

ImmerQi Teaching Internship Program - FAQs

Q: How should I prepare for life in China?

A: Culture shock is a very real factor for newcomers to China; doing your research is definitely advisable. The many blogs and articles on the ImmerQi website (www.immerqi.com) are a useful resource for anyone planning to come on the program.

Q: When should I buy insurance?

A: It is important to buy insurance once you have been accepted on the internship, if not sooner. This is to cover you in case an unexpected illness or event covered by insurance occurs which prevents you from taking up the internship. This is because, after the cooling off period, your internship is only refundable if you are not accepted on the program.

Q: When should I book my flights?

A: In order to obtain a visa, you will require a Letter of Invitation. This document supports your visa application and invites participants to come to China on a cultural exchange (on an X2 visa). Without this document a visa application of this kind will not be successful.

ImmerQi will apply for this document on your behalf (as the sponsor of your visa) and your program advisor will email it to you once it has been obtained.

To be completely safe, you should not book your flights until you have obtained your visa.

If you choose to book your flights prior to this time then we would advise that you buy a flight that allows you to make date changes for a reasonable fee.

We advise that you do not book your flights before you at least receive your Letter of Invitation so that we can be sure that there are no previously unforeseen problems regarding the issuing of this document and your subsequent visa.

The logo for ImmerQi, featuring the brand name in a stylized, cursive script font.

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

Q: How much is the visa fee?

The visa fee to ImmerQi is £190 (GBP). This covers the cost of the visa invitation letter, processing charges paid to the Chinese Authorities to procure the letter and administration charges.

After acceptance, your advisor will send you a link to fill in the information needed to apply for your documents. Once this form is completed you will be directed to another website that allows you to pay the document fee.

When applying for the visa in your local Chinese embassy/consulate there will be an additional application processing fee, this differs depending on consulate so we advise to call before going there.

Q: When will I get the letter of invitation I need to make my visa application?

A: Visa invitation letters are only valid for 3 months and you will receive your visa invitation letter, via the post from your ImmerQi program advisor no earlier than 3 months before the intended arrival day (depending on when you signed up for the program and the progress of your application).

Q: Where can I find useful information about obtaining my visa:

The main place to find out application information and, in many countries now, do the visa application is via <http://www.visaforchina.org/>. from this page you can select your country and nearest embassy to find information on how to apply.

Q: Where should I apply for my visa?

A: You should apply for your visa in your home country. If you apply in a 3rd party country we can't take responsibility should your application be rejected.

Q: Which visa do I apply for from the Chinese Embassy?

A: You will be coming to China on a cultural exchange program as a teacher intern so you should apply for an X2 visa.

ImmerQi

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

Q: Where are the schools located?

A: The schools are located all over China but tend to be concentrated in the more developed eastern parts of the country. Many schools are located in culturally rich but rural areas as well. Some examples of provincial placements include: Heilongjiang, Beijing, Inner Mongolia, Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Hunan, Guangdong, etc. You may use this as a reference; however ImmerQi may work with new schools and locations every year.

Q: If I book with a friend or partner can I be placed with them?

If you make it known on your application that you are traveling with someone, i.e. a partner or a friend, then we can 95% guarantee you will be placed together. Should there be any issues placing you together your point of contact will discuss it with you before your arrival into China.

However we can't guarantee anything with regards to being placed with people who we are unaware of at the time of your application. So please do put their information on your application.

Q: When will I find out the teaching location I will intern in?

A: As there are often last minute changes to placement plans, due to the Chinese culture of reluctance to commit or forward plan, you will be advised of your school's location during the orientation period. Please note, these can be due to change before departure day.

Q: How much money should I bring with me?

A: You will need enough to tide you over for 6-8 weeks as you have a 1 week induction prior to your placement and then schools won't pay your allowance in advance. You will only need money for social activities and personal expenses etc, as meals and accommodation are provided. Your first allowance is paid on the 15th of the first full month for the previous months interned days. Approximately 5000-7000 RMB is recommended.

ImmerQi

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

Q: When should I arrive in Beijing?

A: You should book your flight to arrive in Beijing on the date provided by your ImmerQi Advisor.

Additionally, you are responsible for booking a departure flight from China.

Q: Will someone meet me at the airport?

A: You will be greeted by an ImmerQi representative at the airport. They will have a clear sign and will be stationed next to the meeting point (this will be confirmed later) at international arrivals. You will then be transported in groups to your accommodation location in Beijing. There will be shuttle buses running at pre-determined times throughout the day (these times will be confirmed later). Any participants who arrive later and miss the shuttle busses will be collected at the airport still via taxi by an ImmerQi staff member.

Participants who arrive earlier than the arrival date will be responsible for their own accommodation and arrival arrangements until the arrival day. Should you arrive early and wish to find your own accommodation, your ImmerQi program advisor can advise you on this.

