



***PERIODIC REPORT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL CONVENTION
ON THE RECOGNITION OF STUDIES,
DIPLOMAS AND DEGREES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC***

**Office of Academic Degrees Committee
of the State Council
Office of Postgraduate Education
of the State Education Commission
The People's Republic of China**

1994

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Introduction

This report has been written in conformity with the requirements set forth in the questionnaire distributed by the Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO and the information (up to date status) given will enable its readers to have a general idea of China's higher education system and her academic degrees system providing a context for understanding the issues and problems related to the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education to be tackled.

On February 12, 1980, the 13th Plenary Session of the Standing Committee of the Fifth National People's Congress formally adopted the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees*, which became effective from January 1981. This significant event in the history of Chinese education marks the beginning of academic degree system in New China. In December 1980, the State Council approved the establishment of Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council (ADCSC) to direct academic degrees work throughout the country. The Office of Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council is a working body performing the daily routine of the Committee. With its administration entrusted by the State Council to the State Education Commission (SEdC), it handles official business together with the office of Postgraduate Education of the SEdC. This periodic report is prepared by the Office of ADCSC and the Office of Postgraduate Education of SEdC, which are the national bodies responsible for questions relating to the recognition of foreign qualifications and studies.

1. Structure of the Higher Education System

a) Structure of the System

In the current education system in China, higher education is divided into two categories: regular higher education and adult higher education. Pre-employment higher education is mainly provided by the former, while in-service education is provided by the latter. But, in view of future

developments, these two educational sectors will inevitably overlap in the provision of programmes. At present, the conventional universities and colleges have taken on in-service education and will do more in this area in the future. Adult higher education institutions (HEIs) are enrolling graduates from senior secondary schools and will also continue to broaden their scope.

Regular higher education

In China, universities and other types of full-time tertiary institutions are all institutions of higher education on the same footing. Regular HEIs include comprehensive universities, specialized universities and colleges, short-cycle colleges and short-cycle vocational colleges. Enrolling graduates from senior secondary schools and students who have reached a comparable educational level, these institutions train various types of specialized personnel.

The length of schooling at different levels are as follows: First-degree level programmes in various fields of study usually last 4 years and some programmes 5 years or even longer (in medicine). Short-cycle programmes usually last 2-3 years. There are two levels of postgraduate programmes: master's degree programmes and doctoral programmes, with the former lasting 2-3 years and the latter usually at least three years upon the completion of the master's degree programmes.

Adult higher education

Adult higher education in China provides formal educational programmes mostly at subdegree or diploma course level (short-cycle higher education), with a small percentage of students attaining first-degree level through additional studies, with or without the award of a bachelor's degree. The duration of study usually lasts 3 years for full-time programmes (usually attended by fresh senior secondary school leavers) or 4-5 years for part-time programmes. Besides, there are various non-credit or certificate level programmes ranging from a few months to several years.

