

International Education Guide

FOR THE ASSESSMENT
OF EDUCATION FROM CHINA



I Q A S

INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ASSESSMENT SERVICE

Alberta
Canada 

WELCOME TO THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT'S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION GUIDES

The International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) developed the International Education Guides for educational institutions, employers and professional licensing bodies to help facilitate and streamline their decisions regarding the recognition of international credentials.

These guides compare educational systems from around the world to educational standards in Canada. The assessment recommendations contained in the guides are based on extensive research and well documented standards and criteria. This research project, a first in Canada, is based on a broad range of international resources and considerable expertise within the IQAS program.

Organizations can use these guides to make accurate and efficient decisions regarding the recognition of international credentials. The International Education Guides serve as a resource comparing Alberta standards with those of other countries, and will assist all those who need to make informed decisions, including:

- ♦ employers who need to know whether an applicant with international credentials meets the educational requirements for a job, and how to obtain information comparing the applicant's credentials to educational standards in Alberta and Canada
- ♦ educational institutions that need to make a decision about whether a prospective student meets the education requirements for admission, and who need to find accurate and reliable information about the educational system of another country
- ♦ professional licensing bodies that need to know whether an applicant meets the educational standards for licensing bodies

The guides include a country overview, historical educational overview, description of school education, higher education, professional/technical/vocational education, teacher education, grading scales, documentation for educational credentials and a bibliography.

The guides also include credential placement recommendations on how credentials compare to educational standards in Alberta, Canada.

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COUNTRY OVERVIEW

LAND

The People's Republic of China (PRC for short; 中华人民共和国, or 中国) sits in the eastern part of Asia on the western shores of the Pacific Ocean. It is the world's third largest country (after Russia and Canada), with an area of 9.6 million square kilometres, or 6.5 per cent of the world's total. Its 1.29533 billion people (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2001) account for 23 per cent of the world's population.

Canada's area covers slightly less than 10 million square kilometres and our population in 2001 was just over 30 million.

China is a mountainous country with five major mountain systems. The highest peak in the world, Mount Everest stands on the China–Nepal border. Two major rivers—the Yellow River and the Yangtze River (also known as Changjiang, the “long river”)—provide the framework of agricultural development.

The country borders

- Korea to the east
- Mongolia to the north
- Russia to the northeast
- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the northwest
- Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan to the west and southwest
- Myanmar (Burma), Laos and Vietnam to the south

MAP OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE

Of the 56 ethnic groups in China, Han (汉) Chinese make up 91 per cent of the population. The main ethnic minorities include

- Zhuang (壮)
- Miao (苗)
- Yi (彝)
- Mongol (蒙古)
- Hui (回)
- Uygur (维吾尔)
- Tujia (土家)
- Tibetan (藏).

The dominant language in China is Han Chinese, often referred to simply as Chinese (汉语). It is a monosyllabic, tonal language with little inflection, belonging to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. Chinese is the only major language that retains its pictograph-based writing system. There are 56,000 Chinese characters, but only about 3,000 to 5,000 are used frequently.

The same writing system has existed for over 2,000 years, thanks in part to the unification of China by the First Emperor of Qin in the second century BC.

China carried out two rounds of character simplification, in the 1950s and 1960s, in an attempt to improve the literacy rate by reducing the number of strokes for some characters and the number of characters in common use. The resulting writing system is called Simplified Chinese (简体字). It is generally not difficult for someone trained in one version of Chinese to read characters in the other version.

The non-simplified version, now known as Traditional Chinese (繁体字), continues in use in Hong Kong, Taiwan and many overseas Chinese communities.

The Chinese mainland has not completely phased out Traditional Chinese characters. For example, many universities and college, especially those founded before 1949, use Traditional Chinese characters in their names. Unless otherwise indicated, all Chinese characters in the *Country Education Profile—People's Republic of China* belong to the simplified version.

TABLE 1. SIMPLIFIED AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE

INSTITUTION	SIMPLIFIED	TRADITIONAL
Peking University	北京大学	北京大學
Tsinghua University	清华大学	清華大學
Central China Normal University	华中师范大学	華中師範大學

Spoken Chinese has many regional variants, generally known as dialects, though the mutual unintelligibility of some of the variants may justify their classification as separate languages. There are eight major groups, Mandarin being the largest one. Mandarin Chinese—known as *Putonghua* (common speech 普通话) in the mainland and *Guoyu* (national language 国语) in Taiwan—is the official spoken language of both mainland China and Taiwan and one of the official languages of Hong Kong and Singapore. Another major dialect is Cantonese (广东话), spoken in southeast China, Hong Kong, Macao and in Chinatowns around the world.

HISTORY

As one of the world's ancient civilizations, China has over 4,000 years of recorded history, with the first dynasty of Xia dating back to the 21st century BC. In 221 BC the First Emperor of Qin established the first centralized state in Chinese history, standardizing written script, currencies, weights and measures all across the country. For the next 2,000 years, a succession of imperial dynasties ruled China, until the 1911 Revolution toppled the last dynasty, Qing.

In 1949, the Communist Party of China led by Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China in the Chinese mainland. China considers Taiwan, which uses the name Republic of China (ROC), as a renegade province. Any country wishing to have diplomatic relations with China must recognize or acknowledge this "one-China policy."

ADMINISTRATION

China has 32 major administrative divisions:

- 23 provinces
- five autonomous regions
- four centrally administered municipalities (Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Chongqing)

In addition, there are two Special Administrative Regions (SARs):

- Hong Kong
- Macao

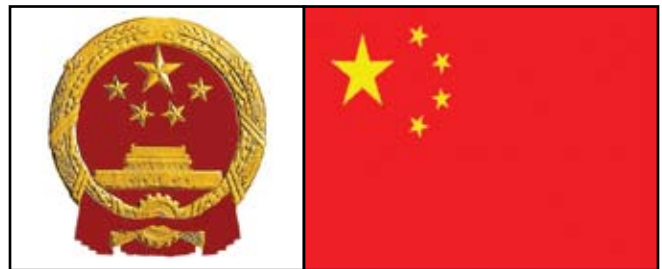
The national capital is Beijing.

2006 marked the 25th anniversary of the Heilongjiang–Alberta sister province relationship.

The President (Hu Jintao, since March 2003) is the chief of state. The Premier of the State Council (Wen Jiabao, since March 2003) heads the government.

China's national flag features a red background and five yellow stars, the largest one symbolizing the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The national emblem contains a representation of Tiananmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace) with five stars above, encircled by sheaves of wheat and a cogwheel that symbolize peasants and industrial workers, respectively. The national emblem always appears on bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree certificates.

CHINESE NATIONAL EMBLEM AND FLAG



NATIONAL EMBLEM OF PRC

NATIONAL FLAG OF PRC

Since the introduction of the reform and open door policy in the late 1970s, China has been moving from a centrally planned economy to a more market-oriented system, though the Communist Party has retained tight political control over the country. In 2003, with a per capita GDP of US\$5,000 measured on a purchasing power parity basis, China stood as the second largest economy in the world after the United States (CIA, 2005).

Canada and China established diplomatic ties in 1970. China is currently Canada's third largest trading partner (and top Asian trade partner) and its greatest source of immigrants, the majority of whom are skilled workers such as engineers and computer specialists (Government of Canada, 2005).

Alberta's trading relationship with China has more than doubled since 2003. China is Alberta's second largest trading partner

(Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations, 2006).

HISTORICAL EDUCATION OVERVIEW

PRE-1949

Chinese society has always attached great importance to education, regarding it as one of the cornerstones of the nation state. According to Confucian philosophy, social harmony could be achieved if people were free from deprivation and received proper education, which must be made available to people of all classes instead of being the privilege of an elite few. Education was therefore a means through which individuals from even the humblest backgrounds could improve their social status. For 2,000 years, curriculum was based on Confucian classics. The goal of education was to realize the potential of the individual and curb the tendency to stray from ethical behaviour.

An enduring feature of the traditional Chinese educational system was the highly competitive civil service examinations (科举考试), formally introduced in the Tang dynasty in the sixth century and abolished only in 1905, a few years before the collapse of the Qing dynasty. Local, provincial and national governments administered examinations. At the lower level, candidates were tested on calligraphy and their knowledge of the classics. At the national level, they had to demonstrate their ability to analyze contemporary political issues.

Successful candidates at the national examinations won high-level administrative positions in the imperial government, with their entire families rising in wealth and prestige. Quotas were assigned to the provinces and prefectures roughly according to population, to enable the government to recruit talent from all across the country. In general, the system was seen to encourage upward mobility, as a large percentage of those who passed the national level examinations were from ordinary families with no official connections. The merit concept in the form of national public examinations with their associated national educational goals and values has persisted to the present, as seen in the highly competitive National College Entrance Examination.

Western-style education began to develop in China following its defeat in the Opium War of 1840. Christian missionaries established many of the western institutions. Chinese students went to study in the United States, Japan, Britain and continental Europe. Reformers tried to modernize Chinese schools by introducing Western science and technology into the curriculum.

The first modern comprehensive university in China, Metropolitan University (京师大学堂)—later renamed Peking University (北京大学)—was established in 1898. In the first half of the 20th century, a modern education system gradually took shape amidst foreign invasions and civil wars.

When the Communist Party of China founded the People's Republic of China in 1949, there were:

- about 300,000 primary schools
- 4,000 secondary schools (CERN, 2000)
- 205 higher education institutions—124 public, 61 private and 20 missionary (Yang, 2001)

1949–1965

As an institution of a state dominated by the Communist Party of China, education is not a fully autonomous social organization but rather one over which different Party factions sometimes compete for control. Simplistically, the different factions include radicals and moderates (more recently known as conservatives and reformers respectively). Radicals consider education a vehicle for political and ideological indoctrination and for promoting social equality as opposed to stratification and elitism. Moderates adopt a more pragmatic approach to education and emphasize its role in training a skilled labour force and supporting the country's modernization drive. Moderates also favour the establishment of key schools and institutions, and of competitive examinations to effect educational selection and the preparation of leaders and elite.

From 1949 to 1958 the government adopted an educational system based on the Soviet model. The government nationalized schools and brought them under centralized planning, financing and administration. At the same time, it set a target to eradicate illiteracy and achieve universal primary education. School education generally followed a 5+6 pattern, with curriculum and textbooks standardized across the country.

Higher education institutions were reorganized, with specialized colleges and universities established under various ministries to serve the human resources needs of a centrally planned economy. Colleges and universities offered short-cycle *zhuanke* (two to three year), long-cycle *benke* (four to five year) and graduate-level programs, but did not award academic degrees. The government sent students to Soviet bloc countries for university and graduate studies,

and Soviet administrators and scholars came to work and teach at Chinese colleges and universities.

From 1950 to 1965, 22,700 students were admitted into graduate programs. Graduate-level education stopped during the Cultural Revolution and resumed in 1978.

Chinese education underwent a period of adjustment and consolidation from 1958 to 1965. After the severing of relations between China and the Soviet Union, the government rejected the Soviet model and English replaced Russian as the second language at school. They undertook experimentation with a dual educational system of regular schools for full-time study and work–study schools offering half-work, half-study programs. Some areas adopted a shortened school curriculum of ten (5+5) or nine (5+4) years. In 1963, the Ministry of Education formulated the national curriculum for 12-year (6+6) primary and secondary education, with standardized textbooks being published two years later. A system of key schools optimized the use of limited resources.

Aiming to provide wider access to higher education resulted in a rapid expansion in the Great Leap Forward period (1958–1960), with the number of higher institutions growing from 229 in 1957 to 1,289 in 1960. Several years of consolidation resulted in an equally dramatic decrease in the number of institutions—down to 407 in 1963 (Min, 2004).

1966–1976

The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), now officially known as the Ten Years of Turbulence, was a period of great political upheaval and social turmoil with a devastating impact on the educational system. Initially, most schools were closed. Across the country, the length of school education was reduced from twelve to nine or ten years. Many secondary technical–vocational schools were closed or turned into general schools. After completing junior or senior secondary school, most students were sent to work in the countryside to be “re-educated.”

Most colleges and universities were closed and the National College Entrance Examination was abolished. In 1970 some higher education institutions started enrolling “worker–peasant–soldier students” (工农兵学员), with acceptance

based mainly on political criteria. Other entrance requirements included graduation from junior secondary school (which could be waived) and three years of work experience. The study period was usually two to three years. Instructional quality deteriorated and there was no formal academic assessment. Students admitted between 1970 and 1976 into such two- or three-year programs may have been awarded a certificate indicating successful completion of a “college general course” (大学普通班), recognized to some extent for employment purposes.

1977–PRESENT

After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, Deng Xiaoping came to power and introduced the reform and open door policy. Since then, the educational system has developed into its current structure, with its main goal being to prepare skilled personnel for the growing economy. The mass-line approach has been discarded in favour of a more stratifying function of education that trains and allocates individuals for different roles in a differentiated workplace. A major challenge faced by the educational sector has been to satisfy growing demand and maintain quality at the same time.

Since 1981, educational laws and regulations have contributed to the expansion, restructuring and consolidation of the Chinese educational system.

- 1981—Regulations on Academic Degrees introduced academic degrees (bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral) for the first time in the People’s Republic of China.
- 1986—The Compulsory Education Law institutionalized the policy of universal education by making nine-year compulsory education a national target.
- 2003—The Law for Promoting People-Run Education and the Regulations on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools gave private schools the same legal status as public institutions and opened up the educational sector to foreign investment.

Sino-foreign joint ventures are now allowed to offer programs at various levels, with the exception of nine-year compulsory education and certain disciplinary areas such as military, political and religious studies.

School education has gradually been restored to twelve years and the system of key schools re-established. The 1980s saw a restructuring of the senior secondary school system to strengthen vocational and technical education,

with the eventual aim to achieve an equal mix of general education and technical–vocational education.

By 1997 technical–vocational education accounted for 56 per cent of total enrolment in senior secondary schools, as compared to only 18 per cent in 1980 (Tsang, 2000). Rapid expansion, however, resulted in problems such as poor quality and inadequate funding. Some technical–vocational schools were closed down while others changed their curriculum to offer general education in the first two years and vocational training in the third year. Many students still prefer general education, which offers a more likely entry to higher education.

In 2003 there were:

- 425,800 primary schools
- 64,700 junior secondary schools (including 1,019 vocational schools)
- 31,800 senior secondary schools (including 15,800 general schools) (CERN, 2004).

Higher education has also undergone a series of reforms to meet the increasing demand of a fast-growing economy. The National College Entrance Examination was restored in 1977 and graduate education introduced in 1978. Higher education institutions and research institutes started to confer academic degrees in 1981. Total enrolment in regular and adult higher education institutions grew from one million in the early 1980s to over 20 million in 2004, when the chance to enrol in higher education reached a historic 19 per cent (*China Education Daily*, 2004).

Structural reforms have moved higher education from central planning to institutional autonomy. Under the old system, the State Council instituted the national socio-economic development plan. Based on that, the Ministry of Education formulated a higher education plan that specified:

- the number and types of institutions and students needed
- student quotas for each industry and region
- the distribution of student enrolments by field of study
- institutional enrolment quotas by discipline and field of study

Institutions designed their programs to fulfill the perceived human resource needs of the nation and students received training in narrow specializations. For example, instead of a general program in mechanical engineering, universities offered specialities in:

- light industry machinery
- heavy industry machinery
- chemical industry machinery
- public works machinery
- petroleum industry machinery
- agricultural machinery

The government also made job assignment plans for all graduates. Students therefore did not have much control over what they learned in school and what they did after graduation.

To adapt to an increasingly market-oriented economy, the higher education system has implemented reforms to broaden specializations, expand the knowledge base of students and encourage interdisciplinary studies. The total number of specialties was reduced from over 1,400 in the mid-1980s to around 200 in 2003. Institutions no longer design their programs according to central planning (but instead, design them to meet the needs of the labour market) and no longer assign work roles. They have also started to charge tuition fees, with student loan and scholarship programs set up to address the equity issue. In 2004, annual tuition was Y (yuan renminbi) 4000–5000 (approximately CDN\$750).

Overseas study and exchange have resumed, with the United States being the primary destination country for graduate study. Over 700,000 Chinese students studied at overseas higher education institutions between 1978 and 2003; a quarter of them have returned to China.

Early in the program, the government sponsored most students studying overseas. This trend has since reversed: over 90 per cent of the 117,300 students who went abroad in 2003 were self-sponsored (Ministry of Education, 2004). Since 2003 the number of Chinese students going abroad has stabilized and in some cases declined, due partly to better accessibility at home, especially since the dramatic increase in higher education enrolment since 1999.

Currently about 10,000 Chinese students come to Canada each year, accounting for 15 per cent of its total international student enrolment

(Asia Pacific Foundation, 2004).

SCHOOL EDUCATION

TABLE 2. 12-YEAR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

14						Higher Vocational Education (<i>zhuanke</i>) 高等职业教育 (专科)
13						
12	General Senior Secondary School 普通高级中学	Specialized Senior Secondary School 中等专业学校	Vocational Senior Secondary School 职业高级中学	Technical Workers School 技工学校		
11						
10						
9	Junior Secondary School 初级中学		Nine-Year School 九年一贯制学校			
8						Primary School 小学
7						
6						
5	Primary School 小学					
4						
3						
2						
1						

*Note: *Zhuanke* is a type of short-cycle college–university program comprising two or three years of study beyond the senior secondary level. It is described in more detail in the Higher Education section. Most *zhuanke* programs admit senior secondary graduates through the National College Entrance Examination. The higher vocational education sector has some five-year programs that admit junior secondary graduates and award *zhuanke*-level exit credentials.

China divides its formal education into basic education (基础教育) and higher education (高等教育). Basic education includes three years of preschool and 12 years of primary and secondary school study. Nine years of combined primary and junior secondary education (6+3, 5+4 or 9)—starting at age six (or sometimes at seven)—is compulsory by law and tuition-free, though fees may be charged for books and supplies. General senior secondary school takes an additional three years.

Primary school graduates attend junior secondary schools based on proximity. Junior secondary school graduates must pass provincially administered examinations in order to gain admission to senior secondary schools.

During and immediately after the Cultural Revolution, China adopted the 10-year basic education system (five years primary + five years secondary) along with the nine-year system (five years primary + two years junior secondary + two years senior secondary).

Note that students attended schools five and a half to six days a week under the nine- or 10-year system. Since the early to mid-1980s, most parts of the country have established the current 12-year school system.

ADMINISTRATION

TABLE 3. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

LEVEL	ADMINISTRATIVE BODY
National	State Council—the Chinese Central Government 国务院
	Ministry of Education 教育部 or State Education Commission 国家教育委员会
Provincial	Provincial/Municipal Education Department 省/市教育厅 or Provincial/Municipal Education Committee 省/市教育委员会
Local	Municipal/County Education Bureau 市/县教育局

*Note: This refers to all provincial level administrative divisions, including the autonomous regions such as Ningxia and Tibet and the four major municipalities of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Chongqing.

At the national level, the Ministry of Education (known from 1985 to 1998 as the State Education Commission) under the State Council formulates regulations, guidelines and policies related to basic education and carries out the overall planning of the school system.

The ministry

- establishes the national curriculum
- compiles standard syllabuses for compulsory subjects

- oversees the evaluation and approval of textbooks and teaching materials for use across the country
- supervises the work of provincial educational authorities
- administers special funding for underdeveloped areas and teacher education programs

The educational authorities of the provinces and major cities—usually called education departments or education committees—

- prepare basic education development plans for their jurisdiction
- develop provincial curricula and course schedules based on the national curriculum
- evaluate and approve textbooks and teaching materials for use within the province
- administer school programs
- provide educational subsidies for lower level governments

The educational authorities at the municipal, county and township levels—usually called education bureaus—are responsible for

- administering educational funding
- implementing the nine-year compulsory education for their respective jurisdictions

GRADING SCALE

Most Chinese schools use percentage grades (0–100), which also correspond to a four-level scale. The four-level scale is expressed either in Chinese characters or as letter grades (A, B, C and D). The passing grade is 60 per cent. For more information, refer to Grade Conversion (see page 49).

Excellent	A	≥ 85	优秀 or 优
Good	B	70–84	良好 or 良
Pass/ Satisfactory	C	60–69	及格 or 中
Fail	D	≤ 59	不及格 or 差

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Kindergartens (幼儿园) in China offer preschool education for up to three years, usually from ages three to six. While the majority of children in urban areas attend kindergartens for up to three years, less than half of those in rural areas receive preschool education, usually in the form of simplified one-year programs. Educational institutions,

government agencies, businesses, neighbourhood committees, villages and private citizens can operate kindergartens, which must register with local educational authorities (CERN).

Most preschool teachers have received education at specialized or vocational senior secondary schools. The Teachers Law (1994) requires all kindergarten teachers to be graduates of preschool education teachers schools (幼儿教育师范学校), which offer programs at both senior secondary and *zhuanke* levels. A small but growing number of preschool teachers are graduates of bachelor's degree programs at teachers colleges (师范学院) or normal universities (师范大学).

The kindergarten curriculum generally includes Chinese language and arithmetic in addition to play and socializing activities. The *Guiding Outline of Kindergarten Education (Provisional)* (Ministry of Education, 2001) prescribes five major components of kindergarten education (see Table 4).

TABLE 4. FIVE COMPONENTS OF KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION, 2001

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Health 健康	To strengthen the body and cultivate healthy attitudes and habits
Society 社会	To build self-esteem and confidence, cultivate caring and friendly attitudes and behaviour, and promote healthy personality development
Science 科学	To stimulate curiosity and the desire to explore and develop cognitive abilities
Language 语言	To encourage language communication and develop language abilities
Art 艺术	To enrich emotional experiences and cultivate aesthetic aptitude and taste

NINE-YEAR COMPULSORY EDUCATION

The current 12-year school system is the result of many reforms and adjustments after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). The 10-year system (5+5) was in place from the early 1960s to the early 1980s, although some areas adopted a shortened nine-year curriculum (5+4) during the Cultural Revolution.

In 1978 the Ministry of Education formulated the national curriculum and syllabuses for 10 years of primary and secondary education, with standard textbooks being

published in the next two years. Students attended school for five and a half to six days a week under the 10-year system.

The transition to the 12-year system (6+6) took place in the early- to mid-1980s, marked by the publication of the national curriculum for key secondary schools (six years) in 1981 and the national curriculum for primary schools (six years) in 1984. Many students who graduated in the transitional period of the 1980s went through an 11-year system (5+6).

The Compulsory Education Law, passed in 1986, stipulates that each child should have nine years of combined primary and junior secondary education. In the same year, the Ministry of Education developed a new national primary and junior secondary curriculum and course syllabuses for the 12-year system, with standard textbooks being published soon after.

Since 1985, the Ministry of Education has been changing its role with regard to the compilation and writing of textbooks and teaching materials. It still prepares the national curriculum and syllabuses of compulsory courses, but no longer produces standard textbooks. Instead, it encourages the compilation of different textbooks based on the national curriculum and syllabuses. A national textbook review committee evaluates and approves primary and secondary school textbooks for use all across the country. Provincial committees evaluate and approve textbooks for use within a province.

TABLE 5. CURRICULUM, SYLLABUS AND TEXTBOOK

National Curriculum	
National Syllabuses for Compulsory Subjects	
National Textbooks	Provincial Textbooks

The current national compulsory education curriculum was drafted in 1988, published in 1992 and revised in 1994. Nine-year compulsory education now reaches over 90 per cent of the population (Ministry of Education, 2003). The majority of schools follow the 6+3 pattern—six years at the primary level and three years at the junior secondary level—although the 5+4 pattern still exists. A growing number of nine-year schools (九年一贯制学校) have been established in an attempt to provide a more streamlined compulsory education program.

Children start school at age six (seven in some areas). The language of instruction is Mandarin Chinese. Schools

that recruit mainly ethnic minority students may use their vernacular as the language of instruction.

The school year has two semesters and runs from early September to mid-July. Students attend class five days a week, a reduction from five and a half to six days with the adoption of the five-day week in all primary and secondary schools in fall 1995 (State Education Commission, 1995). One class hour is 40 minutes for primary students and 45 minutes for junior secondary students.

The majority (98 per cent in 2003) of full-time primary school teachers have graduated from at least a secondary teachers school (中等师范学校), the minimum requirement set by the Teachers Law (see Table 6).

Primary school education now includes nine compulsory courses, with foreign language increasingly offered as an elective course (see Table 7). To receive a certificate of graduation, students must pass graduation examinations in Chinese and mathematics, usually designed and administered by schools under the guidance of local educational authorities, and must meet minimum physical education standards.

Since the passing of the Compulsory Education Law of 1986, the junior secondary school entrance examination has been abolished in most parts of the country. A certificate of graduation from primary school entitles a student to enter a junior secondary school based on proximity. Some key secondary schools are allowed to administer competitive examinations for admission of primary school graduates.

Junior secondary education lasts three or four years following primary school. The national curriculum of 1992 prescribes 13 compulsory courses while allowing a small number of additional courses to be designed by provinces or major cities to meet local needs (see Table 8).

To receive a certificate of graduation, students must pass the graduation examination and must meet minimum physical education standards. The graduation examination, designed and administered by local educational authorities or individual schools according to provincial guidelines, usually has six subjects:

- + Chinese
- + foreign language
- + physics
- + mathematics
- + politics (open-book)
- + chemistry

The majority (over 90 per cent in 2003) of full-time junior secondary school teachers have met the minimum requirement set by the Teachers Law, holding *zhuanke* qualifications, often from teachers junior colleges (高等师范专科学校).

