

CHINA

National plans to hike education standing

China to prioritize return of overseas graduates, intl expansion and research

By ZOU SHUO
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China aims to significantly enhance its international influence, competitiveness and voice in education during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30), according to an education development plan recently issued by the State Council, the country's Cabinet.

The plan outlines how China will make better use of world-class educational resources and innovation factors to achieve these goals. International exchanges in basic research will be deepened, and leading research universities will be encouraged to launch or participate in major global scientific initiatives.

Services for Chinese students studying abroad will be improved, while efforts to encourage overseas graduates to return to China and contribute to national development.

High-level foreign science and engineering universities will also be welcomed to establish cooperative programs in China.

Developing globally recognized Chinese education brands is another priority.

The plan calls for stronger ties with partners in Europe and North America while expanding cooperation with neighboring nations, countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative and Global South countries.

China will share its standards and practical solutions in areas

including vocational education, basic education, engineering, artificial intelligence education and teacher training.

The international Chinese language brand will be further promoted, while the "Study in China" brand and the country's capacity for overseas schooling will also be strengthened. People-to-people and cultural exchanges will be actively encouraged, according to the plan.

On global education governance, China will make use of multilateral platforms such as UNESCO, BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to deepen cooperation and strengthen its leadership role in areas including girls' and women's education, digital and intelligent education and STEM subjects.

Data released by the Ministry of Education in April shows that in 2025 more than 570,000 Chinese students pursued higher education overseas and about 535,600 returned to China after completing their studies. China, meanwhile, hosted 380,000 international students from 191 countries and regions during the 2024-25 academic year.

Wu Peng, dean of the Overseas Education College at Jiangsu University, said that "significantly enhanced" global influence in education during the 15th Five-Year Plan period should be measured by substance rather than sheer numbers.

Regarding international students, Wu said the growth of

degree-seeking and postgraduate enrollment is more important than total enrollment figures.

He also called for a comprehensive service system covering pre-enrollment support, campus life and post-graduation employment. "We cannot simply admit students and leave them to fend for themselves. A closed-loop, service-oriented management system is essential," he said.

Wu added that China's strengths in vocational education, AI and STEM teaching should be integrated into the education systems of countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Nauvao Purl, a United States citizen studying at the University of International Business and Economics, encouraged more US students to come to China for face-to-face exchanges. She reflected on Yung Wing, the first Chinese student to graduate from a US university more than 170 years ago.

"What I learned from Yung Wing is that discomfort and uncertainty — the often awkward spaces — are exactly where the most important work happens," she said.

Purl said she arrived in China with preconceptions shaped by movies, food and social media, only to find a far more complex reality.

"The real China — strangers asking where I'm from, professors staying after class because of their passion and classmates studying incredibly hard — can only be experienced, never fully understood through books," she said.

She urged her peers to "show up" in person, tell stories instead of arguing, embrace the role of cultural bridge-builders and remain patient when engaged in people-to-people diplomacy.

US delegation explores Wuhan's tech sector

By LIU KUN in Wuhan
and CHEN MEILING

Representatives from China and the United States exchanged views on robotics and artificial intelligence during a people-to-people exchange event in Wuhan, Hubei province.

Jeffrey Greene, a veteran pilot and chairman of the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation, led a delegation of about 100 people, including descendants of Flying Tigers veterans, as well as teachers and students from Flying Tigers Friendship Schools, on a five-day visit to Wuhan, which concluded on Sunday, for a series of cultural and technological activities.

On Thursday, the delegation visited the Hubei Humanoid Robot Innovation Center, where members watched humanoid robots dance, write calligraphy, make coffee, pour tea, play chess and engage in conversations.

"I saw videos on Instagram of robots doing little dances, but then they would fall over. These robots can hop on one leg and move all around. They are totally stable — super cool," said Haley Rasilla, a student in the delegation. "It exceeds my expectations — way more futuristic than anything I've ever seen in America. It's crazy."

Erik Lutz, a councilman in the city of Pico Rivera, California, and a representative of the foundation, said he was impressed by robots designed for medical care, cleaning and construction. "We're seeing the future," he said. "The two most powerful countries working in cooperation will provide for the longevity of our civilization."

The innovation center includes a data acquisition site, a simulation training ground, industrial and commercial application zones, an interactive intelligent application zone, and an integrated humanoid robot application zone.

At a roundtable forum themed "Innovation for Good, Intelligence



Descendants of Flying Tigers veterans, teachers and students from the Flying Tigers Friendship School in the United States interact with robots at the Hubei Humanoid Robot Innovation Center in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Thursday. ZOU HAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

to Future" held at Wuhan University of Technology on Friday, students from the two countries discussed opportunities and challenges facing college students amid the AI revolution, focusing on technology ethics and industry-university-research collaboration.