Postgraduate education and academic degree system

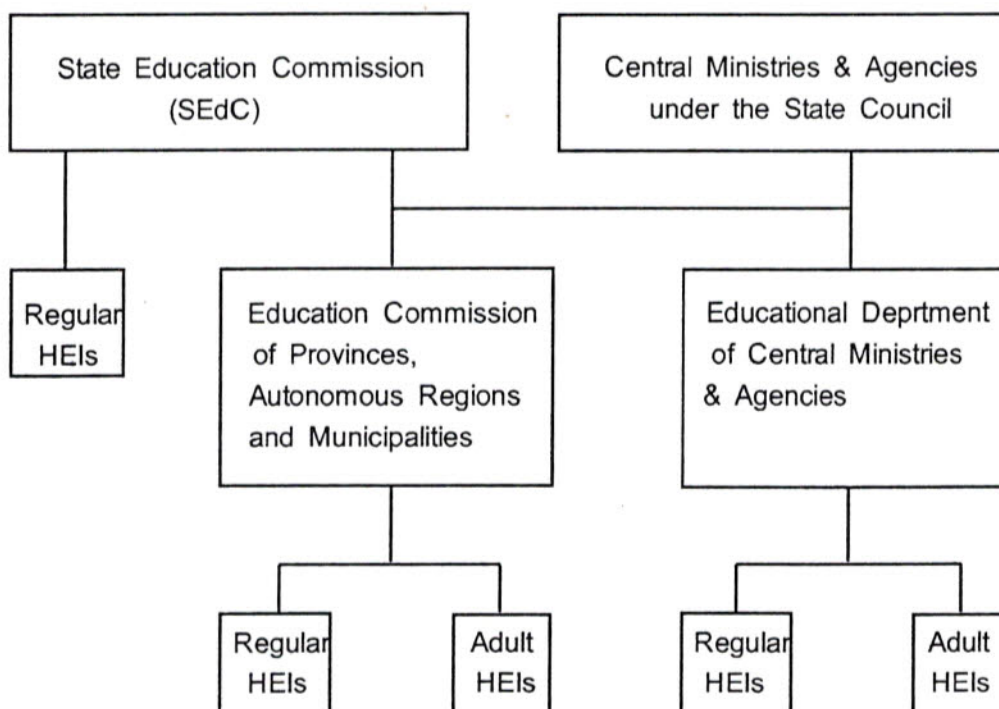
Postgraduate education in general, and enrolment of graduate students in particular is organized under the centralized and unified leadership of the SEdC. Both the long-range and annual plans for postgraduate enrolment are under the supervision of the SEdC. Generally speaking, the annual plans for enrolment are drawn up by the institutions of higher learning and research institutes offering postgraduate programmes according to the stipulations set forth by the SEdC, and then they are sent to the governmental departments in charge to be examined and approved. Then these supervisory departments draw up the aggregate plans and submit them to the SEdC for final approval, and the SEdC in turn transmits them to the relevant departments and institutions for implementation.

Academic degrees are of three grades: the bachelor's degree, the master's degree, and the doctor's degree. The differentiation of grade in China is similar to the practice of most countries in the world.

b) Administrative Structure of Higher Education

HEIs in China fall under either the jurisdiction of the SEdC and other central ministries and agencies or governments of various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government.

Governmental departments in charge of higher education are established in governments at the national and provincial (autonomous regional and municipal) level. It is the SEdC at the national level that assumes the responsibility of higher education in the whole country and at the same time, various central ministries & agencies have their own education management bodies. In 1993, there were a total of 1065 regular HEIs in China, of which 36 are under the SEdC. 325 are under other central ministries & agencies, 704 are under local governments. In 1993, adult HEIs numbered 1183, of which 300 are under central ministries & agencies and the rest under the local governments (see the following chart).



Various central ministries and agencies directly administer a number of key HEIs which affect overall national economic and social development and play a leading role in higher education. They include comprehensive universities, polytechnical institutions, as well as agricultural, medical, and other specialized tertiary institutions of national importance.

The SEdC is responsible for formulating overall plans, giving policy guidance, coordinating efforts, monitoring and assessment and providing essential services. It is incumbent upon the other central ministries and agencies to

strengthen their efforts to forecast manpower needs in their respective sectors and plan accordingly, assist the SEdC in guiding the training of qualified personnel, assume the responsibility for managing institutions under their jurisdiction and decide on the number of students to be enrolled, specialities to be offered, sources of funding, placement of graduates, etc. under the macro-level guidance of the state.

In December 1980, the State Council approved the establishment of the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council to direct academic degrees work throughout the country. Its function is to supervise the conferral of academic degrees. The Academic Degrees Committee is to be composed of a chairman, several vice-chairmen and other members. The chairman, vice-chairmen and other members are all subject to the appointment and removal by the State Council.

The Office of ADCSC is a working body performing the daily routine of the Committee. With its administration entrusted by the State Council to SEdC, it handles official business together with the Office of Postgraduate Education of SEdC.

The academic degrees work in China is administered by a three-tiered system, comprising ADCSC at the national level, organs in charge of academic degrees work at ministerial and provincial level, and the degree-conferring units. Academic degrees work under the jurisdiction of a particular provincial-level or a particular central ministry or agency is usually administered by an academic degrees committee or an ad hoc leading group of the governmental body concerned. Wherever an academic degrees committee or leading group has not yet been established, this work is administered by the department in charge of higher education.

