

# AUSSEN WIRTSCHAFT BRANCHENREPORT CHINA, HONGKONG

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## 1. INDUSTRY AND MARKET SITUATION

### 1.1 Education Policy

#### 1.1.1 Hong Kong

Hong Kong is one of the global economic metropolises and home to 7.4 million people of different cultures and countries. About 10,000 foreign companies have established branches or representative offices in Hong Kong. Hong Kong serves as a gateway for doing business in China and other Asian countries. Some advantages:

- There are no foreign ownership restrictions.
- The tax regime is low, simple, and predictable. There is also no tax on offshore income, capital gains, dividends, estate, or sales.
- Rule of law and an independent, experienced judiciary based on British common law.
- Free movement of capital, talent, and goods.

However, social tensions are rising, and the 2019 protests were signs of the political and societal crisis Hong Kong is going through. The Covid-19 health crisis brought another hit to Hong Kong's people and economy.

Around 200 companies from Austria have set up their businesses in Hong Kong. Nearly 800 Austrians live and work here. About 25 % of all Austrian exports to China are handled via Hong Kong or South China. Because of visa-free entry, an extensive international flights network and English as one of the two official languages, Hong Kong holds many important conferences and trade fairs. Companies use Hong Kong as a test market or stepping stone to enter the Chinese or Asian markets.

Hong Kong is a special administrative region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. As such, Hong Kong is granted not only its own monetary and legal system, but also its own education system. The Hong Kong Basic Law (1990: Art. 136) stipulates extensive autonomy and liberal organization in the field of education:

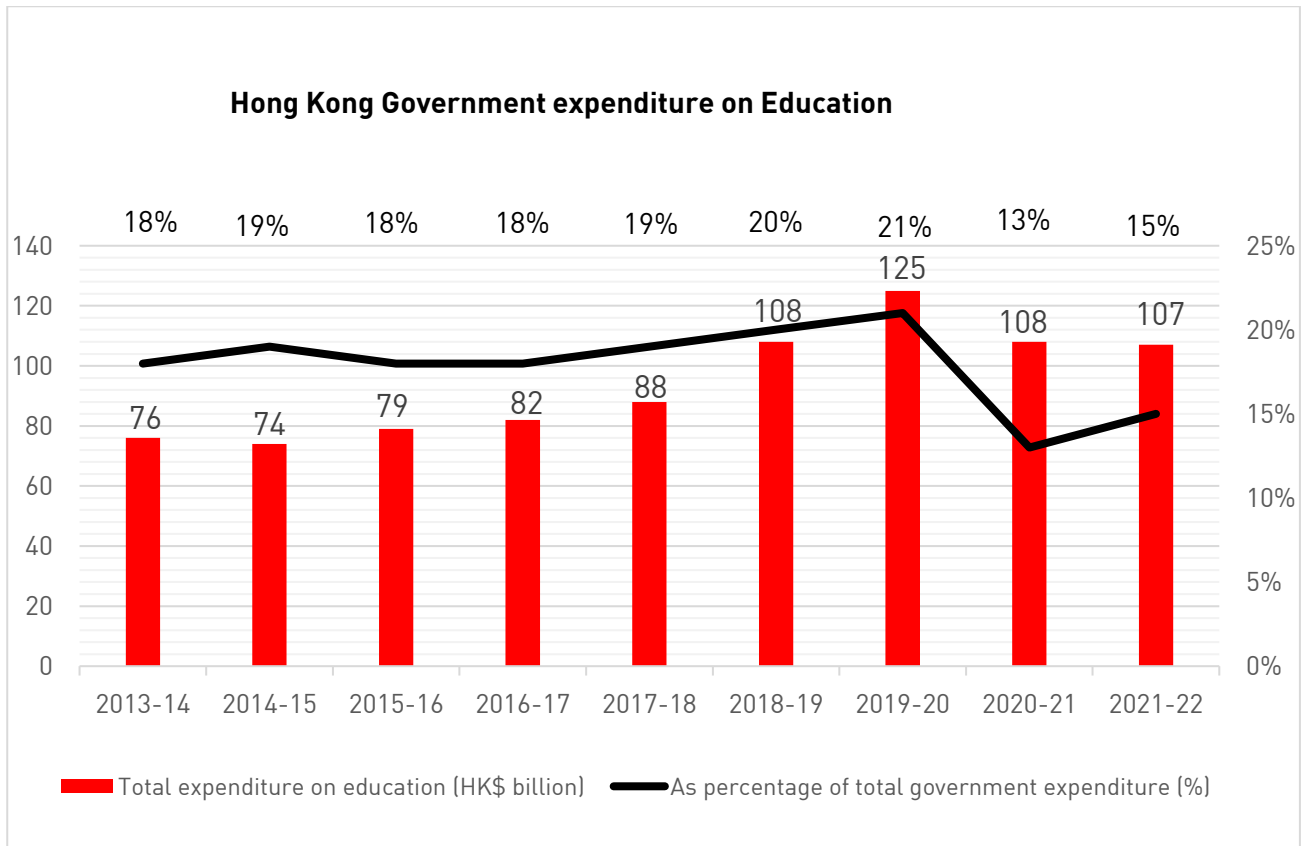
“On the basis of the previous educational system, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on the development and improvement of education, including policies regarding the educational system and its administration, the language of instruction, the allocation of funds, the examination system, the system of academic awards and the recognition of educational qualifications.”

Within the Hong Kong SAR government, the Education Bureau (EDB) is responsible for education. According to the principles of 'one country, two systems', Hong Kong shall continue to be granted a great deal of autonomy in many areas including education at least until 2047. The Hong Kong education system is based on the British model, although nowadays the use of Chinese as a medium of teaching is becoming more important and the influence of China's education principles is surely rising (e.g., as to be observed in history education content, signing of China's national anthems).

