

Studying in China

A guide for international students & families — how Chinese higher education works, the X1 student visa and residence permit, affordable tuition, English-taught MBBS, the CSC scholarship, and work.

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WORLD-RANKED, AFFORDABLE, ENGLISH MBBS AVAILABLE

China offers **world-ranked universities (Tsinghua, Peking)**, **affordable tuition**, a **fast-growing set of English-taught programs (notably MBBS medicine)**, and one of the world's largest scholarship programs, the **Chinese Government Scholarship (CSC)**. The visa runs on the **X1 visa plus a JW201/JW202 form**, converted to a residence permit after arrival. This guide walks it in **ten steps**.

General guidance, not legal or immigration advice. Chinese immigration rules, tuition, and requirements change and vary by province/university. The details here are recent examples and **must be confirmed with the China Study (CSC) portal, the Chinese embassy, and your university.**

Understand Why Students Choose China

WHAT TO KNOW

China offers **world-ranked universities**, **affordable tuition**, a **large and growing set of English-taught programs (including MBBS medicine)**, and **generous government scholarships** — in a country central to the global economy, with modern campuses and facilities.

BY THE NUMBERS

World-ranked

Tsinghua, Peking

Affordable

+ CSC scholarships

English MBBS

a major draw

HOW TO HELP

Weigh China's **affordable, well-ranked, English-taught options (especially MBBS)** against the language for daily life and some restrictions — for medicine and STEM, it's a leading-value choice.

GOOD TO KNOW

China is a top destination for **English-taught MBBS (medicine)** at a fraction of Western fees — its biggest international-student draw.

Understand the System

WHAT TO KNOW

China's leading universities include **Tsinghua, Peking (PKU), Fudan, Zhejiang, and Shanghai Jiao Tong**, among many. Programs are taught in **Chinese** or, increasingly, **English** (MBBS, business, some engineering). Degrees run bachelor's/master's/doctorate.

BY THE NUMBERS

Tsinghua / Peking

global top 20

Fudan / SJTU

+ many others

English

MBBS, business

HOW TO HELP

Choose among China's **top universities** by field, and confirm the language of instruction — many programs (especially MBBS and business) are taught in English.

WATCH OUT

English-taught **MBBS** programs are widely available — but confirm the university is on the official list approved to teach MBBS in English.

Get the X1 Visa & JW Form

WHAT TO KNOW

For study over 180 days you need an **X1 visa**. Your university issues an **Admission Notice and a JW202 (self-funded) or JW201 (CSC scholarship) form** — both required for the X1. Apply at a Chinese embassy/consulate or visa center (in person; a **health exam form** is required).

BY THE NUMBERS

X1 visa

study > 180 days

JW202 / JW201

from your university

Health exam

required

HOW TO HELP

Get your **Admission Notice and JW202/JW201 form** from the university, complete the **Foreigner Physical Examination Form**, and apply for the **X1 visa** in person at a Chinese mission.

WATCH OUT

Without the **JW202 (or JW201) form**, the consulate **won't issue an X1 visa** — and originals are required, not copies.

Convert to a Residence Permit

WHAT TO KNOW

The X1 visa is valid for **30 days after arrival** — you must **apply for a Residence Permit within 30 days** at the local Exit and Entry Administration (Public Security Bureau), including a **medical screening** and police registration. The residence permit is your legal status for the study period.

BY THE NUMBERS

Within 30 days

apply for residence permit

Medical + police

screening & registration

Your legal status

for the program

HOW TO HELP

Apply for your **Residence Permit within 30 days** of arrival (with a medical screening and police registration) — overstaying the X1 without converting it is a serious violation.

WATCH OUT

The **30-day residence-permit deadline** is strict — handle it immediately; your university's international office assists.

Apply to Universities (or CSC)

WHAT TO KNOW

Apply via the **CSC scholarship system**, university portals, or a service like CUCAS. A typical timeline: research in autumn, apply **January–March**, receive your **Admission Notice and JW form in July–August**, then apply for the X1 visa. Originals and notarized documents are required.

BY THE NUMBERS

CSC / CUCAS / direct

application routes

Jan–March

apply

Jul–Aug

admission + JW form

HOW TO HELP

Apply through the **CSC system or directly** (Jan–March), gather notarized documents and a study plan, and receive your **Admission Notice and JW form** in summer to start the visa.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep **originals safe** — Chinese universities and Immigration require original Admission Notices and JW forms, not copies.

Plan for Tuition & Scholarships

WHAT TO KNOW

Tuition varies by program and city but is **affordable** (English-taught MBBS and top programs cost more). The **Chinese Government Scholarship (CSC)** fully funds tuition, accommodation, a monthly stipend, and insurance. Confucius Institute, provincial, and university scholarships also exist.

