



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

# Pre-Arrival Information for PKU Shenzhen International Students





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## 1) Applying for your Visa and Residence Permit

As soon as you receive your admission notification letter and your JW202 form in the mail, you can apply for an X visa. These two documents will be sent to you by FedEx at the address you indicated on your application. If you'd like the forms sent to a different address, you must alert your school by May 30. You should receive them by the end of June. Please start the visa process as soon as you receive your admission notification and JW202. You are ultimately responsible for obtaining your visa, but PKU Shenzhen and your school can advise you throughout the process.

The student visa is called an X visa in China. Degree-seeking students will apply for an X1 and one semester exchange students will apply for an X2. **You must apply for this visa from your home country, before coming to China.** The Chinese government only allows incoming international students to apply for student visas in their country of origin; if you are planning to apply for your student visa while outside your home country, immediately contact the relevant Chinese embassy to ensure this is acceptable. Please use the following as a guide only and be sure to check with the Chinese consulate in your country for specific regulations. Restrictions and procedures can vary greatly by country.

### *Please take note of the following:*

- **Degree-seeking students and year-long exchange students:** Your X visa requires that you enter China within a certain period of time (generally 3 months). The visa will expire 30 days after your entry. Within these 30 days you must apply for a residence permit, and only then will you be allowed to live and study in China for one year (the residence permit must be renewed every year). Upon your arrival, we will assist you in applying for a residence permit. You can expect to pay approximately 500 RMB for the required health check and 800 RMB for your residence permit. The application process for a residence permit takes nearly one month, so you cannot arrive in advance of the orientation start date.

- The X visa does not allow you to work, even part-time, even as an intern. You can however work for free or apply to a campus job (teaching assistant, research assistant, translator, journalist, administration intern) after your arrival. If you wish to do an internship you will need to follow procedures to apply to change your resident permit notations.

-In some countries, the local Chinese embassy doesn't deliver X visas (the list of these countries is not available as it changes according to the political situation, the state of the country's relationships with China and other factors). Contact your local embassy for details. If you cannot apply for an X visa, then apply for an L visa (tourist visa). We will assist you in the process of getting a residence permit.

-If you are already in China under another visa, or plan to visit the country under an L visa before coming to Shenzhen, we cannot guarantee that you will be granted a student visa while abroad. For most countries, it is required to go back to your home country and to apply for an X visa through the normal procedure before coming to PKU Shenzhen. If this is impossible, contact us and we'll ask the local police station about your specific situation.



-Applying for an X visa is similar to applying for a tourist visa, although the list of documents required might vary from country to country. Please contact your local embassy for details on the price of the visa and the requirements. In particular, some countries will ask you to get a doctor's certificate of health. A consultation with your family doctor should be sufficient. The application can take between 24 hours (premium price) and one week, rarely longer. Your visa will be valid from the date of issue. Be sure to enter China before its expiration.

Example: you have an X visa valid for 3 months, from June 10 to September 10. You can enter China anytime before or on September 10, and from the day you entered your visa will again be valid for 30 days. If you enter on August 1, it will be valid in China until August 30. If you enter on September 10, it will be valid in China until October 9.

## 2) Money and Banking

The currency in China is the Renminbi, or the "People's money", and is referred to as RMB or yuan. At time of writing, 1 RMB = 0.15 USD = 0.14 EUR. A particularity of the RMB is that it cannot be freely exchanged: you cannot exchange RMB outside China, or if possible, it is at a very poor rate. There is also a limit to the amount of RMB you can change back to your currency, even in China. Although ATMs are now widespread in China, the coverage by the VISA, MasterCard and other international networks is still low, and many stores and restaurants will only accept cash or Chinese Unionpay.

### Bank transfers

Wire money transfers can take up to one month (and at least one week) to be processed, so 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. 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.

### Chinese Debit and Credit Cards

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.

### Using a Credit Card from a Foreign Bank

Some foreign banks have partnerships with Chinese banks that allow withdrawals without extra fees. For example, Bank of America has a partnership with Chinese Construction Bank. Talk with your bank to see if they have a partnership and consider opening an account at home. Sending money from a partner bank can also ease bank transfers.

### Bringing Cash

The maximum amount you can bring in cash to China without declaring it is 5,000 USD (about 30,000 RMB). If you declare it, you can bring as much as 5,000 USD. 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. Keep your receipt when you exchange cash the first time, as you can show it to exchange cash again upon leaving (as long as the amount that you have to exchange back is lower than the one exchanged to RMB in the first place). ATM receipts will not be considered as proof.