As a rule, institutions of higher learning authorized by the State Council to confer bachelor's, master's and doctor's degrees and research institutes authorized by the State Council to confer master's and doctor's degrees are required to form their own academic degrees evaluation committees to direct the degree work for their respective units. An academic degrees evaluation committee generally has under it several sub-committees and an office, which handles routine work of the committee.

c) Reform of Higher Education System

In February 1993, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council jointly issued the *Guidelines on China's Educational Reform and Development*, setting forth the strategic goals, guiding principles and major policies of China's educational reform and development in the 1990s and the early years of the next century. The main ideas outlined in the guidelines on the reform of higher education are as follows: While adhering to the socialist orientation of running schools, the ways of running schools should be reformed; government

departments should transform their management functions and institutions should enjoy greater autonomy in decision-making; reform should be undertaken with regard to the internal management and operation system of institutions; reform in education and teaching should be intensified so as to explore new ways of higher education development.

Reforms in the system of student enrolment and placement of graduates will be introduced. Nationwide planning of student enrolment will be replaced by a new system which combines national mandatory plan with guidance plans. The government will no longer bear all the expenses of college students and a tuition system will gradually be introduced. The old system under which every graduate is guaranteed a job will be replaced by one in which only a small number of graduates are assigned jobs by the government with most of them finding employment for themselves.

The postgraduate training system and the degree system will be improved. Pilot projects will be launched so that proper revisions of the current regulations governing the authorization of an institution to confer higher degrees and qualifying a professor to supervise doctoral programmes may be made. In addition, the system of quality control and evaluation will be strengthened.

The budget allocation mechanism for institutions of higher learning will be reformed so that it may play an important role in macro-level control. The standards and methods for allocating funds should vary for educational institutions of different categories and at different levels. Financing, which used to be based on the number of students, will be gradually reformed and replaced with a fund system. In addition to budgetary allocations for education from the central and local governments, tertiary institutions may raise funds in accordance with the law.

d) Types of institutions

At present, the regular institutions of higher education in China is generally classified into twelve categories to facilitate collection of educational statistics: comprehensive universities, institutions of natural sciences & technology, agriculture, forestry, medicine & pharmacy, teacher training, language & literature, finance & economics, political science & law, physical culture, art and others (see table 1, table 2).

Table 1 Number of Regular Higher Education Institutions for 1993

	Total	Universities & Colleges	Short-cycle Colleges	Short-cycle Vocational
Total	1065	626	356	83
Comprehensive university	62	49	13	0
Natural Sciences & Tech .	292	214	78	0
Agriculture	59	46	13	0
Forestry	11	11	0	0
Medicine & Pharmacy	126	106	20	0
Teacher Training	251	78	173	0
Language & Literature	15	12	3	0
Finance & Economics	82	43	39	0
Political Science & Law	27	12	15	0
Physical Culture	15	14	1	0
Art	31	30	1	0
Others	94	11	0	83

Note: Short-cycle colleges and short-cycle vocational colleges are not authorized to confer degrees .

Adult HEIs include the following kinds: workers' colleges, peasants' colleges, radio & television colleges (RTVCs), institutes for administration, educational colleges, independent correspondence colleges, divisions of correspondence education and evening schools and short-cycle courses for cadres provided by regular HEIs (see table 3).

The *Provisional Measures for the Implementation of the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees* stipulates that academic degrees are to be conferred in the following ten disciplines: philosophy, economics, law, education, literature, history, natural science, engineering, agriculture and medicine. There are altogether 620 sub-disciplines and specialities throughout the country in which academic degrees are conferred and postgraduate students are trained (see table 4).

Table 2

Number of Students by Field in Regular Higher Education Institutions for 1993

	Graduates			Students Admitted			Enrolment		
	Total	Normal Courses	Short-cycle Courses	Total	Normal Courses	Short-cycle Courses	Total	Normal Courses	Short-cycle Courses
Total	570715	298959	271756	923952	386458	537494	2535517	1417357	1118160
Engineering	196216	127422	68794	327028	168312	158716	934039	605015	329024
Agriculture	22236	13379	8857	32834	15835	16999	96196	61601	34595
Forestry	5107	3149	1958	7806	4035	3771	23289	14922	8367
Medicine & Pharmacy	48559	32571	15988	66877	34528	32349	231375	155143	76232
Teacher Training	170738	52065	118673	221160	57938	163222	594053	225842	368211
Humanities	18747	15114	3633	32534	20089	12445	98964	78637	20327
Finance & Economics	64342	29282	35060	145074	48612	96462	333240	148049	185191
Political Science & Law	10725	6268	4457	19718	9317	10401	51831	30969	20862
Physical Culture	3571	2408	1163	6437	2942	3495	17073	11308	5765
Art	5338	2434	2904	13103	4708	8395	28308	13074	15234

