



# China

Country Profile



2011



# 1. HISTORY and OVERVIEW

## Bilateral Relationship

Canada and China established resident diplomatic missions in 1971. As a rising super power, China has become more prominent on Canada’s agenda. As a result, Canada pursues a policy of economic engagement with China, especially with the latter’s dramatic growth over the last several decades. The governments have engaged in high level dialogue and growing collaboration on a wide range of issues. Such issues include trade and investment, the environment, health, culture, and multilateral cooperation. At the same time, Canada is concerned about human rights and the rule of law in China, and seeks to promote democratic development, good governance, and greater protection for human rights through dialogue and cooperative engagement.

In terms of education, this is a vital and growing area of Canada-China cooperation, presenting exciting opportunities for students, scholars, and educational

institutions. The Canadian Embassy in Beijing has several sections to assist Canadian institutions or companies developing education and training services programs in China.

The Canadian embassy in Beijing has different programs in order to encourage and increase academic relationships with China. Some of these initiatives are:

- Understanding Canada: Canadian Studies
- Program Development Grant (PDG)
- Canada Conference Grant Program
- Student Mobility Support program

An organization worth noting is the Canadian Studies Network in China. This organization not only promotes high quality research and teaching on Canada at post-secondary institutions across China, but it also organizes academic exchanges between Canadian and Chinese scholars and institutions.

# 2. EDUCATION SYSTEM

## Brief Overview

Education in China is a state-run system of public education run by the Ministry of Education.

In 2008, the education sector continued to grow at a rapid pace. With education officially cited as a national priority, China intends to achieve its objectives to build a better educated and qualified work force to meet the needs of a fast growing economy.

According to the Canadian embassy in Beijing, the Chinese Ministry of Finance announced that the government spent 156 billion RMB on education in 2008, a 45 percent increase over the previous year. Over one third of the budget was used to provide free compulsory education (Grades 1-9) to all students nationwide.

The government has committed itself to markedly raising educational levels generally, as evidenced by a Ministry of Education program; it is forecasted that by 2020, of every 100,000 people, 13,500 will have had junior college education or above and some 31,000 will have had senior high school schooling; rates for illiteracy and semi-literacy rate will fall below three percent; and average schooling duration across the population will increase from today's eight years to nearly eleven.

## Policies

Education policy has been undergoing great transformation in China since the initiation of economic reforms and the open-door policy in the late 1970's. These market-oriented reforms and the pursuit of rapid economic growth in a globalized economy have significantly impacted China's education policy and development. In line with the development of the market-oriented economy and its increasing integration with the global market, a more pragmatic perception of

education has gradually taken shape in the post-Mao era, thus resulting in the decentralization and marketization of education in China.

In terms of academic goals, some of the last reforms made are to enhance and universalize elementary and junior middle school education, to increase the number of schools and qualified teachers, and to develop vocational and technical education. A uniform standard for curricula, textbooks, examinations, and teacher qualifications (especially at the middle-school level) were established, and considerable autonomy and variations in and among the autonomous regions, provinces, and special municipalities were allowed. Further, the system of enrollment and job assignment in higher education was changed, and excessive government control over colleges and universities was reduced.

