

People's Republic of China

Demographics for People's Republic of China

Population:	1,306,313,812 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$7.262 trillion
Currency (inc code):	Yuan (CNY)
Language(s):	Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghaiese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien- Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects
Internet country code:	.cn

Primary and secondary education

In China, primary and secondary education takes 12 years to complete, divided into primary, junior secondary and senior secondary stages. Prior to primary school, children may spend up to three years in the kindergarten, but this is not compulsory. Students usually start their primary school at the age of six or seven years old. Of children, 35 percent spend five years in primary education; the majority (65 percent) spend six years. Most pupils have three years schooling at junior secondary stage with just a few taking four years. The nine years spent in primary and junior secondary schools constitutes compulsory education.

Senior secondary education lasts three years. Usually at the end of the first of these years, students need to choose their track: arts or science. This selection is required in preparation for their college entrance exam because arts students can be accepted by the arts department while science students can be

accepted by the science department. Some departments admit both arts and science students.

Technical or vocational institutions provide career training after junior secondary school. The specialities include computer application, fashion design, cooking, motor maintenance, etc.

According to statistics from the Ministry of Education in 2002, the net enrollment rate of primary school age children attained 98.58 percent, and the proportion of primary school graduates continuing their study in junior secondary schools (including vocational ones) reached 97.02 percent.

Higher education

In 2004, there were altogether 2,236 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), among which 1,731 were regular HEIs and the other 505 were higher education institutions for adults. In 2004, the total number of admissions into the regular HEIs was 4,473,400 and the total number of admissions into adult higher education institutions was 2,211,600. Admissions for graduate students into HEIs and research institutions were 326,300 of which 53,300 were for PhDs and 273,000 for Master's degrees.

Graduates from senior high school need to pass the National College Entrance Exam, which takes place in June, in order to be admitted by colleges and universities. Although it is a national exam, the subjects and contents of the test may vary among cities and provinces. For example, students in Beijing and Shanghai often take different entrance exams from those in other provinces. Students will be admitted by the colleges and universities depending on their exam scores. However, different admission score lines may be drawn for different cities and provinces by the colleges and universities. This is due to several factors, such as the average education level in the area, the admission balance among various cities and provinces, etc. The whole national admission process may last more than two months.

Typically a Bachelor's degree requires four-year course work, for which the first three years focus on course learning while the last year includes a graduation thesis and internship. A Master's degree often lasts three years including taught courses, research projects and graduation papers. The Ministry of Education is considering reducing the length of a Master's degree to two years. It generally takes four or five years for a PhD student to get his or her degree.

Because most of the Chinese universities and colleges are public, the government subsidizes a lot. Students used to pay very little in tuition and other fees. Following recent reforms, however, individuals need to pay much more for tuition and other items although the government still subsidizes a lot in spite of the increasing numbers of college students.

Generally a year is divided into two semesters: spring semester and autumn semester. The former often starts in late January or early February and ends in

late June or early July while the latter usually starts in late August or early September and ends in early January.

The Ministry of Education is the only accrediting authority for universities and colleges.

Management education

Management education has a very short history in China although it may be traced back to the late nineteenth century. After the restructure of higher education in 1979 modern management education has resumed. Bachelor's programs in management started to appear, followed by Master's and PhD programs. As the major part of management education, MBA programs were launched in 1991. At that time there were just nine MBA pilot schools.

Now there are 1,396 universities that offer programs in management and among them there are 491 universities that confer Bachelor degrees in management. Over 300 schools and institutions specialize in management now. There are currently 96 MBA programs in China and this growth can be seen in Figure 1.

A total of 350,000 two-year college management major students are admitted per year. This compares with 260,000 admissions per year for Bachelor's students, 16,000 per year for Master's students, 4,221 per year for PhD students, and 18,000 per year for MBA students.

Undergraduate studies in management and business involves three years of taught classes and one year of internship and the writing of a graduation thesis. Taught courses include basic knowledge in business and management such as management principles, economics, business law, accounting, etc. and students also focus on specialist fields such as international trade, finance, marketing, accounting, etc. The most common qualifications are the Bachelor's degrees in business administration or in management.