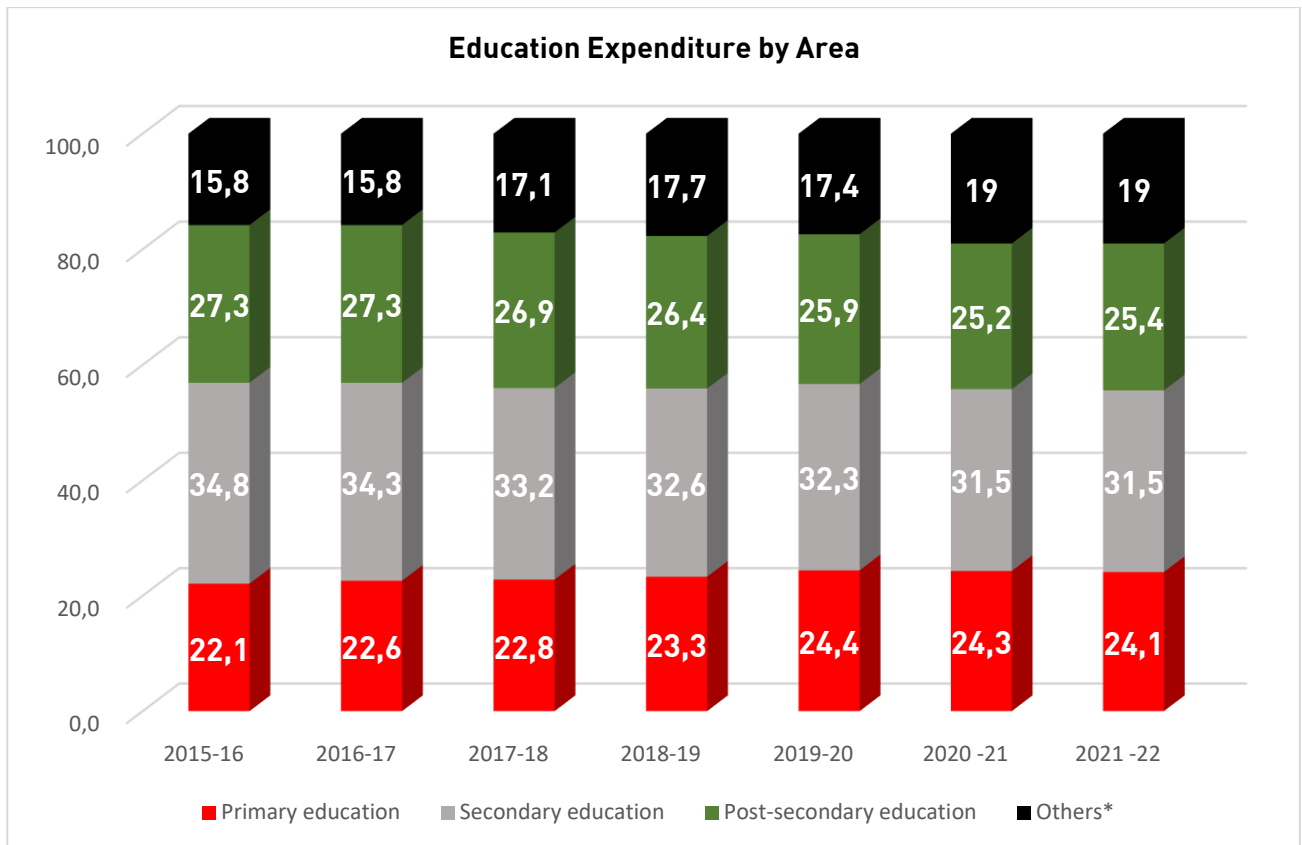
In the Hong Kong 2021/2022 budget, estimated government expenditure on education amounts to HKD 106.8 billion (EUR 12.6 billion), accounting for 15.3 % of the estimated total government expenditure. In Austria, it would be comparatively about 5.6 %. However, one has to consider, the overall public spending in Hong Kong is relatively low compared to Austria. Hong Kong praises itself as an economy with a small government share and low tax rates.

In the past years, Hong Kong's Government has introduced a number of policies and allocated significant funds (over EUR 12 billion within the last three years alone) to support a series of measures for the develop-

ment of innovation and technology (I & T. Special importance is placed on STEM education (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Undergraduate and graduate programmes at local universities combined with short-term internships aim at providing new local talents to the I & T industry.



Source: Education Bureau Hong Kong SAR (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/gov-expenditure.html>)



Source: Education Bureau Hong Kong (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/gov-expenditure.html>)

The policy focus on education and related high public budgets, combined with readiness of parents to invest into their children's education as well, have resulted in Hong Kong having one of the most developed and best education systems in the world.

More parents and employers expect their children and future employees to have international elements in their education programmes. Although English is one of Hong Kong's official languages, the English language skills of young people – even for some graduates even from local English-speaking universities – are on the decline. Short term study-abroad programmes or even a whole degree from an international university make a job candidate more attractive.

Hong Kong could be for Austrian schools and universities an entry point into Asia. The city is well-connected within Asia and the first students from Hong Kong could act as important references and a network for more students from Asia to come. Compared with other Asian countries, the general education level, English language skills and the income level of parents make Hong Kong an attractive place for recruitment efforts for study-abroad programmes.

Also, partnerships with local education providers could be attractive for Austrian schools and universities. Hong Kong offers a good academic environment, having the proximity to and knowledge of mainland China and having at the same time an international orientation, a vibrant multi-cultural environment, internationally recognized institutions, and a welcoming, open policy towards international students.

### 1.1.2 China

China has a public education system administered by the Ministry of Education. Children must attend school for at least nine years and this compulsory education is funded by the government. It includes six years of primary education for children starting at age six (grade 1 – 6), and three years of junior secondary education (middle school) for ages 12 to 15 (grade 7 – 9). Some provinces may have five years of primary school and four years of middle school instead. After middle school, there are three years of non-compulsory senior secondary education (high school) which corresponds to grade 10 – 12. Government funds the system but schools can still charge miscellaneous fees.

This “K-12” education system in mainland China is the largest in the world. According to the Ministry, China had in the year 2020 289 million students and 17.9 million teachers. 10.78 million students took in June 2021 the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (Gao Kao) in China. China’s public education budget in 2021 was RMB 3.76 trillion (around EUR 535 billion) or over 4.22 % of its gross domestic product (GDP), which did not change very much in recent years.

## 1.2 Education System

### 1.2.1 Hong Kong

#### General

There are three groups of education providers in Hong Kong:

- 1) Public schools established and funded by the government are free of charge
- 2) Direct subsidized schools (DSS) which receive subsidies from the Government and school fees from students
- 3) Private schools which are only funded by school fees charged to students

