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**No short-cut for hiking at MacLehose Trail HK, the only choice is going forward!
Same is for those working for international education industry!**

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Inside HOPE

Synergy: HOPE organized HK's university discovery tour for school partners

Against the background of increasingly diversified destination for overseas study, HOPE has consistently adhered to adaption and innovation and at the same time to take the lead to establish a healthy eco-environment of the industry. From 24-27 April, HOPE organized a HK universities' discovery tour for a group of 25 school principals, senior counsellors in international schools, head of associations of private schools, international education and local business councils across China.

Faced with the growing diversity of study abroad demands from students and parents, HOPE's market research reveals that while traditional English-speaking countries remain dominant in numbers, emerging Asian study destinations such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, China, are experiencing sustained growth in popularity. The HK universities' discovery tour is to enable HOPE's partners to know more about the entry requirements of the universities in HK, HOPE's summer and winter short programme with HK universities and to establish link between HOPE and local industries.

In Hong Kong, HOPE delegation visited Hong Kong University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Hong Kong Institute of Finance and Management. The delegates discussed the current market demand in mainland with admission officers from the HK institutions and know more about the characteristics of student recruitment.



HOPE's tour to Hong Kong University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University



HKU Admission officer Dr. Zhiqiang Zhang(Left) and HK Polytechnic University former VP Dr. Xinrong Lv introduced admission policy to HOPE and its partners



HOPE's tour to HK Stock Exchange

In recent years, HOPE has developed a comprehensive and multi-tiered study abroad service system. We have developed differentiated study abroad planning, preparation and application solutions tailored to the different individual needs. More importantly, HOPE is committed to building a healthy and sustainable international education eco-system and eco-environment. HOPE regularly share its exclusively compiled study abroad trends with our partners via newsletter and direct mails, host different international education forums, organize business training excursions and tours for partner schools and agents, and actively promote alumni and parents network connectivity. These initiatives have not only enhanced HOPE's brand influence but also delivered tangible value to our partners. Moving forward, HOPE will continue to adopt an open and inclusive approach, joining hands with more educational institutions both nationally and internationally to provide more and broader, higher-quality study abroad pathways for aspiring students.



HOPE's tour in Hong Kong: M+ Visual Museum (left) and hiking at MacLehose Trail

HOPE's Fair saw more diversified study abroad demand

Under the impact of economic downturn and changing international situation, the number of students going abroad has been decreasing, and the destination countries are more diversified. HOPE's International Education and Summer Camp Fair on 19th April further suggested this trend.

15 universities and schools from China, UK, Australia, Malaysia, and Switzerland, as well as the British Council were invited to this half-day event in Shanghai. About 30 families joined the fair. The number of participating families was lower than our expectation (We expect 50), however, the presented visitors showed different interest in different international education pathways and destination countries. The enquiries on UK, Australia were not as dominant as before, while institutions in Malaysia (University of Southampton Malaysia), international schools in Shanghai and joint venture institutions (University of Nottingham Ningbo) also gained popularity.



Enquiries at exhibition table

The fair included two parts: two panel discussion (one focus on school sector and the other university sector) and individual counselling and interviews. The panel discussion also inspired both participating institutions on market trend and parents/students for various choices they have respectively. The following were the selected topics questions and answers from the panelists.

Questions for the panel discussion (school sector) moderated by Daniel Zheng, MD HOPE:

1. Under changeable international affairs and economic downwardness, are international education pathway and study abroad still cost-effective choice for Chinese families?

Mr. Chen Wenguo, Principal, Hongrun Boyuan School in Shanghai: Yes, it's still a cost-effective choice. For international education, it was first considered by wealthy families. With the increasing wealth in China in recent years, the number of very wealthy families has also grown, and more families are considering sending their children to study abroad. For most families facing the global changes, it is increasingly important to consider from a strategic perspective what kind of person their children should become. It is not just about reading and mastering knowledge. In the era of AI, the goal of cultivating children has changed a lot. It is necessary to cultivate their ability to communicate across cultures, have critical thinking, and independently judge, think, and solve problems in complex environments. In the international education environment, such talents can be cultivated to become lifelong learners who will not feel difficult in any environment. The more challenges they encounter, the more excited they will feel. It is very important to help children find the meaning of life.

Daniel Zheng: I quite agree with you. International education should consider not only the job opportunities, career pathways, but also the true meaning of cultivating children to take an international vision. At least, from an economic perspective, families now have more choices to select.