BY THE NUMBERS

Tuition

affordable (varies)

CSC

fully funded

+ Confucius/provincial

scholarships

HOW TO HELP

Budget the **program tuition** (confirm with your university), and pursue the fully-funded **CSC** or Confucius/provincial/university scholarships — China invests heavily in international students.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **CSC scholarship** fully funds tuition, housing, a stipend, and insurance — apply via the CSC portal (Jan–March) with a university nomination.

Meet the Financial Requirement

WHAT TO KNOW

China has **no single fixed threshold**, but you must prove you can cover tuition and living — a bank statement showing roughly **one year of costs (often ~\$3,000–5,000/semester as a benchmark)** or a scholarship letter. Requirements vary by consulate. Health insurance is mandatory.

BY THE NUMBERS

Funds

~1 year of costs

~\$3,000–5,000/sem

benchmark (varies)

Insurance

mandatory

HOW TO HELP

Prepare a **bank statement** covering about a year of tuition and living (or a scholarship letter), and arrange **health insurance** — both are required; confirm the amount with your consulate.

GOOD TO KNOW

There's **no single published minimum**, and it varies by consulate — show clear proof of about a year's costs.

Meet Language Requirements

WHAT TO KNOW

Chinese-taught programs require **Chinese (HSK, often HSK 4–5)**; the many **English-taught** programs (MBBS, business) require English proof. Even in English programs, learning Chinese greatly helps daily life. MBBS programs often include Chinese language for clinical practice.

BY THE NUMBERS

Chinese-taught

HSK 4–5

English-taught

MBBS, business

Some Chinese

essential daily

HOW TO HELP

Meet your program's language requirement (HSK for Chinese-taught, English proof for English programs), and learn some Chinese — it's important for daily life and, in MBBS, clinical work.

GOOD TO KNOW

MBBS students especially need **some Chinese for clinical rotations** — most programs build in Chinese language for this.

Prepare for the Move

WHAT TO KNOW

After arriving, complete your **residence permit (within 30 days)**, **medical screening**, and **police registration**, then set up mobile payments and banking. Practical tips: **bring RMB cash for the first days**, and **set up a VPN before arrival** for access to some foreign services.

BY THE NUMBERS

Residence permit

within 30 days

Mobile pay + bank

set up

VPN + cash

prepare before arrival

HOW TO HELP

Handle arrival admin — **residence permit**, **medical screening**, **police registration**, **banking**, **mobile payments** — and prepare a **VPN** and some **RMB cash** before you arrive.

GOOD TO KNOW

Set up a **VPN before arrival** (harder to do afterward) and carry **RMB cash** for your first days before mobile payments are set up.

Understand Work & After Study

WHAT TO KNOW

Part-time **work is restricted**: students may work or intern only **with explicit permission from the university and immigration** — don't assume you can work freely. After graduating, those with a **master's degree or higher** may apply for post-study work permits.

BY THE NUMBERS

Work

restricted — needs permission

Don't assume

free to work

Post-study

master's+ work permit

HOW TO HELP

Treat work as **restricted**: get explicit university and immigration permission before any job or paid internship, and note that post-study work permits favor **master's+ graduates**.

WATCH OUT

Working **without explicit permission violates your permit** — confirm the rules before any paid work or internship.

Thrive in China

WHAT TO KNOW

Make the most of modern campuses, strong facilities, and a central-to-the-world-economy location. Build Chinese-language skills and networks, and — if you hold a master's or above — explore the post-study work-permit route into China's job market.

BY THE NUMBERS

Modern campuses

+ strong facilities

Build Chinese

+ networks

Post-study

for master's+

HOW TO HELP

Invest in **Chinese-language skills and networks**, use China's strong facilities and central location, and explore post-study work options if you hold a master's or above.

GOOD TO KNOW

China's **post-study work route is harder than some countries'** and favors advanced degrees — plan accordingly.

Studying in China: The Essentials

A snapshot — rules vary by province/university, so confirm everything with the CSC portal, the Chinese embassy, and your university.

The system

Tsinghua, Peking, Fudan, Zhejiang, Shanghai Jiao Tong and many others; Chinese-taught or (increasingly) English-taught programs, notably English MBBS (medicine) and business.

Visa & permit

Study over 180 days needs an X1 visa (with an Admission Notice and a JW202 self-funded / JW201 scholarship form, plus a health exam); convert to a residence permit within 30 days of arrival.

Applying & scholarships

Apply via the CSC system, university portals, or CUCAS (typically Jan–March; Admission Notice and JW form in summer); the CSC fully funds tuition, housing, a stipend, and insurance.

Money & language

No single fixed threshold — prove ~a year of costs (benchmark ~\$3,000–5,000/semester) or a scholarship; HSK 4–5 for Chinese programs, English proof for English programs; health insurance mandatory.

Work & after

Part-time work is restricted (explicit permission required); post-study work permits favor master's+ graduates; residence-permit and registration deadlines are strict.

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