



International School Alliance China

2018-2019 Handbook for Teachers Coming to China

(Oct. 2018)

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Introduction

Congratulations! You have been hired to participate in one of the ISAC teaching projects and to teach in a Chinese school. The position is a personal opportunity for you to experience China, Chinese culture and Chinese education all at once at one of our member schools and universities in China. It is also a good way of saving money to afford your travel expenses, and to grow from the experience of living, learning and working in a foreign culture.

This handbook exists on the ISAC website for you to download and read as reference. The electronic version, with hyperlinks, can be read and printed with Adobe Acrobat Reader.

The handbook gives you information that will help you make the most of your time in China. You should also consult the website and project coordinator of your host school for further information and practical advice.



Be alert to this symbol: It signals key information worth noting and knowing!

It is natural for you to want detailed information on all aspects of teaching and living in China. Please understand that it is impossible for any handbook, or any

orientation session at home or in China, to provide this kind of information. Even if we attempted to do so, you would find yourself having to recreate much of it when you arrived at your host school.

This handbook focuses on **generic** rather than **specific** issues. The information is based on the experience of the ISAC Program Office, official and unofficial sources, and the advice of former participants, to whom we are especially indebted.

The **ISAC Program Office**, located in Hangzhou, is there to help you and to answer any questions you may have before or during your stay in China. The contact information is listed on the inside front cover of this Handbook. If you are phoning us from abroad, please take into account the time difference. We are available from Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Expectations and Responsibilities

The ISAC program office will do all it can to assist you. In the interests of avoiding misunderstandings, please be aware of, and hold to, the following list of expectations and responsibilities:

- 1) You are expected to engage in full-time teaching at your host school for 9-12 months during a contract term. The

definition of “full-time teaching” may vary by level of teaching. Elementary school teachers have a typical 8-hour schedule often referred as a ‘Early Start and Early Finish’ working day. A working day lasts from around 7:00-8:00 in the morning till 3:30-4:30 in the afternoon. High school teachers have their typical day from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. University instructors have a much more flexible schedule depending on what class slots you are assigned to. All these three types of schools come with a long lunch break, from 12 pm to 2 pm for the fall semester and from 12 pm - 2:30 pm for the spring semester. During the break students have lunch and take a mid-day nap.

- 2) You are responsible for keeping the ISAC Program Office informed of your telephone number, e-mail address and/or WeChat contact information. If you need any assistance with your living in your host school, you can either contact your school or ISAC Program Office.
- 3) You are responsible for informing us your health status and financial obligations in China. The ISAC Program Office, your host schools assume no financial or other liability arising from or related to your participation in the program.
- 4) As a teacher officially placed at your host school, you are expected to be aware of, and observe, the regulations of the institution. After arriving at your school, **don’t forget to ask your host**

school to register your temporary residency with the local police station.

- 5) Credit for work done in the ISAC program is granted at the discretion of your host school/project office. While we encourage foreign teachers to enjoy their stay and the experience at their host school, you should always remember you are a teacher and should fulfill your teaching responsibility.
- 6) After you return home, we hope that you will stay in contact with us. We hope too that you will want to act as a help for other incoming teachers and an ambassador for your host school and the program.

Travel Arrangements to China

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements to China, which means you will purchase for your flight ticket upfront. Your flight ticket fare will be reimbursed after you arrive in China. You should check with each project office how much your limit is. The sooner you plan your trip, the better chance you have of finding a relatively inexpensive flight. However, we suggest that you book your flight only after you get your visa or know a date that you will get your visa.

Please refer to the section on “Orientation Workshops” for suggested date of arrival.

We suggest you to book a one-way flight. In some cases, you may find a round trip ticket good deal; if that’s the case, in booking any round trip flight, make sure that you can change your return date at minimal cost. Make sure you understand the conditions and process associated with making such changes. When you book your flight, you might want to find out about luggage insurance (including insurance for your property during the year). Please book your flight in good time, noting that summer is in the high season for travel to China. Check the start date of your host school as well as the move-in date for residence. You may want to arrive a couple of days early and stay in a hotel while getting “set up” in residence.



Which city to fly to in China

The destination city to fly to depends on which project you are in and which host school you are placed to.

EEPIC Project

– Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport

Hangzhou Foreign Teacher Project

– Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport

Suzhou Project

– Shanghai Pudong International Airport or

– Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport

Xiamen Project

– Xiamen Gaoqi International Airport

Zhengzhou Project

– Zhengzhou Xinzheng International Airport

University Program

– Depending on Your Host University

For EEPIC project teachers, check out the orientation schedule at ISAC website www.isac.org.cn/eePIC before booking your flight; Please inform us when you are coming so that we are expecting you and planning a pick up arrangement.