Mr. David Ranson, Foreign Principal, Zeolym High School Shanghai:

Well, I guess we do. That's why we are here. The world is so small. If British kids only know Britain, they're going to suffer. The same as Chinese students. They need experience both. They need to be exposed to the world and to the global market and not just be fluent in English or French or whatever other languages, but they need to be able to culturally adapt as well. Because Language itself is not enough. We need begin this learning journey with the goal in mind, what do we need to do and what do we want for our children? And I think we want them to have a really great learning experience. They can go to a good university and contribute the economy and to the family life. It's about the future and future generation.

2. After pandemic, Chinese families are more rational to studying abroad; safety, education quality, pastoral care, university destination, tuition fee are all elements that families are considering; from which area, does your school give more confidence to choose your school?

Mr. Chong Meng, International Admission and Marketing Director, Charterhouse International Secondary School, Malaysia: Safety, employment, adaptability, enrollment rate, and ranking are common concerns for parents. Choosing an overseas school with a lower teacher-student ratio will also help students to better integrate into local education. The international situation is changing, parents will prefer to choose a closer place with high security, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong region and mainland China.

Mr. David Mustafa, Principal, Holmes Grammar School, Australia: Parents are concerned about the progression rate, quality of education, safety, and costs. The school is also concerned about the services and welfare of international students, and pays special attention to the academics of students, like if you study in Australia, it is relatively easier to enter the University of Melbourne than applying from China.

3. What type of students are suitable to study abroad? What are the main challenges for students to study abroad at a young age?

Mr. Chen Wenguo, Principal, Hongrun Boyuan School in Shanghai: The best fit depends on the child's own wishes and if the child is self-controlled, independent and the adaptability to the environment. The student must have a sense of purpose. Such well-prepared student is suitable to study abroad. The biggest challenge for students is the loneliness of the mind.

Daniel Zheng: To some extent, self-adaptability and independence can be more important than academic ability.

Mr. David Ranson, Foreign Principal, Zeolym High School: Students need comprehensive quality and have confidence and caring, not just focused on academic ability.

Mr. Chong Meng, International Admission and Marketing Director, Charterhouse International Secondary School, Malaysia: Chinese students don't know what they want to do in the future, and the challenge for schools is guiding children and let them know how to make decisions.

4. To choose an international education pathway or study abroad, how does a family make plans, and what preparation does a family need to make?

Mr. David Ranson, Foreign Principal, Zeolym High School : Researching study abroad

destinations, schools, or making the transition to an international school at home is also an option.

Mr. Chen Wenguo, Principal, Hongrun Boyuan School in Shanghai: It is recommended that children go out to study after high school when they are maturer, the child will be more competitive outside in the future.



Two panel discussion focusing on schools (left) and universities sectors (right)

Panel discussion questions (University sector) moderated by Chanel Zhang, HOPE

1. Study abroad destination countries are more diversified for Chinese students after Pandemic, what do you think the main reasons?

Mr. Gavin Ge, Country Manager, University of Sussex, UK:

Unlike the closed information in the past, nowadays the channels of obtaining information are exceptionally large, and people find that not only those traditional choices, stemming from China's cultural self-confidence, there are different needs, and there are different places to meet the needs. Each school has its own strength, and the most important thing is to choose their own fit.

Ms. Emma Liu, China Project Manager, University of Reading, UK:

As a traditional country for studying abroad, UK has academic advantages and professional choices. We have exchanges with various study abroad destinations, and while studying in the UK, we also have the opportunity to exchange to other places to experience the culture of other countries.

2. University selection is indeed a challenge for most of Chinese students, and ranking can always be the focus. What can be the risk if students only look at ranking, particularly overall ranking? What is your advice on how to select a university?

Ms. Emma Liu, China Project Manager, University of Reading, UK:

In addition to the overall rankings, more consideration should be given to subject rankings, employment experience, learning experience, location, etc.

Mr. Darren Chen, Senior Manager, University of Nottingham Ningbo:

Choosing a major and school needs to be combined with a life plan and using a degree as a way to plan your life. Rankings have to change based on time and experience.

3. Many students and parents think that in China, the employers are more caring about the students' graduating university, rather than the subjects they study. How important do you think the subject is? From data of your university, students graduating from which subject areas in fact have higher employment rate? What career services does your university provide to students?