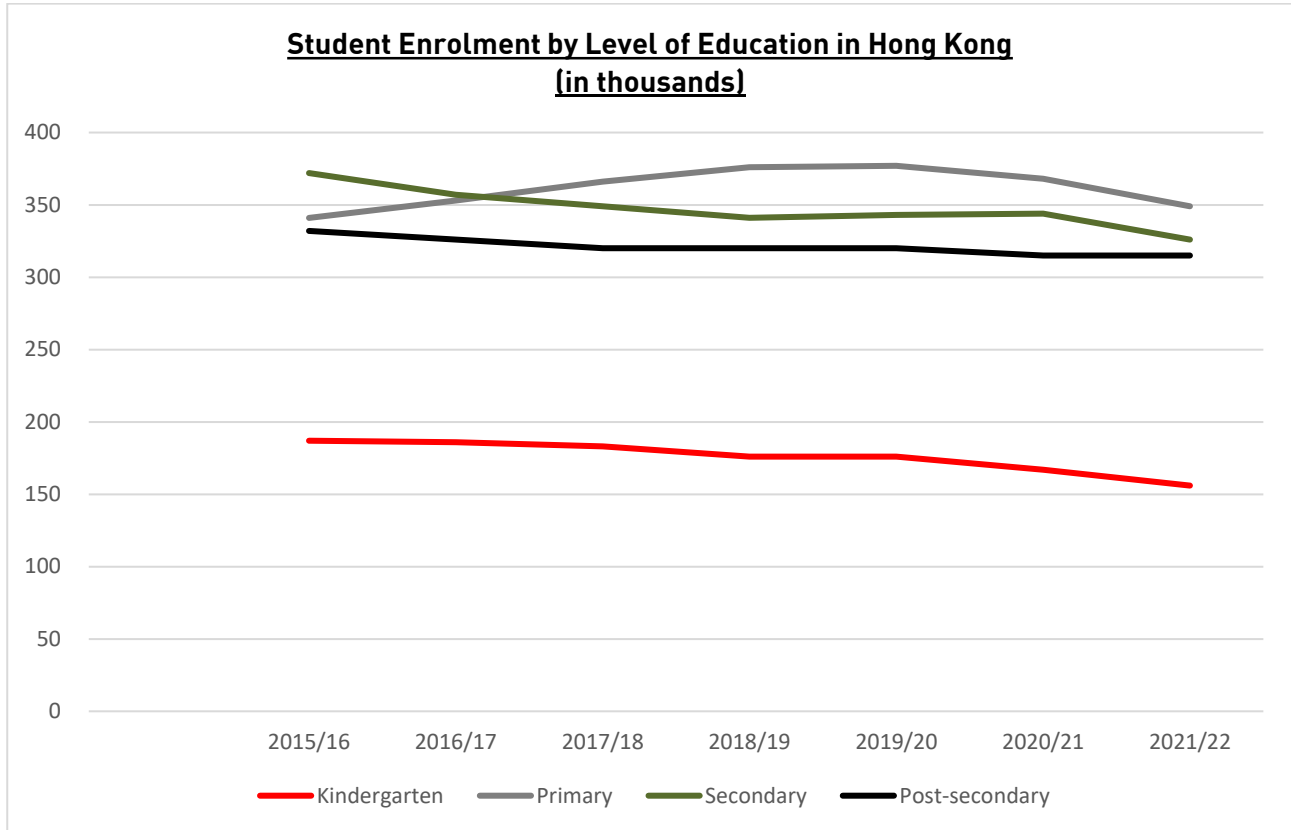
In addition, one can also distinguish between “regular” or “traditional” educational institutions and foreign educational institutions (International schools or English Schools Foundation).

Hong Kong has a compulsory education of twelve years, which starts from the age of six. Most children attend in addition kindergartens and preschools from the age of three.

Hong Kong’s birth rate has fallen in recent years to 0.78 birth per woman (2022), also mainland China experienced a decline to 1.3 birth per woman. The overall relatively constant figures of children in Hong Kong schools are mainly due to more children from mainland China crossing the border to attend school in Hong Kong which fall under the category “Chinese education tourism”. In regular times, about 80,000 students from China commute up to 5 hours a day to attend schools in Hong Kong. 85 % of these mainland Chinese children continue their education and then also study at a university in Hong Kong, very often with the intention to work there after graduation. As a result, some kindergartens and primary schools designated for the local population, especially those in proximity to the border, experienced problems coping with the number of pupils. New schools for Hong Kong students are now also being built in Shenzhen, a city with almost 13 Mio. people just across the border in mainland China. The subway systems of Hong Kong and of Shenzhen allows an easy transfer. Many Hong Kong parents still have reservations about sending their children to mainland China because they doubt the quality of the education and want to avoid politically motivated teaching content.

Within a political framework suggested by Beijing to promote cross-border regional cooperation between major cities in Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and Macao titled the “Greater Bay Area Initiative”, also education providers are encouraged to work closer together, align their policies, and allow students and teachers more mobility between the still different systems. China’s Ministry of Education published in Nov. 2019

detailed arrangements of a Scheme for Hong Kong students to study at Mainland higher education institutions. 122 higher institutions from 21 provinces in the mainland accept applications from candidates sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination, Some well-known higher institutions in mainland China have joined this scheme, including Tsinghua University, Fudan University and Peking University.



Source: Education Bureau Hong Kong ([https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/index\\_1.html](https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/index_1.html))



## Kindergarten

A kindergarten is the first educational option for children, similar to Austria. Nurseries in Hong Kong are privately run (either non-profit or for profit). Monthly fees between EUR 800 and EUR 2,000 are quite common. Kindergarten operators can apply for Government subsidies through the "Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme" ([https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/preprimary-voucher/index.html#PEVS %20list](https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/preprimary-voucher/index.html#PEVS%20list)).

The kindergarten curriculum no longer describes the role of kindergarten teachers as knowledge brokers and providers of play opportunities, but as real learning companions and coaches for finding interests. The kindergartens are continuously evaluated within a quality assurance framework published by the Education Bureau.

Parents expect Kindergarten teachers to prepare children for further education and for being admitted to good schools. A large number of tutoring centres for preschool children have been set up in recent years, as it is quite common for 2- to 3-year-old children to take extra lessons and have preparation sessions for school interviews or evaluation tests. The pressure all over Asia including in Hong Kong to perform is very high from an early age.

## Primary School

Hong Kong's government provides free education in public schools. As of October 2021 279,655 children were enrolled in 456 public primary schools. In addition to public schools, 21 directly subsidised schools also offer primary education with fees ranging from EUR 1,200 to over EUR 6,000 per school year. 114 private primary school providers charge EUR 1,200 to over EUR 20,000 per school year. 22,933 students were enrolled in 45 international schools. From primary level on, Hong Kong schools impose strict school rules. School uniforms are standard in most schools.

Primary Schools		No. of Schools	No. of Students	School Fees (Euro per year)
Local	Government	34	21,084	Free
	Aided	422	258,571	Free
	Direct Subsidies	21	15,744	EUR 1,200 to over EUR 6,000
	Private	114	53,595	EUR 1,200 to over EUR 26,000
International	ESF and others	45	22,933	EUR 12,500 to over EUR 24,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>591</b>	<b>348,994</b>	

Source: [Student Enrolment Statistics https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/Enrol\\_2021.pdf](https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/Enrol_2021.pdf)

## Secondary School

In the secondary level, the offer of the 392 public schools is free of charge. The importance of private educational institutions is growing, as they are regarded as a "good" or even "better" alternative. Most of the 55 international schools are private and despite charging an average of EUR 6,300 tuition fees per school year have a long waiting list. Foreign parents living in Hong Kong and more and more local parents are interested in sending their children to international schools. International schools offer their students an easy transfer option to continue their tertiary education abroad.