If you are unable to join the orientation workshop, you shall fly directly to the city of your host school.

If you will arrive early and want to do some sightseeing or touring first, you may choose to fly to either Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, or Hong Kong; these are the hub airports in China.

If you visit Hong Kong, please make sure you are aware of that the entrance rules for Hong Kong as it is a specially administered territory in China. The entrance regulations are different than that in mainland China. Check out the Travel section for more information.

Travel Cost

No matter which teaching project you are in, your flight cost will be reimbursed after you arrive in China. You should keep your receipt which shows your name, flight

itinerary and your passport with the correct visa stamp to get your flight allowance reimbursed.

(EEPIC only) After the the orientation workshop, you will have to travel to your host school. Teachers teaching outside Hangzhou will usually have the following options: bus, train or plane. The ISAC Program Office has the expertise and ability to make travel plans for you. Depending on what time and which city you will be going to, ISAC staff will plan the best way for you to get to your host school. (For general travel information, see the travel section)

What To Take Along

Make a checklist of what to take along. Be sure to include:

- ✓ your passport(s), with Chinese visa
- ✓ the Notification Letter of Work Permit from your host school/project
- ✓ all documents needed for your residence permit (see the section Residence Permits)
- ✓ this handbook
- ✓ any prescription medicines you will need, in addition to your preferred toiletries (e.g., deodorant, tampons, etc.)
- ✓ your eyeglasses prescription (if you wear glasses)
- ✓ decent rain gear
- ✓ some Chinese currency for your first days in China (about 2,500 Chinese Yuan, or \$500); you can set up a bank account or use ATMs to obtain additional Chinese currency
- ✓ any dictionaries or other reference books you rely on

- ✓ a stack of recent wallet-sized photos (they do not have to be expensive passport-sized photos)

Maybe pictures of your hometown, family and friends – not just to keep yourself company, but to show your new friends. A map of your country, some postcards, a few things “quintessentially representing your country” (but lightweight) as “show and tell” objects or gifts, and – in your head or on paper – information about your country, are useful, too. Despite this list, try to “travel light” – it will make a difference. Don’t forget to take along a spirit of adventure and a sense of humour!

Certain things may not be readily available including:

1. Deodorant
2. Big shoes and large-size clothing
3. Tampons

Work Permit (Z Visa)

We have done our best to ensure the accuracy of the following information. But misunderstandings are possible, and regulations can change. So you may wish to check out certain aspects for yourself.

To work in China, you must have a “Work Permit”. To cross China’s border, you must have a “Visa”. They are two separate documents.

You will require a work visa (type Z visa) to enter China. When you apply at an embassy/consulate, request a **single-entry**

visa, which will allow you to enter China for one time. Why single-entry? Because you will be issued a temporary resident permit while you are in China and that will be valid till the ending month of your working contract. It will be functioning just like multi-entry visa that enables you to travel abroad and return to China, To avoid delay, ensure your visa application is complete and correct before you submit it.

You will apply for your visa through a Chinese embassy or consulate or China Visa Application Service Center. You are encouraged to visit the following website for information on working in China:

<http://www.isac.org.cn/esl-teaching/work-visa/>

<http://fwp.safea.gov.cn/lhCmsArticleDisController.do?cmsArticleContentPage&artId=bb7f31e75f579b18015f72681aae030b>

When you have been formally admitted to a teaching position, you will receive a contract to that effect from your host school/project office. This is an important document that you will need for your work permit. Print out your documents including your contract, notification letter of work permit and your passport with a Chinese visa with you when you fly.

Insurance

Having adequate medical insurance and other forms of insurance is essential. The problem with insurance is that we always assume we will not need it; that makes it easy to assume it is an unnecessary expense. Sad experience brings an important lesson home: The right way to calculate the cost of insurance is to think about where the money would come from if certain eventualities (like illness or even death) occurred. The problem here is that we don't like to think about these things.

Be Safe, Not Sorry

We would also like to pass along a piece of important advice: You should bring any necessary medication to China with you. Although the Chinese Ping An health insurance may cover prescription medication, they may not cover very expensive medication needed for a pre-existing condition. It is possible to have such medication paid for, but you have to prove that you will be in China for an extended period of time. Also, Chinese medications are significantly different from most Western medications and it may be difficult to obtain corresponding medications.