Ms. Daisy Chen, Country Manager, Coventry University, UK:

When looking for a job, the prestigious school label is only a gateway, not a deciding factor. When a student is interviewed, what is more important is the student's professional background. Each university offers students a wide range of services and resources, depending on whether the professors at the school have resources on the corporate sector.

4. Recently, there is quite a lot of press coverage about fake application documents, cheating for English language and entry tests. What does your university respond to this and what measures are you taking? What is your advice to students who are applying?

Ms. Daisy Chen, Country Manager, Coventry University, UK: Once a student is found to have falsified his/her documents, even if he/she has already arrived in the UK, we will still dissuade him/her from the program and will not refund the deposit. Honesty is very important.

Mr. Allan Gan, Student Recruitment Manager, University of Southampton Malaysia:

Don't take risk and advantage of rule. If the grades are not up to standard, please work hard. Be true, be honesty.



Audience on site



Group photo of exhibitors and HOPE staff

Here the suggestion from HOPE: In the face of the complex and ever-changing international

environment, on one hand, it is recommended that overseas universities attach importance to services, especially in career development and employment internships, which are currently of concern to parents and students. Meanwhile, we suggest that parents and students should consider major selection and career development in addition to overall ranking.

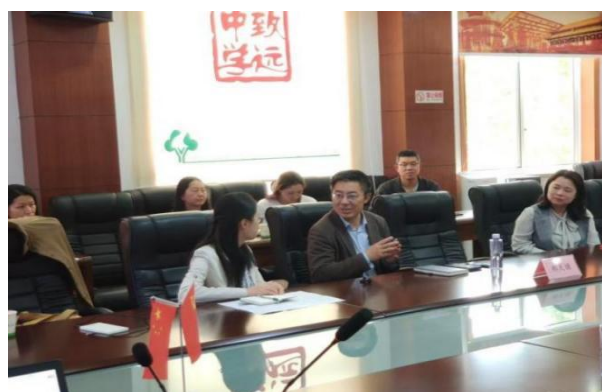
INSIDE HOPE -- Photo news of April



On 10th April, HOPE attended the British Council Exam's Annual Partner Conference with the theme "Synergy". This year's conference aims to harness global educational innovation, build an open collaborative framework, and collectively advance sustainable development in the field of assessments and examinations. The conference was followed by a B2B exhibition where HOPE showcased its services to Chinese schools in foreign teacher recruitment, teachers' training, study tours and links with overseas schools.



On 11th of April, HOPE's Managing Director, Daniel Zheng, attended University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) partner day. Currently, an increasing number of domestic universities are expanding into overseas markets to recruit international students, while significantly enhancing support for their enrollment partners. The international education and study abroad sector is gradually evolving into a two-way engagement model of "going global" and "bringing overseas students in".



On 17th of April, the sixth training session for teachers responsible for international exchange in 60 schools in Pudong New Area was successfully organized by HOPE and Pudong Education Bureau's Education Research Institute at Shanghai Zhiyuan Middle School. Three schools were invited to share their experience in international education exchange including Zhiyuan Middle School's link with Brockenhurst College in the UK. Daniel Zheng, MD of HOPE was also invited to chair the discussion on 'how international education exchange assists school development' after the three school's sharing.



In April, HOPE Shanghai office received visits from Spectrum University Malaysia (upper left), St.Bees School UK (upper right) and Loughborough University. Further collaboration was discussed while HOPE gave a market updates for the visiting guests.

News from local media

Chinese universities add 29 new undergraduate majors

By Zou Shuo | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2025-04-22 17:07

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202504/22/WS68075c51a3104d9fd3820de2.html>

China has added 29 new undergraduate majors in its latest university discipline reshuffle, aiming to respond rapidly to the national strategic needs and high-quality development, according to the Ministry of Education.

In the 2024 undergraduate major approval and adjustment results released on Tuesday, universities nationwide added 1,839 new undergraduate programs while suspending

enrollment in 2,220 programs and phasing out 1,428 others. Additionally, 157 existing programs have undergone modifications in degree categories or study durations.

The ministry releases the reshuffle every year and the latest one marks a more drastic change in undergraduate majors, it said.

Among the 29 newly added majors, it added the ones that serve national strategy, such as regional and country studies, carbon neutrality science and engineering, marine science and technology, and health and medical security.

It has also included the ones focusing on technological frontiers, such as intelligent molecular engineering, medical device and equipment engineering, and spatiotemporal information engineering.