TABLE 6. PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR, 1992

CONTENT	WEEKS		COMMENTS
	Primary	Junior Secondary	
Classroom Teaching	34	34	Classroom teaching is reduced by two weeks and graduation review and examination increased by two weeks in the second semester of the last year of junior secondary school.
School Activities	1	1	
Social Activities	1	1	
Final Review and Examination	2	3	
Reserve	1	1	
Vacation	13	12	Including winter and summer vacations, public holidays and agricultural holidays.
Total	52	52	

*National Bureau of Statistics

TABLE 7. COMPULSORY COURSES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 1992

SUBJECT	学科	DESCRIPTION
Ideology and Morality	思想品德	Students learn about social morality and general politics, with a focus on “five loves”: love for the motherland, people, labour, science and socialism.
Chinese	语文	Students learn 2,500 common Chinese characters, Mandarin Chinese, and the pinyin (Chinese romanization) system and the use of general dictionaries.
Mathematics	数学	Students learn the arithmetic of whole numbers, fractions and decimals, basic geometric forms, simple algebraic formulas, the abacus, logical and spatial thinking, and the application of mathematics to simple practical problems.
Social Studies	社会	Students acquire a basic understanding and knowledge of social phenomena and the history, geography and society of China and the world, learn to observe and adapt to social life and are educated in patriotism and the law.
Nature	自然	Students study common natural objects and phenomena and understand how humans use, transform, protect and explore Nature. They learn to make scientific observations, apply science to practical use and reject superstitions.
Physical Education	体育	Students acquire basic knowledge of physical education, hygiene and healthcare, develop skills in physical education, cultivate habits of exercise and hygiene and are trained in discipline, unity and endurance.
Music	音乐	Students learn Chinese musical masterpieces, gain some exposure to music of other countries and acquire basic knowledge of musical theory and performance.
Fine Art	美术	Students are exposed to excellent examples of fine art from China and other countries and acquire basic knowledge and skills of fine art.
Labour	劳动	Students acquire basic knowledge and skills of labour through self-serving labour, housework, community service and simple, productive labour.

*Yang, 2001

TABLE 8. COMPULSORY COURSES FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1992

SUBJECT	学科	DESCRIPTION
Ideology and Politics	思想政治	Students study the principles of socialist morality, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, conditions of the country and the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. They are to develop a belief in socialism and the in leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.
Chinese	语文	Students learn the basics of modern Chinese and a little bit of ancient Chinese, enlarge their vocabulary, become proficient in the use of dictionaries and references, improve language skills through listening, speaking, reading and writing and develop observation and thinking abilities.
Mathematics	数学	Students acquire basic knowledge and skills of algebra and plane geometry, study rudimentary statistics and spatial forms and improve their computing, logical and spatial thinking and problem solving abilities.
Foreign Language	外语	A school may offer a foreign language (for example, English, Russian, Japanese) at Level I or Level II. Level I includes two years in which students learn basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Level II comprises Level I plus one year (or two years in the 5+4 pattern) that prepares students for further study.
History	历史	Students study the history of China (including their local region) and the world, with a focus on the major events and key figures in modern and contemporary China.
Geography	地理	Students study the basic geography of the world and China (including their local region), learn to use maps and geographical charts and learn to understand the relationship between human activity and geographical environment as well as China's national policy on demographics, natural resources and the environment.
Physics	物理	Through observation and experiments, students acquire basic knowledge of mechanics, thermal dynamics, electricity and optics and understand their essential applications. Emphasis is put on fostering scientific attitudes and developing the ability to observe, experiment and solve simple practical problems.
Chemistry	化学	Through observation and experiments, students learn the basic concepts and theories of chemistry and become familiar with a few important common chemical elements and their compounds. Emphasis is put on fostering scientific attitudes and developing the ability to observe, experiment and solve simple practical problems.
Biology	生物	Through observation and experiments, students learn the structure, physiology and classification of plants, bacteria, fungi, viruses and animals; and acquire basic knowledge of genetics, evolution and ecology and basic understanding of the human body with relation to its form, structure and physiological functions, as well as hygiene and healthcare issues. Emphasis is put on fostering scientific attitudes and developing the ability to observe, experiment and solve simple practical problems.
Physical Education	体育	Students improve their knowledge and skills of basic physical education, hygiene and healthcare, cultivate habits of regular exercise and are trained in discipline, cooperation, competition and endurance.
Music	音乐	Students continue to study Chinese musical masterpieces and some music from other countries, learn basic musical theory and skills and develop the ability to understand, perform and appreciate music.
Fine Art	美术	Students continue to study excellent works of art of China and other countries, acquire basic knowledge and skills of fine art and improve their ability to observe, appreciate and produce fine art.
Labour Skills	劳动技术	Students acquire knowledge and skills in service-oriented labour, industrial and agricultural production and certain professions.

Table 9 shows the courses and instructional hours based on the national curriculum for compulsory education (6+3 pattern). The 5+4 pattern would have 10,366 instead of 10,162 total hours, since a junior secondary school year has a slightly higher course load than a primary school year. The curriculum was published in 1992 and implemented (along with syllabuses and approved national textbooks) across the country for first-year primary school students in 1993. The time for implementing the curriculum for first-year junior secondary students varied from province to province (Li Ma).

In 1994, the Ministry of Education revised the compulsory education curriculum in anticipation of the implementation in 1995 of the five-day, 40-hour workweek across the country. They reduced school time by one-half day each week, with primary and junior secondary having maximum class hours of 26 and 29 and maximum total hours of 30 and 33 respectively, as illustrated in Table 10.

Provincial educational authorities may adjust the national curriculum to better suit local needs, especially by

TABLE 9. PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM (6+3), 1992

SUBJECT	PERIOD	WEEKLY HOURS									TOTAL HOURS		
		Primary						Junior Secondary			Primary	Junior Secondary	Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Ideology and Morality		1	1	1	1	1	1				204		404
Ideology and Politics								2	2	2		200	
Chinese		10	10	9	8	7	7	6	6	5	1,734	568	2,302
Mathematics		4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	986	500	1,486
Foreign Language	I								4	4		272	272
	II							4	4	4		400	400
Social Studies					2	2	2				204		
History								2	3	2		234	608
Geography									3	2		170	
Nature		1	1	1	1	2	2				272		
Physics									2	3		164	702
Chemistry										3		96	
Biology								3	2			170	
Physical Education		2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	544	330	844
Music		3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	476	100	576
Fine Art		2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	408	100	508
Labour				1	1	1	1				136		
Labour Skills								2	2	2		200	336
Weekly Class Hours		23	24	24	25	25	25	32	33	27	4,964	3,074	8,038
Morning Meeting		10 minutes per day											
Team Activities		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	204	100	304
Physical Exercise		4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	816	300	1,116
Scientific and Cultural Activities													
Weekly Activity Hours		5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	1,020	400	1,420
Local Courses		2	2	3	3	3	3			5	544	166	704
Total Weekly Hours		30	31	32	33	33	33	36	37	36	6,528	3,634	10,162

*CERN, 2000

**Note: If Level II foreign language is offered, local courses will be reduced from five to one hour per week in year three of junior secondary school.

TABLE 10. PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM (6+3), 1994

SUBJECT	PERIOD	WEEKLY HOURS									TOTAL HOURS		
		Primary						Junior Secondary			Primary	Junior Secondary	Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3			
Ideology and Morality		1	1	1	1	1	1				204		404
Ideology and Politics								2	2	2		200	
Chinese		9	9	9	8	7	7	6	9	5	1,666	534	2,200
Mathematics		4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	986	468	1,454
Foreign Language	I							3	3			204	204
	II							4	4	4		400	400
Social Studies					2	2	2				204		
History								2	2	2		200	557
Geography									3/2	2		153	
Nature		1	1	1	1	2	2				272		
Physics									2	3		164	685
Chemistry										3		96	
Biology								2/3	2			153	
Physical Education		2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	544	200	744
Music		3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	408	100	508
Fine Art		2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	408	100	508
Manual Work				1	1	1	1				136		
Work Skills								2	2	2		200	336
Weekly Class Hours		21	22	24	25	25	25	29	29	25	4,828	2,772	7,600
Morning Meeting		10 minutes per day											
Team Activities		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	204	100	304
Physical Exercise		4	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	578	200	778
Scientific and Cultural Activities													
Weekly Activity Hours		5	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	782	300	1,082
Local Courses		1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	5	544	166	704
Total Weekly Hours		27	28	30	30	30	30	33	33	33	5,950	3,300	9,250

designing and offering local courses, briefing the Ministry of Education about the adjustments. The authorities then implement the adjusted curriculum across the province. Due to limited resources, some primary schools in rural areas have difficulty adhering to the national curriculum. They may reduce the number of courses offered to four (Chinese, mathematics, ideology and morality, and Nature) or even two (Chinese and mathematics).

GENERAL SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

ADMISSIONS

To continue their study in general or academic rather than specialized or vocational routes, junior secondary graduates must pass the entrance examination for general senior secondary schools (普通高中入学考试, or 中考 for short). Designed and administered by provincial educational authorities, this examination includes the same subjects as the junior secondary graduation examination:

- Chinese
- foreign language
- physics
- Mathematics
- politics (open-book)
- chemistry

Currently about one-third of junior secondary graduates go on to attend general senior secondary schools. The majority of senior secondary teachers (75 per cent in 2003) have qualifications at or above the *benke* level, the minimum requirement set by the Teachers Law (Government of Canada, 2005).

Since 2004, in about 30 cities, counties and districts assigned by the Ministry of Education to carry out a curriculum reform initiative, authorities have abolished the senior secondary entrance examination. The results of junior secondary graduation examination and a comprehensive appraisal determine admissions. It is unknown whether the reform will extend to the rest of the country.

SENIOR SECONDARY UNIFIED GRADUATION EXAMINATION

In 1990 the State Education Commission introduced the General Senior Secondary Unified Graduation Examination (普通高中毕业会考) and implemented it across the country over the next two years. The idea was to separate examination for graduation from examination for further education (the NCEE). By passing the unified graduation examination, students demonstrate they have fulfilled the requirements of all compulsory courses according to the national syllabuses. Students must meet additional political–ideological and social practice requirements and physical education standards in order to receive the certificate of graduation from senior secondary school.

Designed and administered by the provincial educational authorities (and therefore known as the “provincial exam”), the examination includes nine major subjects:

- Chinese
- foreign language
- physics
- biology
- geography
- mathematics
- ideology and politics
- chemistry
- history

Since 2003 a tenth subject—information technology—has been added.

Students do not complete the examination in one sitting but at the conclusion of each subject, so that Chinese, mathematics and foreign language are taken in the third year, whereas history and geography are taken in the first or second year. For the major subjects, the examination papers are marked in percentage grades (0–100) and reported in either the original grades or the four-level scale (A, B, C, D). Other subjects (physics experiment, chemistry experiment, biology experiment, physical education and so on) are usually reported in either pass or fail. Examination guidelines vary from province to province. Table 11 (see next page) outlines the examination guidelines applied in Beijing since 2001.

In recent years, some people have advocated abolishing the provincial unified graduation examination and granting the administration of graduation examinations to individual schools. In some provinces, key schools may be granted exemption from the unified examination. In March 2000 the Ministry of Education announced that the provinces could decide whether to continue or abolish the unified graduation examination. Since then the examination has been abolished—either completely or partially—in a few provinces, including Shanghai, Hubei, Jiangsu, Shaanxi and Shandong.

TABLE 11. GUIDELINES ON GENERAL SENIOR SECONDARY UNIFIED GRADUATION EXAMINATION, BEIJING, 2001

SUBJECTS	CHINESE MATHEMATICS FOREIGN LANGUAGE	POLITICS PHYSICS CHEMISTRY	BIOLOGY HISTORY GEOGRAPHY
Criteria	Based on the national syllabuses for general senior secondary schools		
Grading	Marked in percentage grades and reported in the four-level scale		
Time	Twice a year: at the end of fall semester (January) and at the end of June		
Length	120 minutes for Chinese, Mathematics and Foreign Language 90 minutes for other subjects		
Examinees	Students enrolled in general, vocational or specialized senior secondary schools and non-students.		
Types of Certificates	General senior secondary students receive 北京市高中会考合格证书 (Beijing Senior Secondary Unified Examination Certificate) by passing all subjects. They receive 北京市普通高中毕业证书 (Beijing Certificate of Graduation from General Senior Secondary School) if they meet additional political-ideological and social practice requirements.		
	Vocational or specialized senior secondary students receive 北京市高中会考合格证书-职业学校类 (Beijing Senior Secondary Unified Examination Certificate—Vocational School Category) by passing Chinese, Mathematics, Foreign Language and at least four of the six other subjects. They also receive 北京市普通高中同等学力证书 (Beijing Certificate of Comparable Educational Competence of General Senior Secondary School).		
	Non-students receive 北京市高中会考合格证书-社会类 (Beijing Senior Secondary Unified Examination Certificate—Social Category) by passing all subjects. They also receive 北京市普通高中同等学力证书 (Beijing Certificate of Comparable Educational Competence of General Senior Secondary School).		

Beijing Municipal Education Committee

CURRICULUM CHANGES

Senior secondary education has undergone many changes and adjustments since the late 1970s. In the national curriculum of 1978, senior secondary education lasted two years in the ten-year school system (5+3+2). In the early to mid-1980s, with the transition to the 12-year school system, senior secondary education lasted either two years or three years, following the two versions of the 1981 national curriculum. The six-year curriculum for key secondary schools (3+3) published by the Ministry of Education in 1981 provided the option to divide senior secondary students into the two tracks of arts and humanities (文) and science (理), starting in year two. Most senior secondary schools across the country implemented this six-year curriculum in varying degrees. In 1981 the Ministry of Education also published a revised curriculum for five-year (3+2) secondary schools.

In 1990 the State Education Commission, recognizing that most schools had not been able to fully implement the 1981 six-year key secondary curriculum, published a revision

that was more flexible and better suited to ordinary schools. The revised curriculum accommodated the provincial graduation examination, which was introduced in the same year (State Education Commission, March 1990).

In the 1990 curriculum, of the 11 compulsory courses:

- five (politics, Chinese, mathematics, physical education and labour skills) must be taken in all three years
- four (foreign language, physics, chemistry and history) in the first two years
- two (biology and geography) in year one or year two

The curriculum also introduced two types of electives:

- single-subject electives (offered in the first two years)
- electives based on the different tracks chosen by the students (offered in year three)

Year three electives typically included:

- physics, chemistry and foreign language for the science track and history
- geography and foreign language for the arts and humanities track

TABLE 12. SENIOR SECONDARY CURRICULUM CHANGES

CURRICULUM	教学(课程)计划	PUBLISHED	EFFECTIVE
10-Year Primary and Secondary School Curriculum (Draft)	全日制十年制中小学教学计划试行草案	1978	1978–1990
Six-Year Key Secondary School Curriculum	全日制六年制重点中学教学计划	1981	1981–1990
Five-Year Secondary School Curriculum (Draft) ¹	全日制五年制中学教学计划试行草案	1981	1981–1990
Reform of the Current General Senior Secondary School Curriculum	现行普通高中教学计划的调整意见	1990	1990–2000~2002
General Senior Secondary School Curriculum (Trial Version) ²	全日制普通高级中学课程计划(试验)	1996	1997–1999
General Senior Secondary School Curriculum (Revised Trial Version) ²	全日制普通高级中学课程计划(试验修订稿)	2000	2000~2002–
General Senior Secondary School Curriculum (Experimental) ³	普通高中课程方案(实验)	2003	2004–

Notes:

1. This is a revision of the secondary section of the 1978 curriculum.

2. In 1997, a few provinces piloted the 1996 curriculum. Ten provinces adopted the revised 2000 curriculum in 2000, 25 provinces in 2001 and the whole country in 2002.

3. Initially, four provinces implemented it in September 2004: Guangdong, Shandong, Ningxia and Hainan.

TABLE 13. SIX-YEAR KEY SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, TWO TRACKS, 1981

SUBJECTS	PERIOD	JUNIOR SECONDARY			SENIOR SECONDARY				TOTAL CLASS HOURS		
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2		Year 3			
						I	II	I	II	I	II
Politics		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	384	384	
Chinese		6	6	6	5	7	4	3	4	1,208	1,000
Mathematics		5	6	6	5	3	6	3	6	906	1,080
Foreign Language		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	906	932
Physics			2	3	4		4		5	292	560
Chemistry				3	3	3	4		4	288	432
History		3	2		3			3		350	266
Geography		3	2			2	2	3		318	234
Biology		2	2			2			2	200	192
Human Physiology and Hygiene				2						64	64
Physical Education		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	384	384
Music		1	1	1							100
Fine Art		1	1	1							100
Weekly Class Hours		30	31	31	29	26	29	26	29	5,554	5,734
Labour Skills		two weeks per year			four weeks per year						

* Note: Starting in year two of senior secondary school, students may choose one of two tracks:

I. preparation for further education in arts and humanities

II. preparation for further education in science

TABLE 14. SIX-YEAR KEY SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, 1981

SUBJECT	PERIOD	WEEKLY CLASS HOURS						TOTAL CLASS HOURS
		JUNIOR SECONDARY			SENIOR SECONDARY			
		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	
Politics		2	2	2	2	2	2	384
Chinese		6	6	9	5	4	4	1,000
Mathematics		5	6	6	5	5	5	1,026
Foreign Language		5	5	5	5	5	4	982
Physics			2	3	4	3	4	500
Chemistry				3	3	3	3	372
History		3	2		3			266
Geography		3	2			2		234
Biology		2	2				2	192
Human Physiology and Hygiene				2				64
Physical Education		2	2	2	2	2	2	384
Music		1	1	1				100
Fine Art		1	1	1				100
Weekly Class Hours		30	31	31	29	26	26	559
Electives						4	4	240
Labour Skills		two weeks per year			four weeks per year			576

TABLE 15. FIVE-YEAR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM (REVISED VERSION), 1981

SUBJECT	PERIOD	WEEKLY CLASS HOURS					TOTAL CLASS HOURS
		JUNIOR SECONDARY			SENIOR SECONDARY		
		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	
Politics		2	2	2	2	2	320
Chinese		6	6	6	5	4	872
Mathematics		5	6	6	6	6	926
Foreign Language		5	5	5	4	5	768
Physics			2	3	4	5	432
Chemistry				3	3	4	304
History		3	2		2		234
Geography		3	2		2		234
Biology		2	2			2	192
Human Physiology and Hygiene				3			64
Physical Education		2	2	2	2	2	320
Music		1	1	1			100
Fine Art		1	1	1			100
Weekly Class Hours		30	31	31	31	30	4,898
Labour Skills		two weeks per year			four weeks per year		

TABLE 16. GENERAL SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR, 1990

CONTENT	WEEKS		COMMENTS
	YEARS 1 AND 2	YEAR 3	
Classroom Teaching	34	24	Each week has five and a half school days and 36 to 38 school hours. Each school hour is 45 minutes.
Labour Skills	4	4	
Final Review and Examination	2	12	
Reserve	1–2	1–2	
Vacation	10–11	10–11	Including winter and summer vacations, public holidays and agricultural holidays
Total	52	52	

TABLE 17. GENERAL SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, 1990

SUBJECT	PERIOD	WEEKLY CLASS HOURS			TOTAL CLASS HOURS
		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	
Politics 政治		2	2	2	184
Chinese 语文		4	4	5	392
Mathematics 数学		5	4	5	426
Foreign Language 外语		5	4		306
Physics 物理		3	3		204
Chemistry 化学		3	3		204
Biology 生物			3		102
History 历史		2	2		136
Geography 地理		3			102
Physical Education 体育		2	2	2	184
Labour Skills 劳动技术		four weeks per year			432
Social Practice 社会实践		two weeks per year (included in labour skills, after class activities or regular course hours)			
Total Weekly Hours for Compulsory Courses		29	27	14	2,240
Electives		3	4	16	
After Class Activities		6 (3 physical exercise and 3 others)	6 (3 physical exercise and 3 others)	6 (3 physical exercise and 3 others)	
Total Weekly Hours		38	37	36	

Students in the “preparation for employment” track had to take additional courses in labour skills in Year 3.

In March 1996 the State Education Commission published a three-year senior secondary curriculum that was fully integrated with the nine-year compulsory education curriculum of 1994. The 1996 curriculum and accompanying syllabuses and textbooks began to be adopted in September 1997.

The total number of school hours (class hours plus activities) per week was reduced to 33, since students attended school for five instead of five and a half days starting in fall 1995. The 12 compulsory subjects are:

- ideology and politics
- mathematics (for example, English, Russian, Japanese)
- physics
- biology
- geography
- arts
- Chinese
- foreign language
- chemistry
- history
- physical education
- labour skills

Students can take arts either as a single course or as two separate courses (music and fine art). Nine of the 12 compulsory subjects (excluding ideology and politics, physical education and arts) have elective components (限定选修). With their teachers’ guidance, students choose elective components based on their plans for further education or employment. Schools may also offer a number of optional courses (任意选修), such as:

- vocational training
- population education (人口教育)
- environmental education (环境教育)
- national defence education (国防教育)

The State Education Commission provided a sample course schedule for the 1996 curriculum, allowing the provinces and major cities to make minor adjustments.

The State Education Commission also urged schools to promote computer education and offer computer courses either as part of labour skills or as a separate subject.

The course schedule adopted in Tianjin (a major city that has provincial status) prescribed three instead of 3/2 or two and a half weekly class hours for the compulsory component of physics in year two.

The majority of schools currently follow the senior secondary curriculum published by the Ministry of Education in January 2000. Many provinces adopted the curriculum for their first-year senior secondary students in 2001 or 2002. Major changes from the 1996 curriculum include the addition of “information technology” as a compulsory subject and the replacement of “labour skills” with the multi-component “comprehensive practice.”

The Ministry of Education did not provide any sample course schedule for the 2000 curriculum. The provinces usually design provincial course schedules as guidelines for schools under their jurisdiction. The schools may design their own course schedules, which must be approved by the local educational authorities before being implemented. The 2000 curriculum remains current except for some minor adjustments in 2002 in anticipation of the 2003 rescheduling of the NCEE from July to June.

TABLE 18. SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR, 1996

CONTENT	WEEKS		COMMENTS
	YEARS 1 AND 2	YEAR 3	
Classroom Teaching	35	26	Each week has five school days and 33 school hours. Each school hour is 45 minutes.
Labour Skills	1		
Social Practice	2	2	
Final Review and Examination	2	12	
Reserve	1–2	1–2	
Vacation	10–11	10–11	Including winter and summer vacations, public holidays and agricultural holidays.
Total	52	52	

TABLE 19. SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, 1996

SUBJECT	HOURS	ACCUMULATED WEEKLY CLASS HOURS ¹	TOTAL CLASS HOURS, ² COMPULSORY AND/OR ELECTIVE	TOTAL CLASS HOURS
Ideology and Politics 思想政治		6	192	192
Chinese 语文	Compulsory	8	280	332–384
	Elective	2–4	52–104	
Mathematics 数学	Compulsory	8	280	332–384
	Elective	2–4	52–104	
Foreign Language 外语	Compulsory	7	245	297–349
	Elective	2–4	52–104	
Physics 物理	Compulsory	4.5	158	158–306
	Elective	5	148	
Chemistry 化学	Compulsory	4	140	140–253
	Elective	4	113	
Biology 生物	Compulsory	3	105	105–183
	Elective	3	78	
History 历史	Compulsory	3	105	105–253
	Elective	5	148	
Geography 地理	Compulsory	3	105	105–192
	Elective	3	87	
Physical Education 体育		6	192	192
Arts 艺术	Music 音乐	2	2	70
	Fine Art 美术			
Labour Skills 劳动技术	Compulsory	4	122	122–356
	Elective	9	234	
Optional		9.5–16.5	288–497	288–497
School Activities Scientific and Cultural Activities Morning Breaks		9 (0.5 Hours per day)		315
Social Practice 社会实践	two weeks per year, totalling six weeks for the three year period			

Notes:

1. “Accumulated Weekly Class Hours” refers to the total number of weekly class hours over three years. For example, “Ideology and Politics” has two weekly class hours every year, amounting to six accumulated weekly class hours in total. The total number of class hours = $(35+35+26) \times 2 = 192$

2. “Total Class Hours” is calculated according to the sample course schedule. A different course schedule based on the national curriculum may yield slightly different total hours.

3. The compulsory component of labour skills may be taught for two whole weeks (one week in year one and another in year two).

