



北京大学 深圳研究生院
Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School

Pre-Arrival Information for PKU Shenzhen International Students



Arrival Time:

Thursday, 13 February 2020, 8:30am – 2:30pm

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1) Money and Banking

The currency in China is the Renminbi, and is referred to as RMB or yuan. At the time of writing, 1 RMB = 0.14 USD = 0.13 EUR. We recommend you arrive with local currency or exchange money at the airport or border crossing. The bank on campus will only exchange USD. In the past students have mistakenly arrived or transferred Japanese *yen*, New Taiwan dollars, or Hong Kong dollars which cannot be accepted or used.

ATMs are widespread in China and can be used to withdraw money from foreign bank accounts. However, only the ATMs of major banks will allow withdrawal from foreign bank accounts with Visa or Mastercard: Bank of China, China Construction Bank, ICBC, and HSBC. I recommend that you **notify your bank of your travel to China**, so you won't have any problems when you attempt to withdraw money from an ATM in China. The daily ATM withdrawal limit (at least for Ping An Bank on campus) is 20,000 RMB. There is also a limit to the amount of RMB you can change back to your currency, even in China.

Bank transfers

Wire money transfers can take up to one month (and at least one week) to be processed. Make sure that you have money available while you wait for your transfer. Your campus card will come with a local Chinese bank account, Ping An Bank. When making a transfer, pay careful attention to all the banking account details for both the sender and receiver, transfers will be denied if any information is input incorrectly.

You also may choose to open a bank account at a larger bank. There are several banks near PKU Shenzhen where you can set up a bank account, at either a Chinese or an international bank (Standard Chartered, HSBC Premier, CitiBank and Bank of East Asia). On campus, there is a local bank, Ping An Bank and both Ping An Bank and Bank of China ATMs.

Traveler's checks

Many banks in Shenzhen accept Traveler's Checks in USD; however, it takes generally more than 40 working days to process them. We don't recommend Traveler's checks because of the lengthy processing time.

Western Union

Western Union provides a very fast money transfer service. Students who have had difficulty transferring money or having a Chinese bank accept their foreign wire transfer, will use this service. Western Union agent stations include Postal Savings Banks in Shenzhen, or the Bank of China also offers money receiving service for Western Union. You must open an account with the bank to receive the money.

Chinese Debit, Credit Cards, and WeChat Pay

It is nearly impossible for foreigners to get a Chinese credit card. However, you can easily get a Chinese debit card. Most Chinese debit cards belong to the "Unionpay" network, which is not typically accepted outside of China. Many students transfer money to their Chinese debit card to be able to easily withdraw money in China without incurring fees. You can use a debit card to make purchases at most larger Chinese stores, to withdraw money from ATMs and to shop online from Chinese companies. The campus card provided to you is also a



Chinese debit card.

Nearly every basic consumer purchase in mainland China is made electronically through an e-wallet connected to the phone applications [WeChat](#) or Alipay. During orientation when you go to the bank to activate your banking account, the staff will help you set up the electronic wallet and the WeChat pay function.

Bringing Cash

The maximum amount you can bring in cash to China without declaring it is 5,000 USD (or equivalent in another currency) or 20,000RMB. This includes cash in all currencies together, so you cannot bring 5,000 USD plus 1,000 EUR. Besides the risk of carrying cash while travelling, please note that you might not be able to exchange the extra RMB back into your own currency when you leave China.

2) Payment for Tuition, Accommodation and Insurance:

You should pay all expenses (housing, insurance, tuition) before your arrival by electronic wire transfer. In January, you will receive an invoice from your school detailing your fees. By January 31, you must submit the details of your wire transfer to your school (as instructed by each individual institution), unless your invoice specifically instructed you to pay in person. Please pay the wire transfer as early as possible to avoid any delays. Students that have not sent payment, must pay in RMB cash on the day of arrival (foreign bank cards are not accepted).

- Accommodation fees are as follows:

Accommodation Type	Exchange semester
Single Room	6000 RMB
Double Room	3000 RMB

* 300 RMB housing deposit that will be returned at the end of the program.