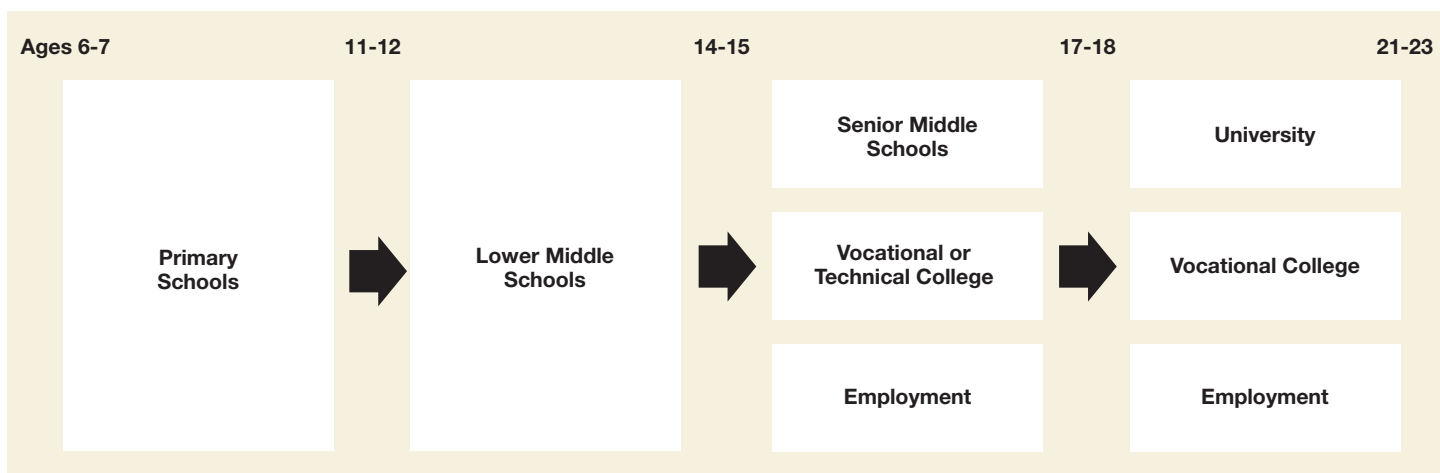
## Organization

The Chinese government has introduced nine years compulsory education for all citizens. Students are required to complete primary and junior middle school education. Thereafter, students who pass the appropriate entrance examinations go on to senior middle schools or middle-level vocational schools. They may then take the national college entrance exam which gives access to tertiary education.

The chart below shows how Chinese children progress through the education system. From the ages of 6-7 to 11-12, a child will be at primary school; progressing towards lower middle school. At 14, there are a number of options: senior middle school, leading on to university at age 17-18; vocational or technical college; or straight into employment.

In terms of access to education, China's system is represented as a pyramid. This is due to the scarcity of resources allotted to higher education, which in turn, sharply reduces the number of students at the higher levels.

### Progression Through Education System





## Primary and Secondary (K-12) Education

### Primary School

Primary education is a six year course in which pupils study core subjects such as Chinese, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science etc. There is also a certain level of elementary political and moral education taught. A strong emphasis is also placed on Physical Education. The two-semester school year consists of 9.5 months, and begins September 1 and March 1, with a summer vacation in July and August, and a winter vacation in January and February.

Chinese and mathematics account for approximately 60 percent of the scheduled class time. Also, beginning in the fourth grade, students usually have to perform productive labour two weeks per semester to relate classwork with production experience in workshops or on farms and relate it to their academic study. Most schools offer after-hour activities at least one day per week as a way to involve students in recreation and community service.

The Ministry of Education of China provided the following statistical information as a way to contextualize the numbers of students in the Chinese education system: by 2002, there were altogether 456,900 primary schools with an enrollment of 121,567,100 students, and the net enrollment rate of primary schools reached 98.58 percent. 97.02 percent of the graduates enjoyed access to junior secondary schools and the full-time teachers in primary schools had reached 5,778,900. In addition, there were 65,600 junior secondary schools with an enrollment of 66,874,300 students and the net enrollment rate of junior secondary schools increased to 90 percent. Those schools employed in total 3,467,700 full-time teachers. Furthermore, 58.3 percent of the junior

secondary school graduates continued their study in senior secondary schools. By the end of 2002, the Nine-Year Compulsory Education (NYCE) had been universalized in the area where 90 percent of the population inhabits, the highest rate among the E-9 countries.

### Middle School

#### JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

Junior Middle school (junior high) is actually a continuation of the primary system, with students studying the same core subjects at higher levels. Again there is an emphasis on sports and physical education, alongside moral and political education. At the end of the three years, all pupils take an examination, which for successful students leads to senior middle school or vocational school. These examinations are considered to be very important as the pass level determines the quality of senior or vocational school into which the students may be accepted.

#### SENIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

In Senior Middle school, students elect whether to follow science or humanities curricula. These courses are designed to lead to the important National College Entrance Exams. Again sports and political education are also part of the curriculum.

According to the Canadian embassy, there are currently close to 30 high schools in China that offer certified Canadian provincial high school curricula (as well as in Hong Kong and Macao). The number is expected to grow as provincial governments such as British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Manitoba examine new applications for curriculum schools in China.

## Post-Secondary Education

By the end of 2004, China had 2,236 schools for post-secondary education, with over 20 million students; the gross rate of enrollment in schools of higher learning reached 19 percent. Postgraduate education is the fastest growing sector, with 24.1 percent more students recruited and 25.9 percent more researchers than the year before.

