

New ways for finding PhDs in China: *PhD workshop China 2009*

Recently, on 12 and December 13 2009, the first PhD workshop 2009 was held in Beijing; a modest event with about 1,270¹ visitors, primarily Chinese top students² interested in enrolling into an international PhD program, and mostly sponsored through grants from the Chinese government. Most of the students were about to obtain (15%) or already in the possession of their Master-degree (75%), (75%), or PhD candidate (10%).



The workshop was organized by the organizer of the China Education Expo 2009, which was organized in October this year and primarily focused on students who were interested to obtain a bachelor of a master degree.



The PhD workshop was held in the elegant *Swissôtel Beijing*, where the participating universities, which are from Australia (2), Canada (15), Germany (30), France (18), Italy (1), Singapore (3), UK (14), USA (2) and Switzerland (1), had large stands in a big conference room.

Prior to their visit to the workshop, the students had to submit certain personal data, in order for the universities to be able to select matching potential PhD candidates for interviews which were to be held during the event. The following information was provided to the institutions in order for them to be able to make their selection, such as: current university, major program, qualifications of the student, whether they are qualified for Chinese sponsorship programs, which universities the students are interested in, and in few cases, the students submitted research proposal. If there is a match between the needs of the Chinese student and the foreign university, the student was invited for a 10-20 minutes follow-up interview at the event.

Organizing the meetings was a challenge, due to no-shows, late arrivals, or the fact that some conversations ended later or went faster than planned. Institutions had their own way of working with this model. Some were open to everyone who appealed to them, others put down a notice which said "on appointment only".

How did the students and universities experience the event?

Overall, the students were enthusiastic. Personal contact with the universities was pleasant and they got a better understanding about their options and their chances to be admitted to the universities. Sometimes a conversation was defined as really intense, because the institutions assumed that all the students had an elaborate vision about specific research topics and had a clear idea of what they wanted to achieve in the future.



Most of the participating universities were also positive about the workshop and stated that they have spoken more qualified students than they had expected on beforehand. Universities experienced it as pleasant that students did their 'homework' and were determined to become a PhD as the next step in their career.

¹ Amount of unique visitors on both days

² The students who were invited, came from the institutions who were selected by the State 211 Project (Project 211 includes 100 institutes from the Chinese government selected to become the national key universities) and / or State Project 985 program (Project 985 includes 39 institutes to develop them to top-class universities at international level)



AcademicTransfer also interviewed Mr. Guan Hong, managing director of Fair Link, organizer of the event. Strikingly, the emphasis is placed on improving the quality of the students and the effectiveness of the meetings, by planning the meetings in advance. More than 2,765 students had applied for the event. However, they were advised not to come if they were not invited for a personal interview with the universities. An actual number of 1,270 visitors showed up, which was invited for the interview.

Facts

Currently in China, every year 48,000 students obtain a Master-degree, and 8,000 students obtain a doctoral-degree³. Since 1999 the amount of postgraduates in China increased 35.9% per year. This makes China a major provider of graduates in absolute numbers. Of the group of registered students, 72% is planning to start a PhD candidateship abroad in the coming year, while the remaining 28% plans to initiate this within two years⁴.

The growing demand for PhD's within Europe and Northern America and the promotional activities AcademicTransfer is doing in China, were motives for AcademicTransfer to visit this workshop.

Conclusion

We conclude that the benefits of a presence for universities on this event are at hand. Since pre-matching is an option, it is possible to speak with a large group of qualified master students who are interested in a PhD, of whom many are qualified for grants from the Chinese government.



AcademicTransfer also contributes to promote Western universities among Chinese top students, with a current estimate of 35,000 website visitors from China on an annual basis. We would like to invite you to take a look at both our portals www.academictransfer.com and www.career.edu. The first mentioned will be available in the Chinese language in the first quarter of 2010. A posting on our website can be an interesting addition to find the right PhDs from China and the rest of the world.

AcademicTransfer

www.academictransfer.com

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³ Source: the website of the event: www.phdchina.org

⁴ Evaluation by Management PhD workshop 2009