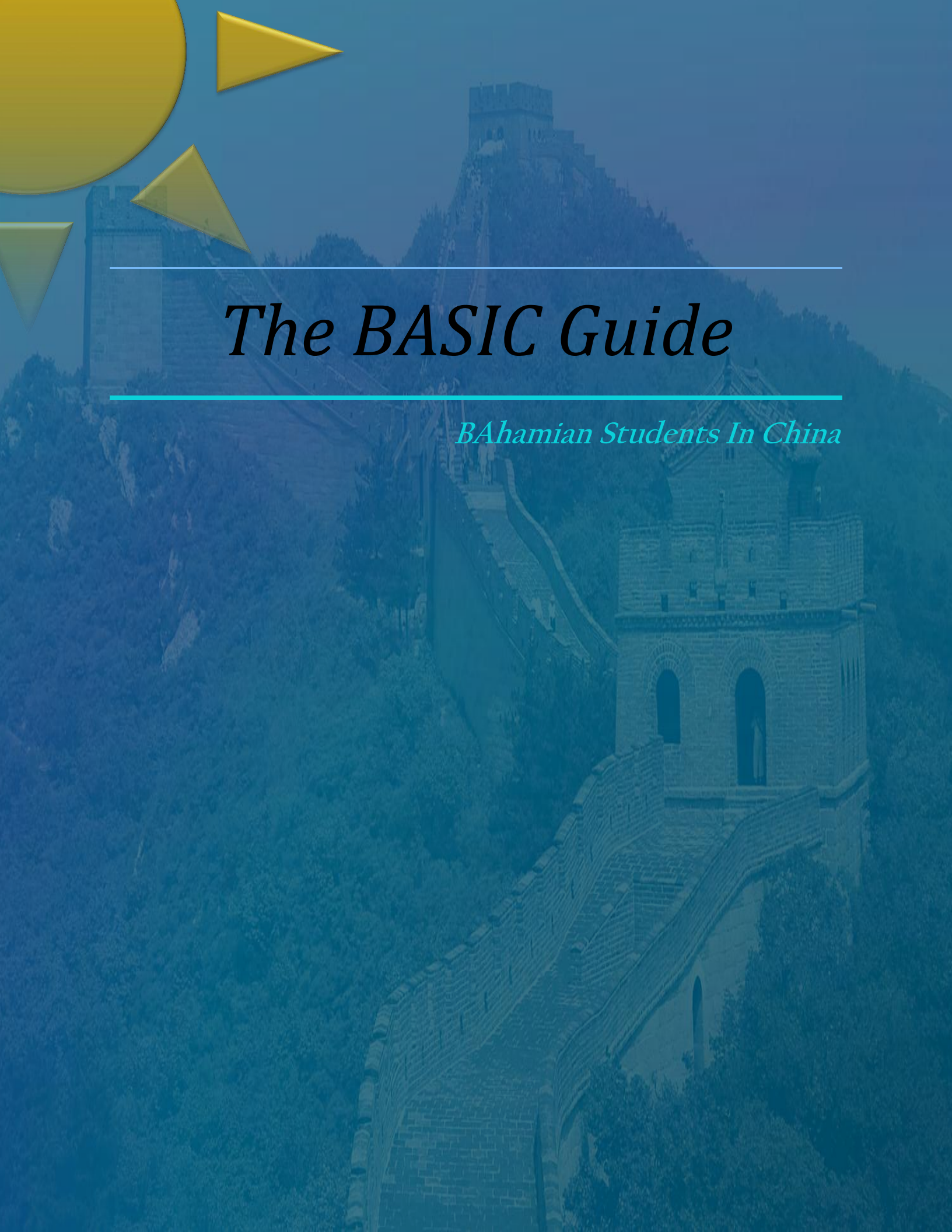

The BASIC Guide

BAhamian Students In China

The BASIC Guide

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If you're reading this then you've probably gotten a scholarship to the People's Republic of China, are considering its application, or are just nosing in and trying to figure out what's going on. In any event, **WELCOME** to The Scholarship Student Guide to The People's Republic of China!

The BASIC guide is not just random knowledge. It includes official scholarship guidelines (as at 2011) and features tips and testimonials from students who have obtained the scholarship and are on track to completing their Degrees.

Through this guide, we hope to better pre-pare you for your educational experience in China and to facilitate your success.

Bear in mind, however, that the tips in this guide are not hard and fast rules. China Scholarship Rules are frequently changed and updated. Also, rules vary across universities. It is important, therefore, to confirm with your university the relevant requirements for successful study along with rules and regulations.

