



# China to persist in the “opening-up” of education

(Information as at 24 June 2020)

On 18 June 2020, China’s Ministry of Education (MoE) announced it has published a new opinion piece on accelerating and expanding the opening-up of China’s education sector - *Opinions by eight government bodies including the Ministry of Education on accelerating and expanding the opening-up of education in the new era*<sup>1</sup> (Opinions). While the full document has not yet been made public, the MoE has released a summary (available [here](#) in Chinese) and answered questions from the press<sup>2</sup> (Q&A document available [here](#) in Chinese). From what has come to light so far, the Opinions suggest there remains a continued strong commitment by China to the internationalisation of its education sector.

The summary of the Opinions suggests that China will:

- Continue the opening-up of education, and look to deepen international **educational collaboration** and exchange in all aspects and at all levels. Credit recognition with foreign counterparts and cross issuance/joint issuance of qualifications will be encouraged. The government will also consider delegating certain approval processes for international collaboration to institutions (for example, foreign affairs approval to universities in

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<sup>1</sup> People’s Republic of China, Ministry of Education, “教育部等八部门关于加快和扩大新时代教育对外开放的意见” (Unofficial translation: Opinion by eight government bodies including the Ministry of Education on accelerating and expanding the opening-up of education in the new era), 18 June 2020, [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/gzdt\\_gzdt/s5987/202006/t20200617\\_466544.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/gzdt_gzdt/s5987/202006/t20200617_466544.html)

<sup>2</sup> People’s Republic of China, Ministry of Education, “加快和扩大教育对外开放 大力提升我国教育的国际影响力——教育部国际司（港澳台办）负责人就《关于加快和扩大新时代教育对外开放的意见》答记者问” (Unofficial translation: Accelerate and expand the opening-up of education and lift international influence of China’s education – the person in charge of the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges of the MoE answers questions from the press, regarding the “Opinions by eight government bodies including the Ministry of Education on accelerating and expanding the opening-up of education in the new era”), 18 June 2020, [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/s271/202006/t20200617\\_466545.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/s271/202006/t20200617_466545.html)

the [Double First-Class University](#) development scheme). At the press conference, a representative of the MoE's Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges (DICE) drew further attention to China's long touted priority regions for education - Hainan, Hebei Xiong'An New Area, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area and the Yangtze River Delta Region - and that education development in these regions would continue to be supported.

- **Eliminate barriers to enable reform in Chinese-foreign cooperation in running schools.** This will include: amending the relevant guidelines and “Regulations on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools”<sup>3</sup> (the legislation that governs the establishment of joint institutes and programs between Chinese and foreign education provider partners); developing streamlined approval and termination processes for these projects; and encouraging some new education projects to be ‘piloted’, given policy support and greater flexibility around the mode of delivery and operational structure. This should be welcome news for foreign partners who have encountered difficulties in navigating China’s regulatory landscape with respect to establishing and maintaining education partnerships. Continue to **improve Chinese higher education institutions’ (HEIs) operating offshore.** According to the MoE, China has set up 100+ different types of offshore educational project in around 50 countries. China will push for more applied universities and vocational colleges to join Chinese state-owned enterprises in setting up offshore projects.
- Further open up and reform its VET system to **achieve a world class VET system with Chinese characteristics.** China will look to introduce ‘favourable policies’ that foreign vocational institutions have adopted, although it is not clear what these will be. Chinese vocational institutions are encouraged to conduct international capacity building with foreign VET institutions. New international vocational competitions will be established, and VET teachers will be given more opportunities to travel abroad for training.
- **Strengthen the branding of ‘Study in China’,** including by lifting the quality and management of inbound study. This follows the recent release of policies around the quality of inbound study including “Higher Education Quality Specification for Inbound Study Abroad (trial)”<sup>4</sup>, “Regulation on the Management of Chinese Government Scholarships”<sup>5</sup> and quality standard for international students studying English medical degrees in China<sup>6</sup>. It is understood the MoE is currently finalising further quality documents relevant to inbound

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<sup>3</sup> People’s Republic of China, Ministry of Education, Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools Information Platform for Supervision Work (JSJ Website) “中华人民共和国中外合作办学条例” (Official translation: Regulations on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools) 1 March 2003, <http://www.crs.jsj.edu.cn/news/index/2>

<sup>4</sup> People’s Republic of China, Ministry of Education, “来华留学生高等教育质量规范（试行）” (Unofficial translation: Higher Education Quality Specification for Inbound Study Abroad (trial)), 9 October 2018, [http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A20/moe\\_850/201810/t20181012\\_351302.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A20/moe_850/201810/t20181012_351302.html)

<sup>5</sup> Unofficial translation of 中国政府奖学金工作管理办法

<sup>6</sup> China Education Association For International Exchange, “来华留学生临床医学专业本科教育（英语授课）质量控制标准（试行）(unofficial translation: Quality Control Standards for Undergraduate Education of Clinical Medicine for International Students in China (Taught in English) (Trial), 11 May 2020, <http://www.ceaie.edu.cn/shewaibanxuezhiliangbaozhangbu/tongzhigonggao/1970.html>

study. Teacher training for teachers of international students will continue to be strengthened.

- **Expand influence in online education** internationally and support institutions at all levels to develop online courses and promote them overseas using the ‘China Education Cloud’ platforms<sup>7</sup>.
- Launch an upgraded ‘Belt and Road education action plan’ and **support multilateral education cooperation**. China says it is willing to share its experience on educational arrangements during the pandemic period with the international community, and provide support especially to developing countries. China proposes to deepen its collaboration with multilateral institutions such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- **Continue support for study abroad**. When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic’s effect on outbound study abroad, the DICE representative explained that the impact of the pandemic on outbound study abroad will be ‘temporary’ and that the Opinions document makes clear China will continue to see study abroad as a means to educate professionals in all sectors relevant to China’s modernisation efforts. China proposes to actively explore collaboration opportunities and expand the scope of outbound study abroad.

### Next steps

The MoE is asking government bodies at all levels to follow the guidance of the Central Party Committee, make the opening-up of education an important agenda and set up collaborative mechanisms to support that agenda. This will likely result in more detailed provincial/municipal and institutional level plans and initiatives around the broad themes discussed above.

Providers are encouraged to keep an eye on developments pursuant to the Opinions document, particularly those aspects that may alter processes for establishing or maintaining education partnerships in China.

For further enquiries, please contact the [Education and Research Section](#) of the Australian Embassy in Beijing.

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<sup>7</sup> unofficial translation of 中国教育云