

Starting your career in **China** Country Guide for International Students



You chose to study in the United Kingdom. You are beginning to think about what your options are after graduation. Building on an excellent international education you are returning to your home country, China. You stand at the beginning of an exciting career, but what are the steps you need to take in order to find a suitable job, and where do you find the information you need?

This careers profile provides you with practical advice about returning to work in China to help you make a successful start in your career in the China labour market. Included are key facts about current trends and jobs in Chinese industry, advice about seeking employment in China hints and tips for making a successful application, and helpful information sources.

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Country profile

Since the end of the 1970s, the Chinese economy has transformed from a planned economy (where government fixes prices and production) to a more market-driven economy. A shift from state-owned to private companies, has accelerated an annual economic growth at a rate of more than 9% per year.

KEY FACTS: The Chinese economy

GDP real growth:	8.7% (2009)
GDP per capita 2009:	US\$6,600 (2009)
Labour force:	812.7 million (2009 est.)
Unemployment rate:	4.3% in urban areas, 10% in rural areas (2009 est.)
Major sectors of occupation:	Agriculture (39.5%); Industry (27.2%); Services (34.2%) (2010 est.)
Main trading partners:	Japan, South Korea, USA, Germany, Taiwan, Hong Kong

Urban China in particular has made huge leaps since the liberalisation of the market. There remains, however a notable income disparity between members of Chinese society, causing a comparatively low GDP per capita. Education and academic titles continue to play a decisive role when starting salary is determined.

KEY FACTS: The Chinese graduate labour market

Average age at graduation:	24 years
Average graduate starting salary:	US\$6,000 annually (2009)
Average working week:	Monday to Friday, 8-9 hours per day, 8.00am-5.00pm
Holiday entitlement:	5 days annual leave (increase depends on years in service), 13 days national holidays

Competition: competition in the Chinese market is high, as over six million graduates join China's labour market each year. However, possessing better language skills and more practical experience should give you a head-start in finding a job.

Benefits

Benefits of a UK qualification

Possibly the largest benefit which all international students receive when studying at one of the over 100 universities in the UK, is the fact that UK universities have some of the most renowned and prestigious histories of higher education in the world. Even if a graduate does not study at one of the more famous institutions, the graduate can return to their home country safe in the knowledge that no matter where they look for work, their qualifications will be highly respected. This is also useful in job interview situations, in which your study in the UK can come into conversation as a point of interest and as an example of experience in situations of teamwork, cultural awareness, when possibly you were outside of your comfort zone.

Furthermore, your experiences in writing and reading English are extremely valuable in the job market. As an added benefit, you will no doubt have been exposed to a variety of accents and dialects during your study stay, making you more open to the English language than you may have realised.

Case study:

After studying at the University of Paisley (now Uni. West of Scotland) I returned home in the knowledge that my degree was from a country with an extremely positive international image in educational terms, which was better than many of those I was competing with in the job market. Against others of similar skills, it seemed I had something different to offer, even if this could not be written down on paper.

Benefits

Graduating: Searching for work

Not long ago, student life and job finding was a far simpler procedure. Graduates would simply leave university, either looking for work through friends and family, a large company or a local business, and often step into a full-time job after an interview. These days, a wider variety of options exist which match the wider variety of jobs and the ease of travel which is available to the worldly student. As the number of students increases, so does the quality of the competition.

It's tough out there. Many graduates having just left university know this, whilst others are soon to find out. Since so many new university leavers have a career path in mind which they may have had for many years, the competition is fierce in many of the desirable graduate schemes. This is more the case in the UK than almost anywhere else. However, one benefit which you as an international student have is that you have a home country to which you can return. The lack of vacancies in the UK has led to many British students leaving for work further afield, often with little experience of the language in that country outside of the native English speaking countries.

In China whilst there are some international companies which accept English-only students, the vast majority will prefer a candidate with some basic Chinese. If you are returning to your home country with a firm grasp of English as well as your mother tongue, you already have an advantage. In China, using your network, 'Guanxi' can be vital in finding a job. This can consist of friends, family and your extended network. However, it is advisable to start extending your network while studying in the UK. Extending your guanxi can be done through joining several associations such as a Chinese University Alumni Association or the Chinese Students and Scholars Association. Most universities have Chinese associations that organize events throughout the year. Becoming a member will help establish your professional network, which may prove to be very useful when returning to China.

