

HOPE Updates – No.11

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Edited by: Daniel Zheng



Dragon dance of autumn

(photo by Daniel in North China's Shenyang, Liaoning Province)



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HOPE travel north to serve bank' s VIP clients

The pandemic and the economic recession prompted more cross-field collaboration for mutual benefits. There is no exception in study abroad and banking industry. Following the strategic agreement signed between HOPE and Industrial Bank last year, themed presentations, salons and one-to-one counselling events have been organized for the bank's VIP clients across China from Fuzhou in the south to Shenyang of north China where the bank has branches.



HOPE's presentation for Bank's VIP clients in Dalian.

From 21st to 25th October, HOPE was invited to visit Dalian and Shenyang of Liaoning Province in north China to provide training to the bank's staff as well as to counsel the bank's VIP clients on how to prepare their kids to study abroad. Around 20 families each city attended this "practical" and "enlightening" presentation made by HOPE team.

"Parents in north China are usually more conservative compared with parents in the south" said the bank manager, "this is mainly due to the local culture, financial status of the family, and the lack of information on international education".

To better serve the bank's clients and to expand HOPE's business, more events will be organized jointly by HOPE and Industrial Bank in Harbin, Changchun, Tianjing, Xi'an, Yinchuan in North East and North West China in the months to come.



Alex Wen (left), Sherry Zhang (right) from HOPE with Industrial Bank's private banking manager in Shenyang after the event.

Schools and universities link see gradual recovery

International education exchange in China has been quiet for some time due to the covid-19 and the relevant travel restrictions. In the past three years, most institutions have been focusing on covid prevention, and international exchange and links with overseas partners have not been prioritized. Most of the school links and university partner programme between China and overseas institutions HOPE has been managing are neither productive nor active.

However, this may change with the new covid-19 policy having been released on 9th November by government, and there have been signs of recovery in international education exchange. HOPE has been approached recently by several partner Chinese institutions at both university and school levels for re-starting the promotion of their links or exchange programme with their UK counterparts.

The links HOPE help to established between Loughborough University and Shanghai University of Sport, Loughborough University and Shanghai International

Studies University, Goldsmiths University of London and East China University of Science and Technology, University of Essex and Dianji University have been activated recently, and a series of online and on-campus promotion events have been organized.



Online presentation by Loughborough University to students from Shanghai University of Sport

At the same time, some international schools are also getting in touch with HOPE for partnership with UK schools. Interests are mainly in sister school link for students and teacher exchange as well as joint programme arrangement for A level or university foundation programme.

It is expected that such collaborative programme will continue to be popular in China post-pandemic period, particularly the joint programme at both university and school levels. Please contact Alice Zhang, International Partnership Manager at HOPE, a.zhang@hope-studyabroad.com, if your institution is interested in such link.

Parents salon discuss important role of family education

The bi-monthly Parents' Salon organized by HOPE has always been a good chance to discuss some “hot topics” in education among the experts and parents whose children are pursuing international education. “How to plan for child's education and career?”, “what is more important, top university or holistic development?”, “study in international school in China or go abroad?”, “how to tackle cross-culture difference for both students and parents” have been topics in the previous salons to inspire parents to improve themselves as well as to assist their children.



Parents salon in Hangzhou by the Westlake

November's salon fell on 5th November in Hangzhou with the theme, “family education”. Two guests were invited to share their successful story with other parents on how to motivate their two kids into Cambridge University. Dr. Sun and Dr. Lou are couples who worked at KCL and Hertfordshire Universities London before and then in two international schools in China as international principals respectively in Suzhou and Yiwu.

As the couple had experience in both UK and Chinese education system, they are extremely familiar with Chinese parents' concerns and worries. The key messages they delivered during the discussion are: family education is as important as school education; Parents shall inspire, rather than control or even dominate their children's academic interest and career plan.

As the parents themselves, Dr. Sun and Dr. Lou stressed the importance of keeping a smooth communication channel with the kids all the time; Always try to find topics of interest for both; "How to say sometimes is more vital than what to say" Dr. Lou said. "Parents shall always improve themselves to catch up with the kids' development and growing up", She added.



Dr Lou was a focus point at the parents salon in Hangzhou.

As the former principal, Dr. Sun think that family education is a very important supplement to school education. While parents and school shall respect each other, parents shall always take a more active role throughout children's education.

