

2012 China Career Development Events

19th November 2012

Last month, the British Council China held a series of China-themed career development and employability events at venues throughout the UK. These events included three workshop sessions and mini job fairs for students currently studying in the UK, as well as a workshop for career advisers based at UK institutions. During both the career adviser and student workshops, senior HR specialists from China were invited to give talks and take part in panel discussions where they were able to provide audiences with valuable information on a range of topics related to employability and career development in China’s labour market. The ultimate aim of these events was to help boost the employability of Chinese students studying in the UK and thereby ensure that UK universities remain competitive in China’s labour market.



Career Advisers’ Workshop

This year’s series of events began with a half-day **Graduate Career Advisers’ Workshop on the Chinese Job Market**, held on 25th October in London. The event was partly organised through the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) and was attended by nearly 100 career advisers and other representatives from universities and institutions across the UK. The workshop helped career advisers based at UK institutions to improve their understanding of the job market in China, and thereby put them in a better position to provide advice to students hoping to obtain employment in China. Enhancing the employability of graduates is something that many UK universities expressed they work hard to promote and, therefore, are continuously engaged in initiatives to support their students in the job market, allowing them to reach their full potential upon finishing their studies. Graduate employability is a key focus for any university wishing to retain and attract top quality students and the British Council is committed to supporting UK institutions in achieving this goal.

The workshop involved talks by senior HR specialists from China: Dr Jenny Yan of HP China, Philip Zheng of Baidu.com and Dr Lin Lei of Microsoft China. A wide range of informative topics were covered, such as China’s labour market and the demand for talent from overseas, opportunities in China’s rapidly expanding IT industry and advice on how universities can boost the employability of their fresh graduates. The three speakers then formed a discussion panel alongside Dr Paul Redmond, President of



AGCAS and Head of Careers & Employability at the University of Liverpool, and Zhang Yong, a senior HR manager of Epson China. The discussion was chaired by Jazreel Goh, Director of

Education Marketing at the British Council in China and the panellists responded to a wide range of issues concerning Chinese students returning to China for work after completing their studies in the UK.

Chinese returnees still represent the vast majority of students looking to work in China after completing their education in the UK. However, as the world's second largest economy, China is also becoming an increasingly attractive destination for British graduates exploring employment opportunities abroad. As such, during the session, career advisers were also very interested in learning about the opportunities and challenges faced by British students and other foreign nationals wanting to look for work in China. The speakers also provided information on placement opportunities, as well as advice on some of the practical issues, such as visa regulations and language related requirements, that British graduates would encounter.

Career advisers and other university representatives that attended spoke very highly of the usefulness and relevance of the session to their everyday work. Some career advisers mentioned how they often get approached by students interested in working in China, but were not confident in advising on related issues due to a lack of information. Many attendees also expressed a strong interest in future events of a similar theme as they see such issues as becoming increasingly important.

Student Workshops

The student facing **China Career Development Workshops & Mini Job Fairs** were held in London, Birmingham and Edinburgh, on 26th, 27th and 28th of October respectively. The events attracted around 1,350 students in total. As the vast majority of these students will return to China to work post-graduation, it is important for them to understand the benefits that they have gained through their studies in the UK and how UK education will continue to be of benefit to them throughout their careers.



With the fast development of China's economy, the competition between local students and overseas returnees has become increasingly intense. In light of this, the workshops gave Chinese students currently based in the UK an updated and realistic insight into the current job market in China, practical guidance on job hunting and career development, as well as giving them a chance to receive professional advice from senior HR specialists, gain first hand recruitment information from businesses themselves and learn about the best opportunities for career development.

All sessions were fully subscribed, reflecting the high demand and popularity for such workshops amongst Chinese students currently studying in the UK. Once again, the speakers provided insightful and constructive talks, and were on hand to answer student questions after these.

Feedback from students on both the workshops and job fairs was highly positive, as many felt that they gained a clearer understanding of the value and benefits of their education in the UK and how

they can further tailor their experience to ensure that they remain competitive upon their return to China. Some students mentioned that studying overseas meant that they sometimes felt 'out of touch' with China's job market, or at a disadvantage to students studying for degrees in China. However, they believed that the workshops were helpful in allowing them to understand how to overcome some of these disadvantages.

One student mentioned how he felt the event was "building bridges" between Chinese students in the UK and employers in China and was able to "recognise the opportunities" available to him after he returns to China. The speakers also found the experience incredibly rewarding. Philip Zheng of Baidu.com praised the British Council for a successful series of events and mentioned how pleased he was to see "the passion demonstrated by the overseas Chinese students in UK and their academic achievements".

Mini Job Fair

Unlike last year's career workshops, mini-job fairs attended by recruiters from Asia-info Linkage and BMW Brilliance Automotive were held alongside the student workshops this year. Both were present at all three workshops, received over one hundred CVs per session from interested students and were also on hand to provide comments and advice on job hunting in China.

Overall, this series of events continued to shed a positive light on the UK as a destination for high education amongst Chinese students and also helped to build on the reputation of UK education amongst Chinese employers, who were keen to gain a better understanding of universities the quality of students in the UK. The British Council hopes to continue to promote the benefits of a UK education amongst Chinese students by drawing on the employability and career boosting benefits that a degree from a UK university can provide.



As well as the UK workshops and job fairs, every year the British Council organises similar career events across mainland China. In March 2013, these events will take place in Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu. During these events, there will be numerous employers hoping to employ graduates from UK universities taking part, which will once again, reflect the demand for UK graduates in China. More information on these events will be available in due course.