You should also look seriously into getting baggage insurance, liability insurance, and renters' content insurance. Of these, liability insurance is especially important. As an example: if you hit a pedestrian while cycling, or if you negligently store something that falls on someone else, you

can be sued for large amounts. Liability insurance covers you up to the amount stipulated on the policy.

<http://www.isac.org.cn/esl-teaching/medical-insurance/>

Costs and Money

How Expensive?

Costs vary from city to city and by personal tastes and expectations. As a rule, you should budget approximately RMB1000-1500 (about \$220) for each month for basic living expenses. Here's how average monthly costs might break down: (all amounts in Chinese RMB:

Rent (school residence).....	covered
Student cafeteria.....	covered
Health insurance.....	covered
Dining out	500
Groceries	200
Phone.....	100
Public transportation.....	100
Travel	300
Postage	50
Books	20
Other entertainment	200

*Total monthly expenses: 1500 (about \$220)***

**These expenses are on the “high side”
Previous teachers indicate that RMB 1200 is reasonable

Tips on Handling Money

You will need to have ready access to some money to tide you over until you are set up and can transfer money from bank to bank. We recommend you travel with the Chinese RMB equivalent of about \$500.

You can also use many ATM (automated teller machine) machines in China to access your account at home. Hint: Look for the “Interac” or “Plus” symbols. Withdrawals are of course in the currency where the machine is located. Fees are applicable to ATMs (a visible fee levied by the Canadian bank, and an invisible one levied by the Chinese bank).

Major credit cards are handy to have, but they are not accepted quite as widely as in western countries. They can be a convenient means to transfer money quickly to China. If you give your parents or some other trusted person authorization to access your credit card account here, they can deposit money in that account up to the credit limit. You can then simply withdraw the money from that account in China as cash advances. As long as you do not withdraw more than your positive account balance, you will not be charged interest. We recommend that you consult your bank here about the details of this kind of transaction and about the fees involved before you leave for China.

Once you get to your host school, one of the first things you should do is to set up a bank account. Foreigners can open accounts in China. You just need to take your passport if you want to open an account. Some Chinese banks offer service to their customers to open joint accounts, for example, the China Industrial Bank. You can go there and

consult the staff. But most of the staff cannot speak English.

You will need a safe place for your money, an institution to which funds can be transferred from western countries and a way of paying bills while in China. As in many other countries, there are different kinds of bank accounts in China. With a current account, you can pay bills by a cashless transfer. To pay fixed sums at regular intervals (for example: your monthly rent), you can set up a pre-authorized automatic transfer. Check with your host school to see which bank is the most convenient, friendly, and economical. You can also get an ATM card to access your account; this is very handy, so be sure to request such a card when you open your account (there may be a delay in issuing the card in any case), depending on your circumstances and the bank you select.

In an Emergency....

If, in the event of an unforeseen emergency, you find yourself in financial trouble, don't panic. Speak to your host school/project office and also contact the ISAC Program Office in Hangzhou immediately. There is no need to be embarrassed. We will treat your request confidentially and do our best to help you.

Advice and Support

The best way to get information about (or from) your host school before and after you arrive in China is to contact the ISAC Program Office. This office can give you details on procedures, help arrange for a room in residence, and generally advise you on all aspects of life in China.

Language

You can survive in China with only English! Most Chinese students, and many faculty and staff, will speak some English. However, to heighten your experience you will want to take Chinese language courses. You will probably be amazed at how little time it will take to pick up the basics.

Taxi drivers do not speak English so you should get your residence name and address written in Chinese. Or arrive with a "screen print" on your smartphone of your Chinese address.

Arriving at Your Host School

Like most employers in China, your ISAC host school/project office provide pick-up service, and you will be picked up at the ‘International Arrival Hall’. There are a number of things you have to do. The first few days will be filled with “official business” for which you will need to have all kinds of documentation on you (passport, resident permit, room, contract, etc.). There will be a staff from your host school to help you get through all the process.

Here’s the sequence of events for the first few days after your arrival:

- 1 Open a bank account.
- 2 Go to the alien registration office and get your residence permit issued or extended.
(see APPENDIX A)
- 3 Go to the Ping An insurance company to get your health insurance

This sounds complicated, and it is. But remember, Chinese have to do almost all of this in their daily life, and it’s all part of the experience.