Please make it known on the form we will send you that you intend to arrive early and check out the pre-departure guide for information on where you can meet our staff in Beijing on arrival day.

Q: Will I need to organize a sim card by myself?

A: ImmerQi will help organize sim cards during the orientation period. However please make sure your phone is unlocked before traveling to China as it is very hard to unlock your phone from a different country. To find out if your phone is unlocked please contact your service provider or the company who sold you the phone.

Q: When will I start teaching?

A: School terms commence at different times depending on the dates of the Chinese New Year Festival. Winter semesters typically begin around March 1st. Autumn semesters typically begin around September 1st. You can ask your ImmerQi Advisor to confirm these dates prior to your arrival.

Q: What do I do if my term doesn't start immediately following the orientation period?

A: If you are not required to travel to your school immediately after orientation you will remain

The logo for ImmerQi is written in a stylized, cursive script. The 'I' is tall and thin, and the 'Q' has a large, rounded tail that loops back under the 'i'. The overall style is elegant and handwritten.

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

in Beijing where you will receive free accommodation and meals plus optional free Mandarin and cultural classes for at least 2 hours each day. However, you will only receive your daily living allowance once you start your teaching internship.

ImmerQi

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

Q: How will I travel from the orientation in Beijing to my school location?

A: Depending on the location of your school, you will fly or travel by train or bus. The School is responsible for the cost of the internal travel (whether air, train, bus) from the Training Centre (Beijing) to the placement school before commencing the internship, by the most direct route as determined by ImmerQi. However, you will be responsible for any excess luggage fees incurred.

When packing for China you should bear in mind that you will be travelling around and therefore, less is more! The standard luggage allowance for a domestic flight is 20 kg and there is also only a limited amount of storage space on trains. Carrying a back pack rather than a suitcase will also make your life a lot easier whilst you are there. You should also bear in mind that you may purchase clothing and other items during the orientation period and account for the extra weight.

Q: Will I be required to sign a contract?

A: To validate the visa and to ensure you are able to receive your allowance you will be required to sign a contract with the school. This agreement is a standard contract that outlines duties, accommodation, transportation, and termination clauses. You will be provided with a sample contract upon arrival.

Q: Why might my school want me to have a medical and what does it involve?

A: Schools, particularly kindergartens, are very cautious about protecting the health and safety of their students and therefore they will want to confirm the health of any staff they take on. If you are required to have a medical please note that standard tests usually include a blood test for HIV/Aids, chest x-ray and, for women, cervical smears. They will also enquire about any history of mental illness.

ImmerQi

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

Q: How many hours will I intern each week?

A: You will be required to intern 35 hours a week at the school, including face-to-face teaching, preparing lessons, meetings, activities, etc. A maximum of 15 face to face teaching hours and a minimum of 10 hours per week will be delivered to students per week.

Q: What kind of teaching will I do?

A: You may be required teach in a variety of ways; a syllabus could be provided, basic teaching guidelines may be given or schools could simply ask that their students enjoy themselves in which case you will be able to teach whatever you like! There is usually an emphasis on spoken English to take advantage of having native speakers in the school, but you should be prepared to teach all aspects of English.

Q: What kind of school will I be placed in?

A: Schools in China vary greatly as they do in all education systems. Schools are usually large with between 2,000 and 5,000 students and are a mixture of private and government schools. Students are usually weekday boarders. Schools generally have good equipment and resources, although

English resources are limited and foreign teachers are not common. Additionally, some schools have more than one campus or schools affiliated with them, and so you may be required to teach at different locations.

Q: How many students will there be in a class?

A: Typically, a class is between 25-50 students depending on the age of the students. Classes are smaller if the students are younger. You should expect classes of around 50 for teaching at senior high level and possibly less than 10 in kindergarten.

Q: Will I have internet access in my placement?

Every school is required to provide internet in the office for working on lesson plans and research. If the participant requires internet in their accommodation, the school and/or ImmerQi can help set it up, however will be an added cost for participant. If the school does not have the facilities to provide internet on campus then they are required to provide it in participant's accommodation.

ImmerQi

Q: Do interns have a point of contact at the school?

A: Yes, there will be an English-speaking liaison at the school to assist with your integration into the school. This is usually one of the Chinese English teachers. They will help you understand your daily routine at the school and what the Head of Department wants from you. They will also be your first point of contact for any problems at your school or accommodation, eg, if you need a plumber.

However, if they can't help with this you should then contact your ImmerQi Program Coordinator. These people are sometimes not ImmerQi's direct contact and interns should bear this in mind when problem solving.

Q: Will I be teaching alone, or will there be assistants present?

A: You should be prepared to lead a class on your own from day one. There may be assistants in the lower age group classrooms.

Q: How many semesters do the schools have?

A: In the vast majority of schools there are two semesters in each academic year of about 4.5 to 5 months. The first semester starts in early September. The second starts in late February/early March and is dependent on the timing of the Chinese New Year.