10 families joining the salon included those whose kids are already overseas and some who are planning to send their kids to international education pathway. "We try to offer a more practical and relaxing platform for our current and potential clients to communicate, to learn, to improve and to exchange ideas", said Chanel Zhang, HOPE's General Manager of Hangzhou branch.

HOPE Director of Counselling debut show at STV study abroad programme

Chanel Zhang, HOPE's Director of Counselling based in Hangzhou joined the famous study abroad talk-show programme at Shanghai TV Station on 31st October.



Chanel at STV studio

This edition of the programme focused on guiding the students to learn more about G5 universities in the UK, particularly LSE. From ranking to entry requirements,

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from courses to research strength, from alumni to career direction, Chanel offered a comprehensive analysis of this famous school using her own knowledge as well as cases of HOPE students for the audience.

Study Abroad Programme at STV is a famous weekly talk-show programme focusing on international education and overseas study guidance for students and parents. School principals, recruitment managers, agent directors, employers, overseas returned students, parents are usually invited to this 40-minute programme.

HOPE has been regularly invited to this programme. Daniel Zheng, Managing Director of HOPE was on this programme for 5 times in the past, not only promoting the UK education but also HOPE's partner institutions.

HOPE Hangzhou alumni gathered for frisbee joy

Frisbee is becoming not only a sport game but also a fashionable form of gathering among the young people in China. There is no exception to HOPE's overseas returned students!



Frisbee gathering for HOPE's alumni students

HOPE's alumni (students who applied overseas universities via HOPE) association finds it a good choice for their autumn get-together. 6th November saw a group of HOPE students and HOPE staff in Hangzhou practicing this fashionable game of joy. Yitong Liu, a Loughborough graduate who is currently a university lecturer in Shanghai, volunteered to be the coach and detailed the rule of the game for all participants. Everyone learned quickly and the game, though tough, is full of joy.



A tough game enjoyed by all

HOPE alumni association has about 500 members. HOPE regularly organizes social events such as tea party, reception, salon and academic lectures, sports game, company visits and excursions. The next event will be watching FIFA World Cup Final 2022 in a fancy pub in Shanghai with beer and lucky draw on 25th November!



New COVID-19 measures released

By WANG XIAOYU | CHINA DAILY | Updated: 2022-11-12 07:29



An Airbus A350-900 arrives at the Baoan International Airport in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, Jan 6, 2022. [Photo/Xinhua]

China will reduce the COVID-19 quarantine period for incoming travelers and close contacts from 10 days to eight, cancel circuit breakers for inbound flights and no longer trace secondary close contacts of confirmed cases, authorities said on Friday.

Categories of COVID-risk areas will also be adjusted to two — high and low — from the previous categories of high, medium and low, according to a notice released by the State Council's Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism that lays out 20 measures aimed at upgrading disease control measures.

The shift comes after a key meeting of the Communist Party of China on Thursday reiterated the country's unswerving adherence to a dynamic COVID-19 policy, while stressing optimization of disease control measures based on the latest epidemic situation and patterns of viral mutations.

According to the notice, all passengers arriving from overseas will undergo five days of centralized quarantine plus three days of home — or hotel-based isolation, compared with the current protocol of seven days of centralized isolation plus three days of self-isolation. It also stipulates that inbound travelers should not be placed into isolation again after finishing required quarantine periods at their first points of entry.

The circuit-breaker mechanism, which bans flight routes if inbound international flights carry COVID-19 cases, will be canceled. Inbound travelers will only need to provide one, rather than two, negative nucleic acid testing results taken 48 hours before boarding.

"For important businesspeople and sports groups arriving in China from overseas, they will be transferred to a quarantine-free closed-loop bubble via designated vehicles to conduct activities without leaving the bubble area," it said.

Meanwhile, quarantine periods for close contacts of confirmed infections have also been reduced from 10 to eight days, while secondary close contacts will no longer be traced.

The notice said that modifying categories of COVID-risk areas is aimed at minimizing the number of people facing restrictions on movement.

High-risk areas, it said, will cover residences of infected cases and places where they frequently visit. The designation of high-risk areas should be limited to a certain building unit and should not be expanded recklessly.

If no new cases are detected for five consecutive days, the high-risk label along with control measures should be lifted promptly.

While blind rollout of mass testing is forbidden, local authorities are required to test cross-provincial travelers upon arrival to detect potential infections promptly.

"Prolonged and expanded battle lines against the virus should be avoided, and we must not take a wait-and-see or arbitrary attitude," it said.