Note: No degrees will be conferred upon graduates of short-cycle courses.

Table 3

Basic Statistics for Adult Higher Education Institutions for 1993

	Institutions	Graduates			Students Admitted			Enrolment		
		Total	Normal Courses	Short-cycle Courses	Total	Normal Courses	Short-cycle Courses	Total	Normal Courses	Short-cycle Courses
Total	1183	441206	48109	39 3097	862631	76008	786623	1862927	181235	1681692
Radio & TV Colleges	45	101615	0	101615	213331	0	213331	437895	0	437895
Workers' Colleges	714	59186	456	58730	112474	802	111672	275246	2490	272756
Peasants' Colleges	5	109	0	109	165	0	165	243	0	243
Institutes for Administration	166	22739	225	22514	59586	1062	58524	93093	1574	91519
Educational Colleges	249	64624	10706	53918	95477	20532	74945	216865	42001	174864
Independent Correspondence Colleges	4	3568	201	3367	4018	82	3936	12139	425	11714
Run by Regular HEIs:										
Divisions of Correspondence		136645	31201	105444	252983	46412	206571	581329	113900	467429
Evening Schools		46466	5320	41146	107609	6914	100695	220919	20641	200278
Short-cycle Courses for Cadres		6254	0	6254	16975	204	16711	25142	204	24938

Note: Adult HEIs are not authorized to confer degrees.

Table 4

Basic Statistics of Postgraduate Education in China for 1993

	Total			Candidates for Doctor's Degrees			Candidates for Master's Degrees		
	Graduates	Entrants	Enrolment	Graduates	Entrants	Enrolment	Graduates	Entrants	Enrolment
Total	28214	42145	106771	2940	6150	17570	25167	35739	88835
Philosophy	447	657	1620	43	98	238	403	532	1355
Economics	1935	3375	7581	128	260	718	1772	3115	6863
Law	1214	1823	4543	60	158	396	1147	1664	4146
Education	540	751	1879	36	56	156	503	686	1694
Literature	1498	2245	5413	55	145	393	1388	2053	4915
History	511	739	1878	59	135	318	452	592	1544
Sciences	5718	7316	19787	840	1551	4332	4878	5721	15393
Engineering	12607	19458	49515	1214	2727	8155	11385	16615	41234
Agriculture	938	1463	3737	101	263	702	837	1200	3035
Medicine	2806	4318	10818	404	757	2162	2402	3561	8656

2. Structure and Organization of Studies

a) Teacher education

i) pre-school and primary school teacher training

There are regular channels for the training of pre-school, primary and secondary school teachers in China. Kindergarten teachers should be graduates of pre-school teacher training schools or graduates of pre-school education programmes offered by vocational schools and primary school teachers should be graduates of normal schools (secondary teacher training schools). Both of them enrol junior secondary school graduates.

ii) secondary school teacher training

Junior secondary school teachers are usually trained by short-cycle teachers colleges offering 2-3-year programmes. Senior secondary school teachers (including teachers of academic or general cultural courses for vocational secondary schools, specialized secondary schools, technical secondary schools) are graduates of teachers colleges or universities providing 4-year programmes. The proper qualifications of various levels of school teacher are legally provided in the *Teachers' Law of the People's Republic of China*. The teachers colleges or universities are authorized to confer the bachelor's degrees, while the short-cycle teachers colleges can only grant diplomas. Both of them enrol senior secondary school graduates who pass the national unified college entrance examinations.