- Insurance: 400 RMB per academic semester

3) Arrival Expenses

You can expect to face the following expenses upon your arrival. Please prepare accordingly:

- Internet: 100 RMB for 5 months/200 RMB for 10 months (for the most basic speed)
- Campus card: 100 RMB to pick up, comes loaded with 100 RMB
- Initial hot water and electricity payments: at least 20 RMB each (deducted from your Campus Card amount)
- Dormitory Furnishings: expenses vary (bed sheets, trash bins, pillows, etc.)
- Wire transfer exchange rate fluctuation compensation: Up to 300 RMB
- Living expenses: about 2,000-3,000 RMB/month, depending on your lifestyle

4) Visa and Travel

International students studying in China for 1 semester receive an X2 short term study visa. This visa allows for



only **one entry into mainland China**. Students with long-term X1 visas can apply for a Temporary Residence Permit to be allowed unlimited entries into mainland China. Currently, in Shenzhen, students with X2 visas cannot receive the Temporary Residence Permit for unlimited entries. **However, most exchange students make travel plans and apply for an additional entry once they have already arrived in Shenzhen.** In this way, you will be able to exit mainland China for travel during your study time, if you so choose. Additionally, this also means exchange students *do not* need to pay for or receive the medical examination that is required for the Temporary Residence Permit.

Lastly, be aware the student health insurance (see section 5 below) only covers mainland China. Make sure you have insurance or purchase travel insurance for any travel you do outside of mainland China (including Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan).

5) Health Insurance

Chinese Health Insurance

As students in China, you are required by law to subscribe to a local Chinese insurance plan. The Ministry of Education recommends using the Ping An Insurance plan, which covers accidental injuries, hospitalization (if you need to stay in a hospital for at least one night) and death. The cost of Ping An Insurance is 400 RMB/semester, and the school will apply for the insurance on your behalf and the cost is included on the invoice. You will be covered from your day of arrival on campus with the Ping An Insurance scheme if the payment is made on time.

International Health Insurance

The Ping An Foreign Students Group Insurance covers outpatient care and some prescription medicines. After one 650RMB deductible, policy holders will be reimbursed 85% outpatient fees with a 600RMB daily limit and an accumulative limit of 20,000RMB. There is not a deductible for reasonable and necessary expenses for treatment following an accidental injury or for hospitalization.

Please refer to the insurance policy (English version) [here](#) and the claims guidelines here. You can view the website of the insurance company [here](#) (Plan 2 - should there be any discrepancies due to translation, the Chinese version will be considered as the legal version).

For more information on the Ping An Foreign Student Group Insurance Plan, you can call their 24/7 hotline 4008105119 or consult with Nathan for more information.

In general, basic medications, doctors' visits and dental care are quite inexpensive in China. The Ping An Insurance and other local Chinese insurance will only cover hospitalization in a Chinese hospital (International English-speaking wards are also not covered). Generally, medical professionals in these public hospitals have only very limited English capability. The school does its best to arrange for a Chinese student Campus Advisor or staff member to accompany international students to the hospital when needed.

If you prefer to have an insurance plan which covers private international hospitals or medical repatriation, you may want to consider also purchasing international health insurance. These plans typically cover hospitalization



and surgery in a private hospital and emergency evacuation to your home country. For more information on health care in China for foreigners, please visit:

<http://www.smartshanghai.com/articles/wellbeing/in-depth-the-ultimate-guide-to-health-insurance-in-china>

Note: Travel Insurance often has time limits or other restrictions, which may make it invalid for a one-semester long study program. If you are looking into Travel Insurance as an option, make sure to read the fine details about the coverage.

At registration, you will be required to prove that you are insured. We will also collect emergency contact numbers.

6) Living Costs

In general, living in China is much more affordable than living almost anywhere in North America or Western Europe. That said, international students from other developing countries are often surprised by the cost of living in Shenzhen, and some do not allot the appropriate amount of money to support themselves for the duration of their studies at PKU Shenzhen.

Shenzhen is in the most rapidly developing area in China, and one of the fastest growing in the world. Consequently, the area has experienced cost inflation to match the rising demand for housing, food, and other commodities. After Shanghai and Beijing, Shenzhen is the most expensive city in China. While the cost doesn't compare to the likes of developed countries, students should not misjudge the amount of living costs beyond tuition and housing.

Below is a brief list of up-to-date Shenzhen prices:

Meal on campus: 10-25 RMB (or around 45 for a Western meal)

Meal (per person) in an average Chinese restaurant: 20-50 RMB

Fancier Chinese restaurant: 100-250 RMB (30 for a vegetable dish, 70 for meat)

Western meal: 60-250 RMB

Fast-food: 20-30 RMB

Chinese beer: 5 RMB (supermarket)

Beer/drink in an expat bar: 35-60 RMB

Taxi (20 Minutes): 30 RMB - 10 RMB for the first 2km, then 2 RMB per extra 2.4 km.