It can be difficult to come across vacancies in graduate jobs, full-time occupation is hard to find without experience and most find that internships can involve heavy competition. All is not lost however! Most graduates find that the main issue is simply knowing where to look, and this guide hopes to point you in the right direction.

Check out the 'More Information' section to see handy links with tips and advice in the search for work!

Main routes to employment

Getting started

Online recruitment and vacancy websites:

- 51Job.com www.51job.com Recruitment and training across China.
- China HR www.chinahr.com An online recruitment portal with job postings and an email alert service.
- China Splash www.chinasplash.com A bilingual job search engine.
- www.CJOL.com A recruitment database for job seekers and employers with vacancy listings and an alert service.
- Employment China www.epchina.net
- Meijob www.meijob.com An online vacancy portal
- New China Career www.newchinacareer.com An online vacancy portal.
- Recruit.net www.china.recruit.net
- Wang & Li Asia Resources www.wang-li.com A recruitment service for bilingual talent.
- Zhaopin www.zhaopin.com Currently China's leading careers site on the Internet.

Social networking

Social networking has become an increasingly common and important part of seeking work, especially with the social media generation. Sites such as Facebook.com and LinkedIn.com have flourished into everyday use for graduates and employers alike, in order to find the right person for the job. Graduates looking for work in their home nation may already be aware of the value of such sites, and of specific sites which are specialised in their own country. Graduates can place details of themselves including their job experience, education level, home/current university as well as a photo if preferred. On some of these sites they can also search for jobs according to their specific interest or area of study. What is clear is that graduates should certainly take the time to discover the potential job opportunities which these sites offer, both socially and at a socio-professional level.

Main routes to employment

The following list of examples is not exhaustive, and contains websites with varying emphasis on professionalism and social networking. In China specifically, such sites as www.renren.com/ & www.51.com are major players in the socio-professional networking field.

Sites worth checking out (global):

- www.ecademy.com
- www.efactor.com
- www.facebook.com
- www.linkedin.com
- www.myspace.com
- www.plaxo.com
- www.ryze.com
- www.spoke.com
- www.ziggs.com

As a graduate looking for work in China, you should use a variety of strategies. Newspapers are a helpful starting point when it comes to the job-hunt. Depending on whereabouts in China you want to work, you should consult both national and regional newspapers and magazines featuring vacancies.

Key newspapers to look for:

- Beijing Wanbao (Beijing Evening Post)
- Beijing Scene
- China Daily (Zhongguo Ribao)
- Gongren Ribao
- Guanming Daily
- Liaoning Daily (Liaoning Riabo)
- Renmin Ribao
- Shanghai Daily
- Shanghai Star
- Sichuan Daily
- The Sun (Taiyang Bao)
- Xingmin Wanbao (Xinmin Evening News)

In the recent past, the Internet has become a popular tool for finding and posting vacancies. When searching the Internet for job offers and vacancies, it is advisable to bookmark webpages and re-visit them regularly. Make use of email alert services offered by online resources to stay updated with the newest jobs.

Main routes to employment

Graduate jobs/Careers Fairs

An interesting way of finding work or further education is through graduate fairs. With varying focuses in each event, graduates can find themselves coming face to face with companies of interest, and may even find interest in something which was not previously considered. Graduate fairs are also a good opportunity to find out about graduate schemes being offered by companies and what these entail. Many offer other facilities such as CV workshops, letter writing tuition and a chance to network with individuals representing companies of differing sizes and reputations, thus they can offer a good learning opportunity even if you struggle to find a company suited to you.

Many universities in the UK hold their own fairs near the end of the spring/summer term and throughout the summer, so it is well worth getting involved early. There may also be fairs in your home country, whether a national event or a university which is local to you, so keep your eyes and ears open. Attendance at such fairs is critical to your entry into the graduate market.

