

# naturejobs

**THE CAREERS  
MAGAZINE FOR  
SCIENTISTS**

**W**e hear plenty about China's ascent as a science superpower, its new science institutes, ample government investment and large numbers of science students (see *Nature's* recent China special at [www.nature.com/news/specials/china/index.html](http://www.nature.com/news/specials/china/index.html)). But China as a magnet for foreign talent is less well documented.

Chinese science graduates continue to go in droves to the United States and other countries for their postgraduate training. An analysis from the Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology in New York shows that by 2007 the two universities supplying the greatest number of graduates in all disciplines to US graduate-school programmes were Chinese — Tsinghua and Peking universities. The University of California, Berkeley, Seoul National University in South Korea, and the University of Michigan rounded out the top five.

But according to the Institute of International Education in New York, China is now also the fifth most popular destination for tertiary-level international students — behind the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Germany. The country's sheer size has something to do with it, with its expanding educational institutions, as does its prominence on the world stage. Students are realizing that some experience in China, not to mention some proficiency in Mandarin, is a nice thing to have on the CV. Chinese government programmes actively encourage foreign students to study there.

To import more graduate students, however, and not just undergraduates, China's institutions will have to address various challenges — especially in science training. As detailed in *Nature's* China special and a recent *Naturejobs* feature (*Nature* **452**, 1028-1029; 2008), funding for graduate students, postdocs and researchers is poorly distributed and often inadequate. Simple things such as reagents are not as readily available as they could be. And there can be culture clashes.

But these things can be addressed, and when they are, China could become not only an exporter of graduate science talent but a major importer as well.

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