



GROUPINGS OF REGIONAL CITIES IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Category 1 – A large market with clear aims and objectives

Category 2 – A large market with growing aims and objectives

Category 3 – An emerging market with growing aims and objectives

Category 1

Changsha	Nanjing	Xiamen
Hangzhou	Tianjin	Xi'an
Hefei	Wuhan	

Category 2

Changchun	Harbin	Shenyang
Changzhou	Jinan	Shijiazhuang
Chengdu	Qingdao	Weifang
Dalian	Quanzhou	Zhengzhou

Category 3

Baotou	Ningbo	Weihai
Dongguan	Ordos	Wenzhou
Dongying	Shaoxing	Wuxi
Foshan	Suzhou	Yantai
Nantong	Tangshan	Zibo

The education and training dimension of China's regional cities is important for two reasons. First of all it offers business opportunities for UK providers of higher, vocational and further education, but just as important, it provides pointers for UK firms who are seeking business locations with a particular education or skills profile.



FUTURE OUTLOOK

Higher Education

According to the outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020), China's higher education sector will continue to play a key role in China's modernisation drive. The sector has experienced rapid expansion since the late 1990s, resulting in China now having the world's largest higher education system. But quality has not kept pace with provision, and China is paying greater attention to this issue with a view to achieving its aspiration of developing world-class universities. Looking ahead, China's universities will place a greater emphasis on career development and entrepreneurship education and will revamp their post-graduate programmes to make them more accessible and relevant to national needs. In particular there will be a focus on the practical application of scientific research and its rapid introduction into production. Research into philosophy and social sciences, however, will also receive attention. Through the Higher Education Rejuvenation Plan for Central and Western Regions, there will be a stress on the development of the higher education sector in inland areas, and

colleges in the East will be encouraged to support their central and western counterparts. Project 985 and Project 211 (national initiatives to cultivate world-class institutions) will continue to play an important role in the building of first class universities and higher education institutions will be encouraged to cooperate with foreign institutions by opening joint research centres and participating in international academic organisations.

Vocational Education

Vocational education is recognised by the Chinese government as a key channel to boost economic growth and promote employment. The Chinese government plans to expand vocational education and incorporate it into its socio-economic development and industrial development programmes. Improvements in the quality of teaching and the development of standards are a priority, along with making sure, through greater collaboration with industry, that student learning is employment-oriented. The government plans to legislate for the involvement of enterprises in, for example, the evaluation of teaching quality and the provision of occupational training. Incentives will also be provided to encourage

enterprises and industry associations to invest in vocational education and run vocational schools. There also will be a major drive to improve vocational education in rural areas. It is planned that graduates of vocational schools will hold both a diploma and a 'vocational permit' in order to be eligible for jobs. Graduates will also be encouraged and incentivised to continue their studies whilst working.

Further or Continuing Education

In China, further education is viewed as part of a life long learning system for those who have completed school education. The current emphasis is to develop non-degree further education and also expand diploma-granting further education. Whilst further education for adults of working age will be recognised and incentivised, there will also be an emphasis on the provision of further education for the aged and as well as efforts to expand community education in urban and rural areas. Distance learning will also be encouraged through television and the internet. A framework will be developed to accommodate the accumulation and transfer of academic credits in further education.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR UK INSTITUTIONS

CHINA'S REQUIREMENTS	UK CAPABILITY
University co-operation in research and innovation	UK education enjoys a global reputation for excellence in research
Curriculum development which takes account of employer needs	The UK's HE and TVET sectors are world leaders in programme development and employer engagement
Teacher training	The UK has advanced teacher training programmes at all levels
Vocational training for modern industrial sectors	The UK's TVET sector leads the way in curriculum development and assessment in modern sectors

Higher Education

According to their municipal Five Year Plan, emerging provincial Chinese cities such as Tangshan, Taizhou, Dongying, Hefei and Shaoxing are encouraging their universities to cooperate with foreign counterparts, whilst cities better known for their industrial capability such as Dongguan, Foshan and Suzhou are also seeking to develop university education and encourage foreign cooperation. Nantong is trying to attract foreign universities to set up branches and, along with Tianjin, Foshan, Taizhou and Yangzhou, is planning to boost post-graduate education. Dongying is looking to attract foreign higher education research institutions to cooperate with its local universities. Tianjin will focus on 985 and 211 projects, while Wenzhou intends to establish sports and foreign language universities. Tangshan is also seeking private investment to develop its universities. Ningbo is seeking to develop university majors in harbour logistics, shipping/navigation and the marine economy.