You may find the following websites useful for locating fairs:

- www.chinajob.com China Job
- www.zhaopin.com/ ZhiLianZhaoPin

In each major city there are countless job fairs organised each month. Graduates are advised to check community sites and look for advertisements in local papers and magazines. Additionally, the British Council annually holds the Alumni UK Career Development Workshop and Job Recruitment fair in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing. This annual event helps UK Alumni re-position themselves in the highly competitive Chinese market. More information can be found at: <http://www.educationuk.cn/alumniuk/pdw>

Main routes to employment

Alternative sources of information on jobs and companies:

- China Economic Net www.ce.cn A trilingual online forum for business news and sections on markets and companies.
- The online version of China Daily www.chinadaily.com.cn Offers news and background stories of national and international affairs in a bilingual setting.
- JobMarket.com www.jobmarket.com.hk An online magazine covering current careers topics.

When looking for a job, it is important to extend your network of contacts. Let not only your relatives but also friends, former professors and teachers, neighbours and other acquaintances know that you are searching for a job and tell them what kind of job or position you are looking for.

It is advisable to register with any employment agency up to one year before the date of your return to China and to build up a profile on a social networking site to further boost your chances. Applications for a specific role, however, should be sent no sooner than one month before your scheduled arrival back in China. Not all vacancies are advertised online. Therefore, the use of alternative sources, persistency and well developed detection skills will help you to discover the hidden jobs.

The right skills and competencies

Most wanted:

- A positive attitude.
- An outstanding educational record.
- Modesty, courtesy and a sense of duty.
- Strong communication and negotiation skills.
- Leadership qualities as well as the ability to work in a team.
- Time management and organisational skills.

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Main routes to employment

The application letter

Unlike other countries, application letters are not customary in China. Should you decide to enclose a cover letter with your application, it should reflect your motivation, explain your specific qualification and emphasise your achievements. Mention the added value you would bring to the organisation to which you are applying. It is helpful to address the letter to a specific person, not simply to a company or department.

When applying for a job, you should send the letter accompanied by your résumé and copies of your diplomas. If these are in English, it might be useful to have them officially translated in advance. It is also advisable to include a copy of your residence ID (Hukou) and a recent photograph of yourself.

Résumé

In addition to personal information (name, contact details, date and place of birth, sex, marital status and children), your résumé should list your experience and information about your academic background (school name and address, university name and address, courses followed, degrees obtained and dates of attendance). If applicable, you should also list any work experience (name and address of employer, function, job title and brief description of your daily activities, dates of employment). Furthermore, you should state your career objectives and indicate the type of position you are aiming for, as well as listing your IT skills and languages competencies, strengths and special achievements or qualifications.

The document should be typed on white paper of A4 size and should be approximately two pages long (sometimes even three to four pages, depending on your experience). For multinational companies in China, it might be necessary to have an English résumé prepared as well as a Mandarin résumé.

Main routes to employment

Digital applications

Digital application forms have become more common. The Internet is considered a fast medium of communication but completing an application form online requires the utmost attention – always check your submission before pressing send. If you are making your application via email, write a concise application email with your résumé attached. Applicants should always remember to use formal language when submitting an online application or applying via email.

The job interview

When invited for an interview it is important to make a good impression in order to stand out from your competitors. Investment in a neat appearance and formal clothing will be appreciated by the employer. When meeting your interviewer, it has proven successful to follow his or her lead. Be modest, yet convincing, when answering questions about yourself and about your education, skills and experience.

Preparing for the interview:

- Find out more about the objectives of the position and the skills required.
- Research the organisation's background.
- Be articulate about your skills, abilities, personal qualities, experience and your future career goals.
- Prepare your own questions to ask the employer.
- Make sure you arrive on time for the interview. If you are unfamiliar with the location it might be worthwhile checking it out in advance.

Decision making after an interview usually does not take much longer than a week and it is common for applicants to send a thank-you letter or email after having been interviewed.

Where will your career take you?