<b>Secondary Schools</b>		<b>No. of Schools</b>	<b>No. of Students</b>	<b>School Fees (Euro per year)</b>
Local	Government	31	19,910	Free
	Aided	359	233,724	Free
	Caput	2	1,224	Free
	Direct Subsidies	59	44,636	EUR 1,200 to over EUR 9,800
	Private	57	26,433	EUR 1,200 to over EUR 27,000
International	ESF and Others	39	18,232	EUR 12,500 to over EUR 26,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>506</b>	<b>325,927</b>	

Sources: <https://www.edarabia.com/hong-kong-school-fees/>  
<https://internationalschools.edb.hkedcity.net/index.php>

### **In-service Training**

Hong Kong generates more than 90 % of its economic output by providing services. Hardly anything is produced in Hong Kong anymore. Like in many other parts of the world, skilled workers are in short supply. It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract young people to work in trade and to provide simple services. Parents encourage their children to pursue an education that prepares them to work in finance, law or in the medical field.

An apprenticeship system is available mainly in technical occupations and the construction sector. The importance of continuous training of workers already employed is getting more attention. The government subsidizes courses at universities and other educational institutions through the Continuing Education Fund (<https://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/cef/en/index.htm>). Today's work environment requires employees to keep up with the latest technologies. An important institution for strengthening the competitiveness of Hong Kong companies and a better qualification of workers in the Hong Kong Productivity Council (<https://www.hkpc.org/en>), which also cooperates with the Fraunhofer Institute (<https://www.fraunhofer.de/en.html>) and WIFI Austria.

### **Tertiary Level**

Hong Kong is well known internationally for its excellent higher education offer. In international rankings such as the Times Higher Education World University Ranking and the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) University World Ranking, Hong Kong universities often achieve top positions:

#### **Higher Education World University Rankings 2022:**

30<sup>th</sup> worldwide: The University of Hong Kong  
49<sup>th</sup> Chinese University of Hong Kong  
66<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong University of Science and Technology  
91<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Polytechnic University and  
151<sup>st</sup> City University of Hong Kong

#### **“QS World University Ranking” 2022:**

22<sup>nd</sup> The University of Hong Kong  
34<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong University of Science and Technology,  
39<sup>th</sup> Chinese University of Hong Kong,  
53<sup>rd</sup> City University of Hong Kong and  
66<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

In the Financial Times' "Executive MBA Ranking" the "Kellogg/ HKUST Business School" even ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> worldwide (<https://rankings.ft.com/rankings/2863/emba-2021>)

Hong Kong has 22 degree-awarding higher education institutions including 11 universities. The annual tuition fees for a bachelor's degree program are comparatively low, averaging EUR 5,000 per year, but for a master's degree, the annual costs can go up to EUR 32,000 per year. PhD programs (for doctoral students) costs between EUR 13,000 and EUR 22,000. The elite "Kellogg / HKUST Executive MBA" program's (<http://emba.ust.hk/>) tuition fee is EUR 169,000 for 2022. Students with financial needs can apply for a scholarship or a supported loan.

In addition to local students, there are also many international students in Hong Kong, mainly from exchange programs. In a regular year, there are over 6,000 overseas exchange students studying in the city. Some Hong Kong universities provide short study abroad exchange programmes for their students. It is not so easy to attract Hong Kong students to exchange programs abroad for a longer period as in their thinking this might defer their graduation time. This can also be observed in respect to Hong Kong - Austria: Usually, there are sufficient Austrians who want to study in Hong Kong for a longer period but too few from Hong Kong who are interested in going to Austria.

Currently, there are more than 1,200 foreign courses offered in Hong Kong by more than 200 overseas institutions in cooperation with 11 publicly funded institutions. The government is seeking to further strengthen Hong Kong's role as a regional education centre, especially for Asia, through internationalization and diversification.

Hong Kong, like many European countries, has a qualifications framework (QF) (<https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/home/index.html>) to help classify acquired qualifications in the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors. This is a useful tool for both, employers and employees, to assess someone's qualifications. The framework is divided into 7 levels, each with 4 characteristics ("Knowledge & Intellectual Skills", "Processes", "Application, Autonomy & Accountability" and "Communication, IT and Numeracy").

In Hong Kong, many students will study abroad in major English-speaking countries such as U.K., U.S., Canada, and Australia. If they opt to go to Europe, the U.K. is normally the first choice followed by France and Germany. The number of students going to Austria is still low. However, after promotions in recent years, the number has been growing year by year. With the "Working Holiday Program" (<https://www.whs.gov.hk/en/partners.php?location=Austria>, <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/austrian-general-consulate-hongkong/travels-to-austria/working-in-austria/>), up to 100 Hongkongers under 30 years can go to Austria for holidays and work for 12 months.

### 1.2.2 China

In mainland China, children attend primary school from 6 to 12 years old and finish compulsory schooling after another three years in middle school. After that, there are various ways to guide the child's future career. With a passed entrance exam, they can attend upper secondary school. Otherwise, they can choose between vocational schools and technical colleges. Another choice is to attend vocational colleges in which young people are trained in the workplace for 2 to 4 years.

The upper secondary school is completed with the National College Entrance Examination "Gaokao" which is considered a major test and decides on further options. Under the so-called "3+X" model for this exam, students must take exams in three compulsory subjects, Chinese, Maths, and a foreign language, and six other subjects in the Social Sciences or Natural Sciences, all within three days. There are 150 points for compulsory courses and 100 points for elective courses. The total number of points determines which University the student can attend. The subsequent bachelor's degree program in mainland China and Hong Kong lasts for 4 years, followed by a master's degree program for 2-3 years.

Nearly one-fifth of China's population is younger than 15 years. Education is therefore very vital for China. With the rising economic growth in many parts of the country, people are willing to spend more on kids' education. The demand for well-trained and well-educated staff is booming. The value of China's education market has nearly doubled from 2015 to 2022 (from USD 240 billion to USD 573 billion). According to Research and Markets "[China Education Market \(K-12, After-School Tutoring & Higher Education\) Report: Insights, Trends and Forecast \(2019-2023\)](#)", the Chinese education market is estimated to reach USD 573 billion in 2023, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 11.3 % for the period spanning from 2018-2023.

China's Ministry of Education (MoE) provides a wide range of laws and guidelines covering the entire educational spectrum - from kindergartens to universities, private and public institutions, and academic and professional education that improves the quality of the provision of schools and universities. The government also allows, under strict conditions, some private investment in education.

The growing demand for education attracts local and international investors and suppliers, especially in the richer coastal and some inland cities.

### University

Some of China's universities are among the best in the world. According to Times World University Rankings 2022, Peking University and Tsinghua University in Beijing is the best in Asia and ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the world. Other famous universities among the Top-50 are Tsinghua University, Peking University and Fudan University in Shanghai. The best Austrian ranked public University is the University of Vienna (151<sup>st</sup> in QS ranking and 137<sup>th</sup> in the Times ranking).

Times World University Ranking: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2022/world-ranking>

QS World University Ranking: <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2022>

The competition for entering a prestige university in China is extremely high. In 2022 over 11.9 million students were enrolled for the National College Entrance Examination. Some students will also choose to study abroad. There are a few factors they will consider when choosing a university, which includes country, language (English preferred), security, living environment etc.