Vocational Education

From the 50 cities featured in this report, 34 explicitly mention vocational education in their Five Year Plan. Those seeking international cooperation in general to improve their vocational colleges include Changsha, Xiamen and Hohhot, whilst a number of cities also state specific sectors where collaboration is sought, such as Daqing (petrochemical and automotive manufacturing), Shenyang (equipment manufacturing) and Jinan (nursing). Large scale developments planned include an 'equipment manufacturing vocational education pilot city' and occupational skills centre in Shenyang and a 'vocational education' park in Ordos.

Further and Adult Education

Further education is specifically mentioned in the Five Year Plans of Hohhot, Datong and Zhongshan, whilst adult education is mentioned in those of Weihai, Xining, Hohhot and Zhongshan.

MARKET ACCESS

Higher Education

UK universities are continuing to attract Chinese students to the UK via direct recruitment, education exhibitions and agents, but the environment remains fiercely competitive. In the meantime, Chinese institutions are very keen to form broad based partnerships with UK universities which include, not only joint research and degree programmes (such as 2+2 and the like), but also teacher training and the two-way exchange of staff and students. Joint programmes taught in China require approval from China's Ministry of Education. Since many universities in the better known cities of Beijing and Shanghai already have foreign links, UK universities may experience a greater willingness to cooperate from institutions in China's regional cities. All Chinese universities are highly conscious of the rankings of their potential partners. There are signs that some Chinese universities are willing to work with foreign Professional Institutions to accredit Masters, Bachelors and Technical level courses. A university may establish a presence in

China via a Representative Office or a Wholly Foreign Owned Enterprise (WFOE). Whilst the activities of a Representative Office are limited to liaison and business development, a WFOE is permitted to engage in any revenue generating activities expressly included in its business license. If the university wishes to establish a Representative Office, the subsidiary company must have been in existence for at least two years, though this restriction does not apply to WFOEs. Foreign universities are also permitted to establish joint campuses in China, though this is a far greater commitment and requires approval at the highest level.

Vocational and Further Education

Vocational education now falls in the encouraged category of foreign investment, so more partnerships with Chinese may be expected. Opportunities for cooperation will particularly relate to priority sectors in regional cities, whether this be automotive, construction, finance or healthcare.

Vocational education in some cities is viewed as lacking structure, quality and relevance, so cooperation in the broad areas of curriculum design, employer engagement and teacher training will be well received. Foreign cooperation in the vocational education sector will require approval by either the local Education Bureau or the Bureau of Human Resources & Social Security.

UK institutions wishing to cooperate with Chinese partners will face difficulty receiving approval from the Chinese authorities unless they are included on a list of 'accredited institutions' held by the Chinese Embassy. Currently the UK's non-HE providers which award their own degrees or award degrees affiliated to universities are not included in this list (and as such do not have their degrees recognised in China). However, if such institutions are able to secure a supporting letter from a UK government department, this may be sufficient to secure local approval for a joint programme.

CONCLUSION

Although China's education system is experiencing growing pains during its rapid expansion, the government is committed to ensuring that it meets the needs of the national economy and fulfils the aspirations of students. Foreign involvement is now encouraged more than before. With a global reputation for excellence, UK institutions are well placed to offer their expertise and enter into profitable partnerships. UK firms considering entry into China's regional cities can also be assured that education, skills and employability are high on the agendas of local governments.