Research from the i-graduate International Student Barometer study tells us the following about the main career drivers for Chinese graduates:

Major career drivers for Chinese graduates:

1. I want to develop myself.
2. I like to be recognised for my achievements.
3. Future job security is important to me.

©International Student Barometer Summer 2009

Top 3 future plans of Chinese students about to graduate from UK HE Institutions:

1. Still undecided.
2. Short term employment in the United Kingdom.
3. Employment in China.

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With language skills, an understanding of Chinese history and traditions, and a high-level education and knowledge about global business, graduates returning to China have plenty to offer to their prospective Chinese employers.

Current career prospects

The Chinese economy is in need of a highly skilled workforce to enable them to develop their knowledge-based industries. Over recent years, the Chinese government has increased its funding of research and development programmes, aiming at investing 2.5% of the country's annual GDP by 2010. Already, together with the USA, the EU and Japan, China ranks among the nations spending most worldwide. This is promising for academics and graduates' returning to China whose intercultural experience is seen as a valuable asset.

Where are the opportunities?

Agriculture

The improvement of quality and the decrease of production costs are high on the agenda of agricultural sector development.

Banking, finance and insurance

Joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) has enhanced a reformation process of the Chinese economy. Foreign competition has forced domestic banks to work more efficiently; traditional approaches have become more commercial and customer service has been enhanced. Corporate and retail banking as well as private sector banking have seen a rise in demand for products and services. Also on the rise is the insurance sector. Currently, there is a shortage in experienced domestic management talent. There are work opportunities for accountants, business analysts, consultants, tax managers, sales managers, claims managers.

Architecture, planning and construction

The construction sector has been one of the main driving forces of the Chinese economy. In the past, developments in this sector have primarily focused on infrastructure, rail systems, ports and airports. Today, a higher living standard, the settlement of multinational companies and the liberalisation of the real estate market have created a growing demand for non-residential buildings (offices, malls, factories) as well as residential housing. Work opportunities lie in real estate development, urban planning, architecture and design and engineering.

Current career prospects

Biotechnology and biomedicine

Graduates with a background in biochemistry and biomedical research will find plenty of work opportunities in the Chinese labour market. Increasing numbers of patients, an aging population and growing numbers of Chinese citizens with health insurance have created huge potential for the pharmaceutical industry and hence for related research. Additionally, stem cell research now faces less controversy, allowing scientists to pursue pioneer research in this area of study.

Energy

At present, China is still heavily dependent on fossil energy resources, in particular coal, which accounts for more than 60% of the national energy production. Given the rapid economic growth of recent decades, the need for an efficient, sustainable and environmental friendly energy production has become the main objective in the energy sector.

Health care products and service

Government initiative has fostered a gradual expansion of the health care sector and support for the pharmaceutical industry, which has seen a recent increase in company start-ups as well as multinational enterprises investing more in research and development. To facilitate access to high-quality medical support for citizens, hospitals have increased their investments in medical devices and equipment.

ICT

Slowly but steadily the Chinese software industry has been emerging as a diverse and highly fragmented market. There is still a notable lack of core technologies and skilled labour, leading to a comparatively high market share of about 70% by foreign products. Further investments in other business sectors are expected to improve the market for domestic ICT services and developments. Seeking to enhance their efficiency, service and production branches, the country will be requiring more IT and telecommunication solutions in the future.

Current career prospects

Manufacturing

Comparably low production costs have made China a favoured location for outsourcing, often referred to as 'the factory of the world'. China's largely export oriented manufacturing sector is facing growing difficulties in the course of the global economic downturn. Nevertheless, there is a growing national demand for domestic retail products. In addition to increased production, product innovation is the future goal of the industry. There are work opportunities for planners, production managers, industrial engineers, but also for sales managers and marketing professionals.

Mining

Due to the country's reliance on coal, China is expected to continue investing in the production of high tech mining equipment. In addition to the construction of new mines, safety management and research on clean processing and conversion technology are important fields of occupation in the mining sector.

Research and development

Being still largely underdeveloped, the Chinese research and development sector strives to improve the mobility between multinational and local research departments. In most corporate research centres profit tends to be valued over innovation, whereas most government funded initiatives and universities focus on building their academic reputation.

