



China's focus on vocational education towards 2035 (Information as at March 2022)

In October 2021, the General Office of the CCPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued a high-level document on strengthening the country's vocational education sector. *Opinions on Promoting High-quality Development of Modern Vocational Education*¹ is based on outcomes of the April 2021 National Vocational Education Conference, and outlines objectives such as developing a modern vocational education system by 2025 and positioning China among the world's top countries for vocational education by 2035.

The document outlines strategies to promote high-quality development of China's vocational education system, including promoting greater international collaboration and exchange with "quality partners", and giving more weight to vocational education in government-supported inbound and outbound studies.

Internationalisation

The document reiterates China's continued support for **Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools (CFCRS)** at the vocational education level, but emphasises the importance of maintaining high-quality joint ventures. Chinese vocational colleges are encouraged to collaborate, conduct academic research, develop education/training standards and exchange personnel with leading international vocational institutions and organisations.

The Study in China program and the Chinese Government Scholarship program for overseas students will include vocational education categories. Similarly, vocational education study programs will get a higher share of the Chinese Government Scholarships that support outgoing students.

China plans to work closely with international organisations such as UNESCO and World Skills, and pledges to implement the [World Skills Vision 2025](#). It also intends to send vocational education teachers and industry leaders for training in other countries. The document calls on local Chinese governments to include vocational education in their internationalisation plans and to consider vocational education collaborations when establishing sister cities/states with foreign counterparts.

Other key goals

One of the key goals identified in the document is to “strengthen the special characteristic of vocational education”. China aims to do so by implementing reform and development of admissions channels for vocational education and promoting greater integration between different levels of vocational studies, and between vocational and academic pathways.

The document also focusses on changing the perception of vocational education through encouraging primary and secondary school students to consider vocational education and associated career paths at a younger age. This is consistent with the [Implementation Plan on National Vocational Education Reform](#) published in 2019, which seeks to eradicate a common mindset that vocational education is a “second choice” to an academic degree.

According to the document, China will optimise the framework of vocational education course delivery to support national strategies and industry/technical advancement. Newly emerging disciplines – including advanced manufacturing, new energy, new materials, modern agriculture, modern information technology, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence – will be prioritised. Furthermore, vocational education will expand to give additional training in sectors where professionals are in short supply, such as pre-school education, nursing, health and wellness services, and domestic services.

Unlike compulsory education (where foreign investment is prohibitedⁱⁱ), the vocational education sector is encouraged to diversify vocational education provision, and listed companies and leading enterprises are encouraged to host and invest in vocational education.

Conclusion

Since the announcement in 2019 of the *Implementation Plan on National Vocational Education Reform*, China has released a number of documents aimed at accelerating the sector's growth. This latest document stresses quality and reiterates the importance of vocational education in education and human resources systems.

Australia has a well-developed and internationally acclaimed vocational education system. Through programs like the Australia China Chongqing Vocational Education and Training Project (ACCVETP) and the Vocational Education Leadership Training program, Australia has worked with China to develop its vocational education system.

Subsequent guidelines and provincial-level plans on VET issues are expected to be announced during 2022. For further enquiries, please contact the [Education and Research Section](#) of the Australian Embassy in Beijing.

ⁱ People's Republic of China, The State Council, “中共中央办公厅 国务院办公厅印发《中共中央办公厅 国务院办公厅印发《关于推动现代职业教育高质量发展的意见 (The CCPC and State Council Publishes ‘Opinions on Promoting High-quality Development of Modern Vocational Education’)》”, 12 October 2021. 中共中央办公厅 国务院办公厅印发《关于推动现代职业教育高质量发展的意见

ⁱⁱ For further details, see summary information at [Double Reduction Plan reduces homework and off-campus tutoring for Chinese school students](#).