Whatever type of post-secondary education students wish to undertake, they must first take the National College Entrance Exam. This exam is held in early July and there are separate exams for science and humanities candidates. University and college admission is administered nationally and by admissions committees at a provincial level, under the Ministry of Education. Students apply for the institution and departments they wish to attend, listing choices in order of preference. Admission is decided mainly on the results of the entrance exam, but it can also include an investigation into the candidates' "social behaviour and moral character".

There are hundreds of universities in China, but each varies immensely in the level and quality of education. At the top of the pecking order are the key universities such as Beijing University and Shanghai's Fudan University. These rate alongside western universities in quality. Below these are various provincial and local institutions which have been awarded the title of university. Somewhat confusingly, there are also a large number of "normal" universities, which are actually teacher training universities.

University admission is operated on a centralized enrollment system, in which admissions committees at the provincial level are under the Ministry of Education. Admission is granted on the basis of academic, physical, and moral qualifications. Special allowances are made for minority nationality and overseas Chinese candidates.

The nationwide examinations are held in the first ten days of July. Candidates can take the examination in either one of the two categories, humanities or sciences/engineering. They apply for the institutions and departments they wish to enter in order of preference.

Chinese universities and colleges still lack the capacity to accommodate the nation's need for higher education. In 2008, around 10.5 million students wrote the all important national university entrance exam (gao kao), while only 6 million were actually admitted into colleges and universities.

## Private Career Colleges

In terms of career college education, this sector embraces higher vocational schools, secondary skill schools, vestibule schools, vocational high schools, job-finding centers and other adult skill and social training institutes. To enable career college education to better accommodate the demands of economic re-structuring and urbanization, the government has recently remodelled vocational

education. The remodelled vocational education is oriented towards obtaining employment and focusing on two major vocational education projects to meet society's ever more acute demand for high quality, skilled workers.

The lack of skilled technicians is one of the main problems facing China's workforce today and therefore contributes to China's reputation for low quality products and frequent industrial accidents. Because of a shortage of education options, every year some 10 million middle school graduates are unable to enter senior secondary schools.

There are over 15,000 career college schools in China with over 17 million students enrolling in 2008. The distribution of these schools tends to follow regional patterns of industrialization and wealth. The moderately wealthy provinces (Shandong, Jiangsu, Sichuan), which also have a focus on industry, agriculture, and natural resource management show the highest vocational enrollment and the most rapid enrollment growth. Tianjin's considerable wealth and lighter industrialization suggests that the population tends to focus more on university education and professional careers, rather than preparing the workforce for skilled trades.

The popularity of a particular major within a given region varies with local demand. For example, chemical engineering, mechanics, and mineral resource engineering are welcomed in Xinjiang Province, while international trade, marine engineering, and sailing are popular majors in Tianjin. According to China Vocational Education Law, the Chinese government is prioritizing the expansion of vocational training institutions, both through greater domestic offerings and through foreign involvement. Canadian vocational colleges match their strongest majors with the economic priorities of China's various regions, and target their programs accordingly.

## English Language Programs

Given that university students in China must pass the mandatory College English Tests as a requirement of graduation, the ESL segment is key in this country. According to the Canadian embassy in Beijing, more than 300 million Chinese people are learning English for academic, career, and other purposes. This market should reach the 4.2 billion dollar mark in 2010.

ESL teaching therefore presents a first-glance opportunity to Canadian institutions. The China-based ESL training market is crowded with severe competition, with schools such as New Oriental, Wall Street English, English First, and not to mention the British Council, dominating the market.

Short-term English immersion programs and student summer camp programs, combined with cultural, leisure, and sports activities, may provide attractive opportunities for Canadian institutions and companies.

## Key Program Interests

1. Business administration
2. Finance
3. ESL
4. Computer Science
5. High School
6. Management
7. Accounting
8. Electronic Engineering
9. Maths
10. Education

## Academic Calendar

The academic year in China runs on a two-semester system: fall and spring. The first semester begins in early September and the second sometime in late February or early March (depending on the lunar calendar). Each semester ranges between 20 to 22 weeks in duration with a winter break for the Spring Festival and a summer break that usually includes most of July and all of August. Primary and secondary school students typically receive only three weeks of vacation time during the Spring Festival, while university students will enjoy up to six weeks (from the end of the fall semester's final exams to the first day of classes in the spring).