TABLE 20. SAMPLE COURSE SCHEDULE FOR THREE TRACKS BASED ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, 1996

Period	Subject	Weekly Hours							Total Weekly Hours	Total Hours
		Year 1	Year 2			Year 3				
			I	II	III	I	II	III		
Ideology and Politics 思想政治		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	192
Chinese 语文	Compulsory	4	4	4	4				8	280
	Elective					2	4	2	2–4	52–104
Mathematics 数学	Compulsory	4	4	4	4				8	280
	Elective					2	2	4	2–4	52–104
Foreign Language 外语	Compulsory	4	3	3	3				7	245
	Elective					2	4	4	2–4	52–104
Physics 物理	Compulsory	2	3/2	3/2	3/2				4.5	158
	Elective				2			3	5	148
Chemistry 化学	Compulsory	2	2	2	2				4	140
	Elective				1			3	4	113
Biology 生物	Compulsory		3	3	3				3	105
	Elective							3	3	78
History 历史	Compulsory	3							3	105
	Elective			2			3		5	148
Geography 地理	Compulsory	3							3	105
	Elective			1			2		3	87
Physical Education 体育		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	6	192
Arts 艺术	Music 音乐	1	1	1	1				2	70
	Fine Art 美术									
Labour Skills 劳动技术	Compulsory	one class hour per week				2			4	122
	Elective					9			9	234
Optional Courses and Activities		5	8.5	5.5	5.5	12	12	8		
Total Weekly Hours		33	33			33				

*Note: Starting in year two, students may choose one of three tracks:

- I. preparation for employment
- II. preparation for further education in arts and humanities
- III. preparation for further education in science

TABLE 21. SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR, 2000

CONTENT	WEEKS		COMMENTS
	YEARS 1 AND 2	YEAR 3	
Classroom Teaching	35	26	Each week has five school days and 33 school hours. Each school hour is 45 minutes.
Labour Skills	1	1	
Social Practice	1	1	
Final Review and Examination	3	12	
Reserve	1–2	1–2	
Vacation	10–11	10–11	Including winter and summer vacations, public holidays and agricultural holidays.
Total	52	52	

TABLE 22. SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, 2000

SUBJECT		HOURS	ACCUMULATED WEEKLY CLASS HOURS	TOTAL CLASS HOURS COMPULSORY AND/OR ELECTIVE	TOTAL CLASS HOURS
Ideology and Politics 思想政治			6	192	192
Chinese 语文	Compulsory		12	384	384
Foreign Language 外语	Compulsory		12	384	384
Mathematics 数学	Compulsory		8	280	332–384
	Elective		2–4	52–104	
Information Technology 信息技术	Compulsory		2	70	70–140
	Elective				
Physics 物理	Compulsory		4.5	158	158–306
	Elective		5	148	
Chemistry 化学	Compulsory		4	140	140–271
	Elective		4.5	131	
Biology 生物	Compulsory		3	105	105–183
	Elective		3	78	
History 历史	Compulsory		3	105	105–236
	Elective		4.5	131	
Geography 地理	Compulsory		3	105	105–209
	Elective		4	104	
Physical Education 体育	Compulsory		6	192	192
Arts (Music and Fine Art) 艺术(音乐、美术)	Compulsory		3	96	96
Comprehensive Practice 综合时间活动	Research-Oriented Study 研究性学习活动	Compulsory	9	9	288
	Labour Skills 劳动技术		one week per year		
	Community Service 社区活动		usually scheduled outside of school time		
	Social Practice 社会实践		one week per year		
Regional or School Optional Courses		11–19	340–566		

TABLE 23. SAMPLE COURSE SCHEDULE FOR TWO TRACKS BASED ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM, ZHEJIANG PROVINCE, 2001

COURSE	PERIOD	WEEKLY CLASS HOURS					TOTAL WEEKLY CLASS HOURS	TOTAL CLASS HOURS	TOTAL CLASS HOURS
		YEAR 1	YEAR 2		YEAR 3				
			I	II	I	II			
Ideology and Politics 思想政治	Compulsory	2	2	2	2	2	6	192	192
Chinese 语文	Compulsory	4	4	4	4	4	12	384	384
Foreign Language 外语	Compulsory	4	4	4	4	4	12	384	384
Mathematics 数学	Compulsory	4	4	4			8	280	332–384
	Elective				2	4	2–4	52–104	
Information Technology 信息技术	Compulsory	2					2	70	70–131
	Elective		1	1	1	1	2	61	
Physics 物理	Compulsory	2	3/2	3/2			4.5	158	158–306
	Elective			2		3	5	148	
Chemistry 化学	Compulsory	2	2	2			4	140	140–271
	Elective			2/1		3	4.5	131	
Biology 生物	Compulsory		3	3			3	105	105–183
	Elective					3	3	78	
History 历史	Compulsory	3					3	105	105–240
	Elective		2		3/2		4.5	135	
Geography 地理	Compulsory	3					3	105	105–218
	Elective		1		3		4	113	
Physical Education 体育	Compulsory	2	2	2	2	2	6	192	192
Arts (Music and Fine Art) 艺术(音乐、美术)	Compulsory	1	1	1	1	1	3	96	96
Research-Oriented Study 研究性学习活动	Compulsory	3	3	3	3	3	9	288	288
Work Skills 劳动技术		one week per year							
Community Service 社区活动		usually scheduled outside of school time							
Social Practice 社会实践		one week per year							
Optional Courses for the Region or School		2	3/2	2	10/9	4	8–14		
Total Weekly Hours		34	34	34	34	34			

*Education Department of Zhejiang Province, 2001

Note: **Starting in year two, students may choose one of two tracks:

- I. preparation for further education in arts and humanities
- II. preparation for further education in science

Since September 2004, four provinces—Guangdong, Shandong, Ningxia and Hainan—have implemented an experimental curriculum published by the Ministry of Education in March 2003. Another eight to 10 provinces will adopt it in 2005 and 15 to 18 more in 2006. By 2007, all first-year senior secondary students may be using the new curriculum. The experimental curriculum comes with course standards for 15 national compulsory subjects:

- Chinese
- Japanese
- mathematics
- chemistry
- history
- technology
- music
- fine art
- English
- Russian
- physics
- biology
- geography
- art
- physical education and health

It uses a credit system and organizes course content at three levels:

- study areas (学习领域)
- subjects (科目)
- modules (模块)

The Ministry of Education has announced its intention to phase out the division of science and humanities tracks in senior secondary schools.

According to the experimental curriculum, senior secondary school remains three years in length. Each school year has 40 weeks of class, one week of social practice and

11 weeks of vacation. Each semester comprises two 10-week sections: nine weeks of class and one week of review and examination. Subjects are grouped into eight study areas. Students must complete a minimum number of credits in each study area to ensure they have an all-round education.

A module is an instructional unit that usually has 36 class hours and can be completed in one 10-week section with four class hours per week. A module in a few subjects—including arts, music, fine art and physical education and health—has only 18 class hours. Students receive two credits after successfully completing a regular 36-hour module or one credit after completing an 18-hour module.

TABLE 24. SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM (EXPERIMENTAL), 2004

STUDY AREA 学习领域	SUBJECT 科目	COMPULSORY CREDITS (116 IN TOTAL)	ELECTIVE CREDITS I ¹	ELECTIVE CREDITS II ²
Language and Literature 语言与文学	Chinese 语文	10		≥ 6
	Foreign Language 外语	10		
Mathematics 数学	Mathematics 数学	10		
Humanities and Society 人文与社会	Ideology and Politics 思想政治	8		
	History 历史	6		
	Geography 地理	6		
Science 科学	Physics 物理	6		
	Chemistry 化学	6		
	Biology 生物	6		
		6		
Technology 技术	Information Technology 信息技术	4		
	General Technology 通用技术	4		
Arts 艺术	Arts 艺术 or Music and Fine Art 音乐、美术	6		
Physical Education and Health 体育与健康	Physical Education and Health 体育与健康	11		
Comprehensive Practice 综合时间活动	Research-Oriented Study	15		
	研究性学习活动			
	Community Service 社区活动	2		
	Social Practice 社会实践	6		

*Ministry of Education, 2003

Notes:

1. Elective Credits I: additional course modules designed for the compulsory subjects.

2. Elective Credits II: course modules designed by individual schools based on local needs and student interest.

Students take mostly compulsory courses in the first year and a combination of compulsory and elective courses in the next two years. The second semester of the third year may be used exclusively for final review in preparation for the National College Entrance Examination. To qualify for graduation, students must obtain a minimum of 144 credits, including 116 credits for compulsory courses and at least six credits for school-designed courses (elective credits II).

Since 2004 Guangdong Province has abolished the provincial senior secondary graduation examination, with individual schools solely responsible for granting graduation to their students.

Adoption of the experimental curriculum has resulted in related changes. The provinces involved also plan to adjust their NCEE standards to the experimental curriculum. In 2007 the new NCEE standards will be applied to the first batch of senior secondary graduates taught under the experimental curriculum.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Students usually enter higher education (高等教育) after completing senior secondary school and passing the National College Entrance Examination, although some five-year higher vocational programs admit junior secondary graduates. While entry into colleges and universities has traditionally been very competitive, higher education has developed rapidly in recent years. China currently has the world's largest higher education system, with over 20 million students enrolled in various post-secondary programs in 2004 (Ministry of Education, 2005).

TABLE 25. CHINESE HIGHER EDUCATION STATISTICS, 2003

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)	2,110
Organizations offering graduate programs	720**
Total enrolment	19 million
Full-time faculty	810,000

Ministry of Education, 2004
 Note: **This includes HEIs and research institutes.

ADMINISTRATION

The Education Law of 1995 and the Higher Education Law of 1998 govern higher education in China. The State Council (国务院) and its educational branch, the Ministry of Education (教育部)—which was renamed the State Education Commission (国家教育委员会) from 1985 to 1998—formulate policies and guidelines and plan for development and reform at the national level. The Ministry of Education and a few other central ministries (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) administer and supervise a number of institutions that recruit and train students for the whole country.

Educational authorities in the provinces and major cities are in charge of institutions that mainly train personnel for specific regions. The Ministry of Education approves the establishment (as well as mergers and name changes) of both public and private higher education institutions, although provincial governments may be authorized to approve institutions offering only *zhuanke* programs.

There are also a number of private institutions that operate legitimately in China but are not authorized to award recognized higher education qualifications. Such institutions have to be approved by local governments (at or above the county level) and registered with the Ministry of Education or the provincial educational authorities.

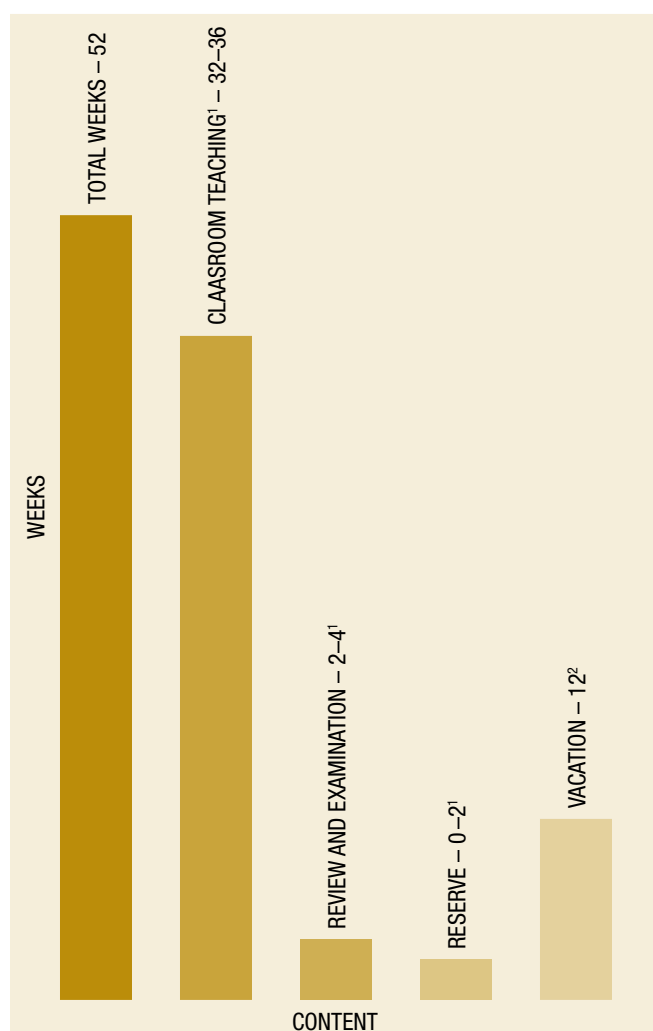
The Ministry of Education website (available in both Chinese and English) provides an updated list of recognized higher education institutions.

ACADEMIC YEAR

A typical academic year runs from early September to mid-July, divided into two 20-week semesters. Each semester has 16 to 18 weeks of coursework and one to two weeks of review and examination. Each week has five school days, a reduction from five and a half to six days with the introduction of the five-day, 40-hour work week across the country in 1995.

Since 1978 many institutions have adopted the credit system (学分制), which allows a level of flexibility in course selection and the length of time to complete a program. Generally, one credit represents 16 to 18 class hours of coursework or one week of practice or project.

TABLE 26. ACADEMIC YEAR, HIGHER EDUCATION



¹ Each semester has 16 to 18 weeks of classroom teaching. Each class hour is 45 to 50 minutes

² Including winter and summer vacations and public holidays. Winter vacation falls in January and February and lasts about four weeks. Summer vacation falls in July and August and lasts six to seven weeks..

Traditionally, higher education programs in China have clearly defined lengths of study in terms of school years (学年制). The Higher Education Law specifies the number of years required to complete each type of qualification through full-time study, as indicated in Table 27.

TABLE 27. SAMPLE UNIVERSITY CALENDAR, 2004–2005

FIRST SEMESTER									
Month	Week	Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Aug	1		30 Class Begins	31					
					1	2	3	4	5
Sept	2		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	3		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	4		20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	5		27	28	29	30			
							1 National Day	2 National Day	3 National Day
	6		4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Oct	7		11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	8		18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	9		25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	10		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	11		8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Nov	12		15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	13		22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	14		29	30					
					1	2	3	4	5
	15		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Dec	16		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	17		20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	18		27	28	29	30	31		
								1 New Year	2
	19		3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	20		10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Jan			17	18	19	20	21	22	23
			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
			31						
				1	2	3	4	5	6
			7	8	9 Spring Festival	10 Spring Festival	11 Spring Festival	12	13
Feb			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			21	22					

Note: The first semester has 20 weeks including review and examination. Public holidays include National Day (three days) and New Year's Day (one day). The winter vacation lasts five weeks (January 17 to February 22).

TABLE 27. SAMPLE UNIVERSITY CALENDAR, 2004–2005 (CONTINUED)

SECOND SEMESTER									
Month	Week	Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Feb	1				23 Class Begins	24	25	26	27
			28						
				1	2	3	4	5	6
			7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Mar			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			21	22	23	24	25	26	27
			28	29	30	31			
							1	2	3
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Apr			11	12	13	14	15	16	17
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			25	26	27	28	29	30	
									1 Labour Day
			2 Labour Day	3 Labour Day	4	5	6	7	8
May			9	10	11	12	13	14	15
			16	17	18	19	20	21	22
			23	24	25	26	27	28	29
			30	31					
					1	2	3	4	5
			6	7	8	9	10	11	12
June			13	14	15	16	17	18	19
			20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			27	28	29	30			
							1	2	3
			4	5	6	7	8	9	10
July			11 Vacations Begins	12	13	14	15	16	17
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			25	26	27	28	29	30	31
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Feb			8	9	10	10	12	13	14
			15	16	17	18	19	20	21
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28
			29	30	31 Vacations Begins				

*Beijing Language and Culture University, 2004

Note: The second semester has 20 weeks including review and examination. University sports meet is scheduled for April 22 (afternoon) and April 23 (whole day). Public holiday includes Labour Day (three days). The summer vacation lasts about seven weeks (July 11 to August 31).

PROGRAMS AND EXIT CREDENTIALS

China is similar to Canada in terms of the general pattern of higher education. After completion of senior secondary school, students may choose the short-cycle post-secondary programs called *zhuanke* (专科) or pursue bachelor's (学士), master's (硕士) or doctoral (博士) degrees. China, however, has two types of higher education credentials:

- certificates of graduation (毕业证书 or 毕业文凭) that confer educational qualifications (学历)
- degree certificates (学位证书) that confer academic degrees (学位)

The separation between educational qualifications and academic degrees is a unique feature of Chinese higher education (see Table 28).

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The term “educational qualification” (学历) has a very specific meaning in China. It does not refer to academic degrees. It indicates that an individual has gone through formal education with qualified results and is entitled by law to further education or a prescribed level of salary and benefits if employed in the public sector. Educational qualifications are always documented by certificates of graduation (毕业证书) that indicate:

- education sector (regular higher education, adult

higher education, military institution or self-study examinations)

- program type (for example, full-time day program, evening program, distance learning)
- program length
- level of study

The four levels of higher education qualifications are:

- short-cycle study (*zhuanke*)
- long-cycle study (*benke*)
- graduate study at a master's level
- graduate study a doctoral level

The Higher Education Law divides higher education into two major types:

- qualification education (学历教育)
- non-qualification education (非学历教育)

In order to receive recognized educational qualifications, a student must go through the qualification education sector. Evaluated, approved and monitored by the Ministry of Education and provincial educational authorities, qualification education programs have relatively strict and unified standards for admission, examination and graduation. The Ministry of Education website provides updated lists of higher education institutions authorized to offer qualification programs. In China, a “recognized” institution is one that offers qualification education programs.

TABLE 28. HIGHER EDUCATION CREDENTIALS: QUALIFICATIONS VS. DEGREES

Educational Qualifications 学历				Academic Degrees 学位
			Certificate of Graduation from Doctoral Program (3–4 years) 博士研究生毕业证书	Doctoral Degree 博士学位
		Certificate of Graduation from Master's Program (2–3 years) 硕士研究生毕业证书		Master's Degree 硕士学位
	本科毕业证书			Bachelor's Degree 学士学位
Zhuanke Certificate of Graduation (2–3 years)	Benke Certificate of Graduation (4–5 years)			Non-degree
Completion of Senior Secondary School and Passing the National College Entrance Examination				

Non-qualification programs include not only short-term vocational training but also formal academic study at undergraduate and graduate levels. Non-qualification education differs from qualification education in two major ways.

- They do not have strict and unified standards for admission, examination and graduation.
- Their exit credentials do not entitle an individual to further education in qualification education or to a given level of salary and benefits if employed in the public sector.

The most common credentials awarded for non-qualification education are certificates of completion (结业证书) and certificates of study (学业证书), although some programs issue certificates of graduation. It is illegal for a non-recognized institution to issue certificates of graduation that indicate a level of qualification such as *zhuanke* or *benke*.

Credentials from non-qualification programs provide access to employment and, to some extent, further education. Employers—especially those in the private sector—may accept non-qualification credentials at their own discretion. An individual may use non-qualification education as a foundation to earn credentials from qualification programs, not by credit transfer but by challenging standardized examinations such as the Higher Education Self-Study Examinations.

Without unified standards, the quality—and even the level of study—of non-qualification credentials is difficult to determine. Since they cannot be articulated into qualification programs or lead to the awarding of academic degrees, they are not considered recognized credentials in China. Typical examples include most certificates of graduation (*zhuanke* or *benke*) from Communist Party of China schools and certificates of completion of graduate coursework.

The key to whether a credential belongs to qualification education is if the issuing body is on the lists of institutions authorized by the Ministry of Education or provincial educational authorities to offer such programs. Some of these institutions also offer non-qualification education, including newly established programs pending approval and certain high-revenue programs such as self-study examination preparation courses and graduate coursework

training classes. Such programs, though, issue certificates of completion rather than certificates of graduation. A certificate that does not specify the level of study is most likely from a non-qualification program.

ACADEMIC DEGREES

Academic degrees (学位) are relatively recent in China, formally introduced on 1 January 1981 following the announcement of the Regulations on Academic Degrees of the People's Republic of China (February 1980). The State Council, working through its Academic Degrees Committee (国务院学位委员会), decides which higher education institutions can award bachelor's degrees and which institutions and research units can award master's and doctoral degrees. It also approves the disciplines and specialties in which a degree can be awarded by a given institution. The Academic Degrees Committee may delegate the evaluation and approval to provincial academic degree committees (省学位委员会) or offices (省学位办公室). China awarded its first bachelor's and master's degrees in 1981 and its first doctoral degrees in 1983.

Academic degrees are separate from educational qualifications. A degree indicates the level of academic achievement, whereas a qualification indicates the level of educational experience. Upon successful completion of a degree program, students receive both a certificate of graduation and a degree certificate, although for a number of years (1985–1992) they were combined into a single certificate. The combined certificate always indicates that the student has been approved for graduation (准予毕业) and awarded an academic degree (授予学位).

Academic degrees are generally considered slightly higher credentials than educational qualifications at the corresponding level. Some institutions offer *benke* qualification programs, but are not authorized to award bachelor's degrees. A small number of students enrolled in bachelor's or master's programs may receive a certificate of graduation but no degree due to deficiencies such as failing to achieve minimum grades (such as 60 per cent) in core subjects.

A bachelor's degree is not needed for admission into a master's level program, but a master's degree is a prerequisite for entering doctoral studies.

Employee recruitment and remuneration has traditionally been based on educational qualifications rather than academic degrees.

Professional entry-level positions in the central and provincial governments typically require a *benke* qualification rather than a bachelor's degree.

Since qualifications and degrees are separate, it is possible for an individual to hold the two types of credentials at different levels, such as a *benke* qualification and a master's degree.

Academic degrees in China comprise 12 major categories. Of these, ten were introduced in 1981, while military science and management were added in 1983 and 1997 respectively. Since 1990 the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council has introduced 16 professional degrees (专业学位), including:

- bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture (建筑学学士/硕士)
- master's and doctoral degrees in clinical medicine (临床医学硕士/博士专业学位)
- Master of Business Administration (工商管理硕士)
- Master of Public Administration (行政管理硕士专业学位)
- professional degrees in veterinary medicine (兽医专业学位)
- master's degrees in agricultural promotion (农业推广硕士专业学位)

TABLE 29. 12 MAJOR CATEGORIES OF ACADEMIC DEGREES

Philosophy	哲学
Economics	经济学
Law	法学
Education	教育学
Arts	文学
History	史学
Science	理学
Technology & Engineering	工学
Agriculture	农学
Medicine	医学
Management	管理学
Military Science	军事学

Note: “工学” (Technology) is often mistranslated as “Engineering.” The Chinese word for engineering is 工程 or 工程学.

REGULAR AND ADULT EDUCATION SECTORS

An important way to categorize higher education programs at *zhuanke* and *benke* or bachelor's levels is whether they belong to regular education (普通高等教育) or adult education (成人高等教育). Credentials earned in the adult higher education sector are technically on par with those from the regular sector. In reality, regular education is considered better quality and therefore more highly regarded in China. Regular and adult higher education sectors differ in many ways, including the institutions, curriculum, admission and graduation requirements and overall quality control standards.

Many government departments explicitly require job applicants to have *benke* qualifications earned from the regular sector.

Regular education is provided by regular higher education institutions, which can be degree-granting institutions, research institutes or institutions that offer only *zhuanke* programs. Totalling 1,683 in 2004, they include the best-funded and most prestigious colleges and universities in China. The part of regular higher education that does not enjoy a reputation for quality is *minban* (民办, “people-run” or private) institutions, approved by the Ministry of Education to provide qualification education. Totalling 214 in 2004, they usually offer programs only at the *zhuanke* level.

Either adult higher education institutions or adult education divisions and individual departments within regular institutions offer adult education. These take the form of distance and evening programs as well as full-time or part-time day programs. The central government administers a handful of adult higher education institutions, such as the Central Radio and TV University (Ministry of Education) and National Procurators College (Supreme People's Procuratorate of China).

The rest of the adult education institutions fall under the jurisdiction of provinces and municipalities. These include, for example:

- radio and television universities
- spare-time universities
- employees' universities

- management cadres' colleges
- colleges of education
- teacher in-service training colleges

These compare unfavourably with regular institutions in terms of funding, facilities, qualifications of academic staff and quality of teaching. Many regular institutions have set up adult education schools (成人教育学院)—sometimes called continuing education schools (继续教育学院)—to deliver adult education programs. Students in those schools may not have access to the same teaching staff and facilities as the regular students.

Compared with regular higher education, adult higher education generally has lower admission, teaching and graduation standards. Applicants to an adult higher education qualification program must either have completed senior secondary school or be over the age of 19. Most programs require applicants to take the National Adult College Entrance Examination (全国成人高等教育入学考试, or 成人高考 for short), administered annually by the Ministry of Education. The NACEE is considered challenging, though less competitive than the National College Entrance Examination, which is the entrance examination for regular higher education.

Once admitted into an adult education program, students are seldom denied graduation because of poor performance, as teachers tend to have lower expectations of adult students and may adjust teaching plans and assessment criteria. Adult higher education is therefore known to follow the pattern of “difficult entry, easy exit” (严进宽出)—one must pass the national entrance examination to be admitted, but seldom fails to graduate. Certificates of graduation always indicate whether the program completed belongs to the regular or adult education sector. Study completed at either an adult higher education institution or an adult education school within a regular institution is classified as adult higher education (成人高等教育).

NAMES AND TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS

Terms such as university, institute and college that appear in the official English names of Chinese higher education institutions should not be taken at face value. It can be difficult to tell from an institution's name what level of program it offers (see Table 30).

Most institutions use standard pinyin (the Chinese romanization system) for proper names such as Beijing and Shanghai, although old spelling based on the Wade-Giles system persists in certain names for historical reasons. For instance, 北京大学 adopts Peking University as its official name, although it is often referred to as Beijing University. In addition, quite a few institutions use Traditional rather than Simplified Chinese characters for their logos and even their official seals, such as:

- 北京大學 instead of 北京大学
- 清華大學 instead of 清华大学

The Ministry of Education maintains regularly updated lists of all higher education institutions that offer qualification programs. Click on “published lists” (名单公布) in the “bulletins and announcements” (公告公报) section of the Ministry of Education website to find a few dozen lists of institutions. The most useful is the “list of higher education institutions approved by the Ministry of Education” (教育部批准的高等学校名单). These institutions fall into four groups:

- regular institutions (1,794 on 24 May 2005)
- adult education institutions (484)
- *minban* (private) regular institutions (249)
- *minban* adult education institutions (2)

Currently the first list (regular institutions) is also available in English.

Almost all *minban* institutions offer only *zhuanke* programs.

Another useful list is “institutional mergers since 1990” (1990年以来高校合并情况), which lists the exact dates the mergers took place and the institutions involved.