Austria experiences some interest from students from mainland China to study in Austria. Especially undergraduate programs offered in English are in demand such as Bachelor Programs in Economics, Tourism, Music, Arts, Technology and Business. One example is "Modul University Vienna" which has been presenting itself at school events and community activities for years and which can already see a considerable Chinese student base in its tourism and management programs. Modul University Vienna has been cooperating with the Nanjing Tech University Pujiang Institute since 2016 and offers Chinese students a joint programme with an internationally recognized tourism degree awarded by Modul University Vienna.

(<https://www.modul.ac.at/about/branch-campuses/modul-school-of-tourism-and-hospitality-management-nanjing/>)

Chinese parents are very interested in their children attending special training programs for sports, language (especially English), IT and accounting.

China sees the rapid expansion of private education, both regular schools and after-class tutoring, as having corrupted the public education system and the ideals it stands for. China made international headlines when it banned in July 2021 for-profit tutoring through a policy known as "dual alleviation," referring to the reduction of both homework burdens and after-school training. In September 2021 China introduced a raft of policies restricting the profiteering of private schools. China prohibits foreign ownership of private compulsory education.

For University education, many Chinese students consider studying abroad and the U.S. and the U.K. are often their first choice. When they pick a university, they would prefer to obtain a degree, which is also recognized in China. This is very important when they return to China to look for a job after graduation. Some Chinese students not only consider studying abroad but also want to emigrate altogether.

### Compare University entrance requirements of Hong Kong and mainland China

	HONG KONG	MAINLAND CHINA
Duration of University	4 years	4 years
University Entrance Exam	HKDSE (Hongkong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination)	Gaokao (National College Entrance Examination)
Exam Period	April 21 - May 19 2023	June 7 2023
Exam Results Release Date	July 19 2023 <b>(August 9</b> -- announcement of program offered by local university) *3322 is the min requirement (Level 3 in English & Chinese. Level 2 in Math & Liberal Studies)	End of June

## 1.3 Trends

### 1.3.1 Hong Kong

The government is trying to further establish Hong Kong as an educational centre in South East Asia and to make it more attractive as a location for both international students and institutions.

#### Lifelong Learning

Hongkongers are paying more attention to lifelong learning and adult education. The Hong Kong Education Bureau promotes lifelong education through various programs and funds, such as Continuing Education Fund (<https://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/cef/en/index.htm>), Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme (<https://www.pass.gov.hk/en/home/index.html>), Quality Education Fund (<https://www.qef.org.hk/>) as well as tax deductible continuing education expenses. Universities and private institutions provide more than 1,200 short and further education courses for adults. Specially, The Open University of Hong Kong (<http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/>) and Centre for Lifelong Learning Research and Development of the Education University of Hong Kong (<https://www.eduhk.hk/clld/index.php>) target those mature students.

#### Tuition / Music / Sports Training

With a strong aspiration for academic advancement and amidst intense examination pressure, many Hong Kong students attend private tutorial lessons for supplementary learning. The competition is very keen, and students usually start private tuition from primary school or even from kindergarten. Many students will have extra tuition class to prepare for the University entrance exam, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (DSE) (<http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/hkdse/>) or the International Baccalaureate (IB) (<https://www.ibo.org/>). Some surveys suggest that the ratio of taking supplementary private tutoring could go up to 50-75 % in coming years.

Extra lessons for musical instruments and sports are also in high demand. Parents believe learning musical instruments and sports will improve children's profile and increase their chance when applying to elite schools or finding a job in the future.

The “Vienna Boys Choir” (Wiener Sängerknaben) teamed up with local partners and had set up a “Vienna Boys Choir Music Academy Foundation Limited” (<http://vbcmf.org/>) in Hong Kong. The Foundation offers music programs for young girls and boys, organizes up to 300 performances per year and would like to set up a school for local and Asian students to pursue choir singing and at the same time regular study content.

## E-Learning

E-learning is very popular in Hong Kong. Some kindergarten and primary schools have already incorporated iPad or computers in their teaching. Many schools use eClass (<https://www.eclass.com.hk/en/>) and Edmodo (<https://www.edmodo.com/>) for communication between schools, teachers, and parents. There are also private platforms that offer online courses to enable local and time-independent learning. Universities are also following this trend. Some offer part of the course or even the entire course online. The number of users is constantly increasing.

In view of the COVID-19, many schools switched to delivering homework to pupils using an online platform like eClass. Some schools held online teaching sessions using Zoom, Skype, or Google Hangouts. Almost all subjects including physical and musical education were taught via the Internet. At the Tak Oi Secondary School (<https://www.takoi.edu.hk/>) up to 250 people could join an online class at the same time. (<https://asiatimes.com/2020/02/online-learning-flourishes-in-hk-macau-amid-virus/>)

Especially free tools are in demand. Currently, Zoom (<https://www.zoom.us/>) allows up to 100 people to meet online for up to 40 minutes for free. Google Hangouts Meet (<http://gsuite.google.com/>) also supports video conferencing with up to 250 people with an Enterprise package that costs EUR 23 per month. Microsoft Teams is also getting more popular. (<https://products.office.com/en-US/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>) The increased IT needs and necessary internet connection poses financial challenges to poorer parents.

### 1.3.2 China

#### Studying abroad

Nowadays, more and more Chinese students are interested in studying abroad. Numerous scholarships are offered to enable such an international experience. As China’s economy has been booming, more families can afford to send their children abroad. Education consultants are able to recruit students from major cities as well as smaller second-tier cities. Usually, richer parents are very interested in sending their children abroad to study but they often lack the appropriate information.

In Germany, students from China are already the second-largest group of foreign students (10 %) after those from Turkey. In Austria, Chinese students only represent 1 % of all international students. In recent years, Chinese students went to Europe, North America, and Australia to study economics or technical related subjects. Lately, they are also interested in other subjects like humanities. Austrian institutions have been successful in recruiting Chinese students to pursue such programmes.

There are more than 60 very popular joint degree programs between the U.S. and Chinese Universities. Students can study at two different institutions for two years each. Some European Universities are also following this model and are developing international partnerships and joint courses with Chinese institutions.

It is very popular for Chinese to learn a western language apart from English. German is – after Japanese and French – one of the most popular foreign languages. Germany, Austria and Switzerland already have numerous educational institutions offering German courses, especially for Chinese speakers. Some German language schools have also established themselves in mainland China and Hong Kong. Summer camps and other language trips are also gaining popularity.

Primary and secondary school pupils form the largest group interested in attending language schools abroad. However, there are often disputes and misunderstandings between parents and study organizers, sometimes also caused by the limited Western language skills of the Chinese parents. Their expectations are also often too high, sometimes fostered by education agents getting a fee from the international school to recruit a student. They expect their children to travel abroad smoothly, live in nice accommodation, and have decent food provided and teachers to take very good care of the students. Parents usually over expect the results of a short-term study program.