### 3) Payment for Tuition, Accommodation and Insurance:

You are required to pay your tuition, accommodation and insurance before your arrival by electronic wire transfer. In July, you will receive an invoice from your school detailing your school fees. By July 31<sup>st</sup>, you must submit a PDF of your transfer receipt as proof of your electronic transfer along with your account information (account holder name, amount of transfer, and the last 4 digits of your bank account number) to your profile on the [int.pkusz.edu.cn](http://int.pkusz.edu.cn) website.

- Accommodation fees are as follows:

Accommodation Type	Academic Year (2 semesters)	Exchange semester
Single Room	12000 RMB	6000 RMB
Double Room	6000 RMB	3000 RMB

*\*Plus 50 RMB as a prepayment for initial hot water payment and a 300 RMB housing deposit that will be returned at the end of the program.*

- Tuition payment: dependent upon your scholarship status. If you are uncertain of your first-year tuition cost, please contact a staff member at your school. Not applicable to exchange students
- Insurance: 800 RMB per academic year (exchange students may instead [provide proof of insurance](#) digitally and at registration)

### 4) 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
- Campus card: 100 RMB to pick up, comes loaded with 100 RMB
- Residence permit and Health Check: approximately 1000 RMB for single semester students, 1400



RMB for full-time or yearlong students

- Initial hot water payment: 50 RMB
- Initial electricity payment: at least 20 RMB
- Dormitory Furnishings: expenses vary (bedsheets, 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

## 5) Health Insurance

### Chinese Health Insurance

As students in China studying for over one semester, 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 exact policy is under the “Campus Living” section on the PKU Shenzhen website. For full-time students, the cost of Ping An Insurance is 800 RMB/year, and the school will apply for the insurance on your behalf. You can also choose to apply to another Chinese insurance company’s scheme and give a copy of your plan as evidence to your school. If you subscribe to Ping An Insurance, you will be covered from your day of registration.

### International Health Insurance

As of August 2014, the Ping An Foreign Students Group Insurance does cover outpatient care and some prescription medicines. After 1 650RMB deductible, policy holders will be reimbursed 85% outpatient fees with a 600RMB daily limit and an accumulative limit of 20,000RMB.

Please refer to the insurance policy (English version) [here](#) and the claims guidelines here. You can view the Chinese version of the policy [here](#) (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 (40081055119) or consult with your school’s administrative staff 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). If you would like your insurance plan to cover private international hospitals or medical repatriation, you may want to consider also purchasing international or traveler’s 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.startinchina.com/shenzhen/life/health\\_insurance\\_for\\_expats\\_in\\_china.html](http://www.startinchina.com/shenzhen/life/health_insurance_for_expats_in_china.html)

At registration, you will be required to prove that you are insured. Exchange students who have acquired insurance outside of the country should fill out the “[Student Acknowledgement & Insurance Provider Certification Form](#)” and provide the copies according to the deadlines listed on the form. This information

should also be given to your emergency contact.

## 6) Average Cost of Life

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 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: 8-25 RMB (or around 45 for a Western meal)

Meal in an average Chinese restaurant: 20-50 RMB

Fancier Chinese restaurant: 100-250 RMB (20 for a vegetable dish, 70 for meat)

Western meal: 60-250 RMB

Fast-food: 20-30 RMB

Chinese beer: 4 RMB (supermarket)

Beer/drink in an expat bar: 35/50 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

Refrigerator: 500-600 RMB

Electric stove: 200 RMB

Mattress: 900-1,500 RMB

Heater: 100-200 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 bathroom<sup>1</sup> and a balcony. The majority of the rooms have 1.2 meter beds, a small percentage have 1.5 meter beds. All international student rooms have a western style toilet, hot water and an air

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

conditioner. The rooms come equipped with basic furniture including: a bed, chair, desk, wardrobe and bedside table.

All dormitory buildings have 24-hour security. 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 and a dryer.

Degree seeking students may live off campus if you 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 hot water card, etc.) will be deducted from your deposit. All students must sign a housing contract.

If you are a continuing student and have paid for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of housing, then this price includes your room over the summer holidays, meaning students are welcome to live on-campus during the summer between their first and second academic years. If you are a graduating student or choose not to renew your housing for your second year, then you must check out of your dormitory after graduation or at the end of the academic semester (exact date determined annually by the PKU Academic Calendar).