The SEdC, in May of 1992, issued a directive entitled "Some Suggestions Concerning Speeding up Training of Secondary School Teachers to Upgrade their Formal Qualifications". In view of the fact that many junior secondary school teachers fall short of the legal requirements on their formal qualifications, it is suggested that they be given opportunities to prepare for the state-administered examinations for self-taught students of teacher training courses at the subdegree level. It is suggested that measures should be taken to link up programmes of correspondence education, and satellite-transmitted teacher education programmes with the self-study higher education examinations.

iii) training of university and college teachers

Over the years most college and university teachers were recruited directly from university graduates without any advanced training. With the rapid development of postgraduate education during the past 15 years, an increasingly greater proportion of college and university teachers will be recruited from those with advanced degrees awarded by domestic or foreign institutions. It will take many decades of strenuous efforts to make this important transition.

In recent years continuing education for college and university teachers has been conducted in diverse forms, including single-subject refresher courses, refresher courses for assistants and selected teachers of higher qualifications, domestic visiting scholars, studying abroad, short-term seminars, workshops and

advanced seminars. Efforts have been made to bring the staff development capability of higher education institutions favoured with strong faculty in training college and university teachers for other tertiary institutions and promote exchange of faculty members between different institutions.

b) Part-time non-formal studies

Adult education, as a link of lifelong education, serves to widen access of education to broader sections of society, to upgrade the knowledge and skills of staff and workers in employment. Adult HEIs, besides providing school-equivalency programmes for adult learners aiming at acquiring formal qualifications or diplomas, now pay greater attention to the development of non-formal programmes. The modes of delivery are diversified to suit the needs of different categories of adult learners. Modular or single-subject programmes are now provided by many adult HEIs. Adult learners may accumulate sufficient credits through completion of a number of single-subject courses and finally meet the graduation requirements of a full diploma course.

Self-study

Self-study is the basic method by which an adult can improve his or her educational level and qualifications. The term "self-study" means that a person, who is out of school, may acquire the knowledge and skills needed for an occupation, professional or otherwise, through self-directed learning, which is to be engaged in light of the needs of the individual and the society, according to the objectives and study plan that the individual sets for himself or herself.

A new departure in widening access to educational opportunities was the initiation of state-administered higher education examinations for self-directed adult learners in the early 1980s. These examinations test the knowledge and ability of an individual who aspires to acquire formal qualifications through self-study. The examinations can be held in a unified way by the Committee of Examination for Higher Education through Self-Study at the provincial (municipal or autonomous regional) level and the examination subjects are determined according to a speciality-specific study plan. Those who successfully pass the examinations will be awarded diplomas or certificates in a single subject. The Self-Study Exams, covering 222 specialities, held twice every year almost at the same time in every part of the country. By 1993, 861,270 adult learners have completed short-cycle courses and 22,879 have completed undergraduate courses. From 1992 to 1993, a total of 124,103 have completed either undergraduate or short-cycle courses.

Distance education

Over the years, significant strides have been made in distance education in China. China Education TV Station broadcasts in two channels offering 31 hours of programmes everyday. There were more than 1,000 education TV stations or relay stations, over 6,000 receiving stations and 53,000 resources

centres nationwide in 1993. The contents of the programmes are geared to structured courses for both tertiary and secondary level students. There are also in-service teacher training courses for primary and secondary school teachers as well as short-cycle vocational/technical training for rural people. There are 45 RTVCs and 124 TV specialized secondary schools. From 1992 to 1993, RTVCs trained 223,800 short-cycle college-level students, an equivalent of 27% of all the short-cycle college students trained during the same period of time. TV specialized secondary schools trained 193,400 personnel of various types. About 1,000 programmes have been broadcast for rural areas reaching an audience of over 20,000,000 in the aggregate.

c) Vocational education

Vocational education in China undertakes the responsibility of two closely interconnected tasks and functions, namely the initial and in-service training of skilled workers and semi-professional manpower. It provides comparatively systematic vocational training at lower, middle and higher levels to the rising generation and to those already gainfully employed according as the specific requirements of different jobs and the varied vocational aspirations of different individuals.

The education and training of the labour reserve or the initial vocational education of young people is now conducted mainly in the form of secondary vocational education based on the nine-year compulsory education. The secondary technical schools, the skilled worker schools and vocational secondary schools constitute the main providers of this education and training.