Chinese students require a visa for studying abroad, including in Austria. If the guidelines for obtaining a visa for a destination are too strict or cumbersome, the motivation of Chinese students to select that country decreases. The process must be straightforward and as fast as possible and parents expect support from the international school when applying for a visa.

English is taught at all Chinese schools, but results vary. Also, there is a big focus on reading in language teaching and oral skills often lag. Internationally recognized tests such as IELTS or the TOEFL allow Chinese to demonstrate their English standard to the education institution. These certificates usually make applying for a visa easier, especially in English-speaking countries.

### **E-learning**

Online education tools have been a natural progression for China, as over 800 million Chinese citizens are internet users, with impressive fibre, broadband, and internet coverage even in many remote regions. STEAM education (science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics) constitutes, along with K-12 education, are the largest segments of China's 300 billion USD EdTech market (2018).

During COVID-19, some online teaching companies offered their services for free. For example, TAL Education (<http://en.100tal.com/>) announced on its official Weibo account free live-streaming courses for all grades to "minimise the influence on study due to the outbreak" while VIPKID (<https://www.vipkid.com.cn/>), which specialises in teaching English online, offered 1.5 million free online courses to children aged from four to twelve.

Many Chinese schools also use e-learning. Even courses in creative arts, music, drama, and physical education (including swimming!) are conducted online. The most popular software used in mainland schools are Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>), Tencent Meeting (<https://meeting.tencent.com/>) and DingDing (<https://www.ding-talk.com/>).

### **EdTech**

August 30, 2021, marked the kick-off for a dialogue between Austria and Hong Kong in the area of educational technology (EdTech). AußenwirtschaftsCenter Hong Kong, EdTech Austria in partnership with **In-vestHK**, Esperanza and Cyberport invited EdTech innovators, investors and enablers from Austria and Hong Kong to learn from each other and to connect virtually.

A short summary of the exchange: Digital learning goes beyond the realm of schools – it also affects universities, businesses, and adult education. People need to keep learning in the fast-paced 21st century and educational technologies can help them do so. Both, Austria, and Hong Kong are ideal test beds and gateways for other markets and EdTech's could start there first to gain insights and to experiment.

InvestHK and the NGO Esperanza gave an overview of Hong Kong's EdTech sector and recommended Austrian EdTech's to make use of Hong Kong to enter the whole Greater Bay Area including major cities in South China and Macao. Austrian EdTechs can apply for the Edventure Global Business Accelerator Fellowship to build Asian connections offered by Esperanza and Cyberport. Hong Kong EdTech innovators and connectors presenting at the Exchange included

**AESIR:** Games and interactive solutions for diverse groups of people with special needs using augmented reality and virtual reality technologies

**Cataliize:** Representing an international group of over 180 people in 36 cities who help entrepreneurs take their ventures to the world

**Mandarin Matrix:** Helping Children Learn Mandarin

**Supercharger Ventures:** Cross-border EdTech accelerator and investors

**Xccelerate:** Learn in-demand tech skills that boost your professional life.

Read the whole summary at [https://www.advantageaustria.org/cn/news/Austria\\_-\\_Hong\\_Kong\\_Greater\\_Bay\\_EdTech\\_Exchange\\_\\_.en.html](https://www.advantageaustria.org/cn/news/Austria_-_Hong_Kong_Greater_Bay_EdTech_Exchange__.en.html) and watch the full recording at <https://youtu.be/NFzrCz1rvA> and look out for further exchanges!



## 2. OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUSTRIAN EDUCATION PROVIDERS

### 2.1 General

The education sectors in Hong Kong and mainland China are promising markets for Austrian institutions and companies. Private Austrian universities, schools and education providers could recruit paying students to study in Austria or to pursue short stay programs. Universities and Schools in Hong Kong and China are interested in mutually beneficial exchange programs with Austria or to recruit teachers. Public and private Schools are looking to apply the best tools and teaching materials available and to apply edu-tech. English as one of Hong Kong's official languages makes Hong Kong a good start for building up contacts in Asia.

Recruiters in Asia recognize the experience students gained from student exchange programs, joint research projects, training courses, continuing vocational training courses and summer courses/ summer camps.

In the publication "Code of Practice for Non-local courses" (<https://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/post-secondary/non-local-higher-professional-edu/index.html>), the Education Bureau provides recommendation on the establishment of a cooperation relationship between a Hong Kong educational institution and an international education provider. The Bureau suggests:

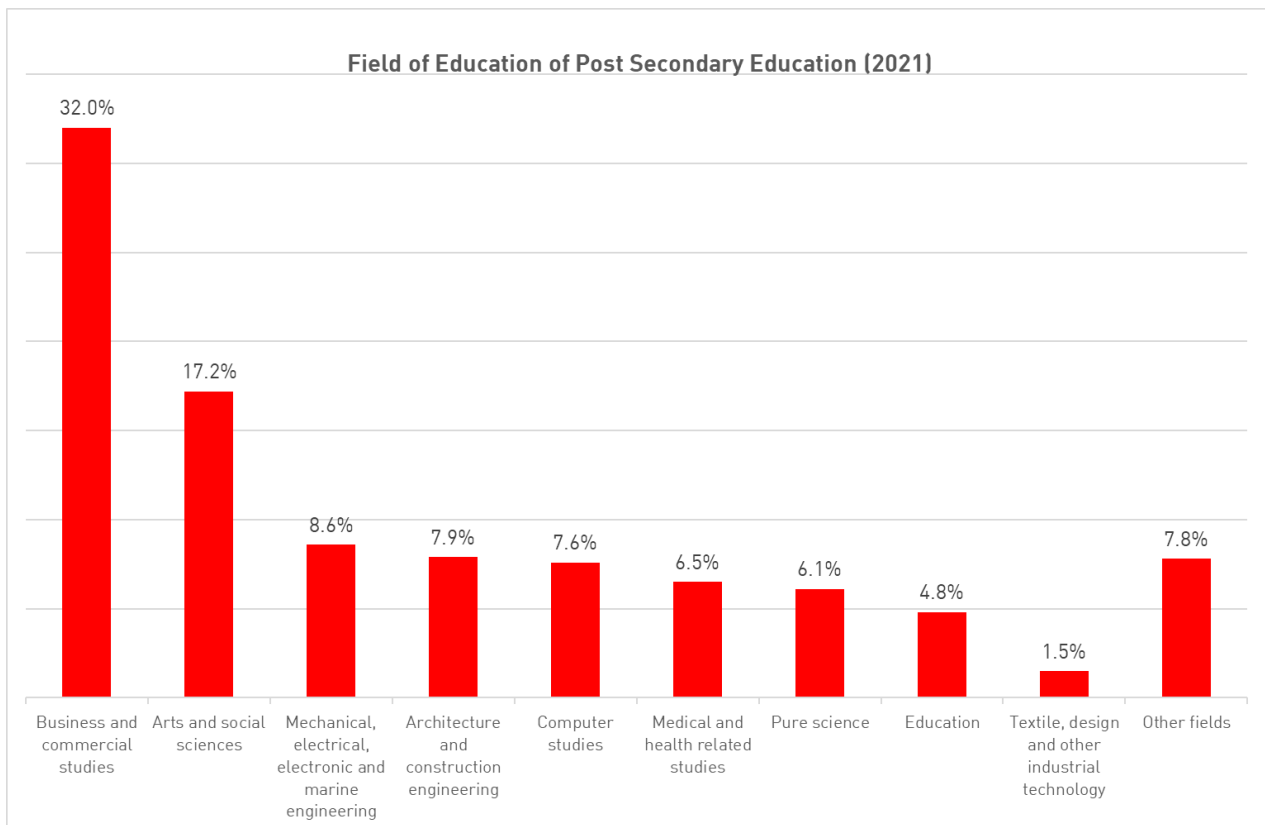
- a) The financial rights and obligations of the partner institutions are regulated.
- b) Local partners have been carefully selected in terms of qualitative and ideological aspects.
- c) Both parties should be aware of the structure of the program (mode, duration, and access restrictions).
- d) Possibility of cooperation, joint staffing, teaching methods and student support.
- e) Administrative areas such as the provision of information and access to university facilities.
- f) Both parties should strive to monitor teaching quality and the pursuit of quality improvement.

