

representing an increase of 3.7 percent to 6.9 percent among Y1000Ts, and 4.6 percent to 6.6 percent for researchers in the United States.

#### SLIGHTLY BEHIND IN THE QUALITY OF PUBLICATION

While performance is similar in terms of gross number of publications, Y1000Ts are at a slight disadvantage in terms of quality of publications (journal impact factor), although there is no significant difference between the two groups in the number of publications in first quartile journals. In terms of impact factor, Y1000Ts tend to publish in less prestigious journals. They are more successful in getting their publications cited, regardless of how many times. Specifically, Y1000Ts had 78.29 percent of their publications cited after moving back to China. In the same period, their counterparts had 73.8 percent of their outputs cited.

Descriptive statistics also illustrate that, after being recruited back to China, the average citation per Y1000T publication (12.225) is lower than that of the control group (15.931). With respect to publication recognition, measured by accumulative citations, Y1000Ts appear to lag behind their counterparts. In addition, although Y1000Ts are very focused on publishing with international partners, there is an evident decrease in international collaboration rate after their return to China. Before returning to China, 56 percent of publications by Y1000Ts involved international collaborations. This percentage dropped to 44.8 percent after their recruitment under the Y1000T program. Meanwhile, the control group managed to maintain a rather high level of international collaboration rate (66.2 percent before the control years 2011 and 2012; 65.6 percent afterwards).

#### CONCLUSION

In sum, the Y1000T program has been rather successful in terms of attracting some of the best overseas Chinese talent back to China, as demonstrated by the highly prestigious list of institutions from which they graduated with their PhD. After their return, the majority of Y1000Ts worked in elite Chinese universities or research institutes, with rather abundant research funding and privileged working conditions—in some cases, better than those of the control group in terms of financial and hardware support.

Nevertheless, conditions sets by Chinese institutions deserve further examination, particularly regarding the assessment devised for Y1000T recipients. According to the program, the primary task of Y1000Ts is to publish high-quality articles in prestigious international journals on an annual basis. While Y1000Ts have been successful in keeping a publication rate similar to the control group, the quality of their publications may have suffered due to the intense pressure to publish.

This sheds light on the overall assessment system of Chinese research performance. In China, the urge to catch up is pervasive and influences the country's national and institutional strategies of enhancing research capacity. Short-term returns, especially the number of research publications and targeting journals' impact factors, are stressed by both government and institutions. However, while much attention is paid to the number of publications and publishing in first quartile journals, the quality of each publication ends up being less of a concern. Although the concentration on short-term returns greatly contributes to the boost in research outputs, it may hinder the development of a more sustainable academic culture emphasizing quality. It may also hamper the development of academic fields where intensive publishing is less likely. Arguably, the next step for China is not to deal with financial or talent shortage, but to overcome its urge to catch up and to pursue short-term returns. ■

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## International Students in China: Facts, Paths, and Challenges

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The internationalization of higher education is a mainstream trend in the development of higher education, with international student mobility as an important indicator. In 2018, the Institute of International Education released a report showing that, in 2017, great changes had taken place in the ranks of the top eight host destination countries, compared to 2001: the United States still ranked no.1, but Belgium, Japan, and Spain had disappeared from the list. Germany had gone down, while the ranks of the United Kingdom and France remained the same. China and Canada ranked no.3 and no.6 respectively and Australia went up from fifth to fourth. The report showed that since 2001, China had significantly improved its performance in attracting international students. This article elaborates on this last finding, and draws from a report by China's ministry of education.

**FACTS**

According to a statistical report on international students in China from 2000 to 2015 released by the ministry of education, these figures increased from 52,150 in 2000 to 397,635 in 2015. Asia was the largest sending continent: 60.40 percent of international students came from Asian countries in 2015. The second home continent was Europe, with 16.79 percent of all international students coming from that region. In turn, African students comprised 12.52 percent of the total number. The percentages of students from America was 8.79 and from Oceania, 1.51.

As for countries of origin, Korea has been sending the most students to China since 2000, and since 2008 the United States has been the second country on the list. In 2015, Korea sent 66,672 students to China (16.77 percent) and the United States 21,975 students (5.53 percent). In recent years, the number of international students from India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, and other Asian countries has increased dramatically.

In terms of academic level, while the percentage of nondegree students has been decreasing since 2000, this grouping remains the majority. In 2015, the percentage of nondegree students was 53.53. The percentage of undergraduate students had increased to 32.17 in 2015, while the percentage of graduate students was 13.47.

The percentage of students receiving a Chinese Government Scholarship decreased very slightly from 2000 to 2015. In 2000, 10.28 percent received a scholarship, while in 2015 the percentage was 10.21.

The top five fields of study of international students were literature, Chinese medicine, engineering, western medicine, and economics. The percentage of students taking literature declined in the past 15 years—but 53.60 percent still study literature. Meanwhile, the share of students taking Chinese medicine decreased from 7.09 percent in 2000 to 3.09 percent in 2015. The percentage of students taking engineering, western medicine, and economics increased, with western medicine as the most attractive with 8.75 percent. The share of students taking engineering and economics reached 6.56 percent and 4.70 percent respectively.