Majors meeting market demand, such as international cruise management and aeronautical sports, as well as AI-integrated disciplines such as AI education, smart audiovisual engineering, and digital theater have been introduced.

For the first time, the ministry has implemented an "emergency mechanism" for strategically critical disciplines, creating a "green channel" for rapid approval of programs tied to urgent national priorities. For example, six universities, including Beihang University in Beijing, have added low-altitude technology and engineering programs to support China's burgeoning low-altitude economy.

With China's higher education system now offering 62,800 undergraduate programs, the ministry has emphasized strengthening alignment between academic planning and employment trends.

US politics spark surge in Canadian university interest

By YANG GAO in Toronto | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2025-04-28 10:44

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202504/28/WS680eeb92a3104d9fd3821f9b.html>



People walk through Harvard Yard on the Harvard University campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on April 15, 2025. [Photo/Agencies]

US President Donald Trump's pressure on universities is leading more American students to consider studying in Canada, as experts say the trend reflects growing concerns over academic freedom.

Stephen Sireci, a professor and the director of the center for educational assessment at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, said Trump's proposals have raised concerns among domestic and international students.

"The message is that universities should get in line and follow everything Trump wants to do, but there's been a lot of rejection of that message," Sireci told China Daily.

Trump enacted executive orders on April 23 to overhaul the university accreditation process, criticizing accreditors for promoting left-leaning ideologies and diversity initiatives over academic performance.

The administration also has targeted Ivy League institutions like Harvard and Columbia, freezing hundreds of millions in federal funding and demanding policy changes.

Sireci said that while the United States has long been seen as a safe and welcoming destination for international students, that perception is changing.

"What the international students are saying now is the exact opposite," he said. "The notion that the United States is a safe place for international students to study and to be supported has changed."

Sireci said the financial implications of suspending federal funds may have broader consequences.

"Federal funding has supported research and science at American universities for a long time, so if that is actually pulled, it will have serious ramifications," he said.

He said that policies discouraging international talent from going to the US could eventually erode its universities' global standing.

"To keep up that level of excellence, we need to recruit and retain some of the best stars from across the globe," Sireci said. "Any policies that inhibit that are going to affect our global competitiveness."

Although he said he hope the shift in student flows might be temporary, Sireci acknowledged it may take years to repair the damage done to America's academic reputation.

"There are a lot of lawsuits being filed now," he said. "I don't think it will last. The effects on America's reputation will take more time to recover."

Asked whether the movement of American students and faculty abroad could become a form of brain drain, Sireci said that risk is real.

"If there are policies to discourage people from applying or people who are accepted from coming, that's going to affect the number of scientists and intellectuals in the United States, for sure," he said.

Sireci also spoke of deeper societal implications.

"For the US higher education system to be strong, we need not just intellectuals and scholars in our country, but we need to collaborate with international scholars across the globe," he said.

"The recent political developments in the US, including ideological divisions and moves to restrict diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs — are shaping student

decision-making," said Glen Jones, a professor of higher education at the University of Toronto.

"Those who see themselves as negatively impacted by the change in direction associated with the Trump government are more likely to look for new alternatives," Jones told China Daily.

Officials at the University of British Columbia's Vancouver campus said that as of March 1, the school reported a 27 percent jump in graduate applications from US citizens for programs starting in the 2025 academic year, compared with all of 2024.

Simon Fraser University also said its faculty of graduate studies also saw a 23 percent increase in applications from American citizens compared with last year.

"Canada has, at least to date, avoided the sort of extreme polarization that now defines US politics," Jones said. "There is a sense of greater stability in the Canadian academic environment.

"It will be some time before we know whether this is a national phenomenon and (of) the magnitude of change," he said.

Asked whether Canadian institutions are ready to accommodate a potential rise in American applicants, Jones said that the federal government's cap on international student visas has already led to a decline in international student numbers across the board.

"Most universities would be pleased to receive additional applications from the United States because this might counterbalance some of the declining applications from some other countries," he said.

However, Jones said that Trump's recent actions, including challenges to academic freedom, research funding and DEI policies — could have cross-border implications.

He cited travel advisories issued by the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the Ottawa government.

"As Canadian university leaders look at what is happening in the US, they are clearly concerned about the erosion of academic freedom," he said.

"This reinforces the importance of protecting this freedom in Canada, and ensuring that our institutions continue to reinforce policies addressing issues of equity and inclusion," he said.