### 2.2 Attract Students to Study in Austria

#### Student Exchange

Universities in Hong Kong are increasingly looking for overseas partnerships to promote exchange programs, academic exchanges, and research collaborations. English-language teaching programs abroad are particularly in demand. Many parents and universities strive for at least one part of the studies to be conducted abroad. In 2020, 12.1 % of all students from Hong Kong studied abroad, this high "Outbound Mobility Ratio" puts Hong Kong at the forefront of Asia countries. (<http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow#slideoutmenu>)

In Hong Kong, post-secondary school students are particularly interested in business and commercial studies. In colleges and in education after compulsory schooling (age 16 years and older), the areas of the hotel, catering, tourism management, sports science, business management are very popular. There is also a great demand in the arts and social science field.



Source: Population Census 2021 ([www.census2021.gov.hk/en/main\\_tables.html](http://www.census2021.gov.hk/en/main_tables.html))

## German course

Learning German is getting more popular. German schools and language schools are attractive option. The German Swiss International School (<https://www.gsis.edu.hk/>) charges primary school fees of EUR 19,200 per year and secondary school fees of EUR 24,000 per year. Its IB exam results in 2021 was an average 42/45 score which makes it one of the best in Hong Kong.

The Goethe-Institut (<https://www.goethe.de/ins/cn/en/sta/hon.html>) is a German language school with over 50 years of history. They offer German courses for kids, teens, and adults. They also offer a German examination preparation course.

The University of Hong Kong offers a B.A. Major in German (<https://german.hku.hk/>). The course in German provides students with a comprehensive knowledge of both spoken and written German. In addition to the acquisition of these linguistic skills, students are introduced to a wide range of aspects of contemporary German society and culture through the study of numerous multimedia materials and documents. All German Major Students are encouraged to attend an intensive summer language course of about 4 weeks duration at a university in Germany during the summer between their 2nd and 3rd year and successful completion of such a course at the appropriate level will count as 6 credits towards their major requirements.

The Hong Kong Baptist University offers BSocSc (Hons) in their European Studies (German Stream) program (<http://europe.hkbu.edu.hk/germanstream/>). European Studies is a four-year program within the Department of Government and International Studies. The aim is to give students a firm knowledge of the basic features of the European world through a combination of political, historical, social, linguistic, and business-oriented studies, together with the experience of living and working in Europe itself. As part of the Major in European Studies, students must choose to learn either French or German. During the first two years, students are trained to a level of fluency which allows them to study, work and live in a French- or German-

speaking environment. The students will spend the third year of the program fully in Europe. It consists of academic study at a German-speaking university and, when feasible, a placement with European companies or public institutions.

### 2.2.1 Success Factors

#### Cultural Understanding

The Hong Kong market is appealing as the education system is similar to that of the U.K., and English is one of Hong Kong' languages. In mainland China the possibilities of communicating in English are sometimes limited. School and Business Culture between Austria, Hong Kong and China differ a lot.

Being flexible and open-minded and accepting cultural differences are essential prerequisites for a successful market entrance. New Austrian suppliers need to understand the local conditions and need to adjust their products and services to the needs of Asians schools and students.

#### Local Point of Contact

In order to recruit students to study in Austria, Austrian institutions should consider establishing a local contact. Teachers, Parents, and students would prefer to meet a representative at local event like education fairs and at local briefings. One of the possibilities is to cooperate with specialized consultants or education agents, which already have well-established contacts and know the local markets.

### 2.3 Decisive Factors or Opportunities

Many Chinese parents would like to send their children abroad at an early age. They are interested in programs that provide a "full package". The best would be if the school could also offer an accommodation / food package and have a designated contact person for students and concerned parents. Chinese parents are usually willing to spend a large sum of EUR 40,000 or more per school year.

Usually, the most important criteria for Chinese to choose a university is reputation. Smaller education institutions must first attract attention through strategic recruitment. The most important channel is attending education fairs in Hong Kong and China. At those education fairs, young people will come together to find out possible options for further education. The "China Education Expo" (<https://www.chinaeducation-expo.com/english/>) and "China International Education Exhibition Tour" (<http://www.cieet.com/>) are probably the most famous educational fairs in Asia and takes place several times a year in all major cities in China.

Some institutions choose to partner up with local universities or overseas education centre to recruit new students. For Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (<https://www.hktdc.com/>) is a good contact for Austrian education institutions to seek assistance in finding local authorized agents. Some agencies will provide detailed information about foreign institutions, help future students in the application preparations, visa application, and provide accommodation assistance.

When Hong Kong or mainland Chinese students choose where to continue their studies, they will usually ask the following questions and expect the foreign institute to provide some information.

- Any advantage of studying in Austria rather than in an English-speaking country?
- Are the programs offered in English?
- Total cost including tuition, accommodation, and other daily expenses (estimate)?
- Is the city safe? Any security concerns?
- Any scholarships?
- Is the program recognized by the Chinese Ministry of Education?
- What is the admission entrance requirements, IELTS needed?

- What is the application procedure?
- Are there any accommodation arrangements or buddy programs for newcomers?
- Visa application?
- Future career prospects?