Higher vocational education constitutes the advanced stage of vocational training and, along with intermediate and elementary vocational education, it forms an integrated system of vocational education in China. There are 83 short-cycle vocational colleges catering to the manpower needs of a number of industrial and commercial urban centres, being founded and maintained by the governments of these cities. Among teacher training institutions there are 15 vocational teachers colleges devoted to the training of teachers of vocational subjects employed in secondary vocational schools.

Vocational colleges take advantage of the human and material resources available in the local areas to provide educational programmes adapted to local needs. All students have to be commuters and tuition and other fees are charged; and graduates will not be assigned a job upon graduation. The programmes offered are all practically oriented.

With respect to the management system of vocational education in China, we have adopted a system involving the participation of different governmental departments of different sectors of the national economy, and these sectoral departments manage and maintain the schools under their jurisdiction independently under the general macro-level guidance of the SEdC, with

the necessary resources also drawn from these various sources.

d) Principal language(s) of instruction

Chinese (Putonghua) is the principal language of instruction in China while some institutions of autonomous regions in which both Chinese and languages of Chinese national minority are used in teaching.

e) Academic year

In China, the academic year is separated into two semesters. The first semester begins in September and the second in February. In addition to mandatory winter and summer vacations, every January 1 and May 1 (International Labour Day) students have a day-off and October 1 (National Day) has two-day holidays.

f) Level of entry and admission to higher education

i) admission to regular higher education

(1) Basic admission requirements

A Chinese citizen who apply for the entrance examination should love the socialist motherland, abide by law; They should be senior secondary school graduates (or have an equivalent qualification); be healthy; and under 25 years of age. Besides meeting these requirements, the applicants must sit for the national unified college entrance examination.

(2) Entrance examination

In China, a strict entrance examination system has been introduced with a view to ensuring the quality of new entrants to universities and colleges. The test subjects and time arrangements for the national unified examination are determined by the SEdC. The nationwide unified examination is held annually from July 7 to July 9.

For those colleges or departments in autonomous regions in which languages of Chinese national minority are used in teaching, the process of designing the test paper, administering the examination and selecting students is managed and controlled by each autonomous region. The applicants for these institutions or departments do not have to take part in the national unified examination.

(3) Experience

Institutions will select students according to their performance in the examination, taking into account the evaluation of their morality and physical conditions. If conditions are equal, overseas Chinese returning to China, their children, and youths from Taiwan province are given priority in admission.

(4) Special limitations

Primary and secondary school teachers are permitted to apply only to teachers colleges or universities. Students graduating from specialized secondary

schools or secondary technical schools, and those who were admitted to institutions of higher education the year before but failed to enroll at the assigned institutions are deprived of the right of application.

ii) admission to adult higher education

Adult HEIs enroll students from among cadres, workers, peasants, former school graduates (including unemployed) and current year senior secondary school graduates, all of whom must pass the nationally or provincially organized entrance examinations for adults, which are held annually in May.

g) Levels/stages of higher education studies

i) studies leading to award(s) not equivalent to university degree(s)

(generally 2 or 3 years)

Students of short-cycle courses of regular HEIs, students of short-cycle vocational colleges and students of adult HEIs who have completed the required courses and passed the examinations will be awarded diplomas or certificates of graduation, which are recognized by the State. No degrees will be conferred upon them.

ii) studies leading to first university degree(s) (generally 4 years)

The bachelor's degree shall be conferred on graduates from institutions of higher education who excel in their studies and attain the following level: (1) a good command of basic theories, specialized knowledge, and basic skills in the branch of learning concerned; (2) some ability to undertake scientific research or to engage in technical work.

iii) studies leading to postgraduate degree(s)

The master's degree shall be conferred on postgraduates from institutions of higher learning or scientific research institutes, or on those with equivalent qualifications, who have passed written examinations in the prescribed courses and an oral examination on the thesis leading to the master's degree, and who attain the following academic level: (1) a firm grasp of basic theories and systematic knowledge in the branch of learning concerned; (2) an ability to undertake scientific research or engage in independent technical work.