**PATHS**

There are several Chinese scholarship programs available for international students, such as the Confucius Institute Scholarship program and local government scholarships. The Chinese Government Scholarship is the most important program, covering in particular living expenses and health insurance. Notably, the Confucius Institute Scholarship program has become increasingly important in recent years. In 2016, there were as many as 8,840 Confucius In-

stitute Scholarship students in China. Further, some provinces of China set up local government scholarships. Jiangsu Province, for instance, has set up the Jasmine Jiangsu Government Scholarship, while the government of Beijing launched the Beijing Government Scholarship for International Students (BGS) to support outstanding international students studying in Beijing. The Confucius Institute is a new form of educational cooperation between China and foreign countries. For instance, the “Confucius China Studies Program” is a study program for foreign students to study in China. In 2016, the program recruited 72 students from 26 countries to study in joint research PhD programs or pursue PhD degrees.

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Chinese universities offer many English-taught courses. According to China’s ministry of education, in 2009, 34 universities of China offered English-taught graduate programs in business and management, engineering, social science, humanities, and other fields. The China Scholarship Council website shows that more than 100 universities offered English-taught courses in 2018.

Providing work permits is an increasingly important strategy for countries that want to attract more international students. International students in China can work after receiving a permit. Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou have published information about how to apply for work permits. Recently, the Chinese government decided to set up a “New Immigration Bureau” to focus on the immigration of international students.

The increase in the number of international students is a result of the economic and education cooperation between China and other countries. China launched the “Belt and Road Initiative” in 2013 to stimulate economic and education cooperation with Asian and African countries as well as with some European countries. According to data about international students studying in China in 2017 released by the ministry of education, more than 60 percent come from “Belt and Road Initiative” regions, upon which China will rely heavily in the next few years in terms of incoming students.

**CHALLENGES**

As mentioned above, China has taken several measures to attract more international students, but is facing a number of challenges, in particular the limited number of international students receiving a scholarship. China's ministry of education has issued a list of universities allowed to provide scholarships to international students, but the list is extremely limited. This weakens China's competitiveness on the international education market.

The Chinese language is hard to learn for international students. In recent years, Chinese universities have set up English courses for international students, but efficiency is low. Most faculty still teach in Chinese. Although Chinese universities offer Chinese language courses for international students, their proficiency remains limited.

Opportunities to immigrate and get a job are also limited. Most international students are eager to immigrate or work in their host country—especially those from developing countries. Although the Chinese government modified the requirements allowing international students to work after graduation, only three cities to date have published the details on how to apply for a work permit. If the government wants to expand interest in studying in China, it must focus on addressing these three issues. ■

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## Challenges to Higher Education in Laos and Cambodia

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**T**rying to summarize the challenges facing higher education in Laos and Cambodia presents several obstacles. One is the risk of addressing the topic superficially. Another is the risk of not acknowledging sufficiently the distinctiveness of each country's culture, history, and political circumstances. These matters aside, this article seeks to identify three broad challenges shared by the two countries with respect to their higher education systems.

**THE SETTING**

Laos and Cambodia are now experiencing rapid and sustained economic growth, based mainly upon the exploita-

tion of their natural resources, the development of manufacturing industries, and the emergence of new services sectors. Both countries continue, however, to be poor by international standards. Each has high levels of income inequality and poverty is extensive in rural areas. Corruption is ubiquitous in both countries, including within their higher education sectors.

Significant improvements in school retention rates over the past 15 years have contributed to a surge in demand for higher education. In both countries, the public higher education sector has been unable to absorb the surge in demand. Private higher education sectors have therefore been permitted to expand rapidly and without too much control. In Cambodia, where this policy has been more vigorously pursued, the private higher education sector is now larger than the public higher education sector.

In 2015, the most recent year for which reliable data are available, Laos, with a population of over six million, had five public universities, eight public colleges, and 43 private degree-granting colleges. It also had more than 90,000 higher education students, about one-third of whom attended private-sector institutions, though mostly on a part-time basis.

Cambodia, with a population of over 15 million, had 109 universities and institutes, including 66 private-sector universities and colleges. It had about 260,000 higher education students, over one-half of whom attended private-sector institutions.

**INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY**

The first challenge for higher education in both countries concerns the need for more institutional autonomy. In each setting, public universities have the necessary governance committee structures for the exercise of institutional autonomy, but their governing boards and academic committees have little or no decision-making authority. In Laos, even modest changes to training programs must be approved by the ministry of education and sports; in Cambodia, the situation is similar, except that public universities are line-managed by as many as 15 different ministries, as well as being coordinated by the ministry of education, youth, and sports. Nine public higher education institutions in Cambodia have been granted limited financial autonomy by virtue of being designated "public administration institutions," but no such development has been evident in Laos.

The consequences of a lack of institutional autonomy for public higher education institutions are widely felt in both countries. Academic managers feel weighed down by the burden of state bureaucracy. There is also a culture of risk avoidance in decision-making.