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Choosing Education Abroad: A Parental Perspective in China

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Abstract

This paper delves into the process and crucial aspects of sending Chinese students abroad for education, considering China's role as a significant source of international students. It underscores key parental considerations when making this pivotal decision. The paper commences by stressing the importance of strategically timing a child's overseas study journey. It outlines three main stages for contemplation: post-junior high school, post-high school, or during/after college. The authors emphasize the necessity of aligning this decision with a student's educational background and the family's financial capacity. Additionally, the paper explores the critical factors in selecting an appropriate study destination. Language proficiency, visa prerequisites, and the choice of academic major are highlighted as pivotal considerations. Lastly, the paper emphasizes the importance of insurance, particularly flight and personal accident coverage, while noting the potential availability of local insurance options in China.

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Introduction

With the development of reforms and economic growth, China has become the world's largest exporter of international students. What knowledge should parents have and what procedures should they follow when sending their children abroad to study?

Choosing the Best Time to Go Abroad

Generally, there are several stages when students can go abroad to study: After finishing junior high school: When a child graduates from junior high school and has a basic education level, they can be sent abroad to continue their high school and university education after studying the language. The advantage of this is that the child can quickly adapt to foreign education during their highly adaptable stage. However, sending a child abroad at this stage can be expensive, requiring at least 600,000 RMB. After finishing high school: Students who have completed high school have a better cultural foundation and are more mature. By preparing for language proficiency in China, they can save a lot on expenses abroad. While in college or after college graduation: If a child is already in college or has graduated from college and has passed the TOEFL or IELTS exams, studying abroad for a master's degree is also an ideal option. Of course, the choice of when to send a child abroad should depend on the family's financial situation.

Choosing the Most Suitable Study Destination

Determine the country based on language. It's essential to understand the language spoken in the destination country. English-speaking countries include the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Singapore, India, and some countries in southern and northern Africa. French-speaking countries and regions include France, Belgium, Switzerland, some North and West African countries, and the Quebec region in Canada. German-speaking countries include Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. Some non-English-speaking countries in Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and others also offer courses in English.

Consider visa difficulty. Many parents hope to send their children to the United States for education, but obtaining a U.S. student visa can be more challenging compared to other countries. Excellent undergraduate and graduate students with high TOEFL and GRE scores and those who receive full scholarships still have a good chance. Some smaller language-speaking countries like France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, offer quality education and relatively easy visa processes, but high-quality education can come with high dropout rates.

Choose a major: Different universities in various countries have distinct characteristics, fees, and teaching methods. The choice of major should also depend on the student's individual circumstances and the education system of the chosen country. For families with limited financial resources, it's advisable to select a country with relatively low tuition fees or majors that offer paid internships.

Language Proficiency. Preparing for foreign language exams is crucial when planning to study abroad. There are two main options. IELTS exam: Organized jointly by the British Council and IDP in Australia, this exam is widely accepted. Testing centers are available in various Chinese cities. TOEFL exam: Administered by ETS (Educational Testing Service) in the United States, this exam is for non-English-speaking countries' citizens applying to study in countries like the United States and Canada.

Financial Preparation. Different countries have varying requirements for financial proof when applying for a student visa. Self-funded students should prepare at least 400,000 to 600,000 RMB. Scholarships are also available for outstanding students. For those facing financial difficulties, China offers student loans for studying abroad through national and

commercial banks. Seeking overseas opportunities may be another solution. Even students from poor families can still dream big and go to Harvard, probably. As a role model, he has published 16 papers^{[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16]} before getting that Harvard postdoc offer.

Information Gathering. After deciding to study abroad at your own expense, start by collecting information about: China's policies on self-funded study abroad Countries and universities that accept international students. The current education system and policies in foreign countries Tuition and living expenses in different countries Admission requirements for foreign universities Use the China International Education Service website for online research.

Consulting with Study Abroad Agencies. Self-funded study abroad agencies are education service entities that provide assistance and guidance. They cooperate with foreign universities, education departments, or other educational institutions with the approval of the Chinese government to provide services to Chinese citizens studying abroad. The roles of these agencies include: Providing professional guidance on choosing countries and universities. Assisting with admission procedures. Facilitating document notarization processes. Helping with legal and legitimate enrollment. Offering planning and design for individual study abroad paths. Guiding applicants to establish the right attitude toward educational investment. Standardizing services to protect the interests of students. When selecting an agency, ensure it has a valid business license issued by the Industrial and Commercial Administration Department and a "Qualification Certificate for Self-funded Study Abroad Intermediary Service Institutions" issued by the Ministry of Education.

Medical Examination. Most foreign universities consider good health a basic requirement for admitting international students. Some countries, such as the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Austria, require health certificates and physical examination forms as part of the application materials. Ensure to obtain the necessary health examinations and forms, as well as any additional required documents for countries like Canada and New Zealand.

Visa Application. Visa-related considerations include obtaining a valid passport, understanding visa types, determining visa validity, considering the duration of stay, assessing the number of entries allowed, evaluating visa application criteria, and ensuring all visa-related documents are genuine and accurate.

Notarization. When applying for a student visa, it is essential to obtain notarized documents as per the legal procedures. Notarization is typically required for documents like the admission letter, diploma, degree certificate, and other supporting materials. These documents should be notarized at a designated notary office and, in some cases, accompanied by translated versions.

Essentials to Bring. Ensure you have all the necessary documents, including admission letters, passports, health certificates, customs declaration forms, academic certificates, degree certificates, financial guarantee letters, and various types of notarized and authenticated documents. Keep these documents with you to avoid losing them. Pack essential items such as medication, daily necessities, study materials, gifts, and important addresses, phone numbers, and prescriptions. Carry sufficient funds, at least 3,000 USD, as living expenses. Be cautious when handling foreign currency and avoid secluded places to prevent accidents. Confirm your flight or ship tickets, considering convenience, cost-

effectiveness, reasonable routes with fewer layovers, and avoiding holidays and weekends. Ensure the details on your ticket match your passport's information.

Insurance. Consider obtaining flight insurance and personal accident insurance, especially if these are not already included in your tuition fees. Different provinces in China may offer insurance coverage through local insurance companies for students studying abroad. Check if your institution provides insurance as part of your package.

Conclusion

Thorough preparation and careful consideration are essential when sending children abroad for study. Understanding the various aspects mentioned above will help parents and students make informed decisions and ensure a successful study abroad experience.

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