COMPILED BY:
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What to Expect in China

- Different culture, food, thinking, and way of life
- No English (unless you are studying in a metropolitan area)
- To complete your degree in Mandarin

Weather in China

The weather in China varies according to the city in which you will be resident. Generally speaking, scholarship students will arrive in China in late August/early September at the end of Summer. Research the weather conditions of various Chinese provinces in tandem with your research of Chinese universities. This will ensure that the schools you choose at the time of application are ones that are located in climate suitable to you.

Scholarship Application Tips

Yes it's free… Yes China is all over TV…Yes China has delicious noodles and really cool Kung Fu… But is China for you? This is a question that most people do not consider before applying. Our advice, do research. Think carefully and then answer the questions: "Is China for me? Is this something I would be able to benefit fully from? Would I be able to achieve my goals in China?" If you still wish to proceed, then the information below will be of great assistance.

- The Chinese Online Government Scholar-ship is available at: **http:// laihua.csc.edu.cn**. New students will first need to register with a user name and password.
- When completing the application form, the agency number is 0441. The agency name is: Embassy of P.R. China in Bahamas.
- After completing the application online, print 3 copies for submission.
- To research universities in China, visit: **http://www.cucas.edu.cn**. On the application, 3 schools may be listed
- To obtain the list of Chinese institutions admitting students under the Chinese Government Scholarship program, visit: **http://en.csc.edu.cn**.
- You do not have to apply to the school directly as this will be done by the China Scholarship Committee (CSC).
- If your passport will expire in less than a year, you should obtain a new passport BEFORE submitting your scholarship application because the passport number on your scholarship application must match the number of your current passport.
- Contact the Technical Division of The Bahamas' Ministry of Foreign Affairs for additional information—*e.g.* deadlines for submission.

Scholarship Rules

- Within the first year of study, under-graduate students as well as graduate/post-graduate students pursuing degree studies in Mandarin will be required to pass the HSK (Mandarin Language Proficiency Test) at the relevant level required by their university and degree program. If you do not pass the HSK at the relevant level, your scholarship will be suspended to the following academic year or terminated.

- Universities will assess scholarship students annually on performance, including academic record, learning attitude, class attendance, behavior, rewards and punishment. For those who fail the annual review, their scholarships will be suspended or terminated for the following academic year.

- Scholarships typically provide 1 return airfare ticket to and from China. If you relinquish your scholarship or if your scholarship is revoked, YOU will be required to pay for your return ticket to The Bahamas.

- Family members of foreign students studying in China can apply for a companion study "L" visa from a Chinese Embassy or Consulate. The term of the companion-study family member's stay cannot surpass the validity period of the foreign student's residence certificate.

- After arrival in China, foreign students diagnosed with entry-forbidden dis-eases will be required to return home immediately at their own expense.

- It is possible for you to live off campus. This is subject, however, to university rules and requires that you register your address at one of the local public security agencies.

- When transferring to another city in China, foreign students must first go to the entry-exit department of the local public security bureau to apply for a move-out formality. Within 10 days of arrival at the target city, they must again go the entry-exit department of the local public security bureau to go through a move-in formality.

- During your studies, if you temporarily exit China, ensure that your residence permit will not expire before your return. If it does, you will need to apply to a Chinese Embassy/ Consulate for an entry visa in order to return to China. The Bahamas Embassy cannot help you circumvent this requirement.

*****To Apply for a Change of Degree Program/University or Extension of Study in China Contact The Bahamas Embassy in Beijing*****

What is Expected of You

Every scholarship student is considered an Ambassador of The Bahamas. Chinese people will learn about The Bahamas and its culture from YOU. Students are therefore expected to conduct themselves accordingly.

*** As an Ambassador, scholarship students should be:**

A—*Amicable*
M—*Mature*
B—*Brave*
A—*Assertive*
S—*Studious*
S—*Stately*
A– *Ambitious*
D—*Doer*
O—*Open*
R—*Respectful*

