choice questions and short essay questions with the topics covering basic knowledge on international education, our partner institutions overseas, British and American culture and education system, HOPE's various services as well as suggestions to company for future business development.

PBL(Project based Learning) was introduced for this year's oral test to encourage more teamwork and communication across offices and departments. Staff were divided in pairs to jointly accomplish a practical task of preparing either a business plan or a promotion event plan with a PPT presentation delivery.



Written test in Shanghai(left) and Hangzhou(right) office invigilated by management team.

Assessment, training and team building, this tradition at HOPE will continue in the future but has already been rewarded for stronger staff competency and more business in the past.



Presentation was delivered within 20 mins.each pair via Zoom with all staff observing and a panel of judges from management team marking and commenting the performance

HOPE New Year Party rewarded, relaxed and refilled ourselves

End of year is not just for test and assessment but also for parties and celebrations at HOPE! Take a look at how we say goodbye to 2021 and welcome HOPE's 22nd year in business.



Happy mums at Shanghai office smile over a hotpot table



Irresistible hotpot banquet



Both Shanghai and Nanjing team chose hotpot for the celebration dinner



Karaoke is always a good choice to relax and reward yourself.



Team Hangzhou's choice for celebration is badminton after the dinner

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Law firm visit promoted LLM and LLB programme

HOPE's "top company visit" leg 3 took students and parents to country's famous law firm, AllBright Law Office in Shanghai Pudong New Area on 8th January 2022.

The group was welcomed by Calvin Lee, senior partner of the law firm who is also HOPE's current official legal advisor. The 3rd role of Calvin is HOPE student, whom we help apply to study LLM in the UK 15 years ago!



The group is having a tour of the law firm led by Calvin

Apart from his own experience in the UK to study LLM, Calvin also introduced the demand for qualified solicitor from AllBright, particularly those who had overseas study experience. This is very encouraging to the students who are currently studying law in China but plan to study LLM in the UK and those who just returned from UK after acquired LLM.

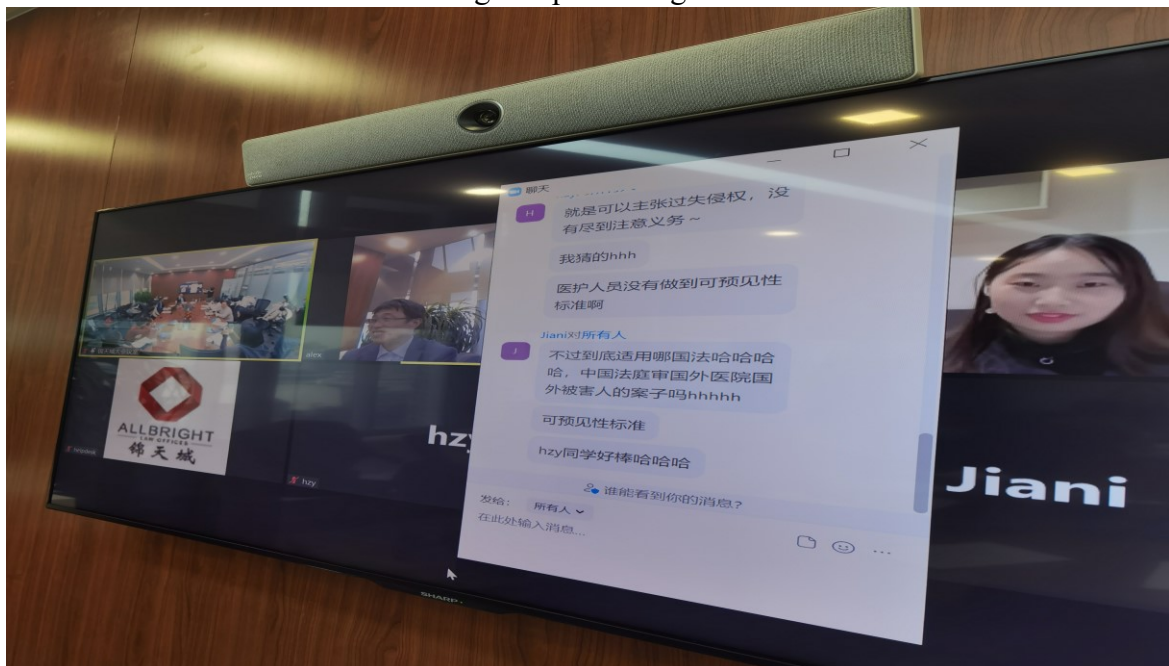
Following Calvin's introduction, Rita Ren, Senior International Officer from Queen Mary, University of London echoed what Calvin said about job prospects by delivering an online presentation from Beijing, and detailed the university's law programme as well.