The notice also requires ramping up stockpiles of COVID-19 drugs and medical equipment, preparing more hospital and intensive care unit beds, bolstering booster vaccination rates — especially among the elderly — and accelerating research of broad-spectrum and multivalent vaccines.



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Wang Liping, a researcher at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said on Friday that given China's huge population and vulnerable groups, as well as insufficient and uneven medical resources, authorities have been highly cautious in adjusting disease control policies and each step has been discussed extensively and even piloted beforehand.

"The optimization of virus control policies does not signal relaxation, but aims for more scientific and precise approaches to fend off the epidemic while minimizing the impact on the economy and livelihoods," Wang said.

Education authorities improve college campus' COVID-19 prevention protocols

By Li Lei | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2022-11-05 17:21



A student takes a COVID-19 nucleic acid test at a testing site inside the Communication University of China in Beijing, on Sept 10, 2022.

Education authorities pledged to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 on campuses in a more "scientific, precise and humane" style as winter nears with potential outbreaks, an official said on Saturday.

The remarks came as China ramped up efforts to fight bureaucracy and oversimplicity in containing novel coronavirus outbreaks.

Liu Peijun, deputy director of the education ministry's sports, health and art division, said the schools had adjusted control measures in accordance with the new developments since the autumn semester which began in September, and the situation on campus so far was "generally under control".

The latest versions of COVID-19 control plans will be strictly implemented on campus, and school authorities can neither simply seal their campus altogether in case of an outbreak, nor can they sit idly by and let the virus spread unimpeded, he told a news conference held by the National Health Commission in Beijing.

"Schools should try their utmost to ensure in-person classes, but when online-teaching become necessary, campus officials need to ensure e-classes' quality and minimize the outbreak's impact on learning," he said.

Liu noted that schools will guarantee the supply of living necessities and other supplies on campus, and focus on areas such as food price, dormitory conditions, health services and package delivery, among others.

Schools will also make channels unobstructed for teachers and students to lodge complaints, and respond to such complaints as soon as possible.

"Meanwhile, we will direct them to understand and cooperate with control measures and overcome the difficulties in unity," the official said.

The ministry on Saturday also unveiled a website (https://hudong.moe.gov.cn/siju_jbz/gxsyreportform.jsp) and a hotline (010-66096146) to report misconducts relating to COVID-19 control on college campuses.

As winter nears, Liu said schools will step up scrutiny for incomers' health data and improve management at key places such as classrooms, the canteen and dormitories in an effort to prevent outbreaks.

Efforts will also be made to avoid the outbreaks of other diseases such as the flu, chickenpox and measles by improving ventilation and food safety.

Chinese universities climb world rankings

By ZOU SHUO | China Daily | Updated: 2022-11-14



Tsinghua University is seen in Beijing on August 27, 2019. [Photo/VCG]

Chinese institutions of higher learning are on the rise in global university rankings, as the country strives to elevate a number of them to world-class status.

In the 2022-2023 Best Global University Rankings published recently by US News & World Report, 338 Chinese universities were among the schools listed, exceeding the 280 listed for the United States, 105 for Japan and 92 for the United Kingdom. The new rankings include 2,000 universities from more than 90 countries.

It is the first time that China had more universities in the rankings than the US. However, the majority of US universities appear in the top half of the rankings, including eight of the top 10.

Tsinghua University's ranking rose three places to 23rd, making it the highest-ranked university in Asia. Meanwhile, Peking University's place rose from 45 to 39.

Among the top 10 schools for artificial intelligence, five were from China, including Tsinghua University, the No 1. Carnegie Mellon University ranked 12th in the sector, making it the best US university for AI research.

According to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2023, seven universities from China were ranked in the world's top 100, up from six last year.

Tsinghua University and Peking University were ranked 16th and 17th, respectively. The other five were Fudan University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Zhejiang University, the University of Science and Technology of China and Nanjing University.

Xiong Bingqi, director of the 21st Century Education Research Institute, said universities should not be too preoccupied with rankings. Experts have also cautioned that university rankings are based on evaluation standards that differentiate and that universities and people should view them more objectively.

Nevertheless, Chinese universities have put great emphasis on academic research, which is more of an issue in the evaluation of world university rankings, and have achieved progress in rankings, Xiong said.

Chinese universities should also focus on nurturing top-notch students to achieve the goal of creating "world-class universities with Chinese characteristics", he said.

