Finding a job in China and Hong Kong for Chinese students

University of BRISTOL
Careers Service

This Factsheet has been produced for Chinese students planning to return to China and Hong Kong for work. Information was sourced through employer and alumni interviews, desk research and trips to China.

Labour market

China is the second largest trading nation in the world, and also has the world's second largest economy with a GDP of USD 14.092 trillion (2018). China is set to continue its steady growth in 2018 by a forecast 6.4 per cent (World Bank).

Important industries are Agriculture 7.9%, Industry 40.5%, Services 51.6% (National Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Commerce 2017).

China has over 8.2 million domestic graduates in addition to nearly 400,000 overseas returnees (51job 2018).

Key Sectors and employers

University of Bristol alumni generally favour the Tier 1 cities below:

- Beijing - has more Fortune global 500 company headquarters than any other city in the world. Main sectors are IT, real estate, scientific research, finance/commerce, tourism. Growing sectors include aerospace, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, cultural creativity
- Shanghai - commercial and financial centre with the largest free-trade zone in mainland China. Main sectors are financial, commercial, consulting, logistics, export/import, automotive manufacturing, manufacturing, real estate
- Shenzhen - the first Special Economic Zone in China. Main sectors are manufacturing, IT, high-tech industry, finance, banking
- Guangzhou - main sectors are manufacturing, automotive, petrol chemical, electronic products
- Hangzhou (new first tier) - an emerging technology hub and home to the e-commerce giant Alibaba. Main sectors are financial services, cultural creativity, technology, tourism
- Chengdu (new first tier) - main sectors are logistics, commerce, finance, science and technology, automotive manufacturing, medicine, food, IT

Hong Kong's main sectors are wholesale, import/export, hotels, finance, insurance, real estate, business (including consulting and banking), services.

Some of the most popular employers with overseas returnee graduates include: Tencent, Wanda Group, Netease, ICBC, China Telecom, Fosun, SP Bank, A. O. Smith, China Unicom, Starbucks (GradConnection 2018).

Zhaopin also highlights Tencent and NetEase in its Top 10 Employers to work for in 2017, as well as BMW China, China Merchants Bank, Vanke, PICC (The People's Insurance Company [Group] of China Limited), Baidu, SF Express, FAW (First Automotive Group Corporation) and BAIC Group (Beijing Automotive Group). Criteria included: culture, salary and welfare, training opportunities, working environment, organizational structure and employer reputation. 30% of the top 30 winners were from the IT/telecom/electronics/internet sector, indicating that Artificial Intelligence and digital technology are driving the new employer economy in China.

Key facts

Overseas graduates' starting salary   Average ¥ 108,000 (around £12,300) (Employability of overseas students survey 2017, by EIC Education and 51job.com)

Working week	Most contracts are 9-6 with a 1-2 hour lunch break. However, working into the evening in many industries is normal. Recent graduates are increasingly challenging the 996 culture (9am to 9pm 6 days a week) of some high-growth tech companies; research potential employers carefully to understand how their working culture is evolving.
Holiday	Varies, with 5 days per annum a minimum and 10 to 20 more usual for multinationals.

What employers are looking for

GradConnection's 2018 survey of 124 China and Hong Kong organisations (multinationals and medium to large Chinese companies) found that:

- 24% of surveyed employers offer more than half their graduate roles to returnees - an increase
- Over 78% of employers wanted to hire a minimum of 20% returnees for their intake.
- Over 50% of employers expect an increase in their hiring numbers for 2018
- Graduates with a UK education are highly favoured (82% of employers target UK universities). Quality of education based on league tables/university ranking tables is important to 45% of employers.

It is important in your application to demonstrate your motivation for the role and to position this return to China as a planned choice (whether or not that is the case).

Employers value the potential for overseas returnees to demonstrate a superior **English language ability**, **advanced knowledge**, **cultural awareness** and a **less 'aggressive' working style**. They are cautious however about overseas graduates' salary expectations and report that overseas returnees' English is not always better than - or even as good as - their China-educated peers'.

As university rankings are important to Chinese employers, emphasise Bristol's status as a top 4 UK university with leading employers (High Fliers 2018), a top 10 UK university (QS Rankings 2018), and the 51st university internationally (QS Rankings 2019). If your subject's world ranking is high, you can also highlight this.

Increasing your employability

- Some employers open positions first to candidates who have a connection with a current staff member, so it is really important to grow your network. Connect with alumni of the University of Bristol and other educational institutes you have attended on LinkedIn (currently there are around 2,000 alumni living in China). Follow alumni and employers on LinkedIn and on WeChat so you can keep up with what is going on in your field.
- Develop your networks and soft skills by enrolling in the Bristol PLUS Award
- Get work experience in sector(s) you are interested in by applying to internships or part-time jobs. Highly relevant work experience might allow you to negotiate a higher graduate salary with employers, although it is important to have realistic expectations. Chinese employers can be put off returnees who expect a higher salary simply due to having studied overseas. Internship opportunities include the:
  - SME Internship Scheme which provides opportunities with local SMEs
  - Q-Step Internship Scheme which develops your quantitative skills via experience of using data in real world contexts. Currently available to undergraduate students studying Childhood Studies, Criminology, Education, Geography, Politics, Sociology or Social Policy
    Industrial Liaison Office Internship Scheme for students of Engineering and Computer Science. Internships take place all over the world including in China.
  - Roles advertised on job portals Student Circus (UK focus) and GradConnection (China/overseas focus)

The recruitment process

Where to find jobs
Popular job portals:

Zhilianzhaopin	www.zhaopin.com
Qianchengwuyou	www.51job.com
Liepinwang	www.liepin.com
Yingjiesheng	www.yingjiesheng.com
GradConnection	https://gradconnection.bristol.ac.uk/

Also look on the websites of companies you are interested in and follow them on WeChat.

Timings
There are two main recruitment periods. Most employers (both multinational and state-owned organisations) open applications from July with tests and interviews from September with the whole phase ending November/December (the Autumn or golden season). A smaller recruitment period in Spring runs around March to May (the silver season). Many employers, aware of the logistical difficulties faced by Chinese students studying overseas, focus their recruitment of this cohort during this time.

For similar reasons, some employers (e.g. KPMG) are opening their recruitment at other times of the year. It is worth getting in touch with employers you are interested in to understand how flexible they can be.

Recruitment stages are similar to the UK. There are usually at least 3 stages taking between one and three months. After an online application and psychometric tests (which many Chinese employers place a strong value on), there can be up to 3 interview stages.

CV
- Format is similar to the UK and it should be either 1 or 2 pages
- The job advertisement will usually ask for a Chinese CV but depending on the role you may need to produce one in English. Some students create a CV which is Chinese on one side and English on the other
- Your Chinese CV may include a formal photo (do not include a photo on an English CV)
- HR staff may only scan your CV for 3-5 seconds, so make sure it is concise, and that you describe outcomes not processes, and that you support your outcomes with facts
- Highlight your English language ability and your UK work experience
- Don't forget to include your first degree qualification
- Chinese employers favour a straightforward format of career profile/objective, education, work history in reverse chronology, awards/extra-curricular achievements. Avoid pulling out key skills /achievements in a separate section as you may be doing for some UK roles (the skills-based CV).

Interview
The first interview is often by phone, Skype or WeChat, followed by a face to face interview and then an assessment centre. Tests and interviews may be in English or Chinese depending on the employer and the role. For example, interviews for technical roles are likely to be in Chinese, but for a sales role within a multinational you may be required to do tests and interviews in English.

Last updated October 2018. This guide is available on mycareer within Resources.