**(provided by '06 Scholarship recipient, Matthew Arnett.)*

Before You Arrive

- Research your province/city/school.
- Visit a clinic/doctor for a complete medical exam and immunization shots.
- Notify The Bahamas Embassy in Beijing of your impending arrival.
- Ensure that the details of your Chinese entry visa are accurate.
- Ensure that you have the appropriate transit visa (if needed).
- Join the Bahamians in China group on Facebook.
- Check with your bank to ensure that your ATM card will work in China. Typically, all Cirrus, Visa, Visa Plus, and Master Cards work.
- If you arrive in China before the date of registration, the university dormitory will likely be unavailable and you will require temporary lodging. If so, research and book your hotel in advance of your arrival in China. Ensure, also, that you have the name and address of your hotel writ-ten in Mandarin characters along with a contact number.
- Find out the name/address of the university where you will be studying Mandarin during your first year. You will often study Mandarin at a university that is different from the university where you will pursue your degree.
- Read your acceptance letter carefully to ensure that you understand what is writ-ten and that the details are what you in-tended.
- If family members plan to travel with you to China, please ensure that they have the appropriate visa with the appropriate number of entries. For instance, if you and your family member intend to travel first to your university's province in main-land China, then to Hong Kong and back to your university's province, you will need a double-entry visa.

What to Bring to China?

When it comes to China, people usually take on 1 of 2 schools of thought. Either they think, "Shopping in China is dirt cheap so I will leave with an empty bag and will shop 'til I drop when I get there", or they think "Oh my God... How will I ever find the things I need".
The thing is this...Shopping in China is paradox. Although almost every-thing we own is "Made In China", international goods are not readily found in mainland markets. In China, international product protection laws restrict products from directly entering the local market and dictate that products first are exported to the country that reserves ownership rights and then re-imported to mainland China to be sold on the local market. This makes international products "more expensive" than in their ownership countries.

China does, however, have some products that are not identical but similar to international ones if you can find them and figure out the Chinese translation. This being said, you might want to pack a few goodies and ensure that you have the following necessities:

- Valid **E-Passport** (Manual passports have been phased out and soon will no longer be accepted as valid travel documents.)
- Original Scholarship Acceptance Letter
- Completed Medical Exam Reports*
- Vaccination Record*
- Medications/ Vitamins—If you have a medical condition, bring your medical his-tory or a note from your doctor particularly if you will require specific medication.
- Laptop—It is cheaper to buy one at home or in the USA. Good electronic items in China tend to be expensive and the cheaper ones tend to be problematic.
- BTC Vibe to call home. Some persons also use Vonage or Skype. If using BTC Vibe, you will need an adapter and electricity converter.
- Universal electrical adapters
- Debit/Credit cards
- Personal necessities—e.g. hair/skin supplies (You will not find black products in China. Females may wish to wear their hair naturally as relaxed hair tends to suffer in China.)
- Shoes—This applies typically to women who wear size 9 or above and men who wear size 11 or above.
- Clothing—This applies to big and tall per-sons. (Chinese sizes are small.)
- Kindle (if you like to read and will not re-side in a metropolitan area)
- Bahamian souvenirs, music—Many universities have annual cultural fairs where students are asked to display the culture of their country.

**With regard to documents, we advise that you use copies unless explicitly asked for the original.*

What NOT to Bring

Electrical items that cannot convert electricity. The electricity in China is generally 220V, 50HZ AC whereas in The Bahamas, the electricity is 120V, 60HZ AC. Typically, items such as computers, laptops, printers, and mobile phones can work in both The Bahamas and China. Ensure that you check all of your electrical appliances before bringing them.

Note that this outlet is the typical electrical outlet in China. Some US/Bahamas plugs will not work in China and will require an adapter.

Necessities in China

- Mobile phone (with Chinese and English languages)—You can buy one at the market/shopping center in China. If you bring one from home, you will need to install Mandarin language. (This can be done by local technicians for a small fee.)

- Mandarin Dictionary—(Electronic vs. traditional paper dictionary) Both are very efficient. The tradeoff is speed and convenience with the electronic dictionary versus stroke order perfection, deep character radical understanding, and associated phrase learning with the traditional paper dictionary. Our vote: the traditional paper dictionary. Why? There is no such thing as a quick and easy way to learn Chinese. Besides, all the latest smart phones can download dictionary applications.

Advice to Parents

As the cost of living in China is steadily in-creasing, parents must be prepared to pro-vide funds to their children for daily living and health expenses. Parents must also bear in mind that the processes in Chinese universities are often very different than those in Western universities. It is necessary at times, therefore, to exercise patience and understanding.

Parents accompanying their children to China

Parents accompanying their children to China should note that the accommodation provided by the China Scholarship Council for students in transit to their universities does not extend to them. Parents must therefore find their own accommodation.
Additionally, scholarship students will not be permitted to stay with their parents during transit.

