



Returned graduates eligible for special civil service recruitment pathway

(Information as at January 2024)

In recent years, some Chinese provincial-level governments including Beijing and Shanghai have announced that Chinese students who have recently graduated from overseas higher education institutions are eligible for civil service positions through a provincial “**Selected and Assigned Graduates**” pathway. Previously this pathway was open only to graduates from elite Chinese universities. This provides an additional and potentially attractive career pathway for those that have graduated from top overseas universities, including many from Australia.

Provinces and overseas universities involved in the scheme

According to Chinese state media¹, as of October 2023, Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangdong, Shandong, Sichuan, Henan, Hebei and Shanxi have opened up their **Selected and Assigned Graduate** recruitment into the civil service to Chinese overseas graduates.

The majority of these schemes use international university rankings produced by Times Higher Education, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) and U.S. News & World Report as reference points for selecting candidates. Eligibility often extends to graduates from the world’s top 50 to 100 universities on these rankings.

Different provinces and regions have varying eligibility requirements for their Selected and Assigned Graduate recruitment of overseas graduates (refer Appendix A). For example, Sichuan requires the graduate to have pursued undergraduate studies in China and earned graduate and above degree level qualifications overseas; Chongqing has set specific requirements on the field of study in-line with local development priorities; some special positions require the graduate to have studied abroad with Chinese government-supported scholarships/programs.

The Chinese central government also administers Selected and Assigned Graduate recruitment for civil service positions, but these sought-after opportunities are typically channelled exclusively to a select group of top Chinese universities, and there is currently no indication that these positions are accessible to graduates from overseas universities.

Employment into civil service

There are mainly two ways for higher education graduates to enter the Chinese civil service: either through the highly competitive **Civil Service Exam** held by both the central government and at provincial levels, or through the **Selected Graduates** pathway, where governments select high-performing fresh graduates² from top universities and assign them into government jobs with civil service titles.

In China, the competition for civil service positions is increasingly fierce, especially in recent years amid rising employment pressure as these positions offer stability and often social benefits such as household registration allocation³. The number of qualified applicants for the national Civil Service Exam in 2023 was 2.6 million⁴ – an increase of 600,000 from the previous year, and up by more than 1 million compared to 2020. Returned graduates are eligible for this examination, and a key requirement is that the student is able to obtain qualification recognition by the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE).

The Selected Graduates pathway, which started in the 1960s is administered by central and provincial governments and was previously open only to graduates from top Chinese universities. This pathway usually requires the students to demonstrate exceptional academic performance and active involvement in key groups and/or social initiatives. Compared to regular civil servants, Selected and Assigned Graduates often have certain advantages as they are primarily groomed as potential leaders for the party and government. The specialised training can provide them with a clear career path and opportunities for rapid advancement.

Experts suggest that the move to recruit overseas graduates into the civil service system through the Selected and Assigned Graduate pathway is aimed at introducing young people with an international outlook into China's government talent pool.

Going forward

As the number of Chinese students pursuing education abroad continues to rise, it is likely that other provincial governments in China may follow and open their Selected and Assigned civil service recruitment pathway to returned graduates.

The large pool of international graduates presents an attractive talent source for the Chinese government. However, the expansion of such opportunities would benefit it is accompanied by a more refined and detailed selection criteria to ensure public satisfaction.

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



Appendix A

Disclaimer: The information presented in the below table is point-in-time desk-top research based on available online sources and may not represent the most accurate or up-to-date information. Users are advised to conduct thorough research and verification for detailed and precise information.

Province/Municipality	Recruitment quota	Requirements for returned graduates
Shanghai ⁵ (2024)	400	Graduates from overseas universities qualified for direct Hukou allocation ⁶ - world's top 50 universities (THE QS or ARWU)
Beijing ⁷ (2024)	460	World's top 100 universities (ARWU)
Chongqing ⁸ (2024)	n/a	World's top 100 universities (QS) Master and above degree level graduates only; restriction on discipline applies
Guangdong ⁹ (2023)	2446	60 overseas universities
Shandong ¹⁰ (2024)	1640	Graduates from world's top 100 universities (QS) are eligible for the Selected and Assigned Graduate pathway; Graduates from overseas universities that are recognised by the CSCSE are eligible for the non-assigned Selected Graduates pathway
Sichuan ¹¹ (2024)	n/a	The scheme includes 55 overseas universities Graduates from universities that are listed in the world's top 50 on all four international rankings, regardless of their majors, are eligible to apply. For those who do not meet this criterion, eligibility is restricted to graduates from majors that are urgently needed by the province, as outlined in the official document; Open only to graduates that hold Masters or above degree level qualification from overseas university who have completed their undergraduate studies at a Chinese university included in this plan.
Henan ¹² (2023)	390	World's top 100 universities (ARWU) Master and above degree level graduates only
Hebei ¹³ (2023)	938	100 overseas universities Master and above degree level graduates only
Shanxi ¹⁴ (2023)	n/a	69 overseas universities Master and above degree level graduates only