Accommodations and Food

The food is provided at the school cafeteria. Please contact your host school to know more about the number and location of the school cafeteria(s). The school’s stadium/gym facilities are available for teachers. Foreign teachers are provided with basketballs, badminton, table tennis and gym. Even outside the school’s premises you can find several restaurants, game zones, cafeterias, and different recreational places.

On-campus Lodging

Foreign teachers can arrange to live in an apartment on the campus. Each school or university has on-campus housing for foreign teachers. Contact your host school or project office to determine the types of accommodation and costs as they will vary between schools.

Off-campus Lodging

Again, please check with your host school to determine what off campus accommodation might be available and the cost.

Stereotyping and Intercultural Differences

Finding out about differences between your home country and Chinese society and culture will be one of the most interesting things about your stay in China. One must always be aware that generalizations are dangerous; indeed, a prolonged stay abroad is a very good way to become aware of the problems inherent in stereotypes.

Still, it is fair to say that Chinese (and to a certain extent Asian society) can be quite prescriptive about “traditions” And “traditions” are defined quite broadly. This handbook has already informed you about formal rules regarding smoking and the consumption of alcohol, and about different concepts of “cooperation” and “cheating.”

Again, China is not a perfect society. China, in fact, is far away from being perfect. Something resembling “queue-jumping” or “spitting” or “rude staring” will earn you bad impressions about the country. Also people may not care much about speaking Chinese to each other even you are also around. Those are the facts about this society. But when you look at the positive facts about the society, you may feel more encouraged. We believe most Chinese people you will meet during your stay in China will leave you good memories.

Meeting People, Social Life, Recreation

It is natural for you to feel alone away from home. The orientation workshop in Hangzhou in August will ease your first shock of being in China. You will get over this loneliness much more quickly – and go on to benefit much more from being in China – if you make the effort to meet Chinese, teachers, staff and students.

You may know some other foreign teachers working at the same school, and they can be a great source of help and companionship. But we cannot recommend strongly enough that you take the initiative to meet and make new friends.

Here are three specific pieces of advice:

- 1) Don't get too much into the habit of speaking English. If you establish a pattern of trying to speak some Chinese from the first day, even with your fellow students, you will feel much more integrated, and you will interact more easily with Chinese and get more from your stay here.
- 2) Teachers within ISAC program are great sources of support and fun. But don't become overly reliant on them. It will be disruptive to their lives and your chances to develop a “life of your own” in China.
- 3) Find a hobby-oriented or other interest group (dance club, yoga group, sports club) or volunteer work, and start participating! ISAC will organize various activities for foreign teachers to participate. Your host

school or city will also host different events. This is a simple and effective way to find Chinese who share your interests.

The two most liked festivals for foreign teachers are the dragon boat festival and the middle autumn festival. The dragon boat festival gives teachers a chance to participate in a boat race and compete with other schools or teams. The Middle Autumn Festival usually comes with a reception or banquet with Chinese traditional performances. And best of all, it is free for teachers. ☺

Chinese don't usually party at night especially Chinese teachers. They don't party. Partly for these reasons (but no doubt as part of our culture in general), Chinese don't have the same kind of social life that you may be used to. Going out to a pub for the evening for serious or not-so-serious discussions is not as common here as it is over in western countries. Try to understand the Chinese way at the same time as you are sharing your cultural ways with Chinese.

Communications

Internet based voice/video services such as Wechat, FaceTime and Skype have radically changed the landscape in the last few years. Wechat is an extremely popular and practical tool for Chinese people to get

connected with each other. Skype is the most popular option for foreign teachers as a way of staying in touch with family and friends in other places.

Wechat

Wechat (<http://www.wechat.com/en/>) is the most popular mobile app in China. Almost every Chinese has a Wechat account. The good thing is Wechat comes with English version and it is very easy to setup and to use.

One of the features that makes WeChat such an innovative application is being able to literally use it as a virtual wallet for online operations. You can use it in your daily life in China.

Cell phones and SIM card

It is of course a personal decision whether you should or should not have a cell phone. But having a cell phone definitely makes your life easier living in China. Either ISAC office or your host school will help you get a SIM card for you. We will need your passport to register a new SIM card under your name.

The monthly cost of a cellphone usage is about 60-100 RMB including a fair amount of call minutes and 2GB data (as of Jan. 2018).

Phone Numbers



In an emergency, for police dial 1-1-0; for fire dial 1-1-9; for ambulance dial 1-2-0.

Please contact the ISAC Program Office or our numbers listed on the website if you are in need. But in a real emergency, call 1-1-0 first.