Transfer Service From Airport to University Campus

The Transfer Service Station located in Beijing Language and Culture University is a system used between specified dates to transfer new Government scholar-ship students from Beijing airport to their respective universities. Detailed services provided to students during the stopover in Beijing are as follow:

1. Free accommodation on campus (double room) for full and partial scholarship students.

2. One-time settlement subsidy for full scholarship students (1000 RMB for new students who will study up to 1 year; 1500 RMB for new students who will study in China above 1 academic year).

3. Medical service needed during the transfer for full and partial scholarship students whose scholarship covers medical care service.

4. A hard-seat or hard-berth train ticket from Beijing to the city where your university is located.

Typically, Chinese Embassies or Consulates in sending countries will notify the Transfer Service Station of students' arrival date as well as their flight/train number one week in advance of arrival. Scholarship students can, however, notify the Transfer Service Station themselves by contacting them directly.

Transfer Service Station for Chinese Government Scholarship Students:

Tel: 0086-10-82303706

Fax: 0086-10-82303326

E-mail: zhongzhuan@blcu.edu.cn

Add: No. 15 Xueyuan Lu,

Haidian District,

Beijing, P.R. China 100083

Transfer Service From Airport to University Campus

Full scholarship students who arrive in Beijing before or after the transfer service period or those who make a stopover in cities other than Beijing must proceed to their universities by themselves. (In such cases, please ensure that you have the address and contact information of your university in Mandarin characters.) Full scholarship students will be reimbursed the cost of a hard-seat or hard-berth train ticket between the port of entry and the city of their institutions after registering at their university. (Please submit original train ticket for reimbursement. Please note also that this is a one-time subsidy.)

Recommended Websites

Online Dictionaries

www.nciku.com

www.iciba.com

www.mdbg.net

Shopping

www.taobao.com

Maps, Subway/Bus Routes

www.edushi.com

General Information

www.cityweekend.com.cn *(Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou)*

www.ganji.com

China Scholarship Council

(for matters relating to scholarship)

http://en.csc.edu.cn

China Service Center for Scholarly Exchange

http://www.cscse.edu.cn/publish/portal20/

Bahamas Ministry of Foreign Affairs

www.bahamas.gov.bs/foreignaffairs/

(Go to Scholarship page)

Bahamas Embassy, Beijing

www.bahamasembassy.cn

After You Arrive

- Convert at least $200-300 USD into RMB at the airport (if possible). As at June 2012, 1 USD=6.3 RMB.
- Register at your university at the time and place specified in your Admission No-tice.
- Get in touch with your Foreign Student Administration Office who will assign you to a dorm and further advise you about other procedures such as verifying your medical examinations and obtaining your Residence Permit.

Medical Examinations and Residence Permits

Students who intend to study in China for more than 6 months, must present their passports, Admission Notice, and the original copies of their Foreigner Physical Examination Form and Blood Test Report to the local quarantine office to have their medical examinations verified. Students whose Foreigner Physical Examination Forms do not meet Chinese requirements will have to retake their medical examinations at their own expense in China. After the health verification, scholarship students must register for residence permits from the local police authority with their passports, Admission Notice and Foreigner Physical Examination Form. This procedure is normally handled by the university's administration.

Getting Around in China

There are many types of transportation in China including Taxis, Buses, Subways, Trains, and Private Car/Chauffeur Services.
Other than pre-arranged Chauffeur Services, official taxis (see picture below) are the easiest form of transportation for persons new to China.
When using an official taxi, ensure that your taxi driver turns on the meter. Otherwise, you will likely be overcharged. Ensure, also, that you ask for your receipt. In the event that you forget an item in the taxicab, you can call the number on the receipt for assistance.
Chinese transportation cards can be used in subways, taxis, and buses in some Chinese cities. A discount is applied to persons using the card in subways and buses.

Internet

In China, be prepared for a "different" inter-net experience than the one you are presently accustomed to. YouTube…gone. Face-book…gone. Certain Wikipedia webpages… gone. China controls their internet and only allows access to certain internet websites. Everything isn't blocked, but most "social websites" and websites deemed inappropriate by the Government are.

Mandarin Language Learning Tools & Aids

"What's the best way to learn Chinese?" The answer: hard work, dedication, and practice. You must set specific language goals, obtain immediate feedback, and focus on technique as much as outcome.