The website does not provide a list of military institutions, which operate under the jurisdiction of the People's Liberation Army and recruit students from both military and civilian populations. The China National College Entrance Examination Online website has a list of military institutions that recruit students through the NCEE.

TABLE 30. TYPICAL NAMES OF CHINESE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

CHINESE TERM	ENGLISH TERM	EXAMPLES	PROGRAM LEVEL
	University	Peking University 北京大学 Tsinghua University 清华大学 Capital Normal University 首都师范大学	Graduate degrees
		Beijing Union University 北京联合大学	Bachelor's degrees
		Luoyang University 洛阳大学 Huainan Union University 淮南联合大学	<i>Zhuanke</i> qualification
		Yanjing Overseas Chinese University 燕京华侨大学 University of Modern Administration 现代管理大学	Non-qualification
		University of International Relations 国际关系学院	Graduate degrees
		Wuhan Polytechnic University 武汉工业学院 China Women's University 中华女子学院	Bachelor's degrees
	Institute	Harbin Institute of Technology 哈尔滨工业大学	Graduate degrees
		Beijing Institute of Machinery 北京机械工业学院	Graduate degrees
	College	Tianjin Vocational College 天津职业大学	<i>Zhuanke</i> qualification
		Mudanjiang Teachers College 牡丹江师范学院	Bachelor's degrees
		Yanjing Overseas Chinese Vocational College 燕京华侨职业学院 Beijing Information Technology College 北京信息职业技术学院	<i>Zhuanke</i> qualification
		Xinyu Junior College 新余高等专科学校 Cangzhou Teachers Training College 沧州师范专科学校 Linyi Medical College 临沂医学专科学校	<i>Zhuanke</i> qualification
	Others	Central Conservatory of Music 中央音乐学院	Graduate degrees
		Central Academy of Fine Art 中央美术学院	Graduate degrees

*This refers to the highest level of programs offered by an institution.

NATIONAL COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

To be admitted into a regular higher education program, applicants must complete senior secondary school and pass the National College Entrance Examination, also known as the National Matriculation Test (全国普通高等学校招生考试, or 高考 for short).

For over 20 years after the restoration of NCEE in 1977, applicants had to be unmarried and under the age of 25 to sit the exams; otherwise they could only enter the adult higher education sector. In 2001 the Ministry of Education removed the restrictions on age and marital status.

The examination was held annually on July 7, 8 and 9 all across the country until 2003, when it was rescheduled to the

same days in June, partly to avoid summer heat. Examination results become available within two to three weeks.

Since 2000, a number of institutions have been recruiting students through the Spring NCEE, held in late January in some cities and provinces. In recent years the Ministry of Education has approved some prestigious institutions to recruit a small number of students based on institutional standards alone, in a process known as “independent recruitment” (自主招生).

Each year, the provinces and major cities establish the minimum total marks required for admission into various categories of programs and institutions. Overall student performance and total available enrolment forms the basis of this standard.

For the purpose of admission, programs are divided into several “batches” based on the level of study (*benke* and *zhuanke*) and the category of institutions. Several types of programs or institutions (such as military science, public security, physical education and arts) usually admit students in advance. After that, students with the highest marks are admitted in the first round into popular *benke* programs offered at key public institutions. Students with lower marks are eligible to enter *benke* programs offered at ordinary public institutions or private institutions. Those with still lower marks may be admitted into *zhuanke* programs.

Each institution also sets its own cut-off scores, which can be higher than the provincially established minimum marks. *Zhuanke* programs offered by prestigious institutions may require higher marks than *benke* programs at less known institutions.

The 2003 cut-off marks of Peking University exceeded the provincial minimum marks by about 100 for humanities students and 130 for science students.

(Beijing University, 2003).

Bonus marks of 10 to 50 may be awarded to ethnic minority students, outstanding athletes and winners of prizes or competitions, such as the Scientific Invention Award, at or above the municipal level.

Some students may receive preferential treatment such as lower entrance marks or exemption from the NCEE. Outstanding students meeting criteria prescribed by the Ministry of Education may be nominated by their high school for direct admission into an institution, which may accept or reject the nomination. In 2004 candidates for such nominations include designated exemplary students at the provincial level, winners of third prize or above at National Secondary School Olympics (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology or information science) and high-performing students in experimental science classes at a few key secondary schools.

Subjects taken for the NCEE and maximum scores depend on the chosen academic track (science or humanities), the province or major city where the student is a registered resident and the time period.

Until 1995 the science track generally had seven subjects:

- politics
- mathematics
- chemistry
- foreign language
- Chinese
- physics
- biology

The humanities track had six subjects:

- politics
- mathematics
- geography
- Chinese
- history
- foreign language

Most subjects had a maximum mark of 100, though for a number of years it was 120 for both Chinese and mathematics and 50 or 70 for biology. The same subject might have different examination papers for different tracks. For example, the mathematics paper for humanities students was less challenging than that for science students.

After 1995 most provinces adopted the “3+2” pattern. The “3” referred to the three core subjects for all students: Chinese, mathematics and foreign language (usually English). The “2” meant physics and chemistry for the science track, or history and politics for the humanities track. The “3+2” pattern had a total maximum mark of 750, with each subject worth 150 points.

First introduced in Guangdong Province in 1999, the current “3+x” pattern has been implemented across the country since 2002. The “3” still refers to the three compulsory subjects for all students: Chinese, mathematics and foreign language. The “x” is a flexible component that may include one or more of the following subjects:

- physics
- biology
- history
- comprehensive science (理科综合)
- comprehensive humanities (文科综合)
- comprehensive science and humanities (文理综合)
- chemistry
- politics
- geography

Before the examination, each province or major city decides the pattern of “x” available for its students. An institution may also indicate the “x” required for its programs, so that students know what subjects to take in order to get into the programs and institutions of their choice. The maximum mark was 150 for each single subject, 300 for a comprehensive subject and 750 for the “3+x”.

For Beijing students taking the NCEE in 2004, “x” simply meant comprehensive science for the science track and comprehensive humanities for the humanities track.

The Ministry of Education is still responsible for designing most of the examination papers and setting the grading criteria, while the provincial educational authorities administer the examination and organize the grading of the papers. In 2004, over 10 provinces designed at least some of the examination papers for their students.

For more information on interpreting NCEE scores, refer to McBean's *Notes of a Knowledge Junkie*.

ZHUANKE PROGRAMS

Many higher education institutions offer short-cycle programs called *zhuanke* (专科, specialized course) that typically require three years of full-time study, though two-year programs are available for certain specialties. Students usually need 120 to 130 credits for graduation from a three-year program, or 90 to 100 credits from a two-year program. Sometimes referred to as junior college specialized programs, *zhuanke* education is in fact offered at universities as well as junior colleges. In recent years some prestigious institutions have discontinued their *zhuanke* programs in order to focus on *benke* and graduate education.

Students may receive *zhuanke* education in either the regular or the adult sector. They can choose from many of the same fields as the long-cycle *benke* programs. At institutions offering both *zhuanke* and *benke* programs, *zhuanke* students are usually taught by the same staff and have access to the same facilities as *benke* students.

A *zhuanke* program generally has an applied focus. There is usually no requirement for a major graduation thesis or project, though some programs include a graduation assignment. Upon successful completion of the program, students receive a *zhuanke* certificate of graduation (专科毕业证书), often translated as a diploma.

Graduates from a *zhuanke* qualification program have easy access to further academic study. They can take an upgrading program to obtain a *benke* qualification and

bachelor's degree. Higher vocational education currently operates exclusively at the *zhuanke* level.

Many students enter a *zhuanke* program because they do not have high enough NCEE scores to get into a similar program at the *benke* level. *Zhuanke* and *benke* programs offered by the same institution do not differ much in annual fees and tuitions. Some people consider *zhuanke* education a fast track to employment, but as more employers start requiring *benke* qualifications for administrative as well as professional and management positions, it has become very popular for holders of *zhuanke* qualifications to upgrade to the *benke* level, often through the adult education sector. Some institutions give their high performing *zhuanke* students (the top 15 to 30 per cent) the option to transfer into *benke* programs in the same fields after at least one and a half years' study. Such students may be identified on their *benke* certificates of graduation as “*benke* drop in students” (本科插班生). A few provinces administer unified examinations that enable outstanding *zhuanke* students to transfer to regular *benke* programs at a different institution within the province.

BENKE PROGRAMS

Long-cycle university programs known as *benke* (本科, essential course) generally require four years of full-time study, or five years for some fields such as medicine and certain types of engineering. A four-year program consists of seven semesters of coursework, with the last semester mostly used for the graduation thesis or project. About 170 to 190 credits are required for graduation. Upon successful completion of a *benke* program, students receive a *benke* certificate of graduation (本科毕业证书). Students may be issued a certificate of completion (本科结业证书) due to deficiencies such as disciplinary problems, failing more than one subject in graduation examinations or the graduation thesis or project, and failing to complete the minimum number of credits for graduation. Students who receive certificates of completion are usually given a period of time to make up the deficiencies in order to obtain certificates of graduation.

The list published by the Ministry of Education in 1998 includes 249 *benke* specialties in 11 major categories. If military science (available at military institutions) is included, there are 12 categories, the same as the 12 Major Categories of Academic Degrees.

A *benke* program usually consists of four types of courses: general compulsory (普通必修课), general elective (普通选修课), specialty compulsory (专业必修课) and specialty elective (专业选修课).

- General compulsory courses, taken by students from all disciplines, may include English, mathematics, physical education, computer basics and Marxist theory.
- General electives provide students with an all-round education. Science students are usually required to take at least two general electives in arts and humanities and vice versa.
- Specialty compulsory courses provide the knowledge base for a particular field of study, while students choose specialty electives based on their individual interests.
- A *benke* program in law may have “Chinese legal history” as a specialty compulsory course and “Western legal history” as a specialty elective.

Both regular and adult higher education sectors offer *benke* programs. Almost all *benke* programs offered by public institutions in the regular sector are integrated with bachelor's degree programs. Upon successful completion of such a program, most students will receive a bachelor's degree in addition to the *benke* certificate of graduation. By comparison, only a small percentage of students enrolled in *benke* programs in the adult higher education sector receive bachelor's degrees upon graduation.

BACHELOR'S DEGREES

Most students enrolled in *benke* programs offered through the regular higher education sector receive—in addition to the *benke* certificates of graduation—a bachelor's degree certificate (学士学位证书). The degree certificate indicates both the category of the degree and the specialty of the program, for example, a Bachelor of Arts in Music (音乐学专业文学士学位). Students with *benke* qualification from non-degree-granting institutions can apply for a bachelor's degree from a degree-granting institution if they meet the requirements prescribed by that institution, which may include examinations in the core courses and oral defence of the graduation thesis. An individual may therefore receive a *benke* certificate of graduation from one institution and a degree certificate from another.

According to the Regulations on Academic Degrees (1980) and “Methods of Implementing the Regulations on Academic Degrees” (State Council, 1981), to be awarded a

bachelor's degree, students must:

- 1) be approved for graduation from a *benke* program by fulfilling all requirements of the curriculum
- 2) demonstrate by their performance in coursework and a graduation thesis (or graduation project) that they have learned the basic theory, specialized knowledge and basic skills of the discipline and are capable of scientific research or specialized technical work

Those who only receive *benke* certificates of completion are ineligible to apply for a bachelor's degree.

Based on these guidelines, the provinces and degree-granting institutions formulate detailed additional requirements for awarding bachelor's degrees to *benke* graduates. For instance, the academic degrees office of Hubei Province has published the guidelines shown in Table 31 for awarding bachelor's degrees.

ZHUANKE TO BENKE UPGRADING PROGRAMS

People with *zhuanke* qualifications may pursue further education by taking *zhuanke* to *benke* upgrading programs (专升本), sometimes translated as *benke* upper division programs. The certificate of graduation usually indicates it is an upgrading program without specifying the field of study of the original *zhuanke* credential. A *benke* qualification obtained through an upgrading program is fully recognized and may lead to a bachelor's degree. A non-degree-granting institution that offers upgrading programs may have an agreement with a degree-granting institution to which its graduates can apply for a bachelor's degree.

Zhuanke to *benke* upgrading programs generally involve two years of full-time or three years of part-time study, with about 80 to 90 credits needed for graduation. Most programs are offered through the adult higher education sector. Applicants must have a recognized *zhuanke* qualification and pass the National Adult College Entrance Examination. An upgrading program offered through the regular sector generally requires applicants to have a *zhuanke* certificate from a regular full-time program and pass the entrance examination administered by the institution. Students in such a program may have access to the same teaching staff and facilities as those enrolled in four-year *benke* programs.

TABLE 31. BACHELOR'S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR *BENKE* GRADUATES, HUBEI PROVINCE, 1999

EDUCATION SECTOR	REQUIREMENTS
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Achieve excellent or good academic grades.
Regular Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve excellent or good academic grades (the standards to be determined by institutions). Receive <i>benke</i> certificate of graduate in the same year coursework is completed. Have not suffered any disciplinary action.
Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve an average grade of 75 per cent or above in required courses. Pass the foreign language examination designed and administered by the provincial academic degrees office. Students who have passed College English Test (CET) band 4 or band 6 are exempt. Pass three degree-course examinations (including one basic specialty course and two specialty courses) at first attempt with grades of 80 per cent or above. The institutions designate the degree courses and administer the examinations.
Self-Study Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve an average grade of 70 per cent or above in compulsory courses. Pass degree course examinations (including a foreign language and three specialty-related courses) at first attempt with grades of 75 per cent or above. Pass the foreign language examination designed and administered by the provincial academic degrees office. Students who have passed CET band 4 or band 6 are exempt from the foreign language examination. The three specialty-related courses, jointly determined by the provincial higher education self-study committee and the examination-administering institution concerned, are specified in the self-study examination guidelines.

Applicants are usually asked to choose a specialty similar to their *zhuanke* study, but this requirement may be waived at the discretion of the institution. It is therefore possible for a student to have two completely different fields of study, such as a *zhuanke* major in science and a *benke* major in arts and humanities or business. Even when the two fields of study are the same or closely related, the combination of two programs, often offered by different institutions, may have less coherence than a conventional four-year *benke* program.

SECOND SPECIALTY *ZHUANKE* PROGRAMS

People with *zhuanke* or *benke* qualifications can pursue further study in a new field at the *zhuanke* level through second specialty *zhuanke* programs (二学历). Before 2004, applicants were admitted based on their educational qualification, without having to take the NACEE. Second specialty *zhuanke* programs are offered through the adult higher education sector in fields perceived to be in high demand, such as foreign language, law and computer science. Students usually study for two to three years on a part-time basis and may be granted transfer of credit for their previous study. Upon completion of the program, they receive a second specialty *zhuanke* certificate of graduation (二学历专科毕业证书).

Introduced in 1981, Higher Education Self-Study Examinations (高等教育自学考试) allow people from all educational backgrounds to obtain recognized *zhuanke* and *benke* qualifications and bachelor's degrees by challenging national examinations. The current system of self-study examinations (also translated as self-taught examinations) was formalized after the Provisional Regulations on Higher Education Self-Study Examinations were passed into law in March 1988.

Several organizations in the Ministry of Education oversee the program at the national level.

- The Higher Education Self-Study Examination Guidance Committee is the leading body.
- The Higher Education Self-Study Examination Office oversees routine work.
- The Higher Education Self-Study Examination Specialty Committee creates examination plans and syllabuses, organizes the compilation of higher education textbooks suitable for self-study and exercises overall quality control and assessment.
- The National Educational Examination and Self-Study Examination Research Committee conducts research on self-study examination policies and guidelines.

SELF-STUDY EXAMINATIONS

The national bodies guide and supervise self-study examination committees and self-study examination offices at the provincial, prefecture and municipal levels. A number of regular colleges and universities are selected in each province to participate in designing and administering the examinations.

Examinations are administered twice a year, in June and December. The list published by the Ministry of Education in 1998 contains 224 specialties in 11 of the 12 major categories (excluding management). Of the 224 specialties:

- 141 are offered as *zhuanke* programs
- 22 are offered at the *benke* level
- 61 are offered as *zhuanke* to *benke* upgrading programs (China Higher Education Self-Study Examination Information Network)

In 2002, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health jointly decided to stop offering programs in medicine through self-study examinations and distance learning (correspondence, radio and TV and online programs) (China.org.cn).

Students receive a certificate of course completion through self-study (单科结业证书) by passing the exam in a single subject. Upon successful completion of the required number of subjects and any additional requirement, such as a thesis, they are awarded a certificate of graduation through self-study (高等教育自学考试毕业证书) stamped by both the provincial self-study examination committee (省高等教育自学考试委员会) and the examination-administering institution (主考院校). The certificate of graduation is usually either *zhuanke* or *benke*, though it may also be issued at the specialized senior secondary level in some provinces. Those who obtain *benke* qualifications through self-study may apply to the examination-administering institution for a bachelor's degree.

Many adult education institutions and regular daytime colleges and universities offer training programs to help students take the self-study examinations. Students enrolled at *minban* (private) institutions offering only non-qualification education or at non-qualification programs at regular institutions may take the self-study examinations to obtain qualifications recognized by the Ministry of Education. According to the Provisional Regulations on Higher Education Self-Study Examinations (1988), certificates of graduation through self-study should be

accepted on par with qualifications obtained from regular institutions. Holders, therefore, are entitled to the same salary and benefits as well as access to further education. In reality, educational qualifications obtained through self-study examinations, like those from the adult education sector, are generally considered of lower status than those from regular programs. Compared with adult higher education, which features “difficult entry, easy exit,” self-study examinations follow “easy entry, difficult exit”—there is no entrance requirement and students do not have to enrol in any course, but the examinations are challenging as standards are set at the national level. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some employers receive self-study examination qualifications more favourably than those from the adult higher education sector.

MASTER'S PROGRAMS

The People's Republic of China introduced graduate education (研究生教育) in 1950. It was, however, stopped during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) and restored in 1978. The first master's degrees were awarded in 1981.

Master's degree (硕士学位) programs are offered by degree-granting colleges and universities and by research institutes authorized by the Ministry of Education and the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council. Applicants must have a *benke* certificate of graduation (a bachelor's degree is not required), usually be under the age of 40 and pass the graduate entrance examination and an interview. The Ministry of Education is responsible for setting and grading papers for English, Russian and Japanese (for non-foreign language majors), political theory and a few basic specialty subjects in the first round of examination. The institutions set and grade the specialty subject papers in the second round of examination and conduct interviews. Students with first class standing in their undergraduate study may be offered direct admission into a master's program.

The latest list published by the Ministry of Education in 1997 has 388 graduate study specialties in 12 major categories, including military science. Most programs comprise two and a half years of full-time study, including about 30 credits of coursework and the preparation and defence of a thesis. Coursework is usually completed in the first three semesters and typically includes:

- 10 credits of required general courses such as Marxist theory and foreign language

- 15 credits of required specialty courses
- some elective courses

Each student is assigned a thesis supervisor, who must be an associate professor or full professor authorized by the institution to supervise master's students. Upon successful completion of the program, students receive a certificate of graduation from a master's program (硕士研究生毕业证书). They have to meet additional requirements set by the institution (for example, grades of 70 per cent or higher in all specialty courses) in order to be awarded a master's degree certificate (硕士学位证书).

MASTER'S LEVEL CLASSES

Some universities that do not award master's degrees do offer master's level classes. For a short period, so-called graduate classes (研究生班 or 硕士研究生班) provided qualification education recognized by the Ministry of Education, with admission and graduation standards set by the provincial educational authorities. After successful completion of such a program, students received certificates of graduation from a graduate class (研究生班毕业证书). Those with high academic performance might choose to complete a thesis and get a master's degree. Graduate classes were discontinued on January 1, 1996.

The majority of master-level classes are offered through non-qualification education. They are usually called graduate coursework training classes (研究生课程进修班, or 硕士研究生课程班). Institutions set the admission requirements, which generally include *zhuanke*, *benke* or bachelor's degrees followed by two or three years of work experience. Some institutions ask applicants to sit entrance examinations. Students may have the same access to qualified teaching staff and facilities as those enrolled in regular master's programs. The programs consist of one to two years of part-time study, usually with eight or nine class hours each week. After successful completion of the program, students receive certificates of completion of graduate coursework (研究生课程结业证书) rather than certificates of graduation.

As a type of non-qualification education, graduate coursework training classes do not have unified standards and there is no guarantee that the courses offered are actually at the graduate level. Certificates of completion of graduate coursework may be accepted for employment purposes at the employers' discretion. Students may use

such a program as the foundation to pursue a master's degree by challenging standardized examinations. For additional information, refer to Comparable Educational Competence.

DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

Universities, colleges and research institutes offer doctoral degree or PhD (博士学位) programs that usually consist of three to four years of full-time study. Applicants to a doctoral program are required to hold a master's degree, usually be under 45 years of age and pass entrance examinations that may include a foreign language and two specialty courses.

In a typical doctoral program, students complete around 15 credits of coursework in the first two or three semesters and sit for a comprehensive examination scheduled in the third semester. The last two years are devoted to the preparation and defence of the thesis. Only full professors are authorized to supervise doctoral students. Candidates must have a broad theoretical foundation in the discipline and in-depth knowledge of their specialty. They must also demonstrate the ability to undertake independent research and have made original contributions in science or technology. Upon successful completion of the program, students receive a certificate of graduation from a doctoral program (博士研究生毕业证书) and a doctoral degree certificate (博士学位证书). China awarded its first doctoral degrees in 1983.

CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS

Correspondence programs at the *zhuanke* and *benke* levels are part of the adult higher education sector. Students may enrol in such programs at correspondence departments of regular higher education institutions or at a few independent correspondence colleges. Admission requirements are identical to classroom-style programs in adult higher education. Applicants must hold a certificate of graduation from senior secondary school and pass the relevant version of NACEE. Applicants for *zhuanke* to *benke* upgrading programs must have a recognized *zhuanke* qualification. Through correspondence, the usual length of time for completion is:

- three to four years for *zhuanke* programs
- five or six years for full-length *benke* programs
- three years for *zhuanke* to *benke* upgrading programs

According to various regulations, including the Temporary Regulations on Correspondence Programs of Regular

Higher Education Institutions (1987) published by the State Education Commission, a correspondence program must be based on a full-time day program that has graduated students for at least two years. Graduates from a correspondence program must have the same level of education as those from a regular full-time day program. The curriculum for correspondence programs is based on similar full-time day programs, with about the same number of foundation and specialty courses. Foreign language is compulsory.

Correspondence study consists of self-study, classroom teaching, homework, question and answer through correspondence, lab, practicum, examinations and a graduation project or thesis or graduation examination. Each program must offer classroom teaching, lab and practicum amounting to about 30 per cent of the total instructional hours of a similar full-time day program. Upon successful completion of the program, students receive *zhuanke* or *benke* certificates of graduation. *Benke* graduates may apply for a bachelor's degree by meeting additional requirements such as high scores in core courses and passing a standardized foreign language proficiency test.

RADIO AND TV UNIVERSITIES

Radio and TV universities (广播电视大学) are a form of distance education that mainly operate in the adult higher education sector. Established in February 1979, they graduated the first group of *zhuanke* students in 1982. For the first few years they offered only *zhuanke* programs and admitted students by RTVU national entrance examinations. Beginning in 1986, most applicants have had to take the National Adult College Entrance Examinations. A certificate of graduation from a RTVU gives an individual the same entitlement to employment and further education as a certificate of graduation from the regular higher education sector.

RTVUs currently recruit students both in the regular sector (through NCEE) and adult education sector (through NACEE) and offer both qualification education (*zhuanke*, *zhuanke* to *benke* upgrading and specialized senior secondary) and non-qualification education. *Zhuanke* to *benke* upgrading programs are often jointly operated by an RTVU and a regular institution; students may apply for bachelor's degrees from the regular institution.

As of 2005, the RTVU system included:

- the China Central Radio and TV University and 44 provincial level RTVUs
- 930 prefecture or municipal level RTVU branches and work stations
- 2,021 county-level work stations
- 22,237 study centres

The China Central RTVU is one of the 72 institutions directly administered by the Ministry of Education. The central and provincial level RTVUs can issue *zhuanke* and *benke* certificates of graduation.

By 2002, over 3.3 million people had received *zhuanke* or *benke* qualifications from RTVUs.

COMPARABLE EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCE

In addition to qualifications (学历) and degrees (学位), the Chinese educational system recognizes a third type of credential called educational ability or educational competence (学力). The term “comparable educational competence” (同等学力) describes a person who has demonstrated the educational competence comparable to a certain level of qualification or degree and who should therefore be granted access to further study. Educational competence is a type of credential that usually does not have formal documentation. Individuals may claim educational competence beyond the level of qualification or degree they hold and support the claim by challenging standard examinations.

People who have not completed senior secondary school can take the NCEE if they are considered to have educational competence comparable to that of a senior secondary school graduate. In many provinces, this can be demonstrated by passing the Provincial Senior Secondary Graduation Examination (省高中毕业会考).

To apply for admission into a master's program, those who do not have a *benke* certificate of graduation may claim comparable educational competence if they have either a *zhuanke* qualification plus at least two years of work experience or a *benke* certificate of completion. To be admitted, they have to pass additional examinations in at least two core courses at the *benke* level.

Sample Case: An applicant received her bachelor's degree in economics (finance) from Nankai University in 1990. She enrolled in a graduate coursework training class in finance at Nankai University between 1998 and 2000 while working at an insurance company. The transcript listed 13 courses totalling 31 credits; there was no graduation thesis or project. Since it was a non-qualification program, she did not receive a certificate of graduation. By completing the program, however, she was able to apply for a master's degree by claiming comparable educational competence and passing examinations in master's degree courses. She received her master's degree in economics (finance) from Nankai University in June 2002.