Long Distance Call Back Home: For long distance, we recommend Google Hangouts or Skype for a good rate. It is quite expensive to call using a Chinese phone number to an overseas number; using the Internet is always a better option.

Travel

China is the land of buses, trains and planes. Intercity high speed trains are the most popular and a fairly inexpensive way to go medium distances. For longer distances, you might be able to get some cheap flights and train trips. If you are placed to the University Program, you'll find a university owned bus team that specializes in student and teacher commute. They are able to take you from one campus to another one and is usually free or very cheap to take.

Air Travel

Flights are widely available in most Chinese cities. It is more foreigner-friendly than booking a train. The websites Chinese people use the most are different from what westerners do.

However you can still find some foreign website that gives you convenience booking a Chinese flight.

Popular website Chinese use:

www.fliggy.com

www.qunar.com

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

Popular website among foreigners:

www.trip.com

www.kayak.com

www.google.com/flights

Major airline companies include:

Air China www.airchina.com/

China Eastern Airlines www.ceair.com/

China Southern Airlines www.csair.com/

Hainan Airlines www.hainanairlines.com/

Xiamen Airlines www.xiamenair.com/cn/en/

Trains

Chinese trains are cheap, fast, frequent and connect all the country. On a bullet train you can travel from Beijing to Shanghai in only five hours. If you take into account that train stations aren't too far from downtown whereas airports are far away, traveling by train is probably faster. Most major Chinese cities have more than one train stations, the thing is to remember which train station to go to because they are quite far apart from one to another.

Foreigners can buy train tickets online and pick up your tickets at the train station. Unlike flight ticket, the price for train ticket is fixed no matter which day and time you are traveling. However, always remember to book your ticket in advance especially for the trips during weekend and holidays.

Imagine hundreds of thousands people are moving during these days and you don't want your plan to be ruined on not able to book a train ticket.

How to buy one?

1. Ask your Chinese friend or foreign friend who can read Chinese to buy one for you on <http://www.12306.cn>, the official website to buy a train ticket in China. After the purchase, you only need to go to the train station, show your passport and get your ticket.
2. Book ticket online with www.trip.com. This website is very popular among foreigners to buy train tickets online. The Chinese version is also very popular among Chinese people.

For tips on how to buy a train ticket in China. Check

<https://www.saporedicina.com/english/travel-by-train-in-china/>

Metro or subway is a very convenient way of transportation in Chinese medium or large cities. Currently there over 35 rapid transit systems in mainland China. Metro is also a very green and economic way of traveling. A trip usually costs about 2-10 RMB depending on how far you travel.



Public Transportation

Buses are widely accessible in most Chinese cities. The cost to take a bus in China is marginal compared what you pay in a western country. You could expect to pay about 1-2 RMB, which is about 0.15 USD. However, most Chinese bus drivers do not speak English. It is only recommended to take a bus if you know where you are going and you know which stop to get off.

Metro

Hotel

For staying in a hotel, you need to be aware of the following when booking a Chinese hotel:

- Not all hotels in China have a license to lodge foreigners. Because of this, we recommend that you make a reservation in advance and avoid having to try several hotels before you find one that you can stay at.
- You will always have to show your passport when you arrive at the hotel.

For useful booking website, the more popular websites are

- ✓ www.booking.com
- ✓ www.agoda.com
- ✓ www.hotels.com



When booking a hotel, always check whether the hotel is able to accommodate foreign citizens.

Hostel

Youth hostels exist in a number of Chinese cities. More information for hostels can be found at www.hostelworld.com. These hostels are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are busy in the holidays especially the ‘National Day Golden Week Holiday’ from Oct.1st to Oct 7th. The price can hike up to three times of the usual price. In China, wherever you wish to stay, book in advance!

Your host school may also be able to function as a short-term hostel in August. To find out whether this is possible, please contact the project coordinator of your host school in question. Often the residences are managed by the school’s “Hospitality Services” or “Conference Services” in the summer.

Travel to Hong Kong

If there is a chance you will be visiting Hong Kong, be certain you are aware of that the entrance rules for Hong Kong. If you are an American, Canadian, Australian or E.U citizen, then you don’t need a Visa as long as you stay for less than 90 days (British can stay 180 days). If you come from another country, you should go to <https://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/visit-transit/visit-visa-entry-permit.html> to check whether you need a Visa. Once you arrive in Hong Kong, a customs officer will stick a “Visa exemption” ticket on your passport, which specifies for how long you can legally stay in Hong Kong without a Visa.