## Best and Worst Time to Promote in this Market

In terms of primary and secondary (K-12) education, the timing of recruitment activities for Canadian institutions is critical to success. Recruitment activities should be

focused on targeting students in Grades 10 and 11, which may serve to “catch” the students before they have made plans for their future study and allow their families to begin documenting their funds [critical to the success of their visa application], as students in their last year of high school will likely have their plans in place and will be busy preparing for their university examinations.

**Best time:** In March, September, October or June (only after national university entrance examination day, when most major educational exhibitions are held).

**Worst:** December, January or April, May and June (before the national university entrance examination).

## Financial Aid

Please find below further details about the key federal and state agencies and their financial aid programs:

### Chinese Government Award for Outstanding Self-Financed Students Abroad

- <http://www.csc.edu.cn/Chuguo/1085c18c80ec403f9373bf995340bcea.shtml>

### China-Canada Scholars Exchange Programme

- <http://www.chineseeducation.ca/htmls/edu/17.html>

### China Scholarship Council

- Special Project (<http://en.csc.edu.cn/Chuguo/756c040afeae493ea966ecc09f204778.shtml>)
- Project of America (<http://en.csc.edu.cn/Chuguo/f6525474de654060acfd1c1bfc9f6cae.shtml>)

# 3. STUDY PERMITS and MOBILITY

## Obtaining a Visa

In 2009, over 16,375 study permits (compared to 13,500 in 2008) were issued by the Canadian Embassy in Beijing (responsible for study permit issuance in Greater China only).

According to the Canadian Embassy officials, the trend for visa approvals is positive, though perceptions persist among Chinese that Canadian student visas are difficult to obtain. In 2005, the approval rate was approximately 60 percent. It then increased to 76 percent in 2006 and continued to rise to approximately 80 percent in 2007.

## Useful links

Canadian Immigration:

<http://www.colombia.gc.ca>

Chinese Ministry of Education

<http://www.moe.edu.cn/edoas/en>

China Education and Research Network

<http://www.edu.cn>

# 4. KEY CONCERNS

## Diplomatic Concerns

As with many other countries around the world, Canada also is concerned about human rights and the rule of law in China and seeks to promote democratic development, good governance, and greater protection for human rights through dialogue and cooperative engagement.

To achieve these goals, Canada is focusing on the rule of law and the implementation of international human rights' conventions and environmental agreements. This approach takes into account legal, judicial, governmental, and legislative institutions, as well as standards and requirements of international institutions. Environmental sustainability in China, through support for Chinese efforts to manage environmental issues in Western regions of China, is done by enhancing the capacity of China's land-resource management systems.

## Educational Concerns

As mentioned prior, Chinese institutions still lack capacity to accommodate the nation's need for higher education. In 2008, around 10.5 million students wrote the all important national university entrance exam, but only 6 million were admitted into colleges and universities.

Due to geographical, economical, and political factors, over half of the Chinese population lives in rural areas, where education is urgently needed and where the local and provincial governments still must prioritize the full implementation of the 9-year compulsory education programs.

Because of a shortage of education options, every year some 10 million middle school graduates are unable to enter senior secondary schools. Likewise, several million high school graduates are unable to attend university. In 2008, 90 million out of 116 million Chinese youths (18 to 22 years old) were not able to attend university. This group's options included either vocational or technical colleges, and/or entering the workforce directly.



# 5. COMPETITOR OVERVIEW

## Competitors by Market

### AUSTRALIA

China is Australia's largest market for both onshore and offshore education delivery. AIE (Australia Education International) has aggressively extended its marketing tools to recruit students from China. As a result, 165,000 Chinese nationals enrolled in Australian institutions in 2009.

AEI China considers that sustained growth between 15 to 20 per cent for the immediate future is highly probable and that there will be more than 200,000 Chinese student enrollments in Australia in 2011 (growth has averaged 18 percent over the past six years).

There is an extended network of China-based agencies working hand-in-hand with Australian schools and universities. Furthermore, Australian institutions are not only intensely developing joint programs which students can take both in China and Australia, but they are also opening offices in mainland China to provide better access to the Australian education system.



### UNITED STATES

In 2009, nearly 130,000 Chinese students studied in the US – a record number, and a 30 percent increase from the year before.

Many highly prestigious universities have offices in some of the most important Chinese cities as a way to promote their academic programs. Also, other educational organizations like the Institute of International Education have offices mainly in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, from where they can strategically implement their marketing strategies to the rest of the country.