Matthew Garrett Embree, who recently graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a degree in computer science, said overreliance on AI is concerning.

"Many of the students in my classes eventually stopped learning how to program and would just write prompts instead," he said. "AI is a powerful tool, but it's still important to learn the basics and understand the fundamentals of whatever topic you're studying. I think this applies across all fields."

David Cornelis Howe, who graduated from Alfred University in New York with a degree in mechanical engineering, said he used AI extensively during his studies, even when large language models were still in the early stages of development.

"I noticed they made a lot of mistakes early on, so I didn't really trust

them at first," he said. "But as I went through school, I realized the technology was improving very quickly."

He said AI is most valuable when it helps users understand concepts or guides them through a process rather than simply providing answers.

"I think it's very important that we don't let AI take away our critical thinking skills and our ability to make decisions for ourselves," he added.

During the visit, the delegation also rode Wuhan's suspended monorail, known as the "sky train", the first of its kind in China. Unlike conventional monorails, the trains hang beneath elevated steel tracks, showcasing the country's advances in rail transit technology.

The visitors also learned about Wuhan's modernization at the Hankow Customs Museum, watched traditional opera performances and explored the region's history at the Hubei Provincial Museum and Yellow Crane Tower.

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Construction sector embraces AI as a 'must-have' at CIC's Global Conference

By YUAN SHANGLUE

Hong Kong's construction sector is stepping up its use of artificial intelligence and smart construction, aiming to improve efficiency and safety through technological innovation.

The mindset was highlighted at the Construction Industry Council (CIC) Global AI and Smart Construction Conference and Exhibition 2026 (GASCCE), held in Hong Kong on June 24-25.

The event attracted over 12,000 global leaders, technology pioneers, academics, government representatives, and industry practitioners, who conducted deep exchanges and talked about the possibilities of the future industry ecosystem onsite and online. Over 40 speakers from all over the world shared the latest developments in artificial intelligence, robotics, the low-altitude economy, and a wide spectrum of smart construction innovations.

CIC Chairman Thomas Ho On-sing delivered a welcome speech at the opening ceremony.

"AI is no longer a choice — it's a must for the construction industry to truly adopt," Ho said.

The CIC branded 2026 the "Year of AI", aiming to push AI solutions into real-world practice across the sector.

Ho stressed the importance of applying AI to the construction sector, and AI's role of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, sub-contractors, and the front-line workforce in their ongoing journey of upgrading and transformation.

Ho mentioned that the CIC's construction safety AI chatbot is now integrated into the CIC APP and is expected to benefit over 140,000 workers, enabling them to access over 3,000 construction safety documents directly on site.

The CIC will also launch the AI Marketplace by the end of the year — a one-stop platform for handy AI construction tools. With added support, including token subsidies, the tool aims to make it more practical and affordable for small and medium-sized enterprises and sub-contractors to adopt AI, Ho said.

Looking ahead, Ho said he believes that Hong Kong's Northern Metropolis can become a test bed



Organizers, guests, and speakers pose for a group photo at the opening ceremony of the Construction Industry Council Global AI and Smart Construction Conference and Exhibition (GASCCE) 2026, held at Hong Kong Science Park on June 24. Among them are Hong Kong Secretary for Development Bernadette Linn Hon-ho (front row, eighth from left) and CIC Chairman Thomas Ho On-sing (front row, eighth from right). PHOTOS BY EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Left and right: Hong Kong Secretary for Development Bernadette Linn Hon-ho (left) address the CIC Global AI and Smart Construction Conference and Exhibition (GASCCE) 2026. Center: The event brings together over 50 technology-related exhibitors and draws more than 12,000 visitors both onsite and online.



and living showroom for various construction technologies, and offer vast opportunities to apply innovations at scale.

Ho noted that the Chinese mainland takes a lead in robotic development worldwide, and he hopes that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region can join forces with the

mainland, especially with other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, to combine strengths and go global together, which also echoes the city's unique positioning as a superconnector and super value-adder.

GASCCE also featured an exhibition area. Over 50 exhibitors from

Hong Kong, the mainland, and overseas brought their latest technologies to showcase the possibilities of the industry.

The effect of the event, and the interaction among attendees, exceeded his expectations, Ho said.

Echoing the importance of applying AI to the industry, Bernadette

Linn Hon-ho, secretary for development of the Hong Kong SAR, said the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) has outlined a clear development strategy, emphasizing that innovation is a critical cornerstone in fostering high-quality development and achieving modernization.

Linn also stressed that technology