Subway ticket: 2-8 RMB

Public bus ticket: 2-5 RMB

Small Refrigerator: 600-900 RMB

Electric stove: 250 RMB

Mattress: 900-1,500 RMB

7) Accommodation



On the PKU Shenzhen website, you can take our [campus tour](#) to discover our campus and dorm rooms. We recommend that students live on campus, but it is not required. International students live in rooms that are 16 square meters, with a private bathroom¹ and a balcony.

Most, or all, exchange students will live in a double room. All double rooms have two .9 meter beds. Exchange students have the option to pay for the price of a single room and live in the double room without a roommate (based on availability). The housing office is not able to convert any double rooms to single rooms. If a student does not pay the fee for a single room, the housing office may assign them a roommate.

All dormitory buildings have 24-hour security and surveillance. All students have a campus card that only allows residents entry into the dormitory building. The first floors of all dormitories have a laundry room with washing machines.

Students may live off campus if they so choose. The school doesn't provide accommodation outside campus and you will ultimately be responsible for negotiating your own off campus housing. However, we can advise you and recommend areas in Shenzhen.

Accommodation fees must be paid in full upon arrival to the Campus Service Center including a 300RMB deposit. Provided there are no damages to your room at the end of the year, this deposit will be returned to you in full upon check out. However, your cold water bill and the cost of any unreturned dorm materials (AC remote, etc.) will be deducted from your deposit. All students must sign a housing contract to live on campus. There is no reduced payment for staying less than one semester.

You must register your residence within the first 24 hours of entering the country. If you stay at a hotel this registration is done for you. However, you need to complete the registration again once you move into the dorm room (or apartment off campus). This registration is completed online through the app WeChat. You should download the app before you arrive, or on arrival. For students living on campus, there will be a QR code on the door of your room for you to use in order to register. For instructions on how to register, please refer to this [document](#). Do not attempt to register before your arrival.

Utilities are paid separately from your accommodation fees. Hot water and electricity are pre-paid through an on-campus rechargeable machine available from 7:00 AM to around 10:30 PM. Depending on your personal habits, utilities are typically 400-500 RMB for about 4 weeks of electricity (for peak A/C season); but around 100 for cooler months; these numbers vary with the weather and your own usage. For hot water, 100 RMB usually lasts about 2 months. Cold water is about 20 RMB per month.

8) Academic Calendar

The Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School Academic Calendar can be found [online](#). Please note that individual schools may have their own academic calendar, this is only the general calendar for the university.

¹ Despite what may be pictured in the virtual campus tour, all international student dorm rooms have Western (seated) toilets rather than squat toilets.



9) Weather

Shenzhen has a warm subtropical climate. Winters are fairly mild and dry with average temperatures 11-16C (51-60F). The rainy season in Shenzhen lasts from April until October with its peak in the summer. Summers are quite hot and humid with temperatures 29-36C (80-95F).

10) Packing List

You will be able to find most everything that you will need in China. Clothes, toiletries, shoes, cell phones etc. are relatively inexpensive. Shenzhen has many international stores such as H&M, Decathlon, Ikea and UniQlo. However, some things can be harder to find.

Some recommendations on what to bring to China:

- *Lightweight clothes.* Inexpensive clothes can be found, but most international clothing brands are more expensive in China. If you need larger sizes (especially for shoes or pants) you will find suitable sizes hard to find. There are also many affordable tailors.
- *Cosmetics and personal hygiene products.* Foreign brand cosmetics are typically more expensive. Take a few samples of your favorite brands, as you may have difficulties finding the same products in China. Feminine hygiene products of one's liking can be tricky to find as well.
- *Mementos and photos from home*
- *Small gifts.* Gift giving is very prominent in Chinese culture. Chinese friends will always appreciate something that you have brought from home to share.
- *Bug Spray, sunscreen, antiperspirant.* Will likely be cheaper in your home country
- *Prescription or name brand medications.* You may not be able to find the same brand of medication in China. It is also helpful to bring basic medicines, such as ibuprofen, cold medicine, anti-diarrhea medicine, etc.
- *Books in your native language or an Electronic book reader*

11) Communication

Mobile phone

There are almost a billion mobile phone users in China. The two major Chinese mobile network providers, China Unicom and China Mobile, have multiple store locations around Shenzhen, though very few have English speaking staff. Students will register with China Mobile for a SIM card upon their arrival to campus (please have your admission letter and passport prepared). If you register and receive your SIM card on campus through China Mobile, you will receive their student plan, which is highly discounted.