What made the event more practical was the mock court hearing host by Shirly, HOPE's current LLB student at Bristol University. She used a case study in her UK class to guide the students from two different groups to "debate" at the mock court. The event came to an end after Calvin summarized the performance of the students!



Presentation on his experience in the UK and demand for qualified solicitors by Calvin

All enjoyed this company tour, and it was for the first time we involved a UK university as well as a current student in the UK to participate virtually and promote the relevant programme. We will probably invite more of our partner UK institutions to join our event like this, and to be more innovative on both recruiting and promoting.



Mock court hearing host by Shirly from Bristol

Some thoughts from HOPE:

Post-pandemic calls for innovation on students' recruitment

The competition among students for overseas top schools and universities is getting increasingly fierce, but the same is the competition among the institutions to recruit the top students. The traditional way of promoting and recruiting such as fairs, presentations, media advertising are becoming less effective but more expensive. Even the online promotion after outbreak of pandemic is passing its peak, and students and parents are getting tired of so many online events.

It seems that both overseas institutions and their agents need to be more innovative on how to recruit more effectively in post-pandemic or even during the pandemic period, as the two-year pandemic has already substantially changed people's way of living and even their mindsets, and you need to quickly respond to the change. HOPE has been trying hard to understand this changing market and is trying to be more creative in promoting our partner institutions more effectively. The following are some thoughts we summarized for your reference based on our experiences in the past two years.

- 1) Need to target the students much earlier and involve in their early preparation stage. Most UK and overseas institutions only target the graduating students, hoping for the immediate result, but this is far less enough and are quite short-sighted. In the increasingly mature market like China (let alone 1st tier cities like Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hongkong),



Need to target the students much earlier and involve in their early preparation stage

students are preparing for overseas school/university application much earlier. You need to “bury a seed” in their heart much earlier as well by involving yourself in their early preparation stage. Target those students 2-3 years before they make the application, or even earlier by providing academic and non-academic support or organizing relevant events or competitions for them. Follow them up until they launch the application, and you will find that your hardworking and persistence could be rewarded.

- 2) If you are not the elite top institutions at the top of the various ranking, use other selling points that are practical to students, such as employment and relations with industries, renowned alumni and celebrities, rich extra-curriculum activities etc., and organize events to showcase these.

HOPE’s top company tour series attracted quite a good number of students and parents so far, as employment and career prospects are probably the only rivals to “ranking” in Chinese students and parents’ dictionary.



Rich extra-curriculum activities could be a selling point

- 3) Fully aware of how the new policies, pandemic and international relations could affect the market and customer behavior, and adapt yourself to the market accordingly and promptly. Quick response to the market is vital.

Quick response to the market includes willingness to change and quick development of new products and programme for the market. HOPE has been developing quite a few new products and services for both individual student and partner institutions in China, from online tutoring platform to in-country international summer camp, from teacher recruitment to teacher development, from top university application training to various profile-raising projects such as volunteering teaching and animal protection.



Quick response to the market includes quick development of new products

- 4) Actively offer your support and assistance to your clients before you are rewarded.
Establishing a long-term relationship with your clients and business partners is important but not easy, particularly at this challenging time. However, this is extremely valuable if you do this before anyone else. There is always a utilitarian market, but there is always a saying as well: a friend in need is a friend indeed!