(IQAS file 113217)

People without a master's degree can apply for admission into a doctoral program by claiming comparable educational competence. The criteria set by the institutions to determine such competence usually include a bachelor's degree plus at least six years of related work experience, a minimum number of publications in leading academic journals and proficiency in a foreign language. Applicants are required to take additional examinations in core specialty courses at the master's level.

Comparable educational competence may also enable some people to obtain graduate degrees without undertaking graduate study at institutions or research institutes. China first introduced the alternative routes to obtain master's and doctoral degrees in 1985 and formalized the regulations in 1998 (State Council). People without master's level qualification (documented by a certificate of graduation from a master's program) can apply for master's degrees by challenging the national examinations designed for people of comparable educational competence. After applying to an institution offering the master's program, they have four years to pass the national examinations in specialty subjects and a foreign language and then one and a half years to complete and defend their thesis. An individual who obtains a master's degree in this way will not receive a certificate of graduation from a master's program and therefore has no educational qualification at the master's level.

Individuals who have published important works or made important inventions or discoveries may be given exemption from coursework and examinations required for a doctoral program and may proceed directly to the defence of their doctoral thesis. One who obtains a doctoral degree in this way will not receive a certificate of graduation from a doctoral program and therefore will have no educational qualification at the doctoral level.

RANKING OF INSTITUTIONS

The status and quality of institutions depend largely on the level of government responsible for their funding and administration. The institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Education or other central government ministries or agencies have the most resources and qualified academic staff. The Ministry of Education website provides a current list of 76 institutions under its supervision. Public institutions in the regular higher education sector generally enjoy a higher status than adult education institutions and *minban* (private) institutions.

Initiated on the centennial of Peking University on May 4, 1998, Project 985 aims to support the best Chinese institutions to become world-class universities—tier one institutions. Between 1999 and 2004, the central government (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance) and some provincial governments invested over 10 billion yuan (CDN\$1.6 billion) in 38 universities (Ministry of Education, 2005). The first nine of the 38 universities have received the most funding. According to a 2003 study, these nine institutions accounted for one third of total research funding, 20 per cent of master's students and 30 per cent of doctoral students of all Chinese universities (China Education Daily, 2005).

The central government launched Project 211 in 1995 to strengthen about 100 higher education institutions in the 21st century. The 99 institutions—of tier two—approved by 2005 are key institutions at the national level. The central and local governments—as well as the supervising ministries or agencies—provide special funding, which totalled over 11 billion yuan or CDN\$1.7 billion from 1995 to 2000 (Ministry of Education), to:

- improve the overall conditions at the institutions
- build key disciplinary areas
- develop a national higher education public service system that includes the China Education and Research Network

The list of 99 institutions is available in Chinese on the Ministry of Education website and in both Chinese and English in *Chinese Colleges and Universities* (4th Edition), published by the Higher Education Press of China.

A common way to rank Chinese higher education institutions, therefore, is to divide them into three groups based on the government's funding priority.

- Tier one has 38 institutions in Project 985 (see Table 32).
- Tier two has about 60 institutions in Project 211 (excluding those also included in Project 985).
- The rest of the institutions belong to tier three.

Since 1999 a commercial educational service, netbig.com, has provided annual rankings of Chinese institutions (sometimes available in English) based on academic reputation, academic resources, academic achievements, student quality, faculty resources and facilities. There is no indication, however, that such rankings are widely accepted in China.

The Research Centre for China Science Evaluation at Wuhan University publishes competitiveness rankings of Chinese colleges and universities, which are divided into two groups:

- key institutions
- ordinary institutions

and seven categories:

- comprehensive and ethnic
- science and technology
- agriculture and forestry
- medical
- teacher education
- language, economics, finance and law
- physical and arts education

Ranking scores are calculated for 50 indicators grouped under:

- resources
- teaching quality
- research and
- reputation.

The lists are available in both Chinese and English.

Some argue it makes more sense to rank Chinese higher education by program rather than by institution. Since 2000

TABLE 32. LIST OF INSTITUTIONS IN PROJECT 985

1.	Tsinghua University 清华大学
2.	Peking University 北京大学
3.	University of Science and Technology of China 中国科技大学
4.	Nanjing University 南京大学
5.	Fudan University 复旦大学
6.	Shanghai Jiaotong University 上海交通大学
7.	Xi'an Jiaotong University 西安交通大学
8.	Zhejiang University 浙江大学
9.	Harbin Institute of Technology 哈尔滨工业大学
10.	Nankai University 南开大学
11.	Tianjin University 天津大学
12.	Southeast University 东南大学
13.	Huazhong University of Science and Technology 华中科技大学
14.	Wuhan University 武汉大学
15.	Xiamen University 厦门大学
16.	Shandong University 山东大学
17.	Hunan University 湖南大学
18.	Ocean University of China 中国海洋大学
19.	Central South University 中南大学
20.	Jilin University 吉林大学
21.	Beijing Institute of Technology 北京理工大学
22.	Dalian University of Technology 大连理工大学
23.	Beihang University 北京航空航天大学
24.	Chongqing University 重庆大学
25.	University of Electronic Science and Technology 电子科技大学
26.	Sichuan University 四川大学
27.	South China University of Technology 华南理工大学
28.	Sun Yat-sen University 中山大学
29.	Lanzhou University 兰州大学
30.	Northeastern University 东北大学
31.	Northwestern Polytechnical University 西北工业大学
32.	Tongji University 同济大学
33.	Beijing Normal University 北京师范大学
34.	Renmin University of China 中国人民大学
35.	China Agricultural University 中国农业大学
36.	National University of Defence Technology 国防科技大学
37.	Central University for Nationalities 中央民族大学
38.	Northwest Sci-Tech University of Agriculture and Forestry 西北农林科技大学

a research unit under the Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Centre (www.cdgd.edu.cn) of the Ministry of Education has been conducting comparative evaluations of major disciplinary areas of Chinese higher education institutions and research institutes. So far, it has published lists of top ranking institutions divided by 80 major disciplines (in Chinese only) and a ranking of prestigious institutions based on the number of top five disciplines. The lists are not exhaustive since not all institutions have participated in the evaluation. A few examples of top 10 institutions are provided in Appendix A.

TEACHER EDUCATION

The Teachers Law of 1993 prescribes the minimum educational qualifications of different types of schoolteachers.

- Graduation from a preschool education teachers school (at the senior secondary level) is needed to be a kindergarten teacher.
- Graduation from a secondary teachers school (at the senior secondary level) is needed to be a primary school teacher.
- Graduation from a junior teachers college or a *zhuanke* program from other postsecondary institutions is needed to teach at either general or vocational junior secondary schools.
- A *benke* qualification from a teachers college, normal university or other higher education institution is needed to teach at either general or vocational senior secondary schools.

Depending on their age, individuals who had been teaching before the Teachers Law was passed may have to upgrade their educational qualifications through part-time study to meet the minimum requirements. In addition, individuals who do not meet the educational qualifications requirement may qualify to teach by passing national teacher certification examinations.

Corresponding to the stipulations of the Teachers Law, teacher education in China has operated mainly on three basic levels.

- Specialized senior secondary schools train kindergarten and primary school teachers.
- Junior teachers' colleges train junior secondary school teachers.
- Teachers colleges and normal universities train senior secondary school teachers.

In addition, educational colleges and teacher in-service training schools offer continuing education programs.

TABLE 33. TEACHER EDUCATION

TYPE OF TEACHERS	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	INSTITUTIONS	NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS
Kindergarten	Senior secondary	Preschool education teachers schools (幼儿教育师范学校)	430
Primary	Senior secondary	Secondary teachers schools (中等师范学校)	
Junior secondary	<i>Zhuanke</i>	Junior teachers colleges (高等师范专科学校)	203
Senior secondary	<i>Benke</i>	Teachers colleges (师范学院) and normal universities (师范大学)	
Junior and senior secondary	Continuing education	Educational colleges (教育学院)	103
Primary	Continuing education	Teacher in-service training schools (教师进修学校)	1,703

Ministry of Education, 2002

The teacher education restructuring plan formulated by the Ministry of Education in 1999 aims to phase out secondary teachers schools, starting with cities and economically developed areas (Ministry of Education, 1999). By 2010, newly recruited primary school teachers and junior secondary teachers must have *zhuanke* and *benke* qualifications respectively and some senior secondary school teachers will have graduation education.

The Regulations on Teacher Qualification (December 1995) requires people who want to teach at various types of schools to apply for a teacher qualification certificate (教师资格证书). In addition to a prescribed level of educational qualification, they must be fluent in Mandarin. Graduates of non-teacher education programs are usually required to take courses in education and psychology before a certificate is issued.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Secondary vocational education (中等职业教育) occurs mostly at the senior secondary level and to a minor extent at the junior secondary level. In 2004 total enrolment was 5.5 million, compared with 8.2 million for general or academic senior secondary schools. The Ministry of Education aims to expand vocational education enrolment to about 50 per cent of total senior secondary school enrolment by 2007 (Zhou, 2005).

The generic term “secondary vocational schools” (中等职业学校) refers to three main types of schools:

- specialized senior secondary schools (中等专业学校 or 中专 for short)
- vocational senior secondary schools (职业高级中学 or 职高 for short)
- skilled workers schools (技术工人学校 or 技工学校/技校 for short)

Historically speaking, specialized senior secondary schools have been more highly regarded than other secondary vocational schools. Recently, the Ministry of Education has taken measures to restructure secondary vocational schools. The distinction between different types of schools is deemphasized and common curriculum standards established. Eventually, all schools offering vocational education at the senior secondary level will be named technical–vocational schools (职业技术学校).

In 2000, the Ministry of Education published curriculum guidelines for all secondary vocational schools and national syllabuses for 23 general and specialty subjects. Starting in 2005, admission to various types of vocational secondary schools will be based on the same entrance examinations as for general senior secondary schools.

Higher technical–vocational education is available at the *zhuanke* level, involving two or three years of full-time postsecondary study. The general term used in China is either higher vocational education (高等职业教育, or 高职 for short) or, more recently, higher vocational and specialized education (高职高专). This refers to various types of schools such as vocational universities (职业大学), adult higher education institutions (独立设置的成人高校) and specialized junior colleges (高等专科学校). Eventually, all institutions offering higher vocational education will be named vocational

colleges (职业学院), technical colleges (技术学院) or technical–vocational colleges (职业技术学院).

SPECIALIZED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Specialized senior secondary schools (中等专业学校) based on the Soviet model were introduced in the early 1950s to train technicians. At the time, programs lasted four years for junior secondary graduates and two years for senior secondary graduates. After the interruption of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), specialized senior secondary education was quickly revived.

When the National College Entrance Examination was restored in 1977, only a small percentage of graduates of general senior secondary schools could get into colleges and universities. Specialized senior secondary schools therefore offered two- or three-year programs specially designed for senior secondary graduates whose NCEE scores were not high enough for postsecondary admission. Until about 1985, over half of students enrolled at specialized senior secondary schools were graduates from general senior secondary schools. From the early- to mid-1980s several hundred national key specialized senior secondary schools were upgraded to junior colleges offering *zhuanke* -level education in technical–vocational fields.

Since the 1990s, the proportion of general senior secondary school graduates enrolled at specialized senior secondary schools has steadily decreased to below 10 per cent. Most schools now recruit only junior secondary graduates. In some cases, high-performing students enrolled at specialized senior secondary schools have the option to transfer, after three years of study, to *zhuanke* programs at technical–vocational junior colleges. This is known as the 3+2 pattern of higher vocational education.

Programs offered through specialized senior secondary education have a strong applied focus. Schools often have established relations with employers where their students can have their practicum. Curriculum usually includes special training courses to help students take standard tests to obtain technical–vocational certificates. Students may also be exempt from the written component of the tests and only have to pass the practical component. Many students receive both a certificate of graduation from a specialized senior secondary school (中专毕业证书) and a mid-level occupational certificate (中级职业资格证书) in their chosen occupation.

For historical reasons, specialized senior secondary education has two major patterns:

- programs designed for junior secondary graduates (pattern one)
- those for senior secondary graduates (pattern two)

Generally speaking, pattern one consists of three or four years of study in both general and specialty subjects, whereas pattern two involves one or two years of study in specialty subjects only.

Pattern one has been the dominant pattern since the mid- to late 1990s. Junior secondary graduates must pass provincially administered entrance examinations in six subjects (politics, Chinese, mathematics, physics, chemistry and a foreign language) to be admitted into specialized senior secondary schools. These examinations may be the same as the entrance examinations for general senior secondary schools. Amid declining enrolment in recent years, many schools no longer require applicants to take entrance examinations and admit students based on junior secondary graduation examination results.

The program usually lasts three or four years, consisting of general courses (文化课), specialty courses (专业课) and up to one year of practicum (实习). General courses usually include politics, Chinese, mathematics, foreign language and physical education. Compared with general senior secondary education, there might be fewer hours of instruction for the general courses as well as an absence of courses in both science (physics and chemistry) and humanities (history and geography). Instead of the practicum, students may have the option to spend the last year in school preparing for the NCEE.

In pattern two, specialized senior secondary schools may recruit general senior secondary graduates whose NCEE scores are not high enough for admission into *zhuanke* programs at colleges and universities. Unlike pattern one, such programs focus on specialty subjects only. They were especially popular in the 1980s, when student admission was based on NCEE scores and the length of study was two or three years. Currently some schools recruit senior secondary graduates without any additional entrance requirement such as NCEE scores and the length of study can be one or two years.

Under special circumstances, certificates of graduation from specialized senior secondary school (pattern two) may

be accepted as *zhuanke*-level study in China. This usually happens at national key specialized senior secondary schools that have subsequently been upgraded to junior colleges without any substantial change in their curriculum and teaching staff.

Before 2000, graduates from a specialized senior secondary school had to work for two or three years before they were allowed to take the NCEE and be admitted into academic programs. Alternatively, they could get into *zhuanke*-level technical–vocational programs in the year of graduation by passing entrance examinations specially designed for graduates of specialized senior secondary schools, vocational senior secondary schools and skilled workers schools. Since 2000, the Ministry of Education has allowed specialized senior secondary graduates to take the NCEE in the year of their graduation. To help their students pass the NCEE, some schools have revised the curriculum to allow more time for general subjects.

VOCATIONAL SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Vocational senior secondary schools (职业高级中学) have a relatively short history, with many established in the 1980s. According to the State Education Commission guidelines drafted in 1986 and passed into law in 1990, the aim of vocational senior secondary schools is to train mid-level skilled workers, farmers with mid-level technical skills and mid-level management and technical personnel. Programs focus on professional education and vocational training. Upon graduation, students should have acquired both general foundation knowledge and specialized knowledge and skills needed to practice a profession.

A typical program lasts three years full time, consisting of general subjects, specialty subjects and one year of practicum. The recommended ratio of general subjects, specialty subjects and practicum is 3:3:4 for programs in technology, agriculture and medicine and 4:3:3 for programs in arts and humanities.

For many years, provincial educational authorities as well as relevant ministries and commissions of central government were responsible for setting curriculum standards and approving teaching plans for various specialties or occupations. Currently most schools have adopted textbooks based on the national syllabuses for secondary vocational schools, published by the Ministry of Education in 2000.

There are three required general subjects for all programs: Chinese, mathematics and physical education. Other general subjects (physics, chemistry, biology, foreign language, geography, history, music and fine art) may be offered depending on the specialty or occupation. Many programs list foreign language and computer applications as required courses.

Upon successful completion of their study and passing the provincial graduation examinations, students receive a certificate of graduation from vocational senior secondary school (职业高中毕业证书). In some provinces, they may also receive a certificate of comparable educational competence of general senior secondary school (普通高中同等学历证书).

Though vocational senior secondary education is highly employment-oriented, it offers some access to further education, mainly in the technical–vocational specialties. Under the same conditions as specialized senior secondary schools before 2000, vocational senior secondary school graduates had to work for two or three years before they were allowed to take the NCEE and be admitted into academic programs. Alternatively, they could get into *zhuanke*-level technical–vocational programs in the year of graduation by passing entrance examinations specially designed for graduates of vocational secondary schools. Since 2000 the Ministry of Education has allowed graduates of vocational senior secondary schools to take the NCEE in the year of their graduation. To help their students pass the NCEE, some schools revised the curriculum to allow more time for general subjects.

SKILLED WORKERS SCHOOLS

Skilled workers schools (技工学校) are senior secondary schools that train skilled workers (技术工人). Unlike vocational secondary schools, they have been under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour rather than the Ministry of Education since 1978. Provincial and local labour and personnel departments (劳动人事部门) approve the establishment, restructuring and termination of skilled workers schools.

According to guidelines jointly published by the Ministry of Labour and Personnel and the State Education Commission in 1986, the aim of skilled workers schools is to train mid-level skilled workers. Upon graduation, students should have acquired general and specialized knowledge

and analytical and problem-solving ability as well as the operational skills needed for an occupation.

A typical program admits junior secondary graduates and involves three years of full-time study (or two years for some specialties, especially in the service industry). A small number of programs that recruit senior secondary students involve one or two years of full-time study. Curriculum standards used to be set by various departments of the central and provincial governments.

Each program consists of general subjects, specialty subjects and practicum (sometimes undertaken at a school-run factory). Like other secondary vocational schools, most skilled workers schools have currently adopted textbooks based on the national syllabuses for secondary vocational schools, published by the Ministry of Education in 2000.

There are three required general subjects for all programs: Chinese, mathematics and physical education. Other general subjects (physics, chemistry, biology, foreign language, geography, history, music and fine art) may be offered according to the specialty or occupation. Many programs list foreign language and computer applications as required courses.

Upon successful completion of their study, students receive a certificate of graduation from skilled workers school (技工学校毕业证书). Many schools, especially national and provincial key schools, have incorporated technical certification programs into their curriculum, so that the majority of their graduates will also receive a mid-level occupational certificate (中级职业资格证书).

HIGHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Higher vocational education in China began in the 1980s with the establishment of many municipally administered “vocational universities” (职业大学). Currently, higher vocational education is available at the *zhuanke* level from various types of institutions, such as vocational universities, specialized junior colleges and adult higher education institutions as well as radio and TV universities. Recently, the Ministry of Education has adopted the general term “higher vocational and specialized education” (高职高专). The education reform initiative launched by the Chinese central government in 1999 aimed to restructure all institutions offering higher vocational education, which will eventually adopt standardized names as vocational colleges

(职业学院), technical colleges (技术学院) or technical–vocational colleges (职业技术学院).

Vocational higher education institutions are currently administered at the provincial level. They recruit students through either the NCEE or the NACEE. Applicants who have graduated from a vocational secondary school use a different set of examination papers from graduates of general senior secondary schools. Programs involve two or three years of full-time study and have a strong applied focus. Schools are encouraged to hire teachers who also hold professional designations such as engineer or accountant.

In 2004, to differentiate higher vocational education from general higher education at the *zhuanke* level, the Ministry of Education published an advisory list of higher vocational education specialties that include 532 specialties in 19 major occupational categories. Upon successful completion of their program, students receive a *zhuanke* certificate of graduation. Unlike graduates from a general *zhuanke* program, they may find it difficult to get a *benke* certificate and bachelor's degree through an upgrading program, as many higher vocational specialties are not available beyond the *zhuanke* level.

Some institutions offer five-year higher vocational programs (五年制高职) that recruit junior secondary graduates. The first three years are considered secondary education and may be offered at a secondary vocational school in partnership with the higher vocational institution.

DOCUMENTATION

DOCUMENT TYPES

To determine whether a document represents a recognized credential in China, the key criterion is whether it belongs to qualification education (学历教育) or non-qualification education (非学历教育). A qualification education program has standardized entrance and exit requirements and is authorized by the Ministry of Education to issue nationally recognized credentials. In contrast, a non-qualification program has flexible entrance and exit requirements, may charge much higher tuition fees and issues credentials that do not entitle the individuals to further education in qualification programs. Many recognized institutions offer certain types of non-qualification programs. For more information, refer to Educational Qualifications.

There are three major types of educational documents from China:

- certificates of graduation (毕业证书)
- degree certificates (学位证书)
- transcripts (成绩单)

TABLE 34. THREE TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT	CHINESE NAME	ALTERNATE NAME
Certificate of graduation	毕业证书	毕业文凭
Degree certificate	学位证书	
Transcript	成绩单	成绩证明/成绩单/成绩记载表/成绩报告单

Other documents include:

- certificates of completion (结业证书)
- examination results (考试成绩)
- official proof (证明书/证明信) (for example, for institutional merger, name change)
- notary public certificates (公证书)
- credentials report (认证报告) from China Academic Degrees and Graduation Education Development Centre

To assess a certificate of graduation, the two major criteria are the type of issuing body and the level of qualification. There are seven levels: primary school, junior secondary school, senior secondary school, *zhuanke*, *benke*, master's program and doctoral program.

TABLE 35. SEVEN LEVELS OF QUALIFICATION EDUCATION

学历水平	LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION	YEARS
小学	Primary school	6
初中 (初级中学)	Junior secondary school	3
高中 (高级中学), 中等职业技术学校	Senior secondary school	3
专科 (大专)	<i>Zhuanke</i>	2–3
本科	<i>Benke</i>	4–5
硕士研究生 (研究生)	Master's program	2–3
博士研究生	Doctoral program	3–4

Schools and institutions are the main issuing bodies of educational credentials in China. Though there are a limited number of vocational junior secondary schools, nine-year compulsory education (six years of primary school plus three years of junior secondary school since the mid-1980s) is mostly provided by general schools. At the senior secondary level, schools fall into two major categories:

- general senior secondary schools (普通高中)
- technical–vocational secondary schools (中等职业技术学校)

A certificate of graduation should indicate the type of school, and it is usually indicated by the name of the school.

In higher education, only regular higher education institutions and research institutes can award graduate-level credentials. At the *zhuanke* and *benke* or bachelor's levels, issuing bodies come in three categories:

- regular higher education (普通高等教育)
- adult higher education (成人高等教育)
- higher education self-study examinations (高等教育自学考试)

While all three categories of credentials are recognized, those from regular higher education are the most highly regarded.

The *zhuanke* and *benke* certificates of graduation and bachelor's degree certificates should always indicate to which of the three categories of higher education they belong. Based on the level of education and type of issuing body, there are 19 major educational credentials at and above the senior secondary level (see Table 36).

TABLE 36. 19 MAJOR EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS

CHINESE	ENGLISH
高中毕业证书	Certificate of Graduation from Senior Secondary School
中专毕业证书	Certificate of Graduation from Specialized Senior Secondary School
职业高中毕业证书	Certificate of Graduation from Vocational Senior Secondary School
技校毕业证书	Certificate of Graduation from Technical Workers School
专科毕业证书 (普通高等学校)	<i>Zhuanke</i> Certificate of Graduation (Regular Higher Education)
专科毕业证书 (成人高等教育)	<i>Zhuanke</i> Certificate of Graduation (Adult Higher Education)
专科毕业证书 (高等教育自学考试)	<i>Zhuanke</i> Certificate of Graduation (Self-Study Examinations)
第二专业专科毕业证书 (成人高等教育)	<i>Zhuanke</i> Certificate of Graduation in Second Specialty (Adult Higher Education)
本科毕业证书 (普通高等学校)	<i>Benke</i> Certificate of Graduation (Regular Higher Education)
本科毕业证书 (成人高等教育)	<i>Benke</i> Certificate of Graduation (Adult Higher Education)
本科毕业证书 (高等教育自学考试)	<i>Benke</i> Certificate of Graduation (Self-Study Examinations)
专升本毕业证书 (成人高等教育)	<i>Benke</i> Certificate of Graduation through Upgrading Program (Adult Higher Education)
学士学位证书 (普通高等学校)	Bachelor's Degree (Regular Higher Education)
学士学位证书 (成人高等教育)	Bachelor's Degree (Adult Higher Education)
学士学位证书 (高等教育自学考试)	Bachelor's Degree (Self-Study Examinations)
硕士研究生毕业证书	Certificate of Graduation from Master's Program
硕士学位证书	Master's Degree
博士研究生毕业证书	Certificate of Graduation from Doctoral Program
博士学位证书	Doctor's Degree

GRADE CONVERSION

Conversion of Chinese grades to Albertan standards is based on the fact the passing grade is 60% in China and 50% in Alberta. The following conversion tables cover the most commonly used grading scales in China.