Graduate management education includes Master's and doctoral studies. In graduate studies students often focus on one specialized field such as

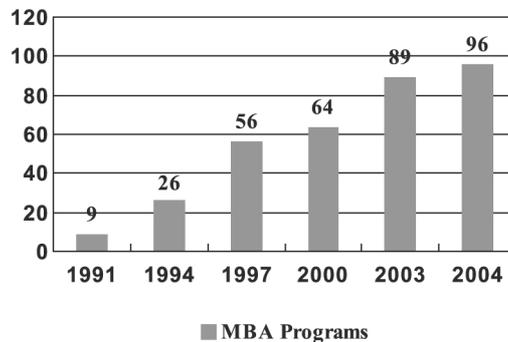


Figure 1. Number of MBA programs

management information system, marketing, strategy, human resource, innovation, etc. They carry out research projects under the instruction of their supervisors.

As a major part of management education, MBA programs attract many applicants each year. Figure 2 shows numbers of applicants to MBA programs. (Please note that GRK is a type of part-time MBA program authorized by the Ministry of Education for certain officials.)

The spring admission is for part-time MBAs (GRK) and the autumn admission is for full-time MBAs. MBA applicants are expected to have at least three-years' work experience and a Bachelor's degree or above. Admission depends on passing an exam containing a written test and an interview. On the two year program, MBA students may study general knowledge in business and management or focus on one specialized field. Some schools also provide specialized MBA programs such as a Finance MBA.

EMBA programs attract many top executives from big multinational companies and state-owned enterprises. EMBA applicants must have at least eight years' work experience including five years of management experience plus a Bachelor's degree or above. Qualification screening and interview are the main methods of selection. This two-year program is part-time and students spend four days a month in class.

Executive education programs are also provided by many schools and institutions. These programs are relatively short and topic focused. Students may choose very specialized fields or topics in which they are interested. The market for executive education is very large because many managers may not have received systematic management education, especially those who started work under the planned economy.

Usually in the universities, business schools and management schools are profit-centers. This is due to the consistent growth of the Chinese economy and the huge demand for management talent. Donations used to be rare but now

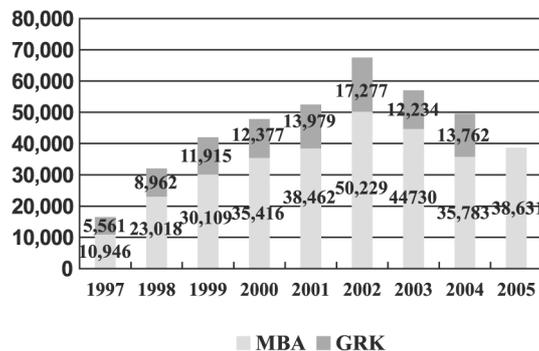


Figure 2. MBA applicants

more and more fund-raising is being carried out. The government also provides funds for research projects.

Not many faculty members in business and management schools have industrial or management experience, considering the short history of management education in China. To be a qualified faculty member in a business or management school requires a PhD degree and consulting experience.

In 2000, MBA program accreditation was carried out for the first time by the National MBA Education Supervisory Committee. The accreditation criteria include facilities, faculty, project design, teaching effectiveness, project management and special features. In 2000, 26 MBA programs gained accreditation and in 2001, so did a further 30.

Issues facing business and management schools

Since there will be more and more business and management schools in the future, how to differentiate will become an important issue. Particularly for MBA programs, many similarities exist in project design, curriculum and other aspects. Schools should find their own strength and cultivate it so that they can compete with others.

Connected to the differentiation issue is one of positioning. Once the MBA program reaches maturity, in about 15 years, a school needs to consider how to position itself in the market for further development. For example, should the program serve for local economy development; should it serve for certain industry; or should it be specialized in a particular discipline?

The third issue is about faculty development and management. Both the quantity and quality of faculty in business and management schools need to be improved. For the leaders of the schools; how to attract talented faculty members; how to retain excellent faculty; and how to formulate an effective payment system are all issues important in maintaining the quality of schools. Balancing research with teaching requirements is another critical issue for deans and business school managers.

The fourth issue is internationalization versus localization. Internationalization is inevitable under the global circumstance; however, business and management schools should pay attention to localization, which could be more important to most of them because the main market for Chinese schools is still in China.

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Source

Statistics in the first two parts (primary and secondary education, higher education) are from the web site of Ministry of Education, China; statistics in the Management Education part are mainly from the National MBA Education Supervisory Committee.