Renmin University of China said in April that it had withdrawn from all international rankings and Nanjing University said that it "no longer considers international rankings a development target" during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period. Columbia University announced in July it would not participate in the next US News & World Report's university rankings.

Chen Zhiwen, editor-in-chief of the online education portal EOL, said none of the rankings are perfect and they cannot reflect the overall situation and strength of universities.

The Chinese government has advocated getting rid of an overreliance on the number of papers and academic titles in the evaluation of universities, while putting more emphasis on training students.

ARE CHINESE UNIVERSITIES NOW COMPETING WITH THE WORLD' S BEST?

From CBBC <https://focus.cbbc.org> 26 October 2022

Now that 7 Chinese universities are in the Times Higher Education Top 100, should British universities such as Oxford and Cambridge be worried, or is their rise a good thing?



Photo by Xingyuner from Maigoo.com

CHINESE UNIVERSITIES ARE RANKING HIGHER THAN EVER ON THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING, CAUSING MANY TO WONDER IF CHINESE UNIVERSITIES ARE STARTING TO COMPETE WITH UK UNIVERSITIES FOR RESEARCH AND ADMISSIONS. IF THIS IS THE CASE, WHAT CAN UK UNIVERSITIES DO TO MAINTAIN THEIR GLOBAL REPUTATION, ESPECIALLY AMONG LUCRATIVE CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

The University of Oxford topped the latest Times Higher Education World University Ranking, released on 12 October 2022, for the seventh year in a row. There are a total of 103 UK universities in the THE ranking, of which 10 are in the top 100.

However, further down the ranking, the dominance of UK and US universities is changing. China now has an unprecedented seven universities in the top 100, up from only two just six years ago. Tsinghua University ranks 16th (the highest university in Asia), followed by Peking University at number 17.

What is driving China's rise up the rankings?

This rise has been driven largely by an increase in research, as measured by citations, particularly during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, and China's average citations score has increased from 41.1 in 2019 to an impressive 55.6. Chinese institutions also score well in terms of industrial collaboration.

“Chinese Universities are climbing up the global rankings year on year,” says Thomas Clayburn, CBBC's Education Sector Lead. “This rise has been particularly noticeable since 2015, when China's Ministry of Education initiated the Double First-Class university development plan, which now lists 147 participating universities.” The development plan was an initiative selecting universities to be developed into first-class educational institutions, and prominent programmes to be elevated in quality to become classed as ‘first rate’.

Nevertheless, a lack of internationalisation is still holding Chinese universities back, with all four measures of internationalism (including number of foreign students and staff) in the THE ranking declining. Others (including BBC China Correspondent Stephen McDonell) have cast doubt on China's place in global rankings considering the control of information in subjects like history and politics in China.

Should UK universities be worried?

Whether or not the on-paper ranking of Chinese universities is reflected in practice, the numbers alone have prompted worries about whether Chinese universities could start to pose a threat to more established institutions in the UK, especially those that have traditionally sought to attract large numbers of Chinese students.

“The biggest threat Chinese Universities pose to the UK education sector is retaining the country's talent at home,” comments Jimmy Robinson, co-founder and director of PingPong Digital, which provides digital marketing services to many UK

universities. “With the cheaper cost of living and tuition fees [in China] and an increase in international recognition, the danger is that more Chinese students may decide to attend a domestic university instead of going overseas.”

To counter this, Robinson suggests that UK universities think about creating “specialised degree programmes that offer students the chance to gain specific skills and knowledge that may not be available at Chinese universities”.

“Local Chinese industry partnerships will also help cement the UK education sector in the mindset of Chinese students, parents and professionals,” he adds.

Robinson also points to the need to maintain an active presence on Weibo and WeChat, as well as less well-known (in the West at least) social media platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Zhihu.

A rising tide lifts all boats

The UK continues to be one of the most popular study-abroad destinations for Chinese students. In 2021, 32% of the total number of international students in the UK were from China, a number that held firm even during the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Even if more Chinese students choose to pursue higher education at home, the UK education sector’s strong brand presence means that many thousands will continue to come to the UK for postgraduate education, research, and more.

“I think this shift – a global levelling up – is good news for the world,” says Phil Baty, Chief Knowledge Officer at Times Higher Education. “We are also seeing more global diversity in creativity and innovation as well as more equal international collaboration.”

Clayburn agrees. “I would argue that the rise of China’s universities up the global rankings is a positive for their potential global collaborators as it has led to increased numbers of high-quality co-authored papers.” Indeed, there were 16,267 UK-China papers in 2019 (about 11% of UK output), compared to around 19% of UK papers with a US co-author and 10.5% with a German co-author.