TABLE 37. GRADE CONVERSION: PERCENTAGE SCALE

CHINESE PERCENTAGE	IQAS PERCENTAGE	CHINESE PERCENTAGE	IQAS PERCENTAGE
100	100	79	74
99	99	78	73
98	97	77	71
97	96	76	70
96	95	75	69
95	94	74	68
94	92	73	66
93	91	72	65
92	90	71	64
91	89	70	63
90	87	69	61
89	86	68	60
88	85	67	59
87	84	66	58
86	83	65	56
85	81	64	55
84	80	63	54
83	79	62	53
82	78	61	51
81	76	60	50
80	75		

TABLE 38. GRADE CONVERSION: FIVE-LEVEL SCALE

PERCENTAGE	ENGLISH DESCRIPTOR	LETTER GRADE	CHINESE DESCRIPTOR	IQAS PERCENTAGE
90–100	Excellent	A	优秀 or 优	94
80–89	Very Good	B	良好 or 良	82
70–79	Good	C	中等 or 中	69
60–69	Pass	D	及格	57
0–59	Fail	E/F	不及格	Fail

TABLE 39. GRADE CONVERSION: FOUR-LEVEL SCALE (I)

PERCENTAGE	ENGLISH DESCRIPTOR	LETTER GRADE	CHINESE DESCRIPTOR	IQAS PERCENTAGE
85–100	Excellent	A	优秀 or 优	90
70–84	Good	B	良好 or 良	71
60–69	Pass/Satisfactory	C	及格 or 中	56
0–59	Fail	D/F	不及格 or 差	Fail

TABLE 40. GRADE CONVERSION: FOUR-LEVEL SCALE (II)

PERCENTAGE	ENGLISH DESCRIPTOR	LETTER GRADE	CHINESE DESCRIPTOR	IQAS PERCENTAGE
86–100	Excellent	A	优秀 or 优	91
76–85	Good	B	良好 or 良	75
60–75	Pass/Satisfactory	C	及格 or 中	60
0–59	Fail	D/F	不及格 or 差	Fail

TABLE 41. GRADE CONVERSION: FOUR-LEVEL SCALE (III)

PERCENTAGE	ENGLISH DESCRIPTOR	LETTER GRADE	CHINESE DESCRIPTOR	IQAS PERCENTAGE
91–100	Excellent	A	优秀 or 优	95
76–90	Good	B	良好 or 良	79
60–75	Pass/Satisfactory	C	及格 or 中	60
0–59	Fail	D/F	不及格 or 差	Fail

DOCUMENT FORMATS AND SAMPLES

For samples of documents that have been scanned, categorized and annotated, see Appendix B.

DOCUMENT TRANSLATION

English translation of Chinese documents varies greatly in quality and accuracy. Individuals, schools, notary public offices, credential evaluation services, immigrant-serving agencies and professional translators may do the translation. At one time, Chinese students prepared their own transcript based on school records, translated it and had the transcript and translation checked and stamped by the school. Currently, when a higher education institution provides certified copies in Chinese and English of education documents such as degree certificates and transcripts, the translation is usually done in-house. Only a small number of secondary schools have such a translation capacity, however. Students therefore continue to translate their own secondary school documents, and format and quality differ greatly.

It is a good idea to have a translation verified no matter the source. Some minor translation errors are easy to detect: 计算机基础 (computer basics) may be translated as “computer base.” However, instead of being a literal translation, the English document may use interpretive translation or even be tailor-made for the perceived benefits of the student. For example, “advanced mathematics” (高等数学) may be translated as “calculus.”

An English transcript may omit courses considered to be irrelevant for further study at a North American institution, such as Marxist Theory (马克思主义理论) and History of the Communist Party of China (中共党史). A certificate of graduation may fail to mention it belongs to the adult higher education sector (成人高等教育) rather than the regular higher education sector (普通高等院校).

Occasionally the English document contains added information that may not be true. For example, a certified English copy of a bachelor's degree in engineering may indicate the recipient is also awarded the professional title of engineer. In fact, educational institutions in China cannot award professional titles. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in engineering (for which a more accurate translation is bachelor's degree in technology), an individual usually has to work for at least five years as an “assistant engineer” (助理工程师) before obtaining the title “engineer” (工程师).

By their very nature, translations are approximations rather than equivalents of the original text. Furthermore, the use of the “same” terminology may be quite different in China and Canada. Translations, therefore, should not be taken at face value. For example, a Chinese “university” (大学) may only offer education at the *zhuanke* level, comparable to a Canadian college that only offers certificate and diploma programs, and some Chinese “colleges” (学院, sometimes translated as “institute”) award master's and doctoral degrees.

The use of the word “engineering” demonstrates the complexities involved in translation. When “engineering” appears in Chinese educational credentials, it is the translation of either:

- 工 (industry or technology), or
- 工程 (engineering)

When used in the name of an academic degree, such as bachelor's degree in engineering (工学学士), it is the translation of 工, which has a much broader meaning than 工程 and is often rendered into:

- “industry” (as in 工商银行, Industrial and Commercial Bank), or
- “technology” (as in 工商大学, Technology and Business University)

工学学士 should therefore be translated as bachelor's degree in technology.

If “engineering” appears in the name of the department or major, such as chemical engineering (化学工程), it is the translation of 工程. In 1997 China introduced the Master's of Engineering professional degree (工程硕士专业学位). Since the word “professional” (专业) may be inadvertently omitted in the translation, such a degree may easily be confused with the more common 工学硕士 (Master's of Technology, usually translated as Master's of Engineering).

DOCUMENT AUTHENTICATION AND FRAUD DETECTION

I. VERIFY

Verify the existence and recognition status of the institution by which the credential was issued. If necessary, verify that the institution by that name did offer that specific program at that particular time.

Look for the institution in the major references, bearing in mind the possibility of mergers, name changes and translation variations. Refer to the PIER World Education Series for a list of military institutions. The most complete and updated lists of recognized higher education institutions are provided by the Ministry of Education website (www.moe.gov.cn). Major references include:

- *Chinese Universities and Colleges* (4th Edition). (2004). Beijing: Higher Education Press.
- *Postsecondary Institutions of the People's Republic of China*. (1992). NAFSA.
- *International Handbook of Universities* (16th Edition). (2001). International Association of Universities.
- *The World of Learning* (55th Edition). (2005). Europa Publications.
- *PIER World Education Series: The People's Republic of China*. (2000). PIER World Education Series.
- *Country Education Profiles: China*. (1992). NOOSR
- *International Comparisons*. UK NARIC. (www.internationalcomparisons.org.uk/)

Fraudulent case: An applicant submitted a *zhuanke* certificate of graduation for a “description of coursework” assessment for the purpose of a course waiver. The certificate indicated it was issued by Beihua University (北华大学) in July 1999. The assessor grew suspicious when the applicant was able to provide a more detailed transcript within very short notice. Further research revealed that Beihua University was established through a merger of several institutions in September 1999. Subsequently the China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Centre confirmed the file was fraudulent.

2. CHECK CREDENTIALS

Make sure the document belongs to one of the 19 major educational credentials. A completed credential from China is either a certificate of graduation (毕业证书 or 毕业文凭) or a degree certificate (学位证书).

Recognized institutions may offer some non-qualification programs, which typically issue certificates of completion (结业证书) or certificates of study (学业证书). There are two kinds of certificates of completion.

- A certificate of completion may be issued for a non-qualification program, such as graduate coursework training classes (研究生课程进修班), higher education self-study examinations preparation courses and *zhuanke* or *benke* programs not approved by the Ministry of Education. Such a certificate is not accepted for admission into qualification education programs. The only way for holders of such a certificate to obtain recognized educational qualifications is to pass the higher education self-study examinations.
- A certificate of completion issued for a qualification program indicates the student has completed all the coursework but has not successfully graduated due to disciplinary problems and/or poor academic performance (such as substandard graduation thesis or too many exam retakes for required courses). Though academic credits completed are considered valid, holders of such a certificate of completion cannot gain admission into the next level of qualification education unless they claim comparable educational competence and take extra exams. They usually have a period of time to make up the deficiencies in order to receive a certificate of graduation. Undergraduate students who fail to get a *benke* certificate of graduation in the same year they complete their coursework are usually ineligible to receive a bachelor's degree.

The Ministry of Education recognizes credentials issued by military institutions (军队院校). The certificates should bear the names of the General Chief of Staff and General Political Office of the People's Liberation Army (中国人民解放军总参谋部、总政治部).

Most credentials issued by Communist Party of China schools (党校), including *zhuanke* and *benke* certificates of graduation through correspondence, are not recognized. Exceptions include CPC programs that recruit students through the NCEE or NACEE.

3. COMPARE FORMAT AND CHARACTERISTICS

Make sure the document conforms to:

- the format and characteristics described and shown in Sample Documents (see Appendix B)
- the placement recommendations in the appropriate credential template

If the document appears unusual or suspicious, take the necessary steps to authenticate it.

An applicant submitted a *benke* certificate of graduation from the University of International Business and Economics (对外经济贸易大学). Anyone who reads Chinese would easily notice the immature handwriting on the certificate and the words 两年制本科 (two-year *benke* program). *Benke* should be four or five years. More suspicious signs are evident in the English translation alone. For example, it describes the study period as “September 2000 to September 2002,” when in fact the Chinese academic year lasts from early September to mid-July and certificates of graduation are issued in early July.

4. CONTACT THE INSTITUTION OR VERIFY ONLINE

Chinese Universities and Colleges includes contact information for recognized institutions in China. Institutions, however, do not always respond to requests for document authentication.

The Ministry of Education has authorized the China Higher Education Student Information website (www.chsi.com.cn) to provide online authentication of certificates of graduation from all higher education sectors, including regular, adult, distance and self-study examination programs. Currently it covers certificates issued between 1990 and 2004. Users need to purchase prepaid cards costing Y5 (slightly less than CDN\$1) to authenticate one certificate. The site does not authenticate degree certificates. This is the only website authorized by the Ministry of Education to authenticate higher education credentials. Any website that has a similar name but a different URL is illegitimate.

The Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Centre under the Ministry of Education offers a credential evaluation and verification service. An individual can submit any type of Chinese higher education credential (certificate of graduation, degree certificate or transcript) to the centre and have “credentials reports” (Chinese, English or bilingual) forwarded to postsecondary institutions, employers, professional bodies or evaluation services. The centre has different fee schedules for applicants in China and those who live overseas; its turnaround is 20 working days.

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GLOSSARY

CATEGORY	CHINESE	ENGLISH
administration	教务处	academic affairs office/teaching administration section
	学位评定委员会	Academic Degrees Assessment Committee
	教育部学位与研究生教育发展中心	China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Development Centre
	教育局	education bureau [municipal or county level]
	教育委员会/教委	education committee [municipal level]
	教育厅	education department [provincial level]
	高等教育自学考试委员会	Higher Education Self-Study Examinations Committee
	教育部	Ministry of Education
	市/县教育局	municipal/county education bureau
	中华人民共和国 or 中国	People's Republic of China (PRC)
	省学位委员会	provincial academic degree committees
	省学位办公室	provincial academic degree offices
	劳动人事部门	provincial and local labour and personnel departments
	省高等教育自学考试委员会	provincial higher education self-study examination committee
	省/市教育委员会	provincial/municipal education committee
	省/市教育厅	provincial/municipal education department
	中华人民共和国学位条例	Regulations on Academic Degrees of the People's Republic of China
	国务院	State Council [the central government]
	国家教育委员会	State Education Commission
credential	学分	academic credit
	授予学位 or 学位	academic degree
	学年	academic year
	文科	arts and humanities subjects
	学士学位证书	bachelor's degree certificate
	学士	bachelor's degrees
	北京市普通高中同等学力证书	Beijing Certificate of Comparable Educational Competence of General Senior Secondary School
	北京市普通高中毕业证书	Beijing Certificate of Graduation from General Senior Secondary School
	北京市高中会考合格证书	Beijing Senior Secondary Unified Examination Certificate
	北京市高中会考合格证书 - 社会类	Beijing Senior Secondary Unified Examination Certificate – Social Category
	北京市高中会考合格证书 - 职业学校类	Beijing Senior Secondary Unified Examination Certificate – Vocational School Category
	本科	<i>benke</i> ["undergraduate course"]
	本科结业证书	<i>benke</i> certificate of completion
	本科毕业证书	<i>benke</i> certificate of graduation
	证书编号	certificate number

CATEGORY	CHINESE	ENGLISH
credential, cont'd	普通高中同等学历证书	certificate of comparable educational competence of general senior secondary school
	结业证书	certificate of completion
	研究生课程班结业证书	certificate of completion of graduate coursework
	单科结业证书	certificate of course completion through self-study
	毕业证书 or 毕业文凭	certificate of graduation
	博士研究生毕业证书	certificate of graduation from a doctoral program
	研究生班毕业证书	certificate of graduation from a graduate class
	硕士研究生毕业证书	certificate of graduation from a master's program
	中专毕业证书	certificate of graduation from a specialized senior secondary school
	技工学校毕业证书	certificate of graduation from skilled workers school
	职业高中毕业证书	certificate of graduation from vocational senior secondary school
	高等教育自学考试毕业证书	certificate of graduation through self-study
	肄业证书	certificate of incompletion/certificate of attendance
	学业证书	certificate of study
	主席	chairman
	科举考试	civil service examinations
	学时	class hours
	同等学力	comparable educational competence
	课程	course
	认证报告	credentials report from China Academic Degrees and Graduation Education Development Centre
	课程计划/教学计划	curriculum
	出生日期	date of birth
	毕业日期	date of graduation
	发证日期	date of issuance
	学位	degree
	学位证书	degree certificate
	学士学位证书	degree certificate: bachelor
	博士学位证书	degree certificate: doctor
	硕士学位证书	degree certificate: master
	系	department
	博士	doctoral degree
	博士学位	doctoral degree or PhD
	博士研究生	doctoral program
	学历	educational qualification
	普通高中毕业会考	General Senior Secondary Unified Graduation Examination
	研究生	graduate student/graduate study

CATEGORY	CHINESE	ENGLISH
credential, cont'd	准予毕业	graduation
	毕业会考	graduation examination
	高等教育自学考试	higher education self-study examinations
	成人高等教育	higher education: adult
	普通高等学校	higher education: regular
	专业/主修	major/specialty
	研究生课程进修班/ 硕士研究生课程班	master's coursework training class [non-qualification program]
	硕士学位 or 硕士	master's degree
	硕士学位证书	master's degree certificate
	中级职业资格证书	mid-level occupational certificate
	全国成人高等学校入学考试 or 成人高考	National Adult College Entrance Examination
	全国普通高等学校入学考试 or 高考	National College Entrance Examination
	全国普通高等学校招生考试 or 高考 for short	National Matriculation Test
	公证书	notary public certificates
	院长	president
	校长	president/principal
	专业学位	professional degree
	学制	program length
	函授	program type: correspondence
	夜大学	program type: evening class
	全日制	program type: full-time
	脱产	program type: full-time (adult)
	半脱产	program type: half-time (adult)
	业余/非全日制	program type: part-time
	理科	science subjects
	二学历专科毕业证书	second specialty <i>zhuanke</i> certificate of graduation
	二学历	second specialty <i>zhuanke</i> programs
	学期	semester/term
	教师资格证书	teacher qualification certificate
	成绩证明 / 成绩卡 / 成绩表 / 成绩记载表/成绩单 / 成绩报告单 / 记分册 or 成绩单	transcript
	专科毕业证书	<i>zhuanke</i> certificate of graduation, often translated as a diploma
	专科 or 大专	<i>zhuanke</i> ["diploma course"]

CATEGORY	CHINESE	ENGLISH
degree name	农学	Agriculture
	文学	Arts
	经济学	Economics
	教育学	Education
	工学	Technology [often translated as Engineering]
	历史	History
	法学	Law
	管理学	Management
	医学	Medicine
	军事学	Military Science
	哲学	Philosophy
	理学	Science
degrees, examples	音乐学专业文学士学位	Bachelor of Arts in Music
	建筑学学士 / 硕士	bachelor's and master's degrees in Architecture
	工商管理硕士	Master of Business Administration
	行政管理硕士专业学位	Master of Public Administration
	临床医学硕士 / 博士专业学位	master's and doctoral degrees in Clinical Medicine
	农业推广硕士专业学位	master's degree in Agricultural Promotion
	兽医专业学位	professional degree in Veterinary Medicine
government documents	1990 年以来高校合并情况	Institutional mergers since 1990
	普通高中课程方案(实验)	General Senior Secondary School Curriculum (Experimental)
	全日制普通高级中学课程计划 (试验修订稿)	General Senior Secondary School Curriculum (Revised Trial Version)
	全日制普通高级中学课程计划 (试验)	General Senior Secondary School Curriculum (Trial Version)
	教育部批准的高等学校名单	List of higher education institutions approved by the Ministry of Education
	全日制十年制中小学教学计划试行 草案	Primary and Secondary School Curriculum (10-Year; Draft)
	现行普通高中教学计划的调整意见	Reform of the Current General Senior Secondary School Curriculum
	全日制五年制中学教学计划试行 草案	Secondary School Curriculum (Five-Year; Draft)
	全日制六年制重点中学教学计划	Six-Year Key Secondary School Curriculum

CATEGORY	CHINESE	ENGLISH
grading: five-level	优/优秀	A/excellent
	良/良好	B/good
	中/中等	C/fair/average
	及格	D/pass
	不及格	F/fail
grading: four-level	优/优秀	A/excellent
	良/良好	B/good
	及格	C/pass
	不及格	D/fail
grading: two-level	合格/通过	pass
	不合格/不通过	fail
institutions, examples	北京航空航天大学	Beihang University
	北京信息职业技术学院	Beijing Information Technology College
	北京机械工业学院	Beijing Institute of Machinery
	北京理工大学	Beijing Institute of Technology
	北京师范大学	Beijing Normal University
	北京联合大学	Beijing Union University
	北京大學 instead of 北京大学	Beijing University
	沧州师范专科学校	Cangzhou Teachers Training College
	首都师范大学	Capital Normal University
	中央美术学院	Central Academy of Fine Art
	华中师范大学 or 華中師範大學	Central China Normal University
	中央音乐学院	Central Conservatory of Music
	中南大学	Central South University
	中央民族大学	Central University for Nationalities
	中国农业大学	China Agricultural University
	中华女子学院	China Women's University
	重庆大学	Chongqing University
	大连理工大学	Dalian University of Technology
	复旦大学	Fudan University
	哈尔滨工业大学	Harbin Institute of Technology
	淮南联合大学	Huainan Union University
	华中科技大学	Huazhong University of Science and Technology
	湖南大学	Hunan University
	吉林大学	Jilin University
	兰州大学	Lanzhou University

CATEGORY	CHINESE	ENGLISH
institutions, examples, cont'd	临沂医学专科学校	Linyi Medical College
	洛阳大学	Luoyang University
	京师大学堂	Metropolitan University
	牡丹江师范学院	Mudanjiang Teachers College
	南京大学	Nanjing University
	南开大学	Nankai University
	国防科技大学	National University of Defence Technology
	东北大学	Northeastern University
	西北农林科技大学	Northwest Sci-Tech University of Agriculture and Forestry
	西北工业大学	Northwestern Polytechnical University
	中国海洋大学	Ocean University of China
	北京大学	Peking University [official name; although often referred to as Beijing University]
	北京大学 or 北京大學	Peking University
	广播电视大学	Radio and TV universities
	中国人民大学	Renmin University of China
	山东大学	Shandong University
	上海交通大学	Shanghai Jiaotong University
	四川大学	Sichuan University
	华南理工大学	South China University of Technology
	东南大学	Southeast University
	中山大学	Sun Yat-sen University
	天津大学	Tianjin University
	天津职业大学	Tianjin Vocational College
	同济大学	Tongji University
	清华大学 or 清華大學	Tsinghua University
	电子科技大学	University of Electronic Science and Technology
	国际关系学院	University of International Relations
	现代管理大学	University of Modern Administration
	中国科技大学	University of Science and Technology of China
	武汉工业学院	Wuhan Polytechnic University
	武汉大学	Wuhan University
	西安交通大学	Xi'an Jiaotong University
	厦门大学	Xiamen University
	新余高等专科学校	Xinyu Junior College
	燕京华侨大学	Yanjing Overseas Chinese University
	燕京华侨职业学院	Yanjing Overseas Chinese Vocational College
	浙江大学	Zhejiang University

CATEGORY	CHINESE	ENGLISH
languages	广东话	Cantonese
	语文	Chinese
	汉语	Chinese [Han language]
	国语	Guoyu—national language in Taiwan
	汉	Han
	回	Hui
	普通话	Mandarin Chinese [known as Putonghua in the mainland]; “common speech”
	苗	Miao
	蒙古	Mongol
	简体字	Simplified Chinese
	藏	Tibetan
	繁体字	Traditional Chinese
	维吾尔	Uygur
	土家	Tujia
	彝	Yi
	壮	Zhuang

number	一/壹	one
	二/贰	two
	三/参	three
	四/肆	four
	五/伍	five
	六/陆	six
	七/柒	seven
	八/捌	eight
	九/玖	nine
	十/拾	ten

subjects of study	农学	Agriculture
	艺术	Art or Arts
	文学	Arts
	文	Arts and Humanities
	生物	Biology
	化学	Chemistry
	社区活动	Community Service
	文科综合	Comprehensive Humanities
	综合时间活动	Comprehensive Practice
	文理综合	Comprehensive Science and Humanities
	理科综合	Comprehensive Science
	经济学	Economics

CATEGORY	CHINESE	ENGLISH
subjects of study, cont'd	教育学	Education
	限定选修	elective components
	工程 or 工程学.	Engineering
	环境教育	Environmental Education
	美术	Fine Art
	外语	Foreign Language
	通用技术	General Technology
	地理	Geography
	健康	Health
	历史 or 史学	History
	人文与社会	Humanities and Society
	思想品德	Ideology and Morality
	思想政治	Ideology and Politics
	信息技术	Information Technology
	劳动	Labour
	劳动技术	Labour Skills
	语言与文学	Language and Literature
	语言	Language
	法学	Law
	管理学	Management
	数学	Mathematics
	医学	Medicine
	军事学	Military Science
	音乐、美术	Music and Fine Art
	音乐	Music
	自然	Nature
	任意选修	optional courses
	哲学	Philosophy
	体育与健康	Physical Education and Health
	体育	Physical Education
	物理	Physics
	政治	Politics
	人口教育	Population Education
	实习	practicum
	研究性学习活动	Research-Oriented Study
	科学 or 理 or 理学	Science
	社会实践 社会时间活动	Social Practice
	社会	Social Studies
	社会	Society
	技术	Technology
	工学	Technology and/or Engineering

APPENDIX A—TOP 10 INSTITUTIONS

TOP 10 INSTITUTIONS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF TOP FIVE DISCIPLINES

1. Peking University
2. Tsinghua University
3. Zhejiang University
4. Fudan University
5. Graduate School of China Academy of Sciences
6. Shanghai Jiaotong University
7. University of Science and Technology of China
8. Nanjing University
9. Renmin University of China, China Agricultural University, Nankai University, Harbin Institute of Technology

TOP 10 INSTITUTIONS FOR COMPUTER SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. National University of Defence Technology
2. Tsinghua University
3. Peking University
4. Computing Technology Research Institute of China Academy of Sciences
5. Harbin Institute of Technology
6. Behang University
7. Zhejiang University
8. University of Science and Technology of China
9. Northeast University
10. Nanjing University

TOP 10 INSTITUTIONS FOR BIOLOGY

1. Shanghai Life Science Research Institute of China Academy of Sciences
2. Zoological Research Institute of China Academy of Sciences
3. Peking University
4. Tsinghua University
5. Fudan University
6. Central China Agricultural University
7. Sun Yat-sen University
8. Zhejiang University
9. Wuhan University
10. China Agricultural University

TOP 10 INSTITUTIONS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

1. Peking University
2. Beijing Foreign Studies University
3. People's Liberation Army Foreign Language Institute
4. Heilongjiang University
5. Tsinghua University
6. Fudan University
7. Hunan Normal University
8. Beijing Normal University
9. Zhejiang University
10. Nankai University

APPENDIX B—PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The placement recommendations are guidelines for international educational credentials and how they compare to Canadian educational standards. They represent benchmark credentials and do not cover all credentials. The fact that a credential is not mentioned in the placement recommendations does not mean it cannot be assessed by IQAS. International credentials that are not covered by the placement recommendations should therefore be referred to IQAS for individual evaluation.

The placement recommendations are advisory in nature, and indicate the general level of a credential in Canadian terms.

Given the different educational philosophies, objectives and program structures in the educational systems of the world, evaluation in terms of direct equivalence to specific Canadian credentials is not possible. It is for this reason that IQAS placement recommendations are made in terms of ‘generally compares’ and not ‘equivalent’.

When evaluating international credentials IQAS considers the following:

- the education system of the country concerned
- the recognition of the awarding institution
- the level, length and structure of the program

When appropriate, IQAS may consider that comparison to a different level of education may more accurately reflect the level of the international credential in Canadian terms. IQAS may also combine two or more credentials if it is considered appropriate (see next page).

CREDENTIAL NAME	ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS	LENGTH OF STUDY	IQAS RECOMMENDATIONS
Certificate of Graduation from Senior Secondary School 普通高级中学毕业证书	Completion of Primary and Junior Secondary School (9 years)	3 years	Generally compares to the completion of grade 12.
Certificate of Graduation from Specialized Senior Secondary School 中等专业学校毕业证书	Completion of Primary and Junior Secondary School (9 years)	3–4 years 1–2 years	<i>Pattern 1: Three-year (or four-year) combined general and specialized senior secondary education</i> Generally compares to the completion of grade 12, including vocational study. <i>Pattern 2: One-year (or two-year) specialized senior secondary education</i> Generally compares to the completion of one or two years of vocational study.
Certificate of Graduation (2–3 year post-secondary program) <i>Zhuanke</i> program 专科毕业证书	Completion of Senior Secondary School (12 years)	2–3 years	Generally compares to the completion of a two-year or three-year post-secondary diploma.
Certificate of Graduation (2–3 year post-secondary program) through Self-Study <i>Zhuanke</i> program 高等教育自学考试专科毕业证书	Completion of Senior Secondary School (12 years)	2–3 years	Generally compares to the completion of a post-secondary diploma.
Certificate of Graduation (4–5 year undergraduate program) <i>Benke</i> program 本科毕业证书	Completion of Senior Secondary School (12 years)	4–5 years	Generally compares to the completion of four or five years of undergraduate study.
Certificate of Graduation (4-year undergraduate program) through Self-Study <i>Benke</i> program 高等教育自学考试本科毕业证书	Completion of Senior Secondary School (12 years)	4 years	Generally compares to the completion of four years of undergraduate study.
Certificate of Graduation (2-year university upgrading program) <i>Benke</i> program 专升本毕业证书	Certificate of Graduation (2–3 year postsecondary program)	2 years	Generally compares to the completion of two years of senior undergraduate study.
Certificate of Graduation (2-year university upgrading program) through Self-Study <i>Benke</i> program 高等教育自学考试本科毕业证书	Certificate of Graduation (2–3 year postsecondary program)	2 years	Generally compares to the completion of two years of senior undergraduate study.
Bachelor's Degree 学士学位	Completion of Senior Secondary School (12 years)	4 years	Generally compares to the completion of a four-year Bachelor's degree.
Bachelor's Degree in Medicine 医学学士学位	Completion of Senior Secondary School (12 years)	5 years (minimum)	Generally compares to the completion of a first university professional degree in medicine.
Master's Degree 硕士学位	Completion of Bachelor's degree	2–3 years	Generally compares to the completion of a Master's degree.
Doctor's Degree 博士学位	Completion of Master's degree	3 years (minimum)	Generally compares to the completion of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree with a focus.