Q: What is the dress code in the schools?

A: Smart casual office wear. Full length trousers, at least knee length skirts and dresses. Tops shouldn't be revealing and tattoos should be covered up. Body piercings, other than earrings in the ear lobes (females only), should be removed for teaching. If in doubt, go conservative!

Q: What is the accommodation like?

A: Each teacher will have their own private bedroom in an apartment or university style dorm and may have to share a bathroom and other available facilities with others. Please be aware that some accommodation may not have western toilets. Many off-campus apartments have kitchens but if interns live on the school campus they may not have kitchens. By western standards the accommodation may be considered basic but by Chinese standards the accommodation provided to foreign teachers is spacious and of a comparatively high standard.

ImmerQi

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

Q: Do interns have to pay any bills?

A: The school will pay for utilities up to certain limits (the standard is 150 RMB per month per person). If the gas, electricity and water expenses exceed this limit, the interns need to pay for the rest.

Q: Do interns have to set up a bank account?

A: Bank accounts are linked directly to cities and specific branches so opening one during the orientation process is not necessary. However should you need one for your pay, or should you wish to open one regardless the school will do their best to accommodate you. However please note that per local laws in some provinces the length of your visa is too short for banks to be allowed to open an account for you.

Q: Will interns have to pay tax?

A: No, you will not have to pay income tax on this program. Interns do not earn a salary, but rather receive a living allowance.

Q: Will I get any spare time during the internship to explore?

A: You can arrange your travel on your days off and public holidays. There are two main public holidays per year, which last a week each.

Q: What is the semester end date?

A: The semester end date also varies each semester depending on the Chinese New Year Festival dates. The actual date will be confirmed by your school upon arrival and may be up to 2 weeks earlier than actual school end dates due to local variances. ImmerQi will require proof from the school should your contract finish early.

Q: How will I get back at the end of the semester?

After the program completion, participants are free to arrange their own travel plans. We understand that all participants will have different plans, therefore, ImmerQi will not organise return transportation but provide necessary assistance where required.

The School is responsible for the cost of the internal travel (whether air, train, bus) from the placement school to Beijing upon completing the program by the most direct route as determined by ImmerQi. However, you will be responsible for any excess luggage fees incurred.

The logo for ImmerQi is written in a stylized, cursive script. The letters are black and have a fluid, handwritten appearance. The 'i' at the end of 'Qi' has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

Q: When should I book my return flight for?

A: As you are likely to want to take the opportunity to travel further in China after completing your internship, you should take this into consideration when booking return flights. You will have a few weeks left on your visa after completion of the semester. However, if you think you will be returning straight home you should still allow a few days to pack and travel back to Beijing for departure. It is always advisable to buy flights that allow you to make date changes for a reasonable fee.

You are responsible for booking a departure flight from China before your 180 day visa expires. Keep in mind 180 days begins from the day you enter China.

Q: Why can't I get a full-time salary?

A: Once you get to your school, it is easy to forget that you are part of a program. You may even find yourselves working alongside people who are not on the program. If you have a degree then you can obviously earn more in China. However, you should consider the program as an 'introduction' to a sometimes difficult country. The money you receive is an allowance and the schools that ImmerQi work with are experienced in dealing with those of you who are fresh to teaching. Don't forget that you have signed up for an internship and not a full-paying job position.

ImmerQi love to hear that their interns will stay on and find jobs for themselves but while in their care, use their support network and get used to China and the way the country works and you never know what opportunities may arise at the end!

Q: What's the best way to communicate with ImmerQi and home in China?

ImmerQi will obviously have mobile phones and email addresses but Skype can really help you out in China.

Pre-arrival, ImmerQi will interview and hold meetings on it. During the internship program, it is obviously a quicker way to get hold of the staff and if your family back home has it, you can call one another for free!

Q: What websites are not accessible in China and how do we access them?

Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Snapchat and google among others are not accessible in China. To access these you need to download a VPN, please ask your advisor for further information,

ImmerQi

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN

Q: What is an intern?

The term 'intern' can be quite ambiguous. Basically, an internship is doing a job in the same way as a normal employee would but on a shorter agreement. This is important to note as it will feel like you are a proper teacher and in time you will be treated as one by your school. See ImmerQi as a trial period to a full time teaching position.

Q: What happens if I leave the program early?

Sadly, some people may leave the internship program for whatever reason. Some obvious things are unavoidable but if you choose to leave the program, bear in mind that your students wouldn't have a teacher anymore. ImmerQi is experienced with people having a hard time for the first few weeks but bear with it, some of the programs best stories have come from those who wanted to leave in the beginning.

Anyone who leaves the program will have their visa cancelled per the laws of China. Once you have left the course we legally have to inform the government who will commence the cancellation. Typically this will take 3 days from the start to when you visa becomes invalid.

ImmerQi

TEACH | INTERN | VOLUNTEER | MANDARIN