The doctor's degree shall be conferred on postgraduates from institutions of higher learning or scientific research institutes, or on those with equivalent qualifications, who have passed written examinations in the prescribed courses and an oral examination on the dissertation leading to the doctor's degree, and who attain the following academic level: (1) a firm and comprehensive grasp of basic theories and systematic, profound, and specialized knowledge in the branch of learning concerned; (2) an ability to undertake independent scientific research; (3) an indication of ability for creative achievements in science or technology.

3. Foreign Students

a) Special admission requirements for foreign students at national level

The SEdC accepts foreign students mainly in accordance with bilateral agreements between Chinese and foreign governments, however, it also receives students sent by other organizations. Foreign students must observe the laws and decrees of the Chinese government, abide by the rules and regulations of their schools and respect Chinese ways and customs.

(1) Categories of foreign students eligible for admission

Undergraduates: The applicants should be at least the equivalent of a graduate of senior secondary school in China. He/she should be under 25 years of age. The programme lasts 4-5 years.

Candidates for a master's degree: The applicant must be the equivalent of a university graduate in China and recommended by two professors or associate professors under whom he/she has studied. Transcripts and diploma must be presented for evaluation and approval. If a graduate in Chinese university wishes to work for an advanced degree at the same or other universities in China, he/she must sit and pass the entrance examination for the master's programme at the institution for which he/she has applied, however, those who have graduated with honours may, upon recommendation by their departments, be approved for the degree programme without examinations. The applicant should be under 35 years of age. The programme lasts 2-3 years.

Candidates for a doctorate: The applicant must be the equivalent of a master's degree holder in China, be recommended by two professors or associate professors under whom he/she has studied, and be approved for the doctoral programme by the Chinese university for which he/she has applied. The applicant should be under 40 years of age. The programme lasts 2-3 years.

General advanced students: The applicant should have completed at least two years of undergraduate studies, and intends to continue studying in China a related subject in which he/she already has some background (except for those wishing to study elementary Chinese). The applicant should be under 35 years of age. The programme lasts 1-2 years.

Senior advanced students: The applicant should have at least the equivalent of the Chinese master's degree, and will pursue advanced study independently under the direction of a Chinese supervisor. He/she should be under 45 years of age. The programme generally lasts for one year or less.

(2) Entrance examinations

After submitting their applications, undergraduates in the sciences, engineering, agriculture and medicine are required to take standard examinations in basic mathematics, physics and chemistry. Those intending to study economic (business) management are required to take an examination in basic

mathematics. In principle, these examinations are conducted by Chinese embassies (or consulates) in the students' home countries.

Candidates for master's degrees are admitted by Chinese universities under certain conditions through evaluating their university diploma, transcripts and letters of recommendation. Those who have been admitted to the master's programmes and passed the qualifying examination after completing the first year of course study in China may stay on for their thesis studies. Whereas, those who fail such examinations will have to terminate their studies and leave the country with a certificate of advanced studies.

In principle, candidates for doctoral degrees must first come to China as senior advanced students, and take examinations required by the Chinese universities before being officially admitted to the programmes. Those who fail such examinations may nevertheless be permitted to stay on as advanced students at a level suited to their academic background.

After they are enrolled, senior advanced students will undergo an evaluation by their supervisors of their knowledge of their subjects and language proficiency. Those who do not meet the requirements must change their status to that of general advanced students.

Undergraduates in liberal arts and general advanced students need to take no entrance examinations. The admission decision will be based on the applicant's previous record.

(3) Language requirements

Students who do not know Chinese, or whose language proficiency is inadequate for their scholarly pursuits, are required to study the language and pass an examination in it before taking up their specialities. Undergraduates in Chinese philosophy, economics, law, education, Chinese language and literature, Chinese history and art as well as traditional Chinese medicine and clinical medicine, are required to take a two-year course in elementary Chinese. Undergraduates and advanced students in the sciences, engineering or other specialities are required to take a one-year course in elementary Chinese.

General advanced students studying liberal arts who have attained an adequate level of competence in Chinese may enter their schools directly. Supplementary language courses will be organized for them based on their language proficiency by their schools, as necessary.

Senior advanced students studying liberal arts and candidates for advanced degrees should have attained a higher level of competence in Chinese and be able to use it in pursuing study and research in their special fields.

