

All information collected by the British Council in China/British Council Education through our consultancy unit, monthly market monitoring and scoping visits. This is not a conclusive list of all UK activities in China.

## February 2015

### UK-China Specific

- Statistics from the HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) indicate a 5 per cent increase in the number of Chinese students who enrolled in UK higher education institutions in 2013/14. Nearly 59,000 new Chinese students started higher education courses, making China the largest non-EU source country and outnumbering the rest of the EU put together.
- UCAS has reported a 12 per cent year-on-year rise in undergraduate applications from China, contributing to a record high. As of 15 January, the deadline for courses starting this year, 8,000 Chinese students had applied, more than from any other country.
- UKVI has expanded its priority visa application service to Tier 4 applicants (students) in China, allowing visas to be processed within five working days for an extra fee.
- A joint graduate school between the University of Glasgow and Nankai University has been approved by the Ministry of Education. Enrolments will begin this year in international relations, regional economics and environmental management.

### Competitor Countries

- The US (27.7 per cent) is the top study destination among Chinese students, followed by the UK (19.8 per cent), Australia (11 per cent) and Canada (8.7 per cent), according to a survey by education agent EIC. Results show 35 per cent of Chinese students had travelled abroad before commencing their studies and 28 per cent had the aspiration to study abroad in high school.
- The US' Institute of International Education has launched a campaign to double the number of outward-bound students to 600,000 within five years.
- New Zealand saw a 12 per cent rise in international students in 2014, reaching more than 93,000. China accounted for 12 per cent of student enrolments and 29 per cent of international student spending.
- Australia will streamline visa applications for Chinese visitors by extending online lodgement for tourist visas, which include short-term study. Separate reports indicate cancellations of student visas have tripled to more than 7,000 in the last two years as new streamlined visa systems have led to a rise in falsified documents.
- France has reported that China is now its second-largest source of international students, after Morocco. Around 35,000 Chinese students studied in France last year and the number is expected to reach 50,000 in 2015.

### Wider Education Environment

#### UK related

- Research by HSBC shows UK students can save more than £13,000 per year by studying abroad, including tuition fees, living expenses and travel costs.

#### China related

- Speaking at the 2015 National Education Work Conference, Education Minister Yuan Guiren outlined China's priorities for the education sector. Deepening reform was identified as the year's theme, while enhancing quality and fairness were described as strategic core tasks. Mr Yuan also called for more international exchange and cooperation.
- Mr Yuan has called on universities to maintain their political integrity by preventing the spread of 'Western values' and keeping criticism of China's leaders and political system out of classrooms.
- Mr Yuan has been appointed Chairman of the National Working Committee on School Football, which is led by the Ministry of Education and responsible for the development of football in schools. In order to cultivate football talent, 30 pilot regions will be established and 20,000 schools will specialise in football.
- According to the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, 39 leaders of higher education institutions in 17 provinces were investigated in 2014. Among those convicted, nearly all were accused of bribery.
- The Ministry of Education has increased the value of government scholarships for international students in an effort to reach China's target of attracting 500,000 international students by 2020. A separate report by the Centre for China and Globalisation has found that China is falling short on ambitions to attract more overseas students due to a lack of international courses, lecturers' poor English, and strict visa regulations. In addition, institutions have few incentives to develop and promote courses for international students as tuition fees are capped at RMB30,000 for foreigners.
- The Ministry of Education and Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences have jointly established a national research base to monitor the quality of higher education.
- Beijing Municipal Commission of Education has announced Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province will coordinate their higher education development. Plans for university campuses to be transferred outside of Beijing municipality are currently being developed.
- Shanghai Municipal Commission of Education has announced that 32 higher vocational colleges will start autonomous recruitment in March. Students recruited will not attend the national college entrance exam.
- China has secured 13 places in the International New York Times' 2014 Global Employability Ranking, which features 150 universities from around the world. Fudan University is ranked highest in 36th position.
- Southwest Jiaotong University's Higher Education Research Institute has released China's first ranking of Chinese universities by level of internationalization. Tsinghua University is ranked first.
- Nearly 1.65 million students have registered to take China's national entrance exam for postgraduate studies this year, 65,000 less than in 2014. This is the second consecutive year numbers have declined, suggesting interest in the exams has peaked.
- Enrolment numbers in English training classes have recovered and returned to levels preceding reforms to the national college entrance exam, which reduced the importance of English in the exam.