WHAT DO CHANGES TO CHINA' S PRIVATE EDUCATION LAW MEAN FOR BRITISH SCHOOLS?

From CBBC <https://focus.cbbc.org> 23 July 2021

RECENT MODIFICATIONS TO THE LAWS GOVERNING THE PROMOTION OF PRIVATE EDUCATION IN CHINA HAVE BEEN SEEN AS A CAUSE FOR CONCERN BY SOME IN THE INDUSTRY, BUT THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARKET IN CHINA REMAINS STRONG



On 14 May 2021, China issued a revision to the Regulations on the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Privately-run Schools. The modifications come into effect on 1 September 2021. While seeking to improve and regulate the growth of the private education sector in China, the modifications also stipulate that private educational institutions must strictly support the public welfare nature of education.

What is the current landscape of international private education in China?

International schools in China can be roughly divided into three types: 1) pure international schools that only accept foreign passport holders (some of which have been renamed in their license as 'expat family children schools'); 2) private bilingual schools operating an international programme; and 3) public schools that operate an international division.

According to The Development Report of International Schools in China, as of 2020, there were 535 private bilingual schools in China, a number that has demonstrated steady growth for the past 5 years. Conversely, the number of private expat-only schools declined to 113 from a peak of 126 in 2017.

British-style education retains a strong reputation in China. The number of British-style schools has been growing significantly in recent years, with over 60 campuses in China. In 2020 alone, cities like Haikou, Dongguan, Xiamen, Changsha, Shijiazhuang, and Changchun celebrated the launch of their first British-style schools.

What does the new Private Education Promotion Law say?

The revisions to the law mainly target private schools carrying out compulsory education (the nine years starting from age six) for Chinese nationals. In principle, schools that only admit the children of foreign nationals are not affected by these revisions.

One of the key strategies behind the revisions is preventing public schools from turning into private schools, as seen in Articles 7 and 8, as well as making access to schools more equitable by prohibiting entrance exams and cross-district enrolment. The law also touches on school leadership. Article 25 states that members of decision-making bodies such as the board of directors should be Chinese nationals. However, this does not mean that schools cannot have foreign principals or management staff, for example.

According to Article 29, private schools offering compulsory education should not use foreign teaching materials, and that any foreign teaching materials used in other schools should comply with relevant laws and regulations.

It was noted during a recent DIT-CBBC webinar on the outlook of UK-China collaborations in school education that no foreign materials does not necessarily mean that curriculum materials from the UK or other countries cannot be used as supplementary materials to widen student learning. This is particularly true for subjects such as English, ICT, PE and art, although schools should still carefully review all materials to ensure that they do not include sensitive content.

Why have these changes come about?

The changes to the law come as China attempts to standardise education and make access to education more equal, as suggested by the definition of education as “public welfare.”

China has taken aim at educational costs as part of measures aimed at reversing the country’s declining birthrate. Despite a relaxation of the one-child policy in 2016 (recently revised to a “three-child policy”), some young urban Chinese are deciding not to have children due to the high costs of childcare and early childhood education. Some statistics even show that urban Chinese families spend up to a quarter of their family income on education.

As a result, other recent measures include tightening regulations around off-campus private tutoring services, which have been able to charge parents concerned about the child’s academic achievement increasingly high fees. On 15 June, the Ministry of Education established the Off-Campus Education and Training Department to oversee the curricula, operations, qualifications, and capital sources of tutoring organisations.

The next step for school ventures in China

The new regulations governing private education are complex, but the outlook remains optimistic for British education companies looking to enter the Chinese market.

Michelle Liang, COO of Wellington College China noted during the aforementioned webinar that the regulations underscore the importance of working with a trustworthy local partner who can help you to understand the local regulatory environment, especially for new school brands.

During the same webinar, Maxine Lu, general principal of Xiehe Education Group, suggested that schools think about how to develop a more holistic approach to education that runs from K-12 (Key Stages 1-5 in British National Curriculum terms) and beyond, and an approach that helps children develop into well-rounded individuals, rather than just preparing them to take international examinations such as iGCSEs.

She also stressed the importance of offering professional development for teachers and leveraging the advantages of a combination of expats, local Chinese and overseas return Chinese teachers. This focus on teacher training could also be an opportunity for companies in the professional development field.