Note: Android phone users should download an app store that will work in China. Check out this article for [options](#). Google Play Store is blocked and you will not be able to use without VPN, which is unreliable and may not have updated versions of Chinese apps.

Some older iPhone models are not able to connect to the 4G network of mainland China. In this case, most students choose to purchase a new phone to use in China.



Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP)

Services such as Skype on mobile phones are quite popular, as the rates are very cheap. The only drawback is the lack of internet speed at peak times of use for the shared campus wireless internet.

Internet

On-campus internet is fairly reliable and comes at a low cost to students. The basic speed is 20rmb per month, and higher speed connection plans can be purchased as well. Once a student has received his/her Username and Password, the internet will be available for use on a 24-hour basis. New routers are being installed in early February in each dorm room, this should result in improved wireless internet speeds in the dorms.

There are many major online services and popular websites that are blocked inside China. Please be aware that internet users in mainland China cannot access the following: social media - including Facebook, Instagram, and SnapChat; Google services - including search, Maps, email, and Drive; major news and entertainment providers - including Netflix, HBO, BBC, NYT, and YouTube; and various other websites, including possibly your home university email inbox. Before arrival in China, we suggest you do proper research and preparation for being able to ensure a smooth transition and be comfortable, connected, and have access to your important information.

12) Culture Shock

Culture shock can be an unexpected issue when living in a foreign country. Most foreigners do experience a degree of culture shock even if they don't realize it. If you are familiar with the stages of culture shock, you will be better prepared on how to cope with adapting to a new culture. Living in China can pose new challenges even for seasoned travelers. The four stages of culture shock that you may experience: the honeymoon stage of initial euphoria, withdrawal and irritability, adjustment phase, and finally adaption and acceptance.

Please notify PKUSZ as well as staff at your home university if you have a history or are being treated with a mental illness. Culture shock may create additional mental hardship and result in difficulty coping with pre-existing conditions.

For more informational and tips on coping with culture shock visit:

<https://www.thespruce.com/culture-shock-from-international-move-2436081>

Personal Account: [“Learning to Embrace Guanxi: On Living Communally in China”](#) by Elizabeth Lindsay Rogers

13) Book, Movie, Information Sources Lists

Beginning to prepare for culture shock before can ease your transition in adapting to a new culture. We encourage you to start learning Chinese, keeping up to date on Chinese news and reading books and watching movies about China. Most of all, expect the unexpected, and understand that things that push you out of your



comfort zone can be rewarding and enlightening.

Here are some resources to get you started!

Recommended Book List:

China in the 21st Century, Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Maura Elizabeth Cunningham

The Geography of Thought, by Richard Nisbett

Peter Hessler's China Trilogy:

Country Driving: A Journey Through China from Farm to Factory

Oracle Bones: A Journey Between China's Past and Present

River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze

Dreaming in Chinese, by Deborah Fallows

Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in New China by Evan Osnos

Only Hope: Coming of Age Under China's One-Child Policy – Vanessa L. Fong

Recommended Movie List:

The Last Emperor (1987) by Bernardo Bertolucci

Tells the life of Puyi, the last emperor of China and the fall of the imperial China

Shower (1999) by Zhang Yang

Follows a family who runs an old fashioned bath house in modern China

Red Sorghum (1987) by Zhang Yimo

Follows a woman's life after being arranged to marry a man who runs a rural sorghum distillery.

Still Life (2004) Jia Zhangke

Depicts a small town about to be destroyed for the 3 Gorges Dam project.

Youth (2017) Feng Xiaogang

A young troupe of military acrobats and performers face the challenges of growing up, the threat of war with Vietnam, and the decline of the Mao era in China during the 1970s.

News, Blogs and Shenzhen Expat Websites:

The Nanyan (PKUSZ school blog)

[the nanyan.com](http://thenanyan.com)

Chinafile

<http://www.chinafile.com/>



Shenzhen Daily

<http://www.szdaily.com/>

SupChina

<https://supchina.com/>

That's Shenzhen

<http://thatsmags.com/shenzhen/>

SixthTone

<sixhtone.com>

14) Learning Chinese

PKU Shenzhen has Chinese class offerings for enrolled students. These courses are included in the cost of tuition. Learning Mandarin Chinese while in China can also help you with cultural integration and adjusting to culture shock. Coursework is not intensive, so students looking to improve their Chinese more quickly can also take advantage of language exchange partners. More advanced classes can be offered if the minimum quota of students is met.

