

How to Market Your Institution to Chinese Students

Description

Utilize these top three insights from the QS International Student Survey (ISS) to generate more leads and increase engagement with Chinese students for quick wins in student marketing and recruitment.

Despite geopolitical and pandemic-related disruptions to student mobility, Mainland China has continued to lead in numbers of tertiary students sent abroad.

As a vital market for the higher education sector, Chinese students have a strong desire for cultural exchange and new experiences. In fact, studying abroad is critical for a growing segment of increasingly affluent students with ambitions to work for global companies or in fact establish one of their own.

Chinese students currently have many countries to choose from, as more and more nations are developing international recruitment strategies to target this significant source market. In addition, Mainland China's domestic higher education system is becoming more competitive, offering strong value propositions to lure its growing middle class.

Yet reaching Chinese students through digital marketing recruitment efforts can be a challenge, as the nation's internet restrictions, use of higher education agents, and other cultural barriers can stifle even the best online digital marketing efforts.

But recruiting Chinese students doesn't have to be too complicated. Below, discover our top three student insights from the [International Student Survey \(ISS\)](#) for successful marketing to Chinese students.

1. Brand and academic reputation are highly important factors when choosing an institution

Of the 4,274 ISS students from Mainland China in our database, reputation came up as one of the top three factors considered when choosing a university. Students ranked high-quality teaching as the most important factor (60%), followed by having a good reputation for their chosen subject area (54%), and that the institution is well-ranked (44%).

Our survey respondents also valued attending a college or university that offers specific courses that they were interested in (42%) and the overall reputation of the institution (41%).

In order to reach prestige-seeking students, institutions must tailor their messaging to emphasize reputation and teaching quality. Academic reputation is not only important to prospects, an increasing number of employers in China have begun to screen potential employees based on the ranking of the university that they graduated from. Students, parents, and employers in most major cities have a strong preference for institutions that perform well in league tables, particularly the QS World University Rankings.

2. Welcoming environments and support are critical to Chinese students

Chinese prospects value feeling welcome, according to our data, especially when narrowing down their decision to a study destination's town or city. When asked to rank the five most important factors in this choice, Chinese prospects valued safety and being made to feel welcome the most (81%), followed by that it has universities with high quality teaching (69%) and that it has a good reputation as a place to study (58%). Utilizing alumni to share their experiences, giving virtual campus tours, and highlighting a warm and inviting culture at both your campus and location will go a long way with this group.

To send a message to Chinese students that your institution is supportive and sensitive to their needs, it is also recommended that marketing and communications materials be translated into Mandarin, if you are considering establishing a locally hosted micro-site and engaging with domestic Chinese social media sites such as WeChat and Weibo.

3. Safety while studying abroad remains top of mind for many Chinese students

When looking at the reservations that Chinese students may have about studying abroad, we asked them what worried them the most: safety was ranked the highest (66%), followed by cost of living (61%) and whether they will do well academically (53%).

In order to better understand how institutions can alleviate these concerns, we asked which factors would make them feel less worried about studying abroad. They responded that they would like to know about the culture of the country (51%), family or friends in the country they were considering (51%), and they would like to hear from family or friends that there is good support for international students (45%).

It's apparent, then, that personal connections and a deep sense of familiarity with a country and its culture drive the decision-making process for many prospective Chinese students. Institutions that have already established a strong student pipeline in China will clearly have the advantage among competing institutions and countries.

It's more important than ever that institutions communicate how they're responding to health and safety issues in a time-sensitive manner, in addition to highlighting the positive, welcoming attributes of their campus and culture.

To receive a free recruitment guide for Chinese students that includes more data-driven insights and highlights common Chinese student personas, download [What You Need to Know to Recruit in Mainland China](#).