You may not need a visa to enter Hong Kong but you will need a one for Mainland China.

FAQ

Students - What is the experience of teaching Chinese students like?

As a foreign English teacher, be aware that you have a responsibility not only to deliver the required educational content, but also to present a consistently professional approach. You are representing ISAC and, as perhaps the only foreigner the students may have met, you are representing your country.

Teaching in China has the potential to expose you to many different teaching situations. You can teach various age ranges, students from the

countryside or those based in cities, and there may be various reasons for their commitment to studying English e.g. an intention to study abroad.

Chinese school class sizes tend to be large; a typical class usually has 25 - 40 or more students. In Chinese schools, teachers are not usually required to work with individual students in a 1-1 capacity.

Culturally, China is changing rapidly as it connects ever more progressively with the western world. As such the cultural make-up of students is varied and interesting, with a blend of traditional Confucian background mixed with today's technologically-motivated generation of students.

Approach - How should I behave in China? What to expect?

Your approach to both the work situation in your school and to your daily life in China should be flexible, patient and respectful. The Chinese environment comes with a strong sense of community, and it is an inclusive one for those foreigners with a good approach. Bearing this in mind will make your daily life much easier and your time in China enjoyable.

As regards flexibility required in your work situation, last-minute teaching timetable changes are common, so be ready for these, as are substituted working days in lieu of public holidays that may have to be done on the occasional weekend. In addition to your scheduled working hours, your school may also reasonably ask you to occasionally help in some special way, for example by attending a party or dinner with other teachers or students, or perhaps by giving a special lesson/lecture for them.

Money - Is it cheap or expensive to live in China?

One of the first things you will notice in China is that your money goes much further than it does in most western countries, due to the relatively low cost of living. (See the links below for more details). Salaries offered to westerners are typically much higher than those of native Chinese teachers.

- http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country_result.jsp?country=China
- <http://www.worldsalaries.org/cost-of-living.shtml>
- http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/rankings_by_country.jsp

Apart from food, clothes, taxis and public transport etc. being relatively cheap, remember that you have a valuable benefit-in-kind in the form of a free apartment and little, if any, bills to pay. Not only this, but you are also given an allowance to spend as you wish on Chinese food in the school canteen!

Accommodation - What is the free accommodation like?

It is to be expected that there are differences in the Chinese style of accommodation, as compared to western-style accommodation. Free accommodation offered to foreign teachers is generally spacious and of good quality. The best way to understand what your accommodation will be is to ask for pictures. Please also remember your accommodation may not be ready before your arrival. If that's the case, ask for pictures of other foreign teacher's residence.

Preparedness - What should I bring with me?

Being a little travel-savvy and possessing a reasonable level of life-skills goes a long way towards day-to-day survival abroad. Living in a foreign land means that the new environment is different to back home. As such, you may not be able to easily obtain all the products that you might be used to taking for granted. As with everything, there are solutions to this; larger supermarkets usually have a foreign department stocking many imported items from other countries or you could try the Chinese alternatives.

Almost everything is available, especially in the larger cities, if you know where to look. However, it is good to prepare in advance to make it easy on yourself when you first arrive, and there are a few things that you might like to bring with you. A short list of these items would be: shoes (if you are anything more than a size 8), deodorant, make-up, favorite cooking herbs and spices, particular cooking implements e.g. bring a potato-masher if you like to eat mash and essential medicines (prescription or otherwise).

Note that it is also advisable to procure a VPN internet service before entering China, if you want to continue to access western sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

Pollution - Is it something to worry about?

Due to it having being the world's factory for a long time, China has some difficulties with pollution that it is working hard to solve. Of course, levels of pollution vary greatly from one day to another (this can be monitored with an app on your smartphone) and from place to place, with the larger cities having the biggest air-pollution problems and the countryside cities having little or no issues with pollution. The extent to which it may or may not affect you will depend on your individual health situation.

The website can give you a better idea which cities in China are less polluted:

<https://www.travelchinaguide.com/climate/air-pollution.htm>

Safety -- Is it safe in China for us foreigners?

The crime rate in China is very low. The Chinese people are very friendly to all foreigners. However, you still need to take some precaution while on crowded buses or in busy shopping centers in order to protect your belongings against pick-pockets.

Closing Formalities

The ISAC Teaching Program is conceived as a system-wide opportunity for foreigners to work at Chinese educational institutions at all levels. And participation in the ISAC program is not limited to one academic year. Each year we have teachers renewing their contracts as well as teachers going back home.