APPENDIX C—SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION FROM SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, 1986, PART I

A: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

B: PRINTED BY XUCHANG MUNICIPAL EDUCATION BUREAU



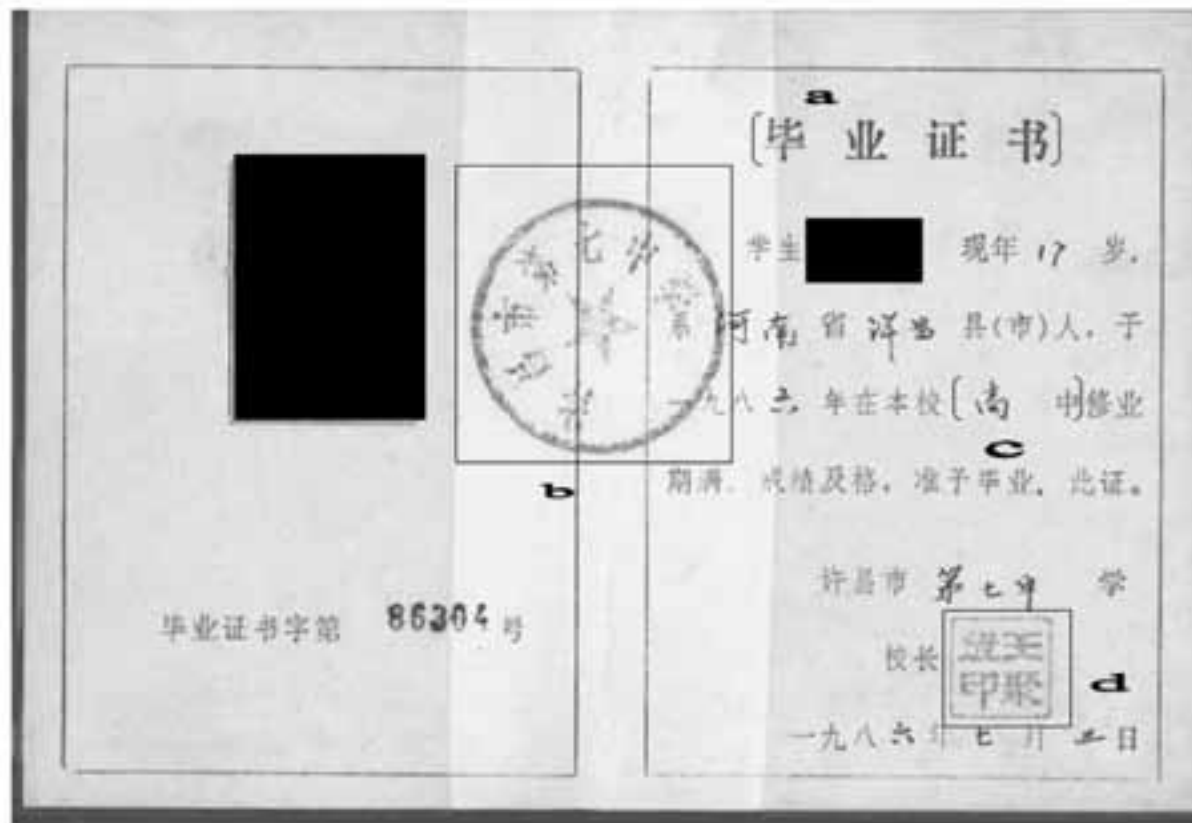
CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION FROM SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, 1986, PART 2

A: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

B: SEAL OF XUCHANG NO. 7 SECONDARY SCHOOL

C: SENIOR SECONDARY

D: PRINCIPAL'S SEAL



GENERAL SENIOR SECONDARY UNIFIED GRADUATION EXAMINATION, 1996

A: GENERAL SENIOR SECONDARY UNIFIED GRADUATION EXAMINATION RESULTS

* This is part of a Certificate of Graduation from Senior Secondary issued in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in 1996

a [普通高级中学会考成绩]

学 科	成 绩	学 科	成 绩
政治	A	物理实验	P
语文	B	化学实验	P
数学	B	生物实验	P
外语	C	劳动技术	P
物理	B		
化学	A		
生物	A		
历史	C		
地理	C		
体育	P		

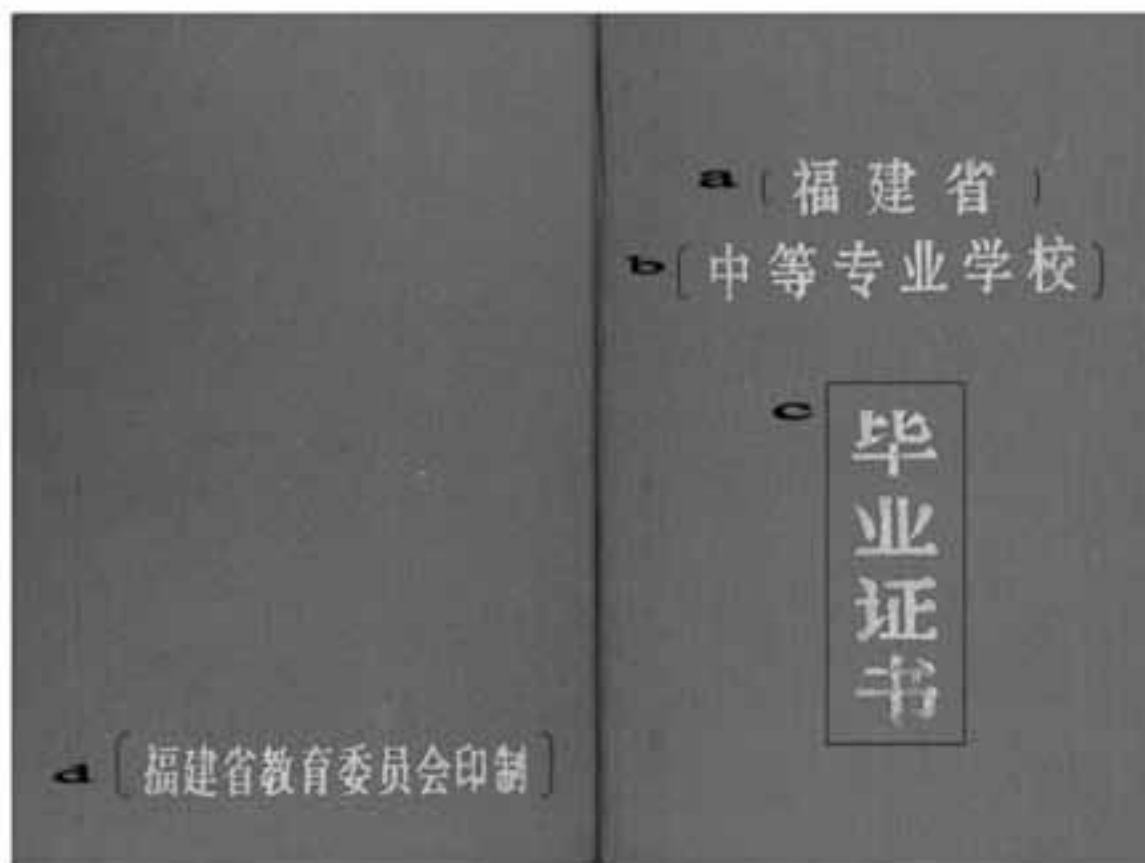
CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION FROM SPECIALIZED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL (1995), PART I

A: FUJIAN PROVINCE

B: SPECIALIZED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

C: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

D: PRINTED BY FUJIAN PROVINCIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE



CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION FROM SPECIALIZED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL (1995), PART 2

A: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

B: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING

C: SEAL OF FUJIAN GRAIN SCHOOL

D: PRINCIPAL'S SEAL



ZHUANKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION, REGULAR HIGHER EDUCATION, 1998

A: REGULAR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

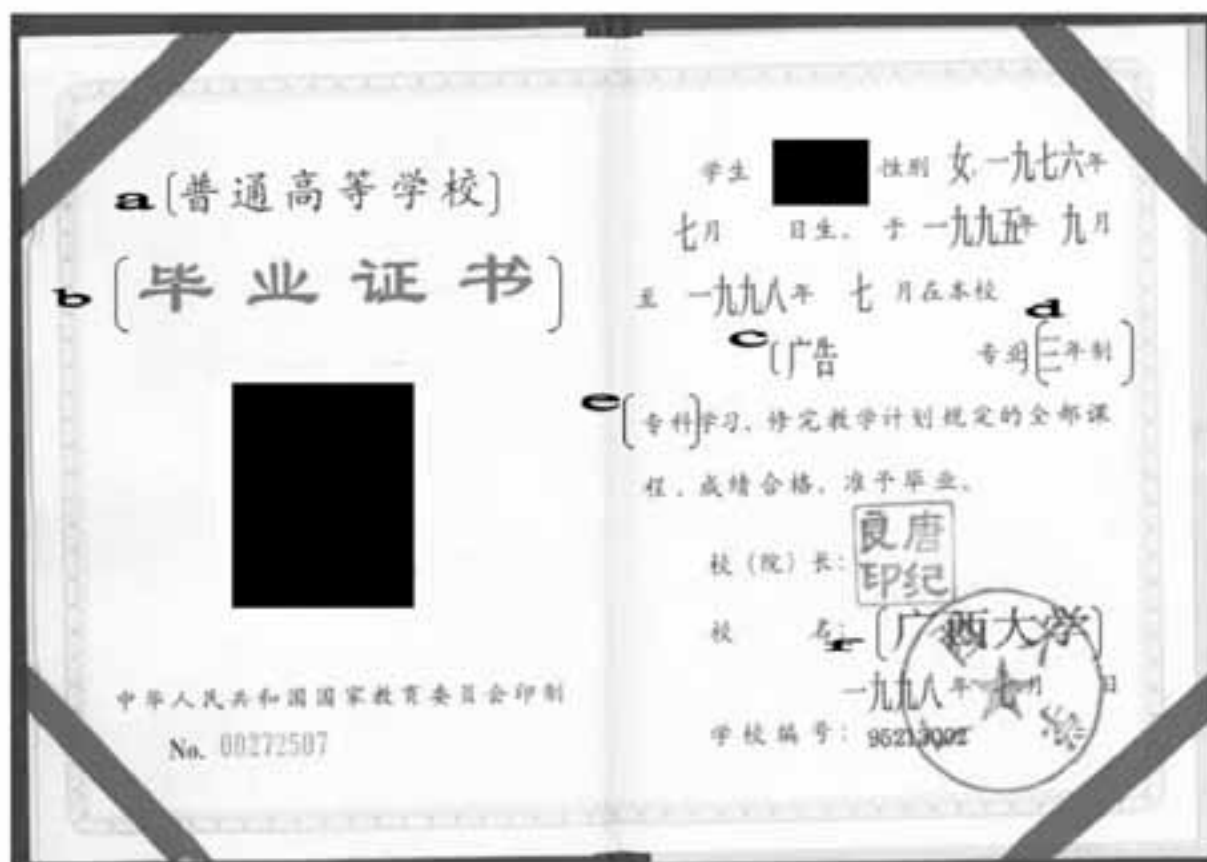
B: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

C: MAJOR IN ADVERTISING

D: THREE-YEAR PROGRAM

E: ZHUANKE

F: GUANGXI UNIVERSITY

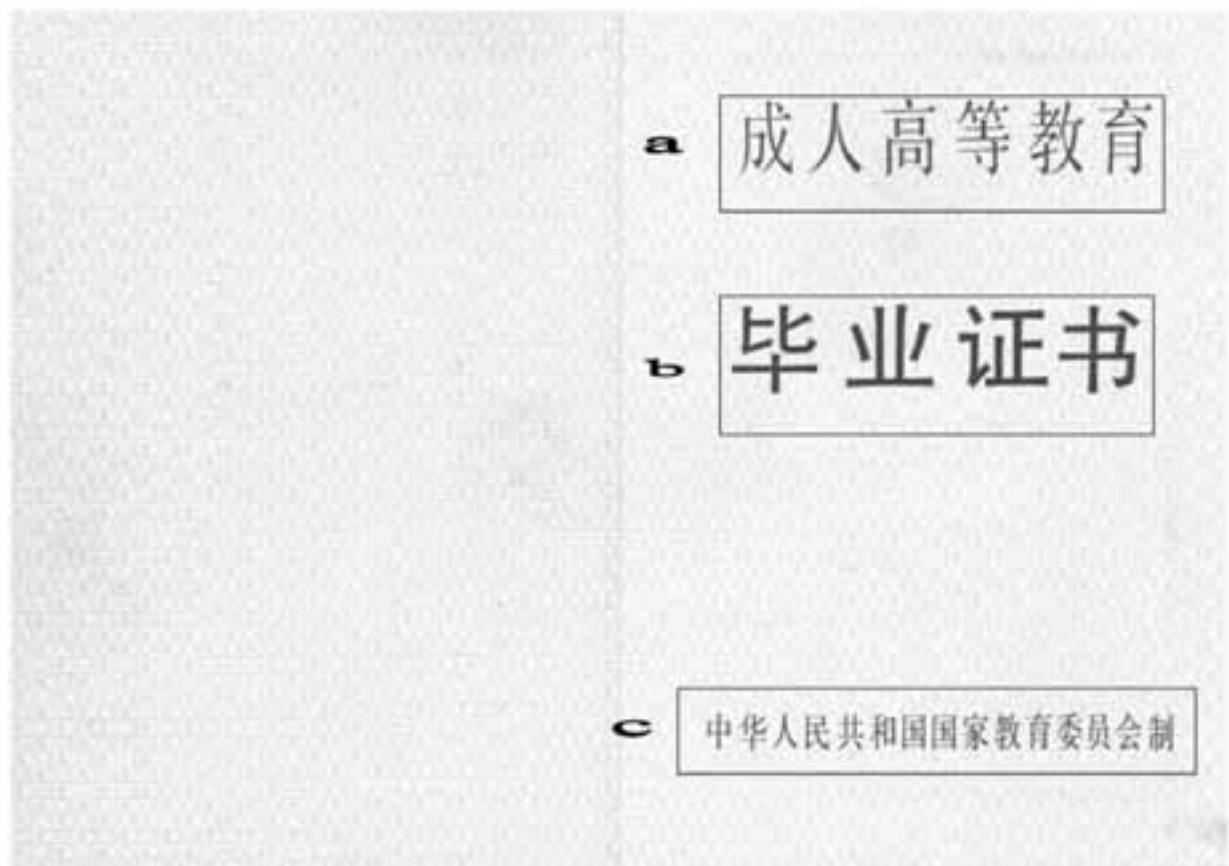


**ZHUANKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION, ADULT HIGHER EDUCATION, 1995,
PART I**

A: ADULT HIGHER EDUCATION

B: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

C: PRINTED BY THE STATE EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



ZHUANKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION, ADULT HIGHER EDUCATION, 1995, PART 2

A: MAJOR IN NURSING

B: HALF-TIME STUDY

C: FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM

D: ZHUANKE

E: RED SEAL OF HARBIN MEDICAL UNIVERSITY



ZHUANKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION THROUGH SELF-STUDY, 2000

A: HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-STUDY EXAMINATIONS

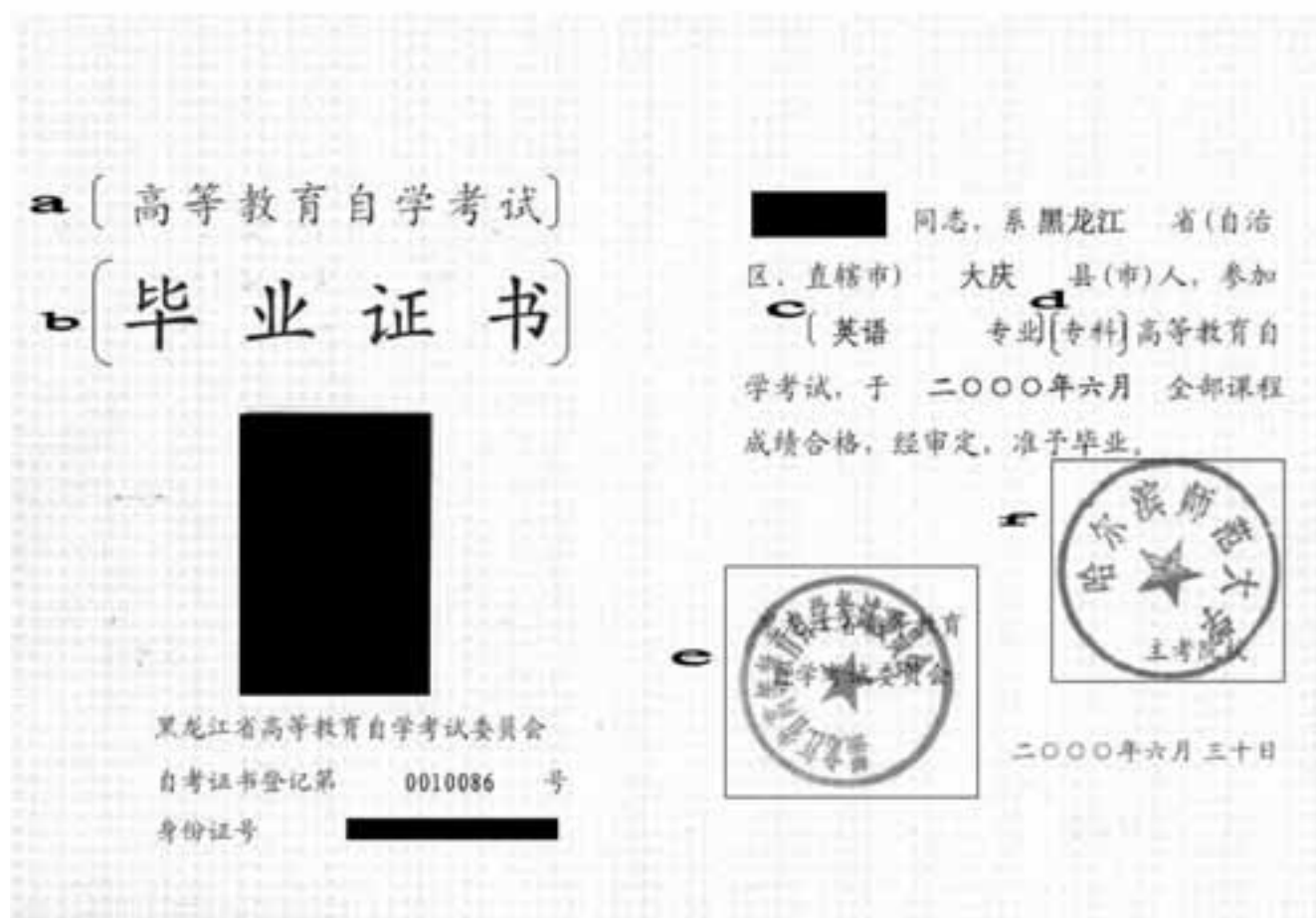
B: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

C: MAJOR IN ENGLISH

D: ZHUANKE

E: RED SEAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-STUDY EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE, HELONGJIANG PROVINCE

F: RED SEAL OF HARBIN NORMAL UNIVERSITY



COMBINED BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION AND BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ARTS, 1991

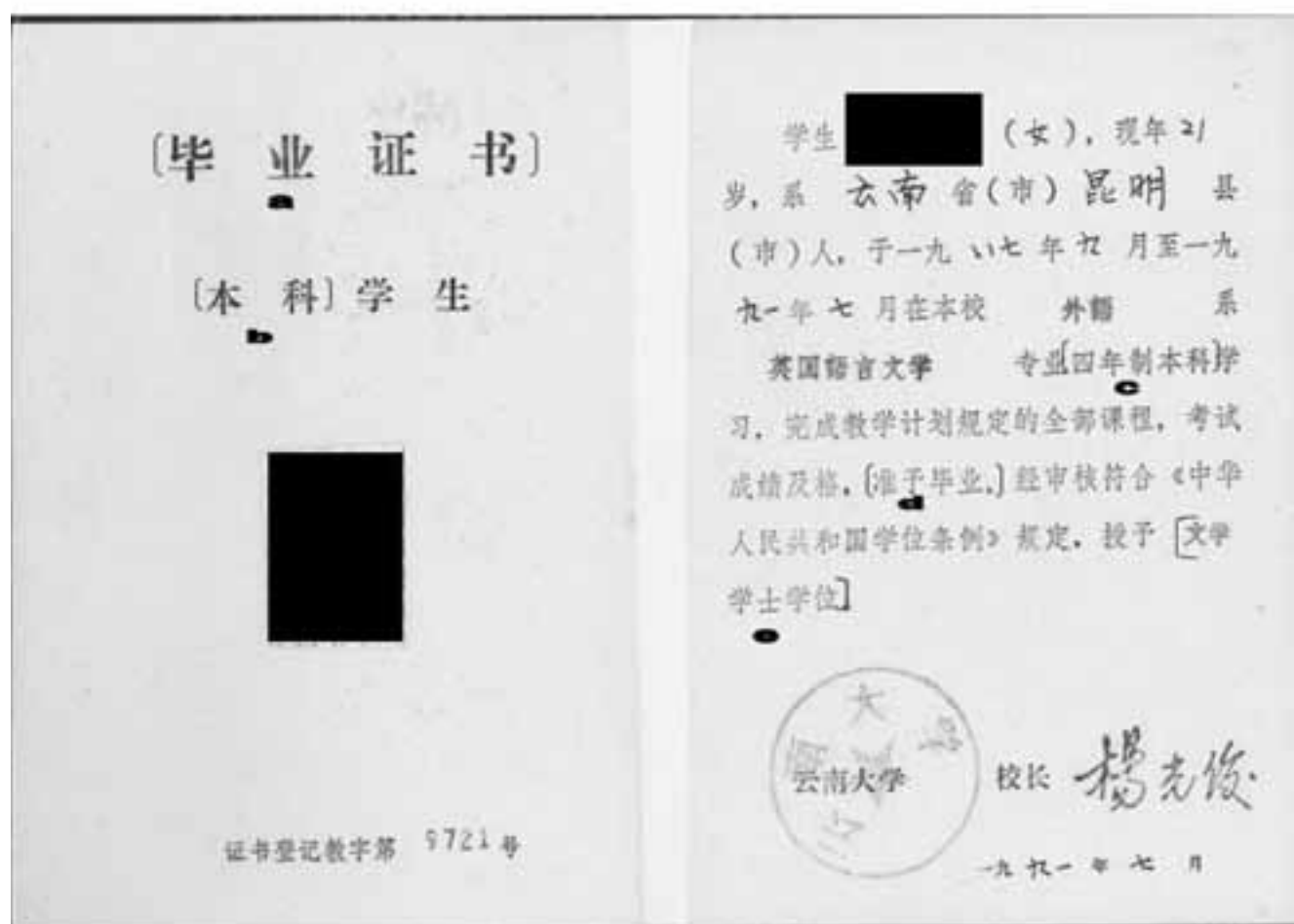
A: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

B: BENKE

C: FOUR-YEAR BENKE

D: APPROVED FOR GRADUATION

E: BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ARTS



BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION, REGULAR HIGHER EDUCATION, 1992

A: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

B: DEPARTMENT OF LAW

C: FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM

D: BENKE CURRICULUM

E: APPROVED FOR GRADUATION



BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION, REGULAR HIGHER EDUCATION, 1996

A: REGULAR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

B: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

C: PRINTED BY THE STATE EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

D: FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM

E: BENKE STUDY



BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION THROUGH SELF-STUDY, 2003

A: HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-STUDY EXAMINATIONS

B: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

C: BENKE

D: HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-STUDY EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE, ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

E: HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION – ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY

Note: The self-study certificate usually does not indicate whether it is a full-length *benke* or *zhuanke* to *benke* upgrading program. That has to be determined by looking at the examination records.



BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION (UPGRADING), 1999

A: CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

B: THREE-YEAR

C: ZHUANKE TO BENKE UPGRADING

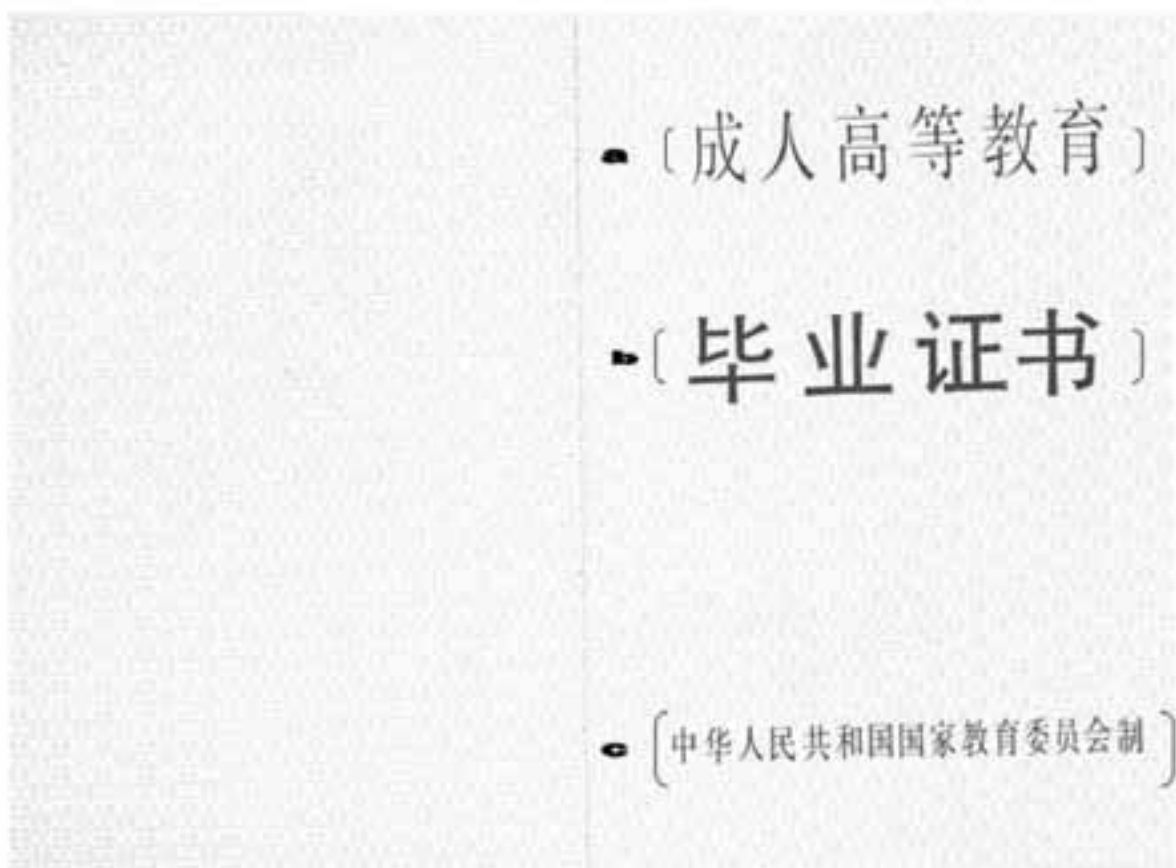
 <p>批准文号: 教部函(81)教工教字005号</p> <p>No. 00311109</p>	<p>学生  性别女, 一九七二年 五月十六日生, 于一九九六年九月 至一九九九年七月在本校(院) 电力管理工程专业 [函授] 学习, 修完[三年][专升本] 教学计划规定的全部课程, 成绩合格, 准予毕业。</p> <p>校(院)长: </p> <p>学校(院): </p> <p>一九九九年七月一日</p> <p>学校编号: 973891</p>
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BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION (UPGRADING), 1998, PART I

A: ADULT HIGHER EDUCATION

B: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

C: PRINTED BY THE STATE EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION (UPGRADING), 1998, PART 2

D: CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM

E: THREE-YEAR PROGRAM

F: BENKE*

* Though the wording "Zhuanke to Benke upgrading" (专升本) is not used here, it is obviously an upgrading program judging by its length (three-year by correspondence).



BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION THROUGH SELF-STUDY, 2003

A: HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-STUDY EXAMINATIONS

B: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

C: BENKE*

D: ZHEJIANG PROVINCIAL HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-STUDY EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE

E: HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION – ZHEJIANG UNIVERSITY

* The self-study certificate of graduation usually does not indicate whether it is a full-length *benke* or *zhuanke* to *benke* upgrading program. This has to be determined by looking at the examination records.



COMBINED BENKE CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION AND BACHELOR'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE, 1991

A: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

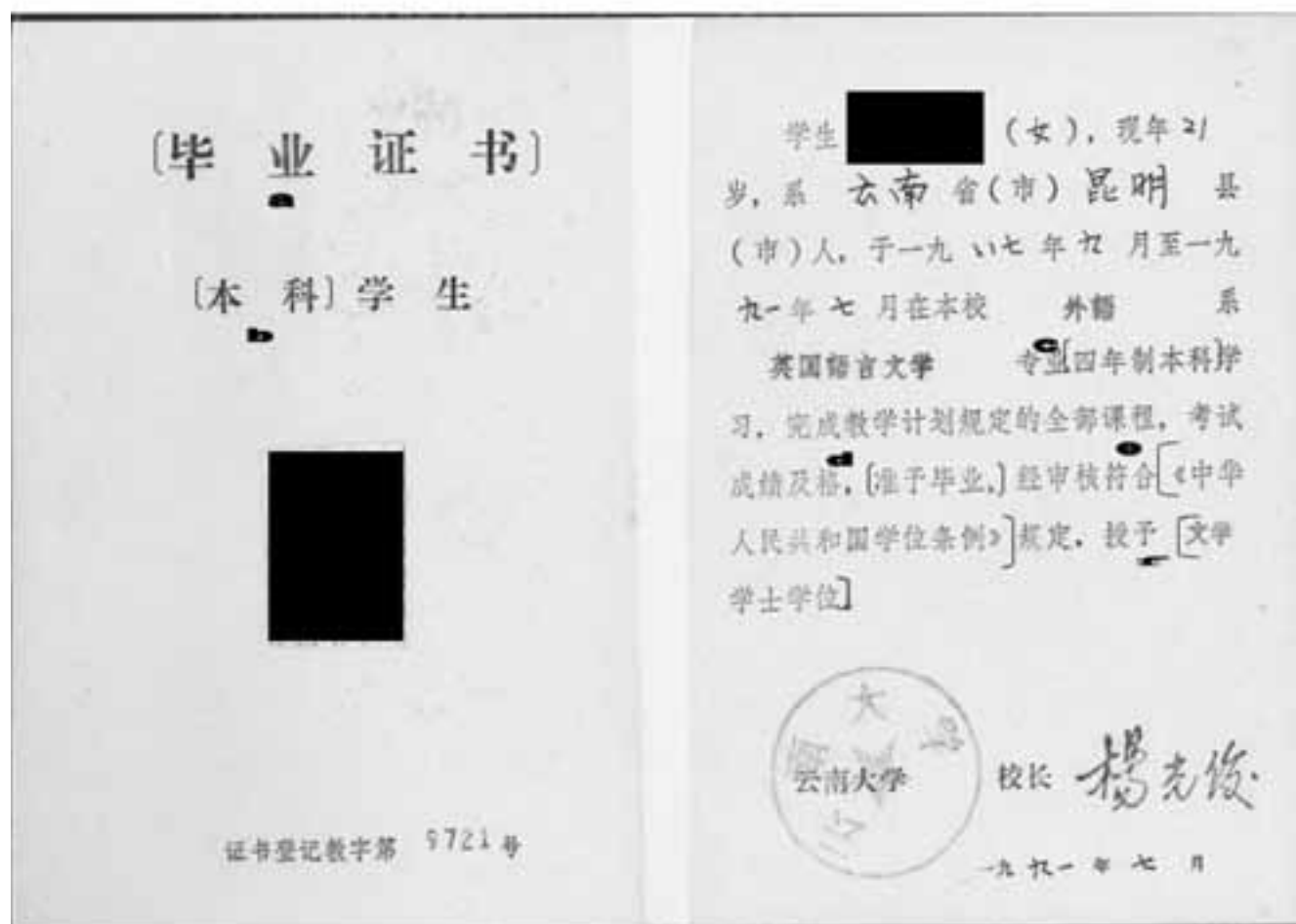
B: BENKE

C: FOUR-YEAR BENKE

D: APPROVED FOR GRADUATION

E: REGULATIONS ON ACADEMIC DEGREES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

F: BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ARTS



BACHELOR'S DEGREE, 2001

A: NATIONAL EMBLEM OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

B: BACHELOR'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE

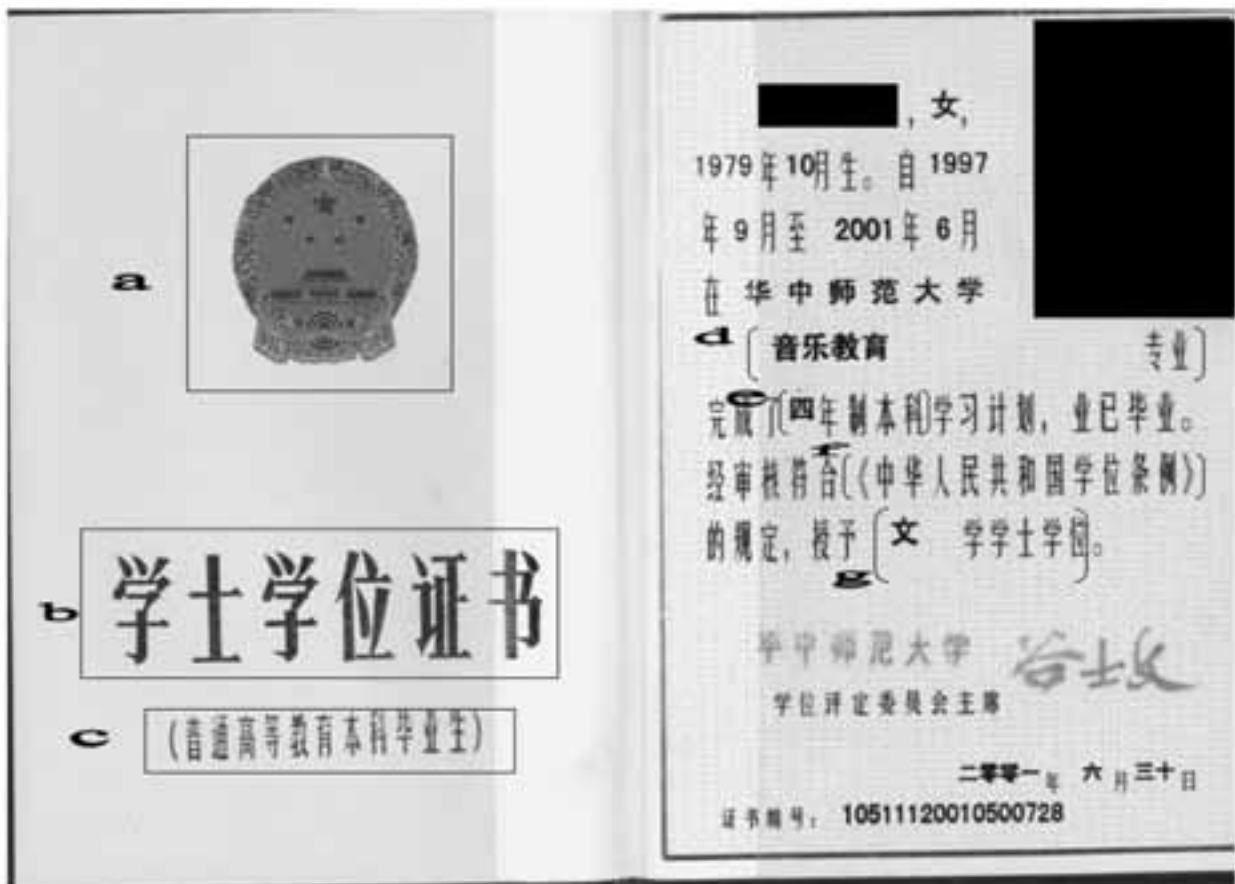
C: REGULAR HIGHER EDUCATION *BENKE* GRADUATE

D: MAJOR IN MUSIC EDUCATION

E: FOUR-YEAR *BENKE*

F: REGULATIONS ON ACADEMIC DEGREES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

G: BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ARTS



BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN MEDICINE (MEDICINE), 1984

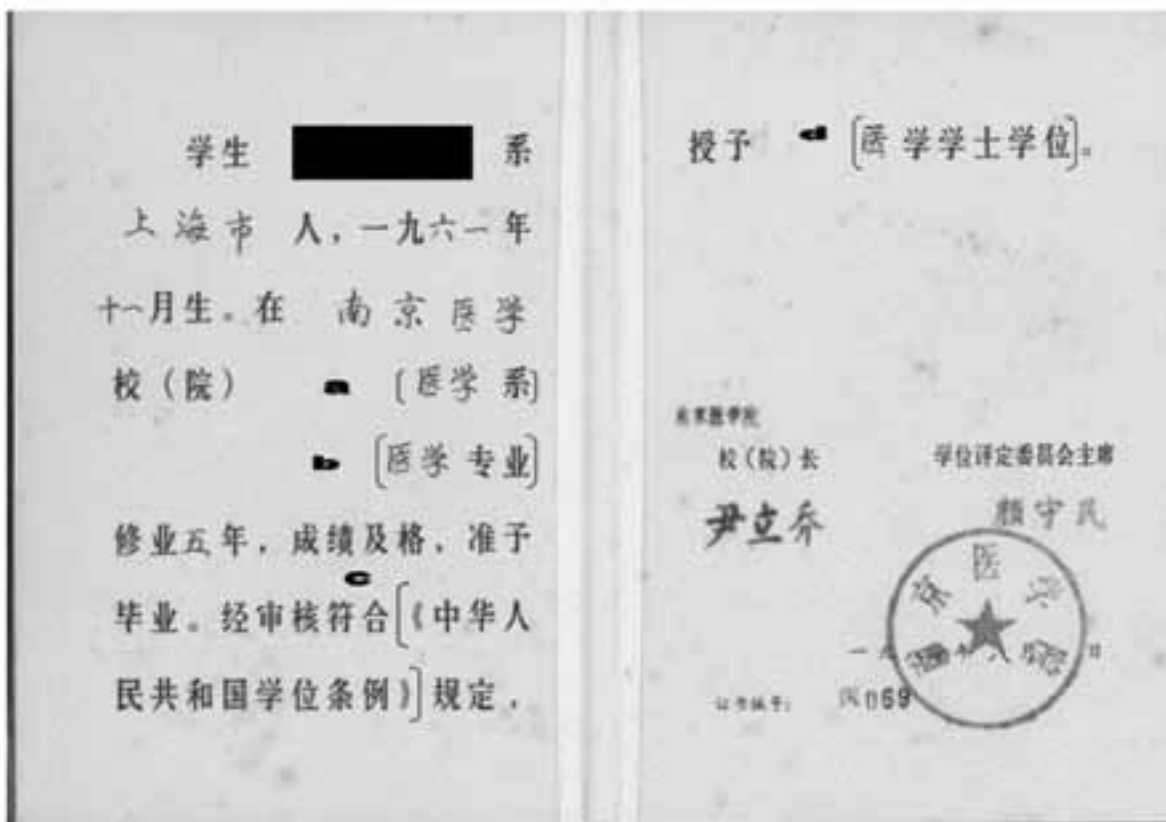
A: DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

B: MAJOR IN MEDICINE

C: REGULATIONS ON ACADEMIC DEGREES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

D: BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN MEDICINE

* This is a combined *Benke* Certificate of Graduation and Bachelor Degree Certificate

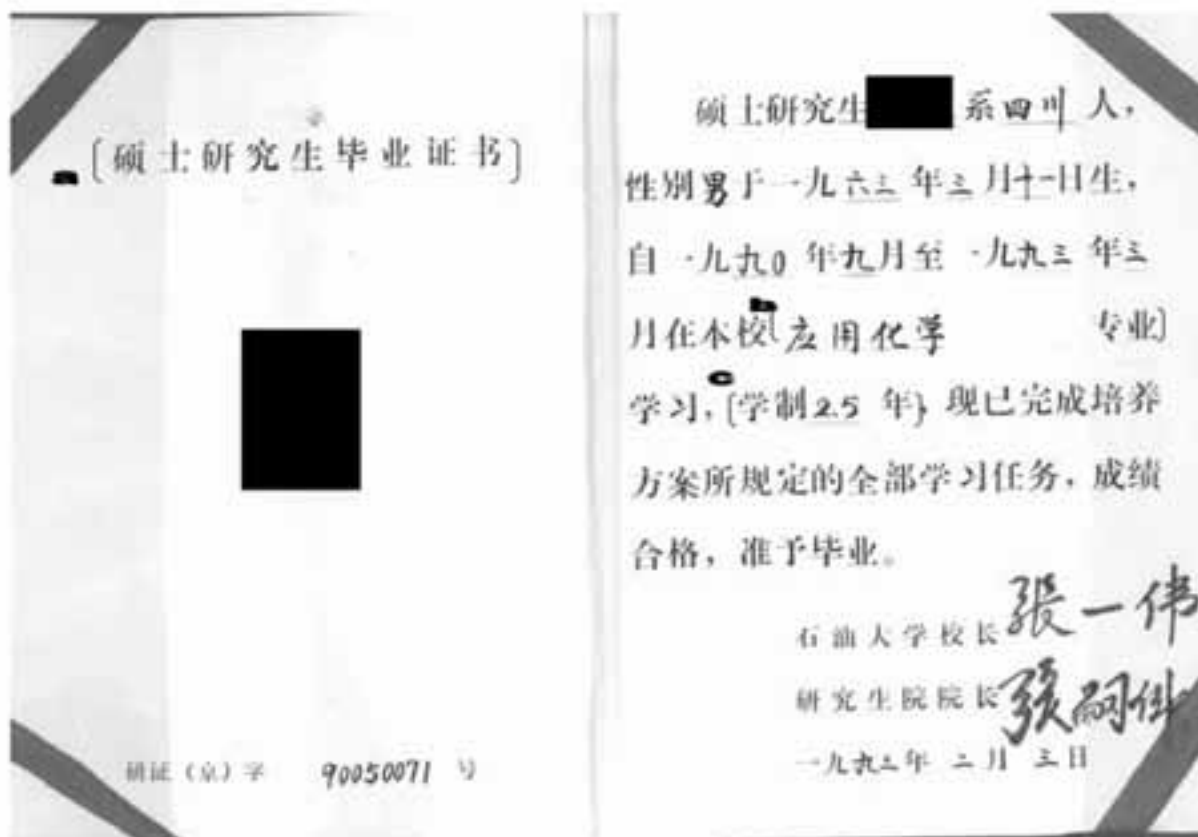


CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION FROM MASTER'S PROGRAM, 1993

A: MASTER'S GRADUATE STUDENT CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

B: MAJOR IN APPLIED CHEMISTRY

C: 2.5-YEAR PROGRAM



MASTER'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE, 1993

A: NATIONAL EMBLEM OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

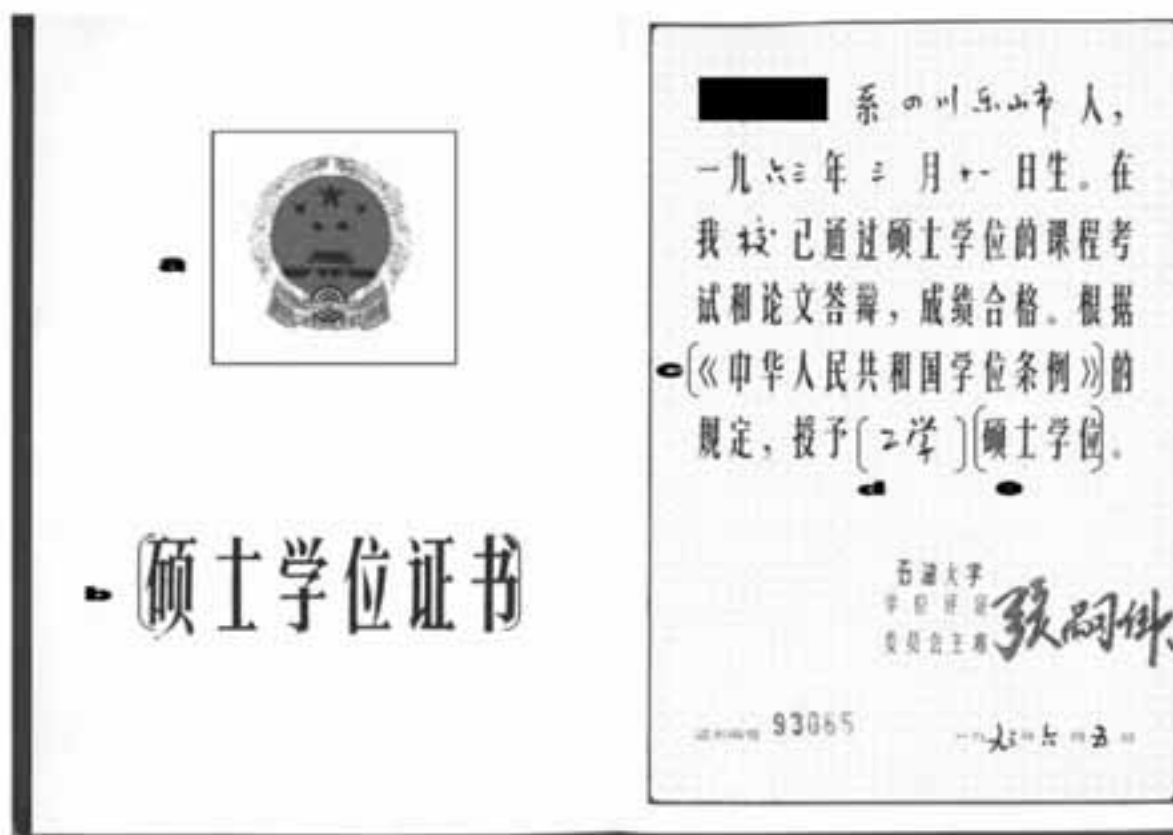
B: MASTER'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE

C: REGULATIONS ON ACADEMIC DEGREES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

D: TECHNOLOGY (OFTEN TRANSLATED AS ENGINEERING)

E: MASTER'S DEGREE

* The above two credentials, the certificate of graduation and the degree certificate, were issued for the same program to the same student.



CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION FROM A DOCTORAL PROGRAM, 2000

A: DOCTORAL STUDENT

B: CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

C: THREE-YEAR PROGRAM



DOCTOR'S DEGREE IN TECHNOLOGY, 2000

A: NATIONAL EMBLEM OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

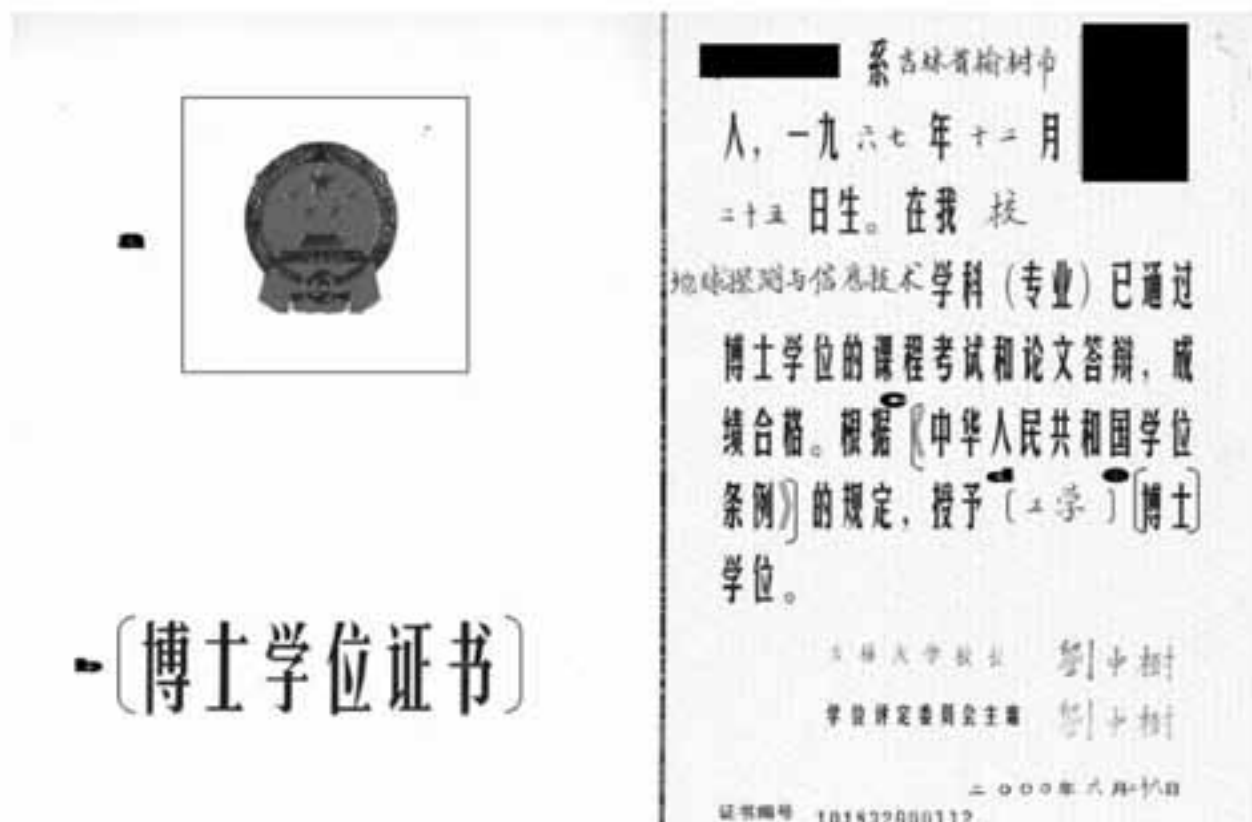
B: DOCTOR'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE

C: REGULATIONS ON ACADEMIC DEGREES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

D: TECHNOLOGY

E: DOCTOR

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