Where to find more information

General information

www.agcas.org.uk/agcas_resources/133-China-Visit-A-Report-on-the-AGCAS-and-NASES-PMI2-Visit-to-China AGCAS study visit to China

www.china.org.cn

www.chinatimes.com China Times

www.chinatoday.com China Today

www.cyol.net/node/indey.htm China Youth Daily (Zhonggou Quingnian Bao)

www.dmoz.org/Regional/Asia/China/ Open directory project

Advice and tips on Careers Fairs, CVs and general job seeking

www.articlealley.com/article_1547972_36.html - An article for those in the nursing profession

www.collegegrad.com/articles/dont-give-up.shtml - An article on staying positive throughout the work search process

www.employmentblawg.com/2010/job-seeking-tips-for-college-graduates - Further tips in the competitive field of employment seeking graduates

www.fpef.org/Education/Tips.htm - Some good tips on networking

www.thegraduate.co.uk/static_generic.cgi?a=tmg_jobboards – Link with good information for those still considering staying in the UK after study

www.graduateopportunities.com/career_advice/graduates_with_disability - A link providing useful tips and stats for graduates with a disability

www.londongradfair.co.uk/autumn - The Guardian's annual job fair for graduates. It is located in London

www.marketoracle.co.uk/Article1277.html - Tips on how to work out your finances post-study

www.online-graduate.co.uk/tipsforgrads.html - Further tips for graduates seeking work experience

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/international_students.htm - Information for international students

Where to find more information

Books and Articles

Executive Recruitment in China; Wolfgang, J. (Expatica 2008)

New Labour Union Rules in China; Lauffs, A., Isaacs, J. (Expatica 2008)

Integrating China into the Global Economy; Lardy, N.R. (The Brookings Institution Press 2002)
ISBN 978-0815751359

Doing Business in China, Part II and III; Ripmeester, N. (Expatica 2008)

China's Global Reach: Markets, Multinationals, and Globalization; Zhibin Gu, G., Grunder, F.
(Fulturs Corporation revised updated edition 2002), ISBN 1596820934

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Disclaimer

Whilst all efforts have been made to ensure the information in this Country Guide is correct at the time of writing, readers are advised that procedures and information sources may change regularly.

Appendix 1: Résumé

姓名

性别：女

公司电话：12345678

出生日期：19xx/00/00

家庭电话：87654321

地址：某市中山路8号5单元602室

手机：13012345678

邮编：210000

Email:

求职理想 (行政主管)

工作经历

2002年9月至今 某大学某学院 (澳大利亚某某集团) 澳方主任助理

学院各事务行政主理, 中外方协调, 外教人事管理 (评估, 薪资) 及财务监督

2002年4月至9月 某文化传播公司任总经理助理及行政主管

参与公司企划, 办公室行政事务管理, 商务谈判翻译; 兼任人事工作协调员。

2001年8月至12月 荷兰Expertise in Labour Mobility咨询公司见习文员

任执行助理,

参与网站www.academictransfer.nl (国际版) 编辑, 撰写中国, 日本, 印尼, 比利时, 美国背景资料, 参与系列手册 Looking for work in Japan, Looking for work in China 资料搜集, 参与Tilburg大学毕业应聘讲座任执行助理。

1999年至2000年 在某省级传媒机构外语节目部任兼职编辑, 播音

参与编辑并制作播出《English Corner》系列节目, 和澳大利亚学者共同制作并播出《Australia Welcomes You》系列英语教学节目。

教育经历

2000/09 – 2001/08 荷兰阿姆斯特丹大学 获欧洲研究硕士学位

1996/09--2000/07 某知名大学 国际经济与贸易专业 本科学历。
在校一直担任学生干部，工作认真负责，学习成绩优秀，多次被学院评为优秀学生干部，优秀团干，个人标兵等。

外语水平

中文：母语 英文：流利熟练 荷文：读，写，一般对话 德文：基础

电脑操作

熟练使用常用办公软件编辑业务文档，上网收发电子邮件。

计算机语言：Windows, MSOffice, Powerpoint, Netscape/Explorer/outlook; PhotoShop; Coreldrew/Frontpage; various computer database programs.

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