The ISAC Program Office will be in touch with you 3-4 months prior to your contract ending date. By the end of your contract term, you need to decide whether to stay in China or to leave. You can also either stay with your current host school, or to work in another project under a different host school. You can also stay in China for other opportunities, some of them may not even be related to teaching. If so it is advised to starting looking about 3 or 4 months prior to that. The ISAC Program Office is able to provide you with all useful information you need to know from a Chinese and local perspective.

Your Participation in the Program

We encourage teachers to take ISAC as a work-abroad program or a “jumping-off year” toward a different, more meaningful life and turning point for your understanding of the world. For some, it is a big commitment to get out of your comfort zone and get into a foreign country where English is not commonly used. Also teaching in China is not always about happy days, positive experience and meeting new friends; you will have bad days, cultural shock and discouraged here and there; sometimes it is not only about cultural difference, it could be about many other reasons. You may feel lost, depressed, home sick for some time; However, that’s part of the adventure, and that’s something you may also experience if you are staying in any other foreign countries. At the end of the journey, most teachers find their teaching experience in China positive, and probably the most rewarding year(s) of their lives.

When you return to your home region, we encourage you to share the experiences and knowledge which you gained in China with your family, friends, colleagues, and society. We also hope that you will help sustain the relationship between China and your home country by assisting those who wish to participate in our program from your country. It is not unusual for teachers participating in a program to become so much a part of the life of the host school and society that they do not wish to leave. Sometimes it is the general

life-style that appeals. And sometimes it is a personal relationship that makes it difficult to leave. If you wish to stay on, either with your current host school or to another one under ISAC, let us know what you think as early as possible so that we can arrange the best placement for you.

When you arrive home, do not be surprised if you experience a “reverse culture shock.” Some past participants report that they not only had to adjust to the “old ways” of being a native, a local, a person mixed up with the rest of the society; they also had to come to terms with the fact that they and some of their friends had grown apart. That is a danger of a year or years abroad, but it is also a way of saying that this year or these years will change your life. On balance, most participants find this change good.

In the meantime, all of us associated with the program wish you a rewarding, exciting, and successful year!

APPENDIX A

Notices for Foreign Nationals in Hangzhou

Exit-Entry Administration Division of Hangzhou Public Security Bureau

China's reform and opening up has attracted large numbers of foreign nationals for tourism, business, studies, and exchanges. The Exit-Entry Administration Department, as functional department of the Chinese government, sincerely welcomes you and wishes you an enjoyable stay here, in your studies and work.

The legal rights and interests of foreign nationals within the territory of China are protected by Chinese laws. Foreign nationals shall abide by the local Chinese laws, shall not endanger the national security of China, or harm its social and public interests, or undermine social public order within the territory of China.

In order to help you better understand the Chinese laws, we have compiled the relevant articles below:

I. Residence and Stay

1. The duration of stay specified on the visa held by a foreign national shall not exceed 180 days, and the visa holder may stay within the territory of China in accordance with the specified duration of their visa.

A foreign national extending the duration of his/her stay within the territory of China may apply to the Exit-Entry Administration Department of Public Security Authorities under local People's Government at above county level, at least seven (7) days prior to the expiration of duration of stay indicated on his/her visa, and shall submit materials relevant to the application as required.

2. A foreign national needing to handle residence permits after entering the territory of China shall, within thirty (30) days after the date of his/her entry into the territory of China, apply to the Exit-Entry Administration Department of Public Security Authorities under local People's Government at above county level of target place.

A foreign national residing within the territory of China and applying for an extended duration of residence shall apply to the Exit-Entry Administration Department of Public Security Authorities under local People's Government at above county level of his/ her residence place, at least thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the effective period of his/her residence permit, and shall submit materials relevant to the application as required.

3. Foreign nationals reaching the age of 16, if to reside or stay within the territory of China, shall take their passport or other international travel documents, or foreign national's residence/stay permits with them, and allow the public security authorities' inspection of the aforesaid documents.

4. Items to be registered on the residence permit held by a foreign national include his/her name, gender, date of birth, purpose of residence, duration of residence, date of issue, place, the number of his/her passport or that of any of his/her other international travel certificates.

In case of changes in the registration items required for the foreign national's residence permit, the holder shall apply to the Exit-Entry Administration Department of Public Security Authorities under local People's Government at above county level of his/ her residence place, making corresponding changes in ten (10) days since the change in registration items.