The following aids may assist you:

- Chinese podcasts on ITunes
- Mandarin Tutor
- Chinese Friend
- HSK Strategies manual
- Mandarin Language Practice books
- Chinese TV shows and movies with Chinese subtitles

About Hangzhou

Hangzhou is "very good. In the absence of social/cultural issues [i.e. prejudice] it would be excellent. After you know the bus system it's convenient to get around. Also if you avoid the high-end stores it's easy to maintain a comfortable standard of living".

-Andrew Stewart
'07 Scholarship Recipient

About Shanghai

"It is very convenient to live here but I am not a city person and the traffic is crazy. You also have to deal with pollution and second-hand smoke."

-Megan Mackey
'05 Scholarship Recipient

About Nanjing

Nanjing is a good city to study Mandarin during your first year because its programs "are aimed at not only teaching the language but also preparing...student[s] for their major."

-Gleniese McKenzie
'06 Scholarship Recipient

Tips for Successfully Completing Your Studies in China

- Obtain and translate your lecturers power point presentations as soon as the course starts (if possible).
- Some universities offer courses taught in English that you may be able to take. They are usually under "双语 shuang yu".
- Do not be afraid to ask professors to submit a written paper in lieu of an exam.
- Buy a white board and markers to practice writing.
- Maintain good communication with your university program/foreign students' advisor.
- Review past exam questions from other students who have already taken the course.

More Student Tips

- You cannot transfer credits from any previous international pro-grams of study.
- You cannot pursue a double major.
- Be prepared for a lack of precise and clear communication with your university. It is often assumed that you know what to do and therefore people do not always explain things.
- Smaller Chinese cities do not tend to have a lot of foreigners. So be prepared in small cities to be the center of attention/conversation.
- Scholarship students may need to open a bank account in China in order to receive the monthly stipend from their universities. Ensure that the bank you choose is the one used by your university. Bank of China and ICBC banks are recommended because of their international affiliation.
- It is not the tradition in China to argue with professors. To do so could be disadvantageous.
- Universities often provide refunds (up to a certain limit) to students for health expenses, photocopies etc. Consult with your university to see which refunds are offered.

More Student Tips

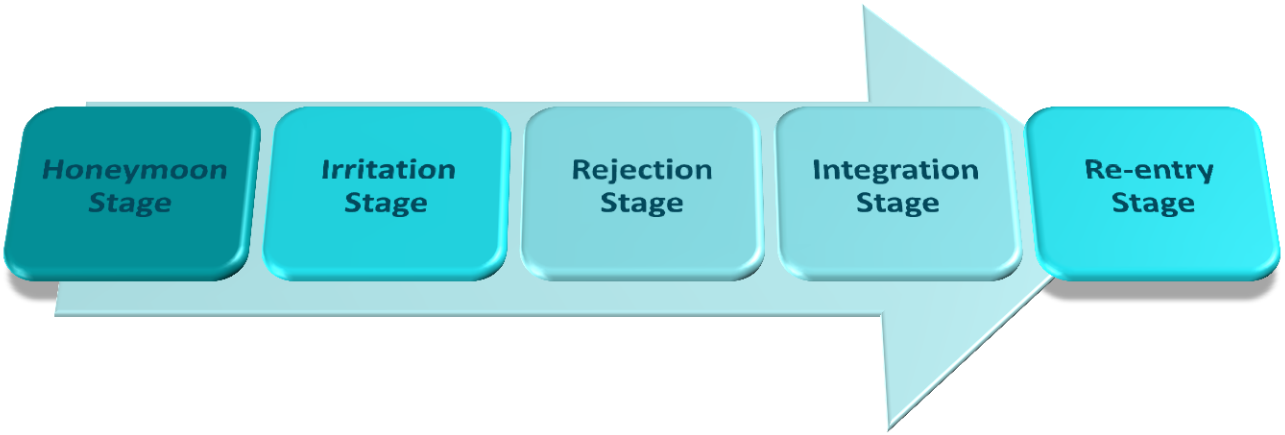
- No matter how well you do in exams, if you do not attend class you will be marked down.
- Monthly stipends are 1400 RMB for Undergraduates & Chinese language students; 1700 RMB for Master's degree students & general scholars; 2000 RMB for Doctoral degree students and senior scholars. Generally, stipends are insufficient and you will require additional funds to live comfortably in China.
- Some universities do not have westernized rooms with western toilets. The tradition-al dormitory room usually has a window, 2 beds (hard mattress), 1 nightstand, 1 wardrobe, 2 computer desks, 1 shower, 1 toilet, 1 sink. Not all rooms, however, have individual bathrooms. In some universities, you will have to use shared bath-room and cooking facilities.
- You will have foreign roommates assigned to you throughout your studies. If room-mates are a problem, some universities will allow you to pay for the other half of your room. Some schools also offer single room lodging.
- Chinese food in The Bahamas is not the same as Chinese food in China. Also, western food in China will cost the same as in The Bahamas or more.
- Some schools offer degree programs in English. Scholarship students may be able to complete their degrees in English, but this is not guaranteed.
- When choosing schools in China, those with a lot of short-term exchange pro-grams are usually more internationally connected and more experienced in catering to international students.
- For persons who prefer western styled toilets, portable toilets can be bought in China at a Carrefour "家乐福 (Jia le fou)".
- Retake the HSK exam before you leave China.