The American government also improved its visa –processing mechanism and consequently reduced study permit processing times from months to only a few weeks, which has encouraged Chinese students to apply to American institutions.



### UNITED KINGDOM

Chinese students remain the largest single group among overseas students in the United Kingdom. In fact, the United Kingdom gets the highest number of students from China after the US. There are currently 85,000 Chinese students (compared to 80,000 in 2008), which represents a 40% increase. Also, more than 100 UK universities have entered partnerships with Chinese counterparts to provide education.

To attract more international students, the UK government recently changed its policy of employment; foreign postgraduates can now have a paid job for one to two years after their graduation.

The organization in charge of promoting international education abroad is the British Council, which has offices in four Chinese cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing.





## 6. ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL and COMMUNITY LINKAGES

### Sector Linkages

Canada and China have a multifaceted relationship with significant cooperation across many policy areas. Recognizing the growing impact of China, Canada is seeking to broaden its relationship with this country at all levels.

Also, Canada provides official development assistance (ODA) for development cooperation with China through CIDA bilateral and partnership programs directly supporting Canadian institutions, firms, and non-governmental organizations working with Chinese partners. Canada also contributes to multilateral institutions working in China, such as the Global Environment Facility and the World Health Organization.

### Community Ties

More than 100,000 British Columbians are descendants of the thousands of Chinese workers who took part in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the late 19th century. Also, Vancouver today has North America's second-largest Chinese community.

A few Chinese associations in British Columbia are:

- Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver  
[www.cbavancouver.ca](http://www.cbavancouver.ca)
- Victoria Chinese Commerce Association  
[www.vcca.ca](http://www.vcca.ca)
- Association of Chinese Canadian Professionals (B.C.)  
[www.accp.ca](http://www.accp.ca)
- Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia  
[www.cchsbcc.ca](http://www.cchsbcc.ca)
- Chinese in Vancouver  
[www.chineseinvancouver.ca](http://www.chineseinvancouver.ca)

# 7. MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Visit the **China Country Specific Resources** page for a full list of relevant marketing opportunities:

[www.bccie.bc.ca/educators/resources/country-specific/china](http://www.bccie.bc.ca/educators/resources/country-specific/china)

# 8. CONTACTS

Visit the **China Country Specific Resources** page for a full list of relevant government contacts:

[www.bccie.bc.ca/educators/resources/country-specific/china](http://www.bccie.bc.ca/educators/resources/country-specific/china)

# 9. KEY INSTITUTIONS and AGENTS

Visit the **China Country Specific Resources** page for a full list of relevant key institutions and agents:

[www.bccie.bc.ca/educators/resources/country-specific/china](http://www.bccie.bc.ca/educators/resources/country-specific/china)

**Note:** Contacts within these downloadable lists are flagged with “BCCIE” if BCCIE has visited the school or if BCCIE has engaged with the agent and the agent has attended at least one BCCIE agent presentation.

# 10. SOURCES

**4International Colleges and Universities**

[www.4icu.org](http://www.4icu.org)

**Australia Education International**

[www.aie.gov.au](http://www.aie.gov.au)

**British Columbia Stats**

[www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca)

**Business Marketing International**

[www.bmimedia.net](http://www.bmimedia.net)

**Canadian Education Centre Network**

[www.cecn.ca](http://www.cecn.ca)

**Canadian Trade Commissioner Service**

[www.infoexport.gc.ca](http://www.infoexport.gc.ca)

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada**

[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

**Comparative and International Education society**

[www.cies.us](http://www.cies.us)

**Council of Ministers of Education, Canada**

[www.educationau-incanada.ca](http://www.educationau-incanada.ca)

**Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress**

[www.coutrystudiesus.com](http://www.coutrystudiesus.com)

**FPP Edu-Media**

[www.fppmedia.com](http://www.fppmedia.com)

**Fraser Institute**

[www.fraserinstitute.org](http://www.fraserinstitute.org)

**Government of Canada**

[www.gc.ca](http://www.gc.ca)

**Index China**

[www.index-china.com](http://www.index-china.com)

**Liuzhou overseas**

[www.liuzhou.co.uk](http://www.liuzhou.co.uk)

**The Open University**

[www.open2.net](http://www.open2.net)

**UK Council for International Student Affairs**

[www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)

**US Commercial Service**

[www.trade.gov](http://www.trade.gov)

**Vancouver Community Network**

[www.vcn.bc.ca](http://www.vcn.bc.ca)