Students admitted to programmes the medium of instruction of which is not Chinese are required, however, to take some Chinese language courses to help them in their daily lives and for the writing of their thesis abstracts.

(4) Academic degrees and certificates

Undergraduates and candidates for a master's degree who pass the examinations at the end of their studies will receive certificates of graduation and, in accordance with the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees*, the bachelor's and master's degrees respectively. Candidates for a doctor's degree who pass the final examinations and the thesis defence will be conferred doctor's degrees. Those who fail such examinations will receive certificates of completion of studies.

General advanced students and senior advanced students who have completed the required work will receive certificates of advanced study. No degrees will be conferred upon them.

b) Recognition of qualifications awarded in foreign countries

The institution of regulations concerning the recognition of qualifications awarded in foreign countries is under way.

c) Services available to foreign students

Government Scholarships of the People's Republic of China are awarded to certain foreign students by SEdC in accordance with bilateral exchange agreements between the governments concerned. The SEdC provides a monthly allowance to a full scholarship student in Chinese RMB(yuan) and also pays to his/her school, on behalf of the student, the expenses for tuition, textbooks and class handouts, laboratory work, field trips, medical treatment, teaching and housing equipment, lodging, extra-curricular activities and school organized tours. Partial scholarship students will be exempt from paying expenses for either tuition, lodging, medical care or textbooks and class handouts in accordance with bilateral agreements signed between their sponsoring organizations and SEdC. Self-supporting students should pay all the fees according to the rates prescribed by their schools.

Chinese universities have dining halls for foreign students. However, foreign students may, if they wish, have meals in the canteens for Chinese students. Chinese universities provide dormitories for their foreign students. Full scholarship students and those partial scholarship students enjoying free medical care who fall ill during their studies in China may consult doctors in the school clinics, who will refer them to designated hospitals for treatment if necessary. Expenses will be paid for them by the school according to relevant regulations.

4. Exercise of profession: Legislation and practices concerning recognition of foreign qualifications

The institution of regulations concerning the recognition of qualifications awarded in foreign countries is under way.

5. National bodies responsible for questions relating to the recognition of foreign qualifications and studies

National bodies: Office of Academic Degrees Committee
of the State Council
Office of Postgraduate Education
of State Education Commission
The People's Republic of China

Director General : Prof. Zhong-lie Wang
Office of ADCSC
Office of Postgraduate Education of SEdC

Deputy Director: Prof. Guang-qing Xi
Mr. Gui-hua Xie

Address: 35 Damucang Hutong
Xidan, Beijing 100816
P.R. China

Tel: (861) 6097343

Fax: (861) 6021964

6. Bilateral and international agreements relating to the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas

China is one of the contracting parties of the *Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific*.

Agreement between the People's Republic of China and Sri Lanka on Mutual Recognition of Degrees and Certificates was signed on August 9, 1988.

Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Mutual Recognition of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees was signed on May 20, 1991.

Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Algeria on Mutual Recognition of Certificates, Degrees and Academic Titles was signed on November 14, 1991.

Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Peru on Mutual Recognition of Degrees and Diplomas was signed on December 13, 1991.

Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Mauritius on Mutual Recognition of Diplomas, Degrees and Academic Titles was signed on November 17, 1992.

Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Cameroon on Mutual Recognition of Certificates, Academic Titles and Degrees was signed on May 4, 1994.

7. Obstacles and difficulties encountered in the recognition of foreign qualifications, in particular in the application of the Convention

The main difficulties we have encountered are as follows: Firstly, because the educational systems and the length of schooling vary from country to country, the actual levels of degrees are quite different among countries. Secondly, the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, such as the recognition of qualifications of doctors (in medicine) and lawyers, is more difficult than in other professions. In fact, it is very difficult to establish equivalency of qualifications between different countries because there exist significant differences between countries as regards entrance requirements, duration of study, curricula, award of degrees or diplomas, and professional recognition and examinations.

8. Major information sources (bibliography)

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Provisional Measures for the Implementation of the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degrees, Approved for the implementation by the State Council, May 20, 1981.

Regulations Concerning the Admission of Foreign Students in Chinese Universities, SEdC, 1993.

Educational Statistics Yearbook of China for 1993, People's Education Press, 1994.