Apart from the above, many Chinese students and parents also expect to get assistance from the Austrian institutions for:

- Apply for the residence permit and visa
- Arrangement of student dormitory or host family in Austria
- Pre-departure briefing
- Airport pick-up
- Official registration (Meldezettel)
- Get an Austrian mobile SIM card
- Apply for the student semester ticket
- Open an Austrian bank account
- Accompany to the immigration office to pick up the residence permit

#### **2.4 Assistance Provided by AUSSENWIRTSCHAFT AUSTRIA**

If Austrian institutions or companies are interested in providing products and services for the education sector in mainland China or Hong Kong or to recruit students from that area, AußenwirtschaftsCenter Hongkong can assist with a range of services like:

- Introduce local education consulting agencies
- Promotion in web pages <https://www.advantageaustria.org/cn/education> and brochures [https://www.advantageaustria.org/cn/news/Study\\_in\\_Austria\\_Programmes.pdf](https://www.advantageaustria.org/cn/news/Study_in_Austria_Programmes.pdf) or in local newspapers
- Attend and present at education fairs and promote on behalf of Austrian provider
- Participate in or hold seminars to promote the offer of Austrian education providers
- Contacts of local high school counsellors/targeted partner and address lists
- Promote in social media and online forums (e.g. Facebook, blogs, WeChat and Weibo etc)

Some of the education events attended by or organized by AußenwirtschaftsCenter Hongkong:

- Education & Careers Expo (once a year) in mainland China
- Austrian Education Showcase (Shanghai or Beijing + Hong Kong + Macau in October/ November)
- Attend University information fairs organized by local secondary schools
- Promote Study-in-Austria on social media (i.e. Facebook and WeChat etc)
- Bi-weekly posting of Chinese articles on Austrian education at a local education website Ohpama (<http://www.ohpama.com/specialists/monica-ng/>)
- Organize info-seminar
- Organize pre-departure briefing for students before their departure to Austria

Have a look at our dedicated social media accounts on facebook, wechat and website:

**Study in Austria / Facebook account:**



<https://www.facebook.com/educationinaustria>  
留學奧地利

**Study in Austria / WeChat Account:**



Please scan in WeChat or look for ID:  
STUDY\_IN\_AUSTRIA  
留學奧地利

**Website:** <https://www.advantageaustria.org/cn/education>

### 3. APPENDIX

#### 3.1 Education Institutions from Other Countries

Hong Kong parents are willing to pay high school fees to foreign education institutions and often also have the corresponding high purchasing power. Universities from the U.S., the U.K., Canada and Australia are particularly attractive to Hong Kong students. For Europe, the most popular study destinations are the U.K., France and Germany. Some have also established a branch in Hong Kong. The University of Chicago (<https://www.uchicago.hk/>) has established a branch in Hong Kong and had moved their Asian headquarters from Singapore to Hong Kong.

##### The U.K.

Due to its common past with Hong Kong, the U.K. is the most important player for study abroad programmes. Hong Kong's current education system in Hong Kong is still modelled after the U.K. The British Council (<https://www.britishcouncil.hk/en>) is the local contact for universities and students and organizes its own educational "Study UK Fair" (<https://www.britishcouncil.hk/en/events/study-uk-fair-2020>) twice a year, each with over 100 exhibitors. In 2021 over 143,000 applications were received from students in China and Hong Kong to study at a UK universities is 143,820. The British Council also offers different English courses for students from 18 months old to adults.

##### France

France also stand in a good position to attract Hong Kong students. French institutions enjoy a very good reputation. The French International School (<https://www.fis.edu.hk/en>), established in 1963, has around 2,700 students enrolled. The school has a strong focus on languages and its students are accepted at top universities around the world. In addition, various scholarships are offered to make studying in France more attractive and affordable. A successful cooperation is the Executive MBA Global Fashion Management Program, a course organized in partnership between the Institut Français de la Mode, the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in Hong Kong.

Located at the Consulate General of France in Hong Kong, the CampusFrance Hong Kong (<http://www.hongkong.campusfrance.org/en/>), offers a range of complimentary services to help prepare for studying in France. CampusFrance promotes French Higher Education in Hong Kong and in Macau by providing practical information about France, higher education system and programs offer as well as about scholarships.

Founded in 1953, the Alliance Française de Hong Kong (AFHK) (<https://www.afhongkong.org/en/>) is a Hong Kong not-for-profit association dedicated to the promotion of the French language and culture. They offer French courses for children and adults, help with examination preparation, and provide assistant for those who would like to study in France or Quebec in Canada.

##### Germany

German speaking parents interested in bilingual German-English education in an international setting established in 1969 the German-Swiss International School (<https://www.gsis.edu.hk/>). Different German universities have partnerships with Hong Kong universities. The German Academic Exchange Service (<https://www.daad.de/en/>) has established a few centres in China (including in Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai) to provide information and complimentary consultation services for studying in Germany, see also their Hong Kong related info at <https://www.daad.de/de/laenderinformationen/asien/hongkong/>. The Goethe-Institute Hong Kong's (<https://www.goethe.de/ins/cn/en/sta/hon.html>) main goal is to promote international cultural cooperation by organizing a broad variety of events to present German culture abroad. They offer German course to kids from 5 years old and for adults. They also promote German culture by organizing different events and provide assistance for German exam preparation. They often partner up with the Austrian Consulate General or Austrian institutions for Austrian programs.

### 3.2 Partnerships between Hong Kong and Austrian Institutions

Hong Kong institutions	Austria institutions
University of Hong Kong	Academy of Fine Arts Vienna University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria University of Innsbruck University of Salzburg University of Vienna Vienna University of Economics and Business
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	Graz University of Technology University of Graz University of Vienna Vienna University of Economics and Business
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	MCI Management Centre Innsbruck University of Innsbruck Vienna University of Economics and Business
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Management Center Innsbruck Modul University Vienna Salzburg University of Applied Sciences IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems Vienna University of Economics and Business
City University of Hong Kong	Johannes Kepler University Linz Management Center Innsbruck University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria University of Vienna Vienna University of Technology Vienna University of Economics and Business
Hong Kong Baptist University	MCI Management Centre Innsbruck University of Graz University of Klagenfurt University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria
Lingnan University	University of Applied Sciences Kufstein Tirol University of Applied Sciences IMC Krems
The Education University of Hong Kong	Pädagogischen Hochschule Tirol

### 3.3 Useful Contacts

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### **3.4 Government Departments**

HKSAR Census and Statistics Department: <http://www.censtatd.gov.hk>

Education Bureau: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeID=92&langno=1>

Macau Education and Youth Affairs Bureau

[https://portal.dsej.gov.mo/webdsejspace/internet/Inter\\_main\\_page.jsp](https://portal.dsej.gov.mo/webdsejspace/internet/Inter_main_page.jsp)

Chinese Ministry of Education <http://en.moe.gov.cn/>

### **3.5 Education Fairs**

#### **China Education Expo**

<http://www.chinaeducationexpo.com/english/>

#### **China International Education Exhibition Tour**

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

#### **HKTDC Education & Careers Expo**

<http://m.hktdc.com/fair/hkeducationexpo-en/HKTDC-Education-and-Careers-Expo.html>

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