In addition, we recommend investigating these resources:

Chinese Pod: A great online resource of podcasts and lessons. This was one of my main resources for studying Chinese, but they went through transitional phase in 2017. There is a large selection of free lessons for you to check out to get a feel for the service. I have found it far more productive than a traditional textbook.

<http://chinesepod.com/>

Mandarin Corner: HSK videos, listening practice for multiple levels. Also insights into Chinese life and many other resources. Created by a Shenzhen local.

<https://mandarincorner.org/>

Yellow Bridge: Character dictionary, lots of beginner and advanced readings, flashcards, and other helpful resources

<https://www.yellowbridge.com/>

LINE Dictionary: My go to Chinese dictionary

<http://ce.linedict.com/dict.html#/cnen/home>

15) What to Expect at Orientation

In order to help international students acclimate to PKU Shenzhen and China as a whole, the school organizes an Orientation specifically for new students from overseas.



Among other events, Orientation will include:

- Campus and surrounding neighborhood tour
- Shopping trip to IKEA
- Purchase of transport cards and a scavenger hunt through Shenzhen
- Events to help you bond with classmates and Campus Advisors
- China Apps Workshop
- Academic information session
- Campus life, cultural, insurance information sessions

16) Getting to Know Your Staff Resources

Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School is comprised of 8 different graduate schools. Of these 8 schools, Peking University HSBC Business School (PHBS) and Peking University School of Transnational Law (STL) have international students and fully English-language programs.

Pre-arrival communication and international student services are managed in partnership between the administrative offices of the individual schools and the main administration of PKUSZ. There is not an International Student Office.

You will get to know several staff members who regularly handle international student affairs. In order to reduce confusion, and receive the most efficient help, a description of staff roles is below:

PKU Shenzhen Main Administration

Nathan Faber

International Affairs Coordinator

nathanf@pkusz.edu.cn

Nathan handles general life affairs and cultural events for international students. He manages 8 Chinese student Campus Advisors who assist international students in discovering Shenzhen and resolving life issues. He can read and speak Chinese.

Areas of assistance: Campus living, orientation, counseling info, PKU student associations, medical incidents, insurance, cultural events, getting to know Shenzhen, general China questions

Peking University HSBC Business School

Nicole Chastagner

MA-PhD Office Vice Director

nchastagner@phbs.pku.edu.cn



Nicole is the vice director managing international student affairs at PHBS. She directs recruitment and admissions, and assists in matters of critical academic and student affairs for full-time and exchange international students. Nicole can read and speak Chinese.

Areas of assistance: Academic affairs, admissions, scholarship

Joyce Guo

International Affairs Manager

jguo@phbs.pku.edu.cn

Joyce coordinates full-time international MA students at PHBS. She handles visa procedures and also assists in academic affairs and resolving significant non-academic incidents. She is a native Chinese speaker and fluent in English.

Areas of assistance: Academic affairs, scholarship, visa, medical incidents, insurance

Christian Pavik

Admissions Officer

Christian.Pavik@phbs.pku.edu.cn

Christian handles recruitment and admissions of international students at PHBS. He communicates important information about PHBS with students before their arrival.

Areas of assistance: Admissions, scholarship, orientation

Safa Saidani

International Marketing Specialist

safa@phbs.pku.edu.cn

Safa handles international marketing and social media accounts for PHBS. She is also a graduate of PHBS and frequently assists in communicating school information and responding to student questions. Safa can read and speak Chinese.

Areas of assistance: Academic affairs, curriculum, campus living, getting to know Shenzhen

Peking University School of Transnational Law

Cole Agar

Director of Graduate and International Programs

coleagar.pku@gmail.com

Cole is the director managing international student affairs at STL. He directs recruitment and admissions, and



assists in matters of critical academic and student affairs for full-time and exchange international students.

Areas of assistance: Academic affairs, admissions, scholarship

Du Yating

Officer of International Programs and International Affairs

duyating@stl.pku.edu.cn

Yating coordinates LLM students and exchange students at STL. She communicates important information about STL to students before their arrival. She also handles visa procedures and assists in academic affairs and resolving significant non-academic incidents. She is a native Chinese speaker and fluent in English.

Areas of assistance: Academic affairs, scholarship, visa, orientation, medical incidents