Challenges to Success

- Going home too soon/often which can hinder Mandarin language acquisition
- Depression/Loss of Motivation—You will need to maintain a heavy workload in addition to being out of your comfort zone and far away from family/friends
- Lack of assistance, in some cases, from professors
- Excessive partying
- Inability to adapt to social/cultural differences
- Fear
- Inability to maintain an open mind
- Being impolite

5 Stages of Cultural Adjustment

Kalvero Oberg was one of the first authors to identify 5 distinct stages of culture shock. You will experience these stages in China, not al-ways in the order listed below. Before coming to China, you must be realistically prepared. While in China, you must be patient. You must learn to laugh at the things that irritate you, and you must stay focused on your end goal.



Honeymoon Stage—Everything in China is just wonderfully different.
Irritation Stage—Everything in China irritates you.
Rejection Stage—You give up trying to adjust and communicate. You want to go home.
Integration Stage—You become comfortable with living in China and attempt to integrate and enjoy yourself.
Re-entry Stage—You go back home and discover that everything has changed. You now have to adapt to life at home.

Be Aware of:

- Black Cabs—These are privately owned vehicles (not necessarily black in color) used as illegal taxis. This form of transportation is risky, particularly for persons new to China, and tends to be overpriced.
- Chinese Laws and Rules of Conduct as well as your university's rules and regulations—e.g.:
  - Religious gatherings are forbidden on university campuses. Should you wish to attend church, there are churches (at least in the metropolitan cities) where you will be required to present your passport for entry.
  - Activities conducted by foreign students must not oppose or attack other countries or violate public ethics.
  - Foreign students are not allowed to work, operate businesses or engage in business-related activities) during their study in China. Work-study activities (i.e. intern-ships in accordance with college rules, however, are permitted.

After Graduation

- Ensure that all of your academic documents (e.g. diploma, transcript, Chinese certificates) are officially notarized and translated into English by an approved Notary Public, authenticated by the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then authenticated by The Bahamas Embassy in Beijing.

- Obtain copies of official transcripts from your university.

- Obtain official letters of recommendation from your professors.

- The terms of your Admission Notice should indicate whether or not your return airfare to The Bahamas will be covered by the China Scholarship Council. Once you have successfully completed your program, you will be required to leave China within a specified time unless you choose to continue your education or work. If you choose to continue your education or work, you will need to apply for the appropriate visa or residence certificate **BEFORE** your current visa or resident certificate expires.

Student Contacts

The following persons have offered their email contacts to future scholarship students with additional questions about studying in China:

1. **SACHA ARMBRISTER**
2011 Scholarship Recipient
Major—International Studies
Status—Studying in China
Email—sarmbrister242@yahoo.com

2. **MEGAN MACKEY**
2005 Scholarship Recipient
Major—Traditional Chinese Medicine
Status—Studying in China
Email—queenofsuits@hotmail.com

3. **GLENIESE MCKENZIE**
2006 Scholarship Recipient
Major—Astrophysics
Status—Studying in China
Email—gemofsaturn@yahoo.com

4. **WILLIAM SEYMOUR**
2004 Scholarship Recipient
Major—Clinical Medicine
Status—Graduated
Email—williamaseymour@gmail.com

5. **ANDREW STEWART**
2007 Scholarship Recipient
Major—Business Management
Status—Studying in China
Email—mnxtwrs@gmail.com

THE BAHAMAS EMBASSY

4th Floor, Unit 2,
Tayuan Diplomatic Office Building,
14 Liangmahe Nan Lu, Chaoyang District,
Beijing, China 100600
Tel: 011-86-10-6532-2922
Fax: 011-86-10-6532-2304
Email: info@bahamasembassy.cn