As for managing the moment, Jones said the current federal cap provides "an opportunity to ensure that Canadian higher education has supports and policies in place" to give international students the experiences they expect.

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Growing number of Chinese students choosing Ireland for higher education

By Xu Nuo | China Daily | Updated: 2025-04-28 08:58

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202504/28/WS680ed29aa3104d9fd3821e95.html>

Chinese mainland students accounted for 10.9 percent of the international student body in Irish higher education last year, making China the third-largest source country for foreign students in Ireland behind India and the United States, according to the 2025 Report on Studying in Ireland.

The report, jointly released by Chinese education consultancy EIC Education, Education in Ireland and University College Dublin at the Irish embassy in Beijing on Wednesday, provides insights into application trends for studying in Ireland, as well as popular programs, scholarships and employment opportunities.

"Its aim is to offer comprehensive guidance and support for Chinese students planning to study in Ireland," said Sunny Sun, director of UK & Ireland Program Management at EIC.

According to data from the Irish visa office, the number of visas issued to Chinese students for studying in Ireland reached 3,560 last year, the highest in a decade and a 10.52 percent increase compared to 2023.

The number of Chinese students pursuing higher education in Ireland steadily increased from 2015 to 2019, declined from 2020 to 2022 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and began rising again in 2023, the report said.

Data from EIC Education showed that over the past six years, the most popular majors among applicants from the Chinese mainland have been electronic and computer engineering, accounting for 14.35 percent of applications, followed by business-related majors such as finance (8.72 percent), marketing (7.46 percent), management (5.77 percent), and accounting (5.53 percent).

The strong demand for electronic and computer engineering programs is due to Ireland's highly developed information industry.

The report also explored the reasons why Chinese students choose Ireland as a study destination. It found that 59.1 percent of respondents cited the international recognition of

Irish university diplomas. Meanwhile, 55.7 percent were attracted by favorable work visa policies and local job opportunities, and 42.6 percent considered the cost of studying in Ireland relatively low.

One former student, who gave his name as Eason, attended Trinity College Dublin in Ireland for his master's from 2019 to 2020. He said the primary reason he chose to study in Ireland was that it is a highly cost-effective destination for overseas studies and offers generous scholarships.

"I only spent a little over 200,000 yuan (\$27,443) in total for the year, including tuition and living expenses," he said.

He added that Chinese companies such as Huawei and Tencent have set up branches in Ireland.

Govt announces new financial support for youth employment

By CHENG SI | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2025-04-25 17:15

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202504/25/WS680b52c6a3104d9fd3821a45.html>

China's employment and entrepreneurship of youths, especially the fresh graduates, continues to attract attention and support from the government.

Three government departments — the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Finance — jointly released a notice with 17 measures on Friday, aiming to boost the employment of fresh college graduates and youths this year through policy and financial incentives to employers and skills training programs and job services to the students.

Previous data have shown that the nation will see 12.22 million fresh university and college graduates this year, up by 430,000 from 2024.

Under the measures, social organizations hiring fresh college graduates, graduates yet to land jobs within two years or jobless youths aged from 16 to 24 can get same financial subsidies as companies.

The organizations can get a subsidy of 1,500 yuan for per person they hire after signing standard labor contracts and paying them social insurance. The policy will expire on Dec 31 this year.

Also, State-owned companies can apply for capital increase specifically used to hire fresh college graduates, according to the notice, and the policy will expire till Dec 31, 2026.

The government will dispatch officials or invite officials from universities or colleges to companies to help develop more job opportunities for the students. Also, government-sponsored entrepreneurial zones will lower their entry threshold to college graduates and youths to encourage and better support the young people's entrepreneurship.

Working skills training is of great importance to young people's employment, said the notice, thus the government will set up 1,000 sub-majors and 1,000 vocational skills training programs at universities or colleges across the nation. The sub-majors are usually interdisciplinary, which are not for academic purposes, but aiming to diversify students' knowledge and enhancing their professional competence.

More internship opportunities will be collected from companies, research institutes and government bodies, according to the notice, and these positions will be mainly on scientific research, technical engineering and management-related.

The notice said that improved job services and assistance will be available to fresh college graduates and those graduates unable to land jobs. For example, to those college graduates yet to land jobs, the government will offer them services including employment policy explanation, job seeking guidance and job recommendations or internship opportunity.