5. Foreign nationals residing or staying within the territory of China must not engage in activities that are not consistent with the purpose of their residence or stay within the territory of China.

6. Following the birth of a foreign baby within the territory of China, his/her parents or representatives shall handle registration of residence or stay within sixty (60) days of his/her birth, at the Exit-Entry

Administration Department of Public Security Authorities under local People's Government at above county level of his/ her parents' residence place, with his/her birth certificate.

7. Following the death of a foreign national within the territory of China, his/her family, guardians or representatives shall declare with his/her proof of death to the Exit-Entry Administration Department of Public Security Authorities under local People's Government at above county level, and apply for the nullification of his/her residence or stay permit according to related regulations.

8. Foreign nationals shall not forge, alter, defraud or fraudulently use visas and certificates.

II. Accommodation Registration

9. For foreign nationals checking in at hotels within the territory of China, the hotel shall handle the accommodation registration in accordance with the relevant regulations on the maintaining of public order at hotels.

10. A foreign national residing or staying at a location other than a hotel shall handle the registration formalities him/herself, or through the host at the local public security authorities, within twenty-four (24) hours of taking up said residence.

11. Foreign nationals staying in Hangzhou for long term, if temporarily staying at a location other than their own residence, shall also handle accommodation registration.

III. Law and Order

12. Foreign nationals staying in Hangzhou shall not disturb public order, gang up to fight, cause affrays, or insult women.

13. Foreign nationals staying in Hangzhou shall not disturb public order, carry or store firearms, ammunition or controlled knives.

14. Foreign nationals staying in Hangzhou shall not infringe others' personal rights, assault, or illegally restrict others' freedom, or intrude into others' residences.

15. Foreign nationals staying in Hangzhou shall not take opium, morphine or other drugs, or traffic or transport drugs.

16. Foreign nationals staying in Hangzhou shall not involve themselves in prostitution or create conditions for prostitution.

17. Foreign nationals staying in Hangzhou shall not produce, reproduce, sell, rent out or disseminate pornographic books, paintings, videos, or any other pornographic material.

18. Foreign nationals rallying, marching, or demonstrating in Hangzhou must apply to the Hangzhou Public Security Bureau for permission. Without permission from the public security authorities, foreign nationals shall not involve themselves in rallies, marches or demonstrations held by Chinese citizens.

IV. Religious Activities

19. Foreign nationals conducting religious activities within the territory of China shall abide by Chinese laws and regulations, shall not form any religious organization, establish religious offices or sites for religious activities, or open religious schools within the territory of China, shall not propagate religious belief or appoint religious personnel, or get conduct any other missionary activity among Chinese citizens.

20. Foreign nationals shall not bring to China religious publications or religious audiovisual products that may endanger the social and public interests of China.

21. Foreign nationals may be involved in religious activities held in churches or other sites of religious activity within the territory of China. Only at the invitation of religious groups above the levels of province, autonomous region or municipality may foreign nationals preach at the sites for religious activities in Hangzhou.

V. Other Affairs

22. Foreign nationals travelling to cities or counties that are not open to foreign nationals shall apply in advance to the public security authorities' Exit-Entry Administration Department for a travel permit, and only travel there with permission.

23. Foreign nationals working within the territory of China shall obtain a work permit and working residence permit according to regulations. No organization or individual is allowed to employ any foreign national who has not obtained a work permit or working residence permit.

24. Foreign nationals holding an international driver's license shall not drive a motor vehicle in Hangzhou if they have failed the Hangzhou Public Security Bureau Traffic Management Department examination and not received a Chinese driver's license.

Foreign nationals holding a Chinese driver's license shall not drive any unlicensed or undocumented motor vehicle.

25. A foreign national shall immediately report a lost or stolen passport to the local public security authorities, and by dint of the case evidence issued by the public security authorities, register the loss at the Exit-Entry Administration Division of Hangzhou Public Security Bureau. After investigation and verification, the Exit-Entry Administration Division of Hangzhou Public Security Bureau shall issue the Certificate of Missing Passport, and the owner of the lost passport shall apply for a new passport at his/her embassy or consulate within China, before handling visa and other relevant formalities at the Exit-Entry Administration Department of public security authorities.

26. A foreign national shall immediately report lost or stolen property to the local public security authorities, and by dint of the case evidence issued by the public security authorities, register the loss at the Exit-Entry Administration Division of Hangzhou Public Security Bureau. After investigation and verification, the Exit-Entry Administration Division of Hangzhou Public Security Bureau shall issue a Certificate of Missing Property.