Utilities are paid separately from your accommodation fees. Hot water is done through a pre-paid card system, and electricity is paid on an on-campus rechargeable machine available 24/7. Depending on your personal habits, utilities are typically 100 RMB for about 1.5 to 2 months of electricity; these numbers vary with the weather. For hot water, 100 RMB usually lasts about 3 months. Cold water is about 20 RMB per month.

In June housing will begin to be arranged. Please indicate to your school if you plan to live off-campus. For exchange students, housing will be arranged by your school's staff on your behalf. Keep a look out for the *Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School Housing Application* that will be emailed to you prior to your arrival (excluding STL internationals).

## 8) 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).

## 9) 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.* Clothes are quite cheap and easy to buy in China, so there is no need to over pack. However, if you need larger sizes (especially for shoes or pants) you will find suitable sizes hard to find. There are also many inexpensive tailors and international stores in Shenzhen.
- *Personal hygiene products.* Take a few samples of your favorite brands, as you will 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* to give to your Chinese friends
- *Bug Spray, sunscreen, antiperspirant*
- *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
- *VPN* to access sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc. VPN access is always changing in China; we suggest that you do some research before purchasing your VPN.

## **10) Communication**

### **Mobile phone**

There are over 300 million mobile phone users in China – many of them are using prepaid top up cards sold at most of the small convenience stores and phone shops in the city. However, annual and semi-annual 3G plans are also available to those with unlocked mobile phones. 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 be provided with a China Mobile SIM card upon their arrival to campus (please have your admission letter and passport prepared).

### **Landline phone**

These are relatively cheap to enable and use, though most students rely solely on their mobile phones. The monthly rental is about 35¥ and calls at 0.11¥ per minute are also quite cheap. If you want to use your phone for international calls then buy a calling card and use that as IDD rates are high.

### **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 20mb 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. Internet in the dormitories can be accessed with a personal router or Ethernet cable. These routers will be available for purchase on campus. Campus Internet is free for the first two weeks after registration. To access websites that are blocked by the Chinese firewall, students may purchase VPN coverage for their laptop. It is advisable to purchase your VPN subscription before arriving in China.

## 11) 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.

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

<http://middlekingdomlife.com/guide/culture-shock-china.htm>

<http://www.cie.uci.edu/prepare/shock.shtml>

Beginning to prepare for culture shock before can ease your transition in adapting to a new culture. The more research you do before your arrival, the easier the transition will be. We encourage you to start learning Chinese, keeping up to date on Chinese news and reading books and watching movies about China.

Here are some resources to get you started!

## 12) Book and Movie List

### Recommended Book List:

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

When A Billion Chinese Jump, by Jonathan Watt

Lost on Planet China, by J. Maarten Troost

### 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 a 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) JiaZhangke

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

KeKexili Mountain Portal (2004) Lu Chuan

This movie follows a band of vigilante rangers who are trying to stop poaching of the Tibetan Antelope (which later became an official mascot of the Beijing Olympics)

#### **News, Blogs and Shenzhen Expat Websites:**

The Economist Blog: Analects

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/analects>

China Real Time Report

<http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/>

China Daily

<http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/>

Shenzhen Daily

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

That's PRD

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

Shenzhen Stuff

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

Shenzhen Standard

<http://www.shenzhen-standard.com/>

### **13) Learning Chinese**

PKU Shenzhen has Chinese classes of varying levels depending upon the overall demand of the student group.

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 volunteer student Chinese tutoring program.

*In addition, we recommend investigating these resources:*

*Chinese Pod:* A great online resource of podcasts and lessons. All pure beginner lessons are free.

<http://chinesepod.com/>

*Confucius Institute Online-* Bilingual blogs, lessons with news articles, Chinese poems, cultural events, dialogues, and books

<http://english.chinese.cn/>

*Memrise-*an online flashcard game to help you start recognizing characters right away by using mnemonics.

[www.memrise.com](http://www.memrise.com)

#### **14) 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. The Orientation is divided into the General Orientation, which offers students opportunities to explore Shenzhen and take advantage of social events on and off-campus, and then school-specific Academic Orientations.

*Among other events, Orientation will include:*

- Converting student visa to residence permit
- Applying for your campus card
- Opening a Chinese bank account
- Chinese Language Survival Course
- Shopping trip to IKEA

The exact Orientation schedule will be determined in early August, and will be distributed to all students via email.