¹ Yue ZHAO. “定向选调生，要招“海归”了(Targeted Recruitment Pathway Is Opening To “Returnees)” Weixin Official Accounts Platform, China Newsweek, 21 Oct. 2023, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/tQot3nz77Bh-Fw14ipxwpQ>

² “Fresh Graduates” is a term commonly used in China to describe those that have recently graduated from Higher Education Institutions, usually the current year. Fresh Graduates benefit from government-backed preferential such as special recruitment quota, special training programs and advantage over Household registration relocation. Students that graduated from overseas higher education institutions are also included in most of the supporting policies for Fresh Graduates.

³ Refer to Policy document published by our office in August 2023 on China’s Hukou system and its impact on study abroad: <https://www.education.gov.au/international-education-engagement/resources/chinas-hukou-system-and-impact-study-abroad>

⁴ LIU, Huan. “2023 年度国考今举行：拟招 3.7 万人，近 260 万人报考 (2023 National Civil Servants Exam Held Today: 37,000 People To Be Recruited, Nearly 2.6 Million People Applied)” Xinhua Net, Xinhua News Agency, 8 Jan. 2023, www.news.cn/politics/2023-01/08/c_1129264303.htm

⁵ “上海市 2024 年度选调应届优秀大学毕业生公告 (Announcement On The Selection Of Outstanding University Graduates In Shanghai In 2024)”. Weixin Official Accounts Platform, Shanghai Employment Directing Center of the Graduates, Shanghai Student Financial Aid Management Center, 2 Sept. 2023, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Cs7w6TLbYvqURhRNvYlfoA>

⁶ Refer to the policy update published by our office in August 2023 on “China’s Hukou system and impact on study abroad” <https://www.education.gov.au/international-education-engagement/resources/chinas-hukou-system-and-impact-study-abroad>

⁷ “北京市 2024 年度定向选调和“优培计划”招聘应届优秀大学毕业生公告 (Announcement On Beijing’s 2024 Targeted Selection And “Excellent Training Plan” Recruitment Of Outstanding University Graduates)”. Beijing Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, Organization Department of Beijing Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China, 15 Sept. 2023, https://rsj.beijing.gov.cn/xxgk/tzgg/202309/t20230915_3260156.html

⁸ “重庆市定向选调 2024 届急需紧缺专业应届优秀大学毕业生简章 (Chongqing’s Targeted Selection Of Outstanding University Graduates In Urgently Needed Majors In 2024)” Weixin Official Accounts Platform, Chongqing Municipal Education Commission, 25 Oct. 2023, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/mX6jxkmbMq6jlx51JFTQBw>

⁹ “广东省 2023 年度选调优秀大学毕业生公告 (Announcement On The Selection Of Outstanding University Graduates In Guangdong Province In 2023)”. People’s Government of Guangdong Province, 6 Nov. 2022, www.gd.gov.cn/zwgk/gsgg/content/post_4041125.html

¹⁰ “山东省 2024 年度选拔录用选调生公告 (Announcement On Shandong Province 2024 Selected And Assigned Graduate)”. Shandong Provincial People’s Government, 28 Sept. 2023, www.shandong.gov.cn/art/2023/9/28/art_94237_10343870.html

¹¹ “四川省面向国（境）外部分知名高校选调 2024 届优秀大学毕业生公告 (Announcement On Selected Graduate Pathway Recruitment For 2024 Graduates From Well-Known Universities (Including Overseas Universities).” Sichuan Civil Servant Network, 10 Oct. 2023, www.scgwy.org/2023/1010/72257.html

¹² “2023 年河南省定向国内外部分高校选调优秀应届毕业生公告 (Announcement On Selecting Outstanding Fresh Graduates From Domestic And Overseas Universities To The Selected Graduate Pathway Recruitment In Henan Province In 2023)”. Henan Civil Servant Examination Network, 21 Nov. 2022, www.hngwy.org/2022/1119/52110.html

¹³ Zhang, Yuanyuan. “河北省 2023 年度面向有关院校定向招录选调生公告 (Announcement of Hebei Province’s 2023 Targeted Recruitment and Selection of Students from Relevant Universities).” Central University of Finance and Economics Career Center, 19 Apr. 2023, <http://scc.cufe.edu.cn/frontpage/cufe/html/newsDetail.html?id=042493e8fdc141ca8dc8548e52df976b>

¹⁴ “2023 年山西省面向国(境)外大学选调优秀高校毕业生公告 (Announcement of Shanxi Province’s Selection of Excellent College Graduates from Domestic and Overseas Universities in 2023).” National Public Servants Net, 19 Dec. 2022, www.chinagwy.org/html/